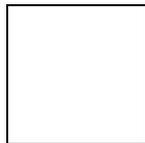


BIBLE ENLIGHTENED:
RELIGIONS AND YOGA

by
DAN COSTIAN, Ph.D.

SECOND VOLUME



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“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that which we know, and we bear witness of that which we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not, how if I say the heavenly things to you, will ye believe?”

John 3:11-12

XVI. THE PROPHECIES THAT ANNOUNCED THE SAVIOR

*“Therefore will the Lord himself give you a sign:
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and shall bring
forth a son, and call his name Immanuel¹”*

Isaiah 7:14²

The coming of a Savior was a fairly widespread idea within the beliefs of ancient peoples and the Old Testament was no exception to this.

The Savior was designated by the term of *Messiah* (*Meshiah*, Aram.; *Mashiah*, Hebr.), signifying the *Anointed One*. *Christós* (*Χριστός*) was its equivalent in Greek, and *Christus* in the ecclesiastical Latin. Tacitus also used the latter name, while *Chrestos* was encountered in the writings of Suetonius (ch. XVIII). Christians have generally attributed the term of *Christ* to *Jesus*. In the Jewish tradition, the *anointed one* was the person who has gotten the consecration (often as a result of the divine command, e.g. Exodus 28:41; 30:30,31; Leviticus 21:12; 1 Samuel 9:16; 16:1 etc.) being anointed with oil as a sign of his function (kingship, priesthood; ch. XV C).

Jesus (*Ἰησοῦς*, Gr.; *Iesus* in the ecclesiastical Latin) comes from *Yeshu*³, or *Yeshua* (*Yahweh/Yahu*—i.e. God—saves; from *yeshu*, salvation, Hebr.), or even *Yehoshua*. Even so, according to the Kabbalah, redemption (*tikun*, accomplishment, realization, Hebr.) could be obtained only through personal action (ch. XXV) while the Messiah is only its warrant.

From amongst many of His names appearing in the references of our book we should mention: *Aissa* or *Isa* (Arab.), practically identical to *Issa* (Jesus, Tibetan; sometimes written also *Isa*) or *Isa Masih* (Jesus the Messiah; ch. XXIII A); *Yuz Asaf* (Jesus the Healer, Persian; ch. XXIII B); *Ishu Quadoshah* (Holy Jesus, Syriac) [1]; *I-shu Mi-shi-so*⁴ (Jesus the Messiah, Chin.) [2], *Ko-nu I-shu* (Holy Jesus, Chin.) [1], or *Hsü-t'ing* (Son

¹ God with us (Hebr.). It appears in Psalm 46:11: “The Lord of hosts is with us” (*immanu*, Hebr.), and in the first gospel among the final words uttered by Jesus: “I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

² Mentioned by Matthew 1:22-23.

³ Ch. XIX B.

⁴ *Ye Su Mishisuo*, after Martin Palmer.

of Yahweh: *Hsü-po*, Chin.) born by the Virgin *Mo-yen*⁵ (Mary, Chin.) [2] etc.

The first prophecy about the Savior was ascribed to Enoch: “And Enoch, [the] seventh from Adam⁶ prophesied also as to these, saying: «Behold, [the] Lord has come amidst his holy myriads»” (Jude 14). One variant of the *Book of Enoch* read about the Son of God: “I and my son will be united with them for ever in the paths of uprightness in their lives; and ye shall have peace: rejoice, ye children of uprightness. Amen” [3].

Jacob, in his turn said: “The scepter will not depart from Judah... until Shiloh⁷ come. And to him will be the obedience of peoples” (Genesis 49:10). Afterwards, Moses announced his people in Deuteronomy: “Yahweh thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken” (18:15; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37), after which he repeated the very words of Lord: “I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18).

The apocryphal *4 Ezra* announced that Christ would be revealed four centuries earlier to those who believe in His coming: “For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. And after these years my son the Messiah shall die” (7:28-29).

The ancestry along the line Jacob-Jesse-David made the subject of other prophecies. The prophet Balaam (Bileam) used to pronounce the following: “I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh. There cometh a Star⁸ out of Jacob, and a scepter⁹ shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). “And out of Jacob shall have dominion” (24:19).

Through Nathan, God revealed to David that the Messiah, the divine Son would be born out of his descendants¹⁰: “I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom... I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son... And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made firm for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Samuel 7:12-16; cf. 1 Kings 8:20,25; 2 Chronicles 6:16; Jeremiah

⁵ *Mo Yan*, after Martin Palmer.

⁶ Genesis 5:3-18.

⁷ The Messiah.

⁸ Some interpret this as announcing the star that would guide the Magi from the East.

⁹ In full agreement with Genesis 49:10.

¹⁰ “The holy seed shall be the trunk thereof” (Isaiah 6:13).

23:5; 33:15; Ezekiel 34:23; Amos 9:11). “Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne” (Psalms 132:11; cf. 132:17).

The *Zohar* depicts the Messiah as follows: “When God desires to be gracious to the world he looks upon this David with a smiling countenance, and he in turn sheds light and grace upon the world through his beauty, his head being a skull of gold... And through God’s great love for him, he tells him to turn his eyes towards him and look at him, because they are very beautiful... And for the sake of that celestial David, beautiful, beloved and desired of God, David said: «Turn to me and be gracious unto me»” [4]. Moreover, the *Zohar* wrote that the Messiah will be announced by cosmic phenomena (the Star) and wonders: Thus, Rabbi Simeon “turning to Rabbi Eleazar, his son, he said: «At the time when the Messiah shall arise, there will be great wonders in the world»” [5].

Most of the prophecies were found, however, in Isaiah: “Therefore thus saith the Lord Yahweh: «Behold, I lay for foundation in Zion a stone¹¹, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone¹²»” (28:16). “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and Yahweh’s word from Jerusalem” (2:3). “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness, from henceforth even for ever” (9:6-7; cf. 11:3-5). “And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall be fruitful; and the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh” (11:1-2). “Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect [in whom] my Soul delighteth; I will put my Spirit upon him” (42:1; quoted in Matthew 12:18), thus reminding the words uttered during the baptism when a voice was saying: “This is my beloved son, in whom I have found my delight” (Matthew 3:17; cf. 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 9:35).

Other prophets would also announce the Messiah in similar terms. “I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a King among his sons” (1 Samuel 16:1). “For behold, I will bring forth my Servant the Branch” (Sprout) (Zechariah 3:8; cf. 6:12). “He shall speak peace¹³ unto the

¹¹ “From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel, from the God of thy father, and he will help thee” (Genesis 49:24-25).

¹² Cf. Psalm 118:22, quoted by Jesus (Matthew 21:42; cf. Acts 4:11).

¹³ See ch. XIX B and C.

nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth” (9:10; cf. Psalms 72:7-8).

Daniel, amongst other things, had the following vision: “There came with the clouds of heaven [One] like a Son of man, and he came up even to the Ancient of days¹⁴, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed” (7:13-14).

The Messiah from the house of David was announced in the apocryphal¹⁵ *Psalter of Solomon* dating from the 1st century BC, which was written in Greek. It was here that the Greek word Christ was mentioned for the first time.

Besides the above quotation from Daniel 7:13, the term *Son of man* (*bar enasha*, Aram.) also appeared with Ezekiel: “So thou, Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; and thou shall hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me” (33:7). Likewise this term appears in the *Book of Enoch*, which wrote that His name was uttered in the presence of the Father, before the sun and the stars were created: “In that hour was this Son of man invoked before the Lord of spirits, and his name in the presence of the Ancient of days. Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, his name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of spirits... Therefore, the Elect and the Concealed one existed in the presence, before the world was created, and for ever” [8]. Thus, we find again the concept of the Primordial Divine Son, Ganesha (ch. I). “He existed and has revealed to the saints and to the righteous... For in his name shall they be preserved, and his will shall be their life” [9]. It was also there that for the first time, the Messiah was called *Son of Yahweh* [10].

From the quotation opening this chapter we have seen that Isaiah (7:14) wrote that God Himself announced the birth of the Messiah from a virgin. The prophet then disclosed the place of birth: “the way of sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations” (9:1). The prophet Micah (5:2) was even more

¹⁴ God the Father (ch. XV D).

¹⁵ We are not to over insist on the importance of the apocryphal texts; that is why Migne himself, the author of the famous Christian *Patrology* will be quoted here: “Avoiding the apocrypha is to fail in the chance of going into the beginnings of Christianity” [6]. Currently, Lossky thought that “these apocrypha, though separated from the scriptural canon, should nonetheless not be totally rejected” [7]. Last but not least, it happened that Jesus’ words were quotes from apocryphal writings such as the *Testament of Joseph* 18.2 (Matthew 5:44), and the *Testament of Levi* 13.5 (6:19).

specific, pertaining to the primordial divine Son: “And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah... out of thee shall he come forth unto me [who is] to be Ruler in Israel: whose goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity”—a quotation to appear again in the Gospels (Matthew 2:6; John 7:42; also see the previous note on Jesse the Bethlehemite). Referring to the Messiah, the *Zohar* confirms the sayings above: “He will arise in the land of Galilee” [11]. The writings of the Pharisees also announce Messiah’s birth in Bethlehem [12].

The Messiah was revealed to have His cradle next to the asses: “the ass (knoweth) his master’s crib” (Isaiah 1:3).

God told Hosea about the return to Israel after the flight to Egypt: “Out of Egypt I called my Son” (11:1; cf. Exodus 13:8).

Another prophecy announced John the Baptist as a forerunner (*pródromos*, Gr.) of Messiah: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1)—a quotation that also appeared in the Gospels too (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76; cf. 1:17; John 1:23). And Isaiah wrote: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: «Prepare ye the way of Yahweh, make straight in the desert a highway for our God»” (40:3). “Cast up a way for him that rideth in the deserts; his name is Yah” (Psalms 68:4).

Isaiah (9:1) alluded to the departure to the territory of Zebulun (also Bethlehem belonged to the lot of Zebulun—Joshua 19:15-16) and Naphtali (quoted by Matthew 4:13) after the baptism: “the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,—the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.”

The giving of bread to feed the multitude that had come to listen to Him was in Psalms as: “The meek shall eat and be satisfied” (22:26).

The prophets mentioned the walking on the water: “Who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the high waves of the sea” (Job 9:8; cf. Psalms 77:19). “Thou didst walk through the sea with thy horses” (Habakkuk 3:15).

The prophets also announced the miraculous healings. “I Yahweh... will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a Light of the nations, to open the blind eyes” (Isaiah 42:6-7). “He will come himself, and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped; then shall the lame [man] leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (35:4-6). “And unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healings in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).

The episode of Jesus entering Jerusalem appeared in Zechariah (9:9): “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to thee; he is just, and having salvation lowly and riding upon

an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

Another prophecy proclaimed the establishment of another covenant (promised during the Last Supper) which differs from those concluded with the ancestors (Noah, Genesis 9:9,11-13; Abraham, Genesis 17:7; Moses, Exodus 19:5): “Behold, days come, said Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers” (Jeremiah 31:31-32). “Covenant” is translated in Latin as *testamentum*, which brought in the terms of Old and New Testament.

The revealing of the traitor among the apostles was found in Psalms (41:9): “Mine own familiar friend, in whom I confided, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up [his] heel against me” (quoted by John 13:18).

The episodes of Judas selling Jesus for thirty silver coins and of his throwing the money in the mid of the Temple, money that was used to buy the “potter’s fields” (Matthew 27:3,5-7) were exactly described by Zechariah (11:12-13): “They weighed for my hire thirty silver-pieces. And Yahweh said unto me: «Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at by them». And I took the thirty silver-pieces, and cast them to the potter in the house of Yahweh.”

The happening from the Gethsemane garden was suggested by the prayer addressed to God: “Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help” (Psalms 22:11).

Isaiah (53:8) described the arrest of the Savior: “He was taken from oppression.” The Lamentations of Jeremiah (4:20) read: “The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of Yahweh, was taken in their pits.”

The derision was rendered in Psalms (22:7-8): “All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head [saying:] «Commit it to Yahweh—let him rescue him; let him deliver him, because he delighteth in him!»” And Isaiah mentions: “They that rule over them make them howl, saith Yahweh; and continually all the day is my name scorned” (52:5). “He is despised and left alone of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom [men] hide their faces;—despised, and we esteemed him not” (53:3).

The passion was envisaged in great detail within the same chapter: “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; and we, we did regard him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, but he opened not his mouth; he was like a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth... Yet it pleased to Yahweh to bruise him; he hath subjected [him]

to suffering” (53:4,5,7,10). “I gave my back to smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (50:6).

The following lines refers to the self-sacrifice consented¹⁶ by Jesus, His condemnation beside the malefactors, the redeeming of people’s sins and His prayers for the guilt of the others: “He hath poured out his soul unto death, and was reckoned with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (53:12).

The cry of the Crucified One to His Father was found in one of David’s psalms (22:1): “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (quoted in Matthew 27:46), while another psalm (69:21) says: “They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” There are also given other details of the crucifixion: “They pierced¹⁷ my hands and my feet... they look, they stare upon me; they part my garment among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (22:16-18). Zechariah’s text (12:10) also told about the act of piercing but is more complex: God said: “I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look on me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.”

The episode of the soldiers having broken the bones in the feet of the two thieves but not those of Jesus (John 19:33,36) was described in Exodus (12:46) where God commended Moses “neither shall ye break a bone” of the lamb sacrificed for Passover (also Numbers 9:12), and also in Psalms: “He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken” (34:20).

The prophecy of Amos: “I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the land in the clear sky” (8:9) obviously refers to the darkening of the sun between the sixth to the ninth hour—Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44—i.e. between noon and 3 p.m. when Christ died on the cross.

Other prophets announced the death of the Anointed One as well. “Shall Messiah be cut off” (Daniel 9:26). “He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people” (Isaiah 53:8; cf. 53:10).

The crucifixion was described also in the apocryphal *Odes of Solomon* [14].

A number of David’s Psalms depicted the resurrection: “My heart rejoiceth, and my glory exulteth; my flesh moreover shall dwell in hope. For

¹⁶ “No one takes it (the life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again” (John 10:18), i.e. to rise from the dead.

¹⁷ The word “pierced” appears in the *Septuagint*, not in the Hebrew original [13].

thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol¹⁸, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see corruption” (16:9-10). “Yahweh, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol, thou hast quickened me from among these that go down to the pit” (30:3). “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him flee before him” (68:1). Then it follows the description of the ascent: “Thou hast ascended on high... They have seen thy goings, O God, the going of my God, my King, in the sanctuary” (68:18,24). Follow the sitting of Him at the right side of the Godhead: “Yahweh said unto my Lord: «Sit at my right hand»” (110:1). “Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; thy countenance is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (16:11).

The *Apocalypse of Ezra* prophesied the resurrection of Messiah and the enjoyment of the Kingdom, which would last for ten generations [15].

Jesus Himself, revealed to His disciples His sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension: “Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; and they will deliver him up to the nations to mock and to scourge and to crucify, and the third day he shall rise again” (Matthew 20:18-19; cf. Mark 8:31). The same events were referred to by other texts even if less straight. “«Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up»... But he spoke of the temple of his body” (John 2:19,21). Christ also foretold the desertion of His apostles: “Behold, [the] hour is coming, and has come, that ye shall be scattered, each to his own, and shall leave me alone” (John 16:32). Finally, Jesus announced His resurrection (Matthew 26:32; Mark 14:28; John 14:18-19,28; 16:16,20). Christ accused the Pharisees and the scribes: “Bear witness of yourselves that ye are sons of those who slew the prophets; and ye, fill up the measure of your fathers... Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and [some] of them ye will scourge in your synagogues, and will persecute from city to city” (Matthew 23:31-34).

Isaiah wrote about God appointing the Messiah as a Judge: “Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect... He shall bring forth judgment to the nations” (42:1). “For Yahweh is our Judge, our Lawgiver, Yahweh, our King: He will save us” (33:22). “My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples” (51:5). “But ye who forsake Yahweh, who forget my holy mountain... I will ever assign you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down in the slaughter; because I called, and ye did not answer, I spoke, and ye did not hear; but ye did what was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delight not” (65:11-12). “For by fire and by his sword will Yahweh enter into judgment with all flesh; and the slain of Yahweh shall be many” (66:16).

¹⁸ The dwelling of the dead.

Jesus disclosed, on the request of His disciples, the signs of His next advent at the end of the centuries (Matthew 24:21-31; Mark 13:4-8, 12, 19-31; Luke 21:7-11, 25-28). However, Jesus warned them: “Of that day and hour no one know, not even the angels of the heavens, but [my] Father alone” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32; cf. Acts 1:7).

The Judgment is also predicted in the apocryphal writings such as *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* [16] as well as in the *Book of Enoch*: “He shall judge secret things... In those days the saints and the chosen shall undergo a change. The light of day shall rest upon them, and the splendor and glory of the saints shall be changed... He shall select the righteous and holy from among them; for the day of their salvation has approached. And in those days shall the Elect one sit upon his throne... In those days the mountains shall skip like rams, and the hills shall leap like young sheep satisfied with milk; and all the righteous shall become angels in heaven” [17].

There were many who saw in Jesus, the Messiah, as foretold by the prophets.

The first was obviously His own mother, Mary, then Elizabeth, John’s mother (Luke 1:43-47). The shepherds of Bethlehem were given the news by the angel of God (2:9-11) and the Magi from the East received an astronomical sign in the star itself (Matthew 2:1,2). Simeon, having been announced by the Holy Spirit, recognized the Messiah in the infant brought to the Temple as the Law required (Luke 2:27-34). The old prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel also recognized Jesus (2:36,38).

The Messiah’s meeting with John the Baptist, evidently was at a crucial moment when the latter said: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29; cf. 1:36).

Andrew, His first disciple told his brother Simon (Peter): “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). Likewise, Jesus was recognized by Philip who told Nathanael: “We have found him on whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets, Jesus, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth” (1:45). Nathanael acknowledged in Him “the Son of God” (1:49). Having met the Samaritan woman who said: “I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ” (4:25), “Jesus told to her: «I who speak to thee am [he]»” (4:26).

Now we shall deal with the prophecies from outside the Judaism. In this respect, in his book on the lost apocrypha of the Old Testament [18] M.R. James recalls the epoch of Zoroaster (Zarathustra), called Zaradosht: “The prophecy is uttered to the disciples of Zaradosht, the King Gushnasp¹⁹ and Sasan and Mahmad. The Virgin-birth, crucifixion, descent into hell,

¹⁹ Hystaspes. Agathias says that Zoroaster was “in the time of Hystaspes,” but that it was uncertain to him whether this was the father of Darius or some other Hystaspes [19].

resurrection, ascension, and second coming are predicted, and in answer to a question of Gushnasp, Zaradosht says: «He shall descend from my family. I am he and he is I; he is in me and I am in him»²⁰. The prophecy of Zoroaster was also mentioned by Clement of Alexandria who wrote about the prediction concerning Jesus: “In addition to *Peter’s Preaching*, the Apostle
 XVI - 1 Paul will show, saying: «Take also the Hellenic books, read the Sibyl, how it is shown that God is one, and how the future is indicated. And taking Hystaspes, read, and you will find much more luminously and distinctly the Son of God described» [20]. The *Sibylline Oracles* and Hystaspes were given the same rank as the books of the Prophets (*Neviim*) by Justin Martyr when he was talking about “those who read the books of Hystaspes or the Sibyl or the Prophets.” He attacked the heretic books declaring that “and the Sibyl, and Hystaspes, said that there should be a dissolution of compatible things by mean of fire” [21]. Last but not least, Solomon of Basrah’s *Book of the Bee* read about “The Prophecy of Zaradosht concerning our Lord” [22].

Other prophecies from the sacred Hindu book *Shrimad Devi Bhagavatam* would be further discussed in great detail in ch. XIX B.

The *Sibylline Books* (*Libri Sibyllini*, Lat.) or *Oracles* deserve here a special mention. The Sibyls (*sybillae*, Lat.; from *sio bolla*, the Doric form of *theou boylé*, god’s will, Gr.) were women endowed with the gift of divination. These books would date, after other sources, back to Solon’s period (around 600 BC) and would belong to the Sibyl of Hellespont. Plato wrote only about the Sibyl of Cumae and Lactantius about ten Sibyls. According to the tradition, three books, out of the existing nine, had been purchased by King Tarquinius Superbus (534-510 BC) from Cumana (Cumaean Sibyl), or from an anonymous old woman according to Pliny the Elder, Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Aulus Gellius. They were burnt during the destruction by fire of the Capitol in 83 BC, being later redone from memory by a committee appointed by Sulla. At the orders of General Stilicho and Christian Emperor Honorius these prophetic books were publicly burned in AD 401. The most famous is the third book containing a passage (considered to be at least earlier than 30 BC) that prophesies as follows: “From the blessed plains of Heaven a blessed man has come with the scepter in his hand which God committed to his clasp, and he has won fair dominion over all.” “The God of Heavens will send a king, and will judge each man and woman” [23]. That tradition is still recalled in Majorcan churches at Christmas Eve [24].

The topic of the Last Judgment was heralded by other prophecies outside Judaism too. Thus, the opening surah in the *Qur’an* calls God “the Master of

²⁰ “Thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee,” said Jesus (John 17:21; cf. 17:23)—ch. XV D.

the Day of Doom” (1.3). The Islamic tradition acknowledges Jesus as the Judge: “Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah’s Messenger said: «By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely, the son of Mary [Jesus], will shortly descend amongst your people, and will judge mankind justly, by the Law»” [25]. Thus, in spite of all other Qur’anic statements denying His divinity, Jesus is equated to Allah! Actually, the *Qur’an* acknowledges that Jesus is God’s Word (*Kalam-ul-Lah*, Arab; the equivalent of *Lógos*, Gr., *Verb*, Lat.; ch. I), thus admitting implicitly His divine origin: “Mary, God gives thee good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary” (3.40), said Gabriel to the Virgin. “The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him” (4.169).

We shall conclude this chapter by quoting Schuon who has contested the idea of regarding both the Buddha Gautama and the Christ Jesus as simply legendary characters: “The fact that the life of Buddha, which is historical in its main features, including certain miracles, retraces the myth of Indra, in no way means that it is itself a myth, any more than the prophecies concerning Christ invalidate His historical reality” [26].

NOTES

[1] Saeki, § 11, p.112. [2] *Ibid.*, §§ 150-152,156,160, pp.31,41-42. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 11: *Buddhist Suttas: Tipitaka, Suttapitaka*, 1881, p.318. [3] *The Book of Enoch*, 105.2, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha...* [4] *The Zohar* III, 84a, vol. V, pp.96-97. [5] *Ibid.*, II, 8a, vol. III, p.22. [6] *Apud* Zenon Kosidowski, *Povestirile evangheliștilor (Tales by the Gospels Authors)*, Ed. Albatros, București 1983, p.360, o.t. [7] Lossky, *In the Image...*, p.157. [8] *The Book of Enoch* 48.2,3,5. [9] *Ibid.*, 48.6-7. [10] *Ibid.*, 48.11. [11] *The Zohar* II, 7b, vol. III, p.20. [12] *Berakhoth*, ch. 12. [13] W. Brandt, *Die Evangelische Geschichte*, 1893, pp.241-243; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, p.617. [14] *The Odes of Solomon*, Ode 42, in *The Lost Books of the Bible...*, p.139. [15] *The Apocalypse of Ezra* 7.31, quoted by Graves, Podro, p.535. [16] E.g. *The Testament of Reuben* 6, in *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs I; The Testament of Levi* 1,3,4 and 8, in *ibid.* III. [17] *The Book of Enoch* 48.3 (2nd part); 49.1; 50.2-4. [18] M.R. James, p.79. [19] Agathias II. 24; *apud* M.R. James, p.93. [20] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, VI.5.42,43. [21] Justin Martyr, *Apology (Apologiae)* I.20, I.44, in *The Ante-Nicene...*, vol. I. [22] Solomon of Basrah, *Book of the Bee*, E.A. Wallis Budge (ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford 1886, ch. XXXVII, p.81. [23] *Libri Sibyllini*, in *The Other Bible*, Harper & Row Publishers, San Francisco 1984, pp.503,504. [24] Graves, Podro, p.535. [25] *Fatih al-Bari*, vol. 7, 302; cf. 304,305; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 3, *hadith* 425; also vol. 4, *hadith* 658. [26] Schuon, *Gnosis*, note 1 to p.22.

XVII. CHRONOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL MILESTONES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS, AS PROVIDED BY THE GOSPELS

“All things that are written of the Son of man by the prophets shall be accomplished”

Luke 18:31

We shall open this chapter by showing that, according to present information, no complete original writing of the New Testament was preserved. Most of the known fragmentary manuscripts dated prior to the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity. Under these conditions, a hasty listing of the earliest known sources would not seem to be completely devoid of interest to us. Diocletian was remembered for having destroyed all the copies that had been accessible to him. Still beyond this circumstance we may assume that even if some of the original editions or at least those preceding the year 363 (see below) would have been spared/retrieved by the Church, they would have been destroyed by the Christian leaders in order to prevent the discovery of any alteration of the original text (ch. XX C2).

Kenyon reports the discovery in 1931 of eleven codices including some that were circulating presumably in Egypt about the period AD 130-150 (meaning that they were written towards the end of the first century), while others were not earlier than the fourth century [1].

From amongst the most ancient manuscripts²¹ in Greek (original language of the New Testament²²) we would mention the *Papyrus Bodmer*²³ II (p⁶⁶), XVI I coming from the time of Trajan (AD 98-117)²⁴ and containing a major part – 1 of the Gospel according to John. A fragment of the same gospel (acquired in

²¹ In the ancient times, the manuscripts existed only as leather (parchment) scrolls. The later *codex* was the earliest kind of book where the support of the text was cut in rectangular pieces sewn together to build up a volume (*tom*; from *tomus*, Lat.; *tomēin*, to cut, Gr.).

²² There exists a hypothesis assuming that the Gospel according to Matthew would have been written originally in Aramaic (ch. XX C2).

²³ In the Foundation Martin Bodmer (Biblioteca Bodmeriana) at Coligny, near Geneva.

²⁴ After other critics, it could be also from Hadrian’s period (AD 117-138).

1920 in Egypt by Bernard P. Grenfell and published in 1935 by Colin H. Roberts) is the *Rylands Greek 457* (P⁵²), dating back to the first quarter of the 2nd century AD. Also the Paris Papyrus P⁴ (P. Suppl. Gr. 1120/5), a fragment of Luke's Gospel, belongs to the early 2nd century.

The codices *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* (see also ch. VII) were written in the 4th century and are the *most complete* old versions. The *Sinaiticus* is a copy fairly correct, except for Revelation. The *Chester Beatty Papyri* P⁴⁵ and P⁴⁶ dating back to about AD 200 (after McDowell) supplemented it in 1931. The *Vaticanus* is a copy much better and more complete than the *Sinaiticus*, but it is posterior to this one. Eventually, the *Manuscript of Dublin*²⁵ (6th century) was the *most accurate* copy. However, it seems that these three sources mainly belonged to the same school. The *Brixianus*²⁶ manuscript was in whole agreement with the *Textus Receptus*, while the *Porphyry*²⁷ manuscript corresponded to the *Textus Receptus* as far as six or eight chapters from Acts, and to the *Codex Alexandrinus* (beginning of the 5th century) with regards to the Epistles. This list could be followed by a long enumeration of uncials²⁸ that, actually, were not as old as suspected.

With the obvious view of solving the problem of distinctions, James M. Robinson believes that “in the case of the *Bible*, a quantity of manuscripts of the same text... tend to correct each other when compared” [2].

Given the late date of the complete texts, the *major question* is not so much the differences among texts but rather the extent to which they correspond to what the Scripture had been in its origins. To take only one example among many others, it is known that prominent leaders of the early Christianity (as Papias, Basilides, Hermas and Justin Martyr—all in the first half of the 2nd century; see ch. I) disagreed with the Gospel according to John that was not acknowledged by them. It was much later when this happened and probably only after several *alterations* meant to make the text “convenient” (ch. XX C2). At any rate, the *present content* of the New Testament started to be established (by choosing the books considered as canonical and rejecting the non-canonical ones) *not earlier than 363* at the Council of Laodicea where Revelation was not acknowledged as a sacred writing. The debate was ardent and continued at the Council of Nice in 365,

²⁵ In Trinity College, Dublin.

²⁶ At Brescia; it dates from the 6th century.

²⁷ *Codex Porphyrianus*, or *Codex P2*, in St. Petersburg, dates from the 9th century and contains Acts and Paul's epistles.

²⁸ Named after the *uncials*, capital letters derived from Roman upper case.

then at the Synod of Rome convoked by Pope Damasus. The *present version of the text* for the other writings was finalized *only in 419* at the Council of Carthage [3]. Sometimes, the position adopted by the Western and Eastern Christendom was different. In 367 Revelation was declared to be canonical (besides Gospels, Acts and 21 Epistles) by Athanasius of Alexandria but that decision became not official *over 325 years*, until the Trullan²⁹ Synod convened in 692 by Emperor Justinian in Constantinople. *The Jerusalem Bible* (1966 edition) notes that some local churches in Syria, Cappodocia, and Palestine excluded Revelation until the fifth century. Besides, Revelation was not considered divinely inspired until well into the 8th century!

In the authoritative opinion of Alexander Schmemmann, “the scriptures are considered the «raw material» for theological definition and formulation, «biblical matter» available to be «interpreted» by theological reason. And it would be incorrect to think that this position is characteristic only of the West” [4]. Moreover, we have all the reasons to believe even in the existence of alterations of the original text prior to the tardy versions that came to us. The problem will be dealt with extensively in chapter XX C2.

And now, we should be allowed to attempt at a parallel to the events preceding by four centuries the advent of Jesus. Then, Socrates had deserted this world without leaving any written document. Actually, through his disciple, Plato, it has come down to us all that it is known on the mind and thinking of the great philosopher. And this is extraordinary! Let us imagine, however, how we might have regarded the situation if the original magnum opus of Socrates had come to us directly and completely. Then, we might have judged Plato as only a pitiable epigone of the great master. The same would have happened if Jesus had personally revealed His teachings to us. The gospels (in case anyone had dared to write them) would most certainly have left no traces in the memory of humankind, to say nothing of the Acts and Epistles...

* * *

The New Testament provided us with a limited number of chronological and geographical milestones of the life of Jesus: scarce information about his childhood (up to the age of twelve) followed by a hiatus until His maturity (around the age of 30). The three years of Christ’s public activity referred to miracles and teachings often preached by Jesus as parables but this period was devoid of the geographical or chronological framework, since the latter ones were replaced by vague expressions such as: “that time” (*ekeíno tó kairó*, Gr.: Matthew 11:25; 12:1; John 6:66 etc.), “those days” (*aís hemérais*

²⁹ It was held in the *trullus* (domed chamber, Lat.) of the imperial palace.

ekeinai; *ai hemérai ekeinai*; *taútas tàs heméras*, Gr.: Matthew 3:1; 24:22,29; Mark 1:9; Luke 1:24 etc.), “then” (*tóte*, Gr.: Matthew 3:13; Luke 7:6; John 11:47 etc.), “when” (*en tó*, Gr.: Matthew 2:1; Mark 11:12; Luke 9:51 etc.), “this place” (*en tó tópo*, Gr.: Matthew 12:6); “that place” (*toú tóπου ekeinou*, Gr.: Matthew 14:35; Mark 6:10; John 5:13), “certain place” (*tis tópo*, Gr.: Luke 11:1), “divers places” (*katà tóπους*, Gr.: Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11) etc.

The people who reported on the life of Jesus could not have been chroniclers or historians³⁰ and hence, were not in the least bit interested in recording those space and time details that they may have considered to be of a minor importance compared to what they really wanted to leave to posterity: the acts and mainly the teachings of Jesus Christ (especially in the Gospel according to John).

However, we will briefly review the recorded facts in their progress.

The parents of Jesus lived in Nazareth, in Galilee (Luke 2:4). Joseph, His father, descended from King David (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 1:27; 2:4; 3:23-38) and His mother was the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18,23; Luke 1:27-35).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem (south of Jerusalem) in Judea (Matthew 2:1,5; Luke 2:4,7) over the time of Herod (Matthew 2:1; Luke 1:5) when Cyrenius (Quirinius) was Governor in Syria (Luke 2:2).

Forty days after His birth Jesus was taken to the Temple of Jerusalem to be committed to God (Luke 2:22-23) according to the Law (Leviticus 12:2-4,6).

When Jesus was less than two years old (Matthew 2:16), He left for Egypt together with His parents (2:14). It was there that they stayed until Herod’s death (2:15,19-21).

Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt to Israel, in the land of Galilee, and settled down in Nazareth (Matthew 2:22-23; Luke 2:39; John 1:45).

At the age of twelve Jesus went to the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:42) and after three days (2:46) He returned to Nazareth (2:51).

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Emperor Tiberius (Luke 3:1), in the days of the high priests Annas and Caiaphas (3:2), Jesus went from Galilee to Bethabara (Bethany) on the banks of the river Jordan (John 1:28; cf. Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:3) not far from the Dead Sea.

Immediately after His baptism (Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1) He went into the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2).

From this point onwards the gospels show differences in the chronological order of the succeeding events.

³⁰ The word *history* cannot be found within the *Bible*.

Learning about John's imprisonment by Herod (Luke 3:20), Christ left for Galilee (Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; cf. Luke 4:14).

Jesus started His preaching when He was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23).

The first four disciples who followed Him were Andrew then his brother Simon (Peter) (John 1:40-42; Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-18), then James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21-22; Mark 1:19-20). The next two who followed Andrew and Simon, after John's gospel (1:43,45) were Philip and Nathanael. Later on, Levi, the tax collector, followed Him and became the apostle Matthew (Matthew 9.9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27-28).

After choosing His disciples, Jesus went to a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee in the company of His mother (John 2:1) where He performed His first miracle (2:11).

Having left Nazareth, Jesus went to live in Capernaum in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matthew 4:13) where He ordered an unclean spirit to go out of a man (Mark 1:21-26; Luke 4:31-35).

Many other miraculous healings followed: Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39), a leper (Matthew 8:2-3; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:12-13), a paralytic (Matthew 9:6-7; Mark 2:11-12; Luke 5:24-25; John 5:6-8), and other sick people (Matthew 4:23; 8:16; Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41 etc.).

Jesus continued to preach and to perform wonders such as the prodigious fishing (Luke 5:1-11), the calming of the storm (Matthew 8:24-26; Mark 4:37-39; Luke 8:23-24), or the walking on the sea (Matthew 14:25; Mark 6:48; John 6:19).

Having been told about the death of John the Baptist, Jesus went away by ship to a desert place where He preached to the crowds (Matthew 14:13; Mark 6:32) in Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), where He worked the miracle of feeding five thousand people with only five loaves and two fishes (Matthew 14:17-21; Mark 6:38-44; Luke 9:13-17; John 6:9-13) a phenomenon to be repeated afterwards (Matthew 15:34-38; Mark 8:5-9).

The marvels of raising from the dead: the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:18,25; Mark 5:23,41-42), the son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7:14-15) and Lazarus (John 11:39-44) as well as of His Transfiguration witnessed by some of His disciples (Matthew 17:2-3; Mark 9:2-4; Luke 9:29-31) were amongst the most remarkable.

Jesus revealed to the disciples His sufferings, His death and resurrection on the third day (Matthew 16:21; 17:22; Mark 8:31; 9:31; Luke 9:22; John 12:31-33) and the fact that after He would rise again He would proceed to Galilee ahead of them (Matthew 26:32; Mark 14:28).

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany at Simon, the leper

(Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3), or to the house of Lazarus, where He met Martha and Mary (John 12:1-3).

The next day He entered Jerusalem in triumph (John 12:12 sq.; also Matthew 21:1 sq.; Mark 11:1 sq.; Luke 19:28 sq.). It was there that He went to the Temple and drove out the merchants and the moneychangers (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45). John (2:14-15) described a similar event following the wedding of Cana.

Before the Passover feast (John 13:1)—or the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7)—in the evening, Jesus had His last supper with the twelve disciples (Matthew 26:20; Mark 14:17,25; Luke 22:14-16).

During the night they went together to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39) in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32) across the torrent called Kidron (Cedron) (John 18:1) where Jesus was caught and taken before Annas (John 18:13) and then before the Sanhedrin presided over by the high priest Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54; John 18:24).

At daybreak He was taken to Pilate (Matthew 27:1,2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28,29), and then to Herod (Luke 23:7).

On the preparation of the Passover (that is the day before the Sabbath) at about the sixth hour (at noon) Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified (John 19:14,16). He was taken to Golgotha (Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33; John 19:17) where He was put on the cross (Matthew 27:35; John 19:18) at the third hour i.e. 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25). From the sixth to the ninth hour (between noon and 3 p.m.) the whole land was covered with darkness (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). At the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus died (Matthew 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-37). Then the earth was shaken and the veil (*katapétasma*, Gr.) of the temple was rent in two (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38).

It is worth noticing that the gospels presented significant differences between the records of the last words of Jesus in spite of their tremendous importance since they got the meaning of a true last will (ch. XIX D). Two gospels assert that after uttering the mysterious sentence: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34), “Jesus having again cried with a loud voice, gave up the ghost” (Matthew 27:50; cf. Mark 15:37). They omit, however, to mention *what were the words* shouted by Him? The two other authors of the gospels remain silent too. Luke wrote, firstly, the words addressed to “the good malefactor” (23:43) adding that before expiring, “Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, said: «Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit»” (23:46). As for John he said that he was entrusted by the Savior to His mother: “Woman, behold thy son” (19:26), then “Jesus... says: «I

thirst»” (19:28), and afterwards “he said: «It is finished», and having bowed his head, he delivered up his spirit” (19:30).

In the evening (Matthew 27:57) of the Preparation day (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31) Joseph of Arimathea, having obtained Pilate’s consent, took the body down from the cross, wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in a tomb hewn in the rock, and rolled a great stone across the entrance (Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42).

The next day after the Preparation (i.e. throughout the Passover), the priests convinced Pilate to put a guard on watch and have the tomb sealed (Matthew 27:62-66).

On the Sabbath (Passover) day they took their lawful rest (Luke 23:56).

At the end of the Sabbath day, as morning was dawning on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1), they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty (Matthew 28:2,6; Mark 16:4-6; Luke 24:2-3; John 20:1 sq.).

Having risen from death, on the morning of the first day of the week, Jesus showed Himself to Mary of Magdala³¹ first (Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9; John 20:14). On the same day, He appeared before Cleopas and another disciple, on their way to Emmaus sixty *stadia*³² (or about threescore furlongs; about 11 km, which takes at least two hours to walk this distance) away from Jerusalem (Luke 24:13,15,18,31).

On the same evening, Jesus appeared in Galilee, in the midst of the disciples who were staying with the doors shut (John 20:19; cf. Matthew 28:16-17; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36). Then, after eight days He showed Himself again (John 20:26). Jesus appeared the third time before the disciples at the sea of Tiberias³³ (21:1,14). Acts talks of Jesus showing Himself “during forty days” (1:3).

* * *

One of the first commentaries to be made on the facts above is that the New Testament referred to two different persons bearing the name of Herod, namely Herod the Great and Herod Antipas.

Herod the Great, according to the records left by Josephus Flavius, died in 750 AUC (*ab urbe condita*, that is since the foundation of Rome,

³¹ Its proper name: *Magdal Nunaiya*; now *Mejdel*.

³² A *stadium* is about 607 English feet (185 metres).

³³ Lake or Sea of Galilee, or of Kinnereth (*Yam Ginnesar* or *Yamma de-Ginnesar*, Hebr.).

considered to be the year 753 BC) [5], corresponding to the year 4 BC. He had become the king of Judea in 37 BC.

In order to kill the King of the Jews who had been announced by the Magi (Matthew 2:2-3), King Herod ordered all the male children of less than two years old to be slain (2:16). It may be supposed, therefore, that at the date of this massacre Jesus was no longer a suckling but was probably more than one year old (hence the safety interval taken into account by Herod). A natural conclusion to the facts above is that the year of the birth of Jesus should be transferred at least five years, if not more, earlier than the official date that had been erroneously calculated on, in the year 525, by the Scythian monk Dionysius Exiguus (Short, Lat.) by order of Pope John I.

In passing, let it be signaled the assumption placing the birth of Jesus to AD 6 (in agreement with the census of Quirinius; see *infra*) when Antipas received the dynastic title of Herod [6]. According to Gallagher and Hoffmann, in the dispute between Origen and Celsus the story of the magi was supposed to have been told Herod the tetrarch, not King Herod the Great [7]. Antipas was born in 21 BC, and was tetrarch of Galilee between 4 BC and his death in AD 39.

Now, let us examine, *in extenso*, Isaiah's prophecy mentioned in chapter XVI: "The Virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son, and call his name Immanuel... He may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good. For before the child knoweth to refuse the evil and to choose the good, the land whose two kings thou fearest shall be forsaken" (7:14-16). Matthew (1:22-23) reminded the prophecy. In 4 BC *two kings* died: Herod the Great executed his co-king Antipater, then "he died, the fifth day after he had caused Antipater to be slain" [8].

The census performed by Quirinius when he had the government of Syria (Luke 2:2) could also be taken into consideration for establishing the year when Jesus was born but this is a subject of controversy.

Publius Sulpicius Quirinius appeared to have the government of Syria after Archelaus had been dethroned in the year 6-7 BC [9]. On the other hand, three censuses of the *Roman* citizens were known to have taken place: in 28 BC, in 8 BC and in AD 14, respectively [10]. We should add that according to T.P. Wiseman, Augustus gave a decree in AD 6 entailing the gathering of 5% inheritance tax from Roman citizens, thus suggesting the hypothesis of a Syriac-Judaic enrolment for Jews ordered by Quirinius. However, a Roman census would not have affected Joseph, since in the days of Herod the Great neither Galilee nor Bethlehem was directly under Roman rule. This happened only in AD 6, when Judea came under Roman jurisdiction [11].

Out of many hypotheses envisaged in order of establishing an agreement between all these historical facts we should mention here just two of them.

The first one relies on Tertullian [12] who attributed the census mentioned in the gospel to Senzius Saturninus, who was in Syria in the years 9-8 BC. The second hypothesis interpreted the text from Luke 2:2: “The census itself first took place when Cyrenius had the government in Syria” as: “The census itself took place before the one (ordered) when Cyrenius had the government of Syria,” based on the fact that in Greek, *protos* means not only “first” but also “before” when it is followed by the genitive case, as it is in this sentence. Eventually, a fragment of a Roman inscription was discovered in Antioch stating that Quirinius had been in Syria between 10 and 7 BC, that is in the days of the pro-consul Saturninus, on a mission from the Emperor Augustus where Quirinius led a campaign against the Homonadenses, a tribe in the Taurus mountains [13].

There have been many references to the brilliant star that had guided the three Magi from the East (Matthew 2:1-2), an astronomical phenomenon used to establish the year of the birth of Jesus. The Chinese chronicles mentioned some bright comets and stars around the years 5 and 4 BC but the later astronomers rejected this idea as well as that of a very bright “new” star (a nova).

Rabbi Samuel Abarbanel (1473-1550) spoke of an ancient Jewish prophecy saying that the Messiah (called *Dag*, Fish³⁴, in the *Talmud*) would appear when there would be a “conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign XVII I of the Fish” (Pisces). Such a thing happened in 7 BC and was the major - 4 astronomical event of the year, since due to the long periods of revolution of these heavy planets, this phenomenon occurs very rarely, namely every 794 years. Moreover, as Jung has stressed on, this one was a “thrice-repeated *coniunctio maxima* in the sign of Pisces, which at that precise moment inaugurated the new era³⁵” [14]. In 1925, the German scholar Paul Schnabel studied some cuneiform tablets dating back to two thousand years ago, which XVII I belonged to the School of Astrology at Sippar³⁶ (near Akkad, north of - 3 Babylon) where—over a period of five months on the year 7 BC—there were recorded the astronomic positions of Jupiter and Saturn that were then in the Pisces constellation, that is precisely where it was predicted by the Jewish prophecy. The great astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), who obviously had knowledge of the writings of Abarbanel, calculated that during

³⁴ The Fish was the symbol of Jesus and of the era beginning on His advent; it was also the secret sign of earlier Christians (ch. XIX C).

³⁵ The Age of Pisces (ch. XIX C).

³⁶ In the opinion of Bjørnstad and Johnson [15], the Jews also attended that School.

that outstanding year there were three conjunctions of the two planets occurring on May 29, September 29, and December 4 [16]. Subsequent researches have shown that the date of September 29 should be corrected to October 3 [17].

The three wise men said: "We have seen his star in the East" (Matthew 2:2). Keller [18] believed that this translation from Greek is, however, incorrect for the words *en té anatólé* (Gr.) are the singular form. Elsewhere, the plural *anatólai* (Gr.) stands for *the East*. The singular *anatólé* has quite a special astronomical significance, in that it implies the observation of the early rising (called heliacal rising) of the star. The translators of the *Authorized Version* could not have known this. According to a proper translation of *en té anatólé*, the text in Matthew 2:2 becomes: "We have seen his star appearing in the first rays of dawn," that would have corresponded exactly with the astronomical facts and this, of course, was the Star of the Wise Men, the Star of Bethlehem, the Christmas Star. Therefore, the three wise men saw the first conjunction on May 29, and left for Israel since they were aware of the prophecy mentioned by Abarbanel. Due to the difficulties of the journey that used caravans over the hot season of the year, they probably reached Israel at the time of the second conjunction, on October 3. Once arrived at their destination, they asked: "Where is the king of the Jews that has been born? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to do him homage" (Matthew 2:2). Then Herod was troubled (2:3), "and, assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born" (2:4). "And they said to him: «In Bethlehem of Judea»" (2:5), since they were aware (2:6) of Micah prophecy about Bethlehem Ephratah (5:2), that was written 700 years ago.

After relating the birth of Jesus, the *Bible* wrote: "there were shepherds in that country abiding without, and keeping watch by night over their flock" (Luke 2:8). A remark in the *Talmud* showed that in that neighborhood the flocks were put out to grass in March and they remained out in the open for almost eight months and were brought in again by the beginning of November [19]. Much probably, this seems to ascertain the birth of Jesus on the second conjunction of October 3 and not on the third one occurred on December 4. According to a text published by The Watchtower Bible: "The Scriptures are against the birth of Jesus' birthday as being the wintry day of December 25. *December* means tenth month, and the tenth Jewish month Tebeth was a rainy and cold month, especially at Bethlehem's elevation of 2,550 feet above sea level. It could not have been this disagreeable wintertime, for the account says shepherds were living out of doors watching over their flocks by night. In wintertime there was no pasturage in the fields for the sheep and already during the eighth month they were withdrawn from

the field and housed for the winter... So it was about the beginning of the eighth month (*Bul*, meaning «rain») that Jesus was born... It locates Jesus' actual birthday about October 1" [20]. After Robin Lane Fox, "by c. 200 there were Christians who argued that the birth had occurred in November 3 BC (miscalculating the date of King Herod's death)" [21]. Last but not least, the pope "recently acknowledged historical research which notes that December 25th was not actually Christ's birthday, but a convenient date borrowed by early Christians from pagan winter festivals" [22].

If the birth date was taken to be within the October-November period, it would amazingly correspond to the Feast of Lights³⁷ or *Diwali* regarded as XVII the darkest night of the year and reckoned to be in India both the birth of the – 5 Savior and the beginning of a new year. The tradition of using candles for the Christmas tree may be connected with the custom of kindling many lights through the Diwali feast. In late November – late December, the Jews also have a Feast of Lights (*Hanukah*) when they kindle oil lamps and celebrate the victory of Good over Evil just like in India (ch. XV B). John (10:22) refers to it as "feast of the dedication."

To the above conclusion leads also a prophetic Qumran text, which includes a marked Gnostic connotation, too: "(When) he is born, they shall all be darkened together... he is born in the night and he comes out Perfe[ct...]³⁸... [H]oly Ones will remem[ber...] lig[hts] will be revealed to him... they [will] teach him everything that... human [Wi]sdom, and every wise ma[n...] in the lands, and he shall be great... mankind shall [be] shaken, and until... he will reveal Mysteries like the Highest Angels... and with the Understanding of the Mysteries of... In his youth he will be... all of them... [like a ma]n who does know anyth[ing], until the time when he shall have come to know the Three Books. [Th]en he will become wise and will be disc[rete...] a vision will come to him while upon [his] knees (in prayer)... he will acquire counsel and prudence, [and] he will know the Secrets of mankind. His Understanding will spread to all peoples, and he will know the Secrets of all living things. [Al]l their plans against him will be fruitless, and the spiritual legacy for all the living will be enriched. [And all] his [p]lans [will succeed], because he is the Elect of God. His birth and the Spirit of his breath... his [p]lans will endure forever... that... pl[an...]" [23].

It was not until the mid of the 4th century when the date of December 25 was chosen. It was accounted for by the desire of Christians to identify the birth of their new god, Jesus, to another god worshipped in the western part

³⁷ In full agreement with the words of Jesus: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5; cf. 1:4; 3:19; 12:35,36,46).

³⁸ "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

of the Roman Empire, namely to Mithra, a solar deity, whose birthday had been said to be on December 25. That choice was placed within the large period around the winter solstice when the Romans celebrated Saturnalia, the Jews had their feast of Hanukah, the Scandinavians had their Yule and the Mithra devotees commemorated the *Natalis Invicti Solis* (birth of the Unvanquished Sun, Lat.) [24]. It was exactly 9 months before, i.e. on March 25, when *Dies Hilaria* (Merry Day, Lat.) or the day of the sacred marriage (*hierós gámos*, Gr.) of the gods used to be celebrated. The Persian custom celebrates the *unio mystica* at the spring equinox, a tradition preserved until today. It is interesting to note that lights were lit during the festivals of December 25 devoted to the birth of the Sun (now, this used to happen at midnight on the Eve of the New Year, to mark the beginning of the new period), just like during the Festival of Lights (Diwali) mentioned above. Also Christians mass is celebrated weekly precisely on the Day of Sun (Sunday) when many candles and oil lamps are kindled. The solar hero, the XVI I *Light of the World, Sol Invictus*, was said to be born when the Sun was born - 6 again out of the darkness of the old year, and that's why the festival was held around the winter solstice. "In the cycle of the Christian Year the rites of the Incarnation³⁹ are governed by the solar calendar, since they are connected with the Birth of the Sun, and so fall upon fixed dates. On the other hand, the rites of the Atonement⁴⁰, of Christ's Death, Resurrection and Ascension, are governed by the lunar calendar, for there is a figure of Death and Resurrection in the waning and waxing of the Moon and whose rites were celebrated at the time of the spring equinox" [25].

The epiphany (*epipháneia*, apparition, manifestation, Gr.; of the Divine: *teopháneia*, Gr.; ch. XV A) denoted the manifestation of an invisible divinity that used to send a sign (dream, vision, miracle) in order to disclose its presence. Some other times this was designated by the word *parousía* (coming, advent, Gr.) when, after an absence, the Divine manifested itself. One such example was the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

The epiphany may be found in the old Syrian-Palestinian sources where it had originally been associated to the festivity of an aeon's birth (ch. XIX C). One could mention also the cases: Zeus at Pergamum, Artemis at Ephesus, Aphrodite at Cnidus, Magnesia etc. The baptism of Jesus had been accompanied by the manifestation of the Divine, both as apparition (epiphany) of the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove (ch. XXI) and as a

³⁹ Likewise, the birth of Virgin Mary is celebrated at a fixed date, on September 9.

⁴⁰ Pesah (ch. XV B).

voice from the heavens that proclaimed: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight” (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Initially, however, the epiphany in Rome and probably in Gaul stood for the celebration of the Magi (Matthew 2:1 sq.) or, some other times, for the miracle that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11) [26].

The Light Festival (*heorté tou phóton*, Gr.)—which evoked the ancient Sun celebration—became the festival of the baptism of Jesus once Christmas had started to be celebrated in Constantinople and in Asia Minor on December 25. Therefore, in the eastern part of the Roman Empire who rejected the western option for Nativity on December 25, the birthday of Jesus was celebrated on January 6 because of the earlier date of Epiphany commemoration in Gaul as late as 361, and in Alexandria until around 400 [27]. Even presently, there are some Christians in the East (Russians, Armenians, Syrians), who celebrate the birthday of Jesus on January 6, a fact that some historians relate to the Julian calendar.

After Herod the Great followed his son Archelaus who ruled over Judea and Idumaea (4 BC - AD 6). It was because of Archelaus that when returning from Egypt after Herod’s death (Matthew 2:19-20), Jesus and His parents settled in Israel, at Nazareth, in the province of Galilee instead of Judea (2:21-23).

Emperor Tiberius (42 BC - AD 37) ruled between AD 14 and 37. Luke XVII (3:1-2) says that John the Baptist was preaching to the people in the fifteenth - 7 year of the government of Tiberius Caesar, that is, in the year AD 29. Nevertheless, some historians place the respective episode in the autumn of or at the end of the year 27 or the beginning of the year 28 [28]. That was happening over the period of Herod Antipas (Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea) who was to sentence John to death and who was eventually banished by Caligula in the year 39.

The mention about John preaching on the time of Annas (*Hanan*, Hebr.) and Caiaphas⁴¹ (Luke 3:2) could only be useful for an approximate chronology, since Annas had been a high priest for 9 years until AD 15, while Joseph Caiaphas (Yehoseph bar Qayapha, Hebr.), son-in-law of the former, had been performing this duty between AD 18 and 36, and such the two men covered the period between AD 6 and 36 (except for the years 15 to 18).

The length of the Savior’s public life was an extremely important biographical element, the starting point being the text in the Gospel according to Luke (3:23) saying that Jesus began to preach when He was almost thirty. The biblical scholars have attempted to calculate the number of the Passover celebrations following His baptism. The synoptic gospels mentioned only one Passover spent by Jesus in Jerusalem, at the time when He was crucified but

⁴¹ That is a nickname meaning “prophet.”

that contradicted the words: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children” (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34).

The Gospel according to John mentions three (or even four, according to some opinions) Passovers that corresponded with the saying of Jesus according to Luke (13:7-9): “Behold, [these] three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none” to which it was added: “Sir, let it alone for this year also... if it shall bear fruit...”

After the baptism and the wedding in Cana, John wrote: “The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (2:13), where He drove away the merchants in the Temple. He met Nicodemus, left for Judea where He baptized the people, went to Samaria where He met a woman and finally reached Galilee where He cured the sick people.

The next (possible) mention says: “After these things was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (5:1). This was interpreted as the Passover festivity according to some theories or as the Day of Pentecost following the Passover further described, according to others which presumes an inversion of chapters 5 and 6.

Afterwards “Jesus went away beyond the sea of Galilee” (6:1) where He would miraculously feed thousands of people. “The Passover, the feast of Jews, was near,” says the same gospel (6:4). Then, Jesus attended the feast of Tabernacles (7:2) and also went to the Temple in Jerusalem (7:14) although that festival was known to take place in the middle of the seventh month (ch. XV B), hence half a year after the Passover.

Finally, there was the last Passover during which the crucifixion took place: “Jesus therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany” (12:1). After that a detailed chronology followed (13:1 etc.).

Origen was at times inclined to support the hypothesis of three years: “*predication fere annos tres*” [29]. Eusebius tends to uphold several years but “the entire time does not comprise quite four years” [30]. Jerome sustains that there were three years (15-18 of Tiberius) as well as Epiphanius [31].

XVII Pontius Pilate, *procurator provinciae Judaeae* between AD 26-36 was - 8 connected to the episode in which Jesus was sentenced to death.

Let us remark at the onset, that Jesus was arrested by “the *Roman cohort* and the commander” (John 18:12 [32]; emphasis added), i.e. a *centurion* (as it was the case of Cornelius who had the command over a Roman cohort in Caesarea; Acts 10:22,24), these words being replaced intentionally in *King James Version* by “the band and the captain.” How could we imagine such a thing unless the charge against the Christ would have been of a political significance? Definitely it was not a religious reason. However, before the Sanhedrin Jesus was accused of blasphemy, which is a religious felony.

After describing his betrayal and delivery unto Annas, Caiaphas and the

Sanhedrin, Jesus announced that those “shall deliver him to the Gentiles” (Mark 10:33; cf. Matthew 20:18 and notice the deliberate omission in Luke 9:22), i.e. the Romans who actually have put him to death: “And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him” (Mark 10:34; cf. Matthew 20:19). Actually, in order to get Jesus condemned, it was indispensable to “deliver him up to the power and authority of the governor” (Luke 20:20), i.e. Pilate.

The scientist Nicholas Roerich wrote about people believing “that Jesus was not killed by the Jewish people but by representatives of the Roman government” [33]. As a matter of fact, that was the conclusion of the Buddhist manuscripts found in Tibet, as reported by Notovitch: “The chiefs of the cities were afraid of him and they informed the principal governor, residing in Jerusalem, that a man called Issa had arrived in the country, who by his sermons had arrayed the people against the authorities, and that multitudes listened assiduously to him... Then Pilate, the Governor of Jerusalem, gave orders that they should lay hold of the preacher Issa and bring him before the judges. In order, however, not to excite the anger of the populace, Pilate directed that he should be judged by the priests and scribes, the Hebrew elders, in their temple... When the priests and the elders heard Issa, they decided among themselves not to give judgment against him, for he had done no harm to anyone... The governor thereupon became very angry, and sent his disguised spies to keep watch upon Issa and report to the authorities the least word he addressed to the people... But Saint Issa’s growing popularity did not allow Pilate to rest. He... ordered the spies to make charges against him... Thereupon the governor said to the judges: «Have you heard this? The Israelite Issa acknowledges the crime of which he is accused. Judge him, then, according to your laws and pass upon him condemnation to death». «We cannot condemn him», replied the priests and the ancients. «As thou hast heard thyself, He spoke of the King of Heaven, and he has preached nothing which constitutes insubordination against the law»... Pilate... became greatly enraged and ordered that Issa be condemned to death” [34]. We give now fragments rendered by Roerich after the Buddhist document: “Pilate, ruler of Jerusalem, gave orders to lay hands upon the Preacher Issa and to deliver him to judges, without however, arousing the displeasure of the people... Then the ruler sent to Issa his disguised servants that they should watch his actions and report to him about his words to the people... But the ruler Pilate ordered one of his servants to make accusation against him... “ [35].

In his *Life of Jesus*, Maurice Goguel has devoted an entire paragraph (and a separate study, too) to the debate of who killed Jesus: the Jews or the Romans [36]. He stressed on “the modifications in detail to which the Passion

narrative was subjected from Mark to John and even to Pseudo-Peter” [37]. “The combination of the tradition concerning Barabbas⁴² with the Passion narrative has altered this narrative to such an extent that it has rendered it quite impossible to reconstitute it in its original form” [38]. The historian draws the following conclusion: “The trial of Jesus could have been conducted solely under the orders of the Procurator, on his own initiative, without any orders on the part of the Sanhedrin at all” [39]. As for Pilate’s attitude towards Jesus (discussed below), Goguel said: “the actual course of the events... casts a doubt on the admission of the innocence of Jesus by Pilate” [40]. Goguel acknowledged: “the tradition had been transformed in such a way that the Romans were absolved of responsibility for the death of Jesus, and all the guilt was transferred to the Jews” [41].

The historians Graves and Podro [42] came to the conclusion that the case of Jesus was a political rather than a religious one. The fact could be ascertained through the nature of the charges brought against Jesus in front of Pilate—instigation to rebellion, refuse to pay the taxes due to the Emperor and making himself King of the Jews: “We have found this [man] perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king... He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even on to here” (Luke 23:2,5; cf. Acts 17:7). However, the most serious charge was that of declaring himself king which was considered a treason against the Roman emperor. The fact was reminded to Pilate (the Jews refreshing the memory of a Roman Procurator about his duty appears as a bizarre fact, so what follows is perhaps an interpolation): “If thou releasest this [man], thou art not a friend to Caesar. Every one making himself a king speaks against Caesar” (John 19:12). Moreover, “The chief priests answered: «We have no king but Caesar»” (John 19:15). The *Lex Julia* sanctioned by death this crime. Suetonius wrote that in all cases of lese-majesty “the laws must be enforced, and enforce it he (Tiberius) did, most savagely, too” (*judicia majestatis, atrocissime exercuit*, Lat.) [43]. According to the existing law the sentence had to be confirmed by the Roman procurator (namely by Pilate), to whom belonged the so-called *ius gladii* (*ius*, justice; *gladius*, sword, singular form, Lat.). Only he could authorize the death penalty [44]. Under these circumstances, the Jews said to Pilate: “It is not permitted to us to put any one to death” (John 18:31). Indeed, the Sanhedrin, the highest court of justice of the Jews, was competent to judge only crimes committed in Israel against God or man: blasphemy, idolatry, perjury, theft, adultery, murder etc. Therefore, we might infer that Jesus was arrested, prosecuted, judged, sentenced and executed for a political crime, in fully accordance with the Roman law.

⁴² See *infra*.

A question arises: if the Jews could have find Jesus guilty of a religious felony (“according to [our] law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God”—John 19:7), would they have the right to put Him to death? According to Josephus [45], until the time of Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Julius Alexander (i.e. AD 48), the Procurators did not disturb the Jewish customs.

The statement that nor Herod had found Jesus innocent (“Nor Herod XVII I either”—Luke 23:15) must be rejected since Herod himself decided - 9 previously to kill Jesus. The gospel read about Jesus that “certain Pharisees came up saying to him: «Get out and go hence, for Herod is desirous to kill thee»” (13:31). And Pilate was told to have found Jesus innocent, and this XVII I statement appears even twice in Luke and John: “I find no guilt in this man” - 10 (Luke 23:4; cf. John 18:38; 19:4,6). “I have found no cause of death in him; - 11 I will chastise him therefore and release him” (Luke 23:22). It is inconceivable that a Roman procurator would have pronounced innocent Jesus who was accused of high treason against Caesar and absolve him of the penalty for a crime of utmost gravity, and this especially as the accused had acknowledged his crime (Luke 23:3; Matthew 27:11; Mark 15:2; John 18:37). On these conditions, one must reject this assertions as well as the Barabbas episode (Luke 23:17-25; also Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; John 18:39-40). After a thorough analyze [46], Goguel arrived at the conclusion that the story of Barabbas was originally a tradition independent of the story of Jesus. “When we compare the three [synoptic] accounts, we see how an incident at first very awkwardly inserted into the story of the trial of Jesus ends by being completely fused with it... We gain a very definite impression that the story of Barabbas serves to conceal the fact that Pilate did condemned Jesus, either because he regarded Him as guilty, or because he considered that the interests of Rome required that He should die... From the point of view of Roman legal institutions, the historicity of the incident of Barabbas is in any case very doubtful” [47]. We would remark that John who never mentioned the name of Barabbas before, suddenly wrote that “they cried therefore *again* all, saying: «Not this [man], but Barabbas»” (18:40; emphasis added).

Under the hypothesis that the Roman procurator had found Jesus innocent, the facts in the gospel would have been unimaginable since the publishing of the *titulus* was a Roman custom stating the culpability of the condemned: “Pilate wrote a title also and put it on the cross. But there was written: «Jesus, the Nazarene, the King of the Jews»” (John 19:19).

Washing one’s hands of innocent blood—reported by Matthew (27:24) in the case of Pilate—was a specific Jewish custom (Deuteronomy 21:6-9), and not at all a Roman one. This represents, too, an interpolation that could not be accepted.

A blatant contradiction in John's account was that Pilate handed Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified (19:14,16), while in fact there were the Romans that accomplished it.

What about the Jewish people? John said that only "the chief priests and the officers [when] saw him they cried out saying: «Crucify, crucify [him]»" (19:6). Luke reported: "And a great multitude of the people, and of women who wailed and lamented him, followed him" (23:27). After Jesus expired, "all the crowds who had come together to that sight, having seen the things that took place, returned, beating [their] breasts" (23:48; emphasis added), in sign of desolation. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Pilate avowed: "His execution was not demanded by all; some of them wept" [48].

XVIIII The manner how his contemporaries portrayed Pilate is wholly discordant with the text of the gospels. Josephus Flavius referred to the slaughter of - 1 unarmed Jewish pilgrims who protested against a project of building an aqueduct [49], while Luke pointed at the author of this crime, showing that the victims were "Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with [that of] their sacrifices" (13:1). In a letter to Caligula, Pilate was described by King Agrippa I as "inflexible, merciless, and obstinate." Another contemporary of Pilate, Philo of Alexandria referred to "his corruption, and his acts of insolence, and his rapine, and his habit of insulting people, and his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never ending and gratuitous, and most grievous inhumanity" [50]. Merejkowski asserts that for the Jews, Pilate was an "uncircumcised dog," "the enemy of God and men," and for him they were a race of "lepers," of "possessed" [51]. Cicero characterized crucifixion as the "most cruel and disgusting penalty" (*crudelissimum, taeterrimumque supplicium*, Lat.) [52], a "terrible form of execution typically inflicted on slaves" (*servitutis extremum summumque supplicium*, Lat. [53], while Josephus called it: "the most pitiable of all forms of death." This typically Roman death penalty was unknown to the Jewish penal law [54].

XVIII The historian of that times, Tacitus (c. AD 60-c.120), gave an accurate - 2 record of the facts despite of his Roman origin: "Christus, the founder of the sect⁴³, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea⁴⁴, in the reign of Tiberius" [55].

After many centuries, the famous ecclesiastic and student of the *Bible*, Alfred Loisy (1857-1940), acknowledged: "The crucifixion of Jesus is explicable on one ground only: He was sentenced to death and executed by the Roman Authority as a sower of sedition against itself. The efforts of the

⁴³ The Christians.

⁴⁴ *Christus... per Pontium Pilatum procuratorem supplicio adfectus erat* (Lat.).

traditional legend have been concentrated on transferring responsibility for his death to the Jews” [56].

There are several other New Testament scholars who advocate the above-mentioned ideas [57].

In 1962, Pope John XXIII had officially and doctrinally absolved the Jews of any guilt for the death of Jesus, and removed all traces of anti-Semitism from the Catholic Canonical Law.

Likewise, the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions” *Nostra Aetate* given by Paul VI on October 28, 1965 stated that “Neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion... The Jews should not be spoken of or rejected or accused as if this follows from Holy Scripture” [58].

In his speech *The Roots of Antijudaism in Christian Society* (October 30 – November 1, 1997) John Paul II declared that the Second Vatican Council was the first making *mea culpa* on this topic, and added: “In the Christian world... erroneous and unjust interpretation of the New Testament relative to the Jewish people and its pretended guilt have circulated for too long, generating feelings of hostility towards this people” [59].

In *La Stampa*, Barbara Spinelli wrote: “the anti-Semitism was not only an attack against the Jews but also against Christianity... The Church not only resigned from its duty to help its Jewish brothers but also actively collaborated to its own spiritual destruction. Hence, it actually prepared the present dechristianization of Europe.” Anca Manolescu in her commentary on the article, proceeds to an extension of the geographical framework: “The cramped nationalism, the fear of strangers or the desire to avoid any attempt to attack a venerable tradition (that is, the church sclerosis inflicted by its repetitiveness and strict conformity) are also present in the area of the Romanian Orthodox Church” [60].

The rehabilitation of Pilate (as a representative of Roman justice) is due to the non-Jews (Gentiles) christened by Paul. They realized that the success of spreading their new faith within the Roman Empire depended on this rehabilitation. Actually, early Christians were in friendly terms with the Roman authority and their religion was tolerated like Judaism, until they were denounced as a sect and the conflict broke out as showed in Revelation (especially in chapter 13) [61]. Besides the gospels, many Christian authors have thrown the guilt on the Jews, openly such as Origen [62] or in an indirect way as Barnabas (in his Epistle), Melito of Sardes, Aristides, Irenaeus and others [63]. Once Emperor Constantine was converted to Christian faith in the year 313 and the transformation of the state in a Christian Empire was accomplished, the Romans had to be absolved of any

guilt of having killed Jesus. Or, as it had been shown, the New Testament was given the final form by the Council of Laodicea in 363. That explains the revision of the narrative making thus Pilate finding Jesus not only innocent but also even trying to save His life in the Barabbas episode. Strange enough, the full name Jesus Barabbas means “Jesus, Son of the Father” (*bar*, son, *abba*, father, Hebr.). Origen read this name in the best codices of Matthew [64]: “Whom will ye that I deliver unto you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus that is called Christ” (27:17). Origen could not believe his eyes: “The name of Jesus must have been added by heretics, for it is not a seemly one for a villain” (*Ne nomen Jesu conveniat alicui iniquorum*, Lat.) [65], and he thought that “Jesus” should be omitted in front of the name of Barabbas, as happened to the posterior editions of the *Bible*. The alleged exchange between Jesus and Barabbas in Jung’s view “leads to the sacrifice of the king” [66].

As previously pointed out, the main role in counterfeiting facts belonged to Luke, which was by no means accidental since he was Paul’s personal physician, even called “Luke, the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14; ch. XX C2). The making up of the text was so successful that Christians would consider the procurator as *Sanctus Pilatus* [67], and Ethiopian Church (of “Grecian” origin) ultimately canonized Pilate as a martyr! [68] Tertullian declared “Pilate... now in fact a Christian in his own convictions” (*Pilatus iam pro sua conscientia Christianus*, Lat.) [69]. As for Pilate’s wife (the future “saint” Claudia Procula) Merejkowski [70] regarded her as “not likely to have been much holier than Pilate himself,” while her story appeared incredible to Dostoevsky.

By summarizing the scarce, vague and sometimes contradictory chronological data available we can place the life of Jesus (such as described in the gospels) between the years 10 BC (more probably 7 to 5 BC according to most historians) and AD 36.

The Gospel according to Luke (3:23) enables us to infer that Jesus was over thirty when He was crucified, while John (8:57) stated that Jesus looked younger than fifty during the period of His miracles.

Some scientists agree that: “Far from coming to a common consent, the historians have dated the death of Jesus in the year 29 or 30” [71], while others wrote: “Despite of the repeated attempts, the year of Jesus Christ’s death could not be determined; the years 30 and 33 come out to be the most probable” [72].

Not only the year, but also the day of the death of Jesus was controversial. The synoptic gospels indicated the Last Supper to have been taken place on Nissan 14 (first month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding to March-April), and His death on the next day, namely on the Passover. John placed the Last Supper on Nissan 13 and the death on 14. Therefore, the crucifixion would

have been performed either on April 7, 30 according to the Synoptics, or April 3, 33 according to John [73]. Most historians seem to give credit to John since it would be hard to admit that executions had occurred on the holy day of the Passover. “The bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for it was [the] Preparation, for the day of that Sabbath was a great [day]” (John 19:31). The hurry in which Jesus was executed, descended from the cross and buried finds a full explanation when knowing that the Passover started the 14th Nissan at 6 p.m. and afterwards any activity was prohibited, especially as the text of Deuteronomy (21:23) was imperative: “his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day.”

Origen held that there were historical evidences to authenticate the existence of Jesus despite of the mysteries concerning the life of the Savior (see also ch. XXIII A and B),. Such instances were the earthquake and the darkness accompanying Christ’s expire, facts ascertained by the historical record of Phlegon of Tralles (books XIII and XIV) [74].

NOTES

[1] Frederic G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, New York etc. 1903, pp.18-23. [2] James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, Introduction, p.2. [3] Kernbach, *Dictionar...*, p.82. [4] Schmemmann, p.67. [5] Michel Mourre, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique d'histoire*, Bordas, Paris 1986, vol. G-J, p.2533. [6] Harold W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids 1972, pp.105-106. [7] Eugene V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus*, Scholars Press, Chico, Calif. 1982, p.65; also Joseph R. Hoffmann, *Celsus on the True Doctrine*, Oxford University Press, New York 1987, p.58. [8] Josephus, *The Antiquities...*, XVII 5.7 and 8.1, in *The Works...*, pp.376,379. [9] Kosidowski, *Povestirile...*, p.213. [10] Pietro Fedele, *Grande dizionario enciclopedico*, Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, Torino 1957, vol. VI, p.310. [11] James W. Deardorff, *Jesus in India*, International Scholars Publications, San Francisco 1994, pp.167-169. [12] Tertullian, *Against Marcion (Adversus Marcionem)* IV.19. [13] Keller, p.358. [14] Jung, *Answer to Job*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 644, p.406. [15] Bjørnstad, Johnson, *Horoskope...* [16] *Ibid.*, p.53; also Keller, pp.361-365. [17] Willy Jack Pasedag, *Heilsgeschichte in Zahlen*, vol. III: *Der heile Tag*, p.41. [18] Keller, p.364. [19] *Ibid.*, p.367; cf. Dalman, p.48. [20] *What Has Religion Done For Mankind*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, N. Y. 1951, pp.234-235. [21] Robin Lane Fox, *The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible*, Penguin Books Ltd., 1991, pp.27-38. [22] Corbin Andrews, *Modernizing God's Image*, National Post, January 20, 1999; *apud* Jagbir Singh, *Shri Adi Shakti, The Kingdom of God*, 1999, p.1715. [23] *Qumran Mss. 4Q534-536*, in Eisenman, Wise, *The Dead Sea...*, pp.36-37; with no apparent reason the document was called *The Birth of Noah!* [24] Clarence Bernhart (ed.), *The New Century Cyclopedia of Names*, Appleton-Crofts, New York 1954, vol. II, p.2186. [25] Alan W. Watts, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*, Thames and Hudson, London 1954, p.126. [26] *Enciclopedia italiana*, Roma 1951, vol. XIV, p.63. [27] *Ibid.*, vol. XXIV, p.299; cf. Dalman, p.45. [28] *Grande Encyclopédie*, H. Lamirault et Cie., Paris 1886-1902, vol. 21, p.130. [29] P.W. Schmidt, *Die Geschichte Jesu*, 1904, pp.129-130. [30] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I.10.2. [31] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51.23.3; 51.25.7, in *The Panarion...*, 1994, vol. II (books II-III), pp.54,56; cf. 51.28, pp.59-60. [32] For instance in *The New American Standard Bible*, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville 1977, or *The New Jerusalem Bible*. [33] Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya*, p.90. [34] Nicolas Notovitch, *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ, The Life of Saint Issa* X.2-3; XI.1,4; XIII.3,19-20,23 (transl. by J.H. Connelly, L. Landsberg), R.F. Fenno & Co., New York 1890, pp.192-193,198-199,208,212-214. [35] Roerich,

Altai-Himalaya, pp.92-93. [36] Maurice Goguel, *The Life of Jesus* (transl. by Olive Wyon), George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London 1954, ch. XVII, § II, pp.464-476; *Juifs et Romains dans l'histoire de la passion*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, LXII, pp.165-182,295-322 (1910). [37] Goguel, p.467. [38] *Ibid.*, pp.520-521. [39] *Ibid.*, p.474. [40] *Ibid.*, p.518. [41] *Ibid.*, p.521. [42] Graves, Podro, p.668. [43] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*: III. *Tiberius*, 58, in Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars* (transl. by Robert Graves), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1980, p.127. [44] Keller, pp.384-385. [45] Josephus, *The Wars...*, II.11.6. [46] Goguel, pp.516-520. [47] *Ibid.*, pp.518-519. [48] *Evangelium Nicodemi* in Thilo (editor), *Codex apocrypha Novum Testamentum*, I, p.522; Karl Hase, *Geschichte Jesu nach akademischen Vorlesungen*, Leipzig 1876, p.557; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, pp.494,615. [49] Josephus, *The Antiquities...*, XVIII.3.2, in *The Works...*, p.392. [50] Philo, *On the Embassy of Gaius (Legatio ad Gaium)*, XXXVIII (302). [51] Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, p.476. [52] Cicero, *In Verrem*, II.5.165. [53] *Ibid.* II.5.169. [54] Keller, p.387. [55] Tacitus, *Annales* XV.44.2-3. [56] Alfred Loisy, *The Origins of the New Testament*, Allen and Unwin, London 1950, p.103; *apud* Graves, Podro, p.682. [57] Paul L. Maier, *Who Killed Jesus?*, in *Christ Today* 34, pp.16-19 (1990). [58] Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate* 4; *apud* *Catechism...*, § 597, p.154. [59] *Apud* David Gabrielli, *Confronti Magazine*, December 1997 (transl. by Terry Finseth and Betty Voli). [60] *Apud Dilema*, VI, no.260, p.11 (January 23-29, 1998), o.t. [61] Goguel, pp.466-467. [62] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, II.34; *De Principiis (Peri archon)*, IV.8. [63] Goguel, p.465. [64] The codices: *Syro-Hierosolymitanum*, *Evangelarium Hierosolymitanum*, and many others; *apud* Rich. Ad. Hoffmann, *Marcus-Evangelium und seine Quellen*, Thomas und Oppermann, Königsberg 1904, p.603; Brandt, pp.102-104; quoted by Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, pp.490,614; cf. Goguel, note 1 to p.516. [65] Origen, *Commentary on Matthews*, ser. latin. 121; ed. Lomm, IV, 255, ser. 121; Bauer, p.527, reprint Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1967; E. Klostermann, *Das Mattheusevangelium*, Tübingen 1927, pp.220,345; Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Marc*, Paris 1929, p.415; Goguel, p.519 and note 1. [66] C.G. Jung, *Transformation Symbolism in the Mass*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 406, p.268. [67] Edgar Hennecke, *Die Neuetestamentliche Apokryphen*, JCB Mohr, Tübingen 1924, vol. II, p.63. [68] Graves, Podro, p.682. [69] Tertullian, *Apology*, XXI. [70] Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, pp.476-477. [71] William Langer, *Encyclopedia of the World History*, Harrap, London 1972, p.119. [72] Fedele, vol. VI, p.314, o.t.; cf. Clive Ruggles, *Nature*, vol. 345, June, 21, 1990. The date of 14 Nissan 33 is indicated also in *What Has Religion...*, p.235. [73] Goguel, p.226. [74] Origen, *Contra Celsum* II.33,59;

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also quoted in Robert M. Grant, *The Earliest Lives of Jesus*, Harper, New York 1961, p.75.

XVIII. JESUS AS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER

“Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure.”

Josephus Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews* [1]

For Christians it is hard to admit the existence of a more exciting subject than the personality of Jesus. There are estimated over a hundred thousand monographs dedicated to Him. However, the systematic study of His life started to enter the focus of daring researchers only towards the end of the 18th and over the 19th centuries. The pioneers of the new science (from amongst whom we could mention, for example, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, David Friedrich Strauss, Johannes Weiss, William Wrede, Albert Schweitzer) that was taking birth, i.e. the biblicistics, had to face the anger of the theologians and of Christian public opinion. Albert Schweitzer, the noteworthy physician and theologian, considered that research on the life of Jesus represents the most powerful and daring achievement in independent religious awareness [2].

Despite the unimaginable efforts of countless scholars who devoted their lives to this question, it was extremely difficult to identify records of Christ mentioned in the chronicles of those times. The historical testimonies provided by secular sources could be counted on the fingers of the hands. Let us look at them in chronological order.

The first historical evidence about Jesus dates back shortly after AD 62 when His brother James found his death (ch. XX C2a,b). October 21, 2002 the major news agencies from around the world announced that André Lemaire, a French scholar of Sorbonne, has identified on a limestone box an inscription in ancient Aramaic reading “James son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” (*Ya’akov bar Yosef akhui Yeshua*). The artifact, bought in the 1970s by an Israeli collector from an Arab antique dealer, is an ossuary, a short coffin (50 cm long) used to keep the bones of the deceased after the decay of flesh. It happened next that the Royal Ontario Museum team acknowledged the authenticity of the inscription, while some members of the Israeli’s Antiquity Authority denied it.

The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius⁴⁵ (AD 37-95?) belonged to a famous family of priests and his mother descended from the royal lineage of Maccabees. During his adventurous life he became familiar with different

⁴⁵ Joseph ben Matthias (Mattathias).

ways of religious experience as those of the Pharisees (becoming a member of them), then of the Sadducees and of the Essenes, even spending three years of asceticism in the wilderness. He was sent to prison but later was accepted into the circle of Nero's wife Poppaea. After the emperor had killed her, Josephus left for Galilee where he was appointed as governor and became the head of a revolt. Having betrayed his fellow-countrymen he was rewarded by Vespasian and Titus. His nickname comes from their family name, Flavius. Lately, he gained the favor of Domitian and his wife, Flavia.

At around the year 93 Josephus published an impressive work entitled *The Antiquities of the Jews*. This was a kind of world history from the Creation up to Nero's rule including all the events thought to be significant by the author. The book contained records on "John, that was called the Baptist" [3], Herod, Pilate and even the death in AD 62 of James, the brother of Jesus: Ananus (i.e. Ananias) "assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others⁴⁶; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" [4].

The most important reference of Josephus to Jesus is known as *Testimonium Flavianum*: "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named after him, are not extinct at this day" [1].

We should mention that some exegetes suspected this testimony as not being the original passage. Origen was supposed to manifest his doubts on that text when referring to "this writer, although not believing in Jesus as the Christ" [5]. However, as shown by the reputed Qumranologist Geza Vermes, "others, myself included, think that part of the text is authentic" [6]. Unluckily for future scholars, within three generations the Emperor Constantine promoted the expurgation of all works hostile to the Christian faith, a status that continued under Theodosius II and Valentinian III. Anyone in possession of such things could be given death penalty. As a result, precious manuscripts and books were lost for ever.

Josephus wrote his first text, in Aramaic, and used personal memories from the year 60 when he was 23 years old as well as official records and sources. His Greek was far from being good. Josephus himself prepared the

⁴⁶ Or: "some of his companions."

initial translation, and his assistants turned it into a sophisticated Greek [7].

Before examining a variant in Slavonic language of *The Wars of the Jews* by Josephus, we cannot pass without mention firstly a most interesting historical writing in Arabic by Agapius (*Aghab.yus*, Arab.) the Melkite⁴⁷ bishop of Manbij (Hierapolis), with the complete title *Kitab al-‘Unwan*⁴⁸ *al-mukallal bi-fada’il al-hikma al-mutawwaj bi-anwa’ al-falsafa al-mamduh bi-haqa’q al-ma’rifa* [8]. In the following we shall quote the passages specific to our topic (the Arabic words appear in *italic* characters):

“[*Al-Manbiji*] has said: We have found in many books of the philosophers that they refer to the day of crucifixion of Christ [*al-Masih*⁴⁹] and that they marvel thereat. The first of them is the philosopher *Iflatun*⁵⁰, who says in the thirteen chapter of the book he has written on the kings: «In the reign of [Tiberius] Caesar, the sun was darkened and there was night for nine hours; and the stars appeared. And there was a great and violent earthquake in Nicaea and in all the towns that surround it. And strange things happened».

Ur.s.y.w.s., the philosopher, says in the fifth chapter of the book he has written concerning the ways and life of kings as [follows]: «A great calamity and prolonged anguish have befallen us. The sun was darkened and the earth (*al-ard*) quaked, and many terrifying things are stated to have happened in the country (*ard*) of the Hebrews (*al-ibraniyyin*). We learned the cause of this from letters, written by Pilatus (*F.Lat.s*), the judge, from Palestine to Tiberius Caesar. [For] he said in them that all these things happened at the death of a man whom the Jews have crucified. When Caesar heard this, he sent [an order] dismissing Pilatus from judgeship over the Jews for having obeyed them. And he threatened and menaced the Jews who had crucified him».

Similarly, Josephus (*Yusifus*), the Hebrew. For he says in the treatises that he has written on the governance⁵¹ of the Jews: «At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good⁵², and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. However, those who had become his disciples did not abandon his

⁴⁷ Belonging to the Melkite (Syriac) Church.

⁴⁸ The Book of the Title.

⁴⁹ The Messiah (Arab).

⁵⁰ The right spelling is *Aflatun*, the name given to Plato by the Arabs.

⁵¹ *Sic!*

⁵² Variant: “his learning/knowledge was outstanding.”

discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders»⁵³.

This is what is said by Josephus and his companions of our Lord the Messiah, may he be glorified. And he also says that all the public activity of our Lord Christ, may he be glorified, [all] that he did occurred under the high priesthood of Hannan and Qayafa⁵⁴. For [the two] were high priests in their years; I mean [to say that his public activity occurred] from the high priesthood of Hannan till the beginning of the high priesthood of Qayafa. The time between these two [dates] does not amount to four years. For when Herod had charge of them, he burnt the genealogies of their tribes, in order that it should not be known that he⁵⁵ [was descendent] from undistinguished people. He [also] took the priestly vestment and put it under his seal. And he did not allow anyone of the high priests to officiate as much for more than one year. For this [reason] there came up four high [priests] in the [interval of time] between the high priesthood of Hannan and that of Qayafa. For after the dismissal of Hannan, Ismail the son of Yahya took his place. When he had finished his years and quitted his [office], Eliezer, the son of Hannan the high priest, replaced him. After he had terminated his year, Simon, son of Qamihud, succeeded him. There came after him [and in his place] Qayafa, on whose order and under whose high priesthood our Lord, the Messiah, may he be glorified, was crucified. Thus, the time between Hannan and Qayafa does not [amount] to less [? *aqall*] than four years.”

In its turn, the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian read: “The writer Josephus also says in his work on the institutions of the Jews: In these times there was a wise man named Jesus, if it is fitting for us to call him a man. For he was a worker of glorious deeds and a teacher of truth. Many from among the Jews and the nations became his disciples. He was thought to be the Messiah. But not according to the testimony of the principal [men] of [our] nation. Because of this, Pilate condemned him to the cross, and he died. For those who had loved him did not cease to love him. He appeared to them alive after three days. For the prophets of God had spoken with regard to him of such marvelous things [as these]. And the people of the Christians, named after him, has not disappeared till [this] day” [10].

The Syriac translation of *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Eusebius read: “For he

⁵³ The fragment above caused the following comments: “Apparently this could have been taken from a version that escaped the early Christian censors” [9].

⁵⁴ Annas and Caiaphas (Arab.).

⁵⁵ Herod.

[Josephus] also speaks in the book of his History about our Savior: In that time there was one wise man named Jesus—if [indeed] it is fitting to call him a man. For he was a worker of glorious deeds and a teacher of men: [that is] of those who accept truth with desire. And he turned many of the Jews and likewise many from among the other nations into his disciples. For he was the Messiah. [But] upon the testimony of the principal men of our nation, Pilate condemned him to the cross. Those who had loved him did not cease to love him. For he appeared to them alive again after three days. For the prophets of God had spoken with regard to him of this and myriads of other marvelous things of this [kind]. And the people of the Christians, named after him, has not disappeared till our day” [11].

In the following we give the quotations regarding Jesus, from a Slavonic translation of another imposing work of Josephus Flavius. This translation called *The History of the Wars of the Jews Against the Romans* would date back to the 11th or 12th century and was supposed to have been made during the rule of Yaroslav, Prince of Kiev. The text was discovered in Russia (published there in 1866-1869, and then again in 1879) within a set of sixteen manuscripts of Josephus all translated in Slavonic (the version exists also in Romanian manuscripts as an apocryphal account of Nicodemus [12]). They bore the original Aramaic title *On the Capture of Jerusalem*, which later on became *The Jewish War*. Its author is called Josephus without the adage of “Flavius.” Among many differences from the Greek version, there are several authentic details that would have been known to a contemporary historian, details which are completely unrelated to religious propaganda. Analysis of these manuscripts revealed that they have been translated from an original in rough Greek. If the first version was in Aramaic, this could easily have been the second version, updated to the year 75, and prepared by Josephus himself to be polished up by his assistants. Although heavily edited and augmented by Christians, this extensive section still seems to contain much of the authentic voice of Josephus. For a more ample analysis we would send the reader to our source [13].

Berendts, who first published the text outside Russia (in Germany in 1906), was convinced of its authenticity and believed that the Slavonic version had been based on the Hebrew or Aramaic edition, which preceded the Greek edition. Other partisans of the authenticity were Seeberg, Frey and Goethals [14]. Robert Graves (an expert on the Greco-Roman aspects of primitive Christianity) and Joshua Podro (an expert on its Hebrew-Aramaic aspects) assumed that this is “apparently a genuine and undoctored translation of an early version—it contains first-hand military detail which Joseph afterwards omitted” [15]. In Merejkowski’s opinion: “In the Slavonic Codex of Flavius Josephus has been found what is evidently an insertion, very

ancient, because so obviously anti-Christian, and, apparently, Judean, containing an historically authentic, through rather vague, recollection of what took place in Jerusalem at the time” [16]. Robert Eisler defended the authenticity of much of that text [17], and so did G. A. Williamson [18], whose position was enshrined in an appendix of the Penguin edition of Josephus, *The Jewish War* [19]. However, other experts (Schürer, Adolf von Harnack, Jean Réville) doubt on the genuineness of the Slavonic version.

We should add that a fragment analogous to the Slavonic version appears also in the gospel that read: “The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: . . . «If we let him alone, all will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation»” (John 11:47-48).

Here it is the translation from Slavonic:

At that time also a man came forward—if even it is fitting to call him man (simply). His nature as well as his form were a man’s, but his showing forth was more than (that) of a man. His works, that is to say, were godly and he wrought wonder deeds, amazing and full of power. Therefore it is not possible for me to call him a man (simply). But again, looking at the existence he shared with all, I would also not call him an angel. And all that he wrought through some kind of invisible power, he wrought by word and command. Some said of him: «Our first Lawgiver⁵⁶ has risen from the dead and shows forth many cures and arts». But others supposed (less definitively) that he is sent by God. Now he opposed himself in much to the Law, and did not observe the Sabbath according to the ancestral custom. Yet, on the other hand he did nothing reprehensible nor any crime, but by word solely he effected everything. And many from the folk followed him and received his teachings. And many souls became wavering, supposing that thereby the Jewish tribe would free themselves from the hands of the Romans. Now it was his custom often to stop on the Mount of Olives, facing the city. And there also he avouched his cures to the people.

And there gathered themselves to him of servants a hundred and fifty, but of the folk a multitude. But when they saw his power, that he accomplished everything that he would by word, they urged him that he should enter the city and cut down the Roman soldiers and Pilate, and rule over us. But that one scorned it. And thereafter

⁵⁶ Moses.

when knowledge of it came to the Jewish leaders, they gathered together with the high priest and spoke: «We are powerless and weak to withstand the Romans. But as withal the bow is bent, we will go and tell Pilate what we have heard, and we will be without distress, lest if he hear it from others, we be robbed of our substance, and ourselves be put to the sword and our children ruined». And they went and told it to Pilate.

And he sent, and had many of the people cut down. And he had that wonder-doer brought up. And when he had instituted a trial concerning him he perceived that he is a doer of good, but not an evil-doer, nor a revolutionary, nor one who aimed at power, and let him free. He had, you should know, healed his dying wife. And he went to his accustomed place and wrought the accustomed works. And as again more folk gathered themselves around him, then did he win glory through his works more than all.

The teachers of the Law were (therefore) envenomed with envy and gave thirty talents to Pilate, in order that he should put him to death. And he, after he had taken the money, gave them consent that they should themselves carry out their purpose, and they took and crucified according to the ancestral law. [20]

Tacitus (c.60-c.120), the great historian and prose writer patrician and Roman Consul left for posterity, one of the most important chronicles, *The Annals* (discovered in 1429) that had been written three or four years before his death. The book showed that after the fire of Rome in the year 64, Nero who was suspected to be the author of the disaster, directed the suspicions against Christians. The historian wrote that the emperor “punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty a class of persons hated for their vices, whom the crowd called Christians. Christus, the founder of the name⁵⁷, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate⁵⁸, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not only in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself⁵⁹, where everything horrible or shameful in the world gathers and becomes fashionable” [21].

⁵⁷ In other translations: “of the sect,” designating here the Christians.

⁵⁸ *Auctor nominis eius Christus, Tiberius imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat* (Lat.).

⁵⁹ Rome.

The next historical source comes from Pliny the Younger (62-c.113), a Roman orator and statesman who left us nine books of his correspondence. In one of his letters sent to Emperor Trajan while he was Governor of Bithynia between AD 111 and 113 [22], he mentioned Christians no less than eight times and Christ three times. The letter deals with the examination of Christians (*cognitionibus de Christianis*) i.e. their formal trial. Pliny raises the matter “whether it is the mere name [of Christian] which is punishable, even if innocent of crime, or rather the crimes associated with the name” (*nomen ipsum, si flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini puniantur*)—see chapter XV D—and declared: “In this affair I have found nothing but boundlessly ignorant superstition” (*nihil aliud inveni, quam superstitionem pravam et immodicum*). However, he complains: “It is not only the towns, but villages and rural districts too which are infected through contact with this wretched cult” (*Neque civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est*). Pliny reports further about Christians: “They had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god” (*quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo, quasi deo, dicere secum invicem, Lat.*).

The third Roman historian, Suetonius (c.75-160) was a highly placed official in the court of Trajan, and then the secretary of Hadrian. There were two short commentaries in his book on the Lives of Twelve Caesars (*De Vita Caesarum* or *Vitae duodecim Imperatorum*) that appeared in the year 121. The chapter about Claudius showed: “Because the Jews caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestos, he (the emperor) expelled them from Rome (*Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultantes Roma expulit, Lat.*) [23]. The chapter about Nero says: “Punishments were also inflicted on the Christians, a sect professing a new and mischievous religious belief” [24].

Tertullian reports as a sure fact that Pilate truthfully informed Tiberius on the passion of Jesus [25].

We would also signal the historian of the 1st century Gaius Velleius Paterculus and his *Roman History* of which the only known manuscript was discovered in 1515 in the abbey of Murbach. Gys-Devic (Ghislain Gaudefroy) regards it as a very corrupt version. The *History* closes with AD 30, but in that copy the end of 29 and the whole year 30 are missing, while the last pages comprise obvious signs of alterations such as any reference to Jesus is absent [26].

The Rabbinical texts are not exempt of references to the Christ. Thus, the entry of the Messiah on an ass is described in the *Talmud Babli* and *Midrash* [27]. The *Talmud* refers to Jesus (albeit in a polemical and aggressive manner) thus confirming His historical existence: “he was hanged” (crucified)

[28]. The most ancient part of the *Babylonian Talmud* recorded that *Yeshua ha-Notzri* (Jesus, the Nazarene, Hebr.) was “hanged” (crucified) “on the eve of the Passover” [29]. “A godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified,” used to say Trypho the Hebrew at the beginning of the 2nd century AD [30].

Mention should be made about Thallus the Samaritan of whom Julius Africanus wrote in AD 221: “Thallus, in the third book of his history, calls the darkness an eclipse of the sun” (*Touto tò skótos ekleypsin tou eliou Thallos apokalei en trite ton historion*, Gr.) [31], a phenomenon that occurred in the eighteenth year of Tiberius, thus confirming the historicity of the darkness at the moment of crucifixion. Müller, Schürer and Eisler identify Thallus with the freedman of Tiberius appearing in the *Antiquities* of Josephus [32].

Last but not least we would mention a controversial letter sent by the patrician Lentullus to the Roman Senate, which included a description of Jesus [33].

Some of the critics noticed that a number of notable Jewish historians of the time such as Justus of Tiberias and Philo of Alexandria had not mentioned one thing about Jesus.

Justus was an opponent of Josephus Flavius a fact that could by no means be overlooked. He wrote *The War of the Jews* and *The Chronicle of the Kings of the Judeans* (from Moses up to his times) but none of these works have reached us today. The patriarch of Constantinople in the 9th century who saw these books said that they contain nothing about Jesus, which was very strange since the author, originating from Galilee, was a contemporary of Jesus and lived in Tiberias near Capernaum. We believe that there are two possible explanations: either the probable aversion to Jesus (fairly widespread among the non-Christened Jews), or the existence of some passages that were far from flattering with respect to the Savior and so were passed over in silence by the Byzantine patriarch.

As far as Philo was concerned, he did not write a single line about Jesus although he was His contemporary (he lived between 21 or 28 BC and AD 41 or 49) and an expert in biblical writings and Jewish sects [34]. The probable reason could be the fact that Philo was a rabbi and an exegete of the *Torah* whilst his nephew, Tiberius Alexander, had been a procurator of Judea between the years 46 and 48. Therefore it is understandable that Philo had an anti-Christian attitude and he participated—together with other fellow historians, amongst who was Justus (if our first hypothesis above is correct)—in the conspiracy of silence woven around the Son of man. Let us not forget that Jesus met His death precisely because the heads of the Jewish society, the clergy in particular, violently reacted against the one who

attacked the dogma of the official religion and who was the preacher of a new belief.

Other critical voices have been heard expressing their surprise at the prominent Roman authors such as the historian Pliny the Elder (23-79), the writer Martial (43-103) or the Greek biographer and essayist Plutarch (50-120) having failed to mention the name of Jesus.

First, let us note that the aforementioned lived all in close proximity to the Christian events that took place in Jerusalem, but whose echo had not had enough time to spread out. Pliny the Younger referred to Christ about eight decades after the crucifixion, Tacitus wrote five years after the former and Suetonius wrote approximately five years after Tacitus (when Pliny the Elder, Martial and Plutarch had already been dead). During such period the development of Christianity had already become sufficiently widespread to make the posterior three historians interested in the initiator of the new teaching, a fact that, obviously, had not been the case of their three forerunners. We have found Jean Steinmann's remark particularly relevant to our idea: "In the year 30 of our era, Jesus died on the cross like a slave, one of the millions of slaves in the Roman Empire. The Palestinian Jews hardly noticed it. Even if Jerusalem itself had been broken down, would the civilized people of Italy, Greece, Asia Minor or Egypt have shown any interest in the Jews?... What did this victim mean to a state ruled by Tiberius and after him by Caligula, Claudius and Nero? What might have been the value of a single man's death in a world that was bathed in blood?" [35].

Many biblical scholars have explained the scarcity of historical references to Jesus through two main causes. On the one hand, the loss of the respective documents in the turmoil of the epoch: the fire of Rome caused by Nero in the year 64 (implying the burning of the reports from Palestine), the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 by Titus as well as the seven year war between the Romans and the Jews (when all the documents about the trial of Jesus and other contemporary events must have been lost). On the other hand, the destruction—this time initiated not by the "pagans" but by Christians—of all the documents against their religion, and which also included historical facts about the life of Jesus. To give only an edifying example we shall mention Celsus, a follower of Stoic and Platonic philosophers who published the anti-Christian dialogue of polemics *Alethés lógos* (True word, Gr.) around the year 177. The work was lost and only some fragments were quoted in Origen's *Contra Celsum*. Celsus used his writing to slander the person of Jesus and of His mother, the source of his attitude being the ideological struggle between Christians and Jews throughout the Roman Empire, a struggle to be echoed in the two editions of the *Talmud* centuries later.

NOTES

[1] Josephus, *The Antiquities...*, XVIII.3.3, in *The Works...*, p.392. [2] Kersten, p.22. [3] Josephus, *The Antiquities...*, XVIII.5.2, in *The Works...*, p.396. [4] *Ibid.*, XX.9.1, in *The Works...*, p.439. [5] Origen, *Contra Celsum* I.47. [6] Vermes, *The Complete...*, p.65. [7] Graham Lawrence, *The Fallible Gospels. Reasonable Observations on the Origin of Christianity*, Copyright 2000. [8] The work has appeared in two printings: <1> Agapius, *Kitab al-'Unwan/ Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis, Historia Universalis (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum, Scriptores Arabici, X)*, editor L. Cheiko, Louvain 1954 (reprint); <2> Agapius, *Kitab al'Unwan/ Histoire Universelle*, écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj (*Patrologia Orientalis*, V, 4), editor A. Vasiliev, Paris 1912; *apud* Shlomo Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum*, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem 1971. [9] Graham Lawrence, *quoted work*. [10] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, trad. J. B. Chabot; vol. I: *Traduction*, Paris 1899; vol. IV: Syriac text, Paris 1910; *apud* Pines. [11] *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac* I.11, edited by W. Wright & N. McLean, Cambridge 1898; *apud* Pines. [12] Goguel, notes 1 and 3 to p.85; Robert Eisler, *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣΑΣ*, Winter, Heidelberg 1928, 1930, 2 volumes, vol. I, pp.430-461; the English translation by Alexander Krappe, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, Methuen & Co., London 1931. [13] Graham Lawrence, *quoted work*. [14] Goguel, p.83. [15] Graves, Podro, p.28. [16] Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, p.344-345. [17] Eisler, *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ...* [18] G.A. Williamson, *The World of Josephus*, Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, Toronto 1964, pp. 308-9. [19] Josephus, *The Jewish War*, revised edition, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1970. [20] The translation follows Goguel, pp.84-85. The Slavonic original appeared in the *Codex of Moscow Academy* 651.47.V; *Codex Sinod.* 770 and 991; cf. A. Berendts, *Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im slavischen «De Bello Judaico» des Josephus*, J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1906, pp.8-10; Eisler, *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ...*, vol. II, p.297; Salomon Reinach, *Jean Baptiste et Jesus suivant Joseph*, 1929, pp.132-136. [21] Tacitus, *The Annals*, XV.44.2-8, in Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals and The Histories*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, London, Toronto, Geneva 1952, p.168; also Ronald Syme, *Tacitus*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1958, vol. II, note 1 to p.469. [22] Pliny the Younger, Letter X.96, in *Pliny. Letters...*, pp.284/285-290/291. [23] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum: V. Claudius* 25, p.176. [24] *Ibid.*: VI. *Nero* 16, p.191. [25] Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos* (transl. by C. Moreschino), Torino 1974. [26] Gérald Messadié, *Jésus de Srinagar*, Robert Laffont, Paris 1995, pp.399-400. [27] *Talmud Babil*, Sanhedrin 98.6; *Bereshit Rabba*, 98; *Midrash Rabbah*, on Ecclesiastes 1.9,1; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, p.601. [28] Tosephta Sanhedrin

X.11; *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Sanhedrin VII.16; *Talmud Babli*, Sanhedrin, 67a; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus Manifest*, pp.453,611; cf. I.B. Pranaitis, *The Talmud...The Secret Jewish Rabbinical Teachings Concerning Christians*. [29] *Talmud Babli*, Sanhedrin 43a; *apud* A. Hauck, *Jesus*, p.7; Merejkovsky, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.36; Sam Shamoun, *Jesus in the Rabbinic Traditions*; cf. Pranaitis. [30] Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, CVIII. [31] Goguel, p.91 sq. [32] Josephus, *The Antiquities*...XVIII.6.4. [33] Kersten, pp.96-97. [34] Arthur Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, E. Diederichs, Jena 1911, p.3. [35] Jean Steinman, (*Paul of Tars*), Ed. Znak, Kraków 1965, o.t.

XIX. JESUS—THE MANIFESTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF EVOLUTION

A. THE COSMIC CYCLES

*“Now the last age by Cumae’s Sibyl sung
Has come and gone, and the majestic roll
Of circling centuries begins anew”*

Virgil, *Eclogues* [1]

Chapter XV B has presented a summary of the Indian concept of the great cosmic cycles. The beginning of such a cycle was marked by the moment of creation, while the dissolution (re-absorption into the Creator) was its end.

The *Bible* mentioned both the creation (Genesis 1:1-31) and the end of the world (see below). The Jews did not have a special word to denote the period, the time interval and used the term *yom* to designate both the noun *day* and the concept of *period*, even *era* (e.g. “day of Jerusalem,” Psalm 137:7). There is no word for “history” in biblical Hebrew. Hence, one might as well interpret that according to Genesis God created the world not in seven days but in seven periods or ages. Other details will be presented in the followings.

The theory of temporal cycles was well received by some of the Fathers and Doctors of the early Church: Clement of Alexandria, Minucius Felix, Arnobius, Theodoret—to give just a few examples. In spite of Origen, Basil, Gregory and particularly Augustine of Hippo (ch. XV B) who have attacked this concept, the cyclic and astral theories came to dominate the historical and doom-day speculations during the climax of the Middle Ages, especially due to the Arabic translations [2]. Eliade referred to the Christian world when saying: “We must wait until our own century⁶⁰ to see the beginnings of certain new reactions against this historical linearism and a certain revival of interest in the theory of cycles” [3]. Indeed, this theory was rehabilitated not only in the field of philosophy by Nietzsche, Spengler, Toynbee, but even in the sphere of political economy [4].

The cosmogonical theory that currently is accepted by most of the scientists estimates that the expansion of the universe is a limited phenomenon that will be followed by its reverse, the regression (contraction) thus ending the cycle (ch. I). Hubert Reeves upheld the concept about the end of the universe when wrote: “Even if it is in infinite expansion, the universe

⁶⁰ The 20th century.

may not be eternal. The matter out of which our bodies⁶¹ are formed may be disintegrating very slowly into light” [5]. In the first chapter we have presented other proofs brought up by the *Bible* to support the theory of the expansion (*Big Bang*). Many texts from the Old and New Testament endorse the completion of the cycle through the destruction of the Creation. Thereafter there will be given further examples.

In the interpretation of the *Puranas* a cosmic cycle included, as we have seen (ch. XV B), four ages or *yugas* (this term first appeared in *Aitareya Brahmana*). The concluding of a *kalpa* (Sanskrit; *kappa*, Pali) is described as the *night of Brahma*. For the Jews, *ketz* (end, Hebr.) refers to the end of the period of sleep and entering the period of achievement (beginning of the next cycle).

The *Satya*⁶² *Yuga* (Age of Truth) stands for the first age, the Golden one, the age of perfection.

We have seen (ch. I) that the idea of perfection was associated to the figure four, hence, the perfection of the first age, which includes four quarters of the cosmic Dharma, and therefore finds itself completely under the sign of the latter. At first, there was no state, no sovereign, no punishment, nor persons to inflict it. People were protecting one another through their inborn Dharma and their sense of justice.

In the *Mahabharata* [6], Hanuman depicted each of the four ages to Bhimasena, one of the Pandavas.

“The Krita is that age in which Dharma is eternal. In the time of that most excellent of Yugas [everything] had been done⁶³ and nothing [remained] to be done. Duties did not then languish, nor did the people decline. Afterwards through [the influence of] time, this Yuga fell into a state of inferiority. In that age there were neither gods, Danavas⁶⁴, Gandharvas, Yakshas⁶⁵, Rakshasas⁶⁶, nor Pannagas⁶⁷; no buying and selling went on, no efforts were

⁶¹ The author refers to the cosmic bodies.

⁶² The Vedic term for *truth*, with the equivalents *alétheia* (Gr.) and *verus* (Lat.).

⁶³ Hence the name of this period, *krita* from the root *kri* (to do, to create, Sanskrit.).

⁶⁴ Genii who fought against gods (*danava*, genie, Sanskrit.).

⁶⁵ Superhuman beings but not being gods (*gandharva*, fragrance, celestial harmony; *yaksha*, mysterious, Sanskrit.).

⁶⁶ Demons (*rakshasa*, night-wanderer, Sanskrit.).

⁶⁷ Semi-divine serpents (from *naga*, serpent, Sanskrit.).

made by men; the fruit [of the earth was obtained] by their mere wish; righteousness and abandonment of the world [prevailed]. No diseases or decline of the organs of sense through the influence of age; there was no malice, weeping, pride, or deceit; no contention, no hatred, cruelty, fear, affliction, jealousy, or envy. Hence the Supreme Brahman was the transcendent resort of these Yogis. Then Narayana⁶⁸, the soul of all beings, was white. In that age were born creatures devoted to their duties. They were alike in the object of their trust, in observance, and in their knowledge. All that period of castes⁶⁹, alike in their functions, fulfilled their duties, were unceasingly devoted to one deity, and used one formula⁷⁰, one rule, and one rite. They had but one *Veda*.”

The second age, Treta Yuga, included only three quarters of Dharma, as its name shows. It was the Age of Silver that marked the beginning of the decay in observing Dharma. It was characterized in the *Mahabharata* as follows:

“Treta [is that age] in which sacrifice commenced, Dharma decreased by a fourth; Vishnu became red; and men adhered to truth, and were devoted to a righteousness dependent on ceremonies. Then sacrifice prevailed, with holy arts and a variety of rites.

In the Treta men acted with an object in view, seeking after reward for their rites and their gifts, and no longer disposed to austerities, and to liberality from [a simple feeling of] duty. In this age, however, they were devoted to their own duties and to religious ceremonies.”

According to tradition, the events in the *Ramayana* would have occurred during Treta Yuga.

Dvapara Yuga contained two quarters of Dharma and was the Age of Bronze, the age of the dangerous balance between perfection and imperfection, and therefore the ideal standard of the society was destroyed. Here is the description the *Mahabharata* gave to this period:

“In the Dvapara age Dharma was diminished by two quarters; Vishnu became yellow, and the *Veda* fourfold. Some studied four *Vedas*, some three, others two, and some none at all. The scriptures being thus divided, ceremonies were celebrated in a great variety of ways; and the people, being occupied with austerity and the bestowal of gifts, became full of passion⁷¹ ...

⁶⁸ Vishnu.

⁶⁹ *Varna* (Sanskrit).

⁷⁰ *Mantra*.

⁷¹ *Rajas*.

And now from the decline of goodness⁷², few only adhered to truth. When men had fallen away from goodness, many diseases, desires, and calamities caused by destiny, assailed them, by which they were severely afflicted, and driven to practice austerities. Others, desiring enjoyments and heavenly bliss, offered sacrifices. Thus, when they had reached the Dvapara, men declined through unrighteousness.”

The events described in the *Mahabharata* would have been taken place, according to tradition, during Dvapara Yuga and consequently, the characterization made—in this famous epos—of the last Yuga can be regarded as a prophecy.

The last age was the darkest of all: Kali Yuga (*Kali*, the Dark One, Sanskr.), the Age of Iron that preserved only one quarter of Dharma, and when man’s lifespan was reduced to a quarter. The selfish, blind, uncontrolled, devastating elements prevail. Humankind comes to be destroyed by fratricidal wars. Here is how Hanuman depicted it:

“In the Kali, Dharma remained to the extent of one-fourth only. Arrived in that age of darkness, Vishnu became black; practices enjoined by the *Vedas*, works of righteousness, and rites of sacrifices ceased. Calamities, diseases, fatigue, faults, such as anger, distress, anxiety, hunger, fear etc. prevailed. As the ages revolve, Dharma again declines; when this takes place, the people also decline. When they decay, the impulses which actuate them also decay. The practices generated by this declension of the Yugas frustrate men’s aims. Such is the Kali Yuga, which has existed for a short time. Those who are long-lived act in conformity with the character of the age.”

The *Vishnu Purana*, dating back to the first millennium of our era, characterized the Age of Iron in the following terms: “The kings will be of churlish spirit, violent temper, and will be ever addicted to falsehood and wickedness. They will inflict death to women, children, and cows; they will seize the property of subjects, be of unlimited power, and will, for the most part, rapidly rise and fall; their lives will be short, their desires insatiable, and they will display but little piety. The people of various countries intermingling with them will follow their various example; and the barbarians being powerful in the patronage of princes, whilst purer tribes are neglected, the people will perish. Wealth and piety will decrease day by day, until the world shall be wholly depraved. Property alone will confer rank, wealth will be the only source of devotion, passion will be the sole bound of union between the sexes, falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation, and women will be the objects merely of sensual gratification. Earth will be venerated only for its mineral treasures; the Brahminical thread will constitute a Brahmin; external types will be the only distinction of the several orders of

⁷² *Sattwa*.

life, dishonesty will be the universal means of subsistence, weakness will be the cause of dependence, menace and presumption will be the subterfuge for learning, liberality will be devotion, simple ablution will be purification. Mutual assent will be marriage, fine clothes will be dignity, and water afar off will be esteemed a holy spring... Thus in the Kali Age shall decay flourish, until the human race approaches annihilation” [7].

We would leave now India to ascertain that the doctrine of the temporal cycles created a wide reverberation throughout the entire ancient world (see also ch. XV B).

Egyptian myths were based on the existence of a paradisiacal Golden Age when the primeval deities were dwelling in the world and “Maat⁷³ came down from heaven and joined those who lived on earth. At that time there was no injustice, no pain, no hunger” [8], no shortcomings, no greed of wild beasts, no suffering and not even diseases: “Abundant food was in the bellies of men, there was nothing wrong in the country, no crocodile did snatch away, there was no sting of a serpent in the time of the Primordial gods” [9]. There was only Maat who was the supreme ruler. However, the wickedness of people drove Maat away and consequently the injustice, evil and suffering set in. The text, known as *The Prophecies of Neferty*, described the social anarchy, the barbarous invasions, the disorders in the movements of the planets, winds and waters, alongside with the continuous revolts of the nations. The prophecy ended by announcing a new Pharaoh who would restore Maat and the order even in the realm of the astronomical and natural elements [10].

Iran has known the myth of the four cosmic ages that appeared, for instance, in the Mazdaean text of *Sudkar-nask* whose elements are preserved in the *Denkart* [11] since the original was lost. There the legendary land of Eran vež was depicted as the Eden where people had neither sins nor diseases [12].

The Buddhist Scriptures describe the worse of all Yuga: “There will come a time, brethren, when... immoral courses for action will flourish excessively; there will be no word for moral among humans—far less any moral agent. Among such humans, homage and praise will be given to them who lack filial and religious piety, and show no respect to the head of the clan; just as today homage and praise are given to the filial-minded, to the pious and to them who respect the heads of their clans. Among such humans, there will be no such thoughts of reverence as are a bar to intermarriage with mother, or mother’s sister, or teacher’s wife, or father’s sister-in-law. The world will fall into promiscuity, like goats and sheep, fowls and swine, dogs and jackals. Among such humans, keen mutual enmity will become the rule, keen ill will, keen animosity, passionate thoughts even for killing, in a mother toward her

⁷³ Divine law, the equivalent of Dharma.

child and a child toward its father, in brother to brother, in brother to sister, in sister to brother. Just as a sportsman feels towards game that he sees, so will they feel” [13].

The Jain⁷⁴ doctrine (derived from the teachings of Vardhamana Mahavira⁷⁵, a great spiritual personality who died around 527 or 509 BC, hence a contemporary of the Buddha) attributes to the temporal cycle an ascent (*utsarpini*, Sanskr.) and a descent (*avasarpini*, Sanskr.) (cf. the Tao symbol, Yin-Yang). *Sarpini* evokes the undulatory movement of a serpent (*sarpin*); *ut* means *up*, and *ava*—*down*. The serpent-cycle of the time encircles the world and the serpent bites its tail like the alchemical serpent *uroboros*, which means an endless alternation.

Lao-tse has described the gradual disappearance of Dharma (Tao) as follows: “After the loss of Tao, there comes virtue, *teh* (having forgotten the proper nature with its natural, healthy principles, there come the artificial principles, the palliatives; the appearance of virtue is the first stage of outward manifestation and decay). After the loss of virtue, there comes benevolence (the second stage of outer manifestation and decay; the primordial unity is lost in favor of multiplicity). After the loss of benevolence there comes righteousness (equity, honesty, justice). After the loss of righteousness there comes the rite (ceremonies, norms, laws). The rite is the crust⁷⁶ of leal-heartedness and good faith (the respect imposed from the outside is the sign of the lack of devotion and good faith; the rites are nothing else than feeble means to make up for the loss of righteousness and original honesty; rites are rather a source of disorder and troubles than of order). But they are also the source (beginning) of disorder (troubles)” [14]. The concept of cycle expressed by the evolution followed by involution or return to origins is, otherwise, well defined in the *Tao-Te-King*: “Firmly contemplate the Return alone... each one follow the return to his source (roots).” “The return (cycle) is the [property of] Tao movement” [15].

Chuang-tse⁷⁷ (c.369-c.286 BC) wrote about the *state of perfect unity*, where the Satya Yuga may easily be recognized: “The men of old, while the chaotic condition was not yet undeveloped, shared the placid tranquility which belonged to the whole world. At that time the Yin and Yang were

⁷⁴ From *Jina*, the Conqueror; *jaina*, the followers of the Conqueror (Sansk.).

⁷⁵ From *vira*, the hero; *Mahavira*, the Great Hero (Sansk.).

⁷⁶ The exterior, formal aspect.

⁷⁷ Also spelled as Chuang-Tzu (Wade-Giles), Zhuang Zi (Pinyin) Kwang-Tze, Chuang Chou.

harmonious and still; their resting and movement proceeded without any disturbance; the four seasons had their definite times; not a single thing received any injury, and no living being came to a premature end. Men might be possessed of (the faculty of) knowledge, but they had no occasion for its use. This was the state of Perfect Unity. At this time, there was no action on the part of any one, but a constant manifestation of spontaneity⁷⁸ [16]. The philosopher described, the Golden Age and the following periods with these words: “Among the men of old their knowledge reached the extreme point. What was that extreme point? Some held that at first there was not anything. This is the extreme point, the utmost point to which nothing can be added. A second class held that there was something, but without any responsive recognition of it (on the part of men). A third class held that there was such recognition, but there had not begun to be any expression of different opinions about it. It was through the definite expressions of different opinions about it that there ensued injury to (the doctrine of) the Tao. It was this injury to the (doctrine of the) Tao which led to the formation of (partial) preferences” [17]. Chuang-tse went on writing: “At that time, on the hills there were no foot-paths, nor excavated passages; on the lakes there were no boats nor dams; all creatures lived in companies... In the age of perfect virtue, men lived in common with birds and beasts, and were on terms of equality with all creatures, as forming one family;—how could they know among themselves the distinctions of superior men and small men? Equally without knowledge, they did not leave (the path of) their natural virtue; equally free from desires, they were in the state of pure simplicity. In that state of pure simplicity, the nature of the people was what it ought to be. But when the sagely men appeared, limping and wheeling about it (the exercise of) benevolence, pressing along and standing on tiptoe in the doing of righteousness, then men universally began to be perplexed. (Those sages also) went to excess in their performances of music, and in their gesticulations in the practice of ceremonies, and then men began to be separated from one another” [18].

The Tao master Wang Ch’ung (c. AD 80) described the cyclic process like this: “The Yang having reached its climax retreats in favor of the Yin; the Yin having reached its climax retreats in favor of the Yang” [19].

Confucius described the past Golden Age as follows: “When the Great Way⁷⁹ prevailed, the world community was equally shared by all. The worthy and able were chosen as office-holders. Mutual confidence was fostered and good neighborliness cultivated. Therefore people did not regard as parents

⁷⁸ *Sahaja* (Sanskrit).

⁷⁹ Here, with the meaning of divine law, equivalent of Dharma.

only their own parents, nor did they treat children only their own children. Provision was made for the aged till their death, the adult was given employment, and the young enabled to grow up. Old widows and widowers, the orphaned, the old and childless, as well as the sick and the disabled were all well taken care of. Men had their proper roles and women their homes. While they hated to see wealth lying about on the ground, they did not necessarily keep it for their own use. While they hated not to exert their effort, they did not necessarily devote it to their own ends. Thus evil schemings were repressed, and robbers, thieves and other lawless elements failed to arise, so that outer doors did not have to be shut. This was called the age of Great Harmony” (*Ta Tung*) [20].

Now, we shall bring other examples from the writings of the ancient authors referring to the ages of mankind.

In *The Works and the Days*, Hesiod (8th or 7th century BC) inserted—obviously far-fetched—an additional epoch of heroes who preceded the Age of Iron⁸⁰. This is confirmed by the fact that no metal was assigned to this intentionally created age, when compared to the “classical” ages shared with other mythologies. He probably aimed at including the half-gods mentioned in the myths. “In the beginning, the immortals who have their homes on Olympus created the golden generation of mortal people. These lived in Cronus’ time, when he was the king in heaven. They lived as if they were gods, their hearts free from all sorrow, by themselves, and without hard work or pain; no miserable old age came their way; their hands, their feet, did not alter... Next after the dwellers upon Olympus created a second generation, of silver, far worse than the other. They were not like the golden ones either in shape or spirit... Then Zeus the father created the third generation of mortals, the Age of Bronze. They were not like the generation of silver. They came from ash spears. They were terrible and strong, and the ghastly action of Ares was theirs, and violence... Now when the earth had gathered over their generation also, Zeus, son of Cronus, created yet another fourth generation on the fertile earth and these were better and nobler, the wonderful generation of hero-men, who were also called half-gods, the generation before our own on this vast earth... After this, Zeus of the wide brows established yet one more generation of men, the fifth, to be on the fertile earth. And I wish that I were not any part of the fifth generation of men, but had died before it came, or been born afterward. For here now is the Age of Iron. Never by daytime will there be an end to hard work and pain, nor in the night to weariness, when the gods will send anxieties to trouble us. Yet have also there shall be some good things mixed with the evils. But Zeus

⁸⁰ We would use the term “Age of Iron” (corresponding to Kali Yuga in Hinduism) thus making a distinction from the “Iron Age” as the historical period.

will destroy this generation of mortals also... When the father no longer agrees with the children, nor children with their father when guest is no longer at one with host, nor companion to companion, when your brother is no longer your friend, as he was in the old days. Men will deprive their parents of all rights as they grow old, and people will mock them too, babbling bitter words against them, harshly, and without shame in the right of the gods... “ [21]. With Hesiod the duration declines, too, from an epoch to another as for the four yugas.

The disappearance of the Golden Age started when Pandora opened her box (actually a jar, *pythos*, which was wrongly translated by Erasmus into a box, *pyxis*). Then, “Gone ere this was the great Goddess Honesty (*Pistis*), gone from the world was the Self-Knowledge (*Sophrosýne*)” [22]. That might be compared also with the flight of one of the *Horae*, *Diké* (Justice) [23] or *Astraea*, daughter of Zeus, who fulfilled the role of the Dharma and was a witness of human misconduct. During the Golden Age, she lived with humankind, then when the Silver Age came she withdraw to the mountains, and throughout the Age of Bronze she completely abandoned the world to become the *Virgo* constellation [24]. Similar is the flight of Wisdom described by Enoch: “Wisdom went forth to dwell among the sons of men, but obtained not an inhabitation. Wisdom returned to her place, and seated in the midst of the angels” [25].

Anaximander (c.611-c.547 BC) knew that all things are born and return to *ápeiron* (infinite; origin of all beings, Gr.) [26]. Early followers of Pythagoras agreed on the fact that all the beings resume periodically their previous existences [27]. The theory of the temporal cycles also appeared in the work of Heraclitus (c.535- c.475 BC): “This world... it always was and is and will be an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and being extinguished in measures” (*aptómenon métra kai aposbynómenon métra*, Gr.) [28]. Empedocles (c.495-c.435 BC) advocated the existence of the cosmic cycle [29] consisting of four phases due to the alternation of two opposite principles acting for cohesion and corruption, respectively: *philia* (love, Gr.) and *neikos* (strife, Gr.) which determine *creation* and *destruction* of the universe [30] (ch. I). Plato (c.427-c.347 BC) in his *Dialogues* mentions the falling of man from the world of gods also, while in *Statesman* he describes the decline of human beings from the dominion of Cronus (the Golden Age) to that of Zeus [31] (see below). The recollection of the “divine state” can be awakened (*anámnesis*, Gr.) in order to rediscover the truths of the lost world [32]. Aristotle (384-322 BC) in his *Perí philosophias* (On philosophy, Gr.)—of which only a few fragments reached us—reiterates Hesiod’s cyclic theme claiming that any cycle ends in a cataclysm [33]. Proclus showed that: “According to the divine Aristotle, the same ideas repeatedly came to the

peoples, after well determined periods of the universe... but they come and go one after another, after the cycles of celestial revolutions” [34].

Also the Roman civilization was familiar with the temporal cycles, the Age of Gold (*Aetas Aurea*, Lat.) to come after the Age of Iron. The fourth book (*Pollio*) of Virgil’s (70-19 BC) *Bucolics* (or *Eclogues*) reads: “Now the XIX last age by Cumae’s Sibyl sung/ Has come and gone, and the majestic roll/ - 1 Of circling centuries begins anew:/ Justice returns, returns old Saturn’s reign/ With a new bread of men sent down from heaven/ Only do thou, at the Day’s birth in whom/ The iron shall cease, the golden race arise” [1]. Here, the poet referred to the return of Diké (see above). These verses heralded, too, the coming of the Savior.

Ovid (43 BC - AD 18) described the four ages in his *Metamorphoses*: “Golden was that first age⁸¹, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right. There was no fear of punishment, no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets; no suppliant throng gazed fearfully upon its judge’s face; but without defenders lived secure... there were no trumpets of straight, no horns of curving brass, no swords or helmets. There was no need at all of armed men, for nations, secure from war’s alarms, passed the years in gentle ease. The earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or ploughshare, of herself gave all things needful... After Saturn had been banished to the dark land of death, and the world was under the sway of Jove⁸², the silver race⁸³ came in, lower in the scale than gold, but of greater worth than yellow brass... Next after this and third in order came the brazen race⁸⁴, of sterner disposition, and more ready to fly to arms savage, but not yet impious. The age of hard iron came last⁸⁵. Straightway all evil burst forth into this age of baser vein; modesty and truth and faith fled the earth, and in their place came tricks and plots and snares, violence and cursed love of gain... ; war came, which fights with both, and brandished in its bloody hands the clashing arms. Men live on plunder. Guest was not safe from host, nor father-in-law from son-in-law; even among brothers ’twas rare to find affection. The husband longed for the death of his wife, she of her husband; murderous stepmothers brewed deadly poisons, and

⁸¹ *Aurea prima sata est aetas* (Lat.).

⁸² Jupiter.

⁸³ *Argentea proles* (the silver race, Lat.).

⁸⁴ *Aenea proles* (the brazen race, Lat.).

⁸⁵ *De duro est ultima ferro* (the age of hard iron came last, Lat.).

sons inquired into their fathers' years before the time. Piety lay vanquished, and the maiden Astraea, last of the immortals, abandoned the blood-soaked earth... they say that Mother Earth, drenched with their streaming blood, informed that warm gore anew with life... But this new stock, too, proved contemptuous of the gods, very greedy for slaughter, and passionate. You might know that they were sons of blood" [35].

Also Macrobius wrote in his *Saturnalia* about the Golden Age that corresponds in his views to the reign of Saturn [36].

The inhabitants of Dacia had, too, lived in *Aetas Aurea* that could offer an explanation for the name of *Dacia Felix* (Happy Dacia, Lat.) given to this territory.

In the Irish text *The Second Battle of Mag Tuiread*, goddess Morrighan prophesied the worst age to come: "I see a world which displeases me: summer without flowers, cows without milk, women without modesty, men without courage... trees without fruit, sea without fish, bad advice in elders, evil judgment from judges... A bad time: son betrays father, daughter betrays mother" [37].

The Aztecs admitted the cyclic theory, too. They believed that three or four world destructions had already taken place with the following one to be expected in the future. A "Sun" that disappeared at the end of each cycle ruled each world [38].

As a conclusion, Schuon described Kali Yuga as "the Dark Age in which the whole world is immersed and that was foretold by all the sacred doctrines" [39].

In spite of the linear time hypothesis that characterizes the Judeo-Christian tenets (ch. XV B), the *Bible* is not exempt of several mentions proving that the cyclic concept was not unknown to the authors of the Scripture.

The decay from the state of perfection was shown (ch. IX) to have been metaphorically described in the Old Testament by the so-called sin of Adam and Eve: "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Genesis 3:7), meaning that they acquired the *consciousness of the existence of things* and made a distinction between *good* and *evil*, thus *infringing the integrity of Tao*, of Dharma. More than that, the Jews shared views similar to the other ancient peoples: lost of the heavenly condition, gradual shortening of the human life span, destruction of the sinful people (apart from some privileged individuals) through the flood but also the fire (see *infra*). Nevertheless, it would be a great surprise to discover within the Jewish Scripture the four ages described by the *Puranas*.

First, the four epochs appear in the Old Testament when Daniel deciphers a dream. "This image's head was of fine gold, its breast and the arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, the feet part of iron and

part of clay” (2:32-33). Thus we find again the metals specific to the four cosmic ages: gold, silver, brass (bronze⁸⁶) and iron. The clay—non-metal—symbolizes the link with Mother Earth (the feet), which is the root⁸⁷ of all. By interpreting the dream, Daniel discloses to the king the succession of the four yugas called “kingdoms” by him. “Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; then another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth everything, and as iron that breaketh all these, so shall it break in pieces” (2:38-40). The prophet mentioned “the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron” (5:4) meaning the deities ruling the four epochs (ch. XIX B). A *Midrash* depicted overlapped thrones made of iron, copper, silver, and gold on the top of Nimrod’s Babel Tower [40]. In the New Testament, Revelation uses a metaphor to describe the four ages (see *infra*).

The apocryphal *Book of Jubilees* also describes the wickedness of the Kali Yuga supposed to start after Abraham and, at the end of these tribulations, the coming of the *Great Judgment* followed by the return of the Golden Age called *The Great Day*⁸⁸ of Peace, when people would devote themselves to the Law and human life would lengthen. “And all the generations which shall arise from this time until the day of the great judgment shall grow old quickly⁸⁹,... and their knowledge shall forsake them by reason of their old age [and all their knowledge shall vanish away]. And in those days, if a man live a jubilee and a-half of years, they shall say regarding him: «He has lived long, and the greater part of his days are pain and sorrow and tribulation, and there is no peace: For calamity follows on calamity, and wound on wound, and tribulation on tribulation, and evil tidings on evil tidings, and illness on illness, and all evil judgments such as these, one with another, illness and overthrow, and snow and frost and ice, and fever, and chills, and torpor, and famine, and death, and sword, and captivity, and all kinds of calamities and pains». And all these shall come on an evil generation, which transgresses on the earth: their works are uncleanness and fornication, and pollution and abominations. Then they shall say: «The days of the forefathers were many (even),... and were good; but behold, the days of our life, if a man has lived many,... and those evil, and there is no peace in the days of this evil

⁸⁶ Bronze and brass are both copper alloys.

⁸⁷ *Mooladhara* (support of the root, Sanskr.)—ch. I.

⁸⁸ As we have shown, *yom* (Hebr.) designates both *a day* and *a longer period*.

⁸⁹ The shortening of the lifespan mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (see *supra*).

generation». And in that generation the sons shall convict their fathers and their elders of sin and unrighteousness, and of the words of their mouth and the great wickedness which they perpetrate, and concerning their forsaking the covenant which the Lord made between them and him, that they should observe and do all his commandments and his ordinances and all his laws, without departing either to the right hand or the left. For all have done evil, and every mouth speaks iniquity and all their works are uncleanness and an abomination, and all their ways are pollution, uncleanness and destruction. Behold the earth shall be destroyed on account of all their works, and there shall be no seed of the vine, and no oil; for their works are altogether faithless, and they shall all perish together, beasts and cattle and birds, and all the fish of the sea, on account of the children of men. And they shall strive one with another, the young with the old, and the old with the young, the poor with the rich, the lowly with the great, and the beggar with the prince, on account of the law and the covenant; for they have forgotten commandment, and covenant, and feasts, and months, and Sabbaths, and jubilees, and all judgments. And they shall stand swords and war to turn them back into the way; but they shall not return until much blood has been shed on the earth, one by another. And those who have escaped shall not return from their wickedness to the way of righteousness, but they shall all exalt themselves to deceit and wealth, that they may each take all that is his neighbor's, and they shall name the great name, but not in truth and not in righteousness, and they shall defile the holy of holies with their uncleanness and the corruption of their pollution. And a great punishment shall befall the deeds of this generation from the Lord, and he will give them over to the sword and to judgment and to captivity, and to be plundered and devoured. And he will wake up against them the sinners of the Gentiles, who have neither mercy nor compassion, and who shall respect the person of none, neither old nor young, nor any one, for they are more wicked and strong to do evil than all the children of men. And they shall use violence against Israel and transgression against Jacob. And much blood shall be shed upon the earth. And there shall be none to gather and none to bury. In those days they shall cry aloud. And call and pray that they may be saved from the hand of the sinners, the Gentiles. But none shall be saved..." "And in those days the children shall begin to study the laws. And to seek the commandments. And to return to the path of righteousness. And the days shall begin to grow many and increase amongst those children of men till their days draw nigh to one thousand years. And to a greater number of years than (before) was the number of the days. And there shall be no old man. Nor one who is satisfied with his days. For all shall be (as) children and youths. And all their days they shall complete and live in peace and in joy. And there shall be no Satan, nor any

evil destroyer. For all their days shall be days of blessing and healing. And at that time the Lord will heal his servants. And they shall rise up and see great peace, and drive out their adversaries. And the righteous shall see and be thankful, and rejoice with joy for ever and ever” [41].

The wickedness in the Kali Yuga is described also by the Jewish prophets: “For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own household” (Micah 7:6).

The *Book of Enoch* prophesied the establishment of the Kali Yuga “when therefore iniquity, sin, blasphemy, tyranny, and every evil work, shall increase, and when transgression, impiety, and uncleanness also shall increase, then upon them all shall great punishment be inflicted from heaven” [42].

Noticeable is the fact that the lifespan of the biblical Patriarchs decreases just as the lifespan of men lessen from one yuga to another.

The New Testament recorded, too, sequences reminding the description of the Kali Yuga in Hindu writings as well as in other ancient Scriptures: “And then will many be offended, and will deliver one another up, and hate one another; and many false prophets shall arise... and then shall come the end” (Matthew 24:10,14). “They of his household [shall be] a man’s enemies” (10:36). “Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and father child; and children shall rise up against parents and shall put them to death” (10:21; cf. Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16). The cosmic cycle appears as a metaphor also in the epistle of James (3:6) talking about “the wheel of life” (Romanian transl. by Cornilescu), some other times called “the wheel of creation” (*The New Jerusalem Bible*), “the course of life” (*The Gideons Bible* for the French edition; “circle of life”—“Lebens Kreis” for the German edition), or “the course of nature” (*King James Version*, Darby etc.).

Lactantius (c. AD 260-340) who adopted Christian faith, prophetically described the last doomed era: “That will be the time in which righteousness shall be cast out, and innocence be hated; in which the wicked shall prey upon the good as enemies; neither law, nor order, nor military discipline shall be preserved; no one shall reverence hoary locks, nor recognize the duty of piety, nor pity sex or infancy” [43].

The ancient models of the cyclic development influenced other Christian authors, too. Dante spoke of the Golden Age [44]. Don Quixote, the hero of Cervantes also talked about the four ages: “Friend Sancho, know that I by Heavens will have been born in this our iron to revive in it the age of gold, or the golden⁹⁰ as it is called.” And then: “Happy the age, happy the time, to which the ancients gave the name of golden” [45]. Likewise did Lope de

⁹⁰ *Edad de oro; edad dorada* (Span.).

Vega who wrote about the “golden century” (*el siglo de oro*, Span.), not forgetting Erasmus of Rotterdam with his *The Praise of Folly*. The concept of temporal cycle was hinted at by Goethe at the end of the First Prologue to *Faust* [46] when writing about “the entire circle of creation” (*den ganzen Kreis der Schöpfung*, Germ.) leading “from heaven through the world to hell” (*vom Himmel durch die Welt zum Hölle*, Germ.), that is from the golden, celestial age, all through the other stages of the worldly decay down to the darkest, present age, similar to hell.

In Islam, the *moral Sunna* spoke of *al-fitrah* (primordial state, of innate spirituality, Arab. [47] corresponding to the Golden Age) that is the primordial perfection [48]. Islamic tradition offers, too, a description of the Kali Yuga similar in many respects with that in the *Mahabharata*: “Narrated ‘Anas: I will narrate to you a *hadith* I heard from Allah’s Messenger and none other than I will tell of it. I heard Allah’s Messenger saying: «... From among the portents of the Hour⁹¹ are the following: Religious knowledge will be taken away; general ignorance (in religious matters) will increase; illegal intercourse will prevail; drinking of alcoholic drinks will be very common»” [49].

The “signs” announcing the return of the Mahdi accompanying the end of the cycle, which are described in the eulogies of Hazrat ‘Ali ibn Ali Talib, remind similar accounts on the Kali Yuga, as shown in section C of this chapter.

A *Midrash* on Genesis discloses that in the beginning God created numerous worlds, destroying one after the other [50]. The doctrine of cosmic cycles (*shemittah*, plural; *shemittah*, singular, Hebr.) was familiar to the Hebrew esoteric trend too, being presented in the *Sepher ha-Temunah* (Book of Configuration, or Book of the Image—*temunah*, Hebr.—of God, or of the Hebrew letters as the mystic image of the Divinity, as the manifestation of God’s power), which appeared about 1250 in Catalonia. Scholem estimated this work as extremely difficult and being not yet adequately investigated. According to the doctrine set forth here, the *Torah* dealt not with the history of a single creation as recorded in the *Bible*, but with a series of creations. The seven shemittah are related to the Great Jubilee⁹² [50]. *Sepher ha-Temunah* wrote that the law of grace, the infinite stream of divine love, which knew no restrictions or negations but only affirmations of the beatific bond

⁹¹ This is the Hour of Judgment, thus describing the last stage of evolution that completes the cycle.

⁹² The seven shemittah last 7,000 years (see *infra*); the Great Jubilee lasts 50,000 years according to the biblical concept of the Sabbatical and Jubilee year (7 x 7 + 1 year). The *Qur’an* mentioned the divine day: “a day whereof the measure is fifty thousand years” (70.4).

between the creature and his Creator, ruled the first shemittah. The Creation of this world of ours, characterized by divine severity, by restrictions and judgment, knows evil desires and temptation. In the next cycles the *Torah* will once again deal only with pure and holy. There will no longer be any further migration of the soul as in the present aeon⁹³ [50]. In *Sha'arey Gan Eden* (Gates of Paradise, Hebr.) the Satya Yuga is characterized like this: "In the preceding shemittah, which was one of grace and in which there was consequently neither evil desire nor reward nor punishment, a different cosmic law (*hanhagah*, Hebr.) necessarily prevailed. The words of the *Torah* were so interwoven as to meet the requirements of this specific cosmic law, and the actions that brought the preceding shemittah into being came from a higher sphere, namely that of wisdom. And so, accordingly, its *Torah* is called *Torah de-atziluth*, for the meaning of *atziluth*⁹⁴ is the secret of divine wisdom" [51]. As for the New Golden Age, it is depicted as follows: "At the end of the sixth millennium⁹⁵ the light which precedes the cosmic Sabbath will spread its rays, swallowing death and driving the unclean spirit from the world... Then a new cosmic law will prevail, in keeping with the end of this shemittah, as it is written in the Book *Temunah*. That is the meaning of the ancient words: «A new *Torah* will go forth»" [53]. "A *Torah* shall proceed from me" (Isaiah 51:4), becomes according to a Midrashic interpretation: "A new *Torah* will go forth from me" [54]. "At the end of the sixth millennium [that is, after the true Messianic redemption and the beginning of the new aeon] man becomes a still higher spiritual being, he will penetrate still deeper into the hidden mystery of the *Torah*... And when man rises up from... [his corporeal condition] to a more subtle, spiritual one, so also will the material manifestation of the *Torah* be transformed, and its spiritual essence will be apprehended in ever-rising degrees. The veiled faces of the *Torah* will become radiant, and the righteous will study them" [55].

Some explanations are, however, necessary concerning the *cosmic Sabbath* at the end of the sixth millennium. The Hebrews likewise limited the duration of the world to *seven millenniums* as in *Testamentum Abrahami*, *Etica Enochi* etc. [56]. The Seventh Day of Era (see *supra*: *yom*, day, period, era, Hebr.) is specific for the conclusion of the divine work, the end of a cycle and the beginning of a new one. The sentence "a thousand years, in thy sight,

⁹³ Ch. XIX C.

⁹⁴ *Atziluth* (Hebr.), the realm of a transcendent level of spirituality (ch. IV).

⁹⁵ That corresponded approximately to AD 2000, since the creation of the world happened around 4000 BC according to the computation based on the Old Testament [52].

are as yesterday when it is past” (Psalms 90:4; ch. XV B), infers that the first Six Days (Eras) of the Creation (Cycle) lasted 6000 years. The Seventh Day is that of liberation: the slaves used to serve for six years and in the seventh year they were set free (Deuteronomy 15:12). Hence, the seventh stage represents here the release (*moksha*, Sanskr.) from the bondage of the reincarnation cycle (*samsara*, Sanskr.; ch. XXIV), that is Salvation.

Thus, over the cyclic evolution, the cosmic Dharma disappears gradually from macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (human society and individual) until it is set up the chaos (*tohu wa-bohu*, Hebr.) constituting the origin of the next cycle (Genesis 1:1 sq.).

At the end of the cycle, the Supreme God starts His last work, namely, the final destruction. He becomes the Sun itself and dries the whole universe to extinction: the waters are absorbed, the earth cracks, and the sap goes out from the cosmic body and from all its creatures. God becomes Wind, cosmic breath and aspires the life-giving Air. The friction ignites the whirling dry matter that has become inflammable. God has become Fire (Samvartaka). Eventually, the Destroyer⁹⁶ shaped like a gigantic cloud lets a clean shower fall all over to extinguish the fire of the world. The scorched and painful body of the Earth finds its supreme repose in Nirvana⁹⁷. Under the flood of the God who has become Water, all the Elements of the former creation merge into the Primordial Ocean from where they came out in the beginning of the previous, now ended cycle [57].

Shiva’s *third eye* (Agya chakra) transforms everything in ashes, and that is why the Great Destroyer of the Creation bears on his forehead the ashes XIX remained after the catastrophe. This symbolism probably echoed in the Ash - 3 Wednesday, the first day of the Lent, when the faithful put ashes on the forehead in penitence, destined (erroneously) to repentance⁹⁸ (cf. Matthew 11:21 and Luke 10:13). Grieving Jews (men as well as women) also used to sprinkle ashes over their heads (e.g. Isaiah 61:3).

Not only the Hindu texts as early as the *Vedas* [58] or the late ones such as the *Vishnu Purana* [59] and the *Vayu Purana* [60] but also the ancient Scriptures of other civilizations, all of them offer similar descriptions. In the antique world the myth of universal combustion, of the cosmic Fire destroyer of the world, was rather spread over, as for the Iranians [61] and was decidedly in fashion throughout the Romano-Oriental world from the first

⁹⁶ Shiva.

⁹⁷ The absorption, final and eternal extinction into the Absolute; literally: extinct by blowing (Sansk.).

⁹⁸ *Metanoia* (Gr.)—see *infra*.

century BC to the third century AD. In Eliade's opinion [62], the Iranian tenets (as expounded in the *Bahman-Yašt* [63] originating in its turn in Babylonia) exerted their influence on Heraclitus (see *supra*), Zeno and the Stoic philosophers, and after a while on Lactantius [64]. We should not forget a similar view encountered with the Qumran Community. Let us complete the list with Plato who wrote: "This has the form of a myth, but really signifies a declination of the bodies moving in the heavens around the earth, and a great conflagration of things upon the earth, which recurs after long intervals" [65]. *Parállaxis* (declination, Gr.) was, however, a term seldom used by the philosopher [66]. Thus, it appears only in *Statesman* [67]. "Parállaxis denotes an astronomical phenomenon produced at regular intervals and being part of the natural course of the world, even though producing disasters on Earth" [68]. The Stoic philosophers as Zeno [69] and his follower Chrysippos [70] used to call it *ekpyrosis*. The *Sibylline Oracles* wrote, too, about this catastrophe: "a great river of burning fire shall flow down from heaven and consume every place" [71]. Julius Firmicius Maternus thought that a cataclysmic fire (*per pyrosim et cataclysmum*, Lat.) would destroy the world [72]. Similar ideas are found with the Germanic tradition. Thus, the *volva* (Scandinavian equivalent of the *sibyl*) announced the end of the world (*ragnarök*, Scand.) to Odhinn in the 10th century Icelandic *Voluspa*: "The sun will be dark and there will be no stars in the sky. The earth will sink into the sea." But the prophecy ends, however, heralding a new era: "The earth will rise again out of the water, fair and green. The eagle will fly over cataracts, swoop into thunder and catch fish under crags. Corn will ripen in fields that were never sown." The gods will survive as well as a couple of humans, who will hide themselves deep within the world-tree, Yggdrasill, and everything will be restored into a new pattern [73]. Similar ideas were spread amongst the Mayas of Yucatan and the Aztecs of Mexico [74]. The Kabbalistic *Sepher ha-Temunah* wrote, too, about the extinction of mankind and nature at the end of the present shemittah [75]. Of such end wrote Robert Frost in his poetic work: "Some say the world will end in fire./ some say in ice./ From what I've tasted of desire/ I hold with those who favor fire" [76].

The *Bible* frequently wrote about the cataclysmic end of the cycle. "The end of all flesh is come before me... and behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13). Isaiah wrote many sentences of that kind: "The day of Yahweh is at hand: it comes as destruction from the Almighty... Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate" (13:6,9). "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is completely dissolved, the earth is violently moved" (24:19). "The stars of the heavens and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to

shine” (13:10). “And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed” (24:23). “The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee” (60:19). “For the wrath of Yahweh is against all the nations, and [his] fury against all their armies: he hath devoted them to destruction, he hath delivered them to the slaughter... And all the host of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll⁹⁹; and all their host shall fade away, as a leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as the withered [fruit] from the fig-tree” (34:2,4). It is interesting to compare this text with the *Upanishad*, which refers to a time when it “shall roll up space as it were a piece of leather; then will there be an end of evil apart from knowing God” [77]. “The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall grow old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner¹⁰⁰ but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished” (51:6). “Of old hast thou founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou continuest; and all of them shall grow old as a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Psalms 102:25-27). “«When I shall put them out, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof black... All the bright lights of the heavens will I make black over thee, and bring darkness upon thy land», saith the Lord Yahweh” (Ezekiel 32:7-8). “The sun shall be changed to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of Yahweh come” (Joel 2:31; cf. 3:15; Amos 5:20). Likewise, Daniel’s dreams and visions (ch. 7-8, 10,12) include many eschatological elements.

The gospels¹⁰¹ comprise, too, similar texts, as well as Acts (2:20). For instance, Jesus announces the end of the cycle saying: “These glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations, and then shall come the end” (Matthew 24:14). “The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give its light; and the stars of heaven shall be falling down, and the powers which are in the heaven shall be shaken” (Mark 13:24-25).

John’s Revelation of Patmos holds a cardinal position with respect to this topic, for instance in this text portraying the end of the cycle: “The sun became black as hair sackcloth, and the whole moon became as blood, and

⁹⁹ In the biblical times, the *Torah* was written on a papyrus or parchment scroll (*volumen*, Lat.) that was unrolled as the reading progressed.

¹⁰⁰ Shall die like a gnat.

¹⁰¹ The topic is fully developed in chapters 24 and 25 of the Gospel according to Matthew (also in Mark, ch. 13, and Luke 21:25).

the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as a fig tree, shaken by a great wind casts its unseasonable figs. And the heaven was removed as a book rolled up” (6:12-14).

The New Testament propounds also other alike images where the conclusion of the cycle is called “the day of [the] Lord.” On that day, “the heavens will pass away with rushing noise, and [the] elements burning with heat, shall be dissolved, and [the] earth and the works in it shall be burned up... [the] heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and [the] elements, burning with heat, shall melt” (2 Peter 3:10,12).

Apocryphal writings such as the *Apocalypse of Ezra* (7:75) and the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (32:6) refer to a new creation, while various Qumran manuscripts describe the “New Jerusalem.”

Origen believed that “this world should have a termination like its beginning” while Ephraim the Syrian announced the end in the followings: “The sea shall roar and be dried up... the heaven and earth shall be dissolved, and darkness and smoke shall prevail. Against the earth shall the Lord send fire, which lasting 40 days shall cleanse it from wickedness and the stains of sins” [78].

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As for the *Qur’an*, it encompasses many references to the end of the world: “When the trumpet is blown with a single blast and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow, then, on that day, the Terror shall come to pass, and heaven shall be split, for upon that day it shall be very frail” (69.13-16). “When the sun shall be darkened, when the stars shall be thrown down, when the mountains shall be set moving” (81.1-3)... “when heaven shall be stripped off, when Hell shall be set blazing, when Paradise shall be brought nigh” (81.11-13). “When heaven is split open, when the stars are scattered, when the seas swarm over” (82.1-3). “By heaven of the returning rain, by earth splitting” (86.11-12). “Surely in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement in the world to come; that is a day mankind are to be gathered to, a day to witness, and We shall not postpone it, save to a term reckoned” (11.105-106). “Therein dwelling forever, so long as the heavens and earth abide” (11.109; cf. 11.110). The *Qur’an* reminded the *Mahabharata* when read: “It is God who sends down out of heaven water, and therewith revives the earth after it is dead. Surely in that is a sign¹⁰² for a people who have ears” (16.67).

¹⁰² *Aya* (Arab.).

It is noteworthy that the contemporary science presumes the end of the universe through the so-called *heat death*. In agreement with the second principle of the thermodynamics this will happen because of the entropy increase accompanying spontaneously each and every evolutionary process (flow of the waters, leveling of the mountains, fall of the bodies, thermic transfer from higher to lower temperature, diversification of species, transformation of the star matter into radiation and, in general, the growth of disorder). After the discovery by Sadi Carnot (1837-1894) of this universal law of thermodynamics, the scientists became receptive at the existence of a Divine Principle. Thus, it was only His action that made it possible the transition from the chaotic state of the cycle end (characterized by the maximum of entropy) to the ordered state specific for the new cycle (displaying a lower entropy). Otherwise, without such a divine intervention, the fact would have been impossible to be explained.

The increase of temperature on Earth following the *greenhouse effect* witnessed today, can be a warning against the thermal death predicted both by science and the ancient Scriptures of the great civilizations.

There exists, however, different interpretations after which a major segment of the world engulfed into the sin will be consequently annihilated; at the same time it will take place the rise of the group that observes the cosmic Dharma, the archetypal laws of the Pure Universal Harmony (*Vishwa Nirmala Dharma*, Sanskr.). The tenth Avatar of Vishnu (ch. XIX B) as a Savior descends for the last time, which does not mean the destruction of the entire creation but only of the evil in the largest part of humankind. The salvation is for the chosen ones. "I say to you: but if ye repent not, ye shall perish in the same manner" (Luke 13:3). We should notice here that the Greek *metanoieite* (erroneously) translated as "repent," actually is a call to change one's way of thinking and acting, denoting the spiritual transformation. As Merejkowski said it with good reason: "Here we have the restoration (*apokatástasis*, Gr.) of the entire cosmic forms, of aeons; to bring this to pass «the strength of the firmament must be shaken»—«must be transposed»" [79].

According to the Jain thinking the universe will never dissolve. The aim of the Jain is the liberation (*kevala*, perfect isolation) of the spirit from the matter (*ajiva*; opposed to *jiva*, life, Sanskr.) the latter being also eternal. The liberated spirit is a monad that is not reabsorbed but remains in a state of eternal awareness of all. In the old Iran concept after judgment only those who are not guilty will know beatitude and eternity (ch. XIX C) [80]. Likewise, the Golden Age following the purifying fire in the *Libri Sibyllini*, was to become a blissful era [81].

In the Old Testament the divine punishment aims at the sinners making no

exception: “Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate; and He will destroy the sinners thereof out of it” (Isaiah 13:9). The return to the Golden Age parallels elements from other cultures: “They shall forge their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-knives; nation shall not lift up swords against nations, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). “I will break bow and sword, and battle out the land; and I will make them to lie down safely” (Hosea 2:18). “I will cut off the chariot..., and the horse..., and the battle-bow shall be cut off. And he shall speak peace unto the nations” (Zechariah 9:10). “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9; cf. Habakkuk 2:14)—a clear allusion to the Divine Law (Dharma). “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatted beast together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the she-bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together” (Isaiah 11:6-8; cf. 35:9; 65:25; Job 5:23). The diseases and infirmities are relegated to the past: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped; then shall the lame [man] leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (Isaiah 35:5-6). Then God will “strengthen the weak bands and confirm the tottering knees” (35:3). A new world would be created: “I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17; cf. 51:16). “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me—saith Yahweh—so shall your seed and your name remain” (66:22).

Christianity advocates the interpretation according to which the Last Judgment will mean the *punishment* of the unworthy and the *salvation* of the XIX worthy (*apokatástasis*, Gr.). The Judge will be Jesus Christ coming for a - 4 second time. A similar topic was dealt with in Hindu Scriptures: “Thereafter, at the end of Kali Yuga, when there exist no discussion on the subject of God, even at the residence of so-called saints and honored gentlemen... at that time the Lord will appear as the Supreme Chastiser” [82]. Also according to the *Qur’an*, the Last Judgment is connected with coming of Jesus: “And (Jesus) is knowledge of (the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment)” (43.61). The *Qur’an* admits the salvation of the worthy ones and even the possible redeeming of the damned people: “The Fire is your lodging, therein to dwell forever—except as God will” (6.128). “Therein dwelling forever, so long as the heavens and earth abide, save as thy Lord will” (11.109)—*illa ma sha’allah* (Arab.).

The salvation or admission to the Kingdom of Heavens (opening of the seventh chakra, the Sahasrara) signifies the Self Realization, reaching the union with the Divine (Yoga). Our example will be a quotation from Ezekiel:

“Thus saith the Lord Yahweh: «The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened»” (46:1). One can easily track here the subtle (*inner*) system, the Sahasrara, the chakra of salvation (*the court*), the preceding Agya chakra (*the gate*; ch. XIX C), the requirement of striving (*work*) through ascetic effort (in classical Yoga; see below) for cleansing the six previous chakras (*the six working days*) otherwise the access to the Sahasrara is prohibited (till then, the gate *shall be shut*). The gate of salvation *shall be opened on the Sabbath day*, i.e. the seventh day pointing to the seventh chakra, the Sahasrara, the conclusion of the cycle. The knowledge about all these things originated in *the east* (ch. XIX D) where India is *par excellence* the land of spirituality. The text that follows uses a metaphor in the sacrifice of “six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish” (46:4), also showing towards the six lower chakras and the special one, that of the Sahasrara. All of them allow Realization only when they are *without blemish*. This can be obtained through asceticism (*sacrifice*). This symbolism refer to the specific historical period, the *Age of Aries* (Ram) (ch. XIX C).

Revelation announces the start of the new cosmic cycle: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea exists no more” (21:1). Further on the text read: “And he that sat on the throne said: «Behold, I make all things new». And he says [to me]: «Write, for these words are true and faithful». And he said to me: «It is done¹⁰³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end»” (21:5-6). “Behold, I make all things new” (21:5) means the re-establishing of the primordial state (cf. Barnabas where the Lord says: “Behold, I will make the last like the first” [83], when the *Omega* becomes the *Alpha*, the beginning of a new cycle).

The second epistle of Peter wrote about the cycle concept: “This is hidden from them through their own willfulness, that heavens were of old, and an earth, having its subsistence out of water and in water, by the word of God, through which [waters] the then world, deluged with water, perished. But the present heavens and the earth by his word are laid up in store, kept for fire unto a Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men... But, ascribing to his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness” (3:5-7, 13).

The concept of the repetition of Creation was also present with Ephraim the Syrian who said about God: “He renewed the earth which was worn out

¹⁰³ These are precisely *the last words* uttered by Christ on the cross (John 19:30) and they bear a peculiar significance (ch. XIX D). Thus, a connection is achieved between the end of Jesus’ worldly existence and his return as a Judge; it is a link between John’s Gospel and Revelation.

through Adam, who sinned and waxed old. The new formation was the creature of its Renewer” [84].

Enoch describes the passing from Kali Yuga to a new cycle, to a *World of Truth* (*Olam ha-Emeth*, Hebr.; *Satya Yuga*, Sanskr.): “The former heaven shall depart and pass away; a new heaven shall appear; and all the celestial powers shine with sevenfold¹⁰⁴ splendor for ever. Afterwards likewise shall there be many weeks, which shall externally exist in goodness and in righteousness¹⁰⁵. Neither shall sin be named there for ever and ever” [85]. “The earth shall be cleansed from all corruption, from every crime, from all punishment, and from all suffering, neither will I again send a deluge upon it from generation to generation for ever. In those days I will open the treasures of blessing which are in heaven, that I may cause them to descend upon earth, and upon all the works and labor of man” [86].

The notion can be found in a hymn from the Dead Sea Scrolls: “For Thou hast shown them that which they had not [seen by removing all] ancient things and creating new ones, by breaking asunder things anciently established, and raising up the things of eternity” [87].

According to the Kabbalah, then begins the *shevirah* (breaking of the vessels, Hebr.), which Luria identified with the “dying of the primordial kings” from chapter 36 of Genesis. This is the end of the cycle (ch. I). Actually, also the New Testament confirms that association: “Death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former kings have passed away. And He that sat on the throne said: «Behold, I make all things new»” (Revelation 21:4-5). *Tikun* (restoration, emendation, accomplishment, Hebr.) represented the harmony being re-established within a new cycle.

* * *

The succession of metals corresponding to the four ages is found in the order of the invention of the technologies aimed at obtaining and processing these metals: *gold* was processed first since it was the most malleable and accessible (found as such in native state); then there comes *silver* being a little harder but obtained by a fairly simple method; *bronze* followed (the age bearing its name started around 4000-3500 BC), harder than the preceding metals and more difficult to obtain; *iron* comes last, the most difficult to

¹⁰⁴ In this text, the new cycle starts with the opening of a new cosmic chakra, called here *heaven* (ch. II), the seventh chakra respectively (Adi Sahasrara; ch. XIX D).

¹⁰⁵ Whole reconstitution of Dharma.

process but manifesting higher mechanical properties and starting its age around 1200-1000 BC. The decrease in Dharma of the four yugas coincides with the decrease in the *nobility* of these metals, they being more perishable under the influence of natural factors whose corrosive action increases from gold to silver, bronze and finally, iron.

The symbolism of metals designating the ages of a cycle was preserved in the Romanian literature both in the folklore (fairy tales about bridges, forests, or clothes made of gold, silver and copper) and in writings such as Eminescu's poems where the metaphor appears (maybe not by chance) both in poems evoking antiquity (*Egypt*): "There are golden groves with starry glades./ Silver woods moving their gleaming branches/ And red copper forests resounding in full harmony" [88], and in those about local topics (*Călin*): "If you cross the copper forest, gleams you can see far away/ Of the silver wood, and listen to the magic of its lay..." [89], which denotes the antiquity and the universality of the theme. The Age of Iron not being mentioned indicates how ancient was the source of the original myth, since by that time the cycle had not reached Kali Yuga yet.

Concerning the sequence of colors¹⁰⁶ attributed to Vishnu, the Evolution Principle, Wilkins gives the following succession of his Avatars: "The first, in the Satya Yuga, called the Suklavarna (white color, Sanskr.) was Ananta; the second, in the Treta Yuga, called the Raktavarna (red color, Sanskr.) was Kapiladeva; the third, in the Dvapara Yuga, called the Krishnavarna (black color, Sanskr.) was Krishna; and the last, in the Kali Yuga, called the Pitavarna (yellow color, Sanskr.) was Chaitanya¹⁰⁷" [90]. Thus, though the most terrible of the ages, the Kali Yuga brings along the chance of salvation (end of the cycle) through Self Realization, when man can benefit from the gift of Paramchaitanya's divine vibrations (ch. II). The *Bible* gives in Revelation precisely the same order when describing the Avatars riding a white horse (6:2), a red horse (6:4), a black horse (6:5), and finally a yellow XIX (understood as pale, in some translations) horse (6:8). Others interpret the - 2 colors as the four races, the four castes, or, in our opinion the four metals: gold (yellow), silver (white), copper¹⁰⁸ (red), iron (black). The end of the cycle is revealed, too, since the fourth rider was Death himself: "Behold, a pale horse, and he that sat upon it, his name [was] Death" (6:8). We should add that in his vision Zechariah also referred to red, black, white and... piebald (strong or grisled, in other variants) horses (6:2-3,6-7).

¹⁰⁶ Mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (see above).

¹⁰⁷ *Chaitanya* (vibrations, Sanskr.).

¹⁰⁸ The main component of the bronze (see an earlier footnote of ours).

According to the alchemical texts, *Opus magnum*, that is the transmutation aimed at obtaining the philosopher's stone, implied the following stages: *melanosis* (black), *leukosis* (white), *xanthos* (yellow) and *iosis* (red), that in the Middle Ages writings became *nigredo*, *albedo*¹⁰⁹, *citrinitas* and *rubedo*. Apparently, these are the colors of the ingredients used as raw materials—mercury (white; silvery, in fact) and sulfur (yellow)—, or as (intermediary or finite) resulting products, respectively: cinnabar (red) and mercury sulfide (black). For the one who has the right key of the code, they are identical to the colors of the Principle of Evolution or of the apocalyptic horses over the four ages of the temporal cycle. A fifth phase called *coda pavonis* (peacock tail, Lat.) is sometimes added, which included the complete range of colors (rainbow) and indicates therefore either the entire set of chakras or the Sahasrara exclusively (ch. XV E).

B. THE PRINCIPLE OF EVOLUTION

“Evolution is the law of life; Numbers is the law of the Universe; Unity¹¹⁰ is the law of God”
Pythagoras [91]

The scientists used the term “inorganic evolution” to designate the development of the physical universe from its origin and the term “organic evolution” for the biological development of the species from the primitive unicellular life forms to their culmination—the human being.

Man has a privileged position on the scale of spirituality. He has the benefit of a similar position among animals too. In spite of his kinship with the upper mammals and the primates (big apes) especially, man has peculiar genetic features. The chromosome cariotype¹¹¹ and genetic sequence in humans both reveal a number of specific aspects. About 70-80 million years ago the separation of the primates from the rodent species took place, though both of them have 24 chromosome pairs. Man is the only exception amongst the primates with his only 23 chromosome pairs; whereas the gorilla and the chimpanzee have 4 pairs of acrocentric chromosomes (with the centromer close to one of the extremities), man has only 3, with the fourth one probably lost during the fusion. However, it would be an error to attribute the evolution

¹⁰⁹ From *al-beida* (the white, Arab.).

¹¹⁰ *Yoga* (Sanskrit.).

¹¹¹ The qualitative and quantitative chromosomal formula typical for each species.

from the monocellular to the human organism to the genetic mutations alone, and science provides the answer to this. All through the thousand of millions of reproductions of encoded messages, “typographical” (punctiform mutations) or “syntactic” (chromosome rearrangements) errors occur. The average percentage of basic mutations taking place during one million years was estimated between 4 and 8 for each DNA¹¹² codon¹¹³. Taking into account the moment when life appeared on earth, this number of mutations *cannot explain by itself* the existence of millions of species and subspecies. It has been computed that thousands of millions of “successful” mutations would have been necessary to ensure the evolution from amoeba to man [92]. Another peculiarity differentiating man from other living creatures is that humans are abnormally poor in subspecies or races, and the familiar black, yellow and white races, far from diversifying, tend to merge each other through the half-breed combinations. This might be another example of deviation from Carnot principle of thermodynamics (ch. XIX A), since the process is accompanied by a decrease in entropy (maintaining the state of order). A similar situation appears with the information (messages) that, instead of degrading¹¹⁴ (increase in entropy) they rather are revealed, developed (decrease in entropy) [93].

While the evolution of the species has been in the focus of mankind from the times of ancient Greece up to Darwin and, independently, to Russel Wallace and their followers, the particularly important problem of the spiritual evolution has not found the consideration which it really deserves, especially in the western world. As the reader would notice, *the evolution of the human spirituality* (aiming at the inner essence of the being) was by no means what the scholars defined as *the history of the religions*, the latter being just an attempt to build up a system dealing with a variety of outward manifestations.

Taking into account that on the spiritual scale man finds himself closer to God than an amoeba, we have to admit that—in parallel with the evolution of species (a fighting field for biological adaptation and improvement)—there has been a spiritual evolution that was not utterly devoid of seriously critical moments. This spiritual growth has made itself into a stage for the forces of *Good* (regarded as the elements enabling the spiritual progress) defying the forces of *Evil* (i.e. whatever that draws man away from the path of Realization, thus preventing his spiritual growth. A. Daniélou gives a

¹¹² The deoxyribonucleic acid.

¹¹³ Nucleotide triplet, which *specifies* an amino acid.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Shannon’s Principle.

comparable interpretation [94]). The eminent Sufi master Rumi had every reason to say to his disciples: “You are shocked not by right and wrong, but by the conventional conception of right and wrong” [95]. Homer believed that the *good* (*agathón*, Gr.) represented a category pertaining at *purity* and *perfection* [96], in other words the *divine state*.

The general view integrating the three evolution spheres (*cosmic*, *biologic* and *spiritual*) is expressed as the *anthropic principle* (ch. II) that in our opinion should be generalized as follows: *The finality of the entire evolution is the human being evolved up to its highest level of spiritual ascent* (godliness, *theósis*, Gr.). Indeed, *God Realization*, that is *liberation*¹¹⁵ is only possible for man (ch. XXIV) who represents the topmost stage of creation not only biologically but also spiritually. Thus, the climax of evolution is the moment when having reached perfection, creation is deified and melts into his Creator, and that actually means the completion of the cycle. Indeed, biblical God urges people to reach this supreme goal: “Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). The *Upanishads* read: “So from the Imperishable [Brahman], my friend, beings manifold are produced, and thither also go” [97].

In conclusion, man was created to achieve his spiritual evolution as his final goal of his existence. Gregory of Nyssa knew it when considering the contemplating man, and in his opening word of *On the Sixth Psalm, Concerning the Octave*¹¹⁶, he prefers to use the word *epektasis* to describe the spiritual advancement in the form *epekteinómenos* (stretching, straining, striving, Gr.; the same as in Philippians 3:13: “stretching forward to what lies ahead”): “Thus he who always stretches forward (*emprosthen epekteinómenos*) will never cease his good ascent through lofty thoughts” [98]. Likewise did Coomaraswamy when comparing the crossing of the *life stages* (*ashrama*, Sanskr.; ch. XV B) to the *pilgrim* (*shramana*, Sanskr.) whose slogan was “go forwards” [99].

The ancient Hindu Scriptures (*Puranas*) infer that before the creation, God was unmanifested and satisfied with this state as *deus otiosus* (ch. I). Then, what was the impetus for leaving His seclusion? The only impulse was the divine love (*agápe*, Gr.). “*L’amor che muove il sole e l’altre stelle*” (Love that moves around sun and other stars, Ital.), that is the conclusion and, at the same time, the essence of Dante’s trilogy, the *Divine Comedy*. Also ibn al-‘Arabi stated: “All motivation springs from love... The origin [of all motivation] is the movement of the Cosmos out of its state of non-existence in which it was until its existence... The movement that is coming into

¹¹⁵ *Moksha* (Sansk.).

¹¹⁶ *Sheminith* (Hebr.), an instrument with eight strings.

existence of the Cosmos is a movement of love... Thus its movement from non-existence into existence is the love of the Creator for it... So is it confirmed that movement is for love, there being no movement in existence except for love” [100].

It is only the love that can explain the act of Creation, “for God is love” (1 John 4:8). “Because love is from God” (4:7). “God abides in us, and his love is perfect in us” (4:12). The manifestation of this love accompanied each divine act aimed at helping the creation to surpass any crisis intervened on its evolutionary path. One such example was Jesus, the incarnation of the Divine Son Principle: “To us has been manifested the love of God, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (4:9). In Him, love went until its extreme limit (*to the end*) taking the form of the self sacrifice willingly assumed by Christ: “Jesus, knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end” (John 13:1). Even the universal dissolution (*pralaya*, Sanskr.) expresses love, since it means the re-absorption of the creation within the ocean of divine love. In the end, Death is the agent of all the palingeneses¹¹⁷ in whose absence the creation would have been unable to reintegrate its original Principle (see ch. XXIV).

Trimurti (triple form, Sanskr.) comprises three supreme divine aspects (ch. II and XIX C). *Brahma*¹¹⁸ is the Creator. At the end of the cycle, *Shiva* will destroy the creation. As for *Vishnu* he is the support of the creation, the sustainer of the evolutionary process.

The holy texts coming down to us from various times, various cultural backgrounds and different geographical areas claim that the Divine manifested Itself to intervene whenever necessary in order to save humankind from destruction.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna is a total incarnation (*purnavatara*, Sanskr.) of Vishnu and defined himself as follows: “Though [I am] unborn, and My self [is] imperishable, though [I am] the Lord of all creatures,... I come into being through My power” (Maya, another name of the Adi Shakti) [101]. Arjuna addressed him saying: “O Supreme Person; the Source of beings, the Lord of creatures; the God of gods, the Lord of the world!” [102]. He answers Arjuna (Bharata) saying: “Whenever there is a decline of

¹¹⁷ From *pálin* (again, Gr.) and *génésis* (generation, Gr.).

¹¹⁸ *Brahma* comes from the root *brih* (to burst, to expand, to manifest, Sanskr.), that might be connected to the creation of the universe through the Big Bang.

righteousness¹¹⁹ and rise of unrighteousness¹²⁰, O Bharata, then I send forth (incarnate) Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age” [103]. “When the Almighty God desires to protect cows, *Brahmanas*, gods, righteous persons, the *Vedas* and the laws of Dharma and Artha and other Purusharthas, he assumes a body” [104].

Irenaeus of Lyons as well as Athanasius affirmed: “the Son of God became... man that man... might become Son of God” [105]. Gregory Nazianzen is even more specific: “I must become... Son of God, yeah God himself” [106]. The quotations acknowledge that God can manifest Himself as human models, which it is comprehensible when taking *ad litteram* the sentence: “God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him” (Genesis 1:27).

The incarnation of a divine Principle is called *Avatar* (*Avatara*, descent; from *ava*, down, and *tri*, to pass, Sanskr.). Here it is a beautiful description of this form of divine manifestation quoted by Jean Herbert: “The Avatar is always the same. The Unique God plunges in the ocean of life, gets incarnated and is called Krishna. Some other time He plunges again, reappears in a different place and is called Jesus” [107]. Merejkowski provides a similar concept: “This knowledge we have in common with the period in which Jesus lived. We may not be aware of it, or wish it to be so, but it is a marked religious similarity and an inalienable advantage: never was the world so near to perishing, and, without knowing it, never did it so long for salvation, as then—and now... As then, so now, a voice cries in the wilderness: «Prepare ye the way of Yahweh¹²¹»” [108]. And he goes on more explicitly: “Jesus... in eternity He had been born already... He, the Celestial, how many aeons, how many eternities, had He to traverse?” [109]. A Naassene psalm highlights the idea of the same divinity (the Principle of Son) manifesting throughout the history: “Send me forth, o Father, therefore, and I, bearing the seal shall descend and wander/ all Aeons through, all mysteries reveal/ I shall manifest the forms of the gods/ and teach the secrets of the holy way/ which I call Gnosis¹²²” [110]. George Fox (1625-1691) believed that Jesus is the expression of a *generatio aeterna*. The topic will be developed in chapter XIX C. At any rate we should agree with Jung words: “Christ

¹¹⁹ *Dharma* (Sansk.).

¹²⁰ *Adharma* (Sansk.).

¹²¹ Isaiah 40:3.

¹²² See ch. XX C4.

would never have made the impression he did on his followers if he had not expressed something that was alive and at work in their unconscious" [111].

Christianity adopted a position clearly focused on Christ, definitely rejecting the idea of any other incarnation of the divine Principle. However, the Scripture discloses a different situation due to the mysterious character called *Melchisedek* (*Melkizedek*) mentioned both in the Old and New Testament.

The New Testament wrote that Jesus "became for ever a high priest according to Melchisedek" (Hebrews 6:20), and went on: "For this, Melchisedek King of Salem, priest of the Most High" (7:1), "first being interpreted «King of righteousness», and then also «King of Salem», which is «King of Peace¹²³»" (7:2). He is "without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but assimilated to the Son of God, abides a priest continually" (7:3). "Now consider how great this [personage] was, to whom [even] the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth out of the spoils" (7:4). The Old Testament wrote that "Melchisedek, King of Salem, brought out bread and wine. And he was priest of the Most High God¹²⁴." And he blessed Abraham, and Abraham "gave him the tenth of all" (Genesis 14:18-20). The Psalms upheld these sayings: "Yahweh said unto my Lord¹²⁵:... «Thou art priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek»" (110:1,4; cf. Hebrews 5:6; 7:17,21). Indeed, like Melchisedek, Jesus, called The Branch (Zechariah 6:12), "shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (6:13). From the above sentences one can clearly see that Melchisedek was *another incarnation of the Divine Son Principle, comparable* (therefore *of the same rank*) with Jesus Christ, thus being "*assimilated to the Son of God*"! Like Jesus at the Last Supper, Melchisedek brought out bread and wine. They both have in common the attributes of *righteousness* and *peace* (Psalms 72:7-8; Isaiah 9:6,7; 57:19; Micah 5:5; Zechariah 9:10; Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14,17; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 1:20; 3:15), the inhuman origin (*without father, without mother*), universality (*without genealogy*), infinity (eternity, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life*), function and rank (*for ever a high priest of the Most High God*) acknowledged by Abraham who gave him the tenth of all that was due to the priests. The idea of eternal priesthood joining Melchisedek and Jesus appeared in the apocryphal texts of *Epistolae Apostolorum* where, before His embodiment,

¹²³ *Salam* (peace, Arab.).

¹²⁴ *El Elyon* (Hebr.).

¹²⁵ Appellation designating Jesus later on.

Christ ordered the archangels to keep His place at the altar of God during His absence [112]. What is remarkable is that amongst the Dead Sea scrolls there was found a soteriologic text about Melchisedek who was said to come at the end of centuries, being called the “Heavenly Prince” and equated to the “Prince of Light” ranking second after God [113].

As early as the *Rig-Veda*, Vishnu (Immanent, Sanskr.) is mentioned as Principle of evolution. In this quality, Vishnu had *ten Avatars* recorded in the *Matsya Purana*. The *Varaha Purana* wrote, too, about ten Avatars [114]. The *Kalika Purana* describes Brahma creating ten *guardians of the ages*, “Lords of creatures,” destined to check the natural cosmic processes in the future steps of the Creation. These Lords of eras were later on given the name of *aeons* (ch. XIX C). *Daksha* was the first of them but this name eventually designated all of them. This name means “the creative (also: the spiritual) power.” *Hari-vansa* confirms that *Daksha* is Vishnu himself. The sage *Parashara* said: “in every age *Daksha* and the rest are born and are again destroyed.” According to the *Mahabharata*, *Daksha* sprang from the right thumb of Brahma, and his wife from the left thumb of the Creator [115]. However, this is precisely the known polarity: masculine (right channel) and feminine (left channel). Moreover, the text ascertains the concept of *Sahaja Yoga* assuming that *the thumbs* are connected to the *Swadhsthana* chakra, which is governed by *Brahmadeva*.

We have seen that the Masculine Principle is accompanied by his female *Shakti* (power, Sanskr.) as for the primordial couple *Sada-Shiva* and the *Adi Shakti* (ch. I; for other pairs, see ch. IV and XX B). To give only one example, in the case of the *Swadhsthana* chakra this association is well described by the shape of its *lotus* with six petals, i.e. the stellar hexagon made up of two superposed triangles standing for: the *masculine Principle* (peak upwards as *Godhead* symbolized in the Christian imagery, where the eye in the center reminds “the third eye” of *Shiva*, His Hindu equivalent) and the *feminine Principle* (peak downwards). In the particular case of the *Swadhsthana* chakra these Principles are *Brahmadeva* (cosmic Creator) and *Saraswati* (creative Power with its specific manifestations: arts, music, literature, science—on a terrestrial plane) or, on a higher register *Heaven* and XIX *Earth* (Mother Earth, *the Goddess*). This *Seal of Solomon* or *Shield of David* - 5, 6 (ch. XV A) became for the hermeneutic science the quintessence of its thinking. Indeed, the stellar hexagon symbolizes the four elements (earth, water, fire, air), the couple of opposites (dry-humid, warm-cold) specific for XIX the side channels, and even the seven planets (Sun in the center; in the - 7, 8 *Kabbalah*, in the center appears the divine Tetragram; ch. XV C) which are, in fact, the seven chakras, while the triangles corners indicate the *Trimurti* (male triad *Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva*) and their *Shaktis* (*Maha-Lakshmi*, *Maha-*

Saraswati, Maha-Kali) respectively, that is the AUM synthesis. Through extension, this symbols parallels the Hindu *Shri Yantra* (*Shri Chakra*) having in its center *Bindu* (ch. I), which is the starting Point (Origin) representing the transition from Unmanifestation to Manifestation, the boundary extant between these two states of the Divine. The line (movement of the point) depicts the evolution, while the triangle is built up of the minimum number of sides that enables a circumscription. Likewise, the *Shri*¹²⁶ Yantra depicts the Universal Goddess and it is called “Lakshmi’s star.”

Jung came to the conclusion that “from time immemorial, man in his myths has expressed the idea of a male and female coexisting in the same body. Such psychological intuitions were usually projected in the form of the divine syzygy¹²⁷, the divine pair, or in the idea of the hermaphrodite nature of the creator” [116].

Though distinct, the couple of masculine (*Purusha*, person; from *puri*, city: that which dwells in a bodily city, Sanskr.) and feminine (*Prakriti*, nature, Sanskr.) remains ever inseparable as the two sides of one thing. Every aspect of the cosmos or of the cosmic consciousness has thus to be represented in a dual form; hence every god is shown as having a consort or energy (*shakti*) inseparable from himself. The *Shaktis* of the seven chakras (ch. XIX C) are known as *Sapta Matrika* (Seven Mothers, Sanskr.; otherwise called Seven Sisters; our Introduction).

The Babylonian epics *Enuma elish* mentioned the pairs of gods, male and female emerging from the Primordial Waters (Nammu; ch. XXA). The Egyptian mythology also refers to pairs originating from Atum.

All the Patriarchs (Jacob’s sons), except Joseph, had a female twin whom they married, and Graves and Patai interpret that as a “joint worship of a god and goddess” [117].

In full agreement with the above, the *Zohar* mentions the *ten Avatars* of the Feminine Principle, the *Shekhinah* (ch. XX B): “Our holy Masters taught us that already the Shekhinah descended on the earth ten times” [118]. However, one of the descents has been lost [119], that being probably the one to come. Likewise, the female Sabbath manifested in each and ever of the ten sephiroth [120]. Also Philo of Alexandria speaks of ten curtains of the Tabernacle of the Holy of Holies [121]. That points at the “ten celestial powers, the «ten potentates which are found in the city» (Ecclesiastes 7:19), namely, the ten supernal beings who are appointed over the «spreading of

¹²⁶ *Shri* is another name of the goddess *Lakshmi*, the Shakti of the Evolution Principle.

¹²⁷ See ch. XX A and C4.

hands¹²⁸», to receive the blessings or prayers offered therewith, and to endow them with a power through which the holy name¹²⁹ is glorified and blessed from below... And these «ten potentates» will take of the blessings above, and pour them down upon him who is below” [122].

Far from being a coincidence, several Sumerian tablets list ten kings (although of different names) between the world creation and its destruction (by the Flood), while the *Bible* counts ten patriarchs for a similar period (from Adam to Noah).

Abu al-Hasan ibn Isma'il al-Ashari (878-941) founded the Muslim scholastic tradition of *Kalam* (literal: “word” or “discourse,” Arab.; also designating “[formal] theology”). He had envisaged ten emanations between God and the material world; the former ones presided over the Ptolemaic spheres [123].

The divine couple masculine-feminine finds its echo in arts too, as in the XIX androgynous statue of Shiva (*Shiva ardhanari*, from *ardha*, half, Sanskr.) from - 9 the Elephanta temple where the left side of the god is portrayed as a woman XIX while his right side takes the shape of a male. Numberless alchemical images - 10 (for instance *Rebis*; from *res bis*, Lat.; ch. IV) constitute other examples. Christianity also refers to the incarnation of the divine Power, namely the Holy Spirit (actually, the Feminine Principle; ch. XXI) next to the Masculine Principle (taking the form of the Son, because the Father remains unknown/not incarnated both as Yahweh and Sada-Shiva). On this topic Lossky said that God, “though unknowable, has made Himself known... to all who have received the Holy Spirit” [124]. Jung mentioned “Christ’s androgyny in Catholic mysticism” [125]. As a matter of fact the androgyny means Jesus accompanied by His Power (*Shakti*, Sanskr.) embodied in His Mother (ch. XX C1, C3). The Gnostic Valentine “goes on to describe... the emanations of divine being ranged in harmonious pairs of masculine and feminine energies” [126]. The Hermetic philosophy also spoke of the androgynous inner man, *homo Adamicus* who always bears with him Eve, hidden in his body, as explained by a medieval author in his commentaries to the *Tractatus Aureus Hermetis* of Arabic origin [127]. In his Prophetic Books (*The Four Zoas*), William Blake associated a feminine emanation (or counterpart) to each and every Zoa: Tharmas-Enion, Urizen-Ahania, Luvah-Vala, Los-Enitharmion.

¹²⁸ Ch. XI C and XXII C.

¹²⁹ Adonai.

Matsya, the fish was the first incarnation of Vishnu, whose object was to XIX save Vaivaswata (the seventh Manu who was the progenitor of the human - 11 race) from the flood (ch. V). Its history is written in many *Puranas* [128]. The fish incarnation was first mentioned in the *Satapatha Brahmana* [129], and the story is retold in the *Mahabharata* in several variants [130]. The Sumerian match of Matsya was the fish-god *Oannes* [131] who—like Matsya who taught Vaivaswata how to build up his ark—taught architecture (but also medicine, agriculture etc.) to people. The *Bhagavata Purana* describes the fight of the fish against the demon Hayagriva to get back the *Vedas* stolen from Brahma when the latter was asleep [132].

Kurma (deed; from *akarot*, to made, Sanskr. [133]), the tortoise was the XIX form taken next by the Great God in order to retrieve the things of value, - 12 which had been lost during the flood. Under this shape he went to the bottom of the Primordial Ocean to serve as support for the mountain Mandara. The gods and the demons twisted the great serpent Vasuki around the mountain and by using it as a rope, they pulled it and churned the sea until they got back the things that they wanted. There is a rich literature about this incarnation [134].

Varaha, the boar, was the third Avatar, which lifted the Earth that had XIX been dragged to the bottom of the sea by the demon Hiranyaksha (Golden- - 13 eyed, Sanskr.) [135]. Other Scriptures read about Prajapati who saw the Earth on the bottom of the Primordial Waters and dived as a boar into the waters to raise the Earth up [136]. Other times, the mythic boar is called Emusha [137], this name being mentioned, too, in the *Rig-Veda* but in a different circumstance [138]. Varaha enjoyed a high regard among the Hindus, a fact that is proved by the great number of texts dealing with this myth in various variants besides those above-mentioned [139].

Narasinha¹³⁰ (man-lion; from *nara*, man, *sinha*, lion, Sanskr.) was the XIX fourth incarnation of Vishnu who took that form to release the humans from - 14 the tyranny of the demon Hiranyakasipu (Golden-Vesture, Sanskr.) to whom immortality had been granted by Brahma himself. The history appears in various texts [140]. On Narasinha it was said: “This fearful man-beast is the greatest being wandering on the earth” [141]. “He is called valiant because he is the embodiment of valor... This man-lion is the very Yajur” [142]—that is his force and courage are virtues inspired to him by the stanzas of the *Yajur-Veda* and its teachings were impersonated by him.

The echoes of those ancient times came down to the Middle East. Due to the perversion produced by the demonic entities (*asuras*, Sanskr.), the

¹³⁰ Spelled also Narasimha, Nrisimha etc.

XIX Egyptians came to worship the effigy of the Sphinx (which was adopted
 18, 19 lately also by other Mediterranean peoples, for instance the Greeks) that
 actually was the reverse of the man-lion since—as one can see in the huge
 statue in Gizeh—it has a human upper part and a lion-like lower part, while
 for the Indian statues of Narasinha the superior half was lion-like and the
 inferior half was human. In spite of this, it was a time when Egypt had the
 XIX true knowledge as proven by the images of the goddess *Sekhmet* having the
 - 20 head of a lioness and the body of a woman [143]. *Sekhmet* (Mighty, Egypt.)
 was worshipped in Memphis and sometimes equated with *Astarte*, or even
 XIX with *Nut*. Originally, also the goddess *Bastet* (feline rendered later on as a
 21, 22 cat) was a lioness, and likewise was *Tefnut*. We should notice that the ancient
 Greeks praised the goddess *Pachet* bearing the head of a lioness (like the
 man-lion Narasinha) whose cult took place in Speos Artemidos [144].
 XIX Zimmer thinks that Hercules wearing the hide of the Nemean lion was the
 - 17 Greek correspondent of Narasinha.

Several data are suggestive for the historical existence of Narasinha.

XIX In Mesopotamia, *Naramsin*, the god of Akkad who fought against the
 - 15 Assyrians (*asuras*, see below) was portrayed as a gigantic warrior on a cliff
 wall¹³¹ in Shahrizor (Iraq). *Naramsin* designated himself as “king of the four
 regions of the world.” Savior of his people, *Naramsin* succeeded in
 overpowering a huge coalition of Hittites and Parsis backed by many
 Mesopotamian city-states. As a result, he was granted the nickname of the
 “divine *Naramsin*” and was honored as a god [145].

XIX In the Mithraeum, the god Mithra was portrayed as a lion-headed man,
 - 16 and Gasquet said that there are more than twenty representations of Mithra
 having the head of a lion or bearing a lion mask [146].

The first four Avatars of Vishnu were supposed by tradition to have
 appeared during the first cosmic age, the Satya Yuga.

XIX **Vamana**, the dwarf, was the fifth incarnation of Vishnu, and embodied as
 - 23 the son of Aditya and the sage Kashyapa. By that time, King Bali, the ruler of
 the titans Daitya, acquired the right to rule over the three worlds consequently
 to his devotion (*bhakti*, Sanskr.) and austerities (*tapas*, Sanskr.). Bali allowed
 Vamana to take for his own as much land as he could cover with three steps
 (*trivikrama*, three steps, Sanskr.; another name of Vishnu). With the first two
 steps Vishnu took control over the heaven and the earth after which, as a sign
 of respect for Bali’s virtues, let him reign over the infernal underworld
 (*Patala*). In other variant, Vamana took dominion over all the three regions.
 The history is recorded by many texts [147].

The story of Vamana finds its Iranian equivalent in the three steps of
Amesha Spenta.

¹³¹ The “Monument of Victory.”

Egyptian mythology that records Vishnu's previous Avatar, Narasinha, especially as his Shakti also refers to the dwarfed god *Bes*, regarded as a XIX foreign divinity having its origin outside Egypt. He was the protector of -24 humankind against evil entities [148], thus reminding not only Vamana's stature but also the control acquired by the last over the infernal region.

The first five Avatars acted on a *cosmic* level, the following three were mainly *heroic* in character, while the last two prevailed as *religious*. In the foregoing we will provide *historical evidences* about the *real existence* (not only as myths) of *all the heroic Avatars* and, of course, the *religious* ones.

The tradition mentioned three *Rama*. The first was Parashurama (Rama-with-the-axe, Sanskr.). The second (seventh incarnation of Vishnu) was *Ramachandra* (or *Rama*, in short). The third, called *Balarama* was the elder brother of the eighth Avatar, *Krishna*.

Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, re-established the social XIX order that had been disturbed by the revolt of the Kshatriyas against the -25 Brahmins. If the revolt had been a success it would let to tyranny hence to the society decay. By defeating the noblemen, Parashurama restored the principle of a monarchy controlled by the sages. Parashurama was under the protection of Shiva who has been the master of arms of the youngster and gave him many weapons including the axe at the origin of his surname [149]. The *double (double-headed) axe* of the Stone Age will become—in the Iron XIX Age—the divine *sword* (usually *two-edged*; ch. IV), that was taken over from -26 Judaism by Christians even up to the medieval times. -32

Parashurama prepared the way for the next incarnation, *Rama*, his contemporary. In the beginning, *Rama* was challenged by Parashurama but the last was defeated and his bow got as a present from Shiva was broken [150]. Parashurama was *Karna's* and *Arjuna's* master of arms, and fought against *Bhishma* [151]. On the Malabar Coast and the rest of the state of Kerala, the years are calculated after Parashurama's era (*Kollam andu*, Sanskr.), as solar years starting in September. The story of this Avatar appears in the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas* [152].

Parashurama is known in Greek mythology as *Zeus*.

We should not be surprised when equating these two names, one Hindu another Greek. Already we have mentioned the example of *Narasinha—Heracles—Pachet*. Indeed, there are enough reasons for this. The great indologist *Heinrich Zimmer* held that “many of the gods, beliefs, and observances of the Vedic age closely parallel those of the Homeric” [153]. *Bernard Breloer* and *Franz Bömer* published a collection of texts by Greek and Latin authors dealing with the history of the Indian Religions. *Georg Misch* drew a parallel between the stages of the Greek philosophy preceding *Plato* and the similar stages of the Indian and Chinese thinking by putting side

by side the texts in question. Vasilis Vitsaxis wrote about *Plato and the Upanishads* [154]. Another instance demonstrating the influence of the Indian spirituality on the Greek one is the exemplary case of Alexander the Great arriving in India, where he felt the need to fill the gape left by his former master Aristotle and took Kalanos¹³² as his Guru. This was not the only one Indian ascetic known by the Greeks, since other names were mentioned, too, in the records. The Greek invaders of India used to call the Jain ascetics (who walked completely nude): *gymnosophistai* (-és, for singular form, Gr.), i.e. sages walking in the nude (ch. XI E). Julius Solinus (3rd century AD) described even an *asana* frequently taken by these sages when staying all day long, alternatively on a single foot (*ferventibus perpetem diem alternis pedibus insistant*, Lat.). Indeed, this is the *padangusthasana* (“the fingers”). As shown by Antigonus of Karystos (3rd century BC) and Diogenes Laertius, the gymnosophists exerted certain influence on the thinking of Pyrrhon (c.365—c.275 BC), the founder of the Skeptic School. A. Daniélou wrote: “Alexander’s soldiers used to go to Nysa, the holy mount of Shiva called by them Dionysus, in order to venerate the god together with their brothers into faith. Heracles of Megasthene is the hero-god Krishna... Many of the legends concerning the founding of the monasteries in the Mount Athos are borrowed from the myth of Skanda¹³³—Shiva’s son born in a reed—whose cult is prohibited to the women, although Mother Goddess reigns upon the mountain where he retired to live a hermit life” [155]. At the end of the 4th century BC, Megasthene was the ambassador sent to King Chandragupta. Afterwards, Deimachus and Dionysus held a similar position next to Bindusara, the Maurya king.

Dumézil [156] remarks some analogies between the Indo-Iranian names and the biblical ones, for instance Akshaf¹³⁴ (Joshua 11:1; 12:20; 19:25) who had his exact homonym in the *Rig-Veda* [157].

From amongst many examples in the field of artistic compositions we will mention here the *three-eyed Zeus* on the Acropolis, in Argos [158], analogous to the god Shiva (*Tri-lochana*, Three-eyed, Sanskr.) the head of the Hindu pantheon as it is Zeus for the Greek one. The likeness does not stop here: we have seen (ch. VIII) the analogy between the supreme god Dyaus-Pitar (Sansk.) and Jupiter/Zeus. Now, we would like to stress on the interesting association between the most ancient holy Indian Scriptures, the *Vedas*, and the name of *Vediovis* in the Roman mythology given to the child Jupiter

¹³² His name has reached us in this Greek form.

¹³³ Karttikeya, Ganesha’s brother.

¹³⁴ Spelled also Achshaph (*King James Version*), Akshaph.

(*Iovis*, Lat.), the equivalent of the Greek *Zeus*. This name is used by Aulus Gellius [159], while Vitruvius and Ovid mentioned a shrine of this deity [160] whose traces were found in Rome between the fortress and the Capitol. Socrates [161] said about “the name of Zeus... some call him Zena” (life cause). In the *Iliad* [162] Zeus is called *Zén*, thus being linked with *Zoé* (Life, Gr., having also the form *zén*) because Zeus was considered “father of all” [163]. We should add that Zeus is connected with the eagle, in a similar way XIX as were other supreme gods: Yahweh (Deuteronomy 32:11; ch. XX B), and – 30 Lord Krishna (Vishnu) having Garuda as vehicle (ch. IV, IX). – 31

Some of the Greek deities were divine incarnation who lived on this earth, just as in the Indian old times. Therefore, we should not be surprised that in ancient times *Greece* had been “the land of *Grace*.” Unfortunately, the veneration granted to the Olympian divinities disappeared as the time went on and was replaced with the wish of descending the gods within the mundane by assigning them human defects. Xenophanes of Colophon (born c. 565 BC) reproached to people (he nominated Homer and Hesiod) the anthropomorphism they ascribed to divinities as well as the charging them with many violations of the laws: thefts, adulteries and deceiving of each other [164]. He regarded this attitude as inadmissible because “there is one god, greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in form or even in thought” [165], adding: “First of all the enlightened people should celebrate the deity by pure songs and holy myths” [166]. In his turn, Plato enunciated a severe but well-deserved judgment against the poets for the false manner in which they depicted the gods [167]. In ancient Greece the assimilation of the gods of Old Europe¹³⁵ into the Indo-European pantheon determined the creation of strange and even absurd or grotesque images. Such a process is strikingly visible in transforming goddess Athena¹³⁶ [169]. The parthenogenetic¹³⁷ goddesses gradually changed into brides, wives and daughters, received an erotic tinge, being bound through the principle of sexual love as a consequence of the patriarchal and patrilineal social system of the Indo-Europeans. From among the exceptions that escaped this metamorphosis altering their original essence there were Artemis of the

¹³⁵ This name is reminded here to refer to the pre-Indo-European period starting from 6500 BC and covering the Danubian-Balkan space. The fact corresponds to the period of Parashurama (Rama’s predecessor) who according to the tradition lived 8000 years ago. The tradition also maintains that Zeus has been worshipped ever since the period when the Greeks were not settled in the future Hellas [168].

¹³⁶ Corresponding to *Maha-Devi* (Great Goddess, Sanskr.)—ch. XX A.

¹³⁷ From *parthénos* (virgin, Gr.) and *génénesis* (birth, Gr.); cf. *swayambhu* (born from oneself, Sanskr.)—ch. XV A. The goddess was called *Athena Parthénos*.

Greeks, Brigit of the Irish and Laima¹³⁸ of the Baltic people. The Baltic goddess Laima appears in the mythological songs together with Dievas¹³⁹ (the Indo-European god of the celestial light), as a goddess with equal powers. In conclusion, myth became demythologized in the Greek culture, and the result was that over the following two and a half millennium the term *myth* came to stand for *fiction* in the European (western at least) culture.

The process of counterfeiting the original myths continued in the modern times, in more and more insidious and aberrant forms anchored in the same erotic impulses as in the decadent antiquity. We will mention again the bad example of Freud and his followers (ch. IX). Professor Clemen and W. Schmidt [170] criticized the errors of method, lack of information and discrimination, maniacal optics of the Freudians who gave a psychoanalytic explanation to the myths and rites [171].

Initially, the three great ancient civilizations of India, Egypt and Greece have had a profound spiritual knowledge, but in spite of the Indians who kept it unaltered throughout millenaries until this day, Egypt and Greece have corrupted it.

Like other great incarnations (Narasinha of whom we had already dealt with, Rama to whom it is assigned an ample commentary in the followings, and Jesus to whom we shall refer in detail in ch. XXIII A and B), Parashurama-Zeus was known over a large geographic area from India until the northern and western parts of the European continent. We have already seen that the axe was one of the specific attributes of Parashurama. However, also Gilgamesh used to carry a huge bronze axe and Zeus had, too, the axe as an attribute. Chevalier and Gheerbrant wrote: "all cultures associate the axe with thunder... The Maya and contemporary American Indians, the Celts and T'ang Dynasty Chinese all called stone axes «thunder stone» and said that they fell from Heaven... Its symbolism is linked with... duality of opposing and complementary forces, and associates the double-headed axe with the XIX caduceus, the *vajra* of the Hindus, Thor's hammer... An axe-blow split Zeus' - 29 skull and out sprang Athena" [172]. Under the same entry the two authors - 33 mention the stone hammer¹⁴⁰ of Thor and the stone axe of Parashurama. Adam of Bremen parallels Jupiter Tonans and Thor, the *potentissimus* god of thunder and thunderbolt (*tonitrus et fulminans*, Lat.) [173]. Hence, the relationship Zeus/Jupiter/Jovis-Thor-Donnar becomes obvious. All of them have in common not only the thunderbolt and the axe but also the same day:

¹³⁸ Close to the goddess Lakshmi, the Vishnu's Shakti.

¹³⁹ Akin to the Sanskrit words *Dyaus* (*Zeus*) and *Devas*.

¹⁴⁰ Mjöltnir.

Thursday, day of Thor; *Donnerstag*, day of Donnar, Germ.; *dies Jovis*, day of Jovis, Lat.; hence: *Giovedì*, day of Giove/Jovis, Ital.; *jeudi*, Fr.). We should add that the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh mentions the god of thunder, Ramman (Rimmon, Hebr.). Zeus can be connected, too, with Zalmoxis, the supreme god of the Dacians and A.B. “Cook concludes that Zalmoxis was the Thracian appellative of the newborn Zeus” [174]. Both Zeus and Zalmoxis had in common the ownership over thunderbolts and the axe (Zalmoxis was called “the god with double axe”). Like Zalmoxis, Zeus was known as god of human sacrifices, under the name of Laphystios [175]. Mihai Eminescu wrote that “Alexander went in India where in the Himalayas reside the *gods of the Dacians*; there he meets *Dochia* and learns wisdom from *Zalmox*” [176]. Zalmoxis is a controversial name but both the philologists and historians agreed on the fact that *zal* signifies “god.” In our opinion, *moxis* matches *moksha* (liberation, Sanskr.) and thus the name could be translated into the “god who grants moksha,” that is immortality. Indeed, Zalmoxis was regarded like this.

Kernbach wrote that “after a widespread myth, first and foremost Zeus was a king in Crete. He was called Kretagenes, born in Crete” [175]. Or, the axe of Zeus was the Cretan religious emblem [177]. This brings another argument for the historical existence of the incarnation named Zeus. Let us notice, however, that the legendary construction related to the myth of Theseus got the name of *labyrinth*, which means “the house of the double XIX axe” (*lábrys*¹⁴¹, Gr.). Although in the opinion of some Zalmoxis was a 27, 28 mythological character, many ancient writers granted him a historical reality and regarded him as a philosopher (Jordanes), high priest (Strabo), lawgiver (Diodorus Siculus), religious, cultural and political reformer (Herodotus, Diodorus, Jordanes, Origen), physician (Plato), civilizing hero (Herodotus, Strabo) maybe Messianic, prophet (Strabo) or king (Plato, Jordanes). Last but not least, Eliade thought that Zalmoxis belonged to the same spiritual family as Zoroaster and Pythagoras living even earlier than these ones [178]. Otherwise, the prominent scholar acknowledged the historical existence of other mythological characters too [179].

Ancient documents recorded the historical presence of some great incarnations regarded as gods. A temple dedicated to Zeus Triphylus (sending to triple deities: *Trimurti*, *Trigunas* etc.; ch. II) in the proximity of Panara, the main town of island Panchaia, contained a very old golden column bearing inscriptions in Panchaic letters—attributed to Zeus himself—hence the conclusion that sometimes the gods were incarnated as

¹⁴¹ The term has also the meaning of corridor having many rooms; hence the *labyrinth* designates the subtle system built up of channels (corridors) and chakras (rooms). From here it comes *lavra*, the assembly of monastic abodes.

kings. The text is mentioned by Euhemerus (*floruit* c. 300 BC) [180]. By the way of consequence, the myths reflected the deeds of prehistorical or historical characters that were transfigured or distorted because of confused recollections.

Through an odd occurrence, some of the apostles of Jesus were identified with Zeus-Jupiter and Hermes-Mercury (Acts 14:12) descended on the earth: “The gods, having made themselves like men, are coming down to us” (14:11).

XIX **Rama** (*Ramachandra*, he who is like the moon; from *chandra*, moon, -34 Sanskr.) was Vishnu’s seventh Avatar. He descended to earth in order to destroy the demon Ravana, the ruler of Lanka (Ceylon) who was the king of the demons called *rakshasas*. Although Ravana had been granted by Brahma the gift of being invulnerable against gods and demons, he was doomed to die through a woman. Then, Vishnu incarnated as *Rama*, the son of the king of Ayodhya of the solar race. Sita, Rama’s wife was kidnapped by Ravana and taken to Lanka from where she was eventually set free after the slaughter of Ravana. Although Sita had proved herself to still be innocent through the ordeal of fire, she was exiled to Valmiki’s hermitage where she gave birth to the twins Kush and Lav.

The myth narrated that in order to reach Lanka, Rama’s army crossed a bridge over the ocean. Such bridge was called later on Adam’s Bridge (see chapter III on Adam’s Peak in Lanka). Thousands years passed until satellite photographs (taken by NASA between 1989-1994) confirmed that legend, making visible the submersed link between Indian coast and the island of Lanka.

The pair Sita-Rama constitute incarnations of the eternal divine couple: Prajapati-Purusha, AdiShakti-SadaShiva (or Parvati-Shiva) etc. The *Puranas* read: “Sita is the Mother, Rama the Father, of the world... I bow to Her who is Contemplation, to Him the Object of contemplation... Sita is Fortune (Lakshmi) and You the Pervader; Sita is the fair Parvati and You the Lord-of-sleep (Shiva)” [181].

The *Upanishads* depicts Rama as a manifestation of the syllable AUM, actually the Hindu triad composed from some characters in the *Ramayana*: “From *A* came forth Brahma, the Creator, who became Jambavat, king of bears. From *U* came Vishnu (Upendra¹⁴²), who became Sugriva, king of the monkeys. From *M* sprang forth Shiva, who became the hero Hanuman... Beyond this [the magic repercussion of the syllable] is the Supreme Self, the Cosmic Man, who is Rama himself” [182].

Rama means *Charming*. Rama is “that which on earth charms or shines” [183]. “The mantra Rama... is an object of meditation (*man*, Sanskr.) and it

¹⁴² Literally: He who is above Indra (Sanskrit.)—one of Vishnu’s names.

protects (*tra*, Sanskr.), hence it is called a *mantra*” [184]. His equivalent in the Romanian fairy-tales was *Făt-Frumos* (Charming Son), while the *Charming Prince* (*charmant*, Fr.; notice the common root to *Rama*) was the match in the folklore of other people. These marvelous tales have a ground of deep significance since after overcoming—like Rama, whose story was told besides the *Ramayana*, especially in the *Puranas* [185] and in the *Mahabharata* [186]—a series of obstacles (blockages within the subtle body), the hero will succeed in awakening the sleeping beauty (as in the well-known homonym tale or in *Snow White*, with an extension also to the *Cinderella* etc.). The seven dwarfs (ch. IV) working on a mine of precious stones suggest the deities of the chakras and their specific jewels, while the glass coffin enclosing Snow White evokes the sacrum bone (ch. II). Therefore, these were nothing else than metaphors used to describe the awakening of the female Kundalini, the innermost reflection of the Goddess (here, Snow White equated *purity*; *nirmal*, Sanskr.). Likewise, Siegfried set free Brunhilde out of her enchanted sleep, after he defeated the dragon (i.e. he took in possession the Kundalini energy; ch. IX) and made his way through the cosmic fire (the path of the Kundalini) that protected the peak of the divine mountain (Sahasrara).

With the view of giving more information to the reader, we shall bring forward the assertions of a French scholar belonging to the Enlightenment movement, Fabre d’Olivet (1768-1825) who upholds the historical presence of Rama.

D’Olivet shows that before Ram (i.e. Rama), the Celts had Thor whose wife was Frega or Freya [187], a fact which confirms the historical succession of Parashurama (Thor)—Rama. The name of Ram was also known to the Druids as being connected to the healing properties of the mistletoe. Leaving the Celts, Ram crossed Europe reaching the Black Sea, then went northwards along river Don, crossed Volga and arrived at the Aral Sea¹⁴³. In those parts lives the Boreal race. After that Ram went to Turania where the inhabitants called the land of their ancestors Tat-arah from where the name of Tatars derived. “Ram... went out of Turan... and entered Iran to make there his conquests and settle down theocracy.” At length he arrived in India [188]. Indeed, many ancient Greek and Roman authors (even early Christians such as Clement of Alexandria) gave the name of Hyperboreans to the Dacians (Thracians) living north and south of the lower Danube (*Istrum*, Lat.) [189].

D’Olivet goes on about Rama as follows: “He is the one known under the XIX name of Lama, Fo, Pa, Pa-pa, Padi-Shah, or Pa-si-pa by Tibet, China, Japan – 35

¹⁴³ Here we find again the famous *Way of the Gods* that started on the land of Romania (the Gorges of Bâc) up to the Aral lake, and was described in the *Upanishads* under the name of *Devayana Path* (ch. I).

and the vast regions from northern Asia. He is the one called Giam-Shyd by the first ancestors of Persians, the Iranians, because he was the first monarch of the world or the first ruler of the dark-skinned¹⁴⁴ people; for those people were called *the people of Giam* or *of Giam-ben-Giam* as the Arabs called them. According to the *Zend-Avesta* the last Zoroaster brought him homage, placing him a long time before the first prophet called by that name and denoting him as the first man blessed by Ormuzd with divine inspiration. Here is a quotation from the *Zend-Avesta* [190]: «Zoroaster asked for the advice of Ormuzd saying: O, Ormuzd, who are absorbed in excellence, righteous Judge of the World... who is the first man who asked for your advice as I do?... Then Ormuzd said... the pure Giam-Shyd, chief of peoples and herds, O holy Zoroaster, he was the first man who asked for my advice as you do now. In the beginning, I told him, I Ormuzd: obey my Law... meditate on it and take it to your people... Then he ruled... I put a golden sword in his hands. He went forward towards the light, towards the south and found there a beautiful land... ». Everywhere, he called him Ruler of the Peoples and herds, almighty and most happy Monarch. He was the one who turned agriculture into the first science” [191].

“Arrian, who undoubtedly wrote after the original traditions, reports that from that theocrat until Sandrocottus who was defeated by Alexander, there was a period of six thousand four hundred and two years. Pliny fully agreed with Arrian, though he does not seem to have copied the former... However, since it is a common fact that Alexander’s expedition in India took place 316 years before Christ, the conclusion is that from Ram’s time until the present year 1821 there was a period of 8550¹⁴⁵ years” [192]. Thus, the text confirms the Hindu tradition placing Rama’s epoch approximately 8000 years ago. On the other side, the tradition claimed that the Chinese Empire was founded in the year 6000 BC by Fo-hi¹⁴⁶ (see *supra* the equivalence Rama—Fo) who introduced the use of calendar, music rules, medicine and sacrificial rituals.

Along the same line of Fabre d’Olivet, “Maurice Granet told that there was only one civilization from the shore of Ireland up to those of Manchuria. What he meant by it—according to Dumézil—was that ever since prehistoric times, no natural obstacle could prevent the eruptive or osmotic communication from one end to the other of northern Eurasia plane cut only

¹⁴⁴ The native population of India before the Arian invasion, the Dravidians were dark-skinned.

¹⁴⁵ More exactly: 8539 years.

¹⁴⁶ The first Chinese emperor Fo (Fu) Xi (Hi, Hsi, Si etc.) and his wife Nu (Nü) Wa (Kua, Hua, Gua etc.) were not legendary characters (ch. IX) but historical persons that after some authors lived about 3000 BC.

by the easy accessible Ural chain” [193].

Another example could be the cult of Isis (see also ch. XX A) whose sphere was not confined to Egypt (as early as 3000 BC) but reached Greece in the 3rd century BC where the goddess had a shrine on the Acropolis and a temple at Delos, then spread throughout the Roman Empire (where flourished until the general introduction of Christianity), even to the borders of the Danube and the Rhine. After Merlin Stone, Isis is the Greek translation for the Egyptian goddess *Au Set*. In a hymn from the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* goddess Isis is identified with Maya of the Hindu: (*Isin*) *en tois 'Indois Maian* (Gr.) [194].

According to the traditional chronology, Vamana, Parashurama and Rama appeared during the Treta Yuga.

Krishna (*Dark One* or *Attractive*; from *krish*, to draw, Sanskr.) was the XIX eighth incarnation of Vishnu. He was one of the heroes of the *Mahabharata* - 36 and of the *Bhagavad-Gita* particularly in which He identified Himself as the Supreme Being: “By Me all this universe is pervaded through My unmanifested form. All beings abide in Me but I do not abide in them” [195]. The *Mahabharata* and the *Vishnu Purana* said that Vishnu plucked two of his hairs: a black one and a white one that entered the womb of Devaki and Rohini. The former gave birth to Krishna, the latter to Balarama. Krishna killed many demons either in the form of animals or humans, amongst who XIX was his own uncle Kansa. He was the charioteer of Arjuna on the famous - 37 battlefield of Kurukshetra. Other details will be given within the topic regarding the next incarnation, The divinity of Krishna is more evident in the *Harivamsha*, a late addition to the *Mahabharata* and especially in the *Bhagavata Purana* describing in detail his life. Other writings less elaborate are also known [196].

The forces of evil manifested as demons. In Hinduism some of them were called *Asuras*. In the earliest parts of the *Rig-Veda*, this term was similar to *Ahura* of the Zoroastrians (Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme divinity). In the sense XIX of *god* it was applied to several of the chief deities such as Indra, Agni, and - 39 Varuna. Later it acquired the opposite meaning and came to signify a demon or enemy of the gods (becoming through the prefix *a-* the negation of *sura*, god—from the root *swar*¹⁴⁷, to shine; analogous to *deva*—from *div*, with the same meaning, Sanskr. [197]; another etymology is said to come from the root *as*, to frighten away, Sanskr.). A similar circumstance occurs, too, in the Greek mythology where originally *daimónion*¹⁴⁸ meant god.

Here we can recognize also Lucifer (meaning: the Shining), the fallen XIX

- 41

¹⁴⁷ Wherefrom it comes *swarga* (heaven, Sanskr.).

¹⁴⁸ Hence it comes *demon*.

angel (recalled in Isaiah 14:12), as an earlier variant. In the *Book of Job*, Antichrist was still a son of God and a representative of Yahweh [198]. In close connection we signal a painting from 1457 of the French School, existing in the Basel Museum [199]. Here, in the extremities of a rhombus are depicted: the Father, above; then the Son who appears two times in almost XIX identical but reversed features on both sides of the center; and Virgin Mary - 42 placed below of them.

The Sanskrit word *asura* was etymologically related to the Mesopotamian XIX god *Assur* who gave His name to the city and then to the country (*Assyria*). - 38 The cruelty of the Assyrians was well known to all the ancient peoples. Isaiah (ch.7) presented the Assyrians in opposition to Immanuel, the Son of the Virgin, who was announced as part of the prophecy about the defeat of the XIX Assyrians. God had sent the Assyrians as an instrument of punishment against - 40 Israel. "Ah! The Assyrian! The rod of mine anger and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge" (10:5-6). However, the forces of evil would be finally destroyed. "When the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and upon Jerusalem, I will push the fruit of the stoutness of heart of the king of Assyria" (10:12). "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Yahweh of the hosts: «O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian; he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thou... for yet a very little while, and the indignation shall be accomplished, and mine anger, in their destruction»" (10:24,25; cf. 14:25-27).

A. Daniélou also supported the historical reality of Rama and Krishna: "Rama and Krishna are both Kshatriyas; they belong to the warrior caste and not to the priestly class. Both are depicted in dark color. There is a little doubt that, in their historical appearances, they impersonate ancient heroes of the non-Aryan tradition incorporated into the Aryan pantheon at a comparatively late period" [200]. He has seen that god Krishna was regarded as the incarnation of Vishnu, a manifestation of the Supreme Divinity sent on the earth to eradicate the evil. His vehicle was the eagle Garuda (ch. IV, IX). Indeed, the *Bible* recorded that God said that He called "a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country" (Isaiah 46:11). "Who raised up from the east him who righteousness calleth to its foot?" (41:2) "I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come,—from the rising of the sun, he will call upon my name; and he shall come upon princes as on mortar" (41:25). Verily, on the one side, as compared to Palestine, Krishna's birthplace Mathura is located eastward and at a northern latitude. On the other side, Krishna has killed many demons incarnated as tyrannical princes: Kansa, Pralamba, Naraka, Jambha, Pitha the great Asura, Muru and others.

Also the Colombians still recalls of a god who came from the East traveling on the wings of a condor, and this is a surprising fact.

The Buddha is the name given to the ninth incarnation, which is of the utmost importance to our study dealing with the relationship between India and the *Bible*.

The historical Buddha, Prince *Siddharta*¹⁴⁹ *Gautama* (c.560¹⁵⁰-c.480 BC) was born in Kapilavastu as the son of the leader of the Sakya tribe. He married at the age of 16 and had a son when he was 29 years old. When he reached this age he gave up the opulent life and became an ascetic isolating himself from the rest of the world. That's why people called him *Sakyamuni* (the silent sage from the tribe Sakya, Sanskr.). He tried to get the enlightenment from masters belonging to *Samkhya* and *Yoga* Schools. He spent many years of severe penances, and was about to die. Hence, he warned his disciples against fasting and similar excess (cf. ch. XX C2, XXV A, B, C). Eventually, he abandoned this way and retired to meditate under a banyan tree where the Adi Shakti granted him the Self Realization (Enlightenment). At the age of 35 he started to preach his new doctrine (*Dhamma*) to a group of disciples gathered in Sarnath. His discourses were got together under the form of *suttas*. His history is narrated in the *Puranas* [201].

Like Hindus, Buddhists resort to *mantras*. Gautama established three mantras that are used throughout the meditation for liberating the ego out of mental bondage. They are:

Buddham sharanam gachchhami (I take refuge near the Enlightened Spirit, Sanskr.).

Sangham sharanam gachchhami (I surrender the ego to the collective¹⁵¹ of realized souls, Sanskr.).

Dharmam sharanam gachchhami (I surrender the ego to the Dharma, the virtue, Sanskr.).

Gachchhami meaning is: I dwell, I take refuge in the Buddha, Sangha, Dharma (Triratna).

Gautama repeatedly said that he just followed “the ancient way,” the timeless doctrine shared by the saints and the “perfectly awakened” ones of past times [202].

The last words uttered by Siddharta before entering final or perfect *nirvana* (extinction, Sanskr.) called *parinirvana* (Sansk.) urged at realizing the union with the Divine (*Yoga*, Sanskr.): “Strive for the awakening” [203],

¹⁴⁹ He whose goal is reached.

¹⁵⁰ Various historians give different years between 567 and 558 BC.

¹⁵¹ *Sangha*.

which means the awakening of the Kundalini, the vehicle of Self Realization. Actually, the nirvana state should be understood as the extinction of the ego, while *moksha* (liberation, Sanskrit., see *infra*) represents the release from both “I” and “Thou.”

After the death of Gautama in Kushinagara, the leadership of the Buddhist community was taken over by Sriputra who behaved towards Buddha’s original doctrine as Paul did to the teachings of Jesus (ch. XX C2b).

Subsequently, the Buddhism split into two distinct schools: the *Hinayana* (Small Vehicle), the purest form dedicated to the *individual* salvation by reaching the state of nirvana, and the *Mahayana*¹⁵² (Great Vehicle) aiming at the salvation of *the whole mankind* through realizing the state of *Bodhisattva*. Thus, the Mahayanic wish is to “save all living beings down to the last blade of grass” so that everything “becomes Buddha” [204]. The Hinayana (or *Sthaviravada*, Sanskr., *Theravada*, Pali—meaning “Way of the Elders”) gains support only from the old scriptural corpus written in Pali, while the Mahayana adds to this one its own corpus written in Sanskrit. The Bodhisattvas are those who in spite of reaching the perfection (enlightenment) dedicate their divine existence for the salvation of the people and give up to nirvana. From amongst the most renowned Bodhisattvas we would mention *Avalokiteshwara* (Supervisory Lord), *Amitabha* or *Amida* (Perfection of Wisdom), *Kshitigarbha* (Sanskrit.; *Ti-tsang*, Chin.; *Jizo*, Japan.), *Vajrapani*, *Manjushri*. In Chinese Buddhism, the masculine Avalokiteshwara of India was equated to the feminine compassionate *Kuan Yin* (*Kuan-shih-yin*; *Guanyin*, Pinyin), known in Japan as *Kannon* (*Kanzeon*, *Kanjizai*), and in Tibet as the multi-armed *Chenresi(g)*.

Buddhism as well as Yoga are meditation traditions devised to help us transcending karma and rebirth, developing a higher awareness (enlightenment), and realize the truth of the Self (ch. XIX C). Both emphasize the need to dissolve the ego (the third of the above Buddhist mantras), and return to the original reality. Both recognize Dharma as the basic law of the universe, and see karma as the main causal factor behind rebirth in the world, with the difference that in Buddhism karma is said to be a self-existent principle, contrary to the Yoga tradition. Both systems regard the integration in the Absolute as a primary goal of practice, but while the in Theravadin tradition nirvana is described negatively as cessation, in the Vedic systems it is regarded as a positive way of union with Brahman (*Brahma nirvana*), release (*moksha*; see *supra*). While Vedanta acknowledges the Absolute as a metaphysical principle Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*,

¹⁵² Its foundation is attributed to Nagarjuna (2nd or 3rd century AD), the author of *Prajna-paramita* (Transcendent Wisdom *prajna* arrived at the Distant Shore, *param-ita*, Sanskr.).

Sanskr.), or as Brahman in which there is liberation and perfect peace, Buddhism does recognize the Absolute which is non-dual and beyond birth and death not allowing it any definition. Yet, some modern Buddhist teachers use the term God and make it equivalent to the Buddha-nature. There is also the figure of the Adi Buddha (Primordial Buddha) resembling to God. By recognizing God, Yoga admits devotion and surrender to the Divine Father and Mother as one of the main spiritual paths (*Bhakti*¹⁵³ *Yoga*). Buddhism recognize devotion to the Buddha, but neither the Buddha nor the Bodhisattvas are regarded as deities or gods (goddesses) but just as guides. Zimmer explained: “The Buddha had begun as a Hindu. Moreover, the Hindu gods had attended him (according to the Buddhist legend) at every stage of his progress. He remained, in other words, within the sphere of India’s traditional philosophy, only approaching its classic problem of release (moksha) from a fresh and revivifying point of view. The range of his interests and effort corresponded precisely to that of the contemporary Brahminic thinkers. And so, in due time, the two systems came practically together. Sharing ideas, problems, and methods, their protagonists argued out the same questions in the same city and village parks and courtly gardens, until, at last, the practical distinction between their two approaches disappeared. Whether one worshipped Vishnu or the Bodhisattva, Shiva or the Buddha, whether one sought release in Brahman or in the all-containing alaya¹⁵⁴, the methods to be followed were practically identical, the attitudes toward the divine guru hardly distinguishable, and the grounds for an honest fundamental argument impossible to find” [205]. However, more than two millenniums ago Buddhist masters started the corruption of Lord Buddha’s truth and succeeded in making Buddhism as distinct as possibly from Hinduism. Eliade wrote in his turn: “The Buddha never consented to give his teachings the structure of a system. Not only did he refuse to discuss philosophical problems, he did not even issue pronouncements on several essential points of his doctrine... His refusal to let himself drawn into speculations of any kind is categorical... The negation of a Self, subject to transmigration but able to free itself and attain nirvana, raised problems. This is why the Buddha on several occasions refused to answer questions concerning the existence or non-existence of the Atman... As he never ceased to repeat, he preached the cessation of suffering and the means of accomplishing it. The countless controversies concerning the Self and the nature of nirvana found their solutions in the experiment of Enlightenment” [206].

¹⁵³ Devotion (Sanskr.).

¹⁵⁴ Abode (Sanskr.), understood as the eternal repository.

The Buddha (Enlightened One) is a collective name given to the manifested forms of the divinity descended on the Earth as saviors. Each cosmic era has its Avatara or its Buddha. The historic Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama was only one of these thirty-six Buddhas (see also ch. XXIII A), and manifested *Bodhi* (Enlightenment), just as all the other Buddhas manifested it before him. His Illumination was only the actualization of an eternal reality, that of Nirvana, which bursts forth whenever the human spiritual evolution permits or demands it (the same as Vishnu's restoration of the Dharma). Gautama himself described the situation like this: "The Blessed One¹⁵⁵ spoke and said: «Know Vasettha, that from time to time a Tathagata¹⁵⁶, is born into the world, a fully enlightened one, blessed and worthy, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy with the knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to erring mortals, a teacher of Gods and men, a Blessed Buddha. He proclaims the truth both in its letter and its spirit, lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation. A higher life doth he make known in all its purity and in all its perfectness»" [207]. "Indeed, o monks, I became, too, Sakkra, ruler of the gods thirty-six times" [208]. Likewise, Mahavira was the twenty-fourth of the Jain redeemers called *Tirthankara* (literally: maker of waves; he who opens the way through the flow of time towards the final liberation and bliss on the opposite, transcendent shore).

All the Buddhas were expressions of the unique transcendent essence, the *Adi Buddha* (Primordial Buddha, of the beginnings, Sanskr.) or *Lokeshha* (Master of the Universe, Sanskr.) corresponding to Prajna, the Supreme Being in Hinduism. The next Buddha would be the *Buddha Maitreya*¹⁵⁷ (announced by both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism) coming after Gautama, who declared: "I am now the Perfect Buddha; and there will be Maitreya too before this same auspicious aeon runs to the end of years" [209]. The *Digha Nikaya* recorded the following words of Gautama: "In those days, brethren, there will arise in the world an Exalted One named Metteya. He will be an Arhant, Fully Awakened, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher for gods and men, an Exalted One, a Buddha, even as I am now" [210].

¹⁵⁵ Buddha.

¹⁵⁶ Name given to Buddha by his followers. Literally: He who came (*agata*, Sanskr.) verily (*tatha*, Sanskr.); in other version: He who comes and leaves at the same time, thus denoting the detachment of the Enlightened One.

¹⁵⁷ The Savior.

Kersten [211] and other authors [212] have equated Jesus of Nazareth with XIX Buddha Maitreya, since the Messiah has the same meaning of “Savior.” In 43, 44 a more creditable rendering, however, *Maitreya* (Sanskrit; *Metteya*, Pali; *Miroku*, Japan.; *Mi-lo-fi*, Chin.; *Maidari*, Mongol.; *Byams-pa*, Tibetan) is *Matraiya*, translated through *Three Mothers* (Sanskrit): Maha-Lakshmi, Maha-Saraswati and Maha-Kali, namely the *powers* of the three subtle channels (central, right and left), thus indicating the incarnation of the Feminine divine aspect (Shakti).

Chapter VIII has signaled the interest of many experts in the various analogies amongst the great personalities marking the spiritual history of humankind: Moses, Rama, Zoroaster etc.

Quite many were those who drew a parallel between the Buddha Gautama and Jesus [213]. Both births were preceded by the Annunciation of the mothers by an elephant and the archangel Gabriel (Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:26-35), respectively. In Gautama’s case too we find an immaculate conception: the sacred elephant entered the bosom (right hip) of the virgin Maya making her pregnant. Gautama took birth during the travel to the Lambini forest, and the birth of Jesus accompanied the journey towards Bethlehem (Luke 2:4,7). Soon after the birth, three Magi did homage to Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12), and Gautama was visited by four kings. The infant Gautama was recognized by the old Brahmin Asita who predicted that the child will become the Buddha, the savior, the guide to eternal life, liberty and light. Likewise, Jesus was recognized by Simeon: “My eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation of [the] Gentiles and [the] glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32). When he was twelve years old, the Buddha was lost and found under a tree, surrounded by singers and sages of the old, hearing his sermon. At the same age, his parents have lost Jesus in Jerusalem, where “they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and hearing them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). Gautama started his spiritual lifework, as Jesus did (Luke 3:23), around the age of 30, when he became an ascetic who isolated himself from the world and received his enlightenment. In the same way, Tirthankara Parsvanatha (Master Parsva) who preceded Mahavira, became an ascetic at the age of 30, and a pilgrim amongst the people who received his teachings. Similar to Jesus, the Buddha revealed his doctrine to his disciples when he was 35. The Enlightened of the East was greeted by a woman with the following words: “Happy the mother, happy the father, happy the woman to whom you belong!” Hearing these words, he replied: “Happy are only those who are in nirvana!” In the same manner, a woman told Jesus: “«Blessed is the womb that has borne thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked». But he said: «Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the

word of God and keep [it]»” (Luke 11:27-28). Just as Jesus did (Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-2), Gautama fasted and made penance for forty days and forty nights, and while being tempted by the devil Kama-Mara (Desire and Death, Sanskr.) he replied: “Well, I know that a kingdom is given to me, but I do not covet a worldly kingdom; I will become a Buddha and everybody will enjoy.” Also Christ was tempted in the wilderness by the devil to whom he said: “Get thee away, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt do homage to [the] Lord thy God, and him alone shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10; cf. Luke 4:8). Both Gautama and Jesus walked on water. They both delivered their teachings in parables, maxims and examples. They had twelve disciples from whom the first two were brothers. Like Jesus, Gautama had a favorite (his cousin Anand called the “first protector of the law”) and a traitor (Devadatta) among his disciples. They both criticized the dogmatic religions preached by the Brahmins and the Pharisees respectively, and were against animal sacrifices. In subsidiary, we should mention that the Essene Jewish sect rejected this kind of sacrifice. We remind that Isaiah reported the words of God, saying: “In the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of he-goats I take no pleasure” (1:11). “He that slaughtereth an ox, smiteth a man” (66:3). Jesus “overthrew... the seats of those that sold the doves” (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15). “He found in the temple the sellers of oxen and sheep and doves... and, having made a scourge of cords, he cast [them] all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen;... and he said to the sellers of doves: «Take these things hence»” (John 2:14-16).

Nevertheless, beyond these more or less formal analogies, we believe that there were much deeper and subtler aspects. Both Gautama and Jesus were unquestionably manifestations of the divine in a human shape but—as Sahaja Yoga explains—revealing an essential difference, dealing with their rank both within the cosmic structure of the Virata and within the human subtle body that reflects the latter: Jesus who was the incarnated principle of the Divine Son presides over the center of the Agya chakra, while Gautama controls its right aspect (the ego).

However, if we really are tempted to find a parallel, we should rather take Jesus and Krishna as our choice. One cannot deny several similarities between the *Mahabharata* and the Christian ethics that were analyzed by Theofil Simenschy [214]. Jung also wrote about the “unmistakable analogies between certain Indian and Christian ideas, which gave rise to conjectures of Indian influences on Christianity” [215]. At any rate, between Jesus and Krishna there exist both formal and subtle analogies, since they are successive incarnations of Vishnu, the Principle of Evolution.

To start with, there is a striking likeness between the two names: Christ—Krishna. Moreover, the name of Krishna’s adoptive mother was

Yeshoda who used to call the little Krishna *Yeshu*, after her name. However, as we have seen in chapter XVI, Jesus was called *Yeshu* or *Yeshua* derived from the Hebrew word *yeshu* meaning salvation.

Like Jesus through various prophecies (ch. XVI), the prophet sage Narada announced Krishna as it is written in the *Bhagavata Purana* and both of them dedicated their lives on this earth to destroy the manifestations of evil.

The prophecy in the *Atharva-Veda* says: “Blessed art thou, Devaki, among all women, welcome amid the holy Rishis¹⁵⁸. Thou hast been chosen for the work of salvation... He will come with a lightened crown, and heaven and earth will be full of joy... Virgin and Mother, we greet you; thou art the mother of us all¹⁵⁹, for thou wilt give birth to our savior. Thou shalt call him Krishna” [216]. The Archangel Gabriel, messenger of God, addressed the following words to Mary: “Hail, [thou] favored one! The Lord [is] with thee; blessed art thou amongst women... Behold, thou shalt conceive in the womb and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus! He shall be great, and shall be called Son of [the] Highest” (Luke 1:28,31,32).

The *Atharva-Veda* tells us that the tyrant Kansa saw a falling star. Just as Herod who talked to the Magi, Kansa asked a sage Brahmin about its significance. The sage revealed that God would send a Savior because the world had become wicked. The star was none other than Vishnu Himself who descended to take the form of Krishna, the one who was destined to punish evil and lead mankind forward along a new path.

Knowing that the Savior would be Devaki’s eighth son (Krishna was the eighth incarnation of Vishnu), Kansa ordered that all her children should be killed. However, just as with Jesus, Krishna was miraculously saved, leaving the place of his birth. On finding out about this, the tyrant decided that every male baby that gave signs of vigor should be put to death. One can notice the analogy to the massacre of infants ordered by Herod.

Krishna spent among the shepherds his childhood and adolescence. When playing the flute, he induced to the audience an ineffable state of joy or bliss (*ananda*, Sanskr.) neighboring the ecstasy reached by the realized souls (saints). The same happened when they were dancing the *raas* (ch. XV F) hearing the divine song played on the same instrument. When drawing a parallel between the two great Avatars, Krishna and Jesus, we should remember the words of the latter: “We have piped to you, and ye have not danced” (Matthew 11:17) supporting our hypothesis. Otherwise, Christ’s words would have been rather odd. Besides, the visionary Isaiah (30:29), refers to the “joy of heart, as of one who goeth with a pipe.”

¹⁵⁸ Sages (Sanskrit).

¹⁵⁹ This is the meaning for the name of *Eve* (Genesis 3:21).

When he was sixteen, Krishna left his family, to spread his teachings throughout India, as Jesus did (ch. XXIII A). The miracles performed were similar to those worked by Christ: healing the sick people by a simple touch, raising the dead, destroying the demons, multiplying the food, being simultaneously present in different places, producing visions [217]. Just as Jesus did, Krishna descended into hell from where he raised his six brothers, who were all killed by Kansa.

Like Christ, Krishna criticized corruption. The latter did not intend to preach a new religion but only to renew and cleanse the existing religion from exaggerations and false knowledge that were in it. He too advised man to repay evil with good, to love one's enemy and forgive instead of seeking revenge. Like Jesus, Krishna was free from attachments, and lived the simple and modest life of a tireless pilgrim.

Krishna told his favorite disciple, Arjuna: "He who does work for me, he who looks upon me as his goal, he who worships me, free from attachment¹⁶⁰, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to me" [218]. John, the disciple who was closest to Jesus, wrote down the following statement from his Master: "If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth¹⁶¹, and the truth shall set you free¹⁶²" (8:31-32). The synoptic gospels added the Savior's urge: "Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you" (Luke 6:27; cf. 6:35; Matthew 5:44).

Like Jesus, Krishna is the Primordial Word: "I am the syllable OM in all the *Vedas*; I am the sound in ether" [219]. He acknowledged, like Christ, that he was the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end: "Of creations I am the beginning, the end and also the middle, O Arjuna... Of letters I am the *A*" [220].

The identity of both incarnations of Vishnu known as Krishna and Jesus explains enough why the Avatar of Jesus was known in the Hindu Scriptures under the name of *Maha-Vishnu* (Great Vishnu, Sanskr.) long time before his birth. L. Heart shined in this respect: "The creation of Lord Jesus Christ as Maha-Vishnu, the son of Shri¹⁶³ Krishna was foretold in Markandeya's

¹⁶⁰ It concerns the liberation (*moksha*, Sanskr.) out of the reincarnation chain (ch. XXIV) that allows the soul to be united (*Yoga*, Sanskr.) to God.

¹⁶¹ The knowledge (*vidya*, Sanskr.) of the Truth about the Kundalini and Self Realization (Yoga).

¹⁶² It shall grant you the *moksha*.

¹⁶³ *Shri* (Sanskrit)—like *Sir*, *Sire* (unabridged form: *Messire*), all coming from *senior* (Lat.), with their variants *monsieur*, *monsignor*, *monseigneur*, *seigneur*, *messieur* etc.—is a title of reverence signifying Lord or Lady.

Shrimad Devi Bhagavatam. Constellations and galaxies of energy are roaring in each dust particle of His skin. Mother Mary, the incarnation of Mahalakshmi, will see this cosmic giant of divine forces, Her Son, being hung on a cross to die” [221]. Here there are some excerpts from the original text describing His birth and depicting Him as the beginning and the end of the creation: “Narayana said:... There was a powerful Child, lustrous like one thousand millions of sun... This Boy is the Sole Stay of all this Universe and He is denominated by the name «Maha-Vishnu». In His every pore countless universes are existing. So much so that even Shri Krishna could not count them... The Lord, the Bestower of boon, granted Him boons appropriate for the moment. «O Child! Let you possess knowledge like Me... let you be the holder of innumerable Brahmadas¹⁶⁴ until the time of Pralaya¹⁶⁵. Be without any selfishness, be fearless and the bestower of boons to all... ». Thus saying, He repeated thrice on his ear the six-lettered¹⁶⁶ great Mantra... Shri Krishna then, spoke in sweet words: «O Child!... Let you divide yourself in parts and turn into smaller Virata in every universe. Brahma will spring from your navel and will create the cosmos. From the forehead of that Brahma will spring eleven Rudras for the destruction of the creation. But they will all be parts of Shiva. The Rudra named Kalagni, of these eleven Rudras, will be the destroyer of all this Vishwas¹⁶⁷. Besides, from each of your subdivisions, the Vishnu will originate and the Bhagavan Vishnu will be the Preserver of this Vishwa world... Your Mother, who resides in My breast, will be no difficult for You to see... ». Saying thus Shri Krishna, the Lord of World disappeared... Thus, from the pores of that great Virata each universe has sprung and in every universe there is one small Virata, one Brahma, one Vishnu and one Shiva and Sanaka¹⁶⁸ and others” [222].

In full agreement with the texts similar to the above-mentioned ones, Jehan de Mandeville wrote in his *Travels* that four thousand years before the birth of the Savior, the gymnosophists (i.e. yogis; see above) were knowledgeable of the prophecies announcing His Embodiment [223].

Like any other manifested form of the Vishnu Principle, Christ incarnated

¹⁶⁴ Universes (literally: egg of Brahma, Sanskr.).

¹⁶⁵ Universal dissolution (Sansk.).

¹⁶⁶ Maha-Vishnu/Jesus opened the sixth Primordial Chakra in the Virata (ch. XIX C).

¹⁶⁷ Universes.

¹⁶⁸ The four (seven after others) sons born by Brahma’s mind, out of whom the most important is Sanat-Kumara.

with the view of sustaining (saving, redeeming) the Creation. Thus, He is the *Sustenance of All* (*Omnitenens*, Lat.) in the Eastern Church liturgy according to a variant of Revelation 1:8 depicting Him as He “who is to come, the Sustainer of All,” although otherwise He is called the Almighty (*Pantokrátor*, Gr.; *Omnipotens*, Lat.). Also Augustine calls Him “omnitenens” [224]. Likewise, the inscription on a gold chalice in Mount Athos by Photis (1621) described Jesus as “the Sustenance to all.” This divine quality appears in Islam too where God is *Dhabet al-kull* (He who sustains all, Arab.). Thus, as early as the opening surah (1.2) that presented the qualities of Allah, God is depicted as “Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds” [225]. The All-Powerful appears in the widespread Qur’anic formula (2.19, 103, 284; 3.25 etc.): *Huwa ‘ala kulli shay ‘in qadir* (He is powerful over everything, Arab.).

A. Daniélou acknowledges, too, the obvious parallel between Krishna and Jesus [226], as well as Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan [227].

Therefore, the ninth incarnation was Jesus, the Great Vishnu, although it is usually known under the general name of “the Buddha” (the Enlightened One).

We may suppose that the appellation of *the Buddha* given to the ninth Avatar was used in order to facilitate the acceptance of Buddhism. That reminds the substitution of the heathen deity of Sol Invictus through Jesus (ch. XVII). A. Daniélou reached the following conclusion: “It had been denied that the Buddha avatar represents Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism” [228]. Buddhist manuscripts refer to Jesus as *Buddha Issa* (ch. XXIII A). That is why we should not be surprised when Jesus is called “the real Buddha” in the ancient Chinese Christian texts [229]. Last but not least, the well-known author of studies in comparative religion, Frithjof Schuon acknowledged that Christ was “the ninth incarnation of Vishnu¹⁶⁹” [230]. Other examples will be given in chapter XXIII A.

Those sent by the Divine to save humankind were all mentioned by the ancient traditions of many peoples to have been born by a virgin and were even created by immaculate conception, since chastity is a woman’s greatest power. This was the only way for a divine incarnation, especially for the divine Son, to enter the world without sin. This has happened in the cases of Krishna, the Buddha Gautama and Jesus. Providential birth involves the divine choice “even from the mother’s womb,” thus confirming what has been shown about the penetration of the divine vibrations (Kundalini) as early as the embryo formative interval (ch. II). “Yahweh called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother” (Isaiah 49:1). Other instances of predestination occurring in the *Bible* are those of Samson: “the boy shall be a Nazarite of God from the womb” (Judges 13:7), of Jeremiah: “Before I

¹⁶⁹ See also ch. XXIII B.

formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I hallowed thee, I appointed thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5); and of John the Baptist: “He shall be filled with [the] Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15) etc.

The Old Testament often used the symbol of the *Virgin* to depict a nation: “the Virgin daughter of Zion” (Isaiah 37:22; Lamentations of Jeremiah 2:13), “the Virgin of Israel” (Jeremiah 18:13; Amos 5:2), the “Virgin daughter of Egypt” (Jeremiah 46:11), the “Virgin, daughter of Sidon” (Isaiah 23:12), the “Virgin daughter of Babylon” (47:1) etc.

For the Christian theology Mary’s virginity is the cornerstone, because without it there would be no redemption of mankind from the “original sin” (ch. IX). The *Qur’an* (21.91; 23.52; 66.12) acknowledges her virginity, too. Virginity equates liberation from “sin” into which sexuality was originally transformed. We should notice that 8th of September, the birthday of Mary lies under the astrological sign of Virgo (Virgin).

Ganesha, the non-incarnated Divine Son, appeared in the first moment of Creation, born by the virgin Gauri through immaculate conception. Likewise, the virgin Satyavati gave birth to Vyasa.

We could mention as models of chastity in Hindu tradition: Ahalya, Sita, Mandodari, Draupadi, Tara.

Thoth (Egyptian messenger, the equivalent of the Greek Hermes and the Hebrew Gabriel) has announced the Virgin-queen Mautmes that she will bear a son from the Sun-god Ra. According to Flinders Petrie, Moses means in Egyptian “unfathered son of a princess,” that is the Royal son of a Virgin [231]. Other instances of unblemished creation were mentioned in the cases of the Egyptian goddess Isis and the Babylonian Ishtar. Both Astarte (Phoenician’s equivalent goddess) and Anath were virgins and mothers too. The King Urukagina from Lagash was born by the virgin Ban [232]. The virgin goddess Nanna, who immaculately conceived the young savior god Attis, was worshipped in Phrygia. The parthenogenic birth from a goddess was met with in the Greek, Celtic, Mayan and other mythologies as well. Thus, Dionysus was born by the virgin Brimo [233], Hephaistos was born by Hera without the aid of a father. After bathing in the Kanathos spring, Hera got back virginity every time she came out of water [234]. In Celtic mythology, Pryderi was born by virgin Rhiannon.

The struggle between Good and Evil in the Persian spiritual tradition followed certain stages; each of them was dominated by the personality and actions of a savior. While bathing in the lake Fedhri (in whose waters Zoroaster himself had previously entered) the virgin Srutat-Fedhri conceived and later gave birth to the first predecessor of the savior Saoshyant (Benefactor), called Oschedar-Bami (He who increases justice, i.e. Dharma),

who would defeat the demon Angra-Mainyu and rule for one thousand years. There followed the millennium of Oschedar-Mah, born by the virgin Vanhu-Fedhri, when humankind would experience a boundless happiness and hence abandon their beliefs. Having been punished by the serpent Azhi-Dahaka who was sent to devour one third of the population in the third age, mankind would be saved by the virgin-born Keresaspa. At least, during her bath in the lake Kasava (where as in the previous cases Zoroaster himself had bathed), the virgin Eredhat-Fedhri (Vispataurva) would conceive and give birth to Saoshyant who would save the world by completely destroying the forces of evil and who would finally preside over the Last Judgment.

The artistic representations—among which a funeral monument from XIX Mesopotamia dating back to the 4th millennium BC—showed that the star 45, 46 had been the sign of God since earliest antiquity. Also in Sumero-Babylonian cuneiform script, the sign for deity was a star [235]. Vishnu himself appeared as a star when He descended to incarnate in the shape of Krishna. Likewise, Vishnumaya who was Krishna's sister changed herself into a dazzling light (lightning) as soon as she was born. The star accompanied the birth of the divinities in the whole Middle East. Thus, a star announced the Messiah to the Jews: "There cometh a Star out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17); "the nations shall walk by thy light, and Kings by the brightness of thy rising" (Isaiah 60:3); and the Magi who had come to Jerusalem said: "We have seen his star in the east, and have come to do him homage" (Matthew 2:2). Previously, the Christmas tree was worshipped as the Tree of Life (ch. IV). The silvery star on its top symbolized both the star that was seen by the Magi and the polar star of the world axis (*axis mundi*, Lat.; ch. IV). Revelation contains many examples associating the star with the Divine: "the seven stars are angels" (1:20); "he that has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars" (3:1; cf. 1:16; 2:1; 12:1). However, the stars are the signs for the chakras too, which points to the deities associated to each and every chakra.

The Magi of Media used to meet on the Victory Mount (Takht-i-Suleiman?) every year to wait for the birth of the King of the World, the reincarnation of Mithra. According to the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, a column of light, having on top a lucky star brighter than many suns was to be the sign of the miracle. The sages give the following account: "We beheld the star entering the cave of the treasure of hidden mysteries and heard a mild and humble voice calling us: «Enter this place with love in your hearts»... And we came in... raised our heads and saw the light that was beyond human description. And as the light started focusing it looked like the limbs of a little and humble man who told us: «Peace be with you¹⁷⁰!»... and he showed

¹⁷⁰ These are precisely Jesus' words addressed to His disciples after resurrection (John 20:19,21,26).

himself as a little, thin and humble man because the inhabitants of the world could not behold the splendor of the unique Son of the all-magnificent Father.” The humble man advises the Magi to go to Galilee [236]. The star, in our opinion, should be understood either as a heavenly body or as a manifestation of the energy of a divine entity like in the case of the Avatars of Krishna (Vishnu) and Vishnumaya.

Justin mentioned Mithra coming back as Mithridates Eupator: “His future glory had been prophesied by heavenly signs: because, both in the year of his birth and when he began his reign, a comet-star had been shining with such a dazzling light for seven days that the entire sky seemed to have been on fire” [237].

Kalki (Fulfiller, Sanskr.) is the name given in India to the awaited tenth and last Avatar of Vishnu. To Christians, this will be Jesus coming again as a Judge. That Avatar has been expected to come at the end of Kali Yuga to put an end to wickedness and restore the kingdom of righteousness, as that of Satya Yuga, the age of Truth.

Referring to “the doctrine of the Kali Yuga and the Kalki Avatara—of the «dark age» and the «universal Messiah»,” Schuon acknowledged that it is “a doctrine the importance of which is such that no Revelation can ignore it, whatever symbolism may happen to be used” [238].

The *Vishnu Purana* described the advent of Kalki in the following way: “When the practices taught by the *Vedas* and the institutes of law¹⁷¹ shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the Kali Age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon the earth. He will be born as Kalki, in the family of an eminent Brahmin of *Sambhalpur*¹⁷² village, endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. By his irresistible might, he will destroy all *mlechchhas*¹⁷³, and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali Yuga shall be awakened, and shall be made as pellucid as crystal. The men who are changed in virtue of that particular time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita Age, the Age of Purity” [239]. Chapter XXIII B would bring more references to the *mlechchhas* and Jesus.

¹⁷¹ The Dharma.

¹⁷² *Bhalam* (forehead, Sanskr.) signified the Sahasrara.

¹⁷³ Nonbelievers (Sansk.); it comes from *mala ichchha* (impure, filthy desires, Sanskr.).

The *Bhagavata Purana* wrote in its turn: “In the twilight of the Kali Age, when kings will be as good as robbers, this protector of the world will be born of Vishnu-yasha¹⁷⁴ under the name Kalki” [240]. We can find a similar text in the *Agni Purana*: “At the end of Kali Yuga there will be mixed castes. Merciless robbers will flourish. Under cover of religions, men will preach irreligion. And the Mlechchhas, in the guise of kings, will devour men. Armed with a coat of mail and with weapons, Vishnu-yasha’s son Kalki will annihilate the Mlechchhas, establishing order and dignity, and lead the people on the path of truth. Then, having renounced the form of Kalki, Hari¹⁷⁵ will return to heaven. Thereupon Krita Yuga will exist as before” [241]. Also the *Mahabharata* [242] and other *Puranas* [243], particularly the *Kalki Purana* are describing the advent of Kalki.

XIX Both in the iconography and Scriptures, Kalki is depicted like a man - 47 mounted on or bowing in front of a white horse while holding a sword in his - 48 hand. It is he who purifies the present, corrupt era and restores benevolence and purity [244]. The holy texts describe the horse (Kalki) to be the master of the heavenly world (Sahasrara): “Man does not rightly know the way to the heavenly world, but the horse does rightly know it” [245]. We remember that a horse (*al-Buraq*) was the vehicle of Muhammad’s ascension to the heavens (ch. II). One of the forms attributed to the Bodhisattva manifestations is the winged, liberating horse called *The Cloud (Valahaka, Sanskr.)*. In their dictionary, Chevalier and Gheerbrant refer to the “archetypal horse... linked... to the destructive yet triumphant powers of Fire” [246]. It will be XIX added here that the mythical horse *Pegasus* (see also ch. XIX D) made water - 49 spring out by kicking the ground with its horseshoe. *Pegé* (Gr.) means *spring* and *cool*. Moreover, the Egyptian *pg* is the name given to the divinity of Earth (Mooladhara sacrum), who is the Divine Son (Ganesha). Therefore, Kalki’s horse is obviously connected to the Kundalini manifestations: coolness (ch. XI C), living water (ch. XI D) and fire (ch. XI E).

The *Bible* was extremely explicit about the second coming of the Savior on this earth (ch. XVI). The Islam tradition acknowledges, too, Jesus as Judge at the time of Resurrection (*Qiyamah, Arab.*). “Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah’s Messenger said: «By Him in Whose hands my soul is, surely (Jesus), the son of Mary will shortly descend amongst you (Muslims), and will judge mankind justly by the Law... He will break the cross... »” [247]. Obviously, this refers to the *transcending* of the “cross” in the Agya chakra (ch. XIX C) thus enabling the access to the Sahasrara and the everlasting resurrection through the Self Realization.

¹⁷⁴ Vishnu’s renown (Sansk.).

¹⁷⁵ Vishnu.

Kalki rendered as the *Pantokrátor* (Almighty, Gr.) Christ is placed in the XIX apex of the Byzantine church domes (i.e. the Sahasrara; ch. II and IV) as -50 early as the 6th century as an acknowledgement of His supreme position, the *Most Higher* Son. Jesus gives His blessings using the right hand (of action, in full agreement with Sahaja Yoga; ch. II and XV F). In this gesture, the fingers adopt a specific position reminding the Hindu *mudra* (ch. XV F). In his left hand Christ holds the earthly globe (in Sahaja Yoga, the left hand is XIX put on the Earth; ch. XV C). Other times, the left hand (feminine channel) -51 holds the Book (Scripture) that indicates the Feminine Principle (Mother of the Book; ch. XX D).

The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:29) was actually the anticipation of the second coming of Jesus: “The Son of man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to each according to his doings” (Matthew 16:27; cf. 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Zechariah 14:5; Jude 14). Most references, however, abound in the Revelation of John of Patmos: “Behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and he might conquer” (6:2). All these attributes have a peculiar significance. The *white horse* announced the coming of the Golden Age (ch. XIX A). The *bow* symbolized the rainbow (a synthesis of the colors of all the chakras) and the *bandhan* (ch. XV F), which indicated the age of Self Realization granted *en masse* (ch. XIX D). The *crown* stands for the powers of Jesus/Kalki (Ekadesha Rudra) who came to put an end to the cycle. “And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and One sitting on it, [called] Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness” (19:11). We also read about “He that has the sharp two-edged sword” (2:12; cf. 1:16; 2:16; 19:15,21). Mankind has already been warned: “For the time is near” (1:3; 22:10): “I come quickly¹⁷⁶” (3:11; 22:7,12,20), but the moment of the Judgment cannot be known: “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens, but [my] Father alone” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).

¹⁷⁶ “Quickly” or “near” should be understand in terms of divine time, meaning the next age (not the next days or years) to come.

C. THE STAGES OF REVEALING THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

“Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”

Matthew 5:48

Having met with the names of many of the deities in the Hindu pantheon the reader might infer that he is dealing with a polytheist belief. This is an utterly false notion. Actually, the deities are nothing else than the manifestation of various attributes of the unique Divinity out of which they emerge in the same way as various specific parts (limbs, organs, tissues, fluids, cells) of the unique human body perform, each of them, a specific function. For instance in the *Vayu Purana*, Sutta has explained that there is only one God but This One is manifested in three forms (*Rajasi*, *Sattwiki* and *Tamasi*, Sanskr.) to create, sustain and destroy the world [248] (see *Trimurti*—ch. II, XIX B). We would easily find here the analogy with the Christian Trinity.

On this topic, one of the most notable orientalist, Heinrich Zimmer, wrote: “Hindu philosophy and enlightened Hindu orthodoxy are fundamentally monistic, monotheistic, in spite of the hosts of gods and superhuman beings with which the mythology teems. The multitudes of apparitions are only specializations, specific virtues, attitudes, components, and facets. Regarded from the viewpoint of the divine itself (a position attained in the enlightenment of Yoga) the apparently contradictory aspects of existence—creation, duration, and dissolution—are one and the same as to origin and meaning and end. They are the changing phenomenal self-expressions of the one divine substance or energy of life... The understanding of this unity is the goal of Hindu wisdom” [249].

Schunon adopted the following position: “Monotheists are «The People of the Book» (*ahl al-Kitab*, Arab.), that is to say, Jews and Christians who have received Revelations in the spiritual line of Abraham. It seems almost superfluous to add that the Hindus, although not «monotheists» in the specifically Semitic sense, are certainly not «polytheists» since consciousness of the metaphysical Unity throughout the indefinite multiplicity of forms is one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Hindu spirit” [250]. The author complements: “Hindus were then assimilated to the «people of the Book»” [251]. In the same general feeling, Karen Armstrong remarks: “Today Muslims insist that if Muhammad had known about Hindus and Buddhists, he would have included their religious sages” [252]. On the other hand, Ibn al-‘Arabi was aware of the fact that for the idolaters who perished during the Flood, their idols were but personifications of the divine Names,

aspects of the Supreme Being whose transcendence and essential unity was forgotten. He stated that for “the man endowed with knowledge... the object of worship is the vehicle of divine manifestation, worthy of reverence” [253].

The same situation could be met with other spheres of spirituality, like in Egypt where—on the background of an apparent polytheism—there existed the very general and not in the least contradictory belief in the universality and unity of a nameless and formless divine existence. That was *the power (Mana)*. The Egyptian tenet claimed that gods were only *names, appellations* given to the countless faces of the unique divinity, to the different modes of manifestations of the unique divinity. The Egyptian priests stated that the manifestation of gods on the Earth was just an illusion since God was beyond the possibility of being known [254]. After Lalouette, the museum of Leyden had in its possession a papyrus from the time of Ramesses II, containing a piece of writing dedicated to Ammon-Ra, where “the ogdoad gods¹⁷⁷ in Hermopolis were thought to be the primitive forms of the god Ammon to which the other gods were only hypostases or Avatars” [255]. We find here a similitude with the theology initiated by Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite over the Middle Ages, while Clement of Alexandria claimed: “the Egyptian wisdom together with the Greek philosophy and the biblical writings of the old Jews prepared the way for Christianity” [256].

Monotheism (under the form of god An who possessed the bread and water of eternal life) or at least *henotheism* (*hen*, one, *theós*, God, Gr. representing the transitory belief from polytheism to monotheism) could also be met with in the ancient history of Sumer.

Another example is the Iranian *Zurvan akarana* or the eternal time, which was so abstract that no one has ever attempted to render it as a religious image. He was called “the Father of Day and Night” and the Scriptures described him in the following way: “Before anything had ever existed, neither sky, nor earth, nor creatures between the sky and the earth, there was One called by the name of Zurvan” [257].

There are many names for God in the *Bible* that actually stand for His *attributes*, a situation which is similar to Hinduism, as it appears to be polytheist just like the biblical text (abounding in various divine names such as El, Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai, Shaddai etc.) might appear to a non-Christian (ch. XV D). Also, we would see that the commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7; cf. 6:14 etc.) *does not proclaim the uniqueness* but establish only *the exclusive superiority* of Yahweh.

¹⁷⁷ The eight (*ogdoáda*, Gr.) ancient primordial gods of the Hermopolis (Hermonthis) and later Heliopolis cosmogony who created the world and were the genitors of the humans.

According to Theagenes of Rhegium (*floruit* c. 525 BC), the name of the gods denoted as early as Homer either their capabilities or the natural elements. However, those who had developed such interpretations of the Homeric mythology (and of religious traditions in general) were in fact the Stoic philosophers. One of them, Chrysippos (c.281- 285 BC) regarded the Greek gods as being only physical or ethic principles.

The creation constituted the moment when the Adi Shakti projected the three energies corresponding to the elements composing the sacred syllable AUM that is the Primordial Word (Logos or the Verb in the New Testament), i.e. the Divine Son (Ganesha-Jesus). AUM is also the symbol the Adi Chakra (Adi Mooladhara) which was the first to be opened in the Virata during the act of creation (see below). Despite the fact that in the *Qur'an* Jesus is not acknowledged as the Divine Son, He is called there: "Jesus, son of Mary, the Word of Truth" (19.35) and the Word of God (2.254; 3.40; 4.169; 5.109).

In chapter XIX B we have been writing about the *Triple Mother* (*Matreya*) who is, actually, the Adi Shakti emanating these three primordial energies. Other references to the feminine trinity appear in chapters II, XX A and XX D. The ancient Iranians worshipped, too, the *trivalent goddess* Aradvi Sura Anahita: the *Wet, Powerful, Immaculate*¹⁷⁸ [258]. On this name we might identify the Adi Shakti (Primordial Power, Sanskr.). These features correspond to the three channels: Ida (wet channel), Pingala (channel of domination), Sushumna (channel of the pure energy, the Kundalini). The Greeks knew her as Athena, called *Tritogenéia*, and the three energies were rendered on her helmet as three winged horses (for instance in her stature carved by Praxiteles, c.370-330 BC) whose symbolism send us to Kalki (ch. XIX B) who presides over the Sahasrara beside the Adi Shakti. The helmet apex indicates the transcending of the Sahasrara (head culmination) and implicitly of the three gunas (*trigunatmika*, Sanskr.). A Gnostic text [259] refers to a Triple Power (*tridynamos*, Gr.) living in the same aeon as Sophia.

Also the Kabbalah [260] showed that amongst the alphabet letters there are XIX *three mothers*, namely *A* (א, aleph), *M* (מ, mem) and *Sh* (ש, shin), the first - 52 two being identical to those of AUM and the third having the shape of a - 53 *trident*¹⁷⁹ (three channels) similar to letter *W* which is in reality a double *U* (according to its English pronunciation; in Latin writing *V* is *U*, e.g. *viribvs* = *viribus*). As it was already shown, the *three-functional structure* is common XIX to most of the religions, while the trident is a divine attribute (Shiva, 54, 55 Poseidon/Neptune).

Before going any further with developing this chapter, we would like to

¹⁷⁸ *Nirmala* (Sanskrit).

¹⁷⁹ Actually, the name of the letter, *shin* means *tooth* (Hebr.).

briefly examine the meaning of the three powers that were generated at the beginning of the Creation [261]. Other details would be given further on.

Maha-Kali (Primordial sound, the guttural *A*) enlightened—within the XIX Cosmic Being—the *Tamo guna*, which represents the desire of existence 56 filling up the entire cosmos; which resides in atoms, in their nucleus, in matter as electromagnetic vibrations; it is the vital force controlling the emotional body and which actualizes the desire in humans. Thus, the manifestation of the *desire* triggered the process of Creation.

Maha-Saraswati (labial *U*) enlightened the *Rajo guna* in the Virata, the XIX causal essence that includes the elements, masses of matter, planets, solar 57 systems and galaxies. Its reflection in man controls the physical and mental body; it actualizes action, rationality and the faculty of organization. Thus, the second step was the *action* aiming to achieve the Creation.

Maha-Lakshmi (nasal *M*, which is a cerebral sound) was the one who XIX enlightened the *Sattwa guna* in the Cosmic Being, which is the sound through 58 that the Virata aims at gradually revealing itself in the cosmos, hence determining the universal evolution. It grants the human being his equilibrium, integration and the possibility of activating the Primordial Power in the form of the Kundalini on the microcosmic level. The Creation is, therefore, perfected through the *evolution*.

The Adi Chakras exist in the Cosmic Being of the Virata in a potential state as early as the start of the Creation. Meister Eckhart put the question: “how can God... have produced or created such different things... in the beginning and all at the same time?” and then arrived at the conclusion that “God created... at the same time, even though they do not appear at the same time” [262]. Indeed, the divine attributes were gradually revealed by the successive enlightenment (awakening, activation) of the Primordial Chakras thus resulting in the creation of the conditions for the enlightenment of the respective centers on terrestrial and human level. The *Zohar* gives such an example concerning the Void (symbolized in the Old Testament by the Red Sea; ch. V): “the cleaving of the Red Sea... this also depends on operation on high, ways and paths being opened and cleft in the sea in correspondence with the ways and paths on high” [263]. Or, as it was shown, the *cleaving* find its expression on the human subtle register in the gap of the central channel existing in the Void zone (ch. II).

To each Adi Chakra there corresponds an *aeon*¹⁸⁰ (*aión*, power controlling one period or region of the Universe, Gr.). Plato mentions “the gods of the provinces, who had ruled under the greatest god... oversight their regions” [264]. When Thales of Miletus said that “all things are full of gods” [265] (or, quoted by Diogenes: “The universe is alive and full of spirits” [266]), he

¹⁸⁰ *Aión* (Gr.).

contradicted Homer who used to place the gods in specific cosmic regions. The Gnostics used to understand through *aeon*, one of the multiple hypostases, emanations, aspects or forms of the manifestation of the unique divinity, i.e. the so-called divine entities.

The relationship deity (aeon)—chakra—star—rotation (of energy in the chakras; ch. XV F) is wonderfully rendered by *Mithra's Liturgy*: “I am a star describing its orbit together with you” (*egó eími syplayos ymin astér*, Gr.) [267].

On a subtle plane the human being is a projection of the Divine Being (“God created man in his image”—Genesis 1:27; ch. II) which explains why the Self Realization (enlightenment granted by the Holy Spirit under the form of the Kundalini) triggers the manifestation of the divine aspects within the subtle channels and chakras. The sequence of the chakras enlightenment reflects the succession of their awakening in the human body when the Kundalini started to rise up. Therefore, the Divine make it clear that the general trend of the creation means the bringing of the spiritual evolution to an end¹⁸¹. The process starts at the foundation of the subtle body—the basis of the spinal column where the Kundalini is located—, when the energy rises and successively enlightens the chakras. The chakras overlapping in the subtle body is suggestively compared to a tower (ch. IV) reflecting in fact the Divine Being¹⁸². “Which of you, desirous of building a tower... having laid the foundation of it, and not being able to finish it, all who see it do not begin to mock at him, saying: This man began to build and was not able to finish?” (Luke 14:28-29: cf. Proverbs 24:27) The *Zohar* also read: “Rabbi Methibtha has seen this tower which had this verse on its frontage: «The Name of God is a strong tower; the righteous invoked it and found a high fortress¹⁸³»” [268]. We can notice here that the righteous (the rest of the people are obviously excluded) is advised to take the mantras (invocation of God's name) for reaching the fortress height that is the Sahasrara (the *fortress* implies the action of conquering it, otherwise the citadel remains invincible). We should not forget that the seven “seals” of the “book” (meaning the seven chakras in the subtle body (both in the Virata and humans) in the Revelation

¹⁸¹ The evolutionary cycle (divine work) ends precisely *on the seventh day* (opening of the Sahasrara)—not before the seventh day, i.e. on the sixth one (!)—because “God had finished on the seventh day his work which he had made” (Genesis 2:2).

¹⁸² “God is... my high tower” (2 Samuel 22:3). “Yahweh is... my high tower” (Psalms 18:2). “Thou hast been... a strong tower” (61:3; cf. 144:2).

¹⁸³ Proverbs 18:10: “The name of Yahweh is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

(6:1-12; 8:1) were broken successively. With an impressive intuition and premonition for the actual times (ch. XIX D), D.H. Lawrence wrote in his last commentary on Revelation: “The famous book of seven seals in this place is the body of man. Of man: of Adam: of any man... And the seven seals are the seven centers or gates of his dynamic consciousness. We are witnessing the opening and conquest of the great psychic centers of human body. The old Adam is going to be conquered, die and reborn as the new Adam. But in stages. In seven stages, or in six stages and then a climax, seven” [269].

Mircea Eliade emphasized the relation between superhuman and human (who is the reflection of the former), deities and chakras, when he wrote: “the «interiorization of sacrifice» makes it possible to direct the offerings at once to the «interior», and the «exterior» gods. The ultimate aim is union (*samhita*) between the different theocosmic planes and the organs psychophysiological functions¹⁸⁴ of man” [270]. With only three words, Heraclitus enunciated an idea that caused the later philosophers embarrassment in its translation (or interpretation) [271]: “*Éthos anthrópou daímon*” (Gr.) [272]. The meaning is clear only for the two last words: *anthrópos* (man, Gr.) and *daímon* (god, Gr.). Friedländer translated the first word through *Artung* (nature, Germ.) which gives the possible translation: “Man’s nature (depends on) his god,” which signify the reflection in man of the divine qualities. Homer used *éthos* for “sitting place” according to Heidegger’s translation (*Aufenthalt*, Germ.). Consequently the sentence becomes: “God sits (dwells) in man” [273], which also denoted the reflection of the divine aspects in the chakras, thus controlled by the corresponding entity.

The great realized soul William Blake was aware that “All deities reside in the human breast” [274].

Jung thought that *god* was an overwhelming psychological factor, loaded with an energy that we can either accept consciously or support unconsciously, and believed that *deity* was a “psychological reality”: “Today accurate observation of unconscious processes has recognized, with all other ages before us, that the unconscious possesses a creative autonomy... When Carus, von Hartmann and, in a sense, Schopenhauer equated the unconscious with the world-creating principle, they were only summing up all those teachings of the past which, grounded in inner experience, saw the mysterious agent personified as the gods... The hypothesis of invisible gods or daemons would be, psychologically, a far more appropriate formulation even though it would be an anthropomorphic projection.” By distinguishing between the *ego* and the *Self* (the only one that can be connected to the unconscious) and by disclosing the irrelevant role played by the mind during the process of subtle knowledge of the Self and unconscious, Jung wrote further down: “The

¹⁸⁴ The subtle functions of the chakras.

individual ego is much too small, its brain is much too feeble, to incorporate all the projections withdrawn from the world.” Man makes an error “in the absurd supposition that the intellect, which is but a part and function of the psyche, is sufficient to comprehend the much greater whole” [275]. Schuon explains: “To believe in the absolute reality of the *ego* and of the world is, according to the Vedantists, an effect of «ignorance»” [276]. He explained that “the... perspective that determines all religious dogmatism” originates in the fact that “for the «volitional» or «affective» man (*bkahta*, devout, Sanskr.) God is «He» and the *ego* is «I»” [277]. That is why Jesus repeatedly stated, referring to the life: “whosoever shall lose it, shall preserve it” (Luke 17:33; cf. 9:24; Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; John 12:25), that means losing the *ego* and becoming the *Self*, which grants to the individual eternal life. We can better understand now the words of Irenaeus of Lyons and Athanasius (ch. XIX B): “the Son of God became... man that man... might become Son of God” (a paraphrase to the text of John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh...”), i.e. the *Self* became *ego* in order that the *ego* might become *Self* [278]. In Schuon’s words, that happens when “the contemplative has identified his «I» with the principle of individuation¹⁸⁵” [279].

The great human troubles come from identifying oneself to the *ego*. To surpass the *ego* one has to experience a profound humility. For Benedict of Nursia and Bernard de Clairvaux the “degrees of humility” are stages in the extinction of the passionate “I” [280], that is the *ego*. In fact, Bernard regarded the *ego* as “something to be despised,” and the same did Meister Eckhart [281]. Jesus has given many examples of humility telling that He had not come to be served but to serve: “I am in the middle of you as the one that serves” (Luke 22:27). He also said: “Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens” (Matthew 18:4). “And whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever shall humble himself shall be exalted” (23:12). Jesus told to His disciples: “Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant; and whosoever will be first among you, let him be your bondman” (Matthew 20:26-27; cf. 23:11). Also James wrote: “God sets himself against [the] proud, but gives grace to [the] lowly” (4:6). “Humble yourselves before [the] Lord, and he shall exalt you” (4:10). Jesus as the Son of God could not be humiliated; only while consenting to be the Son of Man He would suffer humiliation, thus giving us the supreme example of the *ego* extinction.

Once we have identified ourselves with the *Self* and thus have surrendered our *ego*, any sense of guiltiness disappears and we become aware that we are “not guilty of all,” which removes any catch on the Vishuddhi chakra (ch. IX).

¹⁸⁵ A term brought in by Jung (see *infra*).

In the *Book of Krates* [282] that reached us translated in Arabic, the spiritual man says to the worldly man: “Are you capable of knowing your soul in a complete manner? If you knew it as is fitting, and if you knew what makes it better, you would be able to recognize that the names which the philosophers formerly gave it are not true names.” Jung believed that the archetype (expression of the divine principles; see *infra*) “is a specifically psychological instance of the «pattern of behavior» in biology” [283], in other words he admitted that the divine (archetypal) qualities are reflected on a human scale. “We seldom find anybody who is not influenced and indeed dominated by desires, habits, impulses, prejudices, resentments, and by every conceivable kind of complex. All these natural facts function exactly like an Olympus full of deities... «Principalities» and «powers» are always with us; we have no need to create them even if we could” [284].

Coming back to the three tendencies corresponding to the sounds A-U-M and the three channels, these *gunas* reveal themselves in various manners on the human scale. They correspond to three kinds of Yoga explained by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The *rajo* is manifested through dynamism, energy, activity, effort, force, creativity, ardor, turmoil, dispute, criticism, sarcasm, cynicism, domineering, aggression, anger, verbal and physical violence. This *guna* plays a part in the *Karma Yoga* (Yoga of action). Misguided people act then by doing pilgrimages, seeing all kind of (false) gurus and so on.

The *tamo* displayed indolence, inertia, apathy, enslavement (submission to the others), ignorance, obscurity, superstitions, magic and occult practices, confusion and stupefaction (*moha*, Sanskr.), sorrow (*dukha*, Sanskr.), suffering, persecution, depression, at the limit even going up to serious psychic disorders, cases of possession. This *guna* characterizes the *Bhakti Yoga* (Yoga of devotion), which improperly used (devoid of the connection to God) it could lead to excessive and vain ritualism and even, when abused, to dangerous fanaticism.

The *sattwa* is materialized in kindness, purity, virtue, harmony, balance, joy, intelligence, wisdom, light (and enlightenment). This *guna* is specific to the *Gyana (Jnana) Yoga* (literally: Yoga of knowledge, or more properly: Yoga of awareness). This is the path of a knowledge (*Gyana marg*, Sanskr.) that cannot be achieved through reading but which is the subtle, divine, *real* knowledge and is the only one that leads to Self Realization.

Zimmer gave the following explanations: “*Sattwa* is a noun built on the participle *sat*... *Sat* means «being, as it should be; good, well, perfect», and *sattwa*, accordingly, «the ideal state of being; goodness, perfection, crystal purity, immaculate clarity, and utter quiet». The quality of *sattwa* predominates in gods and heavenly beings, unselfish people, and men bent

on purely spiritual pursuits. This is the *guna* that facilitates enlightenment...

The noun *rajas* means, literally, «impurity»... and more generally, «dust»... *Rajas* dims the outlook on all things, obscuring the view not only of the universe, but of oneself. Thus it produces both intellectual and moral darkness. Among mythological beings *rajas* predominates in titans... *Rajas* is evident everywhere among men, as the motivating force of our struggle for existence. It is what inspires our desires, likes and dislikes, competition, and will for the enjoyments of the world. It compels both men and beasts to strive for the goods of life, regardless of the needs and sufferings of others.

Tamas (cf. Latin *tene-brae*, French *ténè-bres*)—literally, «darkness, black, dark-blue»; spiritually, «blindness»—connotes the unconsciousness that predominates the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. *Tamas* is the basis of all lack of feeling, dullness, ruthlessness, insensibility, and inertia. It causes mental gloom, ignorance, error, and illusion. The stolidity of seemingly, lifeless matter, the mute and merciless strife among the plants for soil, moisture, and air, the insensible greed of animals in their search for food and their ruthless devouring of their prey, are among the primary manifestations of this universal principle. On the human level, *tamas* is made manifest in the dull stupidity of the more self-centered and self-satisfied” [285].

From the *sattwa* part of the Cosmic Being are born the gods (*devas*); from the *rajo* part spring forth the lords of progeny (*prajapatis*); from the *tamo* part arise the demons (*asuras*) or the lords of destruction (*rudras*).

The *rajo* corresponds to *Brahma*, the Creator and it is specific to the *awareness state*—realization of the experience of existence. The *sattwa* corresponds to *Vishnu*, the Master of the spiritual evolution and it is the specific tendency for the *state of dream* (sleeping Vishnu resting on the causal ocean which is the manifestation of the subtle scheme). The *tamo* corresponds to *Shiva*, the Lord of sleep (from the root *shin*, to sleep, Sanskr.) and it defines the *state of deep sleep*—the unconscious state of consciousness.

The Hindu sages describe not only three states (*tripura*, *avastha*; Sanskr.): wakefulness (*jagrat*, Sanskr.), dream (*svapna*, Sanskr.) and dreamless sleep (*sushupti*, Sanskr.) but also a fourth¹⁸⁶ state (*turiya*, Sanskr.) [286]. This fourth state is described as the non-dual, unmanifested *Self* of the calm, peaceful being, beyond the three stages of the physical, subtle and causal existence and the three corresponding stages of experience: wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. About the *Self* the *Bhagavad-Gita* said: “He is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchanging” [287]. The various aspects could

XIX 59, 60 be seen in the representations of the Buddha not just seated in meditation but sometimes standing (wakefulness), and other times in a lying position

¹⁸⁶ *Chaturtha* (Sansk.).

(sleep¹⁸⁷; of the *ego*): “Sapiential sanctity is the sleep of the *ego* and the waking of the Self” [288]. However, according to Christian authors: “I sleep, but my heart waketh” [289]. The *Qur’an* also refers to a similar symbolism: God should be remembered “standing and sitting and on the side” (3.187).

The fourth state is beyond the three *gunas*, that is *trigunatmika*. Christians call it the state of ecstasy (*ék-stásis*, getting out of himself, Gr.) experienced by the genuine saints (such as Teresa of Avila, Benedict of Nursia, Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Seraphim of Sarov etc.; ch. XXV A). It is obvious that Lucian Blaga did not just accidentally entitle his major volume of verses *Praise to Sleep* since sleep was for him the return to the initial heavenly state, to the primordial unity. Likewise, the Chinese Taoists considered that sleep and ecstasy were original experiences.

Concerning the *tamo guna* associated to Shiva, we would like to stress on the following aspects. Shiva is the Lord of Absolute Time that is of the eternal undifferentiated present, which is a measure of the eternal night. The energy concentrations that give birth to light and divisible time (separating night from day and past from future) are but temporary phenomena implying a location and a form of relative time. Shiva’s Shakti is Maha-Kali, the transcendent power of Time (*kala*, time; hence the feminine *Kali*, Sanskr.). The deep sleep is the image of the total peace following the dissolution of the universe, the eternal night (*Maharatri*; *ratri*, night, Sanskr.) which grants (from the root *ra*, to give, to grant, Sanskr.) peace, joy, bliss (*ananda*, Sanskr.). The Time (Shiva) is the aspect of destruction: “Time am I, world-destroying” [290].

The intertwining, interdependence of the three basic tendencies considered to be a unique entity is called *Ishwara* (Lord, Sanskr.), denoted in the sacred texts as *Bhagavan* (All-Powerful; from: *bhaga*—power, share, and *va*—Changeless Being, Sanskr. [291]).

The *Bhagavad-Gita* provides the following description of the three *gunas*: “The three modes (*gunas*) *sattwa*, *rajo* and *tamo* born of Nature (Prakriti) bind down in the body, O Mighty-armed, the imperishable¹⁸⁸ dweller in the body. Of these, *sattwa* being pure, cause illumination and health. It binds, O blameless one, by attachment to happiness and by attachment to knowledge. *Rajo*, know thou, is of the nature of attraction, springing from craving and attachment. It binds fast, O Son of Kunti, the embodied one by attachment to action. But *tamo*, know thou, is born of ignorance and deludes all embodied beings. It binds, O Bharata, by (developing the qualities of) negligence, indolence and sleep” [292].

¹⁸⁷ After Schuon; otherwise it is usually regarded as his ultimate *samadhi*.

¹⁸⁸ The unchanging, everlasting Atman.

It has been shown (ch. II) that the sympathetic nervous system (related to the side channels) consumes energy. Thus, if there appears a catch of the left aspect, this one would reduce the energy consumption of the respective branch of the sympathetic and, therefore, there will be an energy excess in the left channel inducing apathy, inertia, depression etc. that defines the tamo tendency. A similar process develops for a catch on the right channel.

The divine aspects—as for instance Jesus who controls the Agya chakra—are reflected from the universal level on the human one and begin to manifest in man at the same time as enlightenment takes place through the Holy Spirit in the form of the Kundalini. The *Bible* often refers to the presence of the divine in us. “We know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given to us” (1 John 3:24). “Yahweh thy God is in thy midst, a mighty one¹⁸⁹ that will save” (Zephaniah 3:17). “He that abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16). “We know that we abide in him and he in us” (4:13). “God abides in him, and he in God” (4:15). Jesus addressed these words to His followers: “He... dwells in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). Talking about those who have faith in Jesus, Jung said: “Christ then dwells in the believer as the perfect man formed in the image of God” [293].

“I will put my law in their inward parts” (Jeremiah 31:33; cf. Deuteronomy 6:6; 11:18; 32:46; Psalms 37:31; 40:8; Isaiah 51:7). This statement discloses that each aeon (divine aspect or epoch which it establishes) has its Law that is reflected in a specific chakra (ch. XIX A). After a passage from the *Talmud* [294], the integral *Torah* would have included seven books (*Heptateuch*), and thus each of the seven aeons (see *infra*) was connected to a Book (Law). The fact that by that time there were known only five books (*Pentateuch*) could find an explanation in the opening of only five Adi Chakras in the Virata. The sixth one was to be opened at the time of the descent of Jesus on the earth (see *infra*). In the like manner could be elucidated the case of Neolithic deity statuettes bearing signs for only five XIX chakras (ch. I). Moreover, several of these figurines were made without head 61 ending with the neck, in other words the last two chakras, the Agya and Sahasrara, were lacking because they were not yet enlightened. The Kabbalah supposed that the two missing books would have been pre-existent under the form of two verses from Numbers (10:35,36). After the book *Temunah*, a verse from Genesis 1:3 (“God said: «Let there be light». And there was light”) would have been a vestige of a more complete *Torah* pertaining to a shemittah consisting only of light without darkness (we should say: a Golden

¹⁸⁹ The equivalent of the deities belonging to other cultures; these deities who govern the subtle body help the spiritual evolution of man and grant him protection against negativity attacks.

Age).

The *Qur'an* read also about the Law of every individual aeon, and it is not by chance that the first surah, regarded as its quintessence, has precisely *seven* verses. Likewise, the last words uttered by Jesus on the cross were also *seven* in number (ch. XIX D). The *Qu'ran* provides self-evident examples: “So He determined them as seven heavens... and revealed its commandment in every heaven” (41.11). “Every term has a Book” (13.38). “The Messengers’ time is set” (77.11). “We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves, till it is clear to them that it is the Truth” (41.53), which on the one side parallels the divine manifestation within the Adi Chakras and the human ones (*in their own souls*), and on the other side announces that eventually people will understand that *that it is the Truth*, or *that it is God* (the *Qur'an* used here the term *al-Haqq* that means *God*, and accidentally was translated *Truth* that has no article: *Haqq*—see *infra*).

The well-known exponent of the Shi'a Falsafah in Iran, Mulla Sadra saw the whole cosmos radiating to form a single “jewel” with many layers corresponding to the gradations of God’s unfolding self-revelation in His attributes or “signs” (*ayat*, Arab.), representing also the stages of humankind’s return to the Source of being [295].

The *Bible* uses for the divine manifestations periphrases or attributive names which designate qualities or hypostases. The instances are abundant. We have mentioned some of them (ch. XV D): “That I am” (Exodus 3:14), “the Ancient of days” (Daniel 7:9, 13, 22; cf. Enoch 46.1, 2; 47.3; 48.2; 54.1; 58.1 etc.), “the Father of lights” (James 1:17), “the First and the Last” (Revelation 1:17; 22:13). To these we can add: *El Elyon* (Most High God; *elyon*, superior, most high, Hebr.; Genesis 14:18-20, 22; cf. Psalms 82:6), *El Olam* (Eternal Lord, Hebr.), *El Roi* (Master in the vision, Hebr.), *El-Shaddai* (Almighty God, Hebr.). Also “the Great God” (*El*, Hebr.; Deuteronomy 10:17; Jeremiah 32:18) who is the equivalent of *Allahu Akbar* (Arab.), “God of the hosts” (*Elohe Sabaoth*, Hebr.; Isaiah 47:4; 48:2; Jeremiah 10:16; 32:18; 50:34), “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). “The God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:15). The New Testament uses the following: “the Lord of the harvest” (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2), “the Lord of the heaven and of the earth” (Matthew 11:25), “the Highest” (Luke 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35; 8:28), “the Ruler of the authority of the air” (Ephesians 2:2); “the King of the ages” (1 Timothy 1:17). One notice that “the Lord of the hosts” exists also in Hindu tradition, this being *Ganesha*, from *Ganas* (*hosts*—of angels, we would say in Christianity—of the Supreme Divinity, Shiva) and *Isha* (Lord, Sanskr., short form of *Ishwara*). Another name of this deity is *Ganapati* (Master of Ganas; *patih*, master, Sanskr.). In Islam, God

has ninety-nine names (ch. XV D), most of them being attributive too, such as: *al-Hamid* (All-Praiseworthy), *al-Wasi'* (All-Encompassing), *al-Hakim* (Wise), *al-Wahhab* (Ever-giving), *al-Ghaffar* (Ever-forgiving), *al-'Ali* (All-High), *al-Latif* (All-Pervading), *al-'Alim* (Omniscient) etc.

The renowned Kabbalist Spanish master Joseph Gikatilla (end of the 13th century) wrote: “All the *Torah* is a warp¹⁹⁰ of attributive names, *kinuyim*¹⁹¹ and these attributes are in their turn warps of different names¹⁹² of God” [296].

According to Vladimir Lossky, Gregory Nazianzen [297] explained that “the «divine names» which textbook theology calls his attributes denote God... in «that which surrounds the essence» (*ta peri tes ousias*, Gr.). This is the eternal radiance... which reveal their incommunicable nature in «energies»” [298].

The Scriptures designate the aeons using, for instance, the plural form of the divinity (see also ch. XV D). The *Bible* commonly uses the plural form. The most known case is of *Elohim* (plural form of *El*), which habitually is incorrectly translated/interpreted as the singular form, the more so many times its associated Hebrew verb was used in a plural form. The foremost instance appears in the three words the *Bible* begins with: “*Bereshit bara Elohim*” (in their accurate translation: “In principle has Gods,” Hebr.; *sic!*). However the common versions read: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). In Genesis *Yachid* is the absolute unity, as in 22:2 where Isaac is the only son, while *Echad* is the complex unity as in 1:5 reading about the first day composed of day and night. Therefore, in the Hebrew *Bible* God is never *Yachid* but only *Echad* (Deuteronomy 6:4: “Yahweh our God is one Yahweh,” i.e. *Echad*). “*Yahweh Echad*” did not mean: “God is One,” but that Yahweh was the only deity whom it was allowed to worship. Further on we will encounter the equivalence between *arché* (Gr.) and *principium* (Lat.) having the double significance of *beginning* and *principle*. The *heavens* point at the Adi Chakras (for details see ch. II). *Bara* (Creation, Hebr.) is the work of the Sprit of God (referred to in the next verse, 1:2), that is of the Adi Shakti. Another meaning attributed to *Elohim* is the Mighties (as in Jeremiah 32:18, erroneously in the singular form), or *Aralim* (*aral*, angel, Hebr.) meaning the Messengers of God, i.e. the Avatars. The theonym *Elohey ha-Elohim* (God of gods, Hebr.) appears for instance in Deuteronomy: “Yahweh, your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords,

¹⁹⁰ *Ariga* (weave, Hebr.); *textus* (Lat.); remark the analogy *text*—*texture*.

¹⁹¹ For instance: Compassionate, Great, Forgiving etc.

¹⁹² Like: *El*, *Elohim*, *Shaddai* etc. (ch. XV D).

the great God” (10:17). “A holy people art thou unto Yahweh thy God (Elohim); Yahweh thy God (Elohim) hath chosen thee to be unto him a people for a possession, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth” (7:6). Another example from the same book (32:17): “They sacrificed unto demons, who are not God (*Eloha*); to gods (*Elohim*) whom they knew not, to new gods (*Elohim*), who came newly up, whom your fathers revered not.” Therefore, Yahweh was just one of the existing gods (*Elohim* is a plural form of *El*, god). The plural form *gods* is current in Psalm 82: “God standeth in the assembly of God; he judgeth among the gods” (82:1). In John Bowker’s translation: “Yahweh takes his stand in the Council of El/ to deliver judgments among the gods” [299]. The Book of Job (15:7-8) mentions: “the first man” (Adam) attended “the council of God.” Armstrong infers that “later in the history of God, some Jews, Christians and Muslims worked on this early image of the absolute reality and arrived at a conception that was closer to the Hindu or Buddhist visions” [300].

“I have said: «Ye are gods¹⁹³, and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men»” (Psalm 82:6-7), which deals, obviously, with the divine incarnations (Avatars) in a human shape. The instances when God defines Himself through *We* occur often as in Genesis: “Behold, man is become as one of us” (3:22). The words: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (1:26) disclose the divine plurality reflected on human condition (divine manifestations who preside over the chakras). Likewise, the serpent said to the primordial couple (3:5): “ye shall be as gods¹⁹⁴” (*eritis sicut dii*, Lat.; as in *King James Version*). The sentence could be understood either as the subtle body following the pattern of the Universal Being where the deities rule over the constituting elements (ch. II), or—related to the next verse (1:27): “male and female created He them”—as authenticating the existence of God-Father and God-Mother (ch. XX B).

Jesus said to the Jews: “Is it not written in your law: «I said: ye are gods»? If He called them «gods» to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)” (John 10:34-35), thus referring to Psalm 82:6.

The gospels use sometimes the less expected form “this Jesus” (*ho Iesous*, Gr.) as in Acts (1:11; 2:32,36 etc.), or even “one Jesus” (17:7; *King James Version*). Speaking of Christ, the *Aquarian Gospel* uses the plural form saying that at the beginning of every era there appears a new such incarnation (see the Aquarian Age; ch. XIX D). The alchemist Angelus Silesius wrote even about “other Christs, by thousands” [301].

The *Qur’an* declares that before Jesus there were other Avatars: “The

¹⁹³ *Dii estio* (Lat.), quoted also by Jesus (John 10:34).

¹⁹⁴ Other wrong translations (like Darby) read: “ye will be as God.”

Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; Messengers before him passed away” (5.79). “Every nation has its Messenger” (10.48).

Kovalevsky referred to “Thrones, Lordships, Principalities, Powers” [302], where the *Principal* (*Beginner*¹⁹⁵) indicated the beginner of an aeon (of an epoch). The *Powers* (*Authorities*) or the *Lordships* are the divinities that rule over the chakras called here the *Thrones*. The author reminds here the epistle¹⁹⁶: “For by him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities” (Colossians 1:16). The *Principalities* are, of course, the primordial divine aspects having dominion over the Adi Chakras in the Virata (see *infra*). In the translation of the *Septuagint* officially acknowledged by the Church, Christ is called “Angel (Messenger) of the Great Council” [303], and not “the Angel of Yahweh” (see Isaiah 37:36) as in misinterpreted versions of the *Bible*. Not only in Hebrew (*aralim*) but also in Greek, the *Angel* has the meaning of Messenger (from *áγγελος*, messenger, Gr.) and the *Great Council* (or the *Assembly of God*—made up of *gods* in Psalms 82:1) indicated the deities.

The *Qur'an* oftentimes uses *We* instead of Divinity: 4.57; 14.5; 15.8-10; suwar 21-23, 36-38; then 39.28,42; 40.24,54,56; surah 56; 76.28 etc. It is there too where we met syntagmas similar with those in the *Bible*, such as *Lord of all Being* (26.127).

When criticising the Gnostic cosmology, Tertullian shows that this one evokes the structure of the human body “with chamber piled upon chamber, and assigned to each god by just as many staircases as there were heresies” [304], obviously this pointing to the subtle body. In her turn, a fine examiner of the Gnostic phenomenon such as Elaine Pagels declares: “a few of these texts describe the multiple heavens, with magic passwords for each one” [305]. We can easily detect the use of specific *mantras* for each and every chakra (or divinity ruling on it).

An ancient Chinese Christian manuscript, although affirms that only Father is the Creator, does not dismiss the possible existence of other gods: “Even if there were still other kinds of gods, yet it is plain that none of them could ever create any thing after that likeness of His. From this (fact) it may be known clearly that any other god (than the One God) did not create any things after that likeness of His” [306]. Another text of the same provenance, called the *Jesus-Messiah-Sutra*, urges as clear as possible: “Worship various

¹⁹⁵ See *infra*.

¹⁹⁶ In *King James Version*: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”

deities” (*Devas*, in the text) [307].

About the universe, Plato believed that the Demiurge “had made [it] moving and living, the created image of the eternal Gods” [308].

The divine entities are also qualified *saints, spirits, angels*¹⁹⁷, *sons of God*. It is remarkable that the *Qur’an* (15.26-28; 55.13-14) when analyzes the progress of the forms of manifestation assigns to every step an element specific to the chakras starting from the bottom: men are created of clay (*tin*, Arab.), the ghosts (*jinnms*, Arab.) of fire, and the angels of light (*nur*, Arab.) stopping at the last known chakra (Agya—the light), since the Sahasrara was not yet opened.

The Old Testament reads about “the sons of God” (Genesis 6:2) different from the humans, or about the “children of the Most High” (Psalms 82:6). Isaiah 56:5 gave another example. When Nebuchadnezzar cast the young men into the fire, Daniel (3:25) said: “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” We should note the plural form: *gods*. The syntagma “children of God” appears in the New Testament too: “children of God... who had been born not of blood nor of flesh’s will nor of man’s will, but of God” (John 1:12-13). 1 John 3:1,2 and also Galatians 3:26; 4:6; Romans 8:14,16 offer other examples.

God manifested in a human shape as an *angel* (Genesis 16:7-14; 32:24-30). Isaiah (63:9) mentioned the Angel of His presence (ch. II).

We have been writing about the *glory* designating the divine manifestation (ch. XI E; also XX B). After resurrection (Self Realization; ch. XIX B) Jesus manifested together with all the deities (called *angels*) ruling over the chakras: “the Son of man is about to come in the glory of his father with his angels” (Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 12:8). “The Spirit drives him out into the wilderness... And he was in the wilderness... with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him” (Mark 1:12-13). Here too the angels are the deities, while the beasts are their vehicles (ch. IV). Schuon made a very interesting remark when speaking of the connection between the divine entities and the Holy Spirit of which they emanated. Thus, “the Archangels are aspects or functions of this central or supreme portion of the creation that is the Holy Ghost qua Paraclete¹⁹⁸” [309].

Revelation contained definite references to the cosmic existence of the seven Adi Chakras, called *stars* (also *assemblies* or *candlesticks*; see ch. IV) in direct relation to the aeons under the form of the seven Spirits or angels.

¹⁹⁷ From *ággelos* (Gr.; pronounced: angelos), related to *Angiras* (Sanskrit.)—one of the Seven Rishi, to whom some hymns of the *Rig-Veda* were ascribed.

¹⁹⁸ *Parákletos* (comforter, Gr.)—a name given to the Holy Spirit.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou hast seen on my right hand, and the seven golden lamps. The seven stars are angels of the seven assemblies¹⁹⁹” (1:20; cf. 1:12,13,16; 2:1). The Judge was described as “he that has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars” (3:1). “The seven Spirits which [are] before his throne” (1:4). In other places the aeons were called “seven lamps of fire... which are the seven Spirits of God” (4:5) or “seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God [which are] sent into all earth” (5:6; cf. Zechariah 3:9; 4:10).

We know that the angels are depicted in Islam wearing turbans of various colors to distinguish their attributes [310] in the same way as are different the colors of the chakras ruled by specific divine entities (ch. XV E). As a matter of fact, the turban on the head top echoes the multiple colors of the Sahasrara lotus (like the domes of the mosques or of the churches in the East; ch. IV). The manifestation of the Divine in each of the chakras (called “members” of the body) was acknowledged by Ibn al-‘Arabi who wrote: “God has shown that He is (in reality) the identity of each of the members” [311].

One cannot deny that each time had its own enlightened individuals who knew the Truth. Still their number was very limited (the case of Nachiketas; ch. IV; also ch. XIX D, XXV A). In Christianity some of them were called Fathers of the Church (although this name was often wrongly attributed to persons who had not the divine grace). No doubt, Evdokimov referred not to these ones but to the *aeons* (whom he called *saints* ruling over the cosmos) when writing: “To the Fathers... the Holy Spirit resuscitates «trees of life», the holy mysteries... and [thus] the kingship of the saints over the cosmos is miraculously restored” [312]. Indeed, when manifested as the Kundalini, the Holy Spirit enlightens the subtle body, the tree of life (ch. IV).

The reflections of the divine aspects of the Primordial Chakras in man could be found in many ancient traditions.

Firstly we would give some quotations from the *Corpus Hermeticum* of Hermes Trismegistus. The Divinity “fashioned and formed seven other Governors, which in their Circles contain the Sensible World... Having all Power, he considered the Operations or Workmanships of the Seven... Man... having the Nature of the Harmony of the Seven,... Nature... brought forth seven Men all Males and Females, and sublime, or on high, according to the Nature of the Seven Governors... ; for all living Creatures being Hermaphroditical, or Male and Female, were loosed and united together with Man, and so the Males were apart by themselves, and the Females likewise... The Heaven was seen in Seven Circles. And the Gods were seen in their Ideas of the Stars, with all their Signs, and the Stars were numbered with the Gods

¹⁹⁹ In the Greek text: “Ecclesia” (see ch. XV A, footnote) that here acquires the meaning of *chakra*.

in them.” The *Governors* were also called *the Gods in the Circles* performing *Divine Works*. [313]. It is obvious that *the Power* is the *Adi Shakti*, the *chakras* ruled by the *Governors* are called *Circles* as in *Sanskrit*, and the *Male* and *Female* in *Humans* reflect both the control over the *chakras* exerted by couples of male and female (*Shakti*) deities and the side channels referred to by the *separation*.

The Sumerian goddess *Mami* or *Mah*²⁰⁰ created man by uttering some charms over the clay (equivalent of the primordial syllable *AUM*); then she placed seven pieces of clay on the left and seven on the right with a burnt brick in between. The dry pieces changed themselves into seven women and seven men who were all in the image of the goddess [314]. There are several symbols to be recognized here: the left (feminine) channel and the right (masculine) channel; the sacrum bone defining the central channel, where the *burnt* brick suggested the *fire* of *Kundalini*; the transformation into seven women and seven men was the embodiment of the divine qualities in the form of the seven *Avatars* and their powers (*shaktis*, the associated feminine incarnations; ch. XX). In chapter II we made a mention to the Pelasgian creation myth on the seven planetary powers both masculine and feminine.

The Babylonians assumed the existence of seven heavens, a fact that was confirmed by the later Christian writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea [315].

In other place we dealt with the seven superior Archangels (ch. IV) and the seven Rishis (ch. V). Likewise were the seven sages of Hellas, the seven Sleepers of Ephesus mentioned also in the *Qur'an*, the seven angels of the XIX Revelation etc. (see *supra*). Jacob Boehme wrote on “the seven spirits of 65, 66 God” and Blake on “the seven perfect spirits.”

Before Christianity, the Magi of Media had become aware of the connection between the teachings of Zoroaster and the aeons theory. According to the Iranian tradition the gods *Amaša Spanta* descended on the earth at the seven *karšvars* that go through the corporeal world with a free power (*vaso-xsathra*) [316]. The relation *karšvar—chakra* becomes evident. The text reads in the beginning about a spatial position (western *karšvar*, eastern *karšvar*) and in the end of “the whole world” [317]. That denoted the knowledge of a sacred geography (ch. IV). Herodotus showed that under the rule of *Deiokes*, the Magi had formed one of the seven tribes in Media [318], and that was probably formed by the priests, as the Levites among the Jews. The Magi assumed a certain parallel between the macrocosm and the microcosm [319] (ch. II).

Some knowledge of the ancient civilizations never fails to produce amazement, even today. The ancient Egyptians held that the grandeur of the

²⁰⁰ *Mah*, in *Sanskrit*, is the *Air*, the *breath* being the Holy Spirit, the Divine Mother (ch. XI C and XXI).

old civilization is due to their having learned arts and sciences from the gods. This statement generated all sorts of fantastic theories. The truth is, however, much more ordinary: these gods were either divine incarnations who manifested themselves in a flesh and blood human shape or great enlightened persons whose knowledge had been revealed to them, a reason for which they were also regarded as divine manifestations.

In order to describe the chakras, the Chinese alchemical writings resort to XIX the metaphor of some mysterious “islands” where “the Immortals” (*Lie-Sien-64 Tchuan*, Chin.) are living, that is the entities controlling these subtle centers. Eliade explained: “to encounter these Immortals was to transcend the human condition and share in an existence of timeless bliss” [320].

In the mythological landscape of the Celts, the sovereign god Dagda (Dagdé) shared to the “gods of the old” the hills surrounding the valley of the sacred river Boyne. It is easy to identify here: the Sushumna channel (*sacred river*) bordered by the chakras (*hills*) bestowed to the Avatars (*gods of the old*). This is a hint about the sacred geography, which was familiar for this civilization too (ch. IV).

We have seen that amongst the ten Avatars of Vishnu (ch. XIX B), the first three (fish *Matsya*, tortoise *Kurma* and boar *Varaha*) occupy a peculiar place since they have not a human shape. Besides, these three incarnations appear in the ancient writings as Avatars of Brahma or Prajapati [321] and that before being considered as manifestations of Vishnu. On the other hand, the tradition assumes that until now there were manifested only *seven* Manu (Men; from *man*, to think, Sanskr.). The vital breaths (prana) are *seven* in number too. The *Satapatha Brahmana* read about the seven vital energies, which talked together: “Verily, as we are now,” they said, “we shall never be able to create. Let us, therefore, make a single human²⁰¹ out of these seven humans.” And thus, they made one human out of those seven humans [322]. The latter are the *Rishis* (sages; ch. V), representing the divinities controlling the chakras also mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita* [323], or the *Seven Seers*. They are “connected with the origin of man and the origin of knowledge... They are considered eternal powers that appear every time a new revelation is needed... These powers represent the basic energies that combine to create life” [324]. They are viewed as cosmic Principles in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Padma Purana* [325]. The Gnostic Christians (such as Saturninus or Saturnilus whose “heresy” was mentioned by Irenaeus) claim that the Demiurge created the Hebdomad (the seven, Gr.) of the theriomorphic planetary Rulers or Archons, each of them ruling over an aeon. The word signifies *beginner* (*arché*, beginning, Gr.) of an era, or *power* governing over the era (*árchon*, leader; the mightiest one, Gr.) and its equivalent is

²⁰¹ The subtle system as a whole.

principium (beginning, Lat.). This send us to the seven immortal saints of the Mazdaean cosmology preached by Zoroaster. The relation *archon*—*arhant* (enlightened, Sanskr.; ch. IX)—*arcanus* (secret, hidden, Lat.)—*arcana* (mysterious work of the alchemists, Lat.)—*arkan* (pillar, Arab.; of Islam) should be noticed.

A Hebrew Gnostic text read: “Out of the Primeval Chaos God created the seven archons through the intermediary of his Wisdom²⁰² which was identical with the «dew of light²⁰³». Wisdom now cast her *eidolon* (shadow-image, Gr.) upon the Primeval Waters of the *tohu wa-bohu*²⁰⁴, whereupon the archons formed the world and the body of man... Later, in her efforts to help mankind, Wisdom sent seven prophets, from Moses to Ezra, corresponding to the seven planets” [326].

In the light of the above, the seven chakras (both in the Virata’s structure and on the human level) were associated with specific manifestations of the Divine. For instance in the *Vishnu Purana*, the Principle of Evolution, Vishnu, is associated with the particular elements of the chakras, namely to their aspects on the three channels ($7 \times 3 = 21$) of the subtle body: “You are everything, earth, water, fire, air, and space, the subtle world, the nature-of-all.” The text follows with a reference to the “human shape bound by the twenty-one incapacities ruled by the powers of darkness” [327]. The *badhas* (dangers, troubles, Sanskr.) called here *incapacities* point at the catches caused to the 21 aspects of the chakras by our negative (*dark, obscure*) deeds.

We can presume that the all-pervading vibratory energy is manifested in frequency ranges according to their specific place. Ernest Scott showed that only “a creed which in some way suggested a spectrum of Being in the universe... could have found its legitimate place in Christianity” [328]. A. Daniélou conceived the divine manifestations as energies: “The gods are but representations of the causal energies from which each aspect of the subtle and the visible worlds is derived. Deities should therefore be thought of as transcendent powers. Each of these manifests itself in a particular aspect of the perceptible universe, or, if we start our investigation from the perceptible end, each deity appears as a subtle entity presiding over the functioning of one aspect of the universe” [329]. “The universe... seems to exist though it

²⁰² Wisdom (*Hokhmah*, Hebr.; *Sophia*, Gr.) is the Primordial Goddess (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.).

²⁰³ Ch. XI C and E.

²⁰⁴ Primordial Chaos (Hebr.).

has ultimately no substance. The power of illusion²⁰⁵ ... may be represented as a «divine thought» of which the universe would be the materialization... The conscious centers of energy—the gods and the living beings—and the unconscious ones—the spheres and the atoms of the universe—are all the display of this power” [330]. “In the form of knowledge, it is the source of liberation, while, as ignorance, it is the principle that binds the world together” [331]. “What we picture as the cosmic or elemental energies must be basically found also in our own beings, for we cannot know of something which is not in ourselves. The heavenly worlds and the lower worlds exist only in so far as they are found in a perceiving mind. It is there that they are experienced. Our effort toward knowing the outside world is limited to the knowledge we can have of ourselves²⁰⁶. Our perception of an external world is but a projection of our inner world. Hence the whole pantheon²⁰⁷ is also a picture of man’s inner life” [332]. “The Gods represent the inclination of the senses enlightened by revelation” [333].

Due to its complexity and especially its importance, the concept of *Illusion* (*Maya*, Sanskr.) deserves a closer analyse, since “Maya is the mean for salvation offered to the human soul, the personified redeeming Power” [334]. We have seen above, that for the Hindus *Maya* (*Maha Maya*) is nothing else than the *Adi Shakti*, the Power of the Supreme Father. “Maya is the active force and Brahman the potential force” [335]. “What Maya has as an attribute (*upadhi*, Sanskr.) represents the world matrix” [336].

The equivalent of *Maya* in Islam is *Hijah* (Veil, Arab.).

“Man is potentially divine and all that he has to do is to strip away the veils of ignorance²⁰⁸ (*avidya*, Sanskr.) created by the phenomenal material world and the mental activity that goes with it; he must dispel the unreal world of *Maya* in order to reach identification with his true timeless Self... The Godhead is your own, deep, concealed, unindividualized and transpersonal Self” [337].

“*Maya* is described as the multiple *nama-rupa* (name and form, Sanskr.), which has no existence in itself yet cannot be denied. The Creation is the manifestation in the realm of *Maya*, which leads to the duality Creator (Uncreated) and creature (created), Beyond-Being and being. In a sense,

²⁰⁵ This syntagma performs the identification of the *Adi Shakti* (*Power*) with *Maha-Maya* (*Illusion*), which accomplishes the creation of the universe.

²⁰⁶ *Gnóthi seautón* (ch. IV, X etc.).

²⁰⁷ *Pan*, all, *theós*, god (Gr.).

²⁰⁸ Ch. IV.

Brahman becomes the world but without losing His transcendent features. The world is an absolute appearance both real and unreal: real as Brahman—a cause persisting in its effect—and unreal, being distinct of Him” [338]. “Only Brahman is true (real) while the world (manifestation) is illusion; the individual soul (*jivo*) is Brahman” (*Brahma satyam jagan mithya jivo Brahma*, Sanskr.). “There is nothing but One who has not a second one” (*Ekam eva advitiam*, Sanskr.) [339].

Samkhya and *Yoga* believe that “human suffering has its root in the illusion: man indeed believes that his psychomental life—the activity of his senses, feelings, thoughts and volitions—is identical... with the Self” [340]. Maya is, above all, “the illusion through which the I believes that he is an individual,” Shankaracharya said. Maya is the principle of individualization, the ignorance (*ajnana*, Sanskr.) without beginning, that the individual I should be conceived as being able to positively conditioning both its individual being and its subjective ignorance [341]. The *Upanishads* clearly showed this: “For when is a duality, as it were, there one sees another; there one smells another; there one hears another; there one thinks another; there one touches another; there one understands another. But where everything has become just one’s own self, then whereby and whom would one see; then whereby and whom would one smell; then whereby and whom would one taste; then whereby and to whom would one speak; then whereby and whom would one hear; then whereby and of whom would one think; then whereby and whom would one touch; then whereby and whom would one understand?” [342]. The nondual principle is also promoted in the Chinese philosophy: “The «this» is also the «that». The «that» is also the «this»... That the «that» and the «this» cease to be opposite is the very essence of *Tao*” [343]. In his turn, the great Sufi poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi wrote: “I am neither Christian, Jew, Parsi nor Muslim. I am neither of the East nor of the West²⁰⁹... I have put aside duality,... I seek the One, I know the One, I see the One, I invoke the One. He is the First, He is the Last, He is the Outward, He is the Inward” [344].

Professor Julia Ching wrote: “in religious Taoism, the same gods as those of the macrocosm inhabit the interior of the body. An adept often searches for his divine teacher in all the holy mountains of China until he finally discovers him in one of the «palaces» inside his head²¹⁰” [345].

The Jewish tradition claims that starting with Adam, the Shekhinah (ch. XX B) moves off the earth reaching finally the seventh heaven. There will be

²⁰⁹ This hints at the positioning upon the Sushumna central channel (ch. IV).

²¹⁰ I.e. the chakra projection on the head. For the inner master (guru) see ch. XXIV.

only the seven genuine righteous ones that would succeed in bringing her back within the mundane world [346]. Enoch said: “And there I beheld seven stars, like great blazing mountains, and like spirits” [347].

Scholem showed that the *Bahir* had spoken of “seven holy forms of God,” each corresponding to a part of the human body²¹¹. “This secret world of the Godhead manifested in the symbol of man is both at once; it is the world of the «inner» man, but also the realm which opens up only to the contemplation of the believer and which the *Zohar* terms the «secret of faith», *raza demehemanutha*” [348].

The *Zohar* offers many important evidences to uphold the hypotheses above. “There are seven regions one over the other in the celestial land lodging the superior angels” [349]. “To you the halls of the supernal king were revealed. There are seven halls, and they all have portals, and the prayers of unification enters each one of them” [350]. Here it is what Rabbi Judah discoursed: “«When God created the world», he said, «He created seven firmaments above, and in each one stars and constellations and ministers to serve, and Chariots one above the other to take upon themselves the yoke of the kingship of their Master. Some have six wings, some four wings²¹²... some are of fire, some of water, and some of air²¹³” [351], according to the scriptural text²¹⁴. Moreover, the chakras of the divine subtle body of the Virata are integrated within the *Adi Sahasrara*, thus making up a heavenly crown (ch. IV), and the specific mantras (prayers) blend in the same manner: “the supreme chief... introduces the prayer into the seven Palaces²¹⁵, to wit, the Palaces of the King. When the prayer enters there, decorated with all those crowns, it combines them all into one heavenly crown, each prayer according to its rank. And the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is crowned on all sides, above and below, so that the whole forms a unity” [352]. This acknowledge the pre-existence—as early as the world creation—of the aeons that shall incarnate: “Rabbi Hiya took as his

²¹¹ These parts of the body are the chakras.

²¹² This probably refers to the number of chakras “petals” (ch. I), namely for this text: the *Mooladhara* (4) and the *Swadhisthana* (6).

²¹³ The mentioned elements clearly point at the chakras: *Fire*—*Swadhisthana*, *Water*—*Nabhi*, *Air*—*Anahatha*.

²¹⁴ “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flame of fire” (Psalms 104:4).

²¹⁵ *Hekhaloth* (Hebr.)

text: *That which is hath been already and that which is to be*²¹⁶. This is explained by what we have learnt, that before God created this world He created others... “ [353]. Actually, Jesus has said: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), while a *hadith* read: “He [Muhammad] was Prophet, when Adam was still between water and mud” (ch. X). The Buddha and Krishna have made similar statements [354]. The *Zohar* reads further on: “In each heaven are controlling angels, as far as the seventh... Furthermore, there is in each heaven a chieftain who is in charge of a part of the world and a part of the earth²¹⁷... The ruler in each heaven transmits of his power to the earth below” [355]. “Before descending into this world, the souls enter the Garden²¹⁸, and coming out therefrom, they receive seven blessings and are encouraged... *to fatherly guide their bodies keeping them on the true path*” [356]. “God created man so that all the celestial spirits contributed to it... The Holy One, blessed be He, created man printing onto him the image of the sacred kingdom that is the image of All²¹⁹... it is the synthesis of all the spirits from up and down, without separation; it is the synthesis of all Sephiroth, all their names, all their epithets and all their denominations” [357].

The Kabbalistic book *Sepher ha-Temunah* mentions the aspects of “a series of creations, each of them governed by one of the seven lower sephiroth. For God’s creative power²²⁰ is exerted in every sephirah and in a cosmic cycle, or shemittah, which is essentially the product of that sephirah. Each shemittah is governed by a different one of God’s attributes, and only in the complete series of seven shemittoth, constituting a Great Jubilee, is the totality of God’s creative powers manifested... In every shemittah... the divine wisdom of the primordial *Torah* appears under a different aspect” [358]. And Rabbi Eleazar says: “The correct order and arrangement of the *Torah* were hidden and are known only to the Holy One, blessed be He” [359].

Revelation read: “There are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain [only] a little while” (17:10). Here we will present only one hypothesis among the others (the historical one will be submitted in ch. XX C2c), which reckons that the first five “kings” refer to the entities presiding over the first five chakras before

²¹⁶ Ecclesiastes 3:15.

²¹⁷ This refers to the *sacred geography* (ch. IV).

²¹⁸ The Eden.

²¹⁹ *Kol* (Hebr.).

²²⁰ The equivalent of the *Adi Shakti* (Sanskrit).

Jesus. The “one [who] is” indicates Jesus who ruled over the sixth chakra when Revelation was composed. “The other [who] has not yet come” designates the Judge (Kalki) who will conclude the cycle (the seventh and last chakra).

The manifestation of the divine entities in Islam is similar to those found with the Judeo-Christian tradition. “Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said: «Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His shade»” [360]. The surah *The Cave* in the *Qur’an* relates about seven young men who took refuge in a cave near Ephesus where they remained asleep for 300 solar years (309 lunar years). The place of refuge (*Kahf ar-Raqim*, Cave of Sleepers, Arab.) and their presumed tomb are honoured since the 6th century. The subsequent doctrine of Imamism (see *infra*) confirms that they were Avatars. Their revelation (through the specific process of awakening the spiritual energy) is essential to the moment of Resurrection or Self Realization (ch. XIX B) which the *Qur’an* calls “the Hour”: “that they might know that God’s promise is true, and that the Hour—there is no doubt of it” (18.20). “My Lord knows very well their number, and none knows them, except a few” (18.21).

For the same reasons as shown before, Ibn an-Nadim refers only to Pentads: “The Primal Man clad himself with five principles, which are the deities: the ether, wind, light, water and fire” [361]. Couliano showed that the Father of Greatness have sent only five aeons of Light, about which wrote also Theodore bar Konai as aeons of time [362].

The main orientation (85%) in Islam is the *Sunna* (custom, tradition, rule, practice, Arab.; contained in the *ahadith*) that acknowledged the first four caliphs (*khalifah*, successor; *Khalifa[t] rasul Allah*, Successor to the Messenger of God, Arab., which is the title granted to Muhammad) who were all considered “rightly guided” (*ar-rashidun*, Arab.): *Abu Bakr* (632-634), Muhammad’s father-in-law, who designated as his successor ‘*Umar* (634-644), later murdered; then ‘*Uthman* (644-656), who was killed for his misbehaviour; and ‘*Ali* (656-661), Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, who was also assassinated (as well as his son al-Husayn, in 680 at Kerbala).

Shi’a (party, separate group, Arab.) regarded only ‘Ali as caliph; the same for his and Fatima’s (Muhammad’s daughter) successors. From the very beginning, this group was against the majority who claimed that the Prophet had not named any successor and so gathered around Abu Bakr. In their turn, the Shi’ites declared that already on his return from the expedition to al-Hudaibiya (April 29, 628) Muhammad had designated ‘Ali as his successor, saying: “He, whose master I am, has also ‘Ali for his master” [363]. According to the tradition, the Prophet has said: “O Abu Bakr! Whosoever wishes to see the man of my family who has the highest rank and the most perfect merit... let him look upon ‘Ali!” [364]. Pious pilgrimages are

organised for the graves of ‘Ali in Najaf and of al-Husayn in Kerbala (both places near Kufa) and, likewise, at Samarra, in the subterranean hiding place of the last Imam.

The *Twelver Shi’ites* (*Ithna ‘Ashariyyah*²²¹, Arab.) admit twelve imams (*imam*, sign, model, the one who guides²²², Arab.) regarded as the representatives of God on earth. This is the mainstream religion in Iran and of half of the believers in Iraq, being spread also in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Libya and some countries in East Africa. *Ithna ‘Ashariyyah* is often identified to the Shi’ism itself because of this situation and of its judicial and theological temperate doctrine which placed it in the center of all the fractions of the Shi’a branch.

To the Shi’ites, the existence of the Imams was a necessity for the perpetuation of the world and human history. Indeed, a *hadith* read: “The earth will not be devoid of the God witness²²³” that is the Imam, since after the sixth Imam, Ja’far as-Sadiq, the Imams are the *witnesses of God* on the earth, His *signs* (*‘alamah*, Arab.). They are the gate (*bab*, Arab.) to God, the road (*sabil*, Arab.), the guide of each generation, and the regents of God (*khulafa’ Allah*, Arab.) on the earth. In this concept we would detect the Hindu Avatar, the Gnostic aeon etc. The Imams have the knowledge of the Supreme Name of Allah (ch. XV D), as well as the books containing the whole esoteric knowledge including the science of the symbolic meaning of the Arabic alphabet letters (*al-jufr*, Arab.). The Kabbalah advocates the same claim (ch. IV). The power to grant initiation (*wilayah*, Arab.) was given to the Imams, while Muhammad moreover had the gift of prophecy (*nubuwwah*, Arab.).

Some exegetes think that there exists a passage in the *Bible* evoking the twelve Imams as descendants of Isma’il (see *infra*): “And for Ishmael I have heard thee: behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will very greatly multiply him; twelve princes shall he beget” (Genesis 17:20).

The first *Pir*²²⁴ was Hazrat ‘Ali, although in appearance he was only a disciple of Muhammad. The relation between the Imam and God is, in this concept, approximately the same as that of Jesus Christ and God in Christian theology. The other Imams came down from ‘Ali and Fatima since it was only the Prophet’s family who could form the chain able to transmit not only

²²¹ *Shari’ah* (sacred law, Arab.).

²²² In the ordinary meaning, the guidance refers to the collective prayer.

²²³ *Hujja* (Arab.).

²²⁴ Leader, guide (Persian)—of the Sufis, corresponding to *murshid* (Arab.).

the teachings but also the divine grace (*barakah*, Arab.; ch. II). The Imams who succeeded to 'Ali and Fatima were their sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn, then Zayn al-'Abidin 'Ali ibn al-Husayn and so forth until 939, when it is believed that the eleventh Imam went into hiding and disappeared from XIX human society. The series of the twelve imams ends with the *Mahdi* (al-62, 63 *Mahdi*, the Guided [by God], Arab.), which could be interpreted as the abridged form for *Maha-Devi*. The Mahdi is the immortal, hidden Imam who will come back to install peace and righteousness on Earth on the Day of Judgement. It is worth mentioning that also the Sunnites acknowledge the arrival of a person who at the end of the times will wholly restore the religion (*Dharma*, Sanskr.) and bring back the dominion of righteousness (ch. XIX A). This faith originates in some hints offered by the Tradition [365] and developed under the influence of the Shi'a tenets [366]. The *Qur'an* also speaks of the successor of Jesus, bearing the name of *Ahmad* that could conceal *Mahdi* or even *Mahad[evi]* as an anagram: "Jesus son of Mary said: «Children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the *Torah* that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad»" (61.6). In other opinions, Ahmad would have been Muhammad since both names signify "the Praised One" [367].

Here are the *signs* that will announce the advent of the Mahdi. "People will neglect prayer, squander the divinity which is conferred to them, legalize untruth, practice usury, accept bribes, construct huge edifices, sell religion to win this lower world, employ idiots, consort with women, break family ties, obey passions, and consider insignificant the letting of blood. Magnanimity will be considered as weakness and injustice as glory, princes will be debauched and ministers will be oppressors, intellectuals will be traitors and the readers of the *Qur'an* vicious. False witness will be brought openly and immorality proclaimed in loud voices. A word of promise will be slander, sin and exaggeration... Criminals will be praised, the lines of combat narrowed, hearts will be in discord and pacts broken. Women, greedy after the riches of this lower world, will involve themselves into the business of their husbands, the vicious voices of man will be loud and will be listened to. The most ignoble people will become leaders, the debauched will be believed for fear of the evil they will cause, the liar will be considered as truthful and the traitor as trustworthy... The women will ride horses, they will resemble men and the men will resemble women. The people will prefer the activities of the lower world to those of the Higher world and will cover up with lambskins the hearts of wolves" [368]. Here we find again the portrayal of the Kali Yuga (ch. XIX A).

Qa'im, the pillar of religion (i.e. the Mahdi) will restore the lost sense of

holiness. First of all he will restore Islam in its original purity and integrity. He will bring a new Order, a new Book, a new Law, and a new Tradition [369]. The Mahdi will also restore in their original truth and purity the other religions, abandoned and distorted in like manner [370]. He will get out from their caves²²⁵ the *Torah* and other Divine Books and judge the faithful of the *Torah* (*Tawraat*, Arab.) according to the *Torah*; the faithful of the *Gospels* (*Injil*, Arab.) according to the *Az-Zabur*²²⁶ and those of the *Qur'an* according to the *Qur'an*. This is the universal initiation granted to all people by the Imam, unto the secrets of the existence and their own religions and, unquestionably, this is the meaning of the “Mahdi” unveiled by the fifth Imam, al-Bagir: the “Mahdi (guide) is thus called because it is him who will guide (*yahdi*) us unto the secret teachings” [371].

God said: “O, Muhammad, these are My friends, My clean chosen ones, the proof that I have given to mankind after you. They are your inheritors and priests and the best of My beings, after you. Through My Glory and Grandeur, I will manifest My religion through them and raise My Word through them. Through the last of them (Mahdi) I will cleanse the earth of My enemies. They will rule over the entire earth from East to West. I will subject the wind²²⁷ to his power... I will help him with My Army and support him with My Angels²²⁸ until he will raise My Name and the beings will acknowledge My uniqueness, and then I will extend his dominion and will ensure the succession of My Friends all through the times until the Resurrection Day” [372].

All the believers who join the Mahdi will receive miraculous powers, particularly those of extrasensory communication with the Imam. “At the time of the Advent of our Qa'im,” Ja'far as-Sadiq said, “God, glorified and exalted be Him, will develop the hearing and the sight of our believers, so that without any messenger between them and the Qa'im, he should talk to them and they should hear him and see him without his ever leaving his place” [373]. Such texts created (and maintained) the confusion (whose victim is also Scott [374]) imagining that the Islamic esoteric trend (Sufism) would have resorted to telepathy (ch. XXII D), when actually the respective information were due to the collective awareness (ch. II and X). Since taking

²²⁵ Thus, this extraordinary prophecy foretold the future discovery in the caves of Qumran and Al-Hammadi of the manuscripts pertaining to the ancient holy books of Judaism and Christianity, especially of the *apocrypha*!

²²⁶ A name given to the revealed Books; here it refers to the Gospels.

²²⁷ That is the divine breath, the cool breeze (ch. XI C).

²²⁸ Equivalent to the *Ganas* (Sansk.).

decisions will be difficult, they will receive guidance and instructions from the Imam who will write in their palms; and they will only watch and follow his commands [375]. How accurately the text describes here the perception of the vibrations (cool breeze, ch. XI C) in the palms and of the blockages (ch. X) as well as the fulfilling of the master's indications in order to remove any blockage! The Sahaja Yoga practice demonstrates that the "commands" are actually the indications transmitted by the Kundalini energy that signals out the existing blockages thus enabling the practitioner to apply the appropriate techniques to remove them.

This doctrine of occultation (*sair*, Arab.), disappearance (*ghayba*, Arab.) or discontinuation (*wakf*, Arab.) stated that the expected hidden Mahdi (*Mahdi al-Muntazar*, Arab. [376]), the coming Mahdi or the Mahdi who arises (*Mahdi Qa'im*, Arab.) at the end of the world will be Jesus (called 'Aissa, in the *Qu'ran*) or Muhammad (*Buruz*, Arab.) coming again, or even the companion of Moses called al-Khidr. Ibn Wadih wrote that according to the tradition Muhammad himself said: "There is no Mahdi save 'Aissa ben Maryam" (Jesus son of Mary, Arab.) [377]. Other views claim that the Mahdi will be only the forerunner of Jesus descended for the second time. It is not without interest that the Jewish tradition at the time of the *Talmud* read about *the hidden* (*ha-nistar*, Hebr.), thirty-six in their number (identical to the number of incarnations of the *Buddha* Principle; ch. XIX B). They constitute the foundation of the world. This concept was taken over by the *Hasidim* (ch. XXV C) in Eastern Europe. The *Ahmadiyya* movement (ch. XXIII B) believes that the Mahdi will be the incarnation of both Jesus and Muhammad and at the same time will be one of Vishnu's Avatars [378].

The Shi'ites believed that some passages on 'Ali in the *Qu'ran* had not been accurately recorded. The Prophet, finding his followers unable to understand the esoteric side of Islam, revealed it only to 'Ali (see 'Ali's *Quran*, ch. X) and therefore it was only he who possessed true knowledge (*ilm*, Arab.) of God, and therefore had exclusive authority to give final and binding interpretations of the *Qu'ran* and *ahadith*. According to a Sunni *hadith* reported by Schuon, the Prophet said: "I am the city of science and 'Ali is its gate" [379], *the science* representing here the *gnosis*. The *ilm* was not just a secret knowledge but also implied an inner transformation under the guidance of *da'I* (spiritual mentor, Arab.) so that the disciple might comprehend the esoteric significance of the *Qur'an*, which was developed by the Isma'ili *batini* into *tawil* (literally: carrying back, Arab.—to the original meaning of the archetypal *Qur'an*).

The concepts of the Shi'ites were supported by the interpretations of the *Qu'ran*, such as those claimed by the Mu'tazilites (first real school of the Islam introducing rationalism in traditional theology, which appeared in the

2nd century after Hegira) who had been honoured under the Baghdad caliph al-Ma'mun (813-833), the son of Harun ar-Rashid. The great prose-writer al-Jahiz was also an adept of that group whose name originated in the "separation" from the Sunnites and Kharijites. Likewise, the Shi'i doctrine in general, and the Imamism more particularly, were enriched with the additions taken from the pre-Islamic beliefs, the old philosophy of Iran, the Greek Neoplatonism and the Christian Gnosticism.

The Prophet was the archetype, the norm, equilibrium and perfection, the Whole or Universal Man (*al-Insan al-Kamil*, Arab.). Muhammad was regarded as the symbolic replica of the cosmos, centered on the principle²²⁹ of divine revelation. He is also the Ancient Man (*al-Insan al-Qadim*, Arab.), a name actually given to God (ch. XV D) in the *Bible* (Daniel 7:9; also 7:13,22). Then comes the Imam who personified the quintessence of the cosmos, a kind of channel through which the divine organizing and regulating energy flows to mankind, and thus to the world. The most important cosmic force is the divine Light of guidance, the pre-eternal, the real instrument of Creation²³⁰. The spiritual relation made that the Light passed from one Imam to the next. It was a continuous prophecy: it started with Adam creation and extended all through the prophets out of whom Muhammad was the last one, then went on through the Imams.

Sourdel wrote: "The secrets known by the Imams completed the Revelation and made up its inside meaning (*batin*, Arab.) and deep truth... The sixth Imam was ascribed the words: «Our objective... is the secret, and the secret of something that remains concealed, a secret that is sufficient to itself»... The secret truth preserved by the invisible Imam and that transcended the Revelation of the *Qur'an* text was regarded as an eternal wisdom including all the previous human wisdom, the masterpiece of a mind partly emerging from the divine spirit... The Imam was at the same time the greatest philosopher, the best king; all the philosophers and kings of the previous times became his predecessors, almost like the prophets. This explains why the Shi'ite authors paid so much attention to the doctrines and ideas spread into the world before Islam, either in Arabia or in India, Iran or even in the Christian countries,... why their thinkers frequently found inspiration in the concepts specific to the Hellenistic philosophy... According to the Hellenistic philosophy, the world is governed by a supreme Intelligence, a divine emanation that only certain sages could enjoy" [380].

Among the *Fatimids* or *Isma'ilites* (spread in the same areas) there were also concepts on an esoteric dimension and also the imams, similar to the

²²⁹ *Ashl* (Arab.).

²³⁰ *Al-Khalq* (Arab.).

Twelver Shi'ites, but they admitted only *seven* Imams, hence their name of *Sevener Shi'ites*. According to their doctrine "the world history included a cycle of seven successive prophetic periods each of them characterized through the arrival of a Prophet followed by an Imam" [381]. The series began with Adam, the first Prophet followed by the Imam Seth and continued with the next five prophets: Noah (*Nuh*, Arab.), Abraham (*Ibrahim*, Arab.), Moses (*Musa*, Arab.), Jesus (*'Aissa*, Arab.), Muhammad. The seventh Prophet will be the Mahdi who will be also the Imam of Resurrection and will fully disclose the secret meaning of Revelation. At the same time 'Aissa will come back on the earth. After some Imamites, the Mahdi would be Muhammad, and after others Isma'il, hence the name of *Isma'ilis* given to the last ones.

Walaya (Arab.) is the acknowledgement of 'Ali and his descendants as Imams. This implied for the initiates the belief in a cosmic hierarchy, and for the rest of the people only the motivation for the coming of the Imams. One of the writings arrived at us, the *Encyclopaedia* of Isma'ilite inspiration, was destined to the initiates only. It was compiled in Iraq at the end of the 10th century. This text supposed by virtue of astrology the Imamate to be connected with the cosmic laws and characterized the spiritual life as the soul purification [382].

To the *Imams* of the Shi'ites correspond the Sunni *Sheikhs*.

We believe it useful to first elucidate the role played by the concepts of *archetype* and *myth* within the human psyche before going further in analysing the specific Hindu way of considering the steps of divine attributes revelation.

While doing a detailed investigation of the psychic development Erich Neumann wrote: "Human life in the beginning is determined to a far higher degree by the unconscious than by consciousness; it is directed more by archetypal images than by concepts, by instincts than by involuntary decisions of the ego; and man is more a part of his group than an individual. And similarly, his world is not a world seen by consciousness, but one experienced by the unconscious. In other words, he perceives the world not through the functions of consciousness, as an objective world presupposing the separation of subject and object, but experiences it mythologically, in archetypal images, in symbols that are a spontaneous expression of the unconscious, that help the psyche orient itself in the world, and that, as mythological motifs, configure the mythologies of all peoples" [383]. Northrop Frye observed: "Man lives not directly or nakedly in nature like the animals, but within a mythological universe, a body of assumptions and beliefs developed from his existential concerns. Most of this is hold unconsciously, which means that our imagination may recognize elements of

it... without consciously understand what it is that we recognize... Below the cultural inheritance, there must be a common psychological inheritance, otherwise forms of culture would not be intelligible to us" [384]. From the standpoint of the religion history, Mircea Eliade estimated that "undoubtedly, such central symbols are «revealed»; they descend from an extrarational zone we can or cannot call «unconscious»... We can affirm that both myth and dream are of extrarational nature that assert themselves to the spirit with the strength of a «revelation». Moreover, the myth always comes from a very congruous symbol system; in a rather emphasized expression, it is the «dramatisation» of the symbol" [385].

Issued from the same root *mi*, the *myth* was regarded in the old times as a reflection, an *imitation* (*mimesis*, Gr.) on a *reduced* (*mikrós*, Gr.) scale of the divine ineffable reality. The text substratum was discussed in chapter IV. Here we would remind only that Plato's etymologies revealed that "there exist words under the words" [386] and Heraclitus the Rhetor (first century AD) used to refer to "the allegorical language of Homer" and "the arcanes of his wisdom" in his exegesis of the *Iliad* [387]. Almost in each of the Platonic dialogues, Socrates, the strictest logician, presents myths or uses mythic structures. The fact was explained by Zeller like this: "In a word, the Platonic myths indicate almost every time a gap of scientific knowledge; they appear when it is needed a presentation of a subject known to be real by the philosopher but whose scientific finding surpasses his means" [388]. However, this is a hypothesis hardly approved in the case of the great Greek philosopher, especially in the occurrence of major works such as *Timaeus*, which is entirely a myth. Socrates regarded the myth as a way toward the essence (*eidós*, Gr.) [389].

Carl Gustav Jung brought a major contribution to the theory of archetypes that is central in his work: "the archetypes do not represent anything external, non-psychic... Rather,... they represent the life and essence of a non-individual psyche. Although this psyche is innate in every individual it can neither be modified nor possessed by him personally... It is the precondition of each individual psyche" [390]. Jung thought that the archetypes are the contents of the *collective* (or *archetypal*) *unconscious*, characterizing the inborn possibilities of representing the symbols of the unconscious. These predispositions, characteristic for the human species, can explain the unity of the cultural and spiritual products in space and time [391]. The great psychologist and psychiatrist came to the following conclusion: "We can hardly suppose that myth and mystery were invented for any conscious purpose; it seems much more likely that they were the involuntary revelation of a psychic, but unconscious, pre-condition" [392]. "Contents of an archetypal character are manifestations of processes in the collective

unconscious... Archetypes were, and still are, living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously, and they have a strange way of making sure of their effect. Always they were the bringers of protection and salvation... There was always a myth hiding behind it, in new and disconcerting garb, which then, following the ancient and venerable pattern, gave itself out as ultimate truth. In reality we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless we are prepared to pay the price of a neurosis.” About “the insignificant” thing, Jung wrote: “Over and over again in the «metamorphosis of the gods» (*Gestaltwandel der Götter*—Ziegler), he rises up as the prophet or first-born of a new generation and appears unexpectedly in the unlikeliest places (sprung from a stone, tree, furrow, water etc.) and in ambiguous form (Tom Thumb, dwarf, child, animal and so on)” [393]. Neither the size nor the topic of our book allows for a satisfactory comment on the writings of the prominent scholar. We can only express our regret that Mircea Eliade was among those who tried to minimize the importance of the outstanding findings of Jung on the archetypes [394]. Actually, the archetype was for Eliade just an “exemplary model,” a “paradigm,” and not at all a structure of the collective unconscious [395]. Constantin Noica also noticed that Eliade “was always upset by his vicinity” to Jung’s researches [396].

* * *

The first seven days of Creation (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-3) symbolized the successive opening of the seven primordial chakras and thus represented the history of the entire evolution: “These are the histories of the heavens and the earth, when they were created” (2:4).

Adi Mooladhara is the first chakra to which it corresponds Ganesha, the non-incarnated Principle of the Divine Son that has controlled it ever since this Adi Chakra opened at the moment of creation. The Adi Shakti actually projected her three energies through Ganesha, who is also found on the level of higher chakras as *Maha-Ganesha* (Great Ganesha, Sanskr.) in the form of the ninth Avatar called Maha-Vishnu, namely Jesus Christ, and then of the last incarnation, Kalki. Now we can understand the famous phrases so often repeated in Revelation: “I am the Alpha and the Omega... He who is, and who was, and who is to come” (1:8; cf. 1:4; 2:8; 11:17; 21:6; 22:13). In the light of the above considerations we can identify here Jesus (He who is), Ganesha (He who was) and Kalki (He who is to come). Two other interpretation are of an equal probability pointing either to the Hindu Trimurti (Brahma, the Creator—He who was; Vishnu, the Principle of Evolution—He who is; Shiva, the Destroyer of the Creation—He who is to come), or to the three historical stages of manifestation of the Christian Trinity (Age of the Father,

which was; Age of the Son, which is; Age of the Holy Spirit, which is to come) that were prophesied by Joachim of Floris (Gioacchino da Fiore; ch. XXI).

Jung noticed: “the «child» is therefore *renatus in novam infantiam*. It is thus both beginning and end, an initial and a terminal creature” [397]. “He embodies the myth of the divine Primordial Man, the mystic Adam. It is he who occupies the center of the Christian mandala, who is the Lord of the Tetramorph²³¹ ... His Kingdom is the pearl²³² of great price, the treasure buried in the field, the grain of mustard seed which will become a great tree²³³, the heavenly city” [398]. He is actually the Eternal Child (*puer aeternus*, Lat.; *sanatkumar*, Sanskr.).

The worship of the Divine Child equated with Ganesha by the Hindus, took the form of the cult for the child Jesus with the Jesuits (religious Catholic order *Compañia de Jesús*, the Company of Jesus, Span., founded in 1534-1539 by Ignatius of Loyola).

The first opened chakra of Mooladhara has as its specific element the Earth (ch. IV), of which Plato wrote: “The earth which is our nurse... he (Demiurge) framed to be... first and oldest of gods that are in the interior of heaven” [399]. In fact, the Earth appears as early as the *first* verse of the *Bible* (Genesis 1:1) thus designating the enlightenment of the *first* Adi Chakra. *Adam* is born out of Mother Earth (*adamah*, earth, Hebr.; it is of feminine gender, thus disclosing her maternal nature): “Yahweh Elohim formed man, dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7; cf. 3:19; Psalms 90:3; 103:14; Job 33:6; 34:15; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 64:8). As Scholem showed, Adam “is a man of the earth... as the late Kabbalists put in a daring etymology, derived from an ingenious pun on Isaiah 14:14²³⁴” [400]. The concept of the earth bringing forth the creatures exists at the outset of Genesis where “God said: «Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after their kind»” (1:24). The myth of creation out of clay appears also in the Mesopotamian texts where the goddess Ninhurshag called “Lady Potter” (ch. XX A and B) is the prototype of goddess Aruru who created Enkidu from clay. Likewise Ganesha was created out of the powder detached from the body of the Divine Mother (AdiShakti-Parvati; ch. I). Virgin Mary who gave birth to the New Adam (Jesus) is another symbol of

²³¹ See the symbolism of number four (ch. I).

²³² The pearl represents the Sahasrara (ch. XV A).

²³³ For these symbols see ch. IV.

²³⁴ “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

the Archetypal Mother (ch. XX). In the *Vulgate* Isaiah's prophecy (45:8) read: "*aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem*" (let the earth open, and let them bring forth Salvation, Lat.). This text is used in the catholic liturgy of the *Advent*.

Jesus is the New Adam. However, He is also *Ganesha* whose name comes from the association of *Gana* and *Isa*. The *Ganas* are inferior divinities serving Shiva under the command of Ganesha (hence another name for Ganesha: *Ganapati*, that is the Lord or Master of Ganas). *Isa* has, too, the meaning of Lord (title also conferred to Christ). At the same time '*Isa* is the name used for Jesus within the entire Indian subcontinent after the invasion of the Muslims.

Ganesha is named also *Dwai-matura* (having two mothers, Sanskr.) since he was the son of both the virgin Gauri and Shiva's wife, Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas. The Great Goddess was at the same time Bhoomi Devi (Mother Earth). The Gnostic writings read: "Adam came into being from two virgins, from the Spirit and from the virgin Earth. Christ, therefore, was born from a virgin" [401]. This is again a proof for the identity between Ganesha, Adam and Jesus.

In Hindu tradition, Ganesha symbolizes the *purity, innocence, wisdom* and *joy* of the Divine Child. The French theologian and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) also found four attributes of Jesus whom he called "the Omega Point" towards which the entire evolution tends [402]. Before him, Maximus the Confessor stated: "Christ is the center where all lines converge" [403].

Jesus referred to these qualities when He said: "Unless ye... become as little children, ye will not at all enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (Matthew 18:3; cf. Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). "Suffer little children, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of the heavens is of such" (Matthew 19:14; cf. Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). And the Psalms read: "my soul within me is as a weaned child" (131:2). "And Jesus said to them: «I have been among you with children, and you have not known me²³⁵; I have spoken to you as to wise men, and you have not understood my words; because you are younger than I am, and of little faith»" [404]. Hippolytus refers to "an explicit passage, occurring in the Gospel inscribed according to Thomas, expressing themselves thus: «He who seeks me, will find me in children from seven years old; for there concealed, I shall in the fourteenth age be made manifest». This, however, is not (the teaching) of Christ, but of Hippocrates, who uses these words: «A child of seven years is half of a father»" [405]. We shall notice here two things. First, that Hippocrates instead of "fourteenth age" referred to the "fourteenth *aeon*" [406] and,

²³⁵ *Fui inter vos cum infantibus et non cognovistis me* (Lat.).

therefore, the text have nothing to do with the age of seven years. Then, that Jesus refers in this gospel to His second coming as Kalki at the end of the ages (aeons), since the subtle body (of the Virata and of the humans, too) has in fact fourteen chakras: seven within the body and seven above it (transcendent), as it is depicted in the old Hidu charts [407]. Certainly, Jesus can be found also within the first more easily available seven chakras (“children” from seven years old).

Revelation witnessed His chastity: “These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins: these are they who follow the Lamb” (14:4). We also remember that the first thing Adam and Eve did after receiving the knowledge was to cover their nudity (Genesis 3:7), thus expressing their chastity. The moment corresponded to the opening of the primordial first chakra (Mooladhara) ruled by Ganesha. Jesus repeatedly stressed on the importance of purity in achieving the spiritual ascent to the Kingdom of God (Sahasrara). We will discuss in the followings about the inflexible attitude displayed by the Savior with regards to the impure glances (Matthew 5:28-30; 18:9; Mark 9:47).

When he is not the only progeny, the hero is often depicted in the fairy tales as the most innocent. Thus, he is either the youngest child therefore the closest to the age of innocence or, apparently, the most incapable—the target of mockery of others who judge not after universal (divine) laws but use only mental criteria. In the end it will be just he who will surpass all obstacles (chakras blockages) obtaining the Kingdom (Sahasrara). The wedding (mystical, hence the Self Realization) ends the story. Although the Principle of Innocence, Ganesha was born first, he was viewed as the younger brother of Karttikeya (or Skanda), since Ganesha never gets old but remains a child forever.

Once lost, the innocence specific to the childhood can be restored through divine benevolence and mercy: “He shall return to the days of his youth” (Job 33:25).

We have shown that the Mooladhara chakra presided over by Ganesha is to be found at the sacral plexus (ch. II). In this respect, the *Bible* provides a hint in the question: “Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?” (Job 38:36; *King James Version*).

The divine attribute of wisdom is expressed through the Hebrew *Hokhmah*, a word encountered not only in Judaism (where it becomes a major theme for the *Proverbs of Solomon* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*) but also (as *al-Hikmah*, Arab.) in the *Qur'an* (2.272; 3.43, 73, 75; 4.57, 113; 5.110; 17.41; 31.11; 33.34; 43.63; 62.2 etc.). The *Wisdom of Solomon* associates wisdom, purity (cleanness, spotless, unsulliness) and holiness [408]. Likewise, the Proverbs read: “I will teach thee the way of wisdom” (4:11; cf. 4:18). She

grants the Grace of Self Realization on the Sahasrara (the crown of the head): “She will provide a graceful garland for your head, bestow a crown of honour on you” (4:9). “Impart to a wise [man], and he will become yet wiser; teach a righteous [man], and he will increase learning” (9:9). That text may refer not only to Wisdom but also to the Grace as in the words of Jesus: “For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall be caused to be in abundance; but he who has not, even what he has shall be taken away from him” (Matthew 13:12; cf. 25:29; Luke 8:18; 19:26).

The Scriptures condemn both the unwise and the one devoid of respect to the divine: “Forsake follies and live, and go in the way of intelligence” (9:6). “Impart to a wise [man], and he will become yet wiser; teach a righteous [man], and he will increase learning. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy is intelligence. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and years of life shall be added to thee” (9:9-11). It would be no longer necessary, we presume, to mention here the longevity performances of some Hindu sages [409]. We believe, however, that the meaning of the biblical words is deeper, in that they send on the eternal life acquired through moksha.

Other sections (XX B and C4) will provide further details on the Wisdom.

The Psalms read: “Thou will make known to me the path of life: thy countenance is fullness of joy” (16:11). The Proverbs talk further about Wisdom: “I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (8:30). Thus we find here again the Divine Child Ganesha, playful and radiating joy and delight. Delight and joy are divine Son’s features repeatedly announced by Jesus who associate them to the Self Realization (*reward in the heavens*, i.e. in the Sahasrara): “Rejoice and exalt, for your reward is great in the heavens” (Matthew 5:12; cf. Luke 6:23). Christ used to say to His disciples: “Your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you” (John 16:22). After the resurrection of Jesus, “the disciple rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord” (John 20:20). Witnessing the assumption of Jesus, the disciples, “having done him homage, returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). “All that believed were together... with gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:44,46). The manifestation of the Holy Spirit (through the Self Realization) produces joy: “The disciples were filled with joy and [the] Holy Spirit” (13:52). “Ye exult with joy unspeakable and filled with the glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

Because of duality, any material happiness (*sukha*, Sanskr.) is followed by sorrow (*dukkha*, Sanskr.). However, our soul incessantly yearns for joy, because the true nature of the Self (the same as of God; ch. XIX C) is everlasting joy and knowledge. But that joy is not of the nature of the object of our senses. We are part and parcel of God who made us in His true image

(ch. II), and is the Ocean of eternal joy. The *Upanishads* say: “Brahman is joy” [410]. It is only because of our love for *Maya* that we have forgotten our true nature. That state of joy (*ananda*, Sanskr.) is known for millennia to characterize the state of Yoga (ch. XIX B). The person whose Kundalini has reached the summit of the Sahasrara (height, mount of God, ch. II) and became one with the Divine, knows the genuine joy: “Shalt thou delight in Yahweh, and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth” (Isaiah 58:14). The secret teaching destined by Christ to the initiates (ch. XX C4) would enable them to experience the joy bestowed through the Self Realization: “I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full” (John 15:11). Or, as the Gnostic writing bearing the following title showed it: “The gospel of truth is joy for those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him” [411].

In the concept of Yoga, Ganesha controls the sexual organs, their function and also the pleasure in humans, through the Mooladhara chakra, whose master he is. The Mooladhara (support of the root, Sanskr.; ch. I) is the basic element that determines the spiritual growth. As we have seen (ch. II), this chakra is placed at the bottom of the backbone, under the sacrum bone.

The genuine Yoga Masters have accused and condemned the practice of certain deviations from Yoga such as Tantrism (that is called wrongly Tantra Yoga, because it has nothing in common with Yoga), which was denounced as being unsuccessful and even dangerous since it destroys any chance of further spiritual development being just a futile attempt to awaken the Kundalini by abnormal sexual practices. It is only by respecting the purity and innocence of the Divine Child Ganesha (ruling over the Mooladhara chakra) that one can attain—through Yoga—release (*moksha*) from the endless chain of incarnations. It is amazing to realize the ignorance and lack of discrimination displayed by some prominent indologists who are defenders of the Tantric way and claim for the excellency (*sic!*) of these methods which call for eroticism and drunkenness (alcohol and drugs concurrently), or even assert that “it is the *only* (*sic!*) method which may bring actual results in the difficult conditions of the Age of Strife, the Kali Yuga” [412].

In Sahaja Yoga concept, purity does not mean that one should practice abstinence, which is as inappropriate as sexual excess, but one should have a normal and a moral sex life that supposes chastity until marriage and which condemns adultery. The Hindu tradition organizes the life in four ashrams (ch. XV B) including the stage of *brahmacharina*, understood by some people as *chastity*. Actually, this refers only to the chastity before marriage. Obviously, the great contemporary sage Ramana had in view those who wrongly interpreted the Sanskrit term hoping to reach the apex of spiritual evolution by practising a total abstinence. Therefore, he explained:

“*Brahmacharya* is «living in Brahman». It has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood... Married or unmarried, a man can realize the Self” [413]. The Jewish mysticism requested a married life, to ensure that the person was in good sexual health. The Talmudic sages would not allow young people to be initiated into the Kabbalah until they reached maturity.

In Proverbs, the Wisdom said that she is “rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights [were] with the sons of men” (8:31), but warned the latter: “And now, sons, hearken unto me, and blessed are they that keep my ways; hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, guarding the posts of my doors²³⁶. For who so findeth me findeth life, and obtaineth favour of Yahweh; but he that sinneth against me doeth violence to his own soul; all they that hate me love death²³⁷” (8:32-36).

When talking of the Mooladhara as the *support of the root* we would like to emphasise that as a manifestation of the Ganesha Principle Jesus said: “I XIX am the root” (Revelation 22:16). The color of Ganesha and of the Mooladhara - 67 chakra is red. The human prototype created by the Babylonian goddess Tiamat was *Kingu* (Red, Akkad.). Likewise, in Semitic languages, Adam was translated by “red” (from *dam*, blood, Hebr.). In the Book of Isaiah, about the New Adam, the Divine Son, one can read: “Who is this that cometh... with deep-red garments... This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?—I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save” (63:1).

Now it is high time to do away with the object of dispute between science (evolutionary theory) and religion (biblical creationist account). We shall prove that as a matter of fact the Judeo-Christian Scripture refers also to the evolution of the species.

It is generally believed that Adam marks the beginning of the human history. This Primordial Being (*Adi Purusha*, Sanskr.) stands for the human Principle and he was a divine manifestation. In the Kabbalah tradition, *Adam Qadmon* was the Primordial Man to whom the God of the Sephiroth is identified because *YHWH* has the numerical value of 45 just like Adam himself. Moreover, *Adam* has God (*Aleph*; ch. IV) in his blood (we have seen the relation *adam—dam*), that has the same red color as the clay (see *supra*) [414]. It is remarkable that *Qadmon* (*qdm*) points at “East” having the same Hebrew orthography (*qdm*). In Arabic language the *Primordial Man* is *al-insam al-qadim*. *Qadim* (antecedent, ancient, Arab.; *qadmon*, Hebr.) comes from *qudus* (holy, Arab.; *qadesh*, Hebr.). The *Universal Man* (with the wider

²³⁶ Meaning the respect of the innocence and purity.

²³⁷ They are excluded from salvation because resorting to an immoral behaviour.

meaning of *aeon*) is *al-Insan al-Kamil* [415]. He is the axis (*qutb*, column, Arab.) or the pole on which the world turned (*axis mundi*, Lat.; ch. IV). He is linked with *Geradamas* (Old Adam, heavenly Adam, as appears in the Gnostic text of *Zostrianos*; or *Adamas*, Gr. [416]), the spiritual being regarded as a prototype of the first material human being.

The Gnostic text *The Reality of the Rulers* or *The Hypostasis of the Archons* asserted that Paradise was not humankind's place of origin [417], thus supporting our hypothesis.

Genesis shows that this Prototype Man was created *before* the appearance of other beings. "In the day that Yahweh Elohim made earth and heavens," there was neither vegetation nor rain, "and there was no man to till the ground" (2:5). After that it appeared the rain (2:6), "and Yahweh Elohim formed man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"²³⁸; and man became a living soul²³⁹" (2:7). Only later "Yahweh Elohim planted a garden in Eden" (2:8), "made every tree grow" (2:9). At last, "out of the ground Yahweh Elohim had formed every animal of the field and all fowl of the heavens, and brought [them] to man" (2:19). Before receiving the divine breath (*pnéuma*, Gr.) the figure of clay was just a *golem* (Hebr.)—stage also mentioned in the *Bible*: "I was made in secret, curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth... in thy book all [my members] were written... when there was none of them" (Psalms 139:15-16)—and these words are ascribed to Adam.

We should add that the *Book of Job* (15:7-8) mentions that "the first man" (Adam) was "brought forth before the hills" (before the geological era of *orogenesis* took place) and attended "the secret council of God," thus attesting his divinity.

Eve is, too, a divine manifestation—of the Primordial Feminine Principle. Eve's name, *Hawah*, and *Yahweh's* (ch. XI C) are both linked to *hawah* (to be, to breathe, Hebr.) and *hayah* (to be, to exist, Hebr.). *Hawah* is translated *Life* or *She who gives Life*. In Sumerian language the word *ti* means *life* and also *rib* and it was used for the name of the goddess *Nin-ti* in relation with the rib of god Enki; the name of the goddess was translated either *the Lady who gives life*, or *the Lady of the rib*.

In the beginning Adam was androgynous, as confirmed by the Talmudic texts: "When the Holy One, blessed be He, created man, He created him as an androgyne" [418]. The *Zohar* explained: "Said Rabbi Abba: «The first man consisted of male and female, for it says: *Let us make man in our image*

²³⁸ *Neshamah* (Hebr.)—v. ch. XI D.

²³⁹ *Nephesh hayia* (Hebr.)—see ch. XI D.

after our likeness²⁴⁰, which indicates that male and female were originally created as one and separated afterwards” [419]. “Rabbi Simeon said: «... As it is written: *And He blessed them and called their name man on the day that they were created*: note that it says *them* and *their* name, and not *him* and *his* name»” [420]. Obviously influenced by Plato, Philo held that man was at first bisexual, and that explains also from where the Gnostics borrowed a similar concept (ch. XX C4). According to the *Excerpts from Theodotus* as preserved by Clement of Alexandria, Adam contained both male and female elements [421]. Also Bishop Kovalevsky admits that the adamic being was androgyne [422]. The above mentions support the idea of Parabrahman splitting to Sada-Shiva (Masculine Principle) and the Adi-Shakti (Feminine Principle) as shown in chapter I. Eve’s name comes from the phrase: “This shall be called Woman²⁴¹, because this was taken out of a man²⁴²” (Genesis 2:23). This archetypal couple (first as an androgyne—2:8 and 2:15—then as the two Principles) lives in the Garden of Eden, this being another evidence of its divine nature. According to the Talmudic literature, the first wife of Adam was created out of dust like her husband [423], which confirms their common origin.

Let us notice that the human being is defined as born from another human being. Or, according to the biblical story neither Adam nor Eve answered this definition, since they had no mother.

Both Adam and Eve had the attribute of innocence, like the related Hindu deity as it was shown before: “They were both naked... and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25).

Another proof about the divine essence of the archetypal human comes from the fact that “God said: «Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26; cf. 5:1; 9:6).

The divine beings have immaterial, spiritual bodies. The Psalms read about “covering thyself with light as with a garment” (104:2). An esoteric *Midrash* from the middle of the second century attributed to Adam “garments of light” (*kethoneth or*, Hebr.) in place of the garments of skin (*dermatinoi chitones*, Gr.; *tunicae pelliciae*, Lat.) of Genesis (3:21) [424]. Actually, in Hebrew language the two words sound the same (*or*) and differ only by one letter: “skin” is written with an *ayin*, while “light” is written with an *aleph*. Like Philo of Alexandria, Origen believed that the coats of skin with which God clothed Adam and Eve were the astral bodies that clothed the soul [425].

²⁴⁰ Genesis 1:26.

²⁴¹ *Ishah* (Hebr.).

²⁴² *Ish* (Hebr.).

Also Lossky wrote about “a «spiritual body», ... different from... the «garments of skin» which God made for Adam and Eve [426]. The *Zohar* confirmed that in Paradise Adam had a spiritual body, different from the earthly humans: “As the body is formed in this world from the combination of the four elements, so is the spirit formed in the Garden (of Eden) from the combination of the four winds that are in the Garden” [427]. Scholem synthesizes the above facts: “Adam was... a purely spiritual figure, a «great soul», whose body was a spiritual substance, an ethereal body, or body of light” [428]. We shall see that this will be also the case of the New Adam—Jesus (ch. XXIII B). The so-called departure from the heaven of the Prototypes is nothing else than a transposition of these Principles on a human scale, their bringing down to a terrestrial state accompanied by the losing of some divine attributes the restoration of which will be the goal of those aiming at retrieving the divine state (godliness) through the union with God (Yoga). Surely, that meant a sacrifice, which could be compared to the consented death of Jesus (the New Adam) on the cross, or that of Kingu, the Babylonian Prototype of man (also different from humans) whose body provided the matter for the first human being, in the same manner that his mother, Tiamat was sacrificed to supply the matter in the cosmogonic process, and the same did the giant Prajapati [429]. During the mentioned episode the spiritual bodies of Adam and Eve became material ones, when “Yahweh Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). The idea appears again in other biblical texts: “Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews; thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy care hath preserved my spirit” (Job 10:11-12). “Thus saith the Lord Yahweh... : «Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will put sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I [am] Yahweh»” (Ezekiel 37:5-6).

A myth from the ancient Babylon reminds the Garden of Eden as a holy place including the Tree of Life, where there lived a god and a goddess [430].

The *Qur'an* brings another evidence on the divine essence of the Prototype Man. Thus, after creating him, God requested the angels to prostrate before Adam (2.32; 15.29-30; 17.63; 18.48; 20.115; 38.71-73). The holy book of Islam makes no distinction between Adam and Jesus (named “the New Adam” by Christians): “Jesus, in God’s sight, is as Adam’s likeness” (3.52). The *Qur'an* regards Adam as the first Prophet, thus disclosing his holiness.

Jesus reveals Himself as possessing a divine essence, like Yahweh (called: “I am”; Exodus 3:14): “Unless ye shall believe that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24; cf. 8:28; emphasis added). The high priest asked: “«Thou

art the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?» And Jesus said: «*I am*» (Mark 14:61-62; emphasis added). “Before Abraham was, *I am*” (John 8:58; emphasis added). Therefore, Jesus is at the origin of all. Moreover, Jesus declared: “I and the Father are one” (10:30). “Ye shall know that I am [He]” (8:28): *Ani ve-Hu* (literally: I and He; meaning: I am He, Hebr.; *egó eimi*, Gr.). “Thou art I, and I am thou” (*sy gar eis egó kai egó sy*, Gr.) [431]. The *Nicene Creed* (AD 325) presents Jesus as “begotten of the Father before all the ages” [432]. Hence it comes His identification with Adam. The Talmudic texts refer to the Anointed One (*Christos*, Gr.): “In the beginning of creation was born the Anointed King” [433], that is the transcendent Son. Like Adam, Jesus determines the beginning of an era, a new one (hence the name of New Adam), an age of renewal, of world purification. Moreover, He will come in His next hypostasis at the end of the ages (actually, the origin of a new cycle).

In Jung’s analysis, Adam symbolizes the Cosmic Man, source of all psychic energies. In his writing dedicated to the *Divine Child*, this author shows that “the initial creature existed before man was” and “the «child» is therefore *renatus in novam infantiam*,” a creature of the beginning [434] (of the cycle, we should add).

The Kabbalah described Adam as a synthesis of the created universe, gathering in him all the elements. In a *Midrash* from the second and third centuries, Adam is described as a being of cosmic size and strength [435]. However, prior the Kabbalah writings the idea had already existed in Eastern Christian tradition. Moreover, bishop Kovalevsky viewed Adam as a *macroánthropos*, to whom the universe was only a *microánthropos* [436]. A Sufi adage says: “Universe is a big man, while man is a small cosmos”²⁴³ [437]. *Shi’a* tradition of Islam conceives Adam as a being enjoying the divine light, as an embodiment of wisdom, the origin of cosmic emanation [438]. And the list is by no means comprehensive. Eliade admitted man’s potentiality of exerting his influence on natural forces (ch. II, XV D), when writing that “for a certain time, man was creative on the cosmic plane” [439]. Jung [440] made the following comments: “The ancient and long obsolete idea of a man as a microcosm contains a supreme psychological truth that has yet to be discovered. In former times this truth was projected upon the body... An inkling of this is to be found in the words of Origen: «*Intellige te alium mundum esse in parvo et esse intra te Solem, esse Lunam, esse etiam stellas*» (Understand that thou art a second little world and that the sun and the moon are within thee, and also the stars, Lat.)²⁴⁴... Origen says pertinently: «*Vides, quomodo ille, qui putatur unus esse, non est unus, sed tot in eo personae*

²⁴³ Macrocosm, *kawn al-kabir*; microcosm, *kawn as-saghir* (Arab.).

²⁴⁴ See ch. II.

videntur esse, quot mores» (Thou seest that he who seemeth to be one is yet not one, but as many persons appear in him as he hath velleities, Lat.)” [441]. This upholds the reflection both of the Cosmic being (Virata) structure and of the divine attributes (impersonated by *deities* in the old times) on a human scale. In his turn, John of Damascus regarded man as a microcosm. Being made in the divine image, man is a *microtheos* at the same time. According to Metodius of Olympus, “the Word that is before the ages adescended into Adam” [442].

The four letters (where we find again the number of the original perfection; ch. I), that made up the name of Adam symbolize the four cardinal points, being their initial letters: *anatolé* (east, Gr.), *dýsis* (west, Gr.), *árktos* (north, Gr.), *mesembria* (south, Gr.). Within the Byzantine collections *Questions and answers* one can read: “From how many powers did God make Adam? From eight parts: the body was made from earth, the bones from stone, the blood from sea, the eyes from sun, the mind from cloud, the breath from wind, the wisdom from light, and the prophecy from the Holy Spirit.” Here we find the elements that are specific for each and every chakra (ch. XV C and *infra*): the Earth, the Fire (sun), the Water (sea), the Air (wind), possible the Ether (cloud), the Light, the Vibrations (Holy Spirit). There are some apocryphal texts meant for the folk use, in which we find that Adam had initially been a giant as big as the Earth (according to the relationship *Adam—adamah*, earth), and similar to the Primordial Cosmic Being: *Purusha* (in India), *Kingu* (in Babylon), *Pangu* or *P’an-ku* (in China), *Ymir* XIX (in German mythology) etc., having all the division into elements as a – 68 common feature. Plato showed that earth, fire, water and air are not substances but qualities. He wrote: “God placed water and air in the mean between fire and earth... and thus he bound and put together a visible and tangible heaven... And for these reasons, and out of such elements which are in number four, the body of the world was created” [443]. The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* depicts God creating Adam out of dust, water, air and fire [444]. The Greek philosopher wrote: “God placed water and air in the mean between fire and earth... and thus he bound and put together a visible and tangible heaven... And for these reasons, and out of such elements which are in number four, the body of the world was created” [444]. As it was already shown, prior to the era opened by the coming of Jesus there were enlightened only four chakras, which explains why only their four characteristic elements were taken into account, namely Earth, Fire, Water, Air (the sequence of whom fully matches Plato’s succession and that of the respective chakras). In Mesopotamia, the prototype Man was the sage *Adapa* created by the god Ea. The Magi in Persia believed the Cosmos to be identical to *Gayomart*, the XIX archetypal Man who had the same structure as the human being, an idea to be – 68

later taken over by Hippocrates [445]. The prototype Man in Gaul was *Dispater* (see ch. VIII and *supra*: the analogy with Dyaus Pitar, or to Zeus-Jupiter, the Supreme Divinity). The archetypal Man in Scandinavian mythology was *Bure*, the father of Borr and grandfather of Odhinn. Chevalier and Gheerbrant came to the following conclusion: “Each major historical period had its progenitor who took the role of the new Adam” [446].

Here, it is worth mentioning a legend of eastern origin, preserved in a manuscript with the Romanian Academy: “After Adam was buried with the crown on his head, a tall, wonderful tree rose with three large branches growing from its trunk. They joined together, then went apart and joined again for seven times. The cross on which the Savior was crucified was made from this tree” [447]. It can be noticed, on the one hand, that the crowned Adam prefigures Jesus. According to the tradition Adam’s skull had been buried at the feet of the cross on which Christ met His death [448]. We find here the skull—Golgotha²⁴⁵ relation (see *infra*) and also another image of the hemobolium where the sacrifice blood flows over the head of the person to be purified (ch. XV E). On the other hand, the legend offers an accurate description of the subtle body (compared to the Tree of Life and the cross), with the three channels (large branches) that intersect seven times in the places where the chakras are located (ch. IV). The analogy is found again on the door created by Toni Zenz for St. Alban Church in Cologne where two trees placed side by side have each three vertical lines (central trunk with symmetrical left and right branches situated on seven levels; ch. IV). Adam and Eve (hypostases of Ganesha and Gauri governing the Mooladhara) are placed at the feet of the tree, while Virgin Mary next to Jesus (ruling over the Agya) on the cross are found on the sixth level of the other tree. The equivalent pairs tree—cross, Adam—New Adam, Eve—New Eve are easily observable.

Last but not least, these names are in etymological connection with Sanskrit words (in *italics*): Adam—*Atman* (Masculine Principle), Eva—*Jiva* (living; even a combination between both, as *Jivatman*, living soul). We recall that Eve was “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20), not only of humans, which reveals her as Creatrix Goddess.

The *terrestrial man* is *entirely different*. Bishop Kovalevsky rightly distinguished between Adam - the principle and Adam - culmination of the creation [449]. The latter, actually, is by no means related to Adam: humankind did not descend from Adam but was a result of the well-known evolutionary process suffered by the species. Surprisingly enough (for the partisans of the science-theology dispute), this process is rendered in Genesis that, as shown, includes *two different stories* (ch. VII). One refers to Adam

²⁴⁵ *Gulgutha* (Aram.), *gulgoleth* (Hebr.) means “skull.”

and another to the biological man.

Genesis accurately describes the steps advocated by the science. Firstly, it took place the creation of the inorganic planet. The earliest is the Planetary Ocean out of which emerged the firm land: “God said: «Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place, and let the dry [land] appear. And it was so” (1:9). Then life bursts all over the inanimate planet. The living beings appeared in the known progression. The aquatic creatures came first, then the flying ones: “And God said: «Let the waters swarm with swarms of living souls, and let fowl fly above the earth in the expanse of the heavens»” (1:20). The following verse repeats this order: “And God created the great sea monsters, and every living soul that moves with which the waters swarm, after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind” (1:21), obviously the “great sea monsters” being the prehistoric ones. As it was written in chapter IX, the original text gives the name of the prehistoric monster, *Tanin*, which could be find also in Isaiah 27:1 where sometimes it is replaced by “fleeing serpent,” “crooked serpent,” or “monster that is in the sea.” The next day (step) marks the appearance of terrestrial animals: “God said: «Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after their kind». And it was so” (1:24; repeated in 1:25). Man appeared only during the last step of evolution, ruling over all the previous creatures: “And God said: «Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over the whole earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth»” (1:26; repeated in 1:28). It is worth remembering the attention given to *the creeping thing*, deliberately mentioned; we might suppose that this refers to the prehistoric huge reptiles, since only they would have deserved a special mention.

It is important to notice that the creation of the biological man encompass *both sexes since the very beginning*: “And God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said to them: «Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over every animal that moveth on the earth»” (1:27-28). Once more the same sequence of the evolutionary process is maintained.

As opposed to this human couple, God created first the Divine Principle as an androgyne (see *supra*). “Yahweh Elohim said: «It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like»” (2:18). Therefore, the Primordial Androgyne existed *prior* to all other living beings since the text went on like this: “And out of the ground Yahweh Elohim had formed every animal of the field and all fowl of the heavens, and brought [them] to man” (2:19). It was only *later on* that the androgyne was split into Eve (2:21-23)

and what now becomes Adam. The androgyny can be also seen in the connection Adam (masculine)—*adamah* (feminine).

We also should notice that the first chapters in Genesis made no reference to “Adam” and “Eve” but to “man” (*ish*, Hebr.) and “woman” (*ishah*, Hebr.). *Adam* and *Eve* were first mentioned only to the end of the third chapter (3:20) where Eve qualification was “the mother of all living,” which designates her as the Primordial Mother, hence the Divine Principle. Here it is another viewpoint: the physical relationship between man and woman is ignored in the case of Adam and Eve but refers *only to the biological individuals* and represents *the first command* uttered by God as early as the first chapter of Genesis (1:28): “Multiply!” Likewise, the text in the end of the second chapter in Genesis *points not* to Adam and Eve (in spite of the word “therefore” which is an attempt to join the verse with the previous ones): “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (2:24). Obviously, Adam and Eve had *neither father nor mother*, thus being different from all the earthly individuals. Under this occurrence, the tardy text (4:1) has to be rejected as a manifest interpolation: “Man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore.”

The concomitant presence in the *Bible* of *two different versions* can be easily explained. On the one side, the verses 4-25 of chapter 2 and the entire chapter 3 of Genesis—dealing exclusively with archetypal individuals of divine origin as a prototype of mankind—belong to the “*P*” text, and on the other side the entire chapter 1 and verses 1-4 of chapter 2—pertaining only to the terrestrial people—belong to the “*J*” text, as shown in chapter VII.

It is worthwhile to notice that the evolution of species is to be found also with the succession of Vishnu’s Avatars: aquatic being (*Matsya*), amphibian (tortoise *Kurma*), terrestrial mammal (boar *Varaha*), transition from animal to man (man-lion *Narasinha*), prehistoric man, of a lower stature (dwarf *Vamana*) as compared to the modern man, followed by the well-known historical heroes: *Parashurama*, *Rama-chandra*, *Krishna*, the Buddha (*Jesus*) and the next coming *Kalki*. A similar view may be encountered with the Native American lore, which stated that the cycle started fifteen thousand years ago when the lower chakras were aligned to animal forms: after fish, snake, bird, mammal, man came only in the fifth rank [450].

The *Qur’an* confirms the evolutionary theory showing that all the creatures had their origin in the Primordial Ocean: “God created every beast of water” (24.44). The idea is common for many beliefs as already shown (ch. IX). Also Jesus referred to “any one... born of water” (John 3:5).

Adi Swadhsthana is the second chakra and the Principle of *Brahmadeva*, the hypostasis of the Creator, who is known to have had very few Avatars,

rules it. On the human scale, the central aspect of this chakra controls the organs and functions concerning the procreation (uterus, prostate, ovogenesis, spermatogenesis, fecundation, period of gestation) as well as the artistic, literary, scientific and technical creation.

Adi Nabhi, the third chakra, is presided by the Principle of Evolution, Vishnu, who incarnated many times in order to sustain Creation, as we have shown in chapter XIX B. He is the Savior whose manifestations enable the sustaining of spiritual life. The Nabhi chakra rules over the liver. Jung wrote that “the «liver» according to an old view, is the seat of life,” and noticed the analogy between *liver* and *to live* [451]. One *Sutra* read: “Of all the various organs in the body, the liver is supreme” [452]. Indeed, Vishnu is the Supreme Being.

Adi Bhava Sagara (Primordial Void) is organized around the Adi Nabhi chakra and is controlled by another divine Principle: the Primordial Master who had ten incarnations (ch. X).

* * *

The moments of revealing (opening) the following Primordial Chakras of the Universal Being were much closer to our time, which makes possible their identification to certain periods (ages) in the known past of the world.

In contrast with the great cosmic cycles, the ages (*yuga*, Sanskr.) and their stages of evolution covering very long periods of time escaping our range of observation, we can now make use of more tangible cycles congruous with our limited experience. Thus, the astronomers discovered (firstly in 128 BC by Hipparchus, although some scholars believe that the phenomenon was known—and accurately calculated—in Mesopotamia since the third or even the fourth millennium BC) the existence of the slow rotation of the earth axis that describes a double cone having its vertex in the center of our planet. XIX Every year, this movement causes the Sun to arrive at the equinoxes – 69 progressively sooner. This explains the name of *precession of the equinoxes* given to this phenomenon. The result of it can be noticed as a slow westward progression of equinoctial points due to the almost circular movement of the earthen axis around the poles of the *ecliptic* (the apparent way the Sun describes on the sky, under an angle of 23°27' formed with terrestrial equatorial plane).

The progression on the ecliptic of the vernal equinox—and of its celestial co-ordinates—lasts 25,200 years. Starting from the vernal point, the astrologers divided the ecliptic in 12 equal sectors of 30° each bearing the names of the respective zodiacal constellations. The crossing of each sector requires 2100 (2000, roughly) years. The North Pole of the terrestrial axis is

now oriented towards the Alpha (the present Polaris) of constellation Ursa Minor or Little Dipper. 4000 years ago it was directed towards another polestar, namely the Alpha Draconis, while in about 12000 years the axis of our planet will point at the Vega.

It is surprisingly to see that the measure for the divine Time in the *Qur'an* is “a day whereof the measure is fifty thousand years” (70.4). Likewise, is the Jewish Great Jubilee that lasts also 50,000 years (ch. XIX A). That comprises two cycles of 25,000 years each, which means a deviation of only 0.8% from the precession of the equinoxes computed by the contemporary astronomers! One cycle corresponds to the diurnal period when the Divinity is manifested in the Creation, and the other cycle covers the nocturnal period when Brahman remains unmanifested (*deus otiosus*).

Zurvan akarana (Eternity) mentioned above precedes and follows the 12,000 years of “limited time.” It was also believed that after the birth of Zoroaster (12,000 years after the creation of the world) he will return as Saoshyant after another 12,000 years when after a final battle and cosmic conflagration the dark, evil forces will be defeated, truth and enlightenment will be established, and there will be no further history, and the Kingdom of God (Ahura Mazda) will be established for ever [453]. In their turn, the *Laws of Manu* [454] and the *Mahabharata* [455] indicate for a *mahayuga* a duration of 12,000 years (the sum total of the four yugas: 4800+3600+2400+1200 years). By adding an equal period of unmanifestation (*Zurvan akarana*) one gets 24,000 years. As it was shown above, at the end of the cycle, a Virgin (representing Purity, *Nirmala*, Sanskr.) will enter the waters of a mystic lake. The Light of Glory (manifestation of the Kundalini, ch. XI E) will be immanent in her body. She will bring up “one who will master all the evil deeds of demons and men” [456].

Considering the situation from this perspective, to each age (named after the respective constellation) it will correspond the manifestation of a different aeon, the revelation of a new divine attribute at the same time with the incarnation of a new Avatar. A *Midrash* written in the 3rd century AD admitted that the history of this world is divided in periods of 2000 years, and the last one will be that of Messiah's (ch. XIX D). The previous periods were supposed to be the time of the Law, and a void period (without the Law). According to this calculation, Jesus lived precisely at the end of the 4th millennium (computed from the origin of the biblical years around 4000 BC), i.e., c. AD 1, after which ensued the 2000 years of the Messiah era [457].

In his book on the Primitive Christian Symbols, Cardinal Jean Daniélou XIX dedicated an entire chapter to “the twelve Apostles and the Zodiac” [458], 70 - 72 where he quotes Hippolytus. In our opinion, that might throw a new light on the connection of the zodiacal signs and the divine aspects governing each of

them.

Eliade held that Buddhism and Jainism compare the cyclic time to a wheel with twelve spokes [459], image used as early as the Vedic texts [460]. We think that the twelve sectors composing the wheel of the time might also depict the twelve ages constituting the complete temporal cycle. For the Romans, the cycle duration could be connected to number twelve revealed through the twelve eagles seen by Romulus [461].

During the time of Muhammad, according to Arabic tradition ghosts were allowed to ascend to the signs of the zodiac, could listen to the secrets of the heavens and afterwards they could impart them to the mortals. From Muhammad onwards, ghosts were driven away by blazing fire as soon as they attempted to go near the zodiac; the *Qu'ran* students regarded them to be simple meteorites or falling stars. Indeed, the Qur'anic text refers to "every accursed Satan... pursued by a manifest flame" (15.18), and a *hadith* speaks of Abu Qatada who mentioned Allah's statement ("We adorned the lower heaven with lamps, and made things to stone Satans"; 67.5) and said: "the creation of these stars is for three purposes, i.e. as decoration of the (lower) heaven, as missiles to hit the devils, and as signs to guide travellers" [462]. Nevertheless, it might be possible that the "stars" or the blazing fires would have been rather the vibratory manifestation of the divine power (ch. XI E) intended to destroy negative tendencies.

Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, Dante Alighieri [463] and many others thought that the celestial bodies influence the cosmic cycles.

Now, let us make a short survey. According to the ratio of cosmic ages duration (4:3:2:1), a whole cycle turning round the twelve zodiacal mansions would require 4,8 - 3,6 - 2,4 - 1,2 eras for Satya—Treta—Dvapara—Kali Yuga, respectively. As expected, the most ancient periods of mankind existence left only vague and incomplete echoes. Hence, the far away ages of *Capricornus* (Goat), *Sagittarius* (Archer) and *Scorpio* (Scorpion) left no traces in our memory but we can suppose that they corresponded to the golden age, the Satya Yuga, together with the age of *Libra* (Balance) and that of *Virgo* (Virgin) amounting at about 4.8 eras. The age of *Leo* (Lion) or royal fight against the evil together with that of *Cancer* (Crab, a well-known retrograde creature) and of *Gemini* (Twins) continuing the battle against the demons, were accompanied by the steady decay of the Dharma that started in the Treta Yuga. The age of *Taurus* (Bull) and of *Aries* (Ram) composed the Dvapara Yuga, while the age of *Pisces* (Fishes) corresponds to the Kali Yuga. At the end of the cycle, the *Aquarian* (Water-Bearer) age witnesses the opening of the Satya Yuga.

Now we would analyse the nearest ages, named after the corresponding constellations in their sequence (backwards in comparison with the apparent

movement of the Sun).

The Age of Libra (c.14000 - c.12000 BC) named after the constellation sending to the perfect balance, the paradisiacal state, seems to have been included into the Golden Age of mankind—like the three preceding ages and the one that follows.

XIX **The Age of Virgo** (c.12000 - c.10000 BC) is connected to the Great - 73 Goddess (*Maha Devi*, Sanskr.) whose names designate her in many cases as a *Virgin*. This age also refers to a paradisiacal state since one of the most XIX familiar names of the goddess is *Gauri* (Fair Virgin, Sanskr.) who gave birth - 74 to Ganesha-Adam. Other eloquent appellations are *Kanya* (Virgin, Sanskr.), - 75 *Kanya-Kumari* (Virgin Girl, Sanskr.) etc. Echoes of those ancient times can be found with the *Gaura* culture in Iran whose vestiges were unearthed from the prehistoric site *Tepe-Gaura* (*tepe*, hill, Iran. and Turk.) northeast of Mosul, where a complex configured temple was found [464]. Therefore, this age started through the manifestation of the Great Goddess who, according to tradition, incarnated 14,000 years ago to destroy the demons threatening the spiritual evolution of humankind. This role of Saviouress, or Redeemer, explains other names given to her: *Tara* (Saviouress, Sanskr.), *Jagaddhatri* (Sustainer of the World, Sanskr.) etc. Armstrong situated this “to the ancient world of the Middle East, where the idea of our God gradually emerged about 14,000 years ago” [465]. We have also shown (ch. I) that when he spoke of the birth of civilization, the American archaeologist William Schiller estimated that this event occurred about 13-15 thousand years ago [466]. We shall see (ch. XX A) that this period abounds in statuettes of the goddess, thus proving that she was then the dominant archetype and the society in those ancient times was a matriarchal one. Virgin archetypal essence was preserved for a long period in all the spiritual cultures of mankind (ch. XIX B).

XIX **The Age of Leo** (c.10000 - c.8000 BC) which belongs to the prehistory, - 76 too, sends to the manifestation of the Great Goddess under the shape of - 77 *Durga*, who is riding a lion (*Sinha-rathi*, Sanskr) in close relationship with the name of the age. In fact, many goddesses had the lion (royal beast conferring the goddess the status of sovereignty) or other related felines as their vehicles (ch. XX A).

The Age of Cancer (c.8000 - c.6000 BC). About this age there are not enough records to allow us the identification of the equivalent divine manifestation. However, because of the regressive character of the crab we can infer that human race was faced with the spiritual decline that will prepare the future rising of the patriarchal power. Indeed, the peaceful matriarchal tribal societies suffered afterwards a mutation into human communities dominated by male aggressors representing the caste of warriors (*kshatriyas*, Sanskr.). The most famous kshatriya was *Parashurama* who

prepared the coming of the next Avatar (Rama).

The Age of Gemini (c.6000 - c.4000 BC) corresponded to the flourishing XIX period of early Hinduism. It was under this sign that *Rama*, the seventh - 78 incarnation of Vishnu was manifested by the birth of two pairs of brothers: - 79 *Rama* and *Lakshmana* on the one hand, *Satrughna* and *Bharata* on the other. Rama himself had twin sons: *Lav* and *Kush* (in conformity with the name of - 80 the constellation where the Sun was at that epoch). Lav went to Russia (ego of the world), and from him we get the name of *Slav*. The other son, Kush went to China (superego of the world), hence we get the name *Kushan*. These two divine principles were also incarnated as the *Buddha Gautama* and - 81 *Mahavira*, then as *Shankaracharya* and *Gnyaneshwara*. In other aeon, they . . 84 were *al-Hasan* and *al-Husayn*, the sons of Fatima and Hazrat 'Ali, the latter being the manifestation of Brahmadeva, the Principle of action ruling the right channel (channel of action, ch. II). In fact, 'Ali was regarded as "the Prophet's right arm." Schuon characterizes the situation as follows: "Hinduism distinguish between «full» and «partial» *Avatars*: in the latter, only a «fragment» of Divinity is incarnated" [467]. In chapter X we have met also the case of Confucius and Lao-tse incarnated at the same period as manifestations of the Primordial Guru.

Over the period of the *Vedas* people used to worship the twin gods *Nasatyas* or *Ashwins* (horsemen; from *ashwa*, horse, Sanskr.) echoed afterwards in Roman mythology through Castor and Pollux (*dioskoúros*, the XIX sons of Zeus; from *kouros*, son, Gr.) riding winged horses. The Mazdaean - 85 tradition had the couple of goddesses with assonant names, *Hauravat* and *Amaratat*.

According to the tradition, Rama incarnated during the Treta Yuga and lived 8000 years ago. Then, the fourth chakra (Adi Anahatha) was opened in the Virata.

Anahatha is an important center of the human being.

On the subtle field that chakra controls the heart and lungs. This is confirmed by the Chinese who believe that the heart organ follows the orders given by the central heart, while the lung is thought to exist only as a result of central heart commandment [468]. We have revealed that scarlet is the color of the Anahatha chakra (ch. XV E) close to the blood color. A biographer of the prominent Chinese alchemist Lii Ten (8th century AD) wrote: "the heart fire is red as the cinnabar" [469]. Or, the cinnabar (mercury sulphide) is scarlet and through the fire it releases mercury which in alchemy is characteristic for the left channel. We should add that mercury is also known as "quick silver" suggesting the living entity (*Jivatman*), while the silver designates the left channel (ch. IV).

The *central* aspect is the seat of courage, fearlessness, confidence in God,

in the own Self, in the others and in the future; it is the subtle aspect that is mobilized for fighting the aggressions. It secures the victory of the individual against all kinds of attacks, for instance by generating the necessary antibodies to fight the pathogenic agents. This explains the relationship of the central aspect with the goddess *Durga*, the destroyer of the enemies. We have XIX written about the relationship of this chakra to the thymus (ch. II), the gland - 88 that produces antibodies. However, *thymus* is etymologically related with *thymós* (spirit, Gr.).

XIX The *right* aspect manifests the qualities of *Rama* who was the perfect son, - 89 brother, husband, father and monarch, in complete observance of the existing - 91 rules (*maryadas*, Sanskr.).

On the *left* side, on the level of the anatomic heart there is the seat of the *Self* (*Atman*, Sanskr.), the reflection of the divine Father (*Shiva*) as written in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “The Lord abides in the hearts of all beings.” “He is seated in the hearts of all” [470]. Then, the Supreme Being says: “Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter” [471], thus rejecting *all* the cults known as *religions* (since they are external), while the *true* and *unique religion* is the *inner* one because only it enables the integration with the Divine in Its inner manifestation. The left aspect houses the relationship with the mother, wife, sister, daughter in the same way as the right Anahatha is associated to the male relatives.

In Hindu symbolism, the graphic sign for Atman is a flame located in the heart. As the *Bible* read: “The Spirit of the Lord is a lamp which searches out the inner chambers of the heart²⁴⁶” [472]. Likewise, the Roman Catholic XIX Church introduced in the 17th century the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - 90 bearing a flame on its top, and Christ became “the King of the heart.” In other sections we have mentioned the flaming chalice appearing with the Mazdaean tradition, Solomon, the Bodhisattvas, Druids as well as in the Grail legend where the chalice contained Jesus’ blood (ch. XI E).

Schuon explained: “in the teaching of every... initiatory tradition, the organ of the spirit, or the main center of the spiritual life, is the heart” [473]. He became more precise when added: “The heart is symbolically the seat of the Self” [474], and has no hesitation while referring to “Atman, the Self” [475].

XIX The concept is ancient, since an Egyptian text from the time of the New - 93 Empire says that “man’s heart is his God” [476]. However, the most precious sources are, of course the Indian ones, whom often we resort to. For the time being we would notice a possible connection between *Atman* (Self, Sanskr.) - 92 and the Egyptian god *Ammon*, having also a close spelling. “The «dogmas»

²⁴⁶ “Man’s spirit is the lamp of Yahweh, searching all the inner parts of the belly” (Darby).

of the Theban theocracy, after the great triad had been set in the respective center... said: «Three are all the gods: Ammon, Ra and Ptah, that are matchless. (Their) name (that is the soul) is hidden as it is Ammon» [477]. The quoted text reminds Erman, who wrote: “Hidden is his name as Ammon, Ra belongs to him as face (?) and Ptah is his body” [478]. *Amun* actually means the *Hidden One* (*amun*, to hide, Egypt.) [479]. Leaving out of account the god associated to the material body, we notice that the Theban theologians merged the other trinity members into the supreme divinity Ammon-Ra. Likewise it is worth noticing the identity *Ammon—Amen* (either alone or in compound names as that of Pharaoh Amenemhet meaning “Ammon was in the beginning”) [480]. Ammon’s paretre²⁴⁷, Amaunet was depicted as the goddess of the wind, the sweet breeze²⁴⁸ (even the god himself) [481].

In ancient Iran people believed that Vohu Manah lived in man’s heart [482].

Krishna declared: “I, O Gudakesha, am the Self (*Ahamatma Gudakesha*, Sanskr.), seated in the hearts of all creatures” [483]. “I” does not mean this physical body, this ego, this consciousness, these thoughts, desires, feelings, conditionings. All these things cease their existence after death. Only the Self is eternal and lasts forever; it is only the Self that defines us.

The *Upanishads* said: “In the heart resides the Atman, the Self. It is in the center of a hundred and one little channels... In these moves... the breath” [484]. “The soul²⁴⁹ of mine within the heart, this is Brahman” [485]. “Vast, heavenly, of unthinkable form, and more minute than the minute, It shines forth. It is farther than the far, yet here near at hand, set down in the secret place [of the heart], even here among those who behold” [486]. Yama, the god of death said to Nachiketas: “More minute than the minute, greater than the great, is Atman that is set in the heart of a creature here” [487]. “In the space within the heart lies the ruler of all, the lord of all, the king of all” [488]. “He who knows Brahman as the real (or truth, *satya*), as knowledge (*jnana*, also spelled *gyana*), as the infinite (*ananta*), set down in the secret place [of the heart], and in the highest heaven (*parama vyoman*), he obtains all desires, together with the intelligent (*vipashchit*) Brahman” [489]. “The One who is in the fire and the One who is in the heart and the One who is in the Sun are all but one and the same Being,” namely Brahman [490]. “He who knows That, set in the secret place [of the heart]—he here on earth, my

²⁴⁷ Ch. XX A.

²⁴⁸ Ch. XI D.

²⁴⁹ I.e. the Self (Atman), in an accurate translation.

friend, rends asunder the knot of ignorance” [491].

Jerome pointed out that “Plato located the soul of man in the head; Christ located it in the heart” [492]. In spite of this statement, when narrating in his *Timaeus* how man was created by the gods, the Greek philosopher really wrote: “That part of the inferior soul which is endowed with courage and passion and loves contention they settled near the head, midway between the midriff and the neck” [493]. Or, between the midriff and the neck there is the heart, and the courage and the passion and love for combat against enemies define precisely the Anahatha chakra as it was shown above.

The Self was described by Jesus as our *treasure*: when He said: “where your treasure is, there also will your heart be” (Luke 12:34; cf. Matthew 6:21). Consequently, in the spiritual doctrine of the early Christendom the heart is the dwelling of the “soul.” This subtle center is the seat of love (in its purest form, i.e. divine love; ch. XIX B), fact that, otherwise, is generally acknowledged.

The *Aquarian Gospel* credited Jesus with the following words: “«God’s meeting place with man is in the heart...» And all the people said: «Teach us to know the Holy One who speaks within the heart»” [494].

The epistles read about *homo interior* (Lat.), “the inward man” (Romans 7:22), about “inwardly... of the heart, in spirit” (2:29) and “the hidden man of the heart²⁵⁰, in the incorruptible of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price” (1 Peter 3:4). The end of the sentence points very clearly to the pure relation between Atman and the meek, maternal, and most pure Kundalini, the Holy Spirit. All the biblical scholars agreed on the fact that the mentioned epistle was never written by Peter. With Isaiah, the Self is “the hidden God.” The *Bible* also read: “The God... does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24; cf. 7:48; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22). This God who does not dwell in buildings intended for cults is the reflection of Godhead in man, of the Self (Atman) to whom the Greeks erected altars bearing the inscription quoted in the verse (Acts 17:23) preceding the above one: “To the Unknown God” (*Agnóstos Theós*, Gr.). Once again we are guided towards the deep significance of the ancient Greek urge expressed through the famous sentence on the frontispiece of the Delphi temple that became the motto of Socrates (ch. X): *gnóthi seautón*, know thy Self (Gr.)—discover in you the Self, the God unknown to you! He will remain unknown as long as we would look for Him outside us. The Hindu match of this urge is *Atmanam viddhi* (know your Self, Sanskr.). Other exegetes believe that the inscription in the temple conveyed by Acts was, actually, *Agnóstai Theai*, that is “to the Unknown Goddess” [495], which reveals the urge to discover within us the

²⁵⁰ *Homo cordis absconditus* (Lat.). *Ho kryptòs tes kardias ánthropos* (Gr.).

manifestation of the Divine Mother as the Kundalini (ch. XX and XXI). The Scriptures enclose also other urges towards seeking one's Self. Scholem shows that God's command to Abraham to go out into the world: "get thee out" (*lekh lekha*, Hebr.; Genesis 12:1) could be understood as *go to thine own self* [496], exactly like *gnóthi seautón*. Scholem noticed that the title of the old manuscript of *Hilkhoth Yetzirah*, also bears the addition: "Each man who looks at it [i.e., who contemplatively immerses in his self] his wisdom is beyond measure" [497].

A Gnostic text wrote explicitly: "You are the children of the understanding heart" [498].

Lossky wrote: "For the ascetic tradition of the Christian East, the heart (*kardia*, Gr.) is the center of the human being... the point from which the whole of the spiritual life proceeds, and upon which it converges" [499]. The author regarded the spirit (*nous*, Gr.) as "the highest part of human creature." "The most personal part of man, the principle of his conscience and of his freedom, the spirit in human nature corresponds most nearly to the person... This is why the Greek Fathers are often ready to identify the *nous* with the image of God in man" [500]. "«Enter into yourself, and find there God, the angels, and the Kingdom», said the masters of the spiritual life," while Anthony the Great (d. 356) urged: "«Know thyself», for «no one can know God unless he knows himself first»." After centuries, Seraphim of Sarov called the heart: "the altar of God," the place of His presence [501].

Jung mentioned the Middle Ages concept about "the secrets of the heart, which are wholly hidden from all men's understanding" [502]. Johann Daniel Mylius believed that philosopher's stone (i. e. the Self) is located in *punctum cordis* (heart center, Lat.) [503].

The German Pietist Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) believed that "faith was not in thoughts nor in the head, but in the heart, a light illuminated in the heart" [504].

The *Zohar* reads: "The Faithful Shepherd²⁵¹ says: «... God leaves his throne... which is the Brain and sits on the throne of compassion that is the Heart, without which the world could not subsist»" [505]. And indeed, the correspondent of the Anahatha chakra is the center of the opening of Brahman (*Brahmarandhra*, Sanskr.) on the head. Besides, all the chakras XIX have their specific projections on the head (*pithas*, Sanskr.), this fact being - 86 well illustrated in the case of Samson through the seven locks of hair - 87 containing the *power* (*shakti*, Sanskr.) that was granted to him when the Spirit of God descended on him (Judges 14:6,19; 16:17,19).

A *hadith qudsi* (direct revelation, in which God Himself talks through the Prophet) acknowledges God's presence in the heart: "Heaven and earth

²⁵¹ *Raaiah Mehemnah* (Hebr.).

cannot contain Me, but the heart of My believing servant containeth Me” [506]. The Prophet said: “Protect God in thy heart; then God shall protect thee” [507]. Consequently, the esoteric movement of Islam known as *Sufism* (ch. XXV B) recognized the supremacy of the heart (*qalb*, Arab.).

The Sikh Scripture read: “The Lord is in the soul, and the soul is in the Lord. This is realized through the Guru’s Teachings” (*Aatam mahi Ram ram mahi aatam cheenas Gur beecharaa*) [508]. “Like the fragrance which remains in the flower, and like the reflection in the mirror, the Lord dwells deep within; search for Him within your own heart” (*Puhap madh jiyu baas hai mukar mahi jaise shaayee*) [509]. “There is beautiful place within the cave of the heart” (*Is gufaa mahi ik thaana suhaaiaa*) [510]. “My beloved lives in the cave of my heart” (*Pritam basat rid mahi khor*) [511]. Guru Nanak also wrote: “A pure heart is the golden vessel to fill the Divine Nectar which is to be sucked from the *Dasham Dwar*²⁵² through the two channels *Ida* and *Pingala*” [512]. “Through Self Realization, one dwells within the home of his inner being (heart); egotism and desire depart” (*Aap pachhaanai ghar vasai haumai trisnaa jaai*) [513].

The philosophers try to get an answer to the question “Who am I?”²⁵³ The only possible response is: “I am the Self” (*Atman*, Sanskr.) and this is the absolute Truth (the unique reality) for each individual. Thus, Jung asked himself: “Is there anything more fundamental than the realization: «This is what I am?»,” and then provided the answer: an “«objective» ego, which for this reason is better called the «self»” [514]. The Swiss psychologist thought that “the greatest limitation for man is the self; it is manifested in the experience: «I am *only* that!»” [515]. In spite of the distinction between *spirit*, *soul*, and *Self* that would be discussed further, some authors equated the above affirmation with “I am the Spirit,” which is in agreement with one of the God’s name in the *Bible*: “Father of Spirits” (Hebrews 12:9).

After the *Vedanta*²⁵⁴ (ultimate knowledge, Sanskr.) commentators, the subject was not a logical but a metaphysical term. It actually was another name of the Self, of the eternal element in man and God. Nothing exists save Brahman who is, therefore, the *only* reality.

The *Maitrayana Upanishad* describes the creation of the Self in the following way: In the beginning, Prajapati (Vishwa) was all by Himself and

²⁵² Brahmarandhra, Sahasrara.

²⁵³ See our Afterword.

²⁵⁴ Post-Vedic comments by Vyasadeva, including the doctrine of the *Upanishads* and the philosophic essence of the *Vedas*, dealing with the nature of the Absolute Truth.

being alone and without joy, He created countless creatures by meditating on Himself. He looked at them and saw that they were like stones. He was not content and thought of penetrating into them to awaken them. He did this in His own way and so became the subjective principle existing in things while still remaining Himself, motionless and immaculate [516].

The mantra intended to the heart chakra (left aspect where it is Shiva's abode) is: "*Sat Chit Ananda rupam, Shivo ham, Shivo ham*" (I am [made of]²⁵⁵ Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva, Sanskr.). Nobody can deny his own *existence*, and existence necessarily implies knowledge, therefore *consciousness*. The simply fact of being aware implies the conviction of its existence. The *bliss* has already been dealt with (ch. XIX B). *Sat* means also *Truth*. Or, Augustine of Hippo wrote that on the one side "Truth dwells in the image of God" (*Veritas quaeritur in Dei imagine*, Lat.) [517], and on the other, "Truth dwells in the inner man" (*In interiore homine habitat veritas*, Lat.) [518]. According to Islamic belief, God created the world "by the Truth" (*bi 'l-Haqq*, Arab.) [519]. As already shown, *Haqq* signifies both "God" and "Truth."

The ontological formula of the *Upanishads* is *OM Tat Sat* (*tat*, this; *sat*, whatever exists; from the root *as-*, to be, Sanskr.), considered to be "the threefold name of Brahman." According to both definitions (Shiva and Brahman), God is *Sat*, i.e. "That I am" (*YHWH*; ch. XV D).

The *Upanishads* read: "In the beginning this world was Atman alone in the form of a Person. He said first: «I am»" [520]. Therefore, the biblical "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14) means nothing else than "I am the Self," which sends back to the conclusion in the *Vedas*: "*aham Brahmasmi*" (I am Brahman, Sanskr.) [521].

The essence of the teachings in the *Upanishads* unveils the identity between the immanent individual Self (Atman) and the Supreme Self (Brahman), between man and his Creator: *I am He*: "My Lord! You had remained as my Self within,... in all my past incarnations. Now, by your Grace²⁵⁶ you have manifested yourself as my master and revealed yourself as the Self" [522]. We remember that Jesus proclaimed the same: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "That they may be all one, as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). "The glory which thou hast given to me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and thou in me" (17:22-23; cf. 17:11). "*Aham Brahmasmi*" stands for the true Self, while *aham idam* (I am this/that, Sanskr.) refers to the

²⁵⁵ Or: [My] form is.

²⁵⁶ The *Grace* is granted by the divine power (Adi Shakti) when the Kundalini is awakened.

false “I.” There is nothing like “I am this or that” but only “I am.” “He, verily, who knows that supreme Brahman, becomes very Brahman” [523], which in the Latin interpretation became: “*Quisquis Deus intellegit, Deus fit*” (Whoever knows God becomes God) [524]. This is the *essence of Yoga*, the union with God (ch. XXV). The sacred writings included also the famous conclusive verdict of the Vedic thought: *Tat Twam asi*²⁵⁷ (That One art Thou; or: Thou art That, Sanskr.) [526], which signifies *Atman is Brahman* and it is used in the beginning of mantras (see below), for instance in the hymn *Ganesha Atharva Sheersha* [527] (head of the *Atharva-Veda*, i.e. the most important of it; that have to be recited first) devoted to Ganapati, where it creates metaphors. This hymn also said: “*Twameva sarvam khalvidam Brahmasi*,” (You alone are all this, you are Brahman, Sanskr.), “*Twam sakshat Atmasi nityam*” (You are verily the eternal Self, Sanskr.).

On Brahman i.e. the Supreme Self, the only thing one could say is: “the Self is not this, it is not that²⁵⁸” [528]. Yajnavalkya told his wife Maitreyi: “*Sa esha neti neti Atman*,” meaning: “[About that] Atman [one says]: «Not this, not that»” [529]—i.e. one says what it is not, thus protesting against the use of any attributes, like in the case of Brahman (ch. I). “That Atman is not this, not that. It is unseizable, for it is not seized. It is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It is unattached, for it does not attach itself. It is unbound. It does not tremble. It is not injured” [530]. “[Atman] is not born, nor dies. This one has not come from anywhere, has not become anyone. Unborn, constant, eternal, primeval, this one is not slain when the body is slain” [531]. “[Atman], indeed, is this whole world” [532]. “The Self alone is multitude of the gods, the universe rests on the Self” [533].

Ramana used to say: “Reality is that which remains the same always and without change” [534], that is why Atman is the only reality for man. At the same time, the great Hindu sage drew our attention on the fact that the false “I” exists in the awakened state but disappears during the sleep when only the real “I” (Self) subsists, which is beyond thoughts²⁵⁹ [535].

Also Aristotle admitted that the Self (that he called “soul”) is the only reality: “The soul is in a way all existing things” (*e psyché ta ónta pós estí pánta*, Gr.) [536]. Empedocles was aware of the divinity existing within man, regarding the individual as “a god” [537]. Philostratus wrote in the *Life of*

²⁵⁷ The *Upanishads* [525] wrote that this was the key to all knowledge, *mahavakya* (the great Vedic formula, Sanskr.) that was given to the famous Brahmin Svetaketu by his father.

²⁵⁸ *Neti, neti* (Sanskrit).

²⁵⁹ The thoughtless awareness (*nirvichara samadhi*, Sanskr.) achieved through the Self Realization.

Apollonius about a Hindu sage called Iarchos who has disclosed to Apollonius of Tyana: “We know everything, just because we begin by knowing ourselves; for no one of us would be admitted to this philosophy unless he first knew himself” [538].

Meister (Magister) Eckhart (c. 1260-1328) stated: “the only representative of God on the earth is the Spirit” [539], therefore acknowledging it to be a projection of the Supreme Divinity on a human plane. He added: “there is a Something in the soul in which God dwells” [540]. Besides, he thought that this site—center of the being (light of the spirit), uncreated and uncreatable (*increated et increabilis*, Lat.) [541]—is the place where man can realize union with God: “When the soul receives a kiss of the Godhead, it attains to its greatest perfection and its greatest bliss” [542]. Eckhart believed that the knower and the known are one. He used to say: “God and I are one” and “there is no distinction between us” [543]. “If I am to know God directly, I must become completely He and He I, so that this He and this I become and are one I” [544]. Such ideas caused Eckhart’s condemnation by Pope John XXII. Eckhart developed the topic “*Esse Deus est*” (existence is God, Lat.) in the first part (that was lost) of *Opus tripartitum* (*Three-Part Work*) that bore the title *Opus propositionum* (*Work of Propositions*) [545]. The Rhenish Magister wrote: “I am the cause of myself in the order of my being, which is eternal being.” “Man is God in God” [546]. “The God who is without a name is inexpressible, and the soul in its ground is equally inexpressible as He is inexpressible” [547]. “All creatures search the One, even the lowest creatures seek the One, and the highest find the One; drawn and transformed above their nature they seek the one in the One, the One in himself” [548].

Eckhart’s ideas echoed with the philosopher and churchman Nicholas of Cusa (Cues; c. 1401-1464) and Angelus Silesius (1624-1677) who at their turn admitted the identity between soul and God. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) stated that once arrived in the seventh Mansion, the soul is united to God in such a way that it is “one spirit with Him.” “The soul is entirely transformed into the likeness of its Creator—it seems to be more God than soul.” “Spiritual marriage raises the soul above itself, deifies it and makes it God by participation” [549]. Here the “soul” obviously depicts the “Self.”

In Islamic esoterica, too, “the individual... in his innermost essence... is not distinct from his divine Principle” [550]. The axiom of the Sufis was Prophet Muhammad’s saying: “Who knows his [true] self, knows his Lord” (see *supra*). In the year 922, the eminent Sufi Husayn al-Hallaj declared: “*Ana al-Haqq*” (I am God, Arab.). By this he understood his identity with the Self (*ipse*, Lat.). His words were regarded as a blasphemy and he was tortured and killed on the spot. In spite of this fact, his grave became a place of pilgrimages as for the saints. Actually, even Muhammad said about God: “He

who has seen me has seen God”; “I am He and He is I” [551]. The Prophet is called *Haqq* (Truth, Arab.), a noun having a distinct meaning but in close relationship with the form used with an article *al-Haqq* (God, Arab.). The Supreme Self *al-Huwiay*, from *al-Huwa* (He, Arab.; one of the divine names) is connected with *life* (*hayat*, Arab.) and *truth* (*haqiqah*, singular; *haqaiq*, plural, Arab.). Ibn al-‘Arabi was also vehemently attacked over his lifetime, to be then venerated as a real saint. He believed that man could discover God by going deeply into his Self [552], that’s why he wrote: “You are not He and you are He” [553], thus making the distinction between those who have not discovered their Self and those who did it, or in others words of him, between the “Perfect Man” and the “animal man” [554]. Following al-Hallaj’s example, al-‘Arabi stated audaciously: “I worship Him and He worships me” [555]. Even the *Qur’an* (51.20-21), refers to the Self but in a more veiled way: “In the earth are signs for those having sure faith; and in yourselves; what, do you not see?”

The sacred book of the Sikhs read: “I am Yours, and You are mine” [556]. “Says Nanak: the knower of God himself is the exalted Lord... The knower of God is the Formless Lord... The knower of God himself is the perfect Lord Creator” [557]. The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* read: “Why do you go to forest in search of God? He lives in all and is yet ever distinct; He abides with you, too, as a fragrance dwells in a flower, and reflection in a mirror; so does God dwell inside everything; seek Him, therefore, in your heart” [558]. The Sikh sacred book goes on: “The Creator has fashioned this body with six rings (chakras), and placed within it the incomparable thing—that is soul” (*Khat nem kar kothree baandhee bastu anoop beech paayee*) [559]. “God has made this human body with six chakras and has established the light of spirit in it. Cross the ocean of Maya and meet the eternal God who does not come, who does not go, who neither takes birth nor dies. When your six chakras meet in line, Surati (Kundalini) takes you beyond distortions” [560]. Obviously the two last texts refer to six chakras since the seventh one was not yet awakened in the Virata.

“This Atman is not to be obtained by instruction, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He is to be obtained only by whom he chooses; to such a one that Atman reveals his own person (*tanum swam*). Not he who has not ceased from action, not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not composed, not he who is not of peaceful mind can obtain Him by intelligence” [561]. “Not by sight is It grasped, not even by speech, not by any other sense-organs, austerity, or work. By the peace of knowledge (*jnana-prasada*), one’s nature is purified. In that way, however, by meditating, one does behold Him who is without parts” [562].

The discovery of the Absolute in different particular aspects of reality

confers the feeling of a scattered unique essence, a fact contrasting with the striving for unity (Yoga), which characterizes the Indian spirituality. The unity can be recovered only through acknowledging the existence of Atman in the innermost space of the heart, the Anahatha chakra. This restores the coexistence—as a manifestation in the Cosmos (Brahma) and as a manifestation in the intracardiac space (Atman, the Self)—by way of identity between individual and the All [563].

“And the king[dom of God] is within you... [Whoever] knows [himself], will fin[d] it”²⁶⁰—is the text of an apocryphal manuscript [564] that enlightens and develops the gospel idea: “*He basileia tou entós umón èstin*” (The Kingdom of God is within you, Gr.): “The kingdom of God does not come with observation²⁶¹; nor shall they say: «Lo here», or, «Lo there»” (Luke 17:20-21). “My kingdom is not of this world... My kingdom is not from hence” (John 18:36), that is the kingdom belongs not to the outer world but to the inner one. However, the Self Realization enables getting the kingdom of God while living on this earth, and reaching this state is a God’s will that abolishes any difference between God’s kingdom in heaven (*Malkuth shamayim*, Hebr.; *Malkauta de’shemaya*, Aram.) and His kingdom on earth, as it is shown in the *Lord’s Prayer*: “Thy will be done *on earth*, as it is in heaven: Thy kingdom come” (emphasis added). “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27; cf. 14:36; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27).

The Buddhist texts gathered by Notovitch under the title: *The Life of Saint Issa* (Jesus; see ch. XXIII A) showed that “Issa furthermore taught the pagans that they should not endeavour to see the eternal Spirit with their eyes, but to perceive Him with their hearts” [565]. The quotation appears again in the Tibetan manuscript seen by Roerich, in the variant: “Issa taught that men should not strive to behold the Eternal Spirit with one’s own eyes but to feel it with the heart, and to become a pure and worthy soul” [566].

The ancient Chinese Christian manuscripts read: “If a man wants to see the manifestation of the one God, he has only to be pure in heart, for then he can see God. You should consider well what is taught in these words” [567]. Indeed, this supreme goal aiming at uniting human being with its Creator is achieved through Self Realization (Yoga) that is the knowledge of the Self, or—since this is located in the heart—through the knowledge of the heart (*gnósis kardias*, Gr.): “wisdom of the understanding heart.”

The author of a Gnostic writing identified himself with the soul (Self) [568]. The *Gospel of Truth* wrote: “in you dwells the light that does not fail”

²⁶⁰ The full text is: “*E basileia tou ouranóu èntos umón èsti kai óstis án eautón gnó taiten euresei eautous gnósesthe*” (Gr.).

²⁶¹ *Cum observatione* (Lat.).

[569]. And the Gnostic teacher Monoimus stated in his letter to Theophrastus: “Omitting to seek after God... seek for him from (out of) thyself, and learn who it is that absolutely appropriates (unto himself) all things in thee... And learn from whence are sorrow, and joy, and love, and hatred... ; and if you accurately investigate these (points), you will discover (God) himself, unity and plurality, in thyself” [570].

Origen maintained that the Christian ideal is to become an inner unified man, since it is only the inner man who is in God’s image [571]. However, the true union can be attained only through the Self Realization. Bonaventure (1217-1274) believed that we would find God’s image reflected “in our own inner world” [572], explaining that when the Christian goes down into the depths of his own Self, he would be “transported in ecstasy above the intellect” [573]. The head of the *Platonic Academy* in Florence, Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) wrote to his friend Cavalcanti: “It is spirit alone I seek, since I seek myself, who am indeed pure spirit” [574].

The human spiritual condition will not evolve to its climax (Self Realization) unless man’s participation as the *Qur’an* stressed it: “God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves” (13.12), i.e. realize their inner Selves. Prophet Muhammad used to say: “Who knows his [true] self, knows his Lord” (*man ‘arafa nafsahu faqad ‘arafa Rabbah*, Arab.; *ar-Rabb*, Lord, Arab.) [575]. The quest for the inner Self is compared with the circumambulation of Ka’ba seen as the Supreme Reality (ch. XV F): “Circumambulating around Allah, you will soon forget yourself... You have been transformed into a particle that is gradually melting and disappearing. This is absolute love and its peak” [576].

Couliano talked about the “«soul» or equivalent” but apparently referred to the Self, and stated: “This, of course, was perceived as a great discovery at a certain stage of introspection of humankind, perhaps tens of thousands of years ago, and as a great secret ever since” [577].

We have seen in the foregoing that sometimes, the Self (*Atman*, Sanskr.) is confused with the soul (*Jivatman*; *Jiva*, alive, Sanskr.) and with the Spirit. On a subtle scale, from the gross physical body one ascends to chakras, then to the soul and in the end, to the Spirit, whereas the causal side descends from the Spirit down to the physical body. Shrouded by the limiting, individualizing stratifications of the tangible gross frame of our physical nature, and by the subtle sheaths of our animating psyche, is the Self, fundamentally unaffected by the process and activities of the conditioning layers, isolated and steeped in beatitude [578].

The Greeks made the necessary distinction between pneumatic (spiritual), psychic (related to the soul) and somatic (bodily). Jung referred to “the trichotomy spirit, soul, and body (*pneumatikón—psychikón—sarkikón*, Gr.)”

adding: “Spirit is the finest and highest; soul, as the *ligamentum spiritus et corporis*²⁶² is grosser than spirit, but has «the wings of an eagle», so that it may lift its heaviness up to the higher regions. Both are of a «subtle» nature and dwell, like the ether and the eagle, in or near the region of light, whereas the body, being heavy, dark, and impure, is deprived of the light” [579]. After Jung, “we define the soul on the one hand as the relation with the unconscious, and on the other as a personification of unconscious contents... It is evident from the ethnological and historical material that the soul is a content that belongs partly to the subject and partly to the world of the spirits, i.e., the unconscious” [580].

According to the *Zohar*, *nephesh*²⁶³ (plural form: *nepheshoth*, Hebr.) is the soul in the sleeping state, while *ruah* (Hebr.) is the soul in the awoken state. None of them can exist without the other. A higher aspect placed above them and called *neshamah* (Hebr.) is dominating them both. We should notice the resemblance with *neshev* (breeze, breath, Hebr.; ch. XI C). *Nephesh* is the lower aspect, the support of the body fed by it; it cannot exist separated from the body and the latter cannot exist unless in close union with the former. Then, it becomes the support of *ruah* that is above *nephesh* but in union with the body. When man possesses *nephesh* and *ruah*, he is apt to receive *neshamah*, so that *ruah* becomes the support of *neshamah* that is of an essence much higher than *nephesh* and *ruah* and hence more secret than the former two. The three elements above are compared to the parts of the flame with the body as a wick: *nephesh* is the lower, dark-colored, bluish part; *ruah* is the white part above it; *neshamah* is the upper, imperceptible flame [582]. *Nephesh* is regarded as the vital force (as appears for instance in Genesis 9:4) of the *basar*, “flesh” (e.g. in Genesis 2:23-24 or Isaiah 10:18), i.e. the physical body. It was thought that on Mount Horeb, Moses was in the presence of the white light that does not consume through combustion as the blue light does [583].

In our times, Jung developed the topic of Self and its realization leading to new basic concepts.

Animoso (hearty, Ital.) comes from *anima* (soul, Lat.) thus confirming the accuracy of placing the latter in the chakra of the heart. Jung inferred that the complementary feminine and masculine principles *anima* and *animus* are archetypes of the collective unconscious, stating that they are distinct from the I of the subject but manifest themselves in and with the help of the subject. Sikh Scriptures display a relationship reminding that of *anima-animus* used by Jung: “The female is in the male, and the male is in the

²⁶² Bond between spirit and body (Lat.).

²⁶³ To be compared with *nafs* (soul, Arab.), distinct of *ruh* (spirit, Arab.) [581].

female. Understand this, O, God-realized being!” (*Purakhi mahi naar mahi purkhaa boojhahu brahm giaanee...*) [584].

By *anima*²⁶⁴, Jung understood the feminine archetype playing a role of an exceptional importance within man’s unconscious [585]. He showed that “anima... always has a peculiar relationship to *time*; as a rule she is more or less immortal, because outside time” and mentioned as examples Rider Haggard’s *She* and *The Return of She*, William M. Sloane’s *To Walk the Night* and Pierre Benoît’s *L’Atlantide*. “In all these accounts, the anima is outside time as we know it and consequently immensely old or a being who belongs to a different order of things” [586].

In Jung’s opinion, anima passed through four stages in its development. “The first stage is best symbolized by the figure of Eve, which represents purely instinctual and biological relations.” The second, more elevated, still retains its feminine character. “The third is represented by the Virgin Mary—a figure who raises love to the heights of spiritual devotion. The fourth type is symbolized by Sapiientia, wisdom transcending even the most holy and the most pure” [587]. All those stages obviously indicate the rising of the Kundalini from her latent state in the Mooladhara sacrum (Eve whom Jung regarded as a feminine terrestrial prototype, similar to the Mooladhara) up to the Agya (Virgin Mary) and finally reaching the last chakra, the Sahasrara (supreme level, i.e. the Universal Mother, the Adi Shakti). Chevalier and Gheerbrant showed that “the Eve within us was summoned upwards through an ascending, purifying movement, in order to become like Virgin Mary, in order to discover the Child of Light... the own Sun” [588].

From the *Rig-Veda* Jung took over the concept of the Self (*das Selbst*, Germ.). He stated: “I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the «self»” [589], and explained: “I have chosen the term «self» to designate the totality of man, the sum total of his conscious and unconscious contents. I have chosen this term in accordance with Eastern philosophy, which for centuries has occupied itself with the problems that arise when even the gods cease to incarnate” [590]. “The center cannot therefore be classed with the ego, but must be accorded a higher value. Nor can we continue to give it the name of «ego», for which reason I have called it the «self». To experience and realize this self is the ultimate aim of Indian yoga, and in considering the psychology of the self we would do well to have recourse to the treasures of Indian wisdom” [591]. Actually, Jung himself practised Yoga²⁶⁵, experienced and described the Self Realization, and confessed: “I began to understand that the goal of psychic development is the

²⁶⁴ It is of feminine gender in Latin and in German (*die Seele*).

²⁶⁵ See also chapter IX.

self... This insight gave me stability, and gradually my inner peace returned” [592].

The great psychologist remarks: “It must be reckoned a psychic catastrophe when the *ego is assimilated by the self*” [593]. “The self as an archetype represents a numinous²⁶⁶ wholeness, which can be expressed only by symbols (e.g., mandala, tree etc.). As a collective image it reaches beyond the individual in time and space and is therefore not subjected to the corruptibility of one body²⁶⁷: the realization of the self²⁶⁸ is nearly always connected with the feeling of timelessness, «eternity»²⁶⁹, or immortality” [594]. “I usually describe the supraordinate personality as the «self», thus making a sharp distinction between the *ego*, which, as is well known, extends only as far as the conscious mind, and the *whole* of the personality, which includes the unconscious as well as the conscious component. The ego is thus related to the self as part to whole. To that extent the self is supraordinate. Moreover, the self is felt empirically not as subject but as object, and this by reason of its unconscious component, which can only come to consciousness indirectly, by way of projection. Because of its unconscious component the self is so far removed from the conscious mind that it can only be partially expressed by human figures... The human figures are father and son, mother and daughter, king and queen, god and goddess. Theriomorphic symbols are the dragon, snake²⁷⁰... Plant symbols are generally flowers (lotus and rose)” [595]. Here Jung discloses the general relation *god/goddess* (Father/Mother-Holy Spirit/Son, of a special interest for Christianity)—*chakras* (clearly indicated by the lotuses—projections of the corresponding divine aspects)—*Kundalini* (snake, as the element of revelation-unification-liberation). At the same time, this “leads to the possibility of an accommodation with the unconscious, and thus to a possible synthesis of the conscious and unconscious elements of knowledge and action. This in turn leads to a shifting of the center of personality from the ego to the self” [596]. It is a brilliant acknowledgement of the results achieved through Yoga.

Schuon [597] characterizes the situation as follows: “Our Reality does not leave us the choice and obliges us to «become what we are», or to remain

²⁶⁶ *Numinosum* (Lat.): inexpressible, secret, frightful, “completely different”—a quality assigned to the divinity that can be directly experimented.

²⁶⁷ Jung advocated the concept of reincarnation (ch. XXIV).

²⁶⁸ That is Self Realization, identification with the Self.

²⁶⁹ See *infra*.

²⁷⁰ Ch. IX.

what we are not,” i.e. to become the Self or to remain the ego, the false I.

Jung gave the name of *individuation* to the process of the Self Realization [598]. In his concept, the Realization of the Self (defined as the Center of human personality) means the achievement of the “psychic wholeness” of the individual. “The symbolism of psychic wholeness coincides with the God-image” [599]. Godliness is got through the integration (assimilation) of the unconscious (the Self, God’s archetype) that is through what psychology calls *totalling psychological function*. In Jung’s vision it means *apokatástasis*, “the restoration of an original condition. This is in exact agreement with the empirical findings of psychology, that there is an ever-present archetype of wholeness” [600].

The personal experience led the Swiss psychologist to the conclusion that “the goal of psychological, as of biological, development is self realization, or individuation” [601]. Eliade explained in a commentary: “a process of psychic integration which he calls the process of individuation... for Jung represents the supreme ideal of every human being, namely, the discovery of the possession of his own self... The manifestations of the self, that is, the appearance of certain symbols which are part and parcel of the self, bring with them something of the intemporality of the unconscious which finds expression in a feeling of eternity and immortality” [602]. However, Jung regarded the Self Realization as the goal of the life not only for the individual but also for the entire group completing one another with the view to achieve a complete image and result. He inferred that what “it is the true self” is no other than “«God within us» and dwells in every individual” [603]. The distinguished psychologist referred to the possibility of passing beyond the psychological stages, mental and human levels through the process of individuation that he described as the Realization of the own Self. He remarked that the only aim of the individuation is liberating of the Self from the false covers of the *person* (ego) and from the suggestive force of the unconscious images (superego).

We have explained that the identification of the subject with Atman is the essential condition to achieve the Self Realization (Yoga). Jung has shown that “the Oriental attributes unquestionably divine significance to the self, and according to the ancient Christian view self-knowledge is the road to knowledge of God” [604] (*Cognitio Dei*, Lat.). The *mystical participation* described by Lévy-Bruhl referred to the collective relationship [605]. Hence Jung’s conclusion: “If we understand and feel that here in this life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change. In the final analysis, we count for something only because of the essential we embody, and if we do not embody that, life is wasted” [604]. Jung also showed that “the primordial being becomes the distant goal of man’s self development...

Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality” [606].

The problem of eternity, of the eternal life was a subject that repeatedly occurred in the New Testament. What can one understand of it?

Eternity is a concept that has always concerned philosophers. According to the Iranian doctrine, the “limited time” created by Ormuzd was preceded and followed by *Zurvan akarana*, the “unlimited time” [607]. Parmenides, who lived in the ancient Greece in the 6th century BC, believed eternity to be a unique continuum that did not include any past or future: “Nor was it ever, nor will it be; since now it is, all together, one, continuous” [608]. Plato advocated in his turn: “We say that he «was», he «is», he «will be», but the truth is that «is» alone is properly attributed to him” [609]. Past and future no longer existed in the eternity. Time itself ceased to exist. The Roman philosopher Boetius (c.475-525) used to define eternity as “endless, total, simultaneous and perfect life,” a definition that came to be accepted by the Christian Church.

For the authors of the *Upanishads* the real immortality consists of the knowledge the Self obtains about itself [610]. Man becomes immortal as soon as he has known himself or, more exactly, the eternal Self residing in himself. Hence, this is the real secret of the urge *Gnóthi seautón* that can be now translated: “Know thy Self” (see *supra*). Anton Dumitriu explained that through *sophrosýne* (knowledge of the self, Gr. [611]; *phrónesis*, knowledge, Gr.) one can reach what it is “immortal,” “eternal,” that specific place where there are gathered all the spiritual energies belonging to it [612].

Buddhism called the Primordial Unity: *Tathata* (That what it is, Pali) thus expressing the present eternal contained within: “That what the soul calls «That what it is» is the unity of the all, the wholeness containing the all” [613]. The Mahayana Buddhism believed that “In the spiritual world, time is not divided into past, present and future, since they are concentrated into a moment of present where life acquires its true meaning... Past and future are absorbed into this second of enlightenment that is not frozen but continuously proceeds on its path” [614]. The Zen master Hui-neng said: “The present is the absolute peace. Although it occurs now, it has no end and this is what eternal happiness actually is” [615].

The relationship between God and the Infinite can be expressed by a simple sentence: *God is the Infinite*. By relating the Infinite to the Space-Time co-ordinates, we understand that the latter are only two of God’s attributes. Greek philosophy understood the *eternal* being beyond space and time. Of course it acknowledged the existence of the world in space and time but not that was its essence. The liturgy affirmed “*Annus est Christus*” (Christ is the Year, Lat.), thus equating God with Time, and the Gospel supplemented

it by “*Templum est Christus*” (Christ is the Temple, Lat.: cf. John 2:21) identifying God with Space. In its turn, the Yoga doctrine shows that in the Absolute there is neither space, nor time, nor causality [616].

As we have seen (ch. XV D) Clement of Alexandria identified God with absolute Time [617]. Jesus is “him that lives to the ages of ages” (Revelation 10:6) and is beyond Time being “who is, who was, and who is to come” (1:4,8; cf. 4:8; 11:17). Thus, at the end of the cycle, the *Day of Lord* gathers past, present and future. However, it is not only then when this happens. In the Garden of Eden, before transcending to the human condition, Adam and Eve had no history; therefore they lived in the eternal present.

God is equated with Time in Islam, too: “I am *Ad-Dahr*” (Time, Arab.) [618].

We have seen (ch. II) that there are three main channels in the subtle body. The *left channel* is the *channel of the past*, which is characteristic of people living from memories, evoking the past (providing them a refuge) and bound to their conditionings coming from the past. In the same manner, the *right channel*, the *channel of the future*, defines the people living in the future, projecting their attention towards the future and always making plans about the future. The most important, however, is the *central channel*, that belongs to the *present*. “Living in the present” is the quality of perfect balance attained by Yogis. Thus, the Sushumna is the channel where the *unio mystica* is achieved between the Feminine Principle (Kundalini) and the Masculine Principle (Atman). The one who exclusively lives in the present becomes one with God. Present is the only reality. Indeed, the past is dead, we cannot change it, and the future escapes our control, is unknown since it exists not yet.

According to Schuon “The Sufi is the «son of the moment» (*ibn al-waqt*), which means first of all that he is conscious of eternity and that through his remembrance of God he remains in the timeless instant of heavenly actuality. But it means also and consequently, that he keeps himself at all times in the divine Will, that is to say, he realizes that the present moment is what God wants of him; therefore he will not desire to be «before» or «after» or to enjoy that which is in fact outside the divine «now»—that irreplaceable instant in which we belong concretely to God and which is indeed the only instant when we can in fact wish to belong to Him” [619]. Schuon explains: “If we were «pure consciousness» like the Self, we would be «always» and «everywhere»; that is to say we would not be «I», for that, in its empirical actuality, is entirely a creation of space and time” [620].

Yahweh defines Himself *in present*: “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). The Sanskrit equivalent of “That I am” is *Sat* (Existence), the first attribute of the Supreme Divinity, Shiva, as it was explained above. God urges us to be

detached from the past: “Remember not the former things, neither consider the ancient things” (Isaiah 43:18). As for the future, the *Bible* reproves all attempt to know it. “There shall not be found among you he... that useth divination, that useth auguries,... or one that inquireth a spirit of Python²⁷¹, or a soothsayer” (Deuteronomy 18:10; cf. 18:14). “Saul put away... the soothsayers out of the land” (1 Samuel 28:3; cf. 28:9). “If there be a man or a woman in whom is a spirit of Python or of divination, they shall certainly be put to death” (Leviticus 20:27). Jesus said to the disciples: “It is not yours to know times or seasons, which the Father has placed in his own authority” (Acts 1:7). “Be not careful therefore for the tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34). And Christ said about Doomsday: “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens, but [my] Father alone” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).

The *Qur'an* reads: “Surely God—He has knowledge of the Hour” (31.34). The same for Islamic tradition: “Narrated Abu Huraira:... The Prophet then recited: «Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (Alone)»” [621].

Joachim of Floris referred to the *Evangelium Aeternum* (ch. XXI), thus unveiling the relation between the teachings of Jesus and eternal present [622]. As for Meister Eckhart he wrote: “In eternity there is neither before nor after” [623].

The Arthurian legends refer to the enchanted island believed to be the place for initiation (Self Realization) where it was neither day nor night, a fact pointing to both going beyond the opposites (in the Agya chakra) and transcending the time flow consisting in the alternation of day and night, thus entering the eternal present.

With a similar intent Hölderlin in his *Hyperion* used the syntagma “children of the instant” (*Kinder des Augenblicks*, Germ.).

After experiencing the Self Realization in 1944, Jung wrote: “I can describe the experience only as ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past and future are one,” rejecting any possibility of describing that state: “How can I imagine that I exist simultaneously the day before yesterday, today, and the day after tomorrow?” [624]. He thought that “through the progressive integration of the unconscious we have a reasonable chance to make experiences of an archetypal nature²⁷² providing us with a feeling of continuity before and after our existence” [625].

Mircea Eliade made the following remark: “Like the mystic, like the religious man in general, the primitive lives in a continual present. (And it is in this sense that the religious man... lives always in an atemporal present)”

²⁷¹ Oracles, like that of the Pythia.

²⁷² The Self Realization.

[626].

The experiments achieved by Alan Watts under the surveillance of Keith Bitman (*Neuropsychiatric Clinic* of the University of California), Sterling Bunnell and Michael Agron (*Langley-Porter Clinic*, San Francisco), confirmed that the ecstatic state enables “the concentration on the present time” thus creating the impression that there exists only the present time.

The above concepts established by way of enlightenment are confirmed by notable representants of modern physics. In the words of Louis de Broglie: “in space-time, everything which for each of us constitutes the past, the present, and the future is given in block” [627]. And Einstein avowed: “People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion” [628].

“Be active” has never been found in the *Bible* but only in our everyday life and the New Testament with its “behold” was a weave of non-action. Being in the present means acquiring the witness quality, watching without interfering, since action is reserved for God. Actually, Jesus warned: “Ye cannot [do] even what is least” (Luke 12:26). “For without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Also the prayer *Our Father* given by the Christ to the people read: “let Thy will be done” (Matthew 6:9). According to Origen: “it is said, «seek what is great, and the little things shall be added; seek what is heavenly, and the earthly shall be added»” [629].

Krishna said in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “While all kinds of work are done by the modes of nature, he whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense thinks «I am the doer»” [630]. This Scripture abundantly deals with giving up the fruit of our actions (*naishkarmya*, *phalatrishna vairagya* or *karma-phalam*, Sanskr.).

Ramana Maharishi explained: “a person’s actions are God’s” [631]. “I do nothing, You do everything”—is the most powerful mantra used by Sahaja Yogis to repress the permanent tendency of the ego to manifest itself.

The *Tao-Te-King* read: “Tao itself does not act [acts as if not acting (*Wu-Wei*)] and so there is nothing which had not been done by it [all is done through it]” [632].

The idea appears with Aristotle too as the first motionless²⁷³ witness who moves everything [633].

In their everyday life Muslims use the formula: *in sha’a llah* (if God wills it, Arab.). The great Sufi poet Rumi explained in the book of “Table Talk” entitled *Fihi ma Fihi* (In it what is in it, Arab.) his doctrine of *iktisab*: “Hence we realize absolutely that the creator of man’s acts is God, not man. Every act that proceed out of man, whether it be good or evil, he performs intentionally and with a purpose... Only God however knows the total advantage of that

²⁷³ *Próton kinoun akineton* (first immovable mover, Gr.).

deed, what fruits he will discover there from” [634]. That led to the verse in *Mathnawi-i-Ma'nawi*: “And the results born of it are not in control of creatures” [635].

The state of witness characterized through detachment allows us to notice that all that is happening is part and parcel of the great divine play (*leela*, Sanskr.; led by Krishna), while the *Qur'an* remembers: “the present life is naught but a play” (6.32; cf. 6.91).

Anyone who infringe that rule is suffering the consequence of what Shri Mataji has called “the law of polarity”: any action triggers the corresponding counteraction through the “boomerang” effect: “If anyone shall kill with [the] sword, he must with [the] sword be killed” (Revelation 13:10; cf. Matthew 26:52).

The Age of Taurus (c.4000 - c.2000 BC). The aeon governing this age XIX was *Krishna*, the eighth Avatar, the Lord of the cows (*Govinda*, Sanskr.). The - 95 age stayed under the sign of the Bull. This was the symbol of the Vedic god - 94 of *Sun* as well as of *Rudra*. *Indra* appears, too, as a bull [636]. Also the sage king *Rishabha* was a bull [637]. The *Mahabharata* used the bull metaphor: thus, Bhishma called *Yudhishthira* “Bharata bull” [638]. Krishna named *Arjuna*: “Bharata [the one as mighty as a] bull” (*Bharatarshabha*; *shaibya*, bull, Sanskr.) [639]. Other known instances were *Apis*, or the sacred bull XIX *Mnevis* of Heliopolis, identified to *Ra*. *Seth* was regarded to be the godly bull - 97 residing at Heliopolis and *Horus* was called “the bull of Hathor,” while *Geb* - 98 was “the bull of Nut.” *Serapis* was the bull god of Ptolemaic kings of Egypt. *Mithra* was running after the Primordial Bull (known in Zoroastrianism) out of which the whole universe was brought out. The Iranian mythology mentioned the centaur *Gopatšah* [640] who was thought to be the spiritual master of the Mazdaean ancestors living in the heavenly land of Eran vež (ch. III). The manifestation of the Power of this animal was revered under the appearance of the *Holy Cow*: *Hathor* in Egypt, *Surabhi* and *Kamadhenu* in XIX India. Other hypostases of the holy cow were worshipped in various spiritual - 99 cultures (ch. XX A). The symbol of the Babylonian god *Baal* was a bull’s head. For the Canaanites the bull was the father of the gods. The Semitic *El* (God) was called “the Bull El” [641]. The Jews devoted to the polytheistic belief preceding the Judaic monotheism worshipped the *Golden Calf* (Exodus 32:4). It is worth noticing that at its origin the first letter of the alphabet with a sacred significance (*alpha-aleph*; ch. I) was illustrated through a bull XIX ideogram out of which came its present shape (ch. VIII). Coming perhaps - 110 from an ancient past, the ancient Greece has the myth of Europa and the bull XIX *Zeus*, while *Poseidon* was called the bull god as well as *Dionysus*. The - 102 Minoan period (3000 - 2000 BC) recorded the *Minotaur*. Between . . 106 Mesopotamia (Hassuna) and the Indus Valley there were discovered seals

XIX displaying carved bulls (c. 2800 - 2500 BC) or ceramic items envisaging that
 -100 beast bearing a flame between its horns (in Baluchistan) but particularly a
 large number of bull statuettes (for instance in the Nindowari temple dating
 back to the 3rd millennium BC but also in Mundigak). All these artifacts
 testify on the existence of a well-organized cult for that archetype [642].
 Chapter VIII provided other details about the bull symbolism.

XIX Besides numberless bull seals from the 3rd millennium unearthed in Indus
 -101 Valley we have already referred (see our Introduction) to the finding of an
 VIII item called the seal of *the Seven Sisters* depicting a deity endowed with bull's
 -9 horns and being seated in a Yoga posture. This god was believed to be Shiva
 Pashupati (Lord of the cattle) and was an ancient pre-Arian divinity
 XIX reappearing in the *Vedas* as Rudra. This could explain why Shiva had the bull
 -96 *Nandi* as his vehicle.

The seals in the Indus Valley demonstrate that in the respective
 XIX civilization the male unicorn prevailed in comparison with the bulls and
 -107 buffaloes. One could assume that the unique horn denotes the pencil of
 vibrations coming out the Sahasrara (ch. VIII). Sir John Marshall showed that
 the ancient world [643] presumed India as the origin of the unicorn, while in
 Iran there existed legends about this fabulous animal. Later texts associated
 the Indus Valley unicorn with a god. According to Roerich the lamas claim
 "that in Tibet there was and still exists near the region of K'am an antelope
 with one horn," while "the British explorer Bryan Hodson has exported a
 specimen of a special antelope with one horn" [644]. Casal related it to the
 vehicles (*vahana*, Sanskr.; ch. IV) of the gods in later Hinduism. The unicorn
 often appears near an urn for burning incenses (it seems that flames comes
 out of the vase, on such a seal). The experts believe that the vase had a
 religious meaning. Throughout processions the urn was sometimes carried on
 a pole and preceded by a bull placed on a platform. Other times near the
 unicorn there was a pipal, regarded as a sacred tree in that area [645]. The
 topic of this fabulous beast is widespread from the *Vedas* to the Gnosticism,
 being also embraced by alchemy and ecclesiastical allegory as well as in
 Judaism, Persia, China [646]. The unicorn is mentioned also in the *Ramayana*
 and *Mahabharata* where it took the form of the sage *Ekasringa* (Unicorn,
 Sanskr.) or *Rishasringa*. We should add the description of Joseph given in the
Blessing of Moses: "his horns are like the horns of unicorns" (Deuteronomy
 33:17; *King James Version*). The female unicorn appeared in the European
 medieval art as a companion of the Feminine Principle like in the topic of the
 XIX *Lady with the Unicorn*, current for a celebrated series of tapestries woven in
 -108 Aubusson (c. 1490; some of them belonging to the Louvre and Cluny
 -109 Museums in Paris) [647].

According to tradition, Krishna lived in the fourth millennium before

Christ [648]. This Avatar was said to have lived towards the end of Dvapara Yuga [649], considered by some authors to have run out in the year 3102 BC [650]. During his time the fifth chakra (Adi Vishuddhi) of the Cosmic Being was enlightened.

As it was shown above Krishna was the divinity witnessing the divine play (*leela*, Sanskr.) devoid of the result of action. This quality of witness characterizes the Vishuddhi chakra ruled by this Incarnation. The Islamic tradition acknowledged the connection between that quality and the neck where the Vishuddhi is placed. Thus, Abu Musa said: “that is inscribed on your necks as a witness” [651].

The Age of Aries (c.2000 - 1 BC) was characterized by the establishing XIX of the monotheistic Judaism through great spiritual personalities such as -111 *Abraham* (19th century BC) and *Moses* (13th century BC). Generally, this -112 period was dominated by the manifestation of the universal principle of the spiritual master (*Adi Guru Dattatreya*). The Primordial Guru Dattatreya was a triple incarnation (he is portrayed with three faces) who appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as a single entity (Genesis 18:1) but under XIX the appearance of *three men* (18:2) as shown in chapter II. During the same -113 age, alongside with the two great Jewish prophets there lived also *Zoroaster* (7th or 6th century; even 10th century, after others), *Lao-tse* (6th century), *Confucius* (6th century), and *Socrates* (5th century) (see ch. X). Lao-tse is told to have descended from the heaven riding a black ram in whose memory the Black Ram Temple was erected and can be seen even today in the western suburb of the main town of the Sichuan district. Confucius himself is associated with a happening implying a ram [652].

The symbol of the *ram* (or the *Passover lamb*) appeared as an object of sacrifice instead of worship, as a reaction against the belief of the previous age when it was worshipped another specific animal (Golden Calf). That could also be illustrated by the cult of Mithra who stabbed the mythological bull.

On the same period we would mention the myth of *Golden Fleece* (ch. V) XIX where a winged golden *ram* (*Chrysomallus*) was the vehicle *rising to the* -114 *heaven*, therefore symbolizing the rising of the Kundalini (vehicle of the spiritual elevation) up to the Sahasrara (Kingdom of the Heaven).

During that age there were composed many important sacred writings such as the *Vedas* and the related texts (the *Brahmanas*, the *Upanishads* etc.), the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Old Testament*, *Tao-Te-King* as well as the great epics of Homer (the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*) comprising a thesaurus of wisdom encoded as myths.

The Age of Pisces (c. AD 1 - 2000) was the period during which XIX Christianity appeared and spread out. -115

Jung noted down: “In *Aion*... I had attempted to explain how the appearance of Christ coincided with the beginning of a new aeon, the age of Fishes... Christ is therefore the «Fish»... and comes forth as the ruler of the new aeon” [653].

The fish was known to have been the secret sign used by the early Christians to identify each other. The Greek word *ichthús* (fish) was an acrostic made up of the initial letters of the following designation: *Iesoús Christós Theou Uiós Soter* (Jesus Christ Son of God, the Savior, *Gr.*). Christ chose His first disciples from among fishermen to whom He said: “I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19; cf. Luke 5:10). In Hinduism the fish was also the symbol of the Savior; for instance, Vishnu’s first incarnation took the shape of the fish Matsya who saved the best of the humans (Manu) from the flood (ch. XIX B). Kashmir has worshipped Matsyendranath (Fisherman) identified with the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwara who was believed to have attained Yoga after he had changed himself into a fish. The symbol of union (Yoga) was found in the zodiacal sign representation showing two fishes making a perfect couple. Ancient Greece also had the symbol of the Savior dolphin. Thus, a new relationship appeared between the Savior symbolized by the fish and another aquatic being to whom it was ascribed the role of Savior too and was meaningfully a mammal. However, the dolphin is Apollo’s sacred animal (*Apollo Delphinios*), a god who is occasionally equated to Jesus. The name of *Delphi* where it was the celebrated oracle of Apollo, also indicates the relation with that being. A XIX dolphin saved the legendary Greek poet Arion (7th century BC). Some Greek - 118 coins depict a dolphin carrying on its back a child or a young man [654]. Many narratives refer to the miraculous creature rescuing the tale hero (Theseus, Coeranus, Taras, Phalanthos, Ica dius, and Enalus). XIX We should notice that the old image of the fish depicted in the catacombs - 117 of the first Christians suggests the mathematical sign of the *infinite* (∞) with - 116 its cut tail, thus evoking the synthesis between the *finite* human Self and the *infinite* Absolute Self.

The choosing of this symbol proves that the first Christians comprised genuine initiate in the secrets of the subtle system, since the two zodiacal XIX fishes in their reverse position resonate with the Tao image of Yin-Yang (☯). - 116 When referring to the reunion Yin-Yang in Tao, Jung said about the latter that some “translate it... even as «God», as the Jesuits do” [655]. In Hindu terms, the Tao couple represents the Adi Shakti and Sada-Shiva united again in Brahman, while in the plane of the terrestrial manifestation they correspond to the Shakti and the male Avatar since in that age Jesus had Virgin Mary as His Shakti (power).

It was not by chance that the fish—as a representative of the creatures

appeared in the Primordial Ocean—points at the Primordial Avatar, here under the form of the New Adam (Jesus). In fact, we have explained (ch. XIX B) that the fish was *the first* Avatar of Vishnu. However, the fish is characterized through *silence*, which signifies the *thoughts silence*, Nirvichara Samadhi (see *infra*) acquired at the climax of the spiritual evolution—the Self Realization or Resurrection because of the Savior manifested for the second time as Kalki, the Sahasrara aeon. The coincidence between the moment designated as Resurrection by Christians (*anástasia*, Gr.; actually, by Muslims too as *Qiyamah*, Arab.), the revelation of the essence (the Self) through Enlightenment (especially in Eastern terminology), and the transformation (transition) into the newness called *the second birth* (ch. XXII B) results from the following defining Gnostic text quoted from the *Treatise on the Resurrection*: “It is the revelation of what is, and the transformation²⁷⁴ of things, and a transition into newness” [656].

The descent of Jesus-MahaVishnu to Earth in the Dark Age of Iron, Kali Yuga, matched—on the cosmic level of the Virata—the moment when the next chakra was opened for the entire Creation (ch. XIX D). Jesus on the cross is the divine manifestation of the master (aeon) of the cosmic Adi Agya chakra, who is reflected on the human scale within the optical chiasma (see *infra*). His name was connected to the number *six*, Agya being the *sixth* chakra. Thus, the Greek appellation used in the gospels is *Iesoûs*, “a name with six letters, a *digamma*,” in the words of Epiphanius [657]. Ezekiel referred to “*six lambs without blemish*” (46:4), where Jesus is symbolized by the Lamb. Archangel Gabriel visited Virgin Mary in the *sixth* month (Luke 1:26). At the wedding of Cana there were *six* water-vessels (John 2:6). The XIX crucifixion took place on the *sixth* day of the Jewish week (Friday). The -119 descent of the Holy Spirit (theophany) is celebrated the *sixth* of January, and the outstanding event of transfiguration—the *sixth* of August, when *six* -120 persons were present: Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, John and James (Luke 9:28,30; Matthew 17:1,3; Mark 9:2,4). Moreover, the cross has *six* arms on a three-dimensional portraiture. It is amazing that this number is also associated with Virgin Mary, for instance her *six* virtues listed by Ambrose of Milan (339-397).

On the same time when the mainstream Christianity had no reticence in adoring the cross although an instrument of torture reminding the Christ’s agony, the Gnostics rejected such an attitude precisely for the mentioned reason [658].

Indeed, we should not see the cross as the sign of crucifixion and suffering but as the token of *liberation* of the divine energy out of the Agya chakra—our *own cross* existing *within* each of us, a symbol of the opening

²⁷⁴ *Metabole* (Gr.).

(inauguration) by the Christ of a new age in the spiritual evolutionary process of mankind. Following the Savior means going beyond (*transcendere*, Lat.) this last but one chakra and reaching the Sahasrara (Kingdom). This is the real meaning of the words of Jesus: “If any one desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24; cf. 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27). We would easily grasp the importance of this urge from its high occurrence in the gospels. In fact, to “deny oneself” signifies surrendering of the ego (ch. XIX B). In this respect, a very good procedure consists of *granting forgiveness* (see *infra*). It was with a good reason when Meister Eckhart remarked on this sentence of the Christ: “this is not only a commandment as one normally says and thinks, it is a promise and a divine teaching... and it is a reward rather than a commandment... and this is blessedness” [659]. Here we recognize the comment of a great initiate who has gotten the bliss (*ananda*, ch. XIX C) himself.

Justin wrote that “Plato... says about the Son of God that he was unfolded by God, throughout the Universe, in the shape of letter X... He had not seen that the sign was a cross; he thought that it was an X and said that virtue, after the first divinity was extended all through the Universe like an X” [660], the latter being the capital of the Greek letter *chi*. Actually, Plato made no reference to the divine Son and said about the universe that God “divided lengthways into two parts, which he joined to one other at the center like the letter X” [661]. However, *chi* is precisely the initial letter of the Greek name of Christ (Χριστός).

If taking into account the existent relationship between the Greek and Hindu spirituality (ch. XIX B) we can understand the connection between the name of the *Agya* chakra and *άγια* (*agya*), the feminine of *άγιος* (holy, Gr.).

The reflection of the *Agya* chakra on the microcosmic human level is situated in the center of the forehead where the left channel (*Ida nadi*) and the right channel (*Pingala nadi*) form a subtle crossing. From an anatomical point of view, this is the place of:

- XIX — the anterior aspect of the chakra (*front Agya*), which is called the -121 *chiasma opticalis* (optical nerve crossing);
- XIX — the posterior aspect of the chakra (*back Agya*) represented by the -122 *decussatio pyramidum* (crossing of the motor nuclei fibres of the spinal nerves for the upper limb and upper trunk and for the lower limb and lower trunk respectively).

The frontal projection belongs to the right (solar) channel while the back projection belongs to the left (lunar) channel.

Golgotha (skull, Hebr.; *kranίου τόπος*, skull place, Gr.; *calvarium*, bald, Lat.), the place of crucifixion indicates the intracranial position of the cross in the *Agya*.

In Greek language, the *chiasma* (having also the initial letter *chi*, X) means *cross* and parallels *decussatio* (Lat.). André Scrima [662] believes that the syntagma “death of [the] cross” (Philippians 2:8) referred to “that unexpected chiasma.” The chiasma was the secret sign of the Pharaohs who used to hold the emblems of *power* in their *crossed* arms. Indeed, this *cross* means *power*. The *Gospel of Philip* wrote about “the power of the cross. This power the apostles called «the right and the left»” [663], thus pointing to the side channels crossing there. The arms of the deceased were crossed on his chest in order to allow him the entering in the Kingdom of heavens. During the pontifical liturgy the bishop crosses the torches (see also ch. XI E). All XIX these gestures coming from the Egyptian antiquity up to the Christianity -123 disclose the hidden significance of the chiasma. -124

The three channels cross in the Agya and that is why there is here the -125 narrowest opening and the most difficult passageway encountered by the -126 Kundalini in her way towards the supreme point. It was about this subtle point ruled by Jesus, that Maximus the Confessor wrote that it is a center on which all lines converge [664]. It allows the transcending from the *human* to the *divine* state not only in the case of the subtle physiology (the crossing point of the three channels as thin as a hair) but also on the level of transition from the *human* time (past-present-future) to the *divine* time (eternal present), thus implying at once the thoughts cessation, the entering into the Nirvichara Samadhi (see *infra*). Indeed, in human co-ordinates the three channels equate the past, present and future since the entity governing the Agya manifested itself in the past (Ganesha-Adam), on our age (Jesus) and will come in the future one (Kalki). This interface of the transcendence from *human* to *divine* was opened by the Avatar who was never better called the *Son of man*. Indeed, this Avatar expressed the perfect integration of the two principles: the *divine* essence under a *human* appearance. We should add also a mathematical interpretation: the two-petals Agya corresponds to the binary counting system (0,1), which allows the writing of any *finite* (that is *human*) number but not of the *infinite* (*divine*) that corresponds to the Sahasrara whose “one thousand petals” signify the infinite.

“*Ad Augusta per angusta*” said the Latin dictum²⁷⁵, thus warning that this august result cannot be got otherwise than walking the narrow path. Likewise it is the slogan “*Per aspera ad astra*” (Lat.), meaning that through difficult ways (asceticism, in classical Yoga) one can reach the stars—here with the significance of the Kingdom of Heavens (Sahasrara). As a matter of fact, we have shown that the chakras are pictured as stars (ch. IV).

Agya is “the narrow gate” that Jesus said about: “Strive with earnestness

²⁷⁵ This was the *password* used by the conspirators in Victor Hugo’s *Hernani* (act IV).

to enter in through the narrow door, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able” (Luke 13:24). “Enter through the narrow gate” (Matthew 7:13). In another metaphor Christ described the narrowness of the passageway through the Agya chakra and condemned the materialistic attachments that hinder the spiritual elevation: “It is easier for a camel to enter a needle’s eye than a rich man into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). “Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him” (Revelation 3:20). It is the “door opened in heaven” (4:1). “They should go in by the gates into the city... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies” (22:14,16), where *the city* is the New Jerusalem—a name corresponding to the Sahasrara (ch. IV). Similar references can be met in the Old Testament too. “Open to me the gates of righteousness” (Psalms 118:19). “This is the gate of Yahweh: the righteous shall enter therein” (118:20). Also Genesis disclose that the heavens gate is the abode of the divine (a chakra): “this is no other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (28:17).

We have mentioned before (ch. XIX A) the example of “the gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east” of the New Jerusalem given by Ezekiel when saying that it “shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened” (46:1). Only “the glory of Yahweh” was allowed to enter this gate, and the glory filled the House of God (43:4-5). In the absence of the Divinity the gate remained shut (44:2). However, the glory of God is precisely the manifestation as the Kundalini that is the Divine Mother (ch. XX B; also XI E). The *six working days* signify the strive through the first six chakras, while the opening *on the Sabbath day* (the seventh one) refers clearly to the Sahasrara.

The *Zohar* is more specific in describing the crossing of the lateral channels and the central one as “the Pillar of the middle that unites the right and the left and that is symbolized by the knot of the phylacteries²⁷⁶ of the head, an image of the celestial Mother” [665], thus showing that the knot on XIX the head (Agya) reflects also the Goddess (in that case, Virgin Mary, Maha-127 Lakshmi) symbolized by the *Torah* in the tefillin.

Even a long time before that, the center of the world was thought to be *Bab-ilani* (Gate of the Gods; from *bab*, gate and *Ilu*, god, Akkad.; *El*, Aram.), hence the name of Babylon, for it was there that the gods descended to earth [666].

Jesus revealed Himself as the Master of the Agya chakra: “I am the door; if any one enter in by me, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). He will be saved because he will be able to reach the end of the spiritual ascent, the Sahasrara

²⁷⁶ Ch. XV D.

(Kingdom of Heavens, synthesis of all chakras, where the individual Spirit joins the Universal Spirit—God). There is no other gate allowing the entering into the Kingdom than the Agya chakra controlled by Jesus: “No one comes to the Father unless by me” (John 14:6). This idea was adapted in a *hadith* like this: “No man will meet God who has not first met the Prophet” [667].

The Hindu equivalent of Jesus is *Maha-Ganesha*, “the Great Ganesha who is the gateway for seekers into the world’s most ancient faith. He is the inner authority, the guardian, the one who grants access to the spiritual mysteries of the Sanatana²⁷⁷ Dharma” [668].

The *Zohar* tells us that Rabbi Simeon “turning to Rabbi Eleazar, his son, said: «... See now, in the lower Paradise there is a secret and unknown spot, brodered with many colors, in which a thousand palaces of longing are concealed. No one may enter it, except the Messiah, whose abode is in Paradise»” [669]. However, the lower (terrestrial) Eden is the Sahasrara whose name means “the lotus with *one thousand* petals” (Sanskrit) and that one is hidden (subtle). It is only the Messiah (Jesus) governing over the gate of the Agya chakra who allows the entrance to the Sahasrara, which He also rules as Kalki.

There is also an *ágraphon* (literally: unwritten; Gr.; oral preaching/saying ascribed to Jesus, however not found in the *Bible*), which compared this world with a bridge (ch. XXIII B).

The difficult passage is often mentioned in the mystical traditions of the East, too [670]. The *Upanishads* mention “a sharpened edge of a razor, hard to traverse, a difficult path is this” [671]. The *Mahabharata* [672] read: “The gate of heaven is very small and narrow. It cannot be seen by those without any sense and blinded by the vain illusions of this world. Even those who can see well, who see the way and want to enter, will find the door locked and hard to open. Its heavy bolts are pride, lust, greed and debauchery.” We remember what Jesus said: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation” (Luke 17:20). Schmemann wrote: “For the first Christians the all-encompassing joy, the truly startling novelty of their faith lay in the fact that the kingdom was *at hand*. It *had appeared*, and although it remained hidden and unseen... , it was already present, its light had already shone, it was already at work in the world” [673]. According to the ancient Persian mythology, on the Last Judgment the souls are compelled to cross a long keen knife blade crossing the abyss of damnation which will swallow the sinners souls [674]. The Mazdaeans recognized the Bridge of the Requirer, or the Chinvat Bridge over which Daena guides the soul over to Paradise. The Irish Celts mentioned the Palace (House) of Mac Óc also called Oengus (son of the supreme god Dagda/Dagdé, i.e. the equivalent of Jesus)—a tumulus

²⁷⁷ Eternal (Sanskrit).

representing the place for penetrating “the other world” (transcendent Kingdom), the paradisiacal one [675]. The *Qur’an* depicts the narrow path leading to the Kingdom of the heavens (Sahasrara; ch. II) as “the path of those whom Thou hast blessed” (1.6) that is called *as-sirat al-mustaqim*, which signified originally (for instance in the opening surah, *al-Fatihah*, 1.5; cf. 2.136) “the straight path” [676], and also the “even (right) way.” A *hadith* depicts the *pul-sirat* as a bridge “sharper than a sword and thinner than a hair” [677] which people must cross over on the Resurrection Day (Self Realization) in order to reach the Kingdom of *Allah Subhan-U-Talla’a* (God Almighty, Arab.). Those who fail will fall into the hell (ego and superego can lead to hell), that fully explain the prayer in the *Qur’an* (66.8): “Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us (and do not put it off till we cross over the Sirat)” [678].

The difficult passage allowing the achievement of the ultimate goal appears also in many fairy tales as well as major writings (ch. XIX B) such as the medieval Arthurian novels. In *Lancelot or The Knight with the Cart* by Chrétien de Troyes, the hero in his *quest* have to cross over the sword bridge with its sharp edge dominating the devil’s river.

In the Neolithic era, the goddess was conceived as the door or gateway to a hidden dimension of being. Also in Taoism, the Feminine Principle was depicted as “gate” (ch. XX A), and a similar concept was found in Islam tradition, where Abraham called Isma’il’s wife: “the threshold of the gate” (ch. XX D). Likewise, a Marian hymn of the Eastern Church would read: “Let us hymn the Glory of the universe, ... Gate of heaven, the Virgin Mary” [679], which means the acknowledgement of Mary as the Shakti of Jesus, both presiding over “the gate” of the *Agya chakra*. Schuon openly acknowledges the fact: “Next to the adult Jesus, ... Mary is ... his feminine prolongation, the *shakti*: she is, then, ... the virginal ... complement of the masculine” [680]. The double invocation *Jesu Maria*, which is in use among Christians, has precisely that meaning (ch. XV D). To tell the truth, *Jesu Maria* is an excellent mantra for the opening of the *Agya chakra*.

Jesus announced the opening of the Sahasrara (Kingdom) as the next stage of the evolution: “Indeed, the kingdom of God is come upon you²⁷⁸” (Matthew 12:28). “For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you²⁷⁹” (Luke 17:21). “The time is fulfilled²⁸⁰ and the kingdom of God has drawn nigh” (Mark 1:15). “The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh” (Matthew

²⁷⁸ *Éphthasen eph’ humas* (Gr.).

²⁷⁹ *Entòs hymón estín* (Gr.).

²⁸⁰ *Peplérotai*, come to an end (Gr.).

3:2; cf. 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9,11). *Nigh* was wrongly interpreted in temporal co-ordinates since it obviously indicates the proximity of the Agya and Sahasrara within the subtle space: “Know that it is near, at the doors” (Mark 13:29), *the doors* pointing to the Agya chakra. That misconception has made Peter asking: “Where is the promise of his coming? for from the time the fathers fell asleep all things remain thus from [the] beginning of [the] creation” (2 Peter 3:4). Clement of Rome echoed Peter: “These things we have heard even in the times of our fathers; but, behold, we have grown old, and none of them has happened to us” [681]. Paul had an opposing opinion: “Now we beg you, brethren... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled... by word,... as that the day of the Lord is present” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2) However, obviously, neither of them (ch. XX C2) have ever reached the kingdom of God (Sahasrara).

Christ uncovers His role as the aeon of the next coming age that God ascribed to Him: “I must announce the glad tidings of the kingdom of God... for this I have been sent forth” (Luke 4:43; cf. Matthew 4:23; 9:35). “And this glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness in all the nations, and then shall come the end” (Matthew 24:14). Therefore, the temporal cycle (ch. XIX A) will come to an end when the teaching about Self Realization will become general, thus designating the beginning of a new era (ch. XIX D). A Gnostic text read: “The Son of Man is within you. Follow after him! Those who seek him will find him. Go then and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom” [682].

The sayings of Jesus announcing that God endowed Him with a *seal* (on the center of the forehead; ch. XV C) disclosed His dominion over the Agya chakra placed there that was therefore granted to Him: “Work... life eternal, which the Son of man shall give to you; for him has the Father sealed, [even] God” (John 6:27).

Now, let us stop for a moment at the image of the “divine eye” situated according to the Christian iconography in the center of a triangle. We should notice that the physical eyes build up—together with the apex of the Sahasrara on the top—a triangle pointing upwards exactly as the mentioned Christian symbol, and in the forehead center there is the “third eye” (of Shiva, the supreme divinity of the Hindu trinity) consisting of the Agya chakra, which is placed in the same way as the divine eye in the triangle center.

At the same time with the announcement of the sacrifice of Himself, Christ told to His disciples about the opening of the Primordial Agya portrayed as an abode in the house of the Supreme Being, the Virata: “In my Father’s house there are many abodes... I go to prepare you a place... And ye know where I go, and ye know the way... I am the way, and the truth, and the

life. No one comes to the Father unless by me” (John 14:2-4,6). Indeed, *the way* to the Kingdom of the Sahasrara compulsory crosses the Agya, the narrow gate controlled by Jesus. The Savior triumphant entering into Jerusalem is but a metaphor depicting the transcending of the Agya chakra and the access in the Heavenly Jerusalem (Sahasrara) as Kalki, the Lord of this last chakra. Of all the apostles, it was only Thomas who questioned (14:5): “How can we know the way?” We shall see (ch. XX C4 and XXIII B) that this disciple was a great initiate, as John otherwise, who was the only author of a gospel where this saying of Thomas was written down. The “way of truth and life” (i.e. Self Realization) thus indicated by the Divinity leads indeed to immortality as written in the Psalms: “For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol... Thou wilt make known to me the path of life” (16:10,11). Sheol, the house of the dead (*preta loka*, Sanskr.) is the state of creation destined to the spirits of the deceased waiting for the moment of the next reincarnation (ch. XXIV). The words “the ancient path” (*orah olam*; it means also “eternal path,” Hebr.) mentioned in Job (22:15) were understood in a negative sense: “Dost thou mark the ancient path which wicked men have trodden, who were carried off before the time... ?” However, the Gaon Saadia, a theologian and philosopher of the 10th century saw in this syntagma “the way for eternity,” such as the text became in his interpretation: “Would you, too, acknowledge the accuracy of the concepts of people advocating the world eternity, who disappeared before their time came... ?” [683].

The topic of *The Way* (Sushumna) appears often both in the Old and New Testament.

John the Baptist is announced in a prophecy as the forerunner of the Messiah: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1). The quotation appears again in the gospels (Matthew 3:3; 11:10; Mark 1:2,3; Luke 1:17,76; 3:4; John 1:23). In fact, there are two difficult passages on the way of the Kundalini: first of all the central channel is interrupted at a lower plane in the Void (manifestation of Prophethood; ch. X) and, secondly it is tightened up at the higher plane of the Agya chakra (ruled by Jesus). This is how we should understand the part played by John who prepared the way for the great work done by Jesus.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: «Prepare ye the way of Yahweh, make straight in the desert a highway for our God»” (Isaiah 40:3). And indeed, as already shown the crossing of the desert is a metaphor for the crossing of the Void (ch. V). If this was the field for the Prophethood, then to the divine Avatar of the Messiah it will be ascribed another place, since the Psalms read: “Cast up a way for him that rideth in the deserts: his name is Yah” (68:4). This one is the divine (Yahweh’s or Yah’s) way to immortality,

“the way that leads to life”—eternal (Matthew 7:14). “Thou wilt make known to me the path of life” (Psalms 16:11). “Prepare ye the way of [the] Lord, make straight his paths” (Matthew 3:1). “I will teach thee in the way of wisdom, I will lead thee in paths of uprightness” (Proverbs 4:11; cf. 4:18).

The gospels refer to the *ways of God* (of the three channels) out of which the Savior will show us the one called the *way of peace* (Sushumna, the channel of the present, balance and inner peace; see *infra*). In the *Song of Zacharias*, John the Baptist was proclaimed: “thou shalt go before the face of [the] Lord to make ready his ways” (Luke 1:76), making Jesus, compared to the “dayspring from on high,... to shine upon them who were sitting in darkness and in [the] shadow of death” (Self Realization granting immortality) “to guide our feet into [the] way of peace” (1:79), because Jesus is the Light, the element of the Agya chakra and at the same time a solar symbol (ch. VII, XIX B). On other occasion (ch. IV) we have seen that this center is related to the Sun and, therefore, to Sunday. The correspondence of weekdays (in the known succession) with the chakras (from bottom to the top) starts on Tuesday (Mooladhara) and ends on Monday (Sahasrara) [684].

The ancient Chinese Christian manuscripts read: “So long as they do not fall to «the Wicked Way», they may forthwith attain «the Way to Heaven»” [685]. De Riencourt shows: “This way and its destination—heaven, salvation of the soul, freedom from rebirth²⁸¹, Nirvana, return to Brahman or whatever—however differently expressed, is that all religions have in common. And it is here, in the direct records of the personal experiences of the great mystics, that the heart of the religious impulses is to be found, rather than in the official dogmas and conflicting intellectual interpretations of philosophers and theologians” [686].

We believe that *aurea mediocritas* (Lat.) mentioned by Horace in his *Odes* as “the golden mean” [687] was the *median way*, of moderation, balance and complete Self Realization.

In their turn, the Hesychasts (ch. XXV A) refer in their terms to “the Royal Way” [688]. As concerns Islam, the esoteric (Sufi, ch. XXV B) spiritual Path (*al-ihsan*, literally: virtue, Arab.) should be revealed by authorised (initiated) persons. As early as the opening surah of the *Qur'an*, God is prayed: “Guide us in the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed” (1.5-6). “When the two angels meet together, sitting one on the right, and one on the left, not a word he utters” (50.16-17). That sentence is depicting the crossing in Agya chakra of the side channels controlled by Archangels Gabriel-Hanuman and Michael-Bhairava (ch. IV); beyond this point, all thoughts are completely silenced as it is explained below.

²⁸¹ Ch. XXIV.

*Nirdvandha*²⁸² (Sansk.), the liberation from opposites (side channels and their endings: ego and superego), implicitly indicates the midway (Sushumna nadi) of non-duality.

When referring to “him who is beyond the intelligence” [689], the *Bhagavad-Gita* had in view the exceeding of the Agya chakra that controls mental processes.

The *Upanishads* wrote: “The thoughts are the only cause of the cycle of birth and death; man, therefore, should endeavour to purify his thoughts. A man is what he thinks: this is the ancient secret” [690]. The same idea was expressed by the Buddha Gautama in the first line of the *Dhammapada*: “All that we are is the result of what we have thought, is based on our thoughts, and made out of our thoughts.” That is why the Yogis seek at getting into the *thoughtless awareness*, the real state of meditation enabling the union.

Patanjali’s classical Yoga treatise explains from its inception pertaining to the Samadhi state (Book I entitled *The Samadhi Pada*): “Yoga is the suppressing of the thought-streams (literally: waves of the mind)²⁸³. Then the Seer (Purusha, Self) stands (abides) in its own nature (form)²⁸⁴” [691].

According to Christian dogma, Jesus is equated to Wisdom, which means on the one hand acknowledging that wisdom is a quality of the Divine Child (see *supra*), and on the other hand that Christ has control on the mental processes. “He is the Intellect in us as well as the Intellect in the Universe”—wrote Schuon [692], the sentence depicting Him as both the ruler of the human and Universal (Virata’s) Agya chakra (Adi Agya chakra).

As soon as in the Yoga state the Kundalini energy goes beyond the Agya chakra—that is the two hemispheres that generate both the thoughts coming out of the past (superego) or being projected toward the future (ego)—the assault of the thoughts stops and the thoughtless awareness (*nirvichara samadhi*, Sanskr.) is installed. Schuon asserted: “If Christ shall come to «judge of living and dead²⁸⁵», that is again a matter of Intellect” [693]. In our understanding, the meaning of the sentence is that by opening the Agya chakra controlling the intellect, Jesus actually helped us to go beyond the ego (the *living*, i.e. the end of “action” channel) and the superego (the *dead*, i.e. the end of the left channel, of the dead/past things).

Dr. Bernie Siegel explained that the most profound states of consciousness

²⁸² *Dvandha* (couple of opposites, Sanskr.).

²⁸³ *Yogas chitta-vritti-nirodhah* (Sansk.).

²⁸⁴ *Tada drastuh svarupe vasthanam* (Sansk.).

²⁸⁵ Acts 10:42.

could be reached only through elimination of the external stimuli and cessation of the mental activity [694]. Jung criticised the individuals who aimed at obtaining the spiritual elevation by putting emphasis on the mental activity, when he labelled it as an “absurd supposition that the intellect, which is but a part and a function of the psyche, is sufficient to comprehend the much greater whole” [695].

Even Jesus urged on stopping the thoughts: “Therefore I say unto you: Take no thought” (Matthew 6:25; Luke 12:22)—according to *King James Version*. That idea probably originated in a collection of *Oracles*²⁸⁶ in Graves’ and Podro’s opinion [696]. It appeared also in a *Midrash* on Samuel’s [697]: “Take no thought for the height of his stature” (i.e. Samuel great height—1 Samuel 9:2).

The Nirvichara Samadhi ensures inner peace, perfect balance, bliss (*ananda*, Sanskr.) and then we live in the present, beyond time (see *supra*). Jesus advised His disciples to achieve inner peace, when saying repeatedly (John 20:19,21,26): “Peace [be] to you²⁸⁷!” “And having said this, he breathed into [them], and says to them: «Receive [the] Holy Spirit»” (20:22). When Jesus heralded the sending of a new Avatar (the Comforter, i.e. the manifestation of the Holy Spirit; ch. XIX D and XXI), He said to His disciples: “I leave peace with you; I give my peace to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it fear” (14:27). The New Testament read about “the peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). We are on a safe ground stating that the sayings of the Savior refer to the Self Realization. Likewise, in the Eastern Church liturgy (and in an early eucharistic canon of about AD 225 [698]) when the priest says: “Peace be with thou,” he gets the answer “And with thy spirit,” which shows that it refers to the inner peace, of the spirit.

The uttering (or writing) of Muhammad’s name is always followed by the words: “may peace of God be upon him²⁸⁸” having the same meaning. Actually, the greeting encountered in Islam *as-salamu ‘alaykum* (peace be with you, Arab.) equating *pax vobiscum* is of frequent usage and refers to the inner peace, the peace of mind (*nirvichara*, Sanskr.).

On many occasions, “the balloons” of ego and superego are compared with two *mountains* that constitute in fact the last and difficult obstacle

²⁸⁶ Ch. XX C1.

²⁸⁷ *Pax vobiscum* (Lat.). This urge became frequent when Jesus met the apostles after His Resurrection.

²⁸⁸ *Sala ‘llahu alayhim ua salama* (Arab.).

impeding the rise of the Kundalini up to the Sahasrara. That is why Jesus says: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard [seed], ye shall say to this mountain: «Be transported hence there», and it shall transport itself; and nothing shall be impossible to you” (Matthew 17:20; cf. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6), hence the saying: “Faith removes the mountains.” Zion is both the name of David’s city (2 Samuel 5:7) and of the southwestern hills and symbolizes the Messianic hope of the Jews: the Land of Promise, the New Jerusalem, therefore, the Sahasrara. “His foundation is in the mountains of holiness” (Psalms 87:1), where the mountains indicate the Agya placed under the Sahasrara. The angel of God asked: “Who art thou, O great mountain...? [thou dost become] a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone” (Zechariah 4:7). The mountain becoming a plain is nothing but the resorption of the ego and superego, while the headstone indicated the Sahasrara (ch. II); the plain is a metaphor for the latter too (ch. IX). “The eternal mountains were scattered, the everlasting hills gave way. His ways are everlasting” (Habakkuk 3:6). The sentence end indicates the Sushumna (Divine Way) whose crossing induces the giving way of the mountains (hills) of ego and superego.

Suzuki wrote: “The basic idea in Buddhism is to surpass the world of the contraries, a world based upon the differences achieved by the mind and emotional states” [699].

Pairs of mountains repeatedly run from the mythology in order to obstruct XIX the *quest* (ch. IV) performed by the hero. We can exemplify with the *Scylla* - 128 and *Charybdis* cliffs of the Messina strait that hinder the navigation, the Gibraltar (*Pillars of Hercules*), and the narrow channel between two rocks challenging the ship *Argo* in its initiatory trip (ch. V), after which the hero have to go through a well-defended *gate*. The syntagma met with the Romanian legends and fairy tales: “there, where the mountains fight with their heads” refers, too, to the Agya chakra. Indeed, the two upper endings (heads) of the side channels are located in the head and have *opposite* (past-future) positions hence their fight.

The *Qur’an* names this obstruction to enlightenment: *barzakh* (23.102; 25.55) signifying “isthmus” or “barrier” (between Hell and Paradise). “Allah who made the earth²⁸⁹ a fixed place and set amidst it rivers and appointed for it firm mountains and placed a partition²⁹⁰ between the two seas” (27.62). This points certainly to the Agya chakra because the place is designated as the crossing of two waters (*nadi*, river, channel, Sanskr.): “He let forth the two seas that meet together, between them a barrier they do not overpass”

²⁸⁹ The Land of Promise, the Paradise of the Sahasrara.

²⁹⁰ *Hajjiz* (Arab.).

(55.19-20). The *Qur'an* also connected the Resurrection to “the day when... the mountains are in motion” (52.9-10; cf. 81.3), “when the mountains shall be scattered” (77.10; cf. 20.105). The holy pilgrimage (ch. XV F) takes place *seven times* between the As-Safa and Al-Marwah hills at Mecca: “Safa and Marwah are among the waymarks of God; so whosoever makes the Pilgrimage to the House, or the Visitation, it is no fault in him to circumambulate them” (2.153). This ritual of Islam signifies the surpassing of the ego and superego. Last but not least, the Scandinavian god Odhinn (*Wotan*, *Wodan* or *Wodanaz*, a name coming from the Germanic *Woda*—meaning, as a substratum, *spirit* [699]; one can notice the identity with the Slavic *voda*, water; here: the living water; ch. XI D) was familiar with songs (we would say: mantras) making the mountains step away [700].

It was already explained (ch. XV C) that prostrating oneself by putting the forehead on the earth (*namaskara*, Sanskr.) signifies the resorption of the ego and superego thus facilitating the Kundalini to cross the Agya chakra and to induce the “dissolution of all thoughts²⁹¹ into the Principle-of-All” [701].

Let us now consider the oneself crossing when it is connected the center of the forehead (Agya)—governed by Jesus (incarnated Divine Son, Maha-Vishnu, or Maha-Ganesha—with the lower part of the spinal cord (Mooladhara) also controlled by the Divine Son, but not incarnated, i.e. Ganesha. This gesture symbolize the flow of the Kundalini energy through her specific channel (Sushumna nadi), corresponding to the parasympathetic nervous system along the spinal cord. The final part of the gesture connects the left and the right channels on the level of the Anahatha chakra (in Eastern Christianity, the gesture ends at the heart which is the seat of Atman, the Spirit). The balance between the energies of the lateral channels allows for the Kundalini to flow easily through the central channel. This effect can also be obtained by joining the hands together, a gesture frequently used by Christians during their prayers (ch. XV C). Previously (Age of Gemini), we have shown that the side aspects of the Anahatha chakra reflect the perfect (divine) qualities of the mother, wife, and daughter on the left, and of the father, husband, and son on the right. With an astonishing intuition, Schuon inferred: “the horizontal line (of the cross) will denote the realitonship of Husband and Spouse” [702].

The custom of crossing oneself is ancient. According to Tertullian [703], the first Christians were making this gesture: “At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign.” They also used to make the sign of the cross over the food, as well as

²⁹¹ *Nirvichara Samadhi*.

over their animals [704]. It was obviously a gesture granting protection.

Protection is a common practice of the Sahaja Yogis, which is used in similar situations. The gesture is called *bandhan* (see also ch. XV E and F) and is preceded by the movement of the hand rising along the spinal cord, with the purpose of the Kundalini awakening. Then, the body is put under a bandhan starting from the left side to the right and backwards; on doing this the body is surrounded by an *aura* of beneficial vibrations. Finally, the Yogis balance the side channels by joining their hands (*namaste*, ch. XV E) just as Christians do when praying.

The Sahaja Yogis give themselves a bandhan of protection right after getting up, before going to sleep, before leaving the house or after coming back home. They also give a bandhan over the water bowl used for foot soaking which is used for cleansing the lower chakras (ch. XV C). They always give a bandhan to any food they are going to eat, in order to bring the vibrations of the food into harmony with their own subtle vibrations (ch. XV D, XV E).

As it has been shown, each chakra has its specific element (ch. XV C): the Earth (Mooladhara), the Fire (Swadhisthana), the Water (Nabhi), the Air (Anahatha), the Ether (Vishuddhi), the Light (Agya), the vibrations of the Paramchaitanya (Sahasrara). The opening of the Agya chakra (the third eye, *trilochana*, Sanskr.) signifies the access to the spiritual (subtle) Light in the same way that the physical eye perceives the visible light: “The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be light; but if thine eye be wicked, thy whole body will be dark” (Matthew 6:22-23; Luke 11:34).

When the Agya chakra is caught (blocked) the spiritual light ceases its manifestation within our subtle body. This happens for instance when we have adulterous eyes, a fact condemned by Jesus: “Every one who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). The penalty is severe: “If thy right eye be a snare to thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee... And if thy right hand be a snare to thee, cut it off and cast it from thee” (5:29,30; cf. 18:8,9; Mark 9:43,45,47). If those who are called themselves Christians would indeed follow Christ’s command, we ought to see around us enough one-eyed or one-armed individuals. The permissiveness of the so-called Christian society as regards the adultery, actually an *anti-Christ* attitude has reached presently a critical point as is was in the shameful “Sexgate” case involving Bill Clinton, the president of the most powerful state in the contemporary world. The public divulgence of the nauseating details of the case not only left unpunished the actors of the drama but on the contrary, augmented the popularity of the adulterous president. Any other comment is superfluous.

We will close the analysis devoted to the divine incarnation of Jesus by reminding His so often repeated urge to love our fellow man: “A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another” (John 13:34). The commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 19:19; cf. 22:39; Leviticus 19:18) comes in the second place after “the love of the Lord, thy God.” “On these two commandments the whole Law²⁹² and the Prophets²⁹³ hang” (Matthew 22:40; Mark 12:29-31; cf. Luke 10:27). Indeed, that was a new commandment since until Jesus people observed only the *lex talionis*, quoted by Him: “Eye for eye and tooth for tooth” (Matthew 5:38). No matter that Leviticus read: “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart” (19:17); “Thou shalt not avenge thyself, not bear any grudge... but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (19:18). The approach of Jesus is revelatory the more so as in His time the Sadducaic House of Boetus advocated the enforcement of *lex talionis* [705]. Love constitutes an imperative requirement for getting eternal life: “He who does not love [his] brother abides in death. Every one that hates his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:14-15). To love our fellow man does not mean the mundane attachment but to love the essence, the divine Self within everyone. The *new message* of Jesus is the one of *love*, *compassion* and *forgiveness*. As Ephraim the Syrian has shown, “The world is built upon mercy” (*Mundus per gratiam aedificabitur*, Lat.) [706].

Indeed, Christ has manifested repeatedly His compassion and love. “He saw a great crowd, and was moved with compassion about them, and healed their infirm” (Matthew 14:14; cf. Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13). “Having called his disciples to [him], he says to them: «I have compassion on the crowd»” (Mark 8:2; cf. 6:34; Matthew 15:32; 18:33; Luke 10:33). “Jesus, knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end” (John 13:1).

Christ insisted on forgiving everyone, even our enemy (Matthew 5:39,44; 6:14-15; 22:39; Luke 6:27-29,35; Exodus 23:4, Proverbs 24:17; 25:21), an urge expressed synthetically in the prayer Christ has given to the humankind, *Our Father*: “and forgive our debts, as we also forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12-13); “and remit us our sins, for we also remit to every one indebted to us” (Luke 11:4). That is why *Lord’s Prayer* is a very powerful mantra to open the Agya chakra. A notable fact is that the prayer given by Jesus is mostly alike with an ancient Judean prayer, *Shemone esrei* [707], which must be

²⁹² The *Torah* (*Pentateuch*).

²⁹³ *Neviim*: The Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos etc.

recited while keeping the head bend down. The same position is recommended for cleansing the Agya in order to enable the surrendering (resorption) of the ego. The Savior asked His heavenly Father to forgive even those who crucified Him: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do²⁹⁴” (Luke 23:34). Likewise did Saint Stephen for those who tortured him (Paul included) saying: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60). When Peter who was so often vindictive (ch. XX C2a) asked: “«Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?», Jesus says to him: «I say not to thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven»” (Matthew 18:21-22). “And if he should sin against thee seven times in the day... thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:4). Similar urges can be found in the Buddhist manuscript on Jesus seen by Notovitch (ch. XIII A): “As regards the laws of Moses, I have endeavoured to re-establish them in the hearts of men; and I say unto you that ye ignore their true meaning, for it is not vengeance but pardon which they teach. Their sense has been perverted” [708]. An almost identical text appears in the Tibetan writings studied by Roerich: “I tried to revive the laws of Moses in the hearts of the people. And I say unto you that you do not understand their true meaning because they do not teach revenge but forgiveness. But the meaning of these laws is distorted” [709]. Therefore, forgiveness and compassion do not mean violation of the laws but on the contrary their observance, because Christ came to restore the Law. Once again one notices that the texts refer to establishing the Law within people’s beings, “in the hearts of men” (Dharma) and not at the exterior aspects of the Law as conceived by the so-called religions.

Indian texts urge: “*Atmabat sarva bhuteshu*” (Love your fellow man as yourself, Sanskr.) [710], while the *Mahabharata* wrote: “Treat the others in the way you would like the others to treat you. Do not do anything to your neighbor that you would not like him to do.” The *Panchatantra* reads: “Man should not do to others what is evil to himself” [711]. “The one who is good to the evildoers is called a good man by the virtuous” [712]. The *Laws of Manu* advise: “Let him not become anybody’s enemy... Against an angry man let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed” [713].

Muhammad was the messenger of *forgiveness* too. The instances are multiple especially over the period that was crucial for his mundane mission: conquering the holy city of Mecca. When he went at Taif near Mecca to preach the word of God, the contestants threw stones at him chasing him away from the village and wounding him. When the angels asked the Prophet if he wanted that village crushed, he answered: “O Allah! To thee I complain of my puny strength and the failure of my zeal with regard to these men. O Thou most compassionate and merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak and

²⁹⁴ *Aba, sheboh 'lehon etehom hokhemin ma'abedin* (Aram.).

Thou art my Lord. I have none but Thee on whom to lean, but if Thou be not angry with me because I am powerless to ensure love and respect for Thy word I care nothing for all the ordeals I undergo.” Saying this he forgave them. After the battle of Badar, Abu Bakr requested that the Meccan prisoners should be set free in exchange of a ransom paid by them. ‘Umar on the other hand, requested that they should be mercilessly executed. Muhammad was on the side of Abu Bakr, treating the prisoners with kindness, even requesting his disciples to be content with dried dates and give up their bread in favor of the captives. The Prophet went so far as refusing the rich ransom offered for Abul As ibn Rabiya who was immediately set free, and forgave even Hibar, the killer of Muhammad’s own daughter, Zaynab, who died after being hit by the aggressor. When entering in triumph in Mecca, the commander in chief Sa’ad ibn Ubayda exclaimed: “Today is a day of revenge and carnage allowable even in the holy precincts.” Hearing these words, the Prophet told ‘Ali to deprive Sa’ad of the command and take charge of it in his place. In the Ka’ba, instead of taking slaves according to the custom, Muhammad put the Meccans of the Quraysh tribe free. The Prophet forgave both Wahshi, the killer of his uncle Hamza, and the ferocious Hind who mutilated the corpse of Hamza [714].

The absence of forgiveness induces the closing of the Agya chakra that is ruled by Jesus, the Avatar of forgiveness. Christ gave the following advise to His disciples: “When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have anything against any one” (Mark 11:25). An ancient Chinese Christian manuscript wrote: “When you pray, you must, first of all, forgive other men’s transgressions against you. And then, if you turn toward God and pray for the forgiveness of sins you have yourself committed, you may also be forgiven” [715]. In order to achieve the enlightenment of the Agya chakra, Sahaja Yoga advocates the forgiveness of all the people including ourselves and our thoughts because, as it has been explained, the Agya controls the mental processes, the generating of the thoughts that have to be stopped otherwise the first compulsory step in Yoga, the Nirvichara Samadhi state cannot be acquired. A strong mantra for the Agya is particularly the prayer *Our Father*. “For if ye forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father also will forgive you [yours]” (Matthew 6:14; Mark 11:25). “But if ye do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive your offences” (Matthew 6:15; Mark 11:26).

D. THE PROPHECIES ANNOUNCE A NEW AVATAR

“Ye search the Scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have life eternal, and they it is which bear witness concerning me”

John 5:39

“All things are possible with God”

Mark 10:27

XIX **The Aquarian Age** (after c. AD 2000) starts at the dawn of Satya - 129 (Krita²⁹⁵) Yuga.

If Pisces is a sign of water, Aquarius is much more so. Considering the last ages of the cycle, the transition from the zodiacal names of mammals to those of aquatic beings can be interpreted as the tendency of reaching the origin of a new cycle reminding the Primordial Waters.

We remember that Jesus is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, the letters that open and close the Greek alphabet. After the end of the Age of Pisces which stood under the sign of this great incarnation of Vishnu (*Maha-Vishnu*, Sanskr.), the Divinity manifests Itself again as Kalki, the tenth and last Avatar of the Evolution Principle, thereby being the aeon where the Aquarian Age is placed.

“The *Bible* speaks of the Second Coming of Christ, of a millennium²⁹⁶ of peace that comes when Jesus returns anew and all of us join together universally. The time is at hand. Christ is coming but not physically, spiritually. The *Bible* spoke in many metaphors. The Spirit of Christ is what comes now in our souls, in our awakened spirituality. The cosmic inner Christ is coming. It is time to realize that we are all the «children of God», and that the «Son of God» came to show us the way to unite with that divine universal spirit” [716].

The beginning of the Age of Aquarius was estimated by various calculations around the year 2000.

In the 5th century BC, the Buddha Gautama announced Maitreya’s advent after 2500 years that is to the end of the age of Pisces (cf. ch. XIX B). “From the *Diamond Sutra* [717] we learn that Gautama the Buddha claimed that after each twenty-five centuries there comes a radical change of

²⁹⁵ Enlightened souls revealed that Krita Yuga should be a transitory short interval between Kali and Satya Yuga.

²⁹⁶ Actually these “thousand years” were mentioned four times in four successive verses in Revelation (20:4-7).

consciousness on Earth with an accompanying period of intense chaos. Buddha moves the wheel of Dharma once every two thousand five hundred XIX years and it takes that length of time for the momentum to fade. The wheel - 130 that Buddha moved has finally come to rest and his Age dies. The wheel must then be started again for the Dhamma²⁹⁷ must be renewed... Buddha in his time said that at the next turning of the wheel, which is in our present epoch, humankind would enter a totally different stage in the transformation of man. Subhuti, his disciple, actually asked about age and Buddha answered and said he could see us with his precognitive senses, his Buddha eye, and that our transformation would be even greater than it was at his time” [718].

The Buddha Gautama made an interesting prophecy about the Buddha XIX Maitreya: “He (or She; our comment) will be the leader of a band of disciples - 132 numbering hundreds of thousands, as I am now the leader of bands of disciples numbering hundreds” [719]. Roerich signals a contemporary Buddhist prophecy on Maitreya: “All his assistants and officers are already incarnating” [720]. On other occurrence (ch. X) we have mentioned the ancient myth of the *Chalice of the Buddha*. That is also linked to the Tibetan prophecies concerning Maitreya and the Shambala, such as one reported by Roerich: “From the West, from the mountains, shall come My people... Beseech the Tara to rest with you. Resolve to cleanse your hearts until My Coming... Where My chalice is—there is your salvation. Upon the mountain, fires are kindled. The New Year is coming. Whoever shall out-slumber it shall not again awaken... Dukkar, the many-eyed and many-armed, sends us pure thoughts” [721]. However, west of Tibet there is India; *Tara*²⁹⁸ is the Goddess (here: the Compassionate, i.e. the Mother) as well as her other aspect, *the many-armed Dukkar*²⁹⁹ who sends us *pure* (nirmal, Sanskr.) *thoughts* (spiritual vibrations, divine love), the *chalice* is the symbol of Self Realization (Salvation), the *fire kindled upon the mountain* (Sahasrara) is the Kundalini, which have to be *awakened* from its *slumber*.

According to William Huarta who studied many years the natives in the jungles of Peru, the Quechua Incan prophecies predicted that the white man’s coming would bring 500 years of materialism and imbalance. But now they say that era is coming to an end and the Age of Aquarius will “signal the return of Light to the planet and the dawn of a golden era. We live in a time of the fulfillment of prophecy” [722]. The Supreme Maya Council wrote ancient Maya prophecies in 1475 before the arrival of the conquistadors.

²⁹⁷ Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *Dharma*.

²⁹⁸ Ch. XX A.

²⁹⁹ A name reminding of the many-armed goddess *Durga*.

They say that a time of darkness was near at hand and two K'altun (each of these cycles is supposed to last 250 years) had to pass before Hunab K'u (God, Mayan) would flash like lightning and pierce through the shadows that envelope the human race. Then we would begin to remember the ancient knowledge of the universe. That flood of knowledge would bring the rebirth of humankind's spirituality and a unification of the people of the Earth in an age of peace [723].

Paul Roland reports that "according to the Native American tradition, the world is nearing the end of an age whose trials and tribulations were foretold long ago." Thomas Yellowtail explains: "Some of the prophecies talk only about the end of time, others speak about the break-up of the modern world... and a return to the traditional ways of our ancestors... each one of us must choose at this present moment which path to follow" [724].

Other forecasts emerged ever since the beginning of the twentieth century. It was in 1901 when it appeared the book of the American physician Richard Bucke: *Cosmic Consciousness*. His fellow American, the psychologist William James had defined religion to be not a dogma but an experience, a discovery of some new connections and of the invisible order that the individual could resonate with. Levi Dowling's *Aquarian Gospel* (see below) that appeared in 1911 merely stressed the convictions about the imminent revolution and renewal of the spiritual concepts.

Bruno Würtz wrote: "The traditional assertion of the old and new eschatology is that Judeo-Christian tradition relying on the biblical chronology, Iranian tradition, memory of the Native American pictograms and *quipus*, Aztec and Maya calendar, all point at the present time as the end of the era, aeon, world" [725].

Mircea Eliade noted that under the influence of the Babylonians, Plato in his *Politicus (Statesman)* [726] "assumed that the periodical cataclysms were caused by planetary revolutions" [727]. Plato seems also to have been familiar with the Iranian concept according to which the purpose of these catastrophes is the purification of the human race [728]. "According to the *Timaeus*, partial catastrophes are caused by planetary deviations [729], while the moment of the meeting of all the planets is that of «perfect time» [730], that is of the end of the Great Year" [731]. The mentioned text was quoted in chapter XIX A. J. Bidez, on the other hand, said that "the idea that a conjunction of the planets would cause a universal upset is, of course, of a Chaldean origin" [732].

Starting from the relationship existing between the planets movements and the evolutionary cycle of life on this earth, the first who used their science to get utilitarian conclusions for the benefit of humankind were the astrologers. Therefore, many of them focused their attention in finding out the predicted

time to reach the culmination of the evolution.

In India there are known several great and ancient books on astrology called *Nadigranthas*, such as *Bhrigu Samhita*, *Satya Nadi* etc. More than two thousand years back, the renowned Rishi Bhrigu Muni wrote such a treatise XIX on lotus leaves, which was published under the title *Kak Nadi* in Marathi - 133 language by Sattwacharya Kakayyar Bhujander from Karnataka, a great astrologer and seeker himself. Here it is an excerpt by Shantaran Athvale from that *Nadigrantha*:

“While Jupiter is in Pisces³⁰⁰ a great Yogi will incarnate on the Earth. By 1970 it will have become quite evident to many people that a new era will have started. Kali Yuga will end and Krita Yuga will start. The axis of the Earth will depress and the Earth’s orbit will come closer and closer to the Sun. Human life will undergo a complete revolution. A great Yogi will incarnate at this time... Until this time a yogi or devotee could achieve the bliss of Moksha and find the ultimate meaning of his life only by following the path of devotion³⁰¹, knowledge³⁰² and Patanjali Yoga. But he would have to go through severe penance in order to awaken the sleeping powers of various chakras of his body and finally enlighten the Kundalini Power. By the new method of Yoga devised by the great Yogi human beings will be able to attain the joy of Moksha within one lifetime. It would no longer be necessary to sacrifice one’s body or to die in order to achieve Moksha. The Brahmananda³⁰³—which so far only great saints had been able to experience and then only by entering into the Samadhi state at the point of death—due to his new type of Yoga could be achieved by ordinary human beings without entering Samadhi state while dying. In the beginning it would be possible for one person in crores to attain this Yoga and Moksha. However, after some time the whole human race with the help of this Yoga will be able to defeat itself... While living ordinary lives people will achieve Yoga—Union with God. There will be no necessity for hospitals as there will be no diseases. In the beginning the great Yogi will be able to heal diseases with a mere touch. Old age with its destruction of the body will not exist, and people will possess heavenly bodies. The world will have to suffer the consequences of a third world war. This world war would end by interference of the Great Yogi. In the end all the nations of the world will come together with the feeling of

³⁰⁰ *Meenarash* (the Pisces constellation, Sanskr.).

³⁰¹ *Bhakti* (devotion, Sanskr.).

³⁰² *Gyana* (knowledge, Sanskr.).

³⁰³ Divine bliss (Sansk.).

oneness. They will agree on the destructiveness of war. There will be a great international conference in a big city of the world... Then the world will recover from the aftermath of war. The whole humanity will understand the importance of prayer and all the nations will unite together. Due to new scientific discoveries, science and religions would become one. With the help of the science, the existence of God and the Soul could be proved. The veil of ignorance and Maya would be drawn aside and Brahmananda and Moksha—which could previously only be attained by yogis as a result of a very hard work and severe penance—would become easily available to many human beings. In this new era every person would have his position in the system according to his individual qualities and merit. It will be possible to fulfill people's needs and desires... Without poverty and diseases society will be healthy and carefree" [733].

In their turn, the contemporary astrologers devoted themselves strenuously to the study of this matter.

Alfons Rosenberg placed the beginning of the Aquarian Age in 1950. The astrologer Alain considered that that age started in 1962, and the same did Arnold Graf Keyserling, while according to others this would occur in 1987.

In their *Astrologer's Handbook*, Frances Sakoian and Louis Acker wrote: "Pluto will enter Sagittarius around the year 2000, marking a period of Spiritual regeneration at the beginning of the Aquarian Age. At this time there will be a fundamental understanding of deeper spiritual values among all people. Religions as they are known at present will be completely transformed. There will be one world religion based on man's direct intuitive communion with the One Creator. New spiritual leaders will arise to teach the fundamental laws governing all life in the Universe. The new world religion will combine all the highest expressions of the great religions of the past, with a more comprehensive scientific understanding of the underlying forces of life" [734].

Christian Kursner gave a brief extract about the evolution of the heavy planets towards the end of the second millennium. Pluto, the mightiest of the planets, is the master of Scorpio until the beginning of the year 1995 and afterwards it will enter Sagittarius. It awakens the old demons to exorcise them completely and this cleansing will bring all the mud from the depths to the surface. The energy will serve to purify man, if it is well used; being perverted it will turn against him. Pluto in Scorpio indicates a token of life, death, and rebirth. Then, it will enter Sagittarius, symbol of superior spirit, of metaphysical abstraction, of fundamental seeking. The other three heavy planets will leave one after another Capricornus to enter Aquarius: Saturn in 1991, Uranus in 1996 and Neptune in 1999, indicating the entering of mankind into the Aquarian Age, generating a new awareness, a new spiritual

order. Thus, the dominion of materialism and selfishness will come to an end, leading at the same time towards a new society characterized by benevolence and universal integration. This will mean the abolishing of the old concepts and the vanishing of any physical and spiritual frontiers. But, beware! The entering of Jupiter alongside Uranus into the sign of Aquarius (1996-1997) may mean the outburst of the divine wrath against those that overlook its authority as well as those that disturb the divine order of the world.

We think that now it is useful to stop here for an instant to make a short comment. Jesus as Maha-Vishnu possesses all the eleven destroying powers (*Ekadesha*³⁰⁴ *Rudra*, Sanskr.) of the Supreme One. The calming down of His anger that could lead to the destruction of the Creation could become possible only through the providential intervention of His Mother. This topic was XIX rendered with a great skill in the painting of Rubens in the Brussels Museum, - 134 *Christ wishing to thunder the world*, where the Virgin intercedes for stopping His punitive action [735].

The German physicist Manfred Gregor, described the astrological year 1996 as follows: *Pluto in Sagittarius*: “«False and lying saints»” will be exposed and thrown out at the same time with the discharge of the incompetent leaders. Pluto is governing the energy balance. In 1996 *Uranus* entered Aquarius where it is “at home” therefore here its influence is the strongest. Here it “brings forward an irresistible evidence for liberation³⁰⁵” and “compels at revolutionary transformations³⁰⁶.” On April 7, 1996, *Saturn* entered Aries. In 1996, Pluto, Uranus and Saturn “are in harmony with each other,” that determines “a smooth transition towards a new even more harmonious stage” [736].

Falling back on the interpretations of various astrologers, Würtz draws the conclusion that leaving the mystical era of Pisces in order to enter the luminous Age of Aquarius would mean the end of the dogmatic religions and superstitions. We shall witness the era of Pisces age dualism being exceeded for the holistic monism of the Aquarian age. The Aquarian age means: “pouring the water of the spirit, pouring the spirit... the fusion of micro- and macrocosm, of man and the cosmic energy, the spiritual development.” Entering the Age of Aquarius means entering a new age of spirituality, a unique universal religion, the re-establishment of the man-universe unity that is the union with the Cosmic Self. The new age could mean the Age of Feminine Principle (opposed to the patriarchy until now; ch. XXI), the

³⁰⁴ *Ekadesha* (eleven, Sanskr.).

³⁰⁵ *Moksha* (Self Realization, Sanskr.).

³⁰⁶ Obviously, at the level of spiritual evolution.

Johannine Era (opposed to the Pauline one that dominated the past two millenniums) [737]. Mankind will thus remove Paul's mystifications (ch. XX C2), while returning the gospels their original meaning.

We close this review by reminding the astrological speculation about the second half of the Christian aeon disclosing Pegasus (ch. XIX B) as Aquarius *paranatellon* (he who rises near Aquarius, Gr.) which points at Kalki because of the reference to the mythical horse.

Nostradamus who forecasted a new Avatar being one who will shake down the dogmas of fossilized religious thought [738], also wrote about the end of the cycle, the Doomsday: "*Le temps present avecques le passé/ Sera iugé par grand Iouialiste,/ Le monde tard luy sera lassé,/ Et desloyal par le clergé iuriste*" (The present time together with the past/ Will be judged by the great Joker:/ The world too late will be tired of him,/ And through the clergy oath-taker disloyal, Fr.) [739]. "*Au reuolu du grand nombre septiesme,/ Apparoistra au temps ieux d'Hecatombe,/ Non esloigné du grand eage milliesme,/ Que les entrez sortiront de leur tombe*" (The year of the great seventh number accomplished,/ It will appear at the time of the games of slaughter:/ Not far from the great millennial age,/ When the buried will go out from their tombs, Fr.) [740]. "*Tant attendu ne reuiendra iamais/ Dedans l'Europe, en Asie apparoistra/ Vn de la ligue yssu du grand Hermés,/ Et sur tous Roys des Orients croistra*" (Long awaited he will never return/ In Europe, he will appear in Asia:/ One of the league issued from the great Hermes,/ And he will grow over all the Kings of the East, Fr.) [741]. Obviously the text refers to the birth of the Great Incarnation between the world wars (*at the time of the games of slaughter*) preceding (*not far from*) the next millennium starting in 2001 (*the year of the great seventh number*—the seventh *shemittoth* of the Kabbalah lasting 7,000 years, the closing of the Great Jubilee; ch. XIX A), regarded as the time of Resurrection (*the buried will go out from their tombs*), namely when the opening of the seventh Adi Chakra will be accomplished. The Great Avatar will be born in Asia instead of Europe as expected. The descent from Hermes Trismegistus (Three times great, Lat.; ch. XX A) hinted on the one side at his/hers peerless (i.e. divine) wisdom surpassing in that all the Sages (*Kings*) of the East, and on the other side at the *caduceus*, symbolizing the subtle body and esoteric knowledge (ch. IX).

Teilhard de Chardin believed that the next step in human evolution would be "a psychic-spiritual mutation" to a higher consciousness [742].

Walter Mercado states: "Now is the time for the great awakening when our questions will lead us to true knowledge. It is time to go beyond the simple beliefs in what we have been told and taught to reach our wisdom. It has already begun. The divinity above, by whatever name we call our God,

has set the process in motion. Already, the beings who raise our consciousness, who guide us to the world of tomorrow, walk among us” [743].

Some exegetes have connected the end of the cycle to several prophecies (Isaiah 11:11; Jeremiah 29:14; 30:3; Ezekiel 36:24; 37:21) foretelling the restoration of the Jews to their land of Palestine, an event that took place towards the end of the second millennium when the Israel state was created in 1948.

The famous psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) considered that this age would start in 1997 [744]. He had shown that “the dechristianization of our world, the Luciferian development of science and technology, and the frightful material and moral destruction left behind by the second World War have been compared more than once with the *eschatological* events foretold in the New Testament” [745]. He also appreciated that “we happen to be living at the end of the Christian aeon of Pisces” [746]. He also stressed on the idea that “at the end of the second millennium the outlines of a universal catastrophe became apparent” [747]. Jung reached a deductive but more particularly intuitive conclusion about “the end of our aeon of the Fishes, and... the coming aeon of Aquarius (the Water Bearer), who has a human figure and is next to the sign of the Fishes. This is a *coniunctio oppositorum* composed of two fishes in reverse. The Water Bearer seems to represent the self” [748]. In other words, by transcending the opposition represented by the side channels, humankind would reach the Self Realization over the Age of Aquarius. In the same subtle understanding, that is achieved by crossing of the ego and superego (Agya chakra), which seen from above are placed on the head such as the Yin-Yang symbol (☯) or the two Pisces, as shown before (section: Ages of Pisces).

Frithjof Schuon referred in his turn to “our time of cyclical end” [749].

It is interesting to note that also Constantin Noica had reached conclusions similar to the astrological interpretations, when he stated (in 1978): “I believe that the 21st century will be a return to spirituality.” In agreement with the above predictions, philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, considered the hypothesis “that «only a god³⁰⁷ might save us»,” and added that “we could not but feel and be aware of the convulsion before the end... that we are coming towards the collapse with the year 2000” [750].

The closing—through apocalypse—of Kali Yuga at the end of the 20th century was foretold by Mircea Eliade in a letter to Emile Cioran: “Dear Emile, over the last few weeks I have been thinking of the apocalyptic collapse of our age... Everything connected to this age (Kali Yuga) will suffer an apocalyptic collapse” [751].

³⁰⁷ See below the hypothesis of a new Avatar.

Prophets have proclaimed the great incarnations: for instance Narada who revealed the coming of Krishna (ch. XIX B). In other cases even an Avatar was the one who announced the advent of the next great Avatar, as for Rama heralded by Parashurama. We have seen that the Old Testament abounds in prophecies on Jesus Christ (ch. XVI).

We could ask the capital question whether, in our times, there are any prophets to predict the advent of a new Avatar? Archimandrite André Scrima wrote: "Through Christ, we do not live only between Genesis and Resurrection, we have entered a different qualitative time, between the Descent of the Holy Spirit and Parousia. And, during this interval, other prophecies and prophets may emerge" [752].

In the followings we will try to find out if in His turn Jesus made a prophecy about both the *next age* and the *divine manifestation* that will incarnate then on this earth, as the great incarnations preceding Him have done.

First we would see that, verily, Jesus Himself announced the Aquarian Age in terms as clear as possible: "a man will meet you, carrying an earthen pitcher of water³⁰⁸; follow him into the house where he goes in³⁰⁹" (Luke 22:10; Mark 14:13). These words were uttered before the Savior parted from His disciples at the Last Supper, which is obviously the symbol for the ensuing *unio mystica*. Jesus, while "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has *poured out* this which ye behold and hear" (Acts 2:33; emphasis added). However, the Old Testament too offers hints about the Water-Carrier, for instance: "I will *pour*... the spirit... " (Zechariah 12:10, emphasis added; cf. Ezekiel 39:29). "I will *pour out* my spirit upon all flesh... " (Joel 2:28 cf. 2:29; Acts 2:17; emphasis added). "I will *pour water*..." (Isaiah 44:3; emphasis added). We will give other details in the followings. Also the *Talmud* read: "The Holy One, blessed be he, said: «*Pour water* before me on the Feast»" (emphasis added) [753]. Indeed, the (living) water or the Spirit of God is precisely the Kundalini energy (ch. XI C and XI D). J. Carmignac studied the Dead Sea scrolls and identified "the teacher of righteousness" (faith) with "the one who pours the rain of righteousness" (faith). Some authors are known to have considered Jesus as being none other than the "Teacher of Righteousness." Surprisingly enough is the connection

³⁰⁸ Jesus refers to the *living water* (ch. XI D) and advises *to follow* the person who will bestow this benefaction.

³⁰⁹ *The house where he goes in* designates the Sahasrara ruled by this Avatar; also, perhaps even the associated *zodiacal mansion*, that of the Aquarius.

made by Cardinal Jean Daniélou, writing with a “*Nihil Obstat*” from the Vatican: “Christ must have celebrated the last supper on the eve of Easter according to the Essenian calendar” [754]. The topic would be analyzed in chapter XXIII B.

In our previous chapters we referred many times to the *Aquarian Gospel* whose full title is the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus, the Christ of the Piscean Age*. There it is clearly acknowledged that Jesus was one of the major Avatars of the divine Principle (Vishnu, for the Hindus), the one who was incarnated in the Piscean Age (ch. XIX C). Indeed, we have seen (ch. XIX B) that to the Sanskrit writings Jesus was known under the name of *Maha-Vishnu* (Great Vishnu). Verily, Levi Dowling believed that a Christ incarnated at the beginning of each and every era. It was also mentioned (ch. XIX B and C) that Jesus existed as early as the first instant of the Creation as a Principle (Ganesha-Adam), then He incarnated at the beginning of the Piscean Age and He will come again, as the Judge (Kalki) in the Aquarian Age.

The *Aquarian Gospel* was transmitted by revelation to Levi H. Dowling (1844-1911). Levi who was in a superconscious state was only the tool that conveyed in a written form the divine message to the mankind, and he was probably inspired from what parapsychology calls the *Akasha Annals* (*Records* or *Archives*)—information existing in the space-time structure that can be retrieved through extension of the paranormal capacities.

We would find the following definition in the aforesaid work: “The Book of God’s Remembrance is known under the name of Akasha Records. These are invisible to the man of flesh, but they confirm the words within the Scripture: «There is nothing hidden which should not be revealed, nothing secret which should not be known³¹⁰». The Sanskrit word Akasha³¹¹ means the primary substance. All the thoughts, words and actions of people are gradually being recorded for ever in this primary substance. Jesus would read from it as from an open book, and hence His disciples said, «we know that you know everything»” [755].

The *Book of God* where people were recorded after their acts was mentioned as early as in the Old Testament as it could be seen from the following dialogue between Moses and God: “«And now, if thou wilt forgive their sin... but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book that thou hast written». And Yahweh said to Moses: «Whoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book»” (Exodus 32:32-33). “Search ye in the Book of

³¹⁰ Matthew 10:26.

³¹¹ *Akasha* (ether, Sanskr.). One can notice the phonetic similitude with *akh* (enlightened, joyous, Ancient Egypt.), the state in which the Pharaoh enters after death, that was extended later on to all human beings.

Yahweh, and read: Not one of these shall fail, one shall not have to seek for the other” (Isaiah 34:16).

Enoch also referred to the Akasha: “Think not in your minds, neither say in your hearts, that every crime is not manifested and seen. In heaven it is daily written down before the Most High” [756]. The scribe of this book was Enoch himself who wrote: “The Watchers called me Enoch the scribe” [757]. “The Lord said to me: Enoch, scribe of righteousness” [758]. *Metatron* (probably corrupted from *meta ton thronon*, nearest to the divine Throne; or *metadromos*, he who pursues with a vengeance, Gr.) was the name ascribed to this celestial scribe and Yahweh’s keeper of Records [759].

This concept appears also in the New Testament that refers to “the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations” (Colossians 1:26), to “God’s wisdom in [a] mystery, that hidden [wisdom] which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory” (1 Corinthians 2:7), “the all-various wisdom of God, according to [the] purpose of the ages” (Ephesians 3:10-11). We read also about God “having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself” (Ephesians 1:9). “[The] revelation of [the] mystery, as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages, but [which] has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith for all the nations” (Romans 16:25-26).

It is not devoid of interest that the Hindu Scriptures have frequently portrayed the Goddess having a Book either on a lotus beside her shoulder (in the *Tara Upanishad*), or in her hand (in Adi Shankaracharya’s *Saundarya-Lahari*), representing the symbol of enlightenment.

The *Qur’an* brings further explanations about the Akasha. Thus, God addresses to Moses, saying: “Bring out your people from darkness into light, and make them remember the Annals of Allah” [760]. “And indeed We have written in Zabur³¹² after al-Lawh al-Mahfuz³¹³” [761]. “Didst thou not know that God knows all that is in heaven and earth? Surely that is in a Book” (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*, the Preserved or Hidden Tablet; on which God has written: 22.69; cf. 27.77; 33.6; 34.3). “Every thing that they have done is in the Scrolls, and everything, great and small, is inscribed (in al-Lawh al-Mahfuz)” (54.52-53). [762]. “We have neglected nothing in the Book” [763]. The same meaning has the quotation opening this section (Isaiah 34:16). Other verse mentioned the “Messengers before thee, who came bearing clear signs (*al-*

³¹² This is the name given in Arabic language to all the revealed Books: the *Torah*, the *Gospels*, the *Qur’an*.

³¹³ Depicting the *Book of Remembrance* that is in heavens with God.

bayyinat), and Scriptures (*Zabur*), and the Book Illuminating (*Kitab al-Munir*)” (3.181). The latter term also appears in 22.8.

A peculiar fact is that in his *Emperor's New Mind* [764] the contemporary scientist Roger Penrose asserts the idea that the great discoveries originate in these divine annals from which they are disclosed through revelation. In his turn, Mircea Eliade used to say that “Jung’s cardinal discovery of the collective unconscious connects the individual with an immense reservoir of «historical memories»: the collective memory where the History of the whole mankind survives in its essence” [765].

We can assume that similar to the profit accumulated over the evolutionary process of the organisms that remains fixed within an informational structure; in the same way there is storage of information on the higher level of the entire universe. According to Dumitru Constantin-Dulcan this refers to “a structure of a field carrying information” that he calls “universal field of information” and acknowledges that the beings are connected to this informational system [766]. Science is familiar with the biorhythms, meteorological sensitiveness, moon influence on the physiologic processes, morbidity reaching its peak during the years of intense solar activity etc. (ch. II).

The team of contemporary scholars known as the *Gnosis of Princeton* (dating back to 1969) stated: “the world is created by the Spirit which is Cosmic Consciousness, in which there is the world information, the matrix of all” [767].

Among Levi Dowling’s manuscripts there was one called “The Cusp of the Ages” describing the transfer of dominion from the Piscean Age to the Aquarian Age. Eva S. Dowling published it in the introduction to the book. The document gives the description of the new era: “This age will be an age of splendor and of light, because it is the home age of the Holy Breath; and Holy Breath will testify anew for Christ, the Logos of eternal Love. At first of every age this Logos is made manifest in flesh so man can see and know and comprehend a Love that is not narrow, circumscribed. Twelve times in every revolution of the sun this christed Love of God is made full manifest in flesh upon the planes of earth, and you may read in Akasha the wondrous lessons that these Christs have taught to man” [768].

Dowling described the entering in the Aquarian (he who bears the pitcher with water) Age: “The man who bears the pitcher will walk forth across an arc of heaven³¹⁴; the sign and signet of the son of man will stand forth in the eastern sky. The wise will then lift up their heads and know that the redemption of the earth is near” [769]. And the accompanying footnote [770]

³¹⁴ In the eastern sky of India, the rainbow corresponds to the *bandhan*, which is the symbol of Sahaja Yoga (ch. XV E).

read: “From the beginning of this age, i.e. from this moment on, more and more people will try to understand the spirit of the Gospel instead of merely following its text. When the largest part of the human race has been penetrated by this spirit, to which this book makes its contribution, mankind will undoubtedly be in the Aquarian Age. That’s why the Aquarian Gospel was given its present title.”

The Introduction to the *Aquarian Gospel* explained: “Before creation was, the Christ walked with the Father God and Mother God in Akasha... Without the Christ there was no light. Through Christ all life was manifest; and so through him all things were done, and naught was done in forming worlds or peopling worlds without the Christ. Christ is the Logos of Infinities and through the Word alone are Thought and Force made manifest... Through Christ, the protoplast, the earth, the plant, the beast, the man, the angel and the cherubim took up their stations on their planes of life. Through Christ they are preserved; and if they fall it is the Christ who lifts them up; and if they sell themselves to sin the Christ redeems. Now Christ, the universal Love, pervades all spaces of infinity, and so there is no end to love. From the great heart of Love unnumbered spirits were sent forth to demonstrate the height, the depth, the width, the boundlessness of Love. To every world and star and moon and sun a master spirit of this Love divine was sent; and all were full anointed with the oil of helpfulness, and each became a Christ... Perfection is the ultimate of life. A seed is perfect in its embryonic life, but it is destined to unfold, to grow. Into the soil of every plane these seeds, which were the Thoughts of God, were cast—the seeds of protoplast, of earth, of plant, of beast, of man, of angel and of cherubim, and they who sowed the seeds, through Christ, ordained that they should grow, and should return at last, by effort of unnumbered years, to the great granary of thought, and each to be a perfection of its kind... Thus Christ made manifest Love’s power to save; but men forgot so soon, and so Christ must manifest again, and then again. And ever since man took his place in form of flesh the Christ has been manifest in flesh at first of every age... In many respects Jesus was a remarkable child, for by ages of strenuous preparation he was qualified to be an avatar, a Savior of the world, and from childhood he was endowed with superior wisdom and was conscious of the fact that he was competent to lead the race into the higher ways of spiritual living” [771].

The cusp of time that has elapsed and the time that is still to come represents the apotheosis of the divine revelation, the opening of the seventh, therefore, the last chakra (Adi Sahasrara) of the Universal Being, the crowning of the whole evolutionary process. “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God also shall be completed” (Revelation 10:7). “The pole Omega symbolizes the

end of the evolution towards the «noösphere», the sphere of the spirit towards which all things converge” [772]. The letter omega in lower case (ω) is the trident symbolizing the three subtle channels, and in upper case (Ω) it is the bandhan and the human head, both pointing to the Sahasrara, the destination of the spiritual ascent, the Kingdom of Heavens.

The Age of Aquarius is interpreted as the water of life, of the Holy Spirit (Kundalini) pouring over the people, in sign of harmony between the human microcosm and the divine macrocosm, of the really attained *unio mystica* (Yoga). However, for this to take place, it is necessary that man should become like Adam who had been created by God, as a divine embodiment “in his image” (Genesis 1:27; 5:1). Because, as John said about the last coming of the Savior: “What we shall be has not been manifested; we shall know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one that has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3). In other words, man has to deify himself and that implies the purification on his subtle energy level, allowing for the Kundalini to achieve the mystical union.

Towards the end of Revelation there is an encoded text, which now becomes crystal-clear. “Blessed [are] they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city” (22:14). The *washing of the robes* symbolized the purification of the subtle body (chakras and energy channels), which is the *robe* of the Spirit that is the real and the only lodger of the *city*. Thus, through the enlightenment granted by the Kundalini awakening, the subtle body becomes the *tree of life*. The *gates* are, visibly, the chakras, while the *city* is the Kingdom of God that is the Sahasrara, “the Omega point” where the union with God (attaining of the Yoga state) takes place. The text goes on disclosing that the Savior through His Messenger heralds this noteworthy truth: “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies” (22:16). And if we ask, “who is this Messenger?” the following line will provide us the answer: “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is at thirst come; he that will, let him take [the] water of life freely” (22:17). Therefore, this Messenger is obviously the embodiment of the Holy Spirit (the reference to the water of life explicitly indicates the Kundalini, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit).

The gospels quoted *seven* words uttered by Jesus on the cross (in order: Luke 23:34; Luke 23:43; John 19:26-27; Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34; John 19:28; Luke 23:46; John 19:30). These stands for His *last will* since they are the *last words* pronounced before dying. This would proclaim His successor, the next Great Avatar. According to John first of all, “he says unto the disciple: «Behold thy Mother»” (19:27), and in the end “he said: «It is

finished»; and having bowed his head, he delivered up his Spirit³¹⁵ (19:30). Thus, the author of the fourth gospel made a double prophecy, as it was to emphasize its high signification. Firstly, he disclosed that the future divine incarnation would be a Woman (*Behold the Mother!*) that is the Adi Shakti, preceding, announcing and accompanying the manifestation of Kalki. The last word uttered by Jesus was *kalah* (it is finished, Hebr.). However, *kalah* also means *bride*. The Bride is not only the symbol of Purity (*Nirmal*, Sanskr.) but also that of the future *unio mystica* (Self Realization). In the New Testament, the Bride (*Sponsa*, Lat.) refers also to a divine incarnation because the Bridegroom (*Sponsus*, Lat.) is no other than Jesus who used this term to describe Himself (Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:19; John 3:29)

Christ was extremely specific when announcing the next Great Incarnation which he called “the Comforter³¹⁶, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name” (John 14:26; cf. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-14). However, the Holy Spirit is the Feminine member of the Trinity (further explanations will be given in chapter XXI). Evdokimov displayed an astounding intuition when he identified the Comforter (Paraclete) with the Woman in Revelation, and alluded to the advent of a new religion, which would be established by that new Avatar: “One can respect the Law; one cannot love it. One cannot have a personal relationship with an idea. That is why all religion is built around a living person... Man seeks the Savior in order to be saved; he awaits the Paraclete in order to have confidence in life once more... That is why XIX Revelation speaks of the woman «clothed with the sun» (Revelation 12:1)... - 135 A morality that consists only of principles, lacks beings that are presents... can never resolve the conflicts of human existence, cannot work miracles, or lead to a joyful «second birth» [773].

Other scriptural texts acknowledge the coming of a Feminine Avatar.

Over the biblical period the Jews believed that the Divine Mother impersonated as *Wisdom* (*Hokhmah*, Hebr.; ch. XX B) will appear again in this world to instruct and teach the people how to live in order to please God. The *Wisdom of Solomon* offers many such examples: “Dispatch her from the holy heavens, send her forth from your throne of glory to help me and to toil with me and teach me what is pleasing to you” [774]. “Who could ever have known your will, had you not given Wisdom and sent your Holy Spirit from above? Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened and people have been taught what pleases you, and have been saved, by Wisdom” [775]. “For God loves only those who dwell with Wisdom” [776]. Besides, Her devotees could see her: “Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades. By those who

³¹⁵ *Mesar ruheh* (Aram.); *parédoken tò pneúma* (Gr.).

³¹⁶ The Paraclete or Counselor (ch. XIX C).

love her she is readily seen, by those who seek her, she is readily found” [777]. In the *Proverbs of Solomon*, Wisdom says: “I love those that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me” (8:17). More than that, she might be even encountered by those who loves her and seek her—the Seekers of Truth (see our Afterword). “Whoever gets up early to seek her will have no trouble but will find her sitting at the door... For she herself searches everywhere for those who are worthy of her, benevolently appearing to them on their ways, anticipating their every thought” [778]. The *Ecclesiasticus* (*Sepher Ben Sirah*) further develops that idea: “Wisdom brings up her own children and cares for those who seek her” [779]. These three books contain many similar sentences on that topic [780]. The Christian Church tried to conceal the female gender of that Avatar when identifying Wisdom (that was acknowledged to be of feminine gender by most of the biblical texts: *Hokhmah*, Hebr., *Sophía*, Gr.; *Sapientia*, Lat.) with... Jesus!

The ancient Chinese Christian texts equal the names given to the Goddess: Wisdom (*Hokhmah*) and the Divine Power (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.), thus showing that only the work of the last one can save the entire humankind: “You perhaps learned that human beings themselves are not capable of «adding the Power to themselves»” (i.e. to save themselves). “Only by the Divine Power of the Lord of heaven all human beings will get wisdom” [781].

Revelation mentions seven angels with trumpets (8:2 sq.) out of which the XIX last one is described as follows: “I saw another strong angel coming down out – 65 of the heaven, clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, and his countenance as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire” (10:1). *The rainbow upon the head* depicts the bandhan over the Sahasrara (ch. XV E), *the countenance as the sun* is the Omkara (ch. XI E, XXV A and B), and the *pillars of fire* are the side channels (ch. XI E). The text goes on: “And the seventh angel sounded [his] trumpet; and there were great voices in the heaven saying: «The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of his Christ»... And the temple of God in the heaven was opened” (11:15,19). These words announced the opening in the Virata of the last primordial chakra, the *Adi Sahasrara* (*temple of God in the heaven*), that happens in the beginning of the age which will grant Self Realization to the whole world. The final fight between the Good Principle impersonated by the crowned Woman and the Evil was described at large in Revelation (ch. 12 and 13). Chapter XX C2 would analyze the Evil impersonated by the beast, which under various disguises is actually the same all over the Age of Iron.

Let us further analyze the prophecy about the next Avatar described in Revelation. “And a great sign³¹⁷ was seen in the heaven: a Woman clothed

³¹⁷ Thus announcing the manifestation of a Great Incarnation.

with the sun³¹⁸, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (12:1). Chapter XIX B explained that the star announces the Savior. We have seen the cases of Krishna, Mithra, and Jesus. In the above-mentioned sentence the star symbolizes the Divine Mother. The twelve stars indicate the coronation, the apotheosis of the whole cosmic cycle, and the completion of crossing the twelve zodiacal ages. The sun and the moon point at the lateral channels in the Cosmic Being (*Adi Pingala* and *Adi Ida*) on both sides of the crowned Woman, Queen of the *Adi Sahasrara* and of the channel leading to it. She is the Primordial Mother (*Adi Shakti*) descended of this earth to help the humankind in transgressing the crisis that prevents its evolution. She is the Creator of the universe, surrounded by what she created: sun, moon and stars. She is the Divine Mother: “She brought forth a male Son, who shall shepherd all the nations with an iron rod” (12:5), thus heralding the second coming of the Shepherd as Judge (Kalki) at the end of the Age of Iron, the Kali Yuga. We shall remind to the reader that the *Golden Age* restored when the Divine Son will return as Kalki dispensing *Justice* at the conclusion of the Age of *Iron* has been also foretold in Virgil’s *Bucolics*: “Now the last age by Cumae’s Sibyl sung/ Has come and gone, and the majestic roll/ Of circling centuries begins anew:/ Justice returns, returns old Saturn’s reign/ With a new bread of men sent down from heaven/ Only do thou, at the Day’s birth in whom/ The iron shall cease, the golden race arise” [1] (see ch. XIX A).

In *Aurora Consurgens*, Thomas Aquinas explained: “This Wisdom, namely the Queen of the South, who is said to have come from the East, like unto the MORNING RISING,... and there was given into her hand power, honor, strength and dominion, bearing upon her head the crown of the kingdom shining with the rays of twelve stars, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... Reigning I will reign, and my kingdom shall have no end for all them that find me and subtly and ingenuously and constantly seek me out” [782]. This amazing text that encompass so many revealing items, is announcing the incarnation of the Great Goddess calling her by the Greek name of *Sophia* (Wisdom), *coming from the East*, being the Power (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.) and the Queen reigning over the *Sahasrara Kingdom* (there was given into her hand... *dominion, bearing on her head the crown of the kingdom*), actually the *Woman* described in Revelation (12:1), the *Bride* (22:17), and the Bestower of eternal life (*Moksha daini*, Sanskr.): *my kingdom shall have no end*. This correction done by Aquinas allowed the exclusion of the interpolation from the gospels—“A Queen of the south shall rise up in the Judgment” (Luke 11:31; cf. Matthew 12:42)—having only the

³¹⁸ “*Mulier amicta sole*” (Lat.), similar to Christ in His Transfiguration on the mount (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29; ch. XI E).

evident aim of misguiding the reader towards the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chronicles 9:1): “for she came from the end of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon” (Luke; cf. Matthew, the above quoted places). Nevertheless, the mention of *the Judgment* made it preposterous any relation with Queen Balkis³¹⁹ of Sheba. The text is most probable pertaining to the Woman crowned with twelve stars, adjoining sun and moon, as depicted in Revelation. As for the original country of the Great Incarnation, we would notice that India is situated eastward and it is renowned (now as in the old times; ch. XIX B and C) for its great sages. Through its tip placed on the 8⁰ parallel, India reaches a more southern position not only against Israel (29-33⁰ latitude), but also as compared to Sheba or Sa’ba (about 15⁰ latitude, in the Yemen of today). We refer to the southern extreme of the Indian subcontinent since it was here where the autochthonous population took refuge when confronted with the foreign invaders (see our Introduction). Likewise, when Jesus referred to the end of the cycle, He declared that the last Avatar will come from East and will shine over the West (Christian world): “For as lightning goes forth from the east, and shines to the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of man” (Matthew 24:27). Roerich brought further support to the above idea by reminding that “the ancient Chinese have preserved the beautiful hymn of the Mother of the Sun, calling her Ruler of the East!” [783].

The *Bible* explains that Self Realization was granted only to a few chosen ones: “For narrow the gate and straitened the way that leads to life, and they are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14). The grace was bestowed individually and only by way of exception (see the case of Nachiketas, ch. IV; also ch. XXV A). However, further on Jesus announces that the time will come when at the end of the cycle the event will get *en masse* extent: “These glad tidings³²⁰ of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations, and then shall come the end” (24:14). Schuon adds to these quotation the following comment: “In other words, we can say that «Christ», who for the Hindus will be the Kalki Avatara and for the Buddhists the Bodhisattva Maitreya³²¹, will restore the Primordial Tradition” [784]. “And it shall be in the last days, saith God, [that] I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17). The prophets announced the prophecy about *en masse* enlightenment ever since the Old Testament. “God be gracious unto us, and bless us... that thy way may be known upon earth, thy

³¹⁹ Bilqis (Arab.).

³²⁰ Meaning “announcement” (*kérygma*, Gr.)—ch. I.

³²¹ See *infra* and chapter XIX B.

salvation among all nations” (Psalm 67:1). “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Yea, even upon the bondmen and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28-29; cf. Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:27; Zechariah 12:10). Then, “whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32). This last sentence refers plainly to getting the Self Realization with the help of the *mantras* (ch. XV D). “They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the expanse; and they that turn the many to righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). “And thou, Daniel, close the words, and seal the book, till the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (12:4). In the same respect, the *Book of Enoch* wrote: “When, too, the secrets of the righteous shall be revealed, then shall sinners be judged... From that period those who possess the earth shall not be powerful and exalted. Neither shall they be capable of beholding the countenance of the holy, for the light of the countenances of the holy, the righteous, and the elect, has been seen by the Lord of spirits” [785]. That will occur at the time of Resurrection: “In those days the saints and the chosen shall undergo a change. The light of day shall rest upon them, and the splendor and glory of the saints shall be changed... He shall select the righteous and holy from among them; for the day of their salvation has approached” [786].

In a manner similar to Revelation disclosing that a *sign* would announce XIX the new era, God assured: “I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs - 136 on the earth” (Acts 2:19; cf. Joel 2:30). The religious officials contemporary - 137 to Christ, “the Pharisees and Sadducees³²², coming to [him], asked him, tempting [him], to shew them a sign out of heaven. But he answering said to them: «... Ye know [how] to discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot the signs of the times?»” (Matthew 16:1-3). In many occasions, the Savior called the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees “hypocrites” (23:13-15,23,25,27,29 etc.) as well as “fools and blinds” (23:17,19; cf. 16,24,26) especially concerning the signs in the heaven.

The *SIGN*³²³ *out of heaven* is the opening of the Cosmic Sahasrara (Adi Sahasrara) and that event took place on May 5, 1970. Without that incomparable manifestation of the divine Power encompassing the entire universe, the *en masse* Self Realization for all the human beings is unthinkable. The *Zohar* put an emphasis on this inevitable relationship when

³²² Party claiming its kinship with the priest Zadok (*Tzadok, Hebr.*), faithful to King David (1 Samuel 2:35; 1 Chronicles 29:22) and his inheritor, Solomon (1 Kings 1:34): “the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok” (Ezekiel 44:15).

³²³ *Semeion* (Gr.).

showing that for an event to occur on this earth an identical event must take place in the heaven since whatever on earth reflects whatever in heaven [787] (ch. II). Moreover, the *Zohar* read: “At the time when the Messiah shall arise, there will be great wonders in the world. See now, in the lower Paradise there is a secret and unknown spot... in which a thousand palaces of longing are concealed. No one may enter it except the Messiah³²⁴... Behind those palaces there is another place, entirely hidden and undiscoverable. It is called «Eden», and no one may enter to behold it. Now the Messiah is hidden in its outskirts until a place is revealed to him, which is called «the Bird’s Nest». This is a place proclaimed by that Bird (Shekhinah)” [788]. The excerpt forecast that the opening in the Virata of the Cosmic Sahasrara would be accompanied by *wonders in the world*. Through the next Avatar the phenomenon will be reflected also at the human dimension (the human Sahasrara, with a thousand petals, *entirely hidden and undiscoverable* because it is subtle; the *lower Paradise*). Here it is indicated, too, the supreme divine rank of the Avatar (*Messiah-Kalki*, the Masculine Principle who will be accompanied by the Holy Spirit depicted as a *Bird*—see ch. XXI—that is the Shekhinah-AdiShakti, the Feminine Principle). The Kabbalistic work refers also to the *occultation doctrine* specific, too, for the Shi’ite Imamism as it was shown (Mahdi; ch. XIX C): “The Messiah, however, is hidden again in the same place as before” [789]. That could signify that because of being veiled by the *Maya* (Illusion, Sanskr.), the Maha Avatar might appear among us as a totally inconspicuous person.

In this respect, Maharishi Ramana who was called with a good reason “the sage of Arunachala” explained: “Realization of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity,” adding: “A saint helps the whole of humanity, unknown to the latter” [790]. This idea is expressed in the gospels, too: “the light appears in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (*lux in tenebris lucet et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt*, Lat; John 1:5).

In the ancient Scripture *Nala Damayanti Purana*, Kali explained to Nala the importance of Kali Yuga, the modern times. When the worst of all times (*Ghor Kali Yuga*) will torture Mother Earth, the Adi Shakti will incarnate and grant salvation to the saintly seekers who are now seeking God, secluded in thick jungles, steep valleys and inaccessible mountains. They will be reborn in Kali Yuga as normal worldly people, ordinary householders. She will then give birth to a new race. Glory to Her. Her coming in Her complete, integrated form should truly represent the most formidable event of World History [791].

In the spirit of the above, Janice Connel referred to “the Blessed Mother, who, for most of humankind, remain God’s Hidden Mystery... When she

³²⁴ He controls “the gate” (Agya) towards the Eden—ch. XIX C.

appears on the Earth in public apparitions, the Seraphim of course accompany and surround her. Those who choose to participate in her public apparitions receive immense light³²⁵ because they are in the physical presence of the Blessed Mother and her entire Celestial Coterie of Seraphim” [792].

About the rebirth of numerous realized seekers, designated as *Messengers*, the *Qur'an* (77.11-12) read: “when the Messengers’ time is set to what day shall they be delayed?” Or in other variant: “when the Messengers are gathered to their time appointed; for what day are these signs postponed?” [793].

Sir Isaac Newton wrote: “About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up, who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamor and opposition” [794]. We think that one of the scientists belonging to the *Gnosis of Princeton* team was right when he declared: “it is high time for Newton to be acknowledged not only as a great scholar but also as a great theologian” [795].

The renowned indologist Jean Herbert explains: “every time a great God incarnates, a number of minor divinities and liberated souls take human births” [796]. In the *Bible*, these were called “children of Yahweh”: “Behold, I and the children that Yahweh hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from Yahweh of hosts” (Isaiah 8:18).

A text in the Gnostic writing *Trimorphic Protennoia* with a prophetic resonance discloses that the “second coming” concerns a Feminine Avatar: “I have come the second time in the likeness of a female and have spoken with them. And I shall tell them of the coming end of the Aeon and teach them of the beginning of the Aeon to come, the one without change... We shall be purified within those Aeons from which I revealed myself” [797].

The Essenes acknowledged that no one could ascend to God without the help of the Goddess: “Verily, nobody can reach the heavenly father unless through the earthly mother” [798]. It is only she who grants the opening of the seventh chakra thus enabling the salvation of humankind: “The seventh communion unites to our earthly mother. It is she who sends forth her angels to guide the roots of man to the deepest blessed ground. Let us invoke our earthly mother, our holy preserver, our maintainer! It is she who will restore the world and all its inhabitants. We worship our earthly mother, good and beneficent” [799].

A text with a special significance for our research is the prophecy of John of Jerusalem, a Christian monk who was born in 1042 near the Benedictine monastery of Vézelay, France. It was he who together with eight knights founded in 1119 the *Order of Hospitallers* that later became known as *the Knights of Rhodes* or *of Malta*. The Church prohibited for centuries his *Secret*

³²⁵ Ch. XI E.

Register of Prophecies. However, the manuscript of that prophecy kept in the monastery of Zagorsk, near Moscow, was discovered recently as part of the KGB-archives and was published in France in 1994.

John's prophecy is very short and includes only forty stanzas. The first 34 stanzas describe what it was defined by all the sacred writings as the darkest age of humankind (Kali Yuga; ch. XIX A). It is remarkable that each of these stanzas begins with the words: "When the millennium following this millennium comes to an end..." supplemented with the calamities that existed just when John wrote those lines on the paper. Since such blame addressed to the contemporary period would result in severe religious persecutions it becomes evident the monk's purpose of avoiding them and that can explain why *the entire prophecy* was delayed by *one thousand years*. Consequently we will take this into account also when analyzing the prophecy included into the stanzas 35-40 given below, which refer, therefore, to the end of *the second millennium* and not of the third one.

35. When the millennium following this millennium comes to an end, Man will no longer be the leader, since Woman will come to take over the scepter. She will be the great mistress of future times, and mankind will be obliged to acknowledge what She thinks. She will be the Mother of the millennium following this millennium. She will spread out the sweet kindness of a Mother after the days of the devil. She will be the beauty after the ugly days of barbarism. The century following this millennium will become a time of enlightenment. There will be love, and share, and dreaming, and the dreams will come true.

36. When the millennium following this millennium comes to an end man will take a second birth³²⁶. The Spirit will take over the majority of the people who will be one in brotherhood³²⁷. Then the end of the times of barbarism will be proclaimed. It will be the time of a new strength of faith. After the black days of the beginning of the millennium following this millennium happy days will begin. Man will find again the path of man, and the earth will be in order again.

37. When the millennium following this millennium comes to

³²⁶ Self Realization.

³²⁷ Union within the collective awareness.

an end, paths³²⁸ will lead from one end of earth and heaven to the other³²⁹. The forests will be dense again and the deserts will be watered. The waters will be clean again, the earth will be as a garden. Man will care for everything that lives. He will clean what he had soiled. He will understand the whole earth as his home and full of wisdom will he think of the tomorrow.

38. When the millennium following this millennium comes to an end everybody will be as an even pace³³⁰. One will know everything about the world³³¹ and one's body³³². Diseases will be cured before they manifest³³³. Everybody will be a healer for himself and for others³³⁴. One will have understood that it is necessary to help in order to be helped. And after times of sullenness and misery, man will open up his heart and his purse to the poor. He will see himself as the keeper of human order and finally a new age will begin.

39. When the millennium following this millennium comes to an end man will have learned to give and to share. The bitter days of loneliness will be past. He will again believe in the Spirit, and all will recognize the barbarians. However, this will happen after the wars and fires. From the ashes the towers of Babel³³⁵ will rise, and an iron fist will be needed to get order from chaos and for man to find the right path again.

40. When the millennium following this millennium comes to

³²⁸ The subtle channels at the level of man, of sacred geography and of the Cosmic Being, the Virata.

³²⁹ This is a symbol for the genuine *unio mystica* achieved between Earth (the starting point of the Mooladhara) and Heaven (the destination of the Sahasrara) through the Self Realization.

³³⁰ This refers to the *inner peace*, not only to the external one (ch. XIX C).

³³¹ It is only by means of connection to the collective awareness that "shall their hands (feet) speak" (ch. XI C).

³³² One will be able to know one's chakras and channels condition.

³³³ This is specific for preventing and healing diseases through Sahaja Yoga (ch. XXII C).

³³⁴ This becomes possible through Sahaja Yoga practice.

³³⁵ The chaos existing in the world.

an end, man will know that all living beings carry the light, and that they are creatures that demand respect. He will found new cities³³⁶ in heaven, on earth and at sea. He will remember what used to be, and he will be able to interpret what will be. He will not be afraid of his own death anymore because he will have lived several lives during his lifetime, and he will know that the light will never die³³⁷ [800].

The Cistercian monk Joachim of Floris was John's of Jerusalem prominent contemporary and made in his turn analogous prophecies, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter XXI. He made a most surprising statement about the great epoch of the Holy Spirit dominion: in the new dispensation of the Spirit, the Spirit would be disclosed in female form [801].

Nostradamus lived in the 16th century and is portrayed by *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as "French astrologer and physician, the most widely read seer of the Renaissance." His real name was Michel de Nostredame (Notredame), meaning "Our Lady," a fact that throws a new light on his predictions regarding the Feminine. That is why Manuela Dunn Mascetti and Peter Lorie entitled their book *Nostradamus: Prophecies for Women* where they wrote: "His prophecies of women are much more than has been understood till today" [802]. Thus, Nostradamus foretold the decline of patriarchy and raise of the feminine spirit: "*Le grand Empire Barbare corruer,/ Auant que Pheses son siecle determeine*" (The great barbarian empire to decay,/ Before the Moon completes its cycle, Fr.) [803], which the two authors explain as: "The great barbarian empire of patriarchy that men have created will decay/ During the time that the feminine spirit is completing its cycle" [804]. The French visionary went on: "*Le changement sera fort difficile,/ Cité prouince au change gain sera,/ Cœur haut, prudent mis, chassé luy habile/ Mer; terre, peuple, son estat changera*" (The change will be very difficult:/ City and province will gain by the change:/ Heart high, prudent established, chased out one cunning,/ Sea, land, people will change their state, Fr.) [805], which according to Mascetti and Lorie it means: "The change caused by the powerful presence of the female will be very difficult:/ But the whole world will gain by the change./ The heart will be the most important feature of this transformation, but also prudence will be as much as an established aspect of this new life, chasing out cunning created by man./ The entire world, in all

³³⁶ The Self Realization through the opening of the Heavenly (Adi) Sahasrara at the cosmic level, and of the human Sahasrara on earth.

³³⁷ The Spirit is immortal.

aspects, will be altered in the most fundamental way” [806]. The Feminine Avatar is forecasted further: “*Quy soubz terre sainte dame voix fainte/ Humaine flemme pour diuin veoir luire,/ Fera des seuls de leur sang terre tainte,/ Et les saincts temples pour les impurs destruire*” [807] usually translated as “Beneath the earth of the holy Lady the faint voice heard,/ Human flame seen to shine as divine:/ It will cause the earth to be stained with the blood of the lone ones (monks),/ And to destroy the holy temples for the impure ones,” was interpreted by the mentioned authors as follows: “Within the most fundamental aspects of the world which is affected by the presence of religion,/ A holy feminine presence will be heard as a gentle but important voice./ This very human flame will be seen to shine in divine light./ Its presence will cause the world and all who live in it to be changed in a fundamental way/ Which will include the death of the dominance of male religious influence” [808]. The event is described as follows: “*Jour que sera par Royné saluée,/ Le iour apres le salut, la priere:/ Le comte fait raison & valbuée,/ Par auant humble oncques ne fut si fiere*” (The day that she will be hailed as Queen,/ The day after the benediction the prayer:/ The reckoning is right and valid,/ Once humble never was one so proud, Fr.) [809].

The founder of Sahaja Yoga, Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, was born in the town of Chhindwara in the center of India, on March 21, 1923, that is precisely at the end of the Pisces. This day which defines the vernal equinox was used for some ancient people (Babylonians, Jews) to establish the beginning of a new year, hence of a new age. However, that could find an echo in the Christian era too: what are the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth months in the actual (Gregorian) calendar corresponded in the beginning of Christian times to the seventh (*septem*), eighth (*octo*), ninth (*novem*) and tenth (*decem*) months when the Roman year started with the *Ides of March*³³⁸ (before the Julian reformation of AD 46).

Shri Mataji’s parents were high-realized souls, and since their daughter’s young age they became aware of her exceptional spiritual powers, a fact that determined young Nirmala to devote her life to the service of humankind. After studies of medicine, biology and psychology, she started to analyze the permutations and combinations characterizing human beings and, based on the ancient culture of Yoga and Indian traditions as well as the essence of the great religions she elaborated the new method of Sahaja Yoga and became the first in the spirituality history who is able to grant *en masse* Self Realization.

Satyananda Saraswati explains: “By a favorable birth, if your parents were highly evolved, you can have an awakened Kundalini... If a child comes with partial awakening, he is called a saint, and if he comes with full illumination, he is known as an incarnation, avatara” [810].

³³⁸ March 15.

On May 5, 1970, when Shri Mataji was at the coastal village of Nargol in Gujarat, neighboring Maharashtra, she witnessed the epoch-making event of the opening of the Cosmic Sahasrara on which she gave the following account:

“As soon as the Sahasrara was opened, the whole atmosphere was filled with tremendous Chaitanya³³⁹, and there was tremendous light in the sky, and the whole thing came out on this earth, as if a torrential rain or a waterfall with such tremendous force as if I was unaware and got stupefied. The happening was so tremendous, and so unexpected that I was stunned and got totally silent at the grandeur. I saw the primordial Kundalini rising like a big furnace, and the furnace was very silent but a burning appearance it had, as if you heat up a metal, and it has many colors. In the same way, the Kundalini showed up as a furnace like a tunnel, as you see these plants you have for coal burning, that create electricity; and it stretched like a telescope and came out one after another, shoot! shoot! shoot!, just like that... and lifted the whole of the head like a big dome and opened it, and then this torrential rain completely drenched me. I started seeing all that and got lost in the joy. It was like an artist seeing his own creation, and I felt the joy of fulfillment. After coming out of this beautiful experience, I looked around and saw human beings so blind and I became absolutely silent, and desired that I should get the cups to fill the nectar, not all stones... “ [811].

Although not as significant as the paramount happening of the opening of the Sahasrara that represented the epitome of human evolution, similar events were recorded over the history of spirituality.

Thus, the beginning of the description given by Shri Mataji can be met with the account of the baptism of Jesus: “He saw the heavens parting asunder³⁴⁰, and the Spirit... descending upon him” (Mark 1:10; cf. Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:21), where the descent of the Spirit is evocative of “the coming on this earth of the torrential rain” above. “The heavens were opened,” begins Ezekiel his narration (1:1). The same vision had Stephen before meeting his death (Acts 7:56), and Cornelius during his ecstasy (10:11). Revelation, too, depicts the opening of the heavens (19:11; cf. 4:1; 15:5).

Furthermore, we would like to remind a quotation of Jerome: “In the *Hebrew Gospel* that the Nazarene read it says: «The whole fountain of the Holy Spirit comes down on him»” [812].

The *Zohar* gives a version that fits well with what was seen by Shri Mataji: “The fiery mass draws out from within itself a variety of colors. The first is a green color... The same is repeated with the whole gamut of colors,

³³⁹ Vibrations (Sanskrit).

³⁴⁰ *Skizoménous* (torn apart, rent, Gr.).

all of which outside, concentrating itself more and, more in the middle until it approaches that hidden point to derive light therefrom” [813].

The great visionary who was William Blake anticipated this great event of opening the cosmic Sahasrara (which he calls “heavens golden gates”) in the following invocation addressed to the Goddess: “Oh Holy Virgin! clad in purest white,/ Unlock heav’n’s golden gates, and issue forth;/ Awake the dawn that sleeps, that sleeps in heaven; let light/ Rise from the chambers of the East” [814]. He also associated the New Jerusalem (another name given to the Sahasrara) with the divine Mother who grants immortality through a second birth: “Now descendeth out of heaven a City yet a Woman/ Mother of myriads redeemed & born in her spiritual palaces/ By a New Spiritual birth Regenerated from Death” [815]. No doubt, the author was familiar with the secrets of the dormant coiled Kundalini (the wound golden string, leading through the Heavens gate of the Agya in the Sahasrara’s New Jerusalem), which he described in the following verses: “I give you the end of a golden string,/ Only wind it into a ball:/ It will lead you in at Heavens gate,/ Built in Jerusalem’s wall” [816].

The references to the “furnace” and “burning appearance” call to mind the prophecy that an old priest from a Buddhist monastery has communicated to Roerich: “These fiery signs accompany the era of Shambala” [817]

Thousands kilometers away from Nargol, a visionary scientist had the intuition of the Sahasrara opening, and described in his turn what he felt. We refer to Fritjof Capra, Ph.D., a physicist well known in Europe and the United States, the author of *The Tao of Physics*³⁴¹. The *Preface* of the first edition begins as follows: “Five years ago, I had a beautiful experience which set me on a road that has led to writing of this book. I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon... when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance. Being a physicist, I knew that the sand, rocks, water and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms, and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles. I knew also that the Earth’s atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of «cosmic rays», particles of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air. All this was familiar to me... As I sat on that beach my former experiences came to life; I «saw» cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I «saw» the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I «heard» its sound, and at that moment I *knew* that this was the Dance of Shiva, the Lord of Dancers

³⁴¹ More than one million copies of this book were sold until the third edition in 1991; we do not know what happened afterwards.

worshipped by the Hindus.” The text is dated: “December 1974” [818], therefore it is believable that the event memorized by the distinguished physicist took place on May 5, 1970.

The outstanding event of opening the collective Sahasrara had an overwhelming outcome: from that time on, hundreds of thousand persons received *en masse* Self Realization in about ninety countries. After India, next comes Russia with tens of thousand, a fact that enables us a short detour.

In his edict of February 10, 1638, Louis XIII consecrated to Virgin Mary his “person, state, crown and subjects.” Marquis de la Franquerie explained the royal attitude: “The king not only acted according to the fullness of his royal power but like this he consecrated the entire state corpus recording also the people associated in a grandiose ardor” [819]. By virtue of the tradition, the *consecration* represented surrendering its object to the Divinity and at the same time, on this specific occurrence, the acknowledgement of the Divine Mother sovereignty (ch. XX C3).

The official (Catholic) chronicle about the Fatima miracle (see details in chapter XX C2c) recorded that on July 13, 1917, the Virgin requested that Russia (about which she foretold the disaster that will ensue the establishment of the communist regime) be consecrated to her, and proclaimed that in the end her Immaculate Heart will triumph, adding: “God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart” [820], a sentence announcing thus the coming of a new era of spirituality subjected to the Divine Mother (ch. XIX D). A remarkable fact is that the happening was predicted by Nostradamus: “From the extreme West of Europe/, Of poor people a young child will be born/, Who by her tongue will convert a great flock:/ In the kingdom of East her message will grow” [821]. Actually, the extremely frequent apparitions of the Mother of Jesus over the past 150 years point at the coming of the Great Avatar of the Divine Mother, in a close connection to the Woman crowned with twelve stars in Revelation 12:1 depicted exactly like Lucia (*young child born of poor people*) reported twelve stars encircling the head of Our Lady of Fatima, the small town of Portugal, *from the extreme West of Europe*, while the *kingdom of East* evidently points at Russia. A subsidiary of the above: apparitions of Virgin Mary had been witnessed also by many thousand Muslims in Zeitoun, a place where she rested under a sycamore tree during the flight into Egypt, according to the legend [822].

In spite of Virgin’s imperious commandment (reminded to Lucia in an apparition of June 1929 at Tuy), no pope succeeded in consecrate Russia to the Divine Mother: two popes made no attempt, and three failed (Pius XII on October 13, 1942 and June 7, 1952, Paul VI on November 21, 1964, and John Paul II on May 13, 1982 and March 25, 1984). Even Lucia attempted in vain to achieve Russia consecration in a letter of August 29, 1989 [823].

Nevertheless, her gesture found a positive answer: Russia was consecrated to the Divine Mother the fall of the same year when for the first time Shri Mataji granted the Self Realization to thousands of Russians.

There are also other “coincidences” which make us wonder.

In the former section (XIX C) we have seen that the Buddha Maitreya points at the Holy Mother, too. On that topic, Roerich referred to a temple of Ghum monastery close to the Nepalese frontier sheltering a huge image of the Buddha Maitreya, which replaced the classic criss-cross image of Gautama.

XIX “Lord Maitreya is seated on his throne; his legs are no longer crossed, as
- 131 usual, but are already set on the ground. This is a sign that the time of His Coming is near and that the Ruler is already preparing to descend from his throne. This monastery was built about twenty years ago by a learned Mongolian lama, who came from distant Mongolia to Tibet... He came to erect this new monastery and to proclaim the approaching advent of the Lord Maitreya. In 1924, a learned lama, the faithful disciple of the founder of the monastery who shared with him the profound Teaching and many prophecies for the future, told us before the impressive image: «Truly, the time of the great advent is nearing. According to our prophecies, the epoch of Shambala has already begun» [824]. Roerich repeatedly heard the prophecy from different lamas, for instant in Sikkim: “Verily, the old prophecies are fulfilled. The time of Shambala has come... For centuries and centuries, it has been predicted... Verily, the time of Shambala has come.” The same remark was heard in Mongolia: “Verily, the time of Shambala has come” [825].

Roerich reminded too that “the Muslims of Persia, Arabia, and Chinese Turkestan reverently preserve the legend of Muntazar, who will soon lay the foundation of a New Era... In Ispahan they have already saddled the white horse that is to carry the Great Coming One” [826]. The Russian scholar referred to the Mahdi al-“Muntazar”³⁴² [as] the Muslim symbol corresponding to Kalki Avatar of the Hindus and to Maitreya of the Buddhists” [827]. In the previous section we have explained the connection *Mahdi—Maha-Devi* (Great Goddess, Sanskr.). When referring to the advent of the Mahdi the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* wrote: “To believe in him as the Second or the Promised Messiah is an article of faith, because first of all his coming early in the 14th century of Hidjra was predicted by Muhammad” [828]. The *Hijrah* (Hegira) lies at the origin of the Islamic calendar and took place on September 20, 622. The 13th century came to an end on September 20, 1922 (622+1300=1922) when the 14th century started.

Therefore, if we take into account the previous two prophecies, the Maha Avatar would have take birth on this earth not earlier than September 20, 1922 and not later than 1924.

³⁴² *Mahdi al-Muntazar* (the hidden Mahdi, Arab.; ch. XIX C).

In 1887, Countess of Caithness wrote in her book titled *The Mysteries of the Ages*: “It was generally considered, at the turn of the next century, that the next Divine incarnation was about to come to earth and would be female, the advent of Divine Wisdom, or Theo-Sophia, and that the present age would be the age of making known all that which has been kept secret from the beginning” [829]. It is precisely what it is happening now, when the ancient secret spiritual knowledge is disclosed through Sahaja Yoga culture.

In 1931, the famous clairvoyant Edgar Cayce predicted that a certain woman would live to see “the greatest development in spiritual affairs that the world has known” [830].

C.S. Lewis wrote *The Great Divorce* compared by many critics to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, where the former describes the ascent from Hell to Heaven. In chapter twelve³⁴³ the author depicts the Goddess: “Some kind of procession was approaching us, and the light came from the persons who composed it. First came bright Spirits, not the Spirits of men, who danced and scattered flowers... Then, on the left and right, at each side of the forest avenue, came youthful shapes, boys upon one hand, and girls upon the other³⁴⁴. If I could remember their singing and write down the notes, no man who read that score would ever grow sick or old³⁴⁵. Between them went musicians: and after these a lady in whose honor all this was being done... «She is one of the great ones³⁴⁶»... «Who are dancing and throwing flowers before her?» «Haven’t ye read your Milton? *A thousand liveried angels lackey her*». «And who are all these young men and women on each side?» «They are her sons and daughters». «She must have had a very large family, Sir». «Every young man or boy that met her became her son... Every girl that met her was her daughter» [831].

Fiona MacLeod refers to a prophecy in the early years of the 20th century current on Iona, “which foretells, now as the Bride of Christ, now as the Daughter of God, now as the Divine Spirit embodied through mortal birth in a Woman... the coming of a new Presence and Power... I believe that though the Reign of Peace may be yet a long way off, it is drawing near: and that Who shall save us anew shall come divinely as a Woman... She would rise suddenly in many hearts” [832].

³⁴³ A symbolic number evoking the Goddess crowned with twelve stars in Revelation.

³⁴⁴ It is an allusion to the right (masculine) and left (feminine) channels.

³⁴⁵ The healing obtained through Sahaja Yoga practice (ch. XXII C).

³⁴⁶ *Maha Avatar* (Great Incarnation, Sanskr.).

Vladimir Lossky stated: “Today the Spirit dwells among us and makes Himself more clearly known... But the very Person of the Holy Spirit who reveals these truths to us and who renders them inwardly luminous, manifest, almost tangible to us, nevertheless remains Himself undisclosed and hidden, concealed by the deity which He reveals to us, by the gift which He imparts” [833], a truly justified statement since that Person is not immediately obvious (see *supra*), being the *Maha Maya* (Great Illusion, Sanskr.). However, it should be proper to use “Herself,” and “She” in the above text, since the Holy Spirit is of feminine gender (ch. XXI).

In the same spirit, Sir George Trevelyan (b. 1906) remarked that we act as receptive channels to “ground” the energy or “block the flow”; these energies are apparently all around us, but they will only begin to flow if we “open ourselves and invoke them.” Individually and collectively we retain the free will to either bring about this new consciousness or smother it at birth. He believes that “we are truly involved with a second coming.” “The only real anxiety is that we may not be awake and aware when our moment arrives” [834]. This is really a most interesting concept!

Vladimir Soloviev clearly announced: “Let it be known: today the Eternal feminine/ In an incorruptible body is descending to earth./ In the unfading light of the new goddess,/ Heaven has become one with the deeps” [835].

Still remaining within the prophecies regarding the coming of the new Avatar on the beginning of the third millennium and making a shortcut preparing the next chapter we would like to review other opinions belonging to contemporary authors who refer to the advent of the Divine Mother.

In her monumental *History of God*, Armstrong shows: “Mystics have seen God incarnated in a woman... Other... have introduced a female element into divine” [836] (ch. XX).

Displaying a remarkable intuition for the present moment, Berdiaev acknowledged the role “with infinite significance of the Woman, that will be prevailing in the history of tomorrow... in the religious awakening of our times.” Evdokimov quoted the front personalities of the recent Russian spirituality—Macarius, Starets Amvrosy and Seraphim of Sarov—who “pay particular attention, radiant with hope, to the mystery of woman... To the question: «Will woman save the world?» they would certainly reply: «Such ministry is implied in her gifts». On its part, the Gospel unceasingly repeats: «If any one have ears to hear, let him hear» (Mark 4:23)” [837].

Bond and Suffield wrote: “in the second half of the 20th century another concept of God³⁴⁷ has appeared. This time God is not a man but a woman. Its promulgators talk about «the Great Goddess» or «the Great Mother», who

³⁴⁷ We shall see below that this universal concept existed in ancient times; it is only *its revival in our modern times* that it is new.

existed in the Western World before the advent of male-centered religions and before Christianity achieved its dominance on the whole Europe” [838]. Of the same opinion is Matthews referring to the Goddess as Sophia who “has been inching her way into popular consciousness throughout the latter half of the twentieth century... It is an era where the Divine feminine will lead the way and where women will rediscover and enter their power” [839].

We would also draw the reader’s attention to the topic in debate by just signaling a remarkable study published by Rita M. Gross under the title *Hindu Female Deities as a Resource for the Contemporary Rediscovery of the Goddess* [840].

James Somerville had the premonition of the imminent epoch-making event that was announced in the Scriptures long time before, when writing in his paper entitled *Maria Avatara*: “Mary aside, where else are we apt to find another feminine figure as an Avatara within the Christian tradition? There is already preparation for such a descent and appearance in female human form in both doctrine and practice, in Scripture itself and in the devotion of the people. The collective psyche of humanity is in urgent need of such an image and such a presence... The memory of the species is long. The great archetypes are deeply rooted in. Like long-submerged volcanic fires under the seas, when their times comes they erupt from the unconscious... She, the everlasting Woman has been there from the beginning as the feminine image of God. Perhaps the time has come to give Her a name” [841].

Beatrice Bruteau writing about *The Unknown Goddess* arrives at a similar conclusion: “We sense that the Goddess is somehow making Her way back to us” [842].

In her work *The Future—If There Is One—Is Feminine*, Sally Miller Gearhart is straightforward: “It becomes clearer with every moment: EITHER THE FUTURE IS FEMALE OR THE FUTURE IS NOT”³⁴⁸ [843].

Under these circumstances, some visionaries proclaimed the near at hand start of the *Sophianic Millennium* where Sophia is the name given to the Great Goddess. One of them wrote the following prophetic words, which could serve as a conclusion to our considerations expounded in this section: “Because she is a veiled Goddess, she can be everyone’s mother, sister or daughter. She is at hand as a living avatara of the Divine Feminine, the Goddess whom we have forgotten and for whom we yearn so urgently... She links us to the ancient Goddesses through the shared symbolism of Isis and Mary, as well as to the native creation Goddesses of Europe. Present in the apocryphal incident, in song and story, in the visions of mystics and philosophers, disguised in both transcendent and earthly images, Sophia comes into our lives and bids us follow her into the Sophianic millennium

³⁴⁸ All emphases added by S.M. Gearhart.

when the Divine feminine will no longer be veiled... As Sophia emerges further into consciousness, so will the image of the empowered woman become apparent in the world... Nothing is going to delay the Goddess' second coming, whether in the guise of Sophia or under any other form. As she emerges so the imbalances of our culture will inevitably iron themselves out... The metaphorical shape of future beliefs will be determined by the needs of the people who live in that future... The unfolding of a Goddess theology is happening as I write. The only difference between this and orthodox theologies is that Goddess spiritually spurns hierarchy, dogma and doctrine. Within the fluid and simple lines of Sophia's dance are the future steps of practical spiritual manifestation... The search for spiritual consciousness—a common ground from which worship of the Divine Feminine arises—is a problem, which is being immediately redressed... We stand on the threshold of a Goddess religion which, by virtue of its membership and its aim, is non-hierarchical, decentralized, locally-manifested, in many and various ways. Goddess spirituality addresses directly to the problems of our own world now... To acknowledge the Goddess is to open up immediately to issues which threaten our total existence. For we cannot deny our common heritage of life which the Goddess safeguards... The face of the Goddess is being restored to us in many forms, not least that of Sophia, the Goddess of Wisdom, who has preserved and sustained the Goddess' ancient love for creation. She is not *just* the planet earth or Nature, though some see her so; she is the Lady of our physical, creative and spiritual life" [844].

NOTES

[1] Publius Vergilius Maro, *The Bucolics* 4.4-9, in *The Poems of Virgil* (transl. by James Rhoades), Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, London, Toronto, Geneva 1952, p.14. [2] Eliade, *The Myth...*, pp.143-144; Pierre Duhem, *Système du Monde*, Paris 1913, vol. II, p.446 sq.; vol. V, p.22 sq.; Lynn Thorndyke, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Macmillan, New York 1923, vol. I, p.455 sq.; Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Bedminster Press, New York 1962, vol. II, p.371. [3] Eliade, *The Myth...*, p.146; also Sorokin, *Social...*, p.379 sq. [4] A. Rey, *Le Retour éternel et la philosophie de la physique*, E. Flammarion, Paris 1927; Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, Harper & brothers, New York and London 1928, pp.728-741; Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, London, New York 1934, vol. III; Elsworth Huntington, *Mainsprings of Civilization*, Wiley, New York 1945, esp. p.453 sq.; Jean-Claude Antoine, *L'Éternel Retour de l'Histoire deviendra-t-il objet de science?*, in *Critique* no.27, p.723 sq. (août 1948) [5] Hubert Reeves, *Atoms of Silence. An Exploration of Cosmic Evolution*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., London 1984, p.8. [6] *The Mahabharata, Shanti Parvan*, ch. LIX; *apud* Dowson, pp.382-383, and Wilkins, pp.246-247, 357-360. [7] *The Vishnu Purana* 4.24. [8] David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, Anchor Bible Series vol. 43, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N. Y. 1979, p.103. [9] Ringgren, p.46. [10] Constantin Daniel, *Civilizația Egiptului antic (Civilization of the Ancient Egypt)*, Ed. Sport-Turism, București 1976, p.243. [11] *Denkart* 9.8; also 7.9-35 *passim*; Henrik S. Nyberg, *Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéenes*, in *Journal Asiatique* (1929, 1931); R.C. Zaehner, *Zurvanica*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. III, pp.303 sq., 573 sq., 871 sq. (1937-1939); H.H. Schaeder, *Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythos*, in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* vol. 95, p.268 sq. (1941); Henry Corbin, *Le temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et dans l'ismaélisme*, in *Eranos Jahrbuch* vol. 20, p.16 sq. (1951); Eliade, *The Myth...*, pp.124-125. [12] *Menoki-i xrat* 44.17-35. [13] *Digha Nikaya* III.71-72; *Chakkavatti-Sihandha Suttanta*. [14] Lao-tseu, *Tao-Te-King* 38.16-21 (transl. by Tao Jian Wen); cf. ch. 18. [15] *Ibid.*, 16.4, 6; 40.1. [16] *The Writings of Chuang...*, book XVI, part II, section IX, 2, pp.369-370. [17] *Ibid.*, book II, part I, section II, 5, pp.185-186. [18] *Ibid.*, book IX, part II, section II, 2, p.278. [19] Wang Ch'ung, quoted in Needham, vol. IV, p.7; cf. Kuei Ku Tzu, quoted in *ibid.*, p.6. [20] Confucius, *Book of Ritual* 7.1.2, in *Confucius' Great Harmony* (transl. by Dr. Shih-shun Liu), copyright by Duen His Yen, 1998-2000; A Chinese version of the above can be found on the wall of Sun Yatsen Hall, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York. [21] Hesiod, *The Works and the Days* vv.108-189, in

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XX. THE QUEST FOR THE BIBLICAL DIVINE MOTHER

“*Antiquam exquirite matrem*”

(Seek the ancient mother, Lat.)

Virgil, *The Aeneid* [1]

“*Das Ewig-Weibliche/ Zieht uns hinan.*” These words conclude Goethe’s masterpiece of universal literature *Faust* [2], therefore bear the quintessence of the message the author intended to convey to the reader. Besides, they are uttered by the mystical choir (*chorus mysticus*, Lat. having here the meaning of *initiates*, from *myst*, Gr.; ch. XV C and E), hence their deep spiritual significances. The original German text gave birth to various translations-interpretations going from the most trivial to the ones bearing profound meanings: “*Woman, eternally show us the way*” [3], “*The Eternal-Womanly draw us upward*” [4], “... *raise (rapture, lead) us to the heavens*” [5], “*Woman Eternal draw us on high*” [6], “*The Woman-Soul leadeth us upward and on!*” [7], “*’th Eternal, in Woman, leads upward and on*” [8]. A comment on these verses says: “We know such love in its purest, most selfless form only in womanhood, whether incorporated in earthly woman or imagined in its highest perfection in the Virgin. Such love is the supreme, uplifting power. The Eternal-Womanly leads upward and on, closer and closer to God” [9].

The woman is the pole around which our entire life revolves. As a virgin she is the symbol of purity and as a mother, she embodies fertility, she gives us birth. It is from her that we first learn the pure love whose superlative is the love of God. This first love is further reflected in the brotherly love and in the love for wife and children. She is the refuge, the support and the most reliable help.

We should admit like Roerich: “When there are difficulties in the home we turn to the woman...When enmity and mutual destruction reach their limits, we turn to the woman. When evil forces overcome one, the woman is invoked.” [10]. He drew the conclusion: “To enumerate the achievements of Womanhood, is to write the history of the world. To enumerate the ecstasies of illumination, is to enumerate the visions of Womanhood” [11].

From the few following instances the reader could judge by himself on the high homage the wise men and people of ancient times paid to the Mother.

The *Laws of Manu* read: “The teacher (*acharya*) is ten times more venerable than a sub-teacher (*upadhyaya*), the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father” [12]. “Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are

not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards” [13]. Since of old until presently, in India, as a token of free consented surrender, after finishing the performing of the familial cult, the father and the children wipe the dust off mother’s feet and put their heads on her feet [14]. Now as in ancient times the Indian wives and holy women equalled in their own feminine way man’s spiritual level. According to a Sanskrit saying: “*yatra narya pujanya tatra ramante devata*” (where the women are respected and respectable, there resides the gods of our well-being). Perhaps nowhere better than in India turns true Vinet’s saying: “A people is worth as much as its women.”

It is said that Confucius refused to enter Shongmu settlement because that name means “higher than mother” [15].

Roerich revealed: “A text from the true East apostrophizes the Mother of the World: «Thou, Who hast covered Thy Face! Thou, Who hast woven the texture of the far-off worlds, Messenger of the Untold³⁴⁹! Ruler of the Elusive! Bestower of the Unrepeatable. By thy command the ocean becomes silent and the whirlwinds trace the outlines of invisible signs...And She who covered Her face will stand on guard alone in the glory of the signs. And none will ascend to the summit, none will perceive the glory of the twelve-signed³⁵⁰ symbol of Her power³⁵¹. From the spirals³⁵² of light She Herself has woven the sign in silence. She is the Leader of those who go toward attainment. Four³⁵³ corners, the sign of affirmation, are manifested by Her as a benediction to those who have made their decision... A silent command, all-penetrating, unchangeable, indivisible, irrefutable, blinding, generous, indescribable, unrepeatable, unharmed, unpronounced, timeless, undeletable—the lightning³⁵⁴ manifested in the lightening!»” [16].

It would be not devoid of interest to see what happened in Buddhism since similar manifestations occurred in Judaism, Christianity and Islam (sections XX B, C and D).

“Originally no Buddhist doctrines asserted any difference between women’s and men’s religious capacities, aspirations, and accomplishments.

³⁴⁹ The sacred, unutterable name, like YHWH for the Jews (ch. XV D).

³⁵⁰ Reminding Revelation 12:1 (ch. XIX C).

³⁵¹ Adi Shakti (Sansk.).

³⁵² Her manifestation as the Kundalini (ch. IX, XI E).

³⁵³ The number of perfection (swastika, the carbon tetrahedron etc.; ch. I) and the one of the Son born by her.

³⁵⁴ Ch. II, IX, XI E.

But some time after the death of the Buddha, his followers began to speculate about the implications of his teachings. Then, sometime after about 300 BC and before 200 BC, a doctrinal crisis erupted wherein the spiritual capacities of women were challenged and a real effort made to prove theologically that women are inferior to men... Not all Buddhist schools shared the view that a Buddha could only have been a male during countless previous existences, however. In a Chinese collection of Jatakas, translated from an Indian language in the middle of the third century AD and published in French translation by Chavannes, there are three tales of previous female existences of Gautama and one of a female existence of the next Buddha-to-be of our world system, Maitreya Bodhisattva” [17].

Even under such almost general circumstances, it has been a remarkable fact that Plato’s nephew and head of his school, Speusippus (407-339 BC) maintained the existence in the universe of a Feminine Principle who manifested herself at different levels of the human being [18], a concept that subsequently echoed with both neo-Pythagoreans and Gnostics.

Here it is an excerpt from the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in praise of the Divine Mother (ch. XX): “The One Divine Mother is the Creator of all things, the Primordial Cause. She Herself is wisdom, meditation and discerning understanding. She is not far away; She is near at hand, within all. So praise the True One, O Nanak, with love! Serving the Guru, one is committed to the Naam, the Name of the Divine Mother. It is received only by those who have good fortune and destiny inscribed upon their foreheads. The Divine Mother dwells within their hearts. Their minds and bodies become bliss and tranquil. O my mind, sing such Praise of the Divine Mother, which shall be of use to you here and hereafter... The Guru has bestowed Her Glance of Grace upon all, within whose hearts the Divine Mother has implanted Her Mantra. The Words of the Divine Mother’s Praises is their food and nourishment. Says Nanak, they have the Perfect True Guru” [19].

According to Jung: “The psyche pre-existent to consciousness (e.g., in the child) participates in the material psyche on the one hand, while on the other it reaches across to the daughter psyche... The conscious experience of these ties produces the feeling that her life is spread out over generations—the first step towards the immediate experience and conviction of being outside time³⁵⁵, which brings with it a feeling of *immortality*. The individual’s life is elevated into a type, indeed it becomes the archetype of woman’s fate in general” [20]. To that archetype Jung devoted numerous pages within his ample works out of which we should mention here the *Kóre* (Maiden Goddess) in connection to the *Divine Child*, result of his collaboration with C. Kerényi [21]. When talking about the *anima-animus* relationship he

³⁵⁵ Ch. XIX C.

explained: “Whereas the old science was almost exclusively a field in which only the man’s unconscious could project itself, the new psychology had to acknowledge the existence of an autonomous female psyche as well” [22]. Therefore it is not a matter of *existence* since this female psyche exists independently of our consciousness but only of *acknowledgement and investigation*.

Schuon acknowledged: “That femininity is a necessary element in all spirituality... as is proved—if proof were needed—by the mystical role of the Virgin-Mother.” As concerns the fight supporters between masculine and feminine in spirituality, “the revolt of one against the other... is indirectly a revolt against God” [23].

In spite of that reality, “with the possible exception of the Virgin Mary, the goddess as a viable religious symbol is a stranger to most contemporary Westerners... Among some feminist writers and thinkers, as well as a number of male scholars, the goddess is receiving renewed interest as she emerges in the consciousness of contemporary religious individuals” [24].

XX-1 However, apart from Virgin Mary, in our times the Goddess came back in people’s attention under the shape of *Liberty* expressed through monuments such as the New York statue (with its smaller replica placed on a bridge over the Seine River in Paris), or its homonym (but of a different artistic look) dominating Budapest from the top of Gellert hill, or in the famous Delacroix painting *Liberty guiding the people* in the Louvre Museum.

Full of hope for the time to come (see ch. XIX D), Roerich heralded a new era: “The medieval humiliation and belittling of women have passed. People have again realized the future Era of the Mother of the World” [25].

Around 1970 (see ch. XIX D) an ample debate about the status and roles of women in the present-day society has started with an unprecedented authentic popular enthusiasm. The social institutions were investigated as regards their negative part they played in placing women in a peripheral position and the cultural institutions made no exception within the trial [26]. We shall give as an example Arthur Green’s essay *Bride, Spouse, Daughter: Images of the Feminine in Classical Jewish Sources* [27].

The Goddess motif focuses the attention of creators in various fields (figurative arts, drama, poetry, prose, dance, movie etc.) by thousands. Tens of books and scholarly studies, thousands of papers on this topic are issued every year. This corpus of writings in a persistent development—already reaching an impressive dimension—created a strong impact on history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, art history and even theology [28].

Stone remarks: “One of the most interesting concepts that has arisen from within the women’s spirituality movement is the idea or belief that the

Goddess is immanent, i.e. within us, even within all life, as contrasted with the idea of a transcendent deity high above us” [29].

After taking a lucid look at the actual state of affairs, Caitlín Matthews stated that she “is the great lost Goddess who has remained intransigently within orthodox spiritualities. She is veiled, blackened, denigrated and ignored most of the time, or else she is exalted, hymned and pedestalled as an allegorical abstraction of divinity... The West is exiled of the Goddess—her features are unknown to us, guessed at, hoped for, rejected as aberration, feared as monstrous or deformed. We in the West are haunted by the loss of our Mother. Our mother country is a place many have never visited, though it is endlessly projected as a golden matriarchy, or paradise, but though the house of the Goddess is in disrepair after so many centuries of neglect... The West no longer speaks the language of the Goddess, because the concept has been almost totally erased from consciousness, although many are trying to remember it... We didn’t invent this Goddess. She was always there, from the beginning. Somehow, humanity left home and forgot its mother. Perhaps our ancestors took her for granted so much that they lost touch?... After two thousand years of masculine images, the time of Goddess reclamation has arrived. The Goddess is just as much Deity as Jesus, or Allah, or Yahweh... The re-emergence of the Divine feminine—the Goddess—in the twentieth century has begun to break down the conceptual barriers erected by orthodox religion and social conservatism. For the first time in two millennia, the idea of a Goddess as the central pivot of creation is finding a welcome response” [30].

* * *

One may ask which was the earliest myth of creation? Actually, science establishes that single cells reproduce themselves through division, that is parthenogenesis, and not as the result of a heterosexual process.

Perhaps it is less known that the contemporary science is able to explain why the Eternal-Womanly is so high placed in human consciousness. The genetic researches arrived at the conclusion that the so-called *chromosome YXX-2* (masculine) is the result of transformations originating in the *chromosome X* (feminine). The process is described as follows:

“At their origin, the heterochromosomes X and Y were a couple of homologous chromosomes... According to Ohno (1967,1970), the transition from the state of «homologous sexual chromosomes» into the chromosomes X and Y in man (in mammals, in general) would have been determined by... the loss and differentiated accumulation of the sexualizing genes,” among

other factors. “It is supposed that a «sexual³⁵⁶» chromosome would have eliminated the somatic structural genes through recurrent deletions. When the genetic «deterioration» was completed, the chromosome that became devoid of structural genes shrunk considerably turning into a sexual chromosome Y” [31].

To the opinions reviewed above we should add the conclusion reached by Buytendijk in his book entitled *Woman* [32] who said that from a biologic point of view the masculine appears “accidental” and “problematical” since in nature the evolution is determined by the feminine fecundity. Moreover, “if consider her greater longevity and endurance towards diseases one could say that *woman is the strong sex.*”

Now, we can provide another clue pointing at the Eternal-Womanly. The investigations established that in the cytoplasm besides the DNA in the cell nucleus there is—within the mitochondria (cell *primary source of energy*³⁵⁷)—an *archaic* form of DNA. The archaism of this DNA (whose presence determines the preservation of an extremely small molecular size throughout the evolution), along with its nucleotide ring evoking the bacterial plasmides as well as the absence of any segment of “mute” (not translated) gene denotes the *rigorous maternal origin* of the mitochondrial DNA that is sharply distinct from the nuclear DNA, the last one having a mixed origin, not translated segments (*introns*) and a molecular size 6-60 time larger. It is remarkable that the mitochondrial DNA plays no part in sexual reproduction, meaning that it followed not the way of sexual reproduction appearing as an archaic vestige of monocell asexual reproduction. The quasitotality of this kind of DNA is expressed in mammals. The absence of the introns together with the matrilineal transmission excluding any mixing does not induce, however, the preservation of sequences throughout the classes and species. Thus, the percentage of substitutions (hence of variants) acquired over the evolutionary process is 5-10 times greater for the mitochondrial DNA as compared with the nuclear DNA [33].

We also have to refer here to some fishes giving birth *only to females* (for XX-3 instance *Rivulus marmoratus*) whose eggs evolve without needing fecundation [34].

Before leaving the genetics, we shall quote again the previous work [31] concluding that “within the population appear mutations *ipso facto* that prevent the accurate definition of the causes responsible for their apparition; these are called spontaneous mutations or genetic variations. Therefore, the

³⁵⁶ Homologous (our comment).

³⁵⁷ That syntagma renders the *exact translation* of the Adi Shakti concept (ch. I) at the cell level.

spontaneous or «natural» mutations are genetic modifications taking place during the natural life course and are determined by factors unknown to the scientist. Their causes are supposed to be “message modifications in the «genetic dictionary» of the individual” “implying especially endogenous factors.” This also confirms implicitly the existence of some exogenous factors unknown (or *not acknowledged*) by the medical science. “But what it is surely known is that... it is necessary an extrinsic supply of energy³⁵⁸ for producing spontaneous (natural) mutations” [31]. We shall also remind that some authors [35] suppose that the energy impact “might determine an increase of the atoms *vibratory* movement leading to a change of molecular configuration” (emphasis added). It is also inferred that amongst the implied factors there are *factors of cosmic nature*, too [36] (ch. II). The conclusion reached by the scientists is that “there is no sure explanation for the large majority of the genetic mutations, hence their spontaneous feature. However, this supposes not their hazardous frequency.” The mutagenic factor can be defined as “the one that amplifies the frequency of the spontaneous mutations” [37].

Founded on the results obtained through Sahaja Yoga practice, Shri Mataji supplied the answer to the questions above, by revealing that the vibratory energy of the Kundalini is able to perform the miracle of very deep changes even at the level of the genes.

W. E. Butler prophesied that if mankind shall learn to govern the automatic process whereby the life force is absorbed in our bodies and perhaps some day even harness the Kundalini, we should be able to alter our molecular structure. He believed that when we shall transform ourselves into spiritual beings the physical universe will no longer appear as form, “but will pass into a state known in the East as *pralaya*—a state of no matter” [38].

We will close our analyze calling for numerology and mathematics, specifically to the row of Fibonacci³⁵⁹ composed of numbers obtained by adding the two preceding ones, for instance: $2+1=3$, $3+2=5$, $5+3=8$, $8+5=13$ etc. However, there is one exception: number 2 cannot be thus computed ($0+1$) and *not only* calls for 1 to be the former number *but also* the other preceding one to be *the same 1*, otherwise the row *cannot be generated!* Therefore we have: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13,... From here we can infer that the existence of the Divine Mother (the second 1, while the first 1 is the Divine Father) results as a *necessity* within this outstanding mathematical row that, similarly to all created beings needs *two* progenitors. The beginning of the

³⁵⁸ The Kundalini energy is such a *not acknowledged factor* by medical science.

³⁵⁹ Leonardo Fibonacci, a prominent mathematician of Pisa (end of the 12th—beginning of the 13th century).

row reminds the known legend of Creation (ch. I): the unmanifested state of Parabrahman (0), then its manifestation as the Father, Sada-Shiva (first 1) and the Mother, Adi Shakti (second 1), followed by the apparition of a pair of successors (2) as in many mythologies: Ganesha and Karttikeya, Enki and Enlil, Baal-Hadad and Ishtar, Baal and Astarte/Anath, Zeus and Hera, Jupiter and Juno, Susano-o (Impetuous Male, Japan.) and Amaterasu, not forgetting Adam and Eve, or the divine Son and Daughter in the Kabbalah (ch. XX B). At last it comes 3 that represents the divine triad (Christian Trinity, Hindu Trimurti, Islamic Trinity etc.). We should not forget that Fibonacci's row found its correspondents within the living, for instance the most highly developed plants. Also it reminds the beginning of the cosmic history when three minutes after the *Big Bang* (the "zero" moment) out of protons and neutrons, the atoms of light elements were forged: hydrogen, helium, lithium, thus getting the series of the atomic mass: 1 (particles: proton, neutron), 1 (hydrogen), 2 (helium), 3 (lithium). Although deuterium appears besides helium having also the atomic mass 2, the former should not be taken into consideration since it is not an element but another hydrogen isotope.

A. THE DIVINE MOTHER OF THE NON-HEBREW ANCIENT PEOPLE

*"All the peoples that had any morals, paid respect
to the woman"*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau [39].

Before any male deity, the Feminine Principle was worshipped and deified by people since the earliest times.

Gimbutas shows: "The Goddess of the Paleolithic and Neolithic... was deemed sacred, and revered as the ultimate metaphor for the divine Creator... The Goddess was a cosmic Creatrix, Life- and Birth-giver, while the father image is not known to Paleolithic and Neolithic art... Flint sculptures of female figures and animals have been found that date as far back as the Acheulian period of the Lower Paleolithic more than 500,000 years ago...; most research has been done on the Upper Paleolithic period, 40,000 to 10,000 before our present time... Furthermore, the survival of goddess worship in historical times and in myth is another rich source that fills the gap of an incomplete archaeological record" [40]. Here are some examples.

In a cave from Laussel by the river Vézère in France, a bas-relief was found depicting a woman as a symbol of maternity. She holds a horn (mark

of power; ch. VIII) in her hand raised in a ritual gesture. Small statues XX-4 witnessing the existence of a motherhood cult over the Aurignacian period were also brought to light in Willendorf (Austria), Grimaldi (Italy), Brassempouy (France), as well as in the eastern part of Europe. Female figurines carved in stone, clay or even ivory such as the one found in Lespugue (Haute Garonne, France), or drawn on ceramic pots, were also found in the layers from Neolithic period in Asia Minor, the Aegean archipelago, the Balkan and the Iberian peninsulas, England, France and Denmark, all proving that the female divinity was an object of uninterrupted worship. Images of goddesses 30,000—40,000 years old came to light in Gagarino, by the Don river, at Mal'ta near Baikal Lake and northwest of Irkutsk. We should not forget the female figurines dating back to about 9,000 BC from the ancient Iran and the terra cotta statuettes symbolizing fecundity found out at Tepe-Sarab, Iran (c. 6000 BC) [41]. Two other images of the Goddess were excavated in Jericho, the earliest known city. A goddess of fecundity molded in crude clay (6th millennium) and the Mother Goddess made of terra-cotta from Çatal-Hüyük (c.5700 BC) were both discovered on the Anatolian plateau and are now on display in the Ankara Museum. Numerous statuettes of the Mother Goddess from the second quarter of the 6th millennium were discovered in Hacilar, Anatolia. Another statue of the Mother Goddess from the Tell³⁶⁰-Halaf culture (5300 - 4300 BC) was found on north of Nineveh. In 1986 the statue of a goddess “was discovered in Liaoning province, northeast of Beijing, at excavation sites of the Hongshan culture, which existed about 4500 to 2500 BC... Somewhat northwest of this main site, in Niu-he Liang, a life-sized head of a female deity figure from 3000 BC was also unearthed. It is considered to be the oldest deity figure discovered in China and possibly the first tangible evidence of an archaic female goddess cult” [42].

Merlin Stone arrived at the following conclusion: “In all the Neolithic and Chalcolithic societies... the Mother Goddess was revered as the supreme deity.” As compared to Her male companion, “from India to the Mediterranean... She reigned supreme” [43].

For the Neolithic artist, “the primary purpose was to transform and spiritualize the body and to surpass the elementary and corporeal” [44]

Marija Gimbutas has substantiated with a profusion of proofs the existence of *Old Europe*³⁶¹ as a cultural entity having its cradle on the XX-5 territory of presently Romania, that lasted for three millenniums including the XIX end of the Neolithic period (6500 - 5500 BC) and the Bronze Age (5500 - 61

³⁶⁰ Hill (Arab.).

³⁶¹ See also ch. I.

3500 BC). Starting its development from this cradle, Old Europe cultural area eventually extended northward over eastern Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and southern Poland, the western Ukraine until Kiev, and southward over Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Crete and other Aegean islands, the western coast of Turkey, southern Italy and Sicily. About 30,000 statuettes made of clay, marble, bone, copper or gold are known from a total of some 3,000 archaeological sites within this area. Amongst them, the XX-6 Goddess figure held a central place undisputed by other tribal divinities. . . . 10 Gimbutas stated that “there are no sculptures of male gods in the Paleolithic, and there are no male gods associated with life and birth giving or death wielding throughout the Neolithic period.” The Goddess was “incarnating the creative principle as Source and Giver of All” [45]. This European cultural entity was characterized as “matrifocal and probably matriarchal, agricultural and sedentary, egalitarian and peaceful. It contrasted sharply with the ensuing proto-Indo-European culture, which was patriarchal, stratified, pastoral, mobile, and war-oriented, superimposed on all Europe, except the southern and western fringes... The persistence of the Goddess worship for more than 20,000 years, from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic and behind, is shown by the continuity of a variety of a series of conventional images. Her specific aspects of power such as life-giving, fertility-giving, and birth-giving are extremely long lasting... The artistic tradition produced in the late sixth and fifth millennium BC in the central Balkan Peninsula is one of the most remarkable and distinctive of European and Near Eastern prehistory” [46]. “There are no depictions of arms (weapons used against other humans) in Paleolithic cave paintings, nor are there remains of weapons used by man against man during the Neolithic of Old Europe... Hill forts in inaccessible locations are not known to Old Europe, nor are daggers, spears, and halberds... As archaeological, historical, linguistic, and religious evidence shows, Old European society was organized around a theocratic, communal temple community, guided by a queen-priestess, her brother or uncle, and a council of women as the governing body” [47].

The matrilineal (mother-kinship) tradition that appeared in Old Europe, manifested a historic continuity since it existed in the archaic Egypt, Sumer, western Anatolia (Lycia), Minoan and Mycenaean Crete, the pre-Greek cities (Argos, Thebes, Tiryns, Athens), as well as in Etruscan civilization, the Picts in Britain before the Celts, Teutons, Slavs, Balts, Basques in northern Spain and southwestern France. Diodorus wrote that in Egypt “it was ordained that the queen should have greater power and honor than the king and that among private persons the wife should enjoy authority over the husband, husbands agreeing in the marriage contract that they will be obedient in all things to their wives.” And Frazer added: “In Egypt, the archaic system of mother-kin,

with its preference for women over men in matters of property and inheritance, lasted down to Roman times” [48].

The gradual transition from the matriarchal society to patriarchy began only towards the third millennium when the processing of metals started. The hard metals as the bronze and later on the iron provided the raw material for the manufacturing of the weapons. Consequently, the warlike patriarchal society replaced the peaceful matriarchal one that used to worship the Goddess, and the male deities dethroned the Goddess.

Coming in three successive waves from the Russian steppe for the period between 4200 and 2800 BC the speakers of Indo-European languages belonging to the Kurgan culture invaded the territory of Old Europe. They forced the Old Europeans to adopt their patriarchal structure, pastoral economy and a pantheon dominated by male deities³⁶². However, the millennial traditions of the Old European substratum were strongly enough for influencing the spiritual life of later European cultures even in a deep measure. Old European religion focused on the cult of feminine deities became clandestine and persisted only with the subdued population, firstly by grandparents and the family mother. As a way of example, the Geto-Dacians kept Woman in a high esteem as can be seen from the Trajan Column in the scenes depicting the conquest of Dacia by the Romans, where women were shown in a rather great number. The cult of the Divine Mother that succeeded in surviving since ancient periods in spite of the patriarchal people invasion was yet altered together with the arriving of the Christian faith and the adoration of the Great Goddess was transferred on Virgin Mary (ch. XX C3).

Robert Graves referred to the “late Minoan times when invaders from Central Asia began to substitute patrilineal for matrilineal institutions and remodel or falsify the myths to justify the social changes” [49]. Baring and Cashford [50] wrote: “Towards the middle of the Bronze Age the Mother Goddess recedes into the background as father gods begin to move to the center of the stage... New creation myths, in which the Father God plays the central role, now begin to overshadow the old ones... We can only wonder how the goddess cultures of the Bronze Age would have continued to evolve had they not been disrupted by the arrival of migratory warrior tribesmen who imposed their mythology and their patriarchal customs on the agricultural peoples whose territory they invaded.” Campbell shows that the impact of these tribal peoples on the Bronze Age cultures from Europe to India was dramatic: “Towards the close of the Age of Bronze and, more strongly, with the dawn of the Iron Age (c.1250 BC in the Levant), the old cosmology and mythologies of the Goddess Mother were radically transformed, reinterpreted, and in large measure even suppressed, by those

³⁶² The Gods of Sun, Heaven, Thunder, Fire etc.

suddenly intrusive patriarchal warrior tribesmen whose traditions come down to us chiefly in the Old and New Testament and in the myths of Greece” [51]. From the fourth millennium BC onwards, Indo-European tribes, in even increasing numbers, force their way into Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and lands stretching eastwards to the Indus Valley. We can trace their path of conquest as they appear as Hittites in Anatolia and Syria; Mittani, Hurrians and Kassites in Mesopotamia; Achaeans and then Dorians in Greece; and Aryans in the Indus Valley [52]. At the same time, the Semitic tribes move from the Syrian-Arab desert towards Mesopotamia and Canaan. The echo of the mythology of war resounds in the *Mahabharata* as it does in the *Iliad* and the Old Testament, descends from these Bronze Age migrations.

In spite of the success of patriarchy, the matriarchal organization lasted until presently in several tribal cultures and the matrilineal tradition persisted until today with the Jews. The archaeological findings prove how perennial it was the cult for the feminine divinity with most of the ancient populations.

In ancient Egypt, the Universal Mother appeared as the sacred cow, symbol of vitality and immortal life.

XX-16 *Hathor, Nut and Isis* were depicted either as a cow or a cow-headed
 . . . 19 woman or a woman bearing a solar discus (a symbol of the divine Son)
 placed between her lyre-shaped horns [53]. The three goddesses are often
 spoken of as a unity, and all three are at times called “Mother of Heavens,”
 “Queen of all gods and goddesses” etc. Another divinity worshipped as a cow
 was the one called *Mht wr.t* (Egypt).

Hathor had not only horns but also cow’s ears and had the serpent Uraeus that protected gods and kings as her ornament. There was “a female snake protecting the Queen” (*nhb.t-Ke*, Egypt.) too [54]. The goddess corresponded to the nocturnal sky, being portrayed with a star-spangled belly [55] despite the paradoxical fact that she played the role of the “Sun-eye.” Her name means: “my house is the heaven.” Hathor was also called a Tree Goddess (symbolizing the renewal of life), but this honor was shared with other goddesses, particularly with Nut, Isis and Saosis. From time immemorial and particularly in later ages, Hathor was surnamed the *Gold* and the *Golden One*, evoking thus immortality and eternity [56]. Hathor was also known as “the Lady of the Sycamore” whose fruits—considered as “the flesh and fluid of

XX-20 the goddess—granted immortality. At Byblos, in Phoenicia, Hathor was
 called *Baalat*. Merlin Stone thinks that for some Arab people Hathor became
Umma Attar (Mother Attar), while for some Canaanites *Attor* was another
 name given to goddess Astoreth. In Egypt, Ashtoreth was known as *Asit*,
 close to the names of the goddesses *Au Set* and *Ua Zit* (Great Serpent;
 worshipped in the Lower Egypt as “the Cobra Goddess”). In fact, the
 Egyptian hieroglyph for the word “goddess” was a cobra.

Nut was the typical sky goddess and sometimes was portrayed as the cow XX-19 of the sky whose milk, showered as rain, fed the world, therefore she was related to the Milky Way.

Plato mentioned another example of a parallel between the mythologies of two civilizations (ch. XIX B). He wrote that a goddess “is called in the Egyptian tongue Neith, and is asserted by them to be the same whom the Hellenes call Athena” [57].

However, the most important female Goddess was Isis, the symbol of XX-15 universal motherhood and fertile humus who alongside Osiris and Horus was a part of the holy triad. She was the goddess of the serpents (ch. IX), of the primordial waters, of the Tree of Life (ch. IV) and offered “the water of immortality” (ch. XI D), being at the same time the milk-giving cow-goddess and the bird-goddess (as a swallow; ch. XXI). In opposition to Hathor and Nut, Isis alone was “the God-mother,” “the Lady of Life,” “the Goddess of a thousand names³⁶³” (*myrionymos*, Gr.) [58]. Isis was also worshipped as “Lady of Words of Power” (ch. XV D), whose “incantations destroy diseases” [59]. In a great hymn in which Isis enumerates her virtues, she declares: “I am she that is called goddess... I revealed mysteries unto men... I am the Queen of rivers and winds and sea... I am the Queen of the thunderbolt... I set free... I overcome Fate” [60]. We can easily identify here the elements of the subtle anatomy (*rivers*—channels, *sea*—Void), the Kundalini (*thunderbolt*) and her manifestation (*winds*), which grants moksha (*sets free*) and wipes out karma (*overcome Fate*). Apuleius identified Isis to Ceres, Venus and Proserpine [61]. She was Pessinuntica (Cybele), Artemis, Aphrodite, the Corn Goddess from Eleusis (Demeter), Juno, Bellona, Hecate etc. [62]. Actually, also Plutarch alleged the identity between Isis and Demeter, the latter continuing the tradition of Cybele from Asia Minor [63]. Last but not least, vestiges such as a temple at London on the Thames and an altar in Chester witnessed of the worship of Isis in the Roman period. All these circumstances attest the *ubiquitous presence* of the Goddess (see also ch. XIX B).

The Cow Goddess was honored also outside the Nile fertile area. A funeral stone found in Byblos, Phoenicia, represented *Astarte* seated on a throne and having a disc between her horns [64]. The Goddess was spoken of as *Ashteroth-Qarnaim* (Astarte of the Two Horns). In Egypt Astarte became *Anath*. Ramesses II was called “Anath’s suckling” and the monument depicting the Pharaoh’s wedding showed Ramesses fed by a cow instead of Hathor. In fact, Astarte was often portrayed with horns [65]. Likewise was rendered the Sumerian goddess Ninhurshag (also called *Ninmah*, *Nintu* and *Aruru*; her original name was *Ki*, meaning Mother Earth). We shall see that

³⁶³ See ch. XV D and *infra*: *Sahasranama* (Sanskrit.).

the Holy Cow was also worshipped in India. This aspect of the Goddess was venerated by the Magi in Media, Iran, and holds an important place in Zoroastrianism where the *Yašna* read about “the soul of the Mother Cow” [66]. Homer used the epithet of admiration “the cow-eyed” (*boópis*, Gr.) for the goddess *Hera*. *Io* also was said to have turned into a cow. Under the name of *Andhumbla* (Milky) the goddess appeared in the Scandinavian pantheon.

XX - 21 The Egyptian goddess *Maat* was often written about in other places of this book (ch. VII; also ch. IX, XIX A), that’s why only some attributes of her will be mentioned in the foregoing. *Maat* was “the all-pervading fluid of life³⁶⁴”; it ruled over the balance between warm and cool³⁶⁵. *Maat* was energy, a force born in the good-doer; it was “the harmony that the supreme god Ra put into the world” [67]. The goddess *Maat* was joined with the top of the head³⁶⁶ of Ra. The will, essence, actions of Ra, the Creator of the world, were saturated with *Maat*. The Egyptian had to become one with *Maat*, which was not possible to be attained by external means but only through man’s complete transformation. *Maat* was, therefore, a central concept in Egyptian thinking. She was either the wife of the supreme god Ra, or Isis or Hathor with whom she was frequently confused. Some other times there used to be two *Maats*: one associated to the Sun and the other to the Moon³⁶⁷. As already shown (ch. VII), *Maat* was called “the eye of Ra” but “eye” is *uzait* in Egyptian, related to the Serpent Goddess *Ua Zit*, while in Greek “eye” is *mati* analogous to *mata* (mother, Sanskr.). *Maat* was identified to Uraeus, the sacred serpent adorning the Pharaoh’s forehead (ch. IX). As a matter of fact, the goddesses within the ogdoad were serpents.

With respect to the Egyptian civilization we will mention here the hermetical writings ascribed to the legendary god Thoth (Hermes with the Greeks; also called *Trismegistus*, Three times great, Lat.), but probably dating back to the 3rd century BC. The text that has reached us is most likely from the first three centuries AD and edited in Byzantium about the 11th century before appearing in the west after the fall of Constantinople. Several texts gratify Thoth as “an excellent Nurse” besides the “Workman, as to a good Father.” Other times he is called “Father and Progenitor,” or he is characterized as “Hermaphrodite, or Male and Female... Father, that is both

³⁶⁴ Living water.

³⁶⁵ This refers to the side channels (warm and cold) thus showing that *Maat* (*Kundalini*) is between them, on the central channel, of balance.

³⁶⁶ The Sahasrara where the mystical union of Feminine (*Maat*) and Masculine (*Ra*) takes place.

³⁶⁷ Thus referring to the side channels (solar and lunar) energy.

Male and Female” [68]. As succinct that it is, the hermetic *Smaragdine Table* proclaims in an Arabic version: “Its father is the sun and its mother the moon; the wind has borne it in its body, and the earth has nourished it. . . It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below; because the light of lights within it, thus does the darkness flee before it. The force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross. The structure of the microcosm is in accordance with the structure of the macrocosm” [69], thus denoting a full knowledge about the side channels (right: solar, masculine; left: lunar, feminine), the Kundalini (wind), its flow (rising and descending from earth-Mooladhara to heaven-Sahasrara) as manifestation of the Adi Shakti (power of all powers, all-pervading and prevailing over everything subtle or gross) and originating in the Mooladhara (nurse earth). It enlightens and expresses the reflection of the macrocosm on the microcosm.

The Al-‘Ubaid culture belonging to an unknown people in Mesopotamia used to worship the image of the Mother Goddess as early as the 6th XX-11 millennium [70].

In the Sumerian cosmogony that took form over the third millennium, the Goddess *Nammu* (Primordial Ocean) was the “mother who gave birth to Heaven and Earth” (male *An*, and female *Ki*, respectively; notice the identity of the latter with the subtle energy *K’i*, Japan. or *Ch’i*, Chin. i.e. the feminine Kundalini; ch. I).

Ishtar was the Goddess of the supreme triad in the Mesopotamian XX-12 religions. This Akkadian name (singular form) dates back to the end of the third millennium whereas the Babylonian name *Ishtarati* (plural form) derives from the earlier *Eshtar*. Later on, Ishtar will become the Great Goddess of Assyria. In the *Hymn to Ishtar* composed over the First Dynasty of Babylon (c. 1600 BC), the goddess was presented as exalted, even supreme among deities [71]. In southern Sumer, she was called *Inanna*, the XX-13 name depending on the geographic zone (*Ninanna*; *Ininni* as the earliest name). She had many attributes and was the mightiest of all mighty Sumerian goddesses. In the *Exaltation of Inanna*, she was in possession of all the divine ordinances and was of equal rank with the god *An*, head of the Sumerian pantheon [72]. On the tablets discovered in Ugarit, *Inanna* (*Maid*) was called “the pure Inanna” [73], “the Starry Virgin” [74], while as early as 3500 BC in southern Sumeria she was “the Virgin Queen of Heaven and Earth” or only “the Queen of Heaven” (*Regina Coeli*, Lat.) [75]. Other names given to her were “the Lioness” and sometimes “the Divine Cow.” Likewise the goddess Durga (besides others) who had the lion as a vehicle and hold weapons in her ten hands to protect the humans from the demons, “the Lioness” *Inanna*

endowed Hammurabi with powerful weapons and granted him protection XX-14 [76]. In her turn, *Tiamat*, called even by her enemy Marduk “Mother of All” [77] gave the Tablets of Fate to the Prototype Man, Kingu, in order to empower him. Also Ishtar was “she who gives scepter, throne and royal power to every king” [78]. However, we know that “the Power” corresponded to the Hindu *Adi Shakti*.

The goddess *Nidaba* of Sumeria, “the Learned One of the Holy Chamber,” was depicted as a serpent. Several sculptures unearthed in Sumer (c. 4000 BC) portray a female with the head of a serpent. At the Sumerian town of Dir, the Goddess was called “the Divine Serpent Lady.” *Ninlil* (see *infra*) was said to have the tail of a serpent. The texts on the tablets found in Sumer referred to the goddess as “the Great Mother Serpent of Heaven.”

Mah (“the mighty goddess,” “the Lady of the gods,” “the Mother of humans”) in Assyria was the Akkadian correspondent of *Belitsh*, the Queen of Gods.

Nannaya was an Akkadian Goddess with the attributes of Ishtar from the time of the third dynasty in Ur (mid of the 21st century BC). Her cult later extending to Syria, Iran and the Kushans in India.

The Babylonian theogony granted an important place to *Tiamat* (*Thamté*) as a Goddess of the primordial aquatic chaos, or *Mother Hubur*, the one who gave birth to everything.

The palace of Mari (c.2000 BC) sheltered a statue made out of a white stone, 1.50 meters high, depicting the image of the goddess of fertility. From a vessel kept in her uplifted hands flowed perpetually “the water of everlasting life” (ch. XI D) [79].

Arinna, the Sun Goddess, was worshipped in the pre-Hittite period, then the cult of the Great Mother whose name remained unknown, appeared during the Hittite occupation. Later, *Hebat* replaced *Arinna*.

The Mother Goddess *Potnia* (*Patnia*)—called “The Mistress” and “Our Lady”—was a primordial pre-theogonic divinity that had been worshipped, according to some historians, ever since the Neolithic period.

When analyzing the Indus Valley civilization, Casal wrote that the Great Goddess or the Mother Goddess was worshipped as it results from the feminine figurines surpassing by far the number of male representations. Some of the goddess’ statuettes bear on their head structures in the shape of a fan whose meaning is harder to explain, in author’s view [80]. We cannot overlook the possibility that these “fans” rather similar to lotuses symbolize the emergence of the Kundalini energy out of the Sahasrara. A multitude of seals belonging to the same culture depict the Great Goddess as the main character who bears horns (ch. VIII) on her head and is placed next to the sacred pipal tree. One seal showed her during a worship ceremony: before her

a great priestess is prostrated hands stretched towards the goddess in a gesture of adoration or prayer; underneath there is a row of seven women³⁶⁸ having high bonnets on their heads. The author detected here the obvious religious trait of the representation [81].

A great number of goddess statuettes (3rd millennium BC) was found in Afghanistan in the Nindowari temple, while those of Mundigak were dated back to 2800 - 2500 BC [82].

With the western Semites, Ishtar was called *Astarte*. Astarte was the supreme goddess of the Phoenicians (Tyre, Sidon, Carthage) who was also worshipped by the Jews (ch. XX B; notice the Hebrew name of *Esther*), Philistines (*Atargatis*), Canaanites (*Ashtaroth*, *Ashtoreth* or *Atthart*; the Arabic equivalents were *Ashtar*, *Astar* or *Athtar*), and even in Ethiopia. She dominated the Heaven (as a version of *Inanna*, “the Queen of Heaven”) and the Earth, and was the symbol of fertility.

In Syro-Palestine they also adored the virgin goddess *Anath* of Ugarit, who was considered by some as the daughter of *Asherah*, the wife of El (to whom it corresponded Anu, the Sumero-Akkadian god). The last goddess was called “Lady Asherah of the Sea” or *Elath*, that is *the Goddess*, and was considered the ancestor of the gods. Anath was known as “Mistress of Kingship,” “Mistress of Dominion,” “Mistress of the High Heavens,” and a late Phoenician inscription called her “the Power of life,” while the Jewish colonists associated her with Yahweh (ch. XX B). A Sumerian memorial plate devoted to Hammurabi (about 1750 BC) called Asherah “*Ashratum*, the bride of Amun” [83], while in southern Arabia Asherah bore the name of *Atharath*, as in the Ugarit tablets [84]. Further details shall be given in chapter XX B.

Ishtar later became *Shaushya* with the Hurrians (Mittani state in the northwest of Mesopotamia in the 16th century BC). The Mitanni people also worshipped the great Babylonian goddess *Allatum*, “the Mistress of the Earth.”

The holy book of the Iranians *Zend-Avesta* mentioned *Spanta Aramati* (*Armaiti*), “The Pure Auspicious Thinking,” that is Wisdom. Her name indicated the *Mother*. She is the goddess of the Earth (*Spandarmet*, Earth, Armenian), endowed with “the efficient force.” As counterpart of the masculine triad, she built up a feminine trinity reminding the Trimurti and their Shaktis (ch. XIX B). Dumézil mentioned *Xshathra* identified to the Greek *Eunomia*, *Vohu Manah* that equated *Eunoía*, and *Armaiti*, which is no other than *Sophía* [85]. In the post-Gathic *Avesta* it appears *Ardhva Sura Anahita*, the Great Goddess of fecundity, who was also regarded as a *trivalent goddess* (ch. XIX C). She was greatly honored by the Massagetes and

³⁶⁸ They could represent the *shaktis* of the seven chakras.

Scythians (under the name of *Anaitis*, of Greek origin). She was an emanation of Spanta Aramati (the earthly representative is *Vispa Taurvairi*), embodied as the lady of refreshing water (*living water*; ch. XI D) and fertile earth. Even the Creator (Ahura Mazda) brought sacrifices to her. Her cult also existed in Babylon and Syria. Beneath them there are the female spirits called *fravarti*. The daughter of Spanta Aramati, *Daena*, may be awakened in the believer by affirming the immortal powers of the Light on earth, when the Immortals XIX answer the call. Her son is the human prototype, *Gayomart* (ch. XIX C). He - 68 is built up of seven metals conferring him seven qualities corresponding to XIX the Seven Immortals. The relation to the seven chakras and their ruling deities - 64 is evident.

As *Atargatis* (Gr.; from *Attar'ates*, the Great Mother of primordial gods), the Syrian goddess had her temple in Hierapolis. In Greece she was identified to *Artemis*. One of her statues was found in ancient Dacia.

The Mother of Gods, a divinity from Asia Minor predominantly worshipped in Phrygia was regarded as the Great Goddess, the Great Mother, being designated under various local names: *Dindymene*, *Sipylene* (Great XX - 23 Goddess of Ida) or, most often, *Kybele* (*Kibeli*) or *Matar* (*Mother*) *Kubile*. It - 24 seems that her original name was *Kubaba* (*Kybebe*, Gr.) or *Kumbaba*. We - 25 might suppose that the last of these names evoked the pitcher, *kumbha* (Sanskrit)—a symbol of the matrix (uterus). Actually, *kubaba* means a “hollow vessel.” Our hypothesis is supported by the fact that a vessel is included in *all the five* ideograms of the name *Kubaba*, as showed on an Akkadian inscription in Ugarit (14th or 13th century BC) reading: “The Lady Kubaba, mistress of the land of Carchemish” [86]. Baring and Cashford noticed the analogy with *Humbaba*, the guard of the forest in the Gilgamesh epic. In other opinions the name could be connected to *Kube* or *Kuba* (cube), since the goddess was honored in Anatolia under the form of a cube-shaped black stone (a meteorite; ch. XV A) paralleling the sacred stone of *Ka'ba* or even the black stone at *Petra* (stone, Lat.), Jordan. The Goddess was also called *Agdistis* (Gr.). However, the Greeks avoided uttering the name of Cybele, calling her *Meter Theou* (Mother of Gods). Her cult could be found in Thrace and the Hellenic world too, and her statues were found in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Crimea. She may have been worshipped at the Neolithic shrines dedicated to the Goddess, in the same way that Mary was worshipped at shrines once sacred to Cybele and Isis [87]. In Cappadocia, Cybele was identified with the warrior goddess *Ma* or *Ammas*, while in the neighboring countries (Cyzicus, Pergamum, Troas, Mysia) she was venerated as the Mother of Gods under the name of *Ida*. *Ida* (or *Ila*) represented the Earth in the *Rig-Veda* while *Ida* was also the name of the left (feminine) channel in Yoga. Cybele has said: “I shall not go to the gods, unless I am

given my territories, half of the heavens, half of the earth, a third part of the sea. Only then I shall go hence” [88], which discloses her high status, being regarded sometimes even as the *paredre* (*paredros*, throne-companion, Gr.) of Zeus.

The Cretan civilization has granted the top of its pantheon to the Mother Goddess [89].

We shall begin analyzing the Divine Mother within the Greek civilization by revealing that in the archaic society the kinship was established on a matrilineal basis. That circumstance gave birth to the name of *Matrokles* (Famous because of his/her mother, Gr.). When the patriarchy became dominant the kinship was determined taking into account the paternal lineage, which led to the name of *Patrokles* (Famous because of his/her father, Gr.), which was given, for instance, to the close friend of Achilles in the *Iliad*.

We should not be astonished by the large variety of goddesses belonging to the Greek pantheon since as it was noticed by a historian of religions, “in Greek religion all goddesses were mere figurations of the great mother goddess who was connected with the earth” [90].

Géa or *Gaía* (short form: *Gé*) in ancient Greece was the female IV-6 representation of the Earth and it is remarkable that it was precisely a feminine and not a masculine deity who first appeared after the chaos. As the primordial divinity *Gaía* gave birth to the primordial God, *Ouranós*, the Heaven, then from this couple appeared other Gods and Titans. *Rhea* was the mother of Zeus and of the main Gods on Olympus, whereas *Hera* was the XX-26 principal Goddess of the Greek pantheon and was nicknamed “goddess of the yoke,” i.e. Goddess of Yoga (*Yogeshwari*, *Yogadaini*, Sanskr.) [91]. With the Phrygians and Trojans *Hera* was *Dindymene* or *Kybele*, while the Romans called her *Juno* [92]. Both *Gaía* and *Hera* were related to the golden apple tree about which the serpent *Ladon* coiled. The serpent also appeared in other traditions as *Lothan* (called in Canaan *Lat* or *Elat*, meaning *Goddess* as the feminine form of *El*, the *God*) or *Leviathan*, *Typhon* etc. (ch. IX).

Demeter (from *gé/dhé*, earth, and *métra*, womb, Gr.) stood for the fertile earth and was the Mother of everyone³⁶⁹ in a hymn ascribed to Orpheus. She had been given the secret (reserved solely to the initiates) name of *Deo* in the Eleusinian Mysteries (ch. XV C). However, *Demeter* as well as *Kóre* XX-27 represented not personal names but designations of “mother” and “daughter” respectively, since they were, actually, initiatory names. Pausanias asserted that *Demeter* had also a second daughter whose secret name unknown to the uninitiated was *Despoina*, while Homer and Pamphos identified *Kóre* to Proserpine. XX-27

Demeter was the goddess with *three aspects*: mother, divinity of the fertile

³⁶⁹ That is Eve (Genesis 3:21).

earth, and owner of a secret wisdom. In one of the earliest Homeric Hymns, devoted to Demeter [93], the goddess was said to teach the chosen ones a sacred mystery not to be spoken about (*árreton*, unutterable, Gr.) [94]. She was a being “not to be named” before the uninitiated. Her surname was *Erinnys* (Goddess of Peace, Gr.). In Arcadia, Demeter transformed herself into a mare. During her cult in the cave in Phygalia, the mare’s head was adorned with snakes³⁷⁰ and was accompanied by a bird (dove) [95]—a universal symbol of spirituality (common also to other goddesses as Aphrodite) which was later adopted for the Holy Spirit by Christians. In Thessaly, Demeter was known as *Pheralia*.

The virgin *Athena*, symbol of Wisdom (*Sophía*, Gr., also for Christians; ch. XX C4), had been adored since the second millennium BC and is recognized as one of the most ancient deities of Hellas. The *Iliad* related the birth of the goddess from the top of the head of Zeus that symbolized both the transcending of the Sahasrara by the female Kundalini and the *unio mystica* accomplished with the Male Principle, Atman. Among her attributes there were the holy tree (olive tree) i.e. the subtle body (ch. IV) and the snake (Kundalini, ch. IX).

Athena fought against the *Giants* just like Durga who destroyed the *asuras*. One of the names given to the goddess was *Sotería* (Savior, Gr.), while others were *Hygeia*, being regarded as “the health-giver” (likewise the Kundalini; ch. XXII C) and *Eirenephoros*, “peace carrier” (of inner peace, we should add).

Some historians do not hesitate to see a relationship between *Athena* and her Illyrian homonym, as well as the Egyptian *Aten* (*Aton*), god *Adonai* (*Lord*; of Syrian cities, later adopted by the Jews) and the Etruscan *Thana* [96]. In fact, *Athéna* means the *Goddess: A Théa* (Gr.), that is the Great Goddess (such as *Devi* or *Maha Devi* respectively, Sanskr.; see *infra*), while *Pállas* signifies Maid, Virgin (Gr.).

The Greeks worshipped *Persephone* or *Kóre* (Daughter, Gr.; of Demeter) as the goddess of death and regeneration (rebirth).

The cult of the virgin *Artemis* of Ephesus and Delos, as the protector of chastity and goddess of fecund vegetation was considered to have come out from the Asiatic and Aegean cult of the Great Mother. At the same time Artemis was “the goddess of the mountains,” thus being similar to *Parvati* (Mountaineer, Sanskr.).

Moirai—the goddesses of Destiny—could be the equivalents of the Hindu goddess *Lakshmi* (or *Shri*)—Fate, Fortune, Luck (Sansk.).

The Etruscan civilization mainly venerated *Uni* or *Una* (earlier called

³⁷⁰ Other details on the relationship between the Goddess and the serpent existing in many cultures were given in ch. XI.

Turan), the Goddess of marriage corresponding to Hera. *Menvra* was the equivalent of Athena, and Demeter was called *Kerri*, while Persephone became *Persipnai* for the Etruscans.

The Romans, either directly or through the Etruscans, took over the Greek deities and gave them new names: *Tellus* (Gaea), *Juno* (Hera), *Ceres* (Demeter), *Minerva* (Athena), *Diana* (Artemis), *Venus* (Aphrodite), *Libera*, later *Proserpine* (Persephone). Both Diana and Proserpine equated with the moon [97]. Juno-Hera was called *Magna Deum Mater* (Great Mother of the Gods, Lat.) [98] or *Deum Mater* (Mother of the Gods, Lat.) [99] by the Romans. However, most of all she was venerated as *Mater Montium* (Mother of the Mountains, Lat.) [100], analogous to *Parvati* in the Hindu pantheon.

We shall also mention the *Matronae*, depicted as three mother goddesses, reminding the triple aspects of Hindu Goddess: Maha-Lakshmi, Maha-Saraswati, and Maha-Kali.

Alma (feminine form) in Latin means “holy,” “worshipful,” “nourishing,” “life giving,” “benevolent,” attributes that were sublimely gathered in *Alma Mater*, the Universal Mother. We should not be surprised that this adjective was also used for the Earth (*Alma Tellus*) connected to Mother Earth. In the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14), *almah* (Hebr.) designated a young woman or maid, which was interpreted in the *Septuagint* by *parthénos* (virgin, Gr.; ch. XX C1).

The Romans adored *Kybele* under the name of *Cybele* and identified her with *Rhea* (sometimes with *Gaea*). When Hannibal was threatening Rome, the citizens of the capital complied with the prophecy existing in the *Sibylline Books* quoted by Livy: “if ever a foreign foe should invade the land of Italy, he could be driven out of Italy as defeated if the Idaean³⁷¹ Mother should be brought from Pessinus to Rome” [101]. The sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi confirmed the oracle, and King Attalus of Pergam handed over the goddess in the form of a black stone (ch. XV A) brought to Rome in great honor in 205 BC. Cybele became the Mother of the Roman Empire, and her cult lasted until the 5th century AD. She was *Magna Mater Deorum*. This name was also given to Ceres. Sophocles called her “the All-Mother” [102].

There was one time when the Romans also paid a high respect to other goddesses less known today. While Romulus was devoted to arms, the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius was actually the first priest. Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote on the latter: “Numa, the first amongst men, founded a sanctuary to *Fides Publica* and organized in her honor sacrifices as holy as those for other deities” [103]. In his turn, Plutarch added that Numa taught people the most holy of their vow, the vow to *Fides* [104], and Livy shown

³⁷¹ The Mount Ida is near Troy, in Asia Minor. In Crete there is another mount with the same name.

that the rituals devoted to goddess Fides were performed with the right hand³⁷²—of faithfulness, *fides* [105]. Goddess *Juventas* was the protector of youth and, implicitly, of *perpetual* renewal, that is *eternity*; in this respect, Benveniste evokes the etymological relation between *aevum* and *iuven* [106]. It was *Juventas* who promised *firma omnia et aeterna* to Rome [107]. The Romans constructed a chapel for her in the famous temple of Jupiter the Capitoline where *Juventas* was thus associated to the supreme god (Jupiter O[ptimus] M[aximus]). Besides there were discovered inscriptions dedicated to Jupiter *Juventas*. We close our review by showing that the Latins in Praeneste used to venerate the goddess *Fortuna Primigenia* (primordial, Lat.) who suckled child Jupiter (*Iovis puer*), *Diouo fileia* [108].

The Nabataeans, an Arab population who ruled over Transjordan before the Roman conquest (1st century BC) worshipped in the beginning the female divinity known as *al-Lat* (the Goddess) and then *Dhu-Shara*—having as a symbol a black stone (*betyl*, as Cybele; ch. XV A), the consort of al-‘Uzza (Power, that corresponds to the Adi Shakti; ch. XX D). Her sign was the Moon, and the animals (lioness, cow and serpent) were all related to the Universal Great Goddess. On a funeral stone in Turkmaniyeh valley there is a Nabataean inscription containing the name of *Dhu-Shara* [109] whose name evokes the Hindu goddess *Dussera* (*Durga*). According to Suidas, the Greek compiler of an encyclopedia about AD 1000, the black stone of *Dhu-Shara* in Petra paralleled the Ka’ba [110]. However, also *al-Lat* was worshipped under the shape of a similar black stone (ch. XX D).

The Chinese worshipped the Earth in its feminine aspect called *Yin* (*Ti*) while the Japanese deity supporting the entire Creation was *Izanami* (She Who Invites, Japan.). The Sun goddess, *Amaterasu Omikami* (Shining Heaven, Japan.) was the daughter of the primordial god *Izanaghi* (He Who Invites, Japan.).

Tao-Te-King described a rather interesting Genesis: “There was something undetermined. It was before the birth of Heaven and Earth. That something was plunged into an immense silence and it was a measureless void. It exists by itself and is preserved without change. It can be considered the *Mother of Universe*. Since I do not know its name, I will call it *Tao*” [111]. “Everything that exists has an origin. This origin is the Mother (of the phenomenal world who existed before this world). Whoever understands the Mother, will also know her children” [112]. Lao-tse gave the following definition to *Tao*: “Being called by the name of *Yu*, it represents the Mother of all³⁷³ the existing beings and things, it denotes the power of mother who creates

³⁷² The hand of action and of auspiciousness (ch. XV F).

³⁷³ That is *Eve* (Genesis 3:20).

«countless beings», «tens of thousands of beings» (Wan-Wü)” [113]. “The Spirit, the Valley and the one who never dies are also called the Woman of depth. In the gate of the Woman of depth there is the Root of Heaven and Earth. The spirit of the Void (Valley) is beyond perception and continuous. Its power is never wasted nor exhausted” [114]. We can easily interpret the *gate of the Woman* here to be the cosmic dwelling of the Adi Kundalini (manifestation of the Divine Mother) that is the Adi Mooladhara (support of the root, Sanskr.) and the *Valley* to be here none other than the Adi Sushumna nadi.

The primordial goddess in Taoism was *Nü Wa (Nü Hua)*, the protector of XX-33 marriage and home, who was described by Sui Shen (Interpreting of signs; or Shou Wen) in the following way: “Wa, the sacred and wise virgin of the ancient times, the creator of all things.”

The Mahayana Buddhism venerated as the Great Goddess *Prajna-paramita* (Perfection of Wisdom) mentioned in *Prajna-paramita Sutra* (that became *Madhyamika*, Middle Path or Doctrine, the basic text of all the schools of Mahayana) expounded by the sage Nagarjuna. There, the Buddha declares that *Prajna-paramita* is the mother and teacher of all the Buddhas: “She is the mother and begetter, she showed them the all-knowledge, she instructed them in the ways of the world. From her have the Tathagatas come forth... The all-knowledge of the Tathagatas has come forth from her. All the Tathagatas, past, future and present, win full enlightenment thanks to this very Perfection of Wisdom” [115]. Wisdom (*Prajna*) leading to Nirvana was thus the highest virtue (*Paramita*). It was the essence of the Enlightened One (Buddha) himself and of those on the way of enlightenment (Bodhisattva). *Prajna-paramita* (Pali), *Yum Chen* (Chin.) or *Hannya* (Japan.) was the Buddhist equivalent of the Greek *Sophia* and source of enlightened knowledge (*Nirmala Vidya*, Sanskr.; one of the attributes of the Great Goddess), similarly to the Hindu *Shakti*. All Buddhist manuscripts containing texts about her begin with the *Hymn to Perfect Wisdom* where she is called “Mother.” The hymn read: “Teachers of the world, the Buddhas are Thine own compassionate sons” [116]. She signifies the enlightenment that makes one into a Buddha. Her emblem is the Book resting on a lotus beside her shoulder. In the *Prajna-paramita Sutra* (also called *Sutra of Eight Thousand Verses*) she is praised as follows: “She is worth of worship. In her we find refuge. She brings us safely under the wings of enlightenment. She is omniscience... She is the mother of the Bodhisattvas. She is the perfect wisdom of the Buddhas. She turns the wheel of the Dharma” [117]. Buddhists also worship goddess *Tara* (Savioress).

The historian and archaeologist Nicholas Roerich wrote that in the palace of the king of Ladakh there is a temple “dedicated to Dukkar, the resplendent

Mother of the World. In the center again stands her image. On her right hand—Buddha... Dukkar—the illuminated, many-armed Mother of the World” [118]. Quite recently a temple devoted to the Mother of the World was discovered in the ancient settlement of Kish [119]. Dukkar is the many-eyed and many-armed [120], as goddess Durga of a closer name.

- XX-28 The Chinese worshipped *Kuan Yin* (or *Guan Shi*, Chin.; *Kwanon*, Japan.),
 -29 the archaic Goddess of Compassion (*Yin Pusha*), who became Bodhisattva, analogous to Avalokiteshwara (Lord with merciful sight). Her equivalent in
 XX-34 India was *Padmapani* (*padma*, lotus, Sanskr.). She was regarded as “the Mother of the World” too [121]. “There is also the mother-goddess *Wu-sheng Lao-mu* (literally: the Uncreated Mother), a creator as well as savior figure who is sometimes called the «Eternal Venerable Mother». Her role reflects a high status for woman in society, since so much power is ascribed to a goddess. According to popular belief... she first creates the world and then engenders human being, who are her children. Their misbehavior and contention, however, brings her grief. With great compassion, she continues to send messages to them through inspired leaders and revealed books, calling on them to recover their true nature and return home” [122].

With the Druids, the woman was priestess. With the Celts, the primordial female divinity was *Ana* symbolizing the wholeness of the human potential as a spiritual being [123]. *Cerridwen* and *Rhiannon* were other goddesses honored by the Celts. In Ireland, the name of Mother was *Danu* or *Dana* (Old, in Irish language; presumably the Primordial Mother), therefore included among the archaic deities. Her worshippers were called *Tuatha Dé*
 XX-35 *Danann* (Irish). People also worshipped Brigit (*Brigid*) both as Goddess and saint, linking the pagan Celtic and medieval Christian traditions. In northern
 XX-36 Britain she is *Brigantia*. The British Goddesses, *y Mamau* occur in inscriptions of Roman times (*Deae Matronae*, Lat.). In Scandinavia *Freyia* (*Freia*) was the protector of virginity and fecundity. The Finnish mythological cosmogony started with *Ilmatar*, the virgin of the Air, while the Baltic myths considered that *Nerthus* was the Mother of Gods. The maternal Earth was *Zemes Mate* (in Lettish) or *Zemina* (in Lithuanian).

The Slavs had *Mokoshi* (that sounded close to the Sanskrit *Moksha*—especially to its Japanese equivalent *Mokusho* or the Chinese *Mochao/Mozhao*—and to *Maha-Lakshmi*) to protect the home and female occupations. The northern Yakuts have a cosmogonic myth presenting the *Mother of God* as the Creator instead of God [124].

The old Iberians observed the gynocracy like the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans. The property was transferred through the women, and the child belonged to mother’s clan and bore her name—a tradition preserved even today by the Portuguese.

With the Aztecs, the earth Goddess was *Coatlicue* (Mother Earth; Birth-XX-37 Giver), who was the sister of the Moon Goddess and mother of the Sun God. In Mexico, the fecundity Goddess was called *Tonancin* (Our Mother).

The pre-Columbian Kogi tribe descended from the Taironas population and still lives on the mountain Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Colombia) that remained unapproachable to the conquistadors. According to a hymn of this tribe: “First there was the sea. All was dark. There was no sun, no moon, no people, no animals, no plants. The sea was the Mother... Thus, first there was only the mother. Her name was Gaulchovang... She was the spirit of those to come and she was thought and memory” [125].

Amongst the North American native people the legends speak about female divinities. The Keres tribe mentions *Tse che nake* (Thought Woman)—the goddess who created the world by her thought—who was worshipped in New Mexico since pre-Columbian times. The Tewa-speaking population in that zone venerates the Clay Lady, who is an aspect of Mother Earth. The Hopi, a population living in northeastern Arizona have *Kokyang Wuhti* or Spider Woman, which is considered to be mother of all. She is endowed with divine powers, has unlimited wisdom and lives in the earth. As the mother and grandmother of all, the Changing Woman (“the woman who is transformed time and again”) is the goddess of the Navajo who had lived for centuries in the Four Corners area (Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado). She brought with her the Blessing Way, made the earth safe for humans and instituted order in the chaos and disorder of the world [126]. Jacinto Garavito Palomino showed in 1915 that the Kogi tribe used to worship the divine Mother: “Mother Shivalaneum—the Mother of Songs—the Mother of all our ancestors is the one who in the beginning gave us the light. She is the Mother of all human races. She is the Mother of all the tribes... Mother Shivalaneum is the Mother of all. Only She is. And She left Her memory in all the temples... So said our older brothers” [127].

We will end that far from being exhaustive review by mentioning the African goddesses *Yemaha* and *Oshun*, as well as *Pele*, the goddess of Hawaii. For other examples we send our reader to Kernbach’s *Dictionary of General Mythology*.

* * *

It is not by chance that Hindu spirituality was left until the end of this section since it is here that the Holy Mother acquired an extremely deep and complex meaning.

We have seen in the opening of this chapter that the ancient people saw the manifestation of the attributes related to motherhood and fertility in the

divine embodiment of the woman. All these were nothing but the creative Power (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.) revealed to the material world.

We have mentioned before (ch. XIX B) that the divine Principle of Evolution, incarnated as a Savior on this Earth, was born of a Virgin whose great power was due to her chastity. The attributes of the various female goddesses presented so far, showed her *powers*: “the mighty Goddess” (Mah), “the life Power” (Anath), or “the efficient power” (Spanta Aramati). The horns were also a symbol of power (ch. VIII) visible even since the Upper Paleolithic in the representations of the Universal Mother, then in the Sumerian goddesses, and in other artifacts under the form of a cow or only bearing horns (Hathor, Isis, Astarte, Kamadhenu, Surabhi, Andhumbra etc.).

XX-38 The Great Goddess was accompanied by a feline (lion, tiger, panther or leopard), a symbol of Power since the most ancient times. At Çatal-Hüyük a

XX-9 statue of the Mother Goddess (6th century BC; see *supra*) was found seated on a throne having two leopards on each side [128]. Both in Assyria and Babylon, Ishtar also called “the Lioness” was portrayed riding a lion and was holding a weapon in her hand. Inanna was called “the Lioness” too. Qadesh,

IX-25 the Canaanite goddess was seated on a lion; Astarte rode a lion and sometimes had a head of a lioness [129]. The metaphor of mother lioness was also present in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 19:2). Anaitis, the Great Goddess of the Scythians mounted also on a lion. A bronze statue of her displaying this posture was found in Näieni-Prahova, Romania [130]. She was the

XX-23 equivalent of the Phrygian Kybele who was frequently depicted riding a lion. Felines or griffins (lion-bodied and eagle-headed fabulous animals) followed often the Great Goddess Potnia. With the Hittites, her match was the Great Goddess Arinna (Anahita with the Aryans). The statue of the goddess seated

XX-40 between lions was discovered in the Phoenician city-state of Ugarit. The Hittites also worshipped Heba (Hebat, Khebat; wife of the Storm-god), whose rock-sculpture at Hattusas (Bogazkale, 200 km east of Ankara) shows her riding a lion. The lions accompanied the statues of the goddess Qetesh in Egypt and Syria. Likewise, lions escorted Hera [131]. With the Mannei who inhabited Azerbaijan around 1000, the Goddess was also mounted on a lion.

XX-41 Even Virgin Mary was seated on a throne between two lions [132].

The *Bible* reminds, too, the relation between the Goddess and the felines: the beloved have to descend from the high places (*bamoth*, Hebr.—where the shrines of Mother Goddess were erected), “from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards” (Song of Songs 4:8).

According to the *Apocryphon of John* [133], Sophia gave birth to *Yaltabaoth* depicted as having “a lionfaced serpent. And its eyes were like lightning fires which flash” and, therefore, reunites many symbols of the Goddess. Wisdom’s son was also called *Ariael* (from *ari*, lion, Hebr.) [134],

and was the Demiurge of the Ophites [135].

As already shown (ch. IV) the divinities in the Hindu pantheon had each a specific vehicle (*vahana*, Sanskr.). Thus, the Great Goddess had a tiger for her vehicle when she was *Durga*, the destroyer of demons, holding in each XX-42 of her ten hands a different weapon (as the Greek *Hecate* later on [136]). On a seal discovered in the prehistoric town of Mohenjo-Daro one can see the XX-43 image of the Goddess near a tiger [137]. At other times she was *Sinharathi* or *Sinhavahini* (riding a lion, Sanskr.) or *Jagadamba* (Universal Mother, Mother of the World, Sanskr.) or *Jagaddhatri* (Sustainer of the World, Sanskr.). All these manifestations are in charge with the central aspect of the Anahatha chakra.

The quintessence of these powers is the *Adi Shakti*, the Primordial Power, the Great Goddess (*Maha-Devi*) or *The Goddess (Devi*, meaning also “the Shining One,” Sanskr.), in short.

In *Devi Suktam* hymn addressed to her by Adi Shankaracharya, she was named “the Goddess who takes up her abode in all perishable beings under the form of energy” (*Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu shakti rupena samsthitah*, Sanskr.) [138]. The energy the great saint was referring to was manifested as the Kundalini.

“This Mother of the world was actually supreme in India long before the arrival of the conquerors from the north. The occlusion of the Indus Civilization together with its goddess queen must have resulted from the arrival of the strictly patriarchal warrior-herdsmen, and the installation of their patriarchal gods. The Mother was removed from her lotus and Brahma seated in her stead... Nevertheless, in the hearts of the native population, her supremacy was maintained, and with the gradual merging, through the centuries, of the Vedic and pre-Vedic traditions, gradually she returned to her position of honor... Today she is the greatest power in the Orient” [139].

The *Adi Shakti* is the creative Power of the Supreme Being (ch. I), that manifests both in non-incarnated and in incarnated forms. Markandeya was the first to determine that the *Adi Shakti* incarnates herself in the form of a sacred Cow in Gokul. Markandeya later embodied as one of Rama’s twins, called Lav.

The cult of the Great Goddess was very ancient in the Indian area. According to E. Mackay, the statuettes of the Indus civilization (3rd millennium BC) found in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro portrayed *Parvati*, the wife of Shiva-Pashupati (literally: Lord of Cattle, Sanskr.; in a broader meaning: Lord of Creatures, Divine Shepherd) The effigy of the latter carved on a seal discovered in the same area depicted the god seated in a Yoga position (*Yogeshwara*, Lord of Yoga, Sanskr.). However, these names had not yet appeared in the pre-Vedic period. Her equivalent in the Aryan *Vedas* was

Ushas (Dawn, Sanskr.), the daughter of Heaven (*Dyaus Pitar*; from *dyauh*, *div*, etymological: bright sky, Sanskr.). The cult of the Mother Goddess was also dominant with the Dravidians, the autochthonous population prior to the Aryan invasion.

The age of the Vedic gods started with the Aryan conquest, when the Divine Mother was depicted either as *Aditya* (mother of the solar gods *Aditya*—Sun, Sanskr.) or as *Bhoomi-Devi* (Earth Goddess, Mother Earth, Sanskr.), earlier called *Prithivi* (Broad, Sanskr.) as well as the sacred Cow as *Surabhi* (Fragrant, Sanskr.) or *Kamadhenu* (Wish-Cow; *dhenu*, cow, Sanskr.) or *Kamadhuk* (who produces all what you desire when she is milked; *kama*, desire, Sanskr.). Aditi was also a cow. The Goddess made herself conspicuous as the Universal Power in the *Rig-Veda* and in the *Atharva-Veda* where she “takes” or “goes together with” the most important gods: Rudra, Vasu, Varuna, Indra, Adityas etc., actually, “all the gods” (*Vishwadeva*, Sanskr.) [140]. “I make powerful my beloved one, no matter who he”—says the Goddess. She declares her greatness: “It is I who brings forth the Father, upon the head of that world, my womb is in the waters, in the ocean. From there I expand myself towards all the worlds, and I reach there the heaven with the top of my head. I blow like the wind, embracing all the worlds, beyond the heaven and the earth: so am I in all my magnificence” [141]. We find here: the Goddess raising the Male Principle up to the Sahasrara (the head of the world), the breeze (wind) of the Kundalini, the all-pervading vibration of Paramchaitanya.

In the Vedic hymns, the Goddess is also called *Bhavasi Mata* (Mother of the created beings, Sanskr.) or *Kshama* (Earth, Sanskr.). Zimmer considered her as “the Great Mother Goddess of the Chalcolithic period, who was worshipped over a wide area of the world, and of which innumerable images have been found throughout the ancient Near East, in the lands of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and in the Danube valley. She is a sister, or double of the well known goddesses of early Sumero-Semitic Mesopotamia; and thus she furnishes a clew to pre-Aryan linkages between India and the sources of our Western tradition of myth and symbol” [142].

The *Vedas* mentioned *Gayatri* about whom Kennedy wrote: “Nothing in the *Vedas* is superior to the *Gayatri*... The *Gayatri* is the mother of the *Vedas* and of *Brahmins*... For the *Gayatri* is Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva, and the *Vedas*” [143].

The Divine Mother occupied a prevailing place among the *Puranas* deities. She is the *Adi Shakti*. As *Maha Devi* she is the wife of the supreme God Shiva. She is known under different other names: *Bhairavi* (Terrible, Sanskr.) when Shiva becomes Bhairava; *Uma* (Light, or Peace-of-the-Night, Sanskr.), in the *Kena Upanishad*; *Himavati* (Daughter of the Snow-capped

One, i.e. the Himalayas, Sanskr.); *Jagadamba* or *Jaganmata* (Mother of the World, Sanskr.); *Durga* (Beyond-Reach, Sanskr.); *Parvati* (Mountaineer, XX-46 Daughter of the Mountain, i.e. the Himalayas, Sanskr.); Virgin *Gauri* (Fair, Blonde, or Shining, Sanskr.); *Kali* (Black, Sanskr.) first mentioned in the *Vedas* where she was associated with Agni, later as the wife of Shiva. In the *Puranas* we find her as *Lakshmi* (Fortune³⁷⁴, Sanskr.), Vishnu's wife, her XX-47 name denoting the unpersonified good fortune in the *Rig-Veda* and the goddess of luck and misfortune in the *Atharva-Veda*. This enumeration might further continue with *Bhavani* (Giver-of-Existence, Sanskr.), *Chandi* or *Chandika* (Violence, Wrath, Sanskr.), *Shyama* (Dark, Sanskr.) and the others that reach the number of one thousand names, all mentioned in the *Shri Lalitambika Sahasranama Stotram* [144].

Goddess Kali had her equivalents in other spiritual expressions, out of which we should mention the Jewish Shulamite, "black, but comely" (Song of Songs 1:5), and the Christian *Black Madonna* (ch. XX C3).

The Devi has always been the *Shakti*, the Power of the corresponding masculine incarnation when appearing in the human form, as a Mother, Wife or Daughter, for example: *Sita*—Rama's wife; *Radha*—Krishna's companion; *Mary*—the mother of Jesus; *Fatima*—Muhammad's daughter and Hazrat Ali's wife.

To end this section we shall give several quotations from the Sikh Scripture referring to the Divine Mother called *Aykaa Maa-ee*. "Throughout all the ages He/She is One and the Same. The One Divine Mother created the Three deities. One, the Creator of the World³⁷⁵; One, the Sustainer³⁷⁶; And One, the Destroyer³⁷⁷" [145]. "Angels, men, heavenly heralds and celestial singers, meditate on Her. Even the humble Rishis sing of the Divine Mother." "The Lord Himself is your mother, and He Himself is your father" [146].

³⁷⁴ The goddess of hundreds of thousands (*lakshsha*, Sanskr.).

³⁷⁵ Brahma.

³⁷⁶ Vishnu.

³⁷⁷ Shiva.

B. THE DIVINE MOTHER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

“And God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”

Genesis 1:27

“God could not be everywhere, so he created mothers”

Jewish Proverb

What it is known as the *Old Testament* originally included the divine revelation received by the God’s chosen ones. In their turn they orally communicated it to the people around them. There was a great lapse in time before the message transmitted down through generations could be given a written form. The result of it was characterized through a number of peculiarities that cannot be overlooked because they have greatly influenced the form in which the Scriptures reached us.

In its original form, the text of the *Torah* was an unbroken line of about 300,000 letters making up *a single word* (there was no gap between words, sentences or paragraphs as it has today) and this fact later generated more or less arbitrary opportunities of getting words whose meaning depended on the place where the line was divided. In AD 1236, Cardinal Hugo de S. Caro made the first attempt to systematize the text into chapters, while Robert Estienne (Stephanus) from Paris performed the division into paragraphs only three centuries later, in 1553 as it is known today.

At those ancient times people did not use punctuation, the latter being able to completely change the meaning, like in the classic example of an Athenian woman who went to the Oracle in Delphi and asked: “Will my son die in the war?” The answer was written in an ambiguous style: “Your son dies not will he come back,” than can be read in two opposing ways dependent on the position of the comma: “Your son dies not, will he come back,” or “Your son dies, not will he come back.”

XX-48 There were no graphical signs for vowels used when the texts of the Old Testament were written. The Jews started using vowel signs since the 6th century AD. It was only at the end of the 9th century BC at Tiberias that a group of rabbis (*Masorettes*, from *masoreth*, tradition, Hebr.) agreed on some words that were written in a certain way (*ketivah*, written, Hebr.) to be read in a different way (*keri*, reading, Hebr.). Eventually, the present form of the XX-49 Old Testament includes not only the vowel signs (*puns*) but also the musical marks allowing for the text to be sung.

The task of the Masoretes was not an easy one at a time when everyone spoke only Aramaic: they had to reconstruct the biblical Hebrew language³⁷⁸ that, for centuries (beginning with the Achaemenid period, in the 6th century BC), was no longer in common usage. As a result, long time before the Masoretic edition, for the daily use it was necessary the writing in Aramaic of paraphrases of the Holy Scripture known as *Targums*, the oldest dating back to the first century BC (*Targum Onkelos*; see *infra*). Actually, the rabbinical Hebrew of the Masoretes was never spoken, remaining a scholarly language.

To give just an example: depending on vocalization, the consonantal *slm* may be read as “spark,” “peace,” “good health,” “agreement,” “completeness” or “reward.” Such peculiarity allowed Professor Kamal Salibi to write *The Bible Came From Arabia*, where he claims that the original homeland of the Israelites and the birthplace of Judaism was in West Arabia, not Palestine.

Last but not least, although many languages have homonyms, none of them were as rich, in this respect, as the Semitic languages. To mention just one example, no less than eight pages in the Assyrian dictionary published in Chicago were necessary to give all the meanings of the Semitic word “abu” [147].

Obviously, the Old Testament in its present form was only one of many possible variants, having been *deliberately interpreted* by those with certain interests and who, without exception, were all men.

The situation is described by Armstrong: “After Yahweh had successfully vanquished the other gods and goddesses of Canaan and the Middle East and become the *only* God, his religion would be managed almost entirely by men. The cult of the goddesses would be superseded, and this would be a symptom of a cultural change that was characteristic of the newly civilized world” [148].

Here there are the conclusions embraced by some *Bible* scholars. As early as in the last century S. Grimke, M. Joslyn Gage and E. Cady Stanton denounced biblical texts as being not the words of God but the words of men, since the *Bible* is written by male authors. The *Bible* supplies a religious justification and an ideological legitimization of patriarchy. “Indeed, the absence of feminine symbolism for God marks Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in striking contrast with the world’s other religious traditions, whether in Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome, or in Africa, India and North America, which abound in feminine symbolism” [149]. Professor Edward Chiera wrote: “In the case of the *Bible*... the jealous censorship on the part of

³⁷⁸ With the exception of four fragments (Jeremiah 10:11; Daniel 2:4—7:28; Ezra 4:8—6:18 and 7:12-26) the rest of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew.

the priest... piously but nonetheless ruthlessly eliminated what he did not approve." Geo Widengren also wrote: "We must not lose sight of the fact that the Old Testament, as it is handed down to us in the Jewish Canon, is only one part... of Israel's native literature. And, moreover, this preserved part has in many passages quite obviously been exposed to censorship and correspondingly purged" [150].

XX - 72 The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in the caves of Qumran threw a new
- 73 light on the topic. The scrolls contained large parts or only fragments of every book of the Hebrew Bible except Esther and Nehemiah. When compared to the texts previously known, the scholars concluded that "roughly half of the biblical texts from Qumran were found either to contain passages that do not appear in modern translations, or to lack passages that appear in the traditional *Bible*. Some of these differences are especially intriguing" [151].

The possible forgeries due to scribes cannot be easily waived: "How do ye say: «We are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us?» Behold, certainly the lying pen of the scribes hath made it falsehood" (Jeremiah 8:8).

It should be mentioned here that the *Qur'an* reproached the Jews with changing the Word of God (*tahrif*, Arab.), and leaving out some ample parts from the original text of the *Pentateuch*: "Who send down the Book that Moses brought as a light and a guidance to men? You put it into parchments, revealing them, and hiding much" (6.91). "There is a party of them that heard God's word, and then tampered with it" (2.70). "The lies they forged has deluded them in their religion" (3.23). "And there is a sect of them which twist their tongues with the Book, that you may suppose it part of the Book, yet it is not part of the Book; and they say, «It is from God», yet it is not from God" (3.72). "They perverting words from their meaning; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of; and thou wilt never cease to light upon some act of treachery on their part, except a few of them... People of the Book, now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have concealing of the Book, and effacing many things" (5.16-18). "So woe to those who write the Book with their hands, then say: «This is from God», that they may sell it for a little price; so woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for their earnings" (2.73).

We will begin our analysis by noticing that since it is the pure Spirit, the God of the Jews has no body, hence no physical characteristics, therefore genderless and consequently it is certainly not possible to hold that God is either male or female. In spite of this circumstance so as obvious as ignored, the biblical names used to designate the Unique Divinity (Yahweh, El or Elohim) appear as nouns in a masculine form. Therefore it ensues clearly that the concept of a male *God (Father)* originates in a *grammatical requirement*

and not in some other logic. The immediate outcome was that all the chroniclers, scribes, prophets and biblical psalmists, as well as the scholars, theologians and exegetes used in the case of God an anthropomorphism (in full disagreement with their religious concepts) out of which derived denominations such as Our Father, Lord, Master, Heavenly King etc. The linguistic maleness of God was still accentuated by translation into non-gendered languages such as English.

Mention should be made about the mysterious God of the Kabbalists, *En-Soph* manifested through the ten emanations known as *sephiroth* (ch. IV). *En-Soph* was not mentioned in the Old Testament. Being not a person and having no documented name as YHWH, it has obviously to be referred to as “It” instead of “He.” Moreover, it is a hidden God since incapable of revealing itself to humankind, as shown by an anonymous author of the 13th century [152].

We should also take into account that many Hebrew words can be either masculine or feminine, their gender depending on how they are vocalized. Nonetheless, as shown above, the original text of the Old Testament contained no vowels, which were added later on by *male* individuals.

In his excellent book *The Hebrew Goddess*, Raphael Patai observed that a study of comparative religion suggests that humankind seems to have need of the image of the divine Mother as well as the divine Father. The author put forward the following question: “Is it conceivable that the human craving for a divine mother did not manifest itself at all in Judaism?... Is the Hebrew goddess dead, or does she merely slumber, soon to awaken rejuvenated by her rest and reclaim the hearts of her sons and lovers?” [153]. His book answers to these questions.

Among the deities of the ancient world and especially of those of the surrounding area, the god of Israel holds a singular position, and that cannot be denied. He neither shares his power with a goddess, nor is the husband of any. The exegeses of the *Bible* have been made an attempt to solve the problem by considering his spouse to be the community of Israel (e.g. in Isaiah 50:1; 54:1-8; Jeremiah 2:2-3; 3:1-20; Hosea ch. 2-4 etc.) or the land of Israel (Isaiah 62:4-5). Likewise, Christians adopted this model and ascribed the role of the Bride of Jesus to the Church (ch. XX C3 and C4).

Indeed, the entire Scripture often refers to the sacred union (*hierós gámos*, Gr.; *unio mystica*, Lat.), *zivuga qadisha* (Hebr.; in the Kabbalah and Hasidism: *yihud*, singular, *yihudim*, plural), thus implying the presence of the divine Wife. The Kabbalists, the Gnostics, the Christian and Islamic mystics refer all together to that union (*Yoga*, Sanskr.). On a human level, the union takes place between the individual Self (*Atman*, Sanskr.) and the Holy Spirit (*Kundalini*, Sanskr.). The following words that belong to the notable

Kabbalist teacher and poet Moses Zacuto (c.1626-1713) might denote that he was aware of the secrets of the subtle body and Kundalini energy. Zacuto wrote to his disciple Abraham Rovigo: “I believe I have already informed you about the mystery of the name *luz*³⁷⁹, which is the mystery of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, of the male and the female” [154], thus referring to the side channels (masculine and feminine) not forgetting the central one (*luz*, backbone, Hebr. [155]).

Bereshit that according to the tradition comprises the whole Law is the first word of the *Torah* and can be read *brith esh* (covenant of fire, Hebr.) [156]. The Old Testament reads about the divine marriage. “With the joy of the bridegroom over the bride, shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isaiah 62:5). The bridegroom’s period of rejoicing was seven days—an allusion to the successive opening of the seven chakras (i.e. the seven days of Creation; ch. XIX C), eventually leading to the *ananda* state. Hosea (ch. 2-4; see also *infra*) gives other references to the divine union. For instance, God said: “I will betroth thee unto me for ever” (2:19; cf. 2:20). “I said unto her: thou shalt abide for me many days;... and thou shalt not be [another] man’s, and I will also be for thee” (3:3). We have seen (ch. XIX B) that David’s (Solomon’s) star also symbolizes the holy union of the two Principles.

The couple consists of *Elohim* and *Edem*, the latter being depicted by Hippolytus “as far as the groin a virgin, and the parts below (resembling) a snake, as Justin says. But this girl is styled Edem” [157] and come close to the cosmogonic pairs of Sky-god and Earth-mother that can be met in each and every mythology (see *infra*). Besides we infer that the theonym *Elohim* (Mighty Ones, Hebr.; ch. XV D) enables the disclosure of the divine feminine aspect that is the *Adi Shakti* (Primordial Power, Sanskr.). Moreover, *Elohim* is the plural form of the feminine singular *Alh* (*Eloh*), obtained by adding the suffix *-m*. If the termination *-m* of the masculine plural is added to a feminine noun it makes *Elohim*, a Female potency united to the Male Principle, and thus capable of having an offspring.

The *Zohar* refers, too, to the Divine Mother as a member of the Divine Trinity. As an example, Godhead called the *Long (Big) of Face* “consists of three overlapped natures or principles: male, female and son” [159]. The *Zohar* designates Father, Mother, and Son through the letters of the Tetragram. “When they are joined together, *yod* and *he*, She... produces a Son;... they are joined together and the Son is within them. The perfection of everything exists in the way they are arranged; it is all-inclusive: Father and Mother, Son... These matters were not meant to be revealed except to the supreme holy ones, who have entered and emerged, and who know the paths

³⁷⁹ At the same time, this may be a reference to the manifestation of the subtle energy as “light” (*luz*, Span.).

of the Holy One, blessed be He, and who do not deviate either to the left or to the right, as it is written, «For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them...» (Hosea 14:10)” [160]. The text explains that the holy ones (the realized ones) are familiar with the way of the Sushumna, the only that allows entering the heavenly Kingdom (Sahasrara) avoiding the side channels, the deviations. The *yihud* (union, Hebr.) aimed to reunify the *Z'er Anpin* (Small of Face, Hebr.) representing the male aspect of the Godhead, with the *Neqevah di-Z'er* (Female of the Small One, Hebr.) representing the female aspect. Luria considered that “the *yihudim* is greater than studying the *Torah*, for it unifies the supernal worlds” [161]. Other times we found mentioned in the *Zohar* “the heavenly Father and Mother” [162]. The supreme goal of human life was seen by the Kabbalists (ch. XXV C) to be the return to God and this was allegorically discussed in term of the reunion of the *King* (*Yahweh*) and the *Queen* (*Matronit* or *Shekhinah*; see below) [163]. Surely it is the *zivvuga qadesha* (sacred marriage, Hebr.) that expresses the relationship between the Masculine and Feminine aspects of God [164]. According to the *Zohar*, Adam is the offspring of God and the Shekhinah, who are called the Supernal Sun and Moon [165]. Sometimes, the text is unequivocal: “The body of Adam was supplied fully by the heavenly Father and Mother” [166]. The Kabbalist author Shlomo Alqabets (c.1505-1584) refers in his writings to the Shekhinah as “our Mother “ and to God as “our Father” [167].

The reunion of God and His Shekhinah constitutes the meaning of redemption, when the masculine and feminine are restored to their original unity: “The sacrifices aim at joining God with his Shekhinah... All sacrifices shall be offered to God and his Shekhinah... The day when God will be united to the Shekhinah will be called «one»... And when the Shekhinah will unite with the Holy One, blessed by him, the male Principle found itself united with the female Principle.” It is the “Soul of the souls,” that is the *Adi Shakti*, which is “the only one that knows how to unite the Holy One, blessed be him, and the Shekhinah in each Sefhira and every luminous leave hanging on the sephirotic tree... You have no body, no limbs, and you are not a female; you are one, without a second” [168]. The Kabbalists held that, in fact, every religious act should be accompanied by the formula: this is done “for the sake of the reunion³⁸⁰ of God and his Shekhinah.” And indeed, under Kabbalistic influence, this formula was employed in all subsequent liturgical texts and books of later Judaism, down to the nineteenth century [169]. Patai [170] describes the Kabbalistic rituals (also used for the exorcism, expiation or purification; ch. XXI D) that included the following variants:

— prior to reciting a prayer or performing a *mitzvah* (plural form:

³⁸⁰ *Yihud*.

mitzvot; religious commandment, Hebr.): the enunciation of a declaration to the effect that the intention of the person doing so is to bring about the unification of God and the Shekhinah;

— the performing of a complex exercise in which the divine names are combined together in order to unite God and the Shekhinah and to unite the Self of the adept with the celestial Self of God.

In the Kabbalistic doctrine of God, fully developed in the *Zohar*, the feminine element plays an extremely important role and obtained a large recognition and popular approval—in spite of the obvious forgery of the absolute Oneness of God—, being a proof that it responded to a deep seated religious need [171]. The Kabbalah considers that the Tetragrammaton characterized the union between God (*YaH*) and the Shekhinah (*WeH*). On the other side, *Y* is the Father, and *H* the Mother [172], so that *YH* (*yod he*) which forms the name of God (*Yah*) indicates that God Himself is both Male and Female. The eminent Kabbalist Moses Cordovero (1522-1570) referred to the highest sephirah (*Kether*, crown, Hebr.) when writing: “The Crown itself is comprised of Male and Female, for one part of it is Male, the other Female” [173]. *Kether*, that is the *Sahasrara* (ch. IV) is the place where the mystical union between the two Principles is achieved.

A reference to the tree having the sephiroth placed on seven levels (ch. IV) explains that “if the soul has emanated from the sphere of the Shekhinah herself, who is symbolized by the number seven, it «shall go forth free»” [174], that is it will not be subject to transmigration. We read in the *Zohar* the saying of Raya Mehemna: “With this work of yours, which is the *Book of Splendor*³⁸¹, that reflects the light of the Supreme Mother... Israel will taste of the Tree of Life” [175].

Last but not least, the Kabbalists referred to the Daughter of the Voice (*Bath Qol*, Hebr.) to have been audible by the Rabbis in the Talmudic era (ch. XV D).

In the followings we shall see that the Scripture refers to the Divine Mother even in the *interpreted* form that reached us. As it was explained by Baring and Cashford, “the *psyche*’s need for the feminine is honored in some way in every age, in spite of any conscious decision on the part of a priesthood to exclude it” [176]. Jung explained: “From time immemorial, man in his myths has expressed the idea of a male and female coexisting in the same body. Such psychological intuitions were usually projected in the form of the divine syzygy³⁸², the divine pair, or in the idea of the

³⁸¹ *Sepher Ha-Zohar*.

³⁸² Ch. XX C4.

hermaphrodite nature of the creator³⁸³ ... «Homo Adamicus³⁸⁴ ... although he appears in masculine form, always carries about with him Eve, or his wife, hidden in his body», as a medieval commentator on the *Hermetis Tractatus aureus* says” [177].

Knowing the facts presented earlier, it is now much easier to attempt to explain one of the greatest mysteries of the Old Testament: the absence of *any mention* about the divine Female Principle. As a matter of fact, there is no word or equivalent for *goddess* in the Hebrew (as well as in Aramaic)! The situation is completely weird. Whereas most of the ancient people worshipped the Universal Mother (ch. XX A) and the rule of the matrilineal descent was preserved unaltered by the Jews up to date, their Scripture allotted woman an obviously much lower position. Women discrimination went as far as the Rabbis requested men to thank God during the morning prayer for not making them Gentiles, slaves or women.

It is a well-known fact that all the ancient peoples worshipped couples of gods and goddesses such as Sada-Shiva (God the Father) and the Adi Shakti (Great Goddess). We shall give below some examples.

In Egypt, the first divine pair formed by *Shu* (god of air, life, space, light) and *Tefnut* (goddess of moisture) gave birth to god *Geb* (Earth) and goddess *Nut* (Heaven) who, in their turn generated the couple *Osiris* and *Isis* whose son was the Sun, the supreme god.

To the end of the 4th millennium the city-states (Ur, Uruk, Nippur, Lagash etc.) that have been formed in Mesopotamia, later generated various civilizations (Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Akkadian, Hittite, Elamite, Mittani etc.) that have in turn had their flourishing periods. The cults of these peoples mutually influenced one another and all centered round the divine pair that was known under various names and aspects.

The Sumerian triad was *Anu* (Heaven), *Enki*—or *Ea* in Akkadian (Earth), and *Enlil* (Air). Enlil originated in Nippur whereas Anu came from Uruk. *Anu* (or *An*, Sumer.), as the head of gods had the “bread and water of eternal life.” He gave birth to goddess *Antu*, his wife. In Sumer people worshipped the couple formed of *Anu*, the god of heaven and the virgin *Inanna* (*Ininni*, *Ninanna*, *Nininni*), the goddess of earth. The consort of An, the Earth, was also called *Ki*, and was the mother of *Enlil* (*Ellil*, Akkad.; *El*, god, Hebr.). In Nippur, the demiurge *Enlil* and his wife *Ninlil* generated the Universe. God *Ea* was the father of *Marduk*, the lord of heaven and earth with the Babylonians (*Assur* with the Assyrians). *Mah* had *Dumuzi* in southern Sumeria (*Tammuz*, in northern Sumeria, Akkad. and Hebr.; see Ezekiel 8:14)

³⁸³ Ch. XX B.

³⁸⁴ The inner man (Self; ch. XIX C) in hermetic philosophy.

for his son who was in mythological relation with *Ishtar*. The latter was *Anu's* consort, the divine prototype of the wife, mother and sister. Babylon had the triad: *Apsu* (father, the primordial chaos, the sweet water), *Tiamat* (mother, the salty and bitter sea water) and *Mummu* who appeared before creation and was subject to the former two and was actually the divine Word, *Amatu* (close to *AUM* and *amen*; ch. I). In Assyria, *Assur* replaced *Apsu*, whose substitute in Babylon was *Marduk*. *Tiamat* was the Universal Mother since, through the second (post-diluvium) genesis, she was cut in two by Marduk thus giving birth to Heaven and Earth (i.e. the Male and the Female Principles) according to the cosmogonical poem *Enuma elish* (*When on High*; thus entitled after the words in the beginning). *Marduk's* consort was goddess *Sarpanitu*. Myths on the Goddess split into pieces are told all over the world.

In Syria and Palestine the wife of *El* (God) was *Astarte* or *Anath* whose son was *Adon* (Lord; took up by the Greeks as *Adonis*) who, resembling the Assyrian *Dumuzi*, symbolized death and rebirth (as the Egyptian *Osiris*, or the Phrygian *Attis*). From *Adon* it originates the Hebrew *Adonai* (Lord, Master). By extending our comparison we come to the cyclic concept (ch. XIX A) even within Judaism that usually rejected it: the *death* (or *sleep*) of *Adonai-Brahma* indicates the completion of the cycle, while the *rebirth* signifies the beginning of a new cycle.

The Hittite divine pair was *Tishuba* (*Teshuba*) the god of storm and goddess *Hebat* (*Arinna* of the pre-Hittite period) while the people of Urartu worshipped the couple formed of the heavenly god *Cald* and the goddess *Bagbartu* (*Uarubani*).

The old Iranians considered *Apam* (the guardian of waters) and the goddess of water *Anahita* to be the creators of mankind.

The first Greek divine couple was *Uranus* (*Ouranós*, Heaven, Gr.) and his wife *Gaia* (Earth) who gave birth to *Cronus* (*Chrónos*, Gr.) the husband of *Rhóa*, the mother of *Zeus* and other main gods in Olympus (*Hades*, *Poseidon*, *Demeter*, *Hera* etc.).

In the Mahayana Buddhism, *Paramita* was the consort of the *Adi Buddha* (Primordial Buddha) just as, in Hinduism, the *Adi Shakti* was the consort of the Supreme Masculine Principle. In the Buddhist sutra *Prajna-paramita*, the Divine Mother is highly revered as follows: "She is worthy of worship. In her we find refuge. She brings us safely under the wings of enlightenment. She is omniscience. Emptiness is her characteristic. She is the mother of the *Bodhisattvas*. She is the perfect wisdom of the *Buddhas*. She turns the wheel of the *Dharma*" [178].

In China, the female Earth was *Yin* (*Ti*), whereas *Yang* (*T'ien*) was the male Heaven. The Japanese considered the first (cosmogonic, theogonic and anthropogonic) stage to originate in *Izanagi* and his wife *Izanami*. They also XX - 32

worshipped the couple Heaven and Earth. The daughter of *Izanaghi* married *Susano-o*, the god of storm, and became the direct ancestor of the first *Mikado* (emperor, Japan.). In Mongolia, *Tangri* was the Heaven (*Yata*) while *Itangan* was the Mother Earth.

One can notice that sometimes the deities form *tetrads* composed of two couples: father and mother, son and daughter. We will remind the instances of Sumeria (An, Ninhurshag, Enki, Enlil), Canaan (Elkunirsa, Ashertu, Baal-Hadad, Ishtar), Israel (El, Asherah, Baal, Astarte/Anath), Greece (Cronus, Rhea, Zeus, Hera), Rome (Saturn, Ops, Jupiter, Juno), India (Shiva, Parvati, Ganesha, Karttikeya—the last ones being the sons), Japan (*Izanaghi*, *Izanami*, *Susano-o*, *Amaterasu*) together with those of the Hittites, Iranians etc. The Kabbalah (see *supra*), explains the Tetragram as consisting of Father (Y), Mother (H), Son (W) and Daughter (final H).

Within this quasi-unanimous context, the isolated fact that the Jewish Scripture contains no references to the Divine Mother seems so suspect, that we have attempted to check on the real situation. A scrupulous analysis enables the disclosure of the biblical Divine Mother despite all attempts to assert the antithesis.

To start with we shall check the historical evidences, then we shall take a closer look at the Old Testament text as it came down to us.

At Ras Shamra, Palestine, there were discovered in the beginning of the 1930s a set of tablets dating back to about 1350 BC. They were written in the language spoken in Ugarit, close to that of the Hebrews and referred to two Canaanite deities: *Asherah* and *Anath* (ch. XX A). We should not forget that *Asherah* has *forty* entries in the Old Testament: Judges 2:13; 10:6; 1 Kings 11:5,33; 15:13; 16:33; 2 Kings 17:10; 21:3; Jeremiah 17:2 etc.), while *Ashtoreth* (singular form) and *Ashtaroth* (plural form) are mentioned *nine times*. All these are Hebrew names.

Some historians believed that Anath, the daughter of Asherah, is the same with Astarte (Astoreth, Ashtoreth). Likewise, Asherah and Astarte were confused with each other and that was not only for the biblical texts. Although not being sure that the two goddesses would have been not originally the same deity [179], Patai does not exclude the hypothesis of a distinction between Anath and Astarte [180] as it comes out of a hieratic papyrus from the 12th century BC referring to Neith, the Great, the Mother of God: “give him³⁸⁵ Anath and Astarte, your two daughters” [181]. In our opinion they could represent the power of the side channels: “His right hand [Ana]th seizes./ Astoreth seizes his left hand” [182]. On the other hand, the Amarna tablets (14th century BC) confound Asherah and Astarte [183]. The title of “Queen of heaven” was bestowed both to Anath and Astarte, as well

³⁸⁵ To Seth.

as to the goddess Qadesh (belonging to the Canaanite-Syrian pantheon) and, as seen before (ch. XX A), to Inanna.

Originally Astarte meant *uterus*. Her name was related to the city of Ashtartu—also called Ashterah, Be'eshterah (Joshua 21:27) or Beth Ashtarah, but most of the times as the plural form of Ashtaroth (1 Chronicles 11:44)—appearing many times in the *Bible* as the city of the Levites (Yahweh's priests) [184]. As far as Anath, her name was associated with the town *Beth Anath* (House of Anath, Hebr.) in the land of Nephtali (Judges 1:33; cf. Joshua 19:38), then to the priest's town *Anathoth* (plural form of *Anath*), north of Jerusalem, considered to be the birth place of Jeremiah and other biblical personalities (Joshua 21:18; 2 Samuel 23:27; 1 Kings 2:26; Jeremiah 1:1 etc.). Two men bore the name of Anathoth (1 Chronicles 7:8; Nehemiah 10:19), while Shamgar, one of the Judges (*Shophet*, Hebr.) was even called “the son of Anath” (Judges 3:31; 5:6).

Bearing the title of “Lady Asherah of the Sea” the goddess was regarded as the “Progenitor of the Gods,” i.e. the Great Mother Goddess and in the Canaanite pantheon she was the leading goddess. She was the wife of *El*, the chief of gods. The Hebrew colonists arrived in Palestine, considered Anath, “the Power of Life,” as the parent of Yahweh. Like for Cybele, Astarte's epiphany was a cone-shaped stone or obelisk, called “pillar” (*masebah*, Hebr.) in the Old Testament. After the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, the *Bible* mentions many times the respect paid to Asherah, the totemic pillars (*asherim*, Hebr., pertaining both to the goddess and her image [185]) symbolizing her, the altars *bamoth* (high places, plural; *bamah*, singular, Hebr.; Exodus 34:13) erected at the hills tops as, for instance in Deuteronomy 12:2,3 etc. (ch. XV A).

XX-50
XX-51
. . . 55
Asherah was adored even before the existence of a temple in Jerusalem (Judges 3:5-7). There were no less than 300 terracotta figurines and plaques depicting the Goddess discovered inside the houses and in all the major archaeological excavations performed in Palestine after 1940. They cover a period from Middle Bronze (2000-1500 BC) to Early Iron (900-600 BC). Thirty-eight female figurines were discovered only in stratum A (Israelite period) from Tell Beit Mirsim, southwest of Hebron [186].

XX-56
Midway between the red Sea and Palestine, near the Israelite-Egyptian frontier (northeast of Sinai) the ruins of the Kuntillet Ajrud fortress (8th century BC) housed two big vessels destined for storage, whose inscriptions ascertain that Yahweh was worshipped together with His female double, Asherah, like the gods of the East [187]: “Amarya(h)u said to my lord... may you be blessed by Yahweh and by his Asherah” [188]. In the same archaeological site it was unearthed the inscription: “I have blessed you by Yahweh *shmrn* and his Asherah” [189] about which Patai holds that *shmrn*

could refer to Shomron (Samaria) [190]. Last of all, the following text was found at Khirbat al-Qom 15 km west of Hebron: “Uriah the rich has caused it to be written: Blessed be Uriah by Yahweh and by his Asherah; from his enemies he has saved him” [191]. To remain with the same topic, we should mention the Masoretic text where God said: “As for me, I respond and look on him” (on Ephraim; Hosea 14:8). The significance of the original text, *ani ‘aniti wa’ashurenu*, in the *interpretation* of the Masoretes is not at all clear. Patai thinks that the syntagma *wa’Asherato* that appears in the inscription about Uriah, suggests the reading: “*ani ‘Anato wa’Asherato*” (I am his Anath and his Asherah, Hebr.), meaning: “I am the one who provides the people with the blessings of fertility,” in perfect agreement with the sequel of the verse 14:8: “I am like a leafy cypress-tree: from me is thy fruit found” [192].

According to an incantation of the 7th century BC whose text was found in Arslan Tash, Upper Syria, the women in labor requested for Asherah’s help [193]. Patai [194] supposed that a similar invocation would have been used on the event of the birth of the second son of the slave Zilpah, when Leah exclaimed: “b’Oshri!” that is usually translated: “By my happiness!” As a consequence, after the custom, being the mistress of the slave who delivered that son, Leah gave to the latter the name of Asher interpreted as “Happy” (Genesis 30:12-13). Reed believed that Leah would have exclaimed “b’Asherah!” (By Asherah!), but the text was changed for reasons easily to understand [195]. Anyway, *ba* (*b’* before a vowel) was used to swear by a god, but no known god was called Oshri. If we accept this hypothesis, the conclusion is that Asherah was venerated as early as the epoch of the Patriarchs in Genesis! A *Midrash* mentioned that in the days when the Sons of God married the daughters of men (Genesis 6:2) only a virgin called *Istahar* remained chaste [195], that name suggesting goddess Ishtar.

Solomon used to worship “Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians” (1 Kings 11:5), that is Asherah, yet her cult was embraced not only by the king, because prophet Ahijah of Shilo blamed the Israelites for their adoration of “Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians” (11:33). The same veneration was met with Maacah, Rehoboam’s mother (15:13). One image of Asherah stood for many centuries in the great Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:7).

Asherah was revered in the Israelite capital, at the king’s court, where her image was displayed during the rule of King Ahab (873-852 BC)—when in Israel there were four hundred prophets of Asherah (1 Kings 18:19)—and endured until the fall of this kingdom (722 BC), and even then it lingered a century more and as long as the goddess statue and altar in Beith-el were destroyed by Yoshiyah (2 Kings 23:15), the king of Judah (639-603 BC).

In Judah, after the death of Yehoyada, Yoash allowed the people to return

at the worship of Asherah and her idols (2 Chronicles 24:17-18), and probably accepted the reinsertion in the Temple of the statue of the goddess which remained there for a century, until the reign of King Hezekiah (727-696 BC) who removed it from there (2 Chronicles 29:5,15-18). As soon as Hezekiah died, his son and successor Manasseh (698-642 BC) built again the old altars and idols including the image of Asherah which was even in the Temple (2 Kings 21:3-7; 2 Chronicles 33:3-7).

As for Samaria, the statue of Asherah stood still erected, thus honored at the end of the reign of Yoahaz (2 Kings 13:6), son of Yehu (that is in 798 BC), so that her cult survived the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel.

Jeremiah abundantly described the cult devoted to the Goddess who was called "Queen of the Heavens." The name of the prophet's birthplace, *Anathoth*, comes from *Anath*. Jeremiah mentioned the title ascribed to the goddess *four times* (44:17,18,19,25). Patai dates back the text to 626-621 BC. The king of Judah, his wives and the people of the kingdom walked in the streets of Jerusalem (7:17,18; 44:9,17,21 sq.) to pay homage to the Goddess. They took solemn pledges to be her slaves, burnt incense and poured out drink-offerings (7:18; 44:17-19,21 sq.). They made cakes in the effigy of the goddess (44:19) using moulds like the one (dating from about 1500 BC) found in Israel [196]. Although originally only the women were busy with her worship (Jeremiah 44:19), later on also the men took a hearty part with the entire family at those ceremonies (7:18; 44:20,21), even the king and the queen. The prophet wrote that giving up the worship of the Goddess brought about divine sanction: "Since we left off burning incense to the Queen of Heavens, and pouring out drink-offerings to her, we have wanted everything, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (44:18).

The *Bible* reveals that beside his famous Temple, Solomon has built other contiguous temples ("houses"): "And Solomon was thirteen years building his own house; and he finished all his house. And he built the house of the forest of Lebanon... And he made... a house for Pharaoh's daughter... All these [buildings] were of costly stones..." (1 Kings 7:1-2,8-9). Scholars believe that they were temples devoted to the Goddess (the forest of Lebanon was supposed to point at the Goddess of the Mount, Astarte-Anath).

An Aramaic papyrus leads to the conclusion that the "Queen of the Heavens" was venerated in the 5th century BC in the Jewish military colony of Hermopolis, in Egypt, where it was a temple of the Goddess [197].

One can also mention the belief of the Judean mercenaries colony in Elephantine (Upper Egypt, at the first cataract of the Nile) that preserved the popular spiritual tradition of the Goddess, which was worshipped besides Yahweh and another male god in a new Temple they built there, until the 5th

century BC when the building was destroyed [198]. “History had allowed these Hebrews of the Diaspora to retain, side by side with Yahweh (Yahu), other deities (Bethel, Harambethel, Ashumbethel) and even the goddess Anath in a convenient syncretism” [199] as proved by an Aramaic document of 419 or 400 BC reading about a priest who ruled the community and collected donations from 123 individuals for Yahu, from 70 for Ishumbethel and from 120 for Anathbethel [200], the goddess worshipped in the Jewish colony at Elephantine.

Alongside with the Goddess, the Israelites worshipped her son, Tammuz (see *supra*), even in the time of Ezekiel who recalled his ritual in front of the Jerusalem Temple: “He brought me to the entry of the gate of Yahweh’s House that was toward the north; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz” (8:14). The latter was appointed as “shepherd of the land” like Jesus will be later on.

“Under such circumstances was there not a Hebrew goddess?” [201]. Patai gives an affirmative answer in his book dedicated to the Hebrew Goddess, demonstrating the permanence of Goddess cult over an immense period. He computed that Asherah was in the Temple between 928 and 586 BC (the period of the Babylonian exile), apart the intervals 893-825, 725-698 and 620-609 BC when she was excluded from the place of cult. Therefore, out of 370 years of Solomon Temple existence, the Goddess was adored together with Yahweh over a period summing up 236 years, that is nearly *two third of this period*, and her veneration was part and parcel of the mainstream religion authorized and directed by the king, court and priests, and the opponents consisted only in a few prophets who at large intervals manifested their wrath against the Goddess worshipping [202].

If we compare the attitude of the kings and population towards the pagan deities *Baal* and *Asherah*, we will notice a clear discrimination favoring the last. Thus, the biblical chronicles during the reigns of Yoram (2 Kings 3:2) or Yehu (10:19-28) report about destroying of Baal statues and even the massacre of its priests but say no word about the destiny of Asherah’s statues and priests.

Trying to explain the extraordinary hold Asherah exercised over the Jews, Patai guesses to “the effect that she answered the psychological need for a mother goddess which was keenly felt by the people and its leaders alike throughout the centuries following the conquest of Canaan” [203].

In order to find other evidences about the female aspect of the Divine, first of all we shall examine the *Old Testament* in its (interpreted) form that came down to us.

The first chapter in Genesis says: “God created man in his image, in the

image of God created he him; male³⁸⁶ and female³⁸⁷ created he them” (1:27). The conclusion is clear: God does not only exist as a male but also as a female: *God-Mother*. The mark semicolon (;) should not deceive us as it is obvious that it was purposefully put there to cause confusion; since, if there had been a colon (:) instead, the doubts would have vanished! The same intention was apparently accomplished in the verses 5:1-2 where the same idea was reiterated: “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him”—here follows a full stop after which *a new* verse begins: “Male and female created He him.” However, since there was no verse splitting in the original text, the intention towards a different division and so, a different meaning, becomes very obvious.

The creation of the archetypal humans out of the same primary matter—since the archetypal Man (androgynous as explained by the Kabbalah) was separated into Adam and Eve (ch. XIX C)—was nothing but the act of Creation repeated on a different level. Creation (no matter if cosmogony, theogony or anthropogony) in most mythologies supposed the two symmetrical divine Principles: a Male and a Female, each time originating into a division of the Primordial Unity as for Parabrahman (ch. I). Scholem [204] reports the existence in the 3rd century of the concept stating that Eve was created “in the same way” as Adam (according to Genesis 1:27) but independently of him, from the earth and not from his flank or rib (1:21), and this “first Eve” had no connection with the demonic Lilith [205]. This theory disagrees with the common view claiming the contrary. In fact, because Lilith was granted the same rank as Adam, the gynophobes downgraded her to the demonic realm, a position that they allotted also to other manifestations of the Goddess. Such an instance was the demoness’ name of *Naamah*, which means “Beauty,” “Pleasant” and was also the name of Enoch’s daughter who was Noah’s wife (ch. XV C). With a good reason, Caitlín Matthews wrote: “The metaphorical polarization of divine male and demonic female must always be extreme where the Divine Feminine is marginalized. However, Sophia³⁸⁸ cannot help but drift into the forefront of esoteric veneration, whether as woman, female abstraction or hypostatic Goddess. It is in her most transcendent beautiful of guises that she enter the soul of the Kabbalist” [206].

The Gnostic known as Justin Martyr was a Greek born in Shechem (*Flavia Neapolis*), Palestine, who was converted to Christian faith in 130. He

³⁸⁶ *Zakhar* (Hebr.).

³⁸⁷ *Neqevah* (Hebr.).

³⁸⁸ Generic name given by Matthews to the Goddess.

was the alleged author of the *Book of Baruch* (half of the 2nd century), which assumed that since the beginning a half-virgin and half-serpent (ch. IX) called *Edem* would have existed together with the Masculine Principle. Hippolytus reports that this representation was known earlier than the sources of Baruch's official Gnosis [207]. Hippolytus was referring to her as the "soul of Edem have been left behind. But the foolish Justin calls this (Edem) Earth" [208]. Scholem wrote that Edem "brought her whole power to Elohim as a dowry, when they were married" [209], thus allowing us to equate her with the *Adi Shakti* (Primordial Power, Sanskr.).

In a close connection with the biblical story of the Prototype Man creation out of clay by a male God we think useful to recall the existence of a much earlier Sumerian myth attesting that the goddess Ninhurshag, called the "Lady Potter," was the earlier prototype of the goddess Aruru who created Enkidu out of clay. Ki-Ninhurshag was the main deity of the Sumerians, "the mother of all living"³⁸⁹, and was rendered as the Great Cow [210] (ch. XX A).

Let us now go back to the first chapter of the *Bible*. After having partly analyzed some lines in the beginning of Genesis (ch. XIX A) here we shall resume and develop this enquiry. "God said: «Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it be a division between waters and waters»" (1:6). The creation in the cosmogonical myths originated in the Primordial Ocean and hence, the "waters" here signify the *primordial substance* of Creation. "And God made the expanse, and divided between the waters that are under the expanse and the waters that are above the expanse" (1:7). Those are evidently the *Heaven* and the *Earth*, or nothing else than *Father* and *Mother*. These lines, once again, reveal the division of the unique divinity into the Masculine and Feminine Principles.

Both in Aramaic and Hebrew, the suffix *-ah* indicated a *feminine gender*. On the other side, one and the same noun can exist both in masculine and in feminine form. For instance, *earth* is *eret* in its masculine form and *artzah*³⁹⁰ in its feminine form. The last corresponds to what most of the ancient people called *Mother Earth*, the Earth as a Feminine Deity.

The Hebrew word for the Spirit is *Ruah*³⁹¹ and thus, the latter is feminine in gender due to the suffix *-ah*. We will come across this word on the very onset of the Torah. The verse 1:2 in Genesis should therefore be read more correctly in the following way: "The Female-Spirit (*Ruah*) of God was

³⁸⁹ That is Eve (Genesis 3:20).

³⁹⁰ Phonetically close to *earth*.

³⁹¹ *Ruh* (Arab.); *roho* (Swahili).

hovering³⁹² in a womanly manner over the face of the waters,” since not only the subject but also the predicate “to hover” is used in its feminine form! Hindu Scriptures also refer to the perfect image of the Primordial Waters and describe the divine mother Prajapati moving like the wind (breeze, another hint at the Divine Mother manifestation; ch. XI C) over the waves [211]. The quoted verse in the *Bible* relates the aquatic element and the Female Spirit. Another evidence for the gender can be found in the sentence: “Say... to your sisters, Ruhamah” (Hosea 2:1). The name of Ruhamah is, therefore, associated to the women and it is translated here through Merciful (cf. *Rahman*—one of Allah’s name). The same symbolism was later found with the Jews, namely in *Shemoth* (R.15) saying that three creatures preceded the world: water, wind and fire; the water became pregnant and gave birth to the light. A fact worth noting is that the lines in Genesis immediately following the word “water” refer precisely to the creation of the light: “And God said: «Let there be light». And there was light” (1:3). It goes without saying that the Spirit of God is the Female divine Principle (see ch. XXI).

In addition to the above we can mention a basic Kabbalistic writing that contains the text of Genesis with the following addition: “In the beginning God created... This God is the Supernal Mother who rides and rises with a triumphant shout” [212].

Turning back to the Aramaic text of Genesis we come on the name *El-Shaddai* given to God in the verse 17:1, which literally means “God-with-a-female-breast” (*shad*, female breast, Hebr.), that is “God who feeds one at *her* breast”! This name was often used and interpreted as God Almighty, as it has already been shown in chapter XV D (cf. Genesis 28:3; 35:11; Exodus 6:3; Isaiah 13:6; Joel 1:15 etc.) and thus it is related to the *Power* (*Shakti*, Sanskr.)—of the Male Principle (notice the analogy *Shaddai*—*Sada-Shiva*)—a concept that was inseparably connected to the Primordial Divine Mother (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.).

Patai read: “In Kabbalistic teaching the divine name Yahweh has a masculine, and the name Adonai a feminine connotation” [213].

The book of Ezekiel (48:35) used the name *Yahweh-Shamah* that was translated (actually, interpreted) by “God is there.” However, when using with masculine subject, the form of “there” is “sham,” whereas with a *feminine subject* it becomes “shamah.” Therefore, here God is found again as a *female* hypostasis!

The Hebrew text of the Ecclesiastes starts with: “The words of Qoheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1). The *Ecclesiastes* or the *Preacher*

³⁹² *Merahepet* (Hebr.); that word is used two times in the *Torah* (Genesis 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:11). The *hovering* of the Holy Spirit appears again in the New Testament where the Spirit is compared with a dove (ch. XXI).

replaced this name. However, *Qoheleth* is of *feminine gender*: “See this which I have found, said the Qoheleth, [searching] one by one to find out the reason” (7:27) where the verb is in *feminine* inflection! The Russian version of the *Bible* renders the accurate name in the feminine form [214]. The Jew translators who worked out the *Septuagint* text considered *Qoheleth* as being the feminine of *qahal* (assembly, Aram.) and replaced it through *ecclesiastes* (from *ekklesia*, assembly, Gr.). We may also notice the radical disregard manifested in this book towards women: “I found more bitter than death the woman... Whose pleaseth God shall escape from her” (7:26). “One man among thousand have I found, but a woman among all those I have not found” (7:28). Therefore, we should not be surprised when the author refers to the feminine Wisdom using these words: “I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. Whatever hath been, is far off” (7:23-24).

Another name used to conceal the existence *de facto* of the Jewish cult for the Divine Mother is the personified Wisdom (*Hokhmah*, Hebr.) mentioned all together by Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon and the non-canonical writings (but accepted by the *Septuagint*; ch. VII): *Wisdom of Solomon* (see also ch. XIX C) and *Ben Sirah (Ecclesiasticus)*. *Hokhmah (al-Hikmah, Arab.,* also appearing repeatedly in the *Qur’an*: 2.272; 3.43, 73, 75; 4.57, 113; 5.110; 17.41; 31.11; 33.34; 43.63; 62.2 etc.) is of *feminine gender*, like her correspondents in other languages *Sophía* (Gr.) and *Sapientia* (Lat.), still in Russian (*Premudrosti*). Philo of Alexandria even wrote that “the Logos was apportioned a divine... pair of parents, God himself as father... and Sophia as mother” [215].

This fully matched with the Holy Spirit (ch. XXI). Aristotle considered *nous* (intelligence, Gr.) to be the reflection of the divine spirit (*pnéuma*, Gr.). Actually, “during the first centuries after Christ the words *nous* and *pnéuma* were used indiscriminately, and the one could easily stand for the other” [216]. Wisdom gender changed only when she was equated with the Latin *Spiritus Sanctis* (of masculine gender).

Hokhmah is related with the Tree of Life (subtle body; ch. IV): “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is he that retaineth her” (Proverbs 3:13). We can see that the enlightenment granted by her bestows the state of bliss (*ananda*, Sanskr.). More details are given in the *Ecclesiasticus* where Wisdom is a miraculous tree (24:13 sq.), ministers in the holy tent (24:10), and is related with the rivers³⁹³ overflowing Eden (24:25 sq.).

The *Sepher ha-Bahir*, one of the earliest Kabbalistic writings (ca. 1200) had identified the Shekhinah with the Gnostic Sophia, which resides as *Hokhmah* at a superior position on the sephirotic tree (ch. IV). According to

³⁹³ Nadi (Sansk.).

the Gnostic Hebrew myth about the world creation mentioned in chapter XIX C, Wisdom, acting like a female deity, resembles the Christian Gnostic concept of the *anima mundi* (world soul, Lat.) [217]. It is worthwhile to stress on the fact that in Gnosticism (ch. XX C4), Sophia is much more a goddess than Hokhmah in the Jewish tradition, since she initiated the Creation of the world.

Wisdom is not an attribute of God but Divinity Itself: “All wisdom comes from the Lord, she is with him for ever” [218]. An ancient Chinese Christian manuscript read: “This One God is wise and holy, and His wisdom is self-created” [219].

There are many mentions about Hokhmah in the *Proverbs of Solomon*. The first act of Creation refers to Wisdom who said: “Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was” (8:22-23). “When he prepared the heavens I was there” (8:27), and so on.

The *Wisdom of Solomon* read about Hokhmah: “Within her is a spirit intelligent, holy³⁹⁴, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, shrewd, irresistible, beneficent, friendly to human beings, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating, all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits. For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things. She is a breath³⁹⁵ of power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; so nothing impure can find its way into her. For she is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God’s active power, and image of his goodness. Although she is alone, she can do everything; herself unchanging, she renews the world, and, generation after generation, passing into holy souls, she makes them into God’s friends and prophets; for God loves only those who dwell with Wisdom. She is indeed more splendid than the sun, she outshines all the constellations; compared with light, she takes first place, for light must yield to night, but against Wisdom evil cannot prevail” [220].

From the *Proverbs* one can notice that Hokhmah is taken as an independent power of God. Yahweh is not a simply wise but seems to have a Wisdom with whom he interacts, as though that Wisdom were a deity herself. She speaks in the first person (8:22-31): “I was set up from eternity... I was brought forth... I was there... “ etc. Hokhmah plays a role in the

³⁹⁴ *Pneúma noerón hágion* (Gr.)—a concept that reveals Sophia’s pneumatic nature.

³⁹⁵ *Atmís* (Gr.). The syntagma relates, too, Sophia to the Kundalini energy—Adi Shakti (God’s Power) manifestation within the human being (ch. I).

mythology of Creation, as the Adi Shakti does in the Puranic texts.

The *Wisdom of Solomon* presents Hokhmah as a personage separable from God: “With you is Wisdom, she who knows your works, she who was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your eyes and what agrees with your commandments. Despatch her from the holy heavens, send her forth from your throne of glory to help me and to toil with me and teach me what is pleasing to you; since she knows and understands everything she will guide me prudently in my actions and will protect me with her glory.” Hokhmah saved humankind: “It was Wisdom who protected the first man to be fashioned³⁹⁶, the father of the world, who had been created all alone, she it was who rescued him from his fall and gave him the strength to subjugate all things. But when in his wrath a wicked man deserted her, he perished in his fratricidal fury. When because of him the earth was drowned, it was Wisdom again who saved it, piloting the upright man on valueless timber” [221].

About Wisdom, the non-canonical text of Ben Sirah read: “The first man did not finish discovering about her, nor has the most recent tracked her down; for her thoughts are wider than the sea, and her design more profound than the abyss” [222]. These passages suggest that there is indeed a feminine presence in the Old Testament. Thus is Hokhmah personified as a female being but, like Yahweh, she cannot be seen. The way she is introduced cannot be replaced by an abstract representation because the text suggested a physical presence and thus we might suppose her to be a goddess! She is everlasting: “Form eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain” [223]. A similar text appears also in the Old Testament, in Proverbs (8:23 sq.). It was also there that Hokhmah is described walking the streets of the city, crying out for people to listen to her: “Wisdom crieth without; she raiseth her voice in the broadways; she calleth in the chief [place] of concourse, in the entry of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words” (1:20-21). “On the top of high places by the way, at the cross-paths she taketh her stand. Besides the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud” (8:2-3).

Moreover, Wisdom can be regarded as God’s spouse: “She enhances her noble birth by sharing God’s life, for the Master of All has always loved her” [224]. Scholem observed that the term *symbios* used here appears again in the same chapter in the sense of *marital connubium*, and that it is therefore clear that Wisdom here was regarded as God’s wife [225]. Philo of Alexandria even goes so far as to call God “the husband of Wisdom” [226], and calls Hokhmah “the mother and nurse of the All” [227], and that despite the strong antipathy of the former towards the women [228].

³⁹⁶ Adam.

Hokhmah appears personified also in the New Testament, for instance with Luke: “The Wisdom of God had said:... “ (11:49).

The verses ending the *Proverbs of Solomon* (31:10-31) included an acrostic (*ákron*, extremity, border, *stoichos*, verse, Gr.; it is a word got by reading downwards the initial letters of the verses) of the Hebrew alphabet and made up a hymn exalting the virtuous woman. We have seen (ch. IV) that the 22 Hebrew letters are configurations of the divine Power (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.) and virtue is associated with Purity (*Nirmala*, Sanskr.), since the acrostic started by comparing her to a pearl³⁹⁷ (symbolizing not only the purity but also the *Sahasrara* that was opened by the *Adi Shakti*; ch. XV A and XIX D). Other metaphors to be found here are: “the heart of her husband” (31:11)—the *Anahatha*, residence of the Masculine Principle, Atman (ch. XIX C); “the ship” (31:14) and “she girdeth her loins with strength” (31:17)—the *Nabhi* and the *Void* (ch. V); “the distaff” (31:19), similar to the trident of the three channels—“the strengths” (the three *Maha-Shaktis*; ch. II) belonging to the three *nadis*; for the woman “strength and dignity are her clothing” (31:25) and “her lamp goeth not by night” (31:18)—ch. XI E; the woman is endowed “with wisdom” (31:26)—Sophia (ch. XX C4); she was not only “worthily” but “excelled them all” (31:29). These features designate the chakras and the nadis and, altogether are qualities of the Great Goddess.

The *Wisdom of Solomon* read: “To know you is indeed the perfect virtue, and to know your power is the root of immortality” [229]. The text equates: the Gnostic Divine Mother (knowledge)—the Purity, *Nirmala* in Sanskrit (perfect virtue)—the *Adi Shakti* (power)—the *Mooladhara* (root)—the Self Realization (immortality).

Bede Griffiths has recently written on Wisdom: “The feminine aspect of God as immanent in creation, pervading and penetrating all things, though found in the *Book of Wisdom*, has almost been forgotten... The Asian religions with their clear recognition of the feminine aspect of God and of the power of God, the divine shakti permeating the universe, may help us to get a more balanced view of the created process” [230].

The Jewish esoterica advocate that the alphabet includes on the one side the symbol of the Godhead (*aleph*), and on the other, the remaining letters that represent the Maid of Israel (ch. IV).

However, the Old Testament offers also straight, explicit references to the Divine Mother. In the Book of Isaiah God talks about “your mother” (of the Jewish people) (50:1) and resumes the talk (54:1-8) giving more details: “thy Maker is thy husband: Yahweh of hosts is his name... the God of the whole earth shall be called” (54:5). “Yahweh hath called thee as a woman forsaken

³⁹⁷ A ruby, in other variants. This is the color of the *Anahatha* chakra.

and grieved in spirit, and as a wife of youth, that hath been refused, saith thy God” (54:6). “Thus saith Yahweh: «I remember for thee the kindness of the youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness»” (Jeremiah 2:2). “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; and I will betroth thee unto me to righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; and I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shall know Yahweh” (Hosea 2:19-20). “And it shall be in that day, saith Yahweh, [that] thou shalt call me: «my husband»” (2:16).

Moreover, God is not always described as King, Lord, Master, Judge or Father. We would give here some notable exceptions. God “hovereth over the young, spreadeth out his wings, taketh them, beareth them on his feathers” (Deuteronomy 32:11³⁹⁸), followed by the specification: “He made him suck” (32:13). “Have I conceived all this people, have I brought them forth, that thou sayest to me: «Carry them in thy bosom, as the nursing-mother beareth the suckling?»” (Numbers 11:12). “Yahweh hath said unto me: «Thou art my son; I this day have begotten thee»” (Psalms 2:7). “«Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?» saith Yahweh. «I who cause to bring forth, shall I shut [the womb]?» saith thy God” (Isaiah 66:9). “For thus saith Yahweh: «... ye shall suck, ye shall be carried upon the side, and be dandled upon the knees»” (66:12; cf. 66:11). “And I it was that taught Ephraim to walk,—he took them upon his arms... and I gently caused them to eat” (Hosea 11:3-4). “On the Rock that begot thee was thou unmindful” (Deuteronomy 32:18). However, as it was already explained (ch. XV A), God was called “the Rock.” Therefore, in all the quoted texts God is depicted as a *Mother*! It is amazing that we find an analogous situation in an ancient version of the gospels existing in the *Codex Cantabrigiensis D* (on its authenticity, see ch. XXV A). The canonical Luke 3:22 described the baptism of Jesus: “And a voice came out of heaven: «Thou art my beloved son, in thee I have found my delight»” (*kai phonen ex ouranou genésthai*: “*su ei ho huiós mou ho agapetés en soi eudókesa*,” Gr.). However, the ancient codex read: “And a voice came out of heaven: «Thou art my son, on this day I have given thee birth»” (*kai phonen ex ouranou genésthai*: “*huiós mou ei su egó sémeron gegénneká se*,” Gr.), a text that is confirmed by the *Italocodices* [231] and echoes the Psalm above.

The *Odes of Solomon* brought a strong support to the above ideas: “The Son is the cup, and he who was milked is the Father; And the Holy Spirit milked him: because his breasts were full, and it was necessary for him that his milk should be sufficiently released; And the Holy Spirit opened his bosom and mingled the milk from the two breasts of the Father” [232].

Also the Dead Sea scrolls read: “like a man whose mother comfort him,

³⁹⁸ Similar references in Isaiah (31:5) and Psalms (17:8; 51:7; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4).

so will he comfort them in Jerusalem” [233].

Such hypostasis was echoed in the writings of Clement of Alexandria: “The nutriment is the milk of the Father, by which alone we infants are nourished... «the care-soothing breast» of the Father” [234].

The *Qur’an* made an attempt to deny that Jesus is the Son of God: “It befits not Allah that He should beget a son” [235], which would mean to agree on the maternal hypostasis if this “befits”! Then follows the negation of the previous assumption when it is acknowledged that to God everything becomes possible: “When He decrees a thing, He only says to it: «Be³⁹⁹!»—and it is” (*kun fa yakoon*, Arab.). Likewise with the *Bible*: “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27; cf. 14:36; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27).

The lecture of the Old Testament reveals that its compilers not only ignored the Goddess but also assigned an unquestionable inferior place to women, as a whole.

According to Genesis, it was woman who gave herself up to temptation and transgressed the divine commandment, thus drawing Creator’s wrath not only on her but also on her husband enticed by her. Both were punished being chased away from the Eden (3:23,24). Although originally the source of living for the first people, the earth turned into a curse on their account, and man was compelled to get food out of this ground with a great effort (3:17,23), while for the woman the punishment was greatly increased, since God said to her: “I will greatly increase thy travail and thy pregnancy; with pain thou shalt bear children; and to thy husband shall be thy desire, and he shall rule over thee” (3:16).

Bishop Kovalevsky fought against this discrimination of penalties according to the gender when he wrote: “It is evident that the sin of Adam exceeds the one of Eve” [236]. In chapter IX we have shown the reasons to invalidate the theory of the so-called *original sin*.

Jerome thus expressed the redemption from “the original sin”: “now the chain of the curse is broken. Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary” [237]. Irenaeus declared in his turn: “Eve... having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race;... Mary... by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race” [238]. This incredible fact is really bewildering: from a “giver of life” (ch. XIX C) Eve became the opposite!

Merlin Stone refutes with proofs such points of view [239].

Evdokimov analyzed this topic in connection with Freudian theory (see also ch. IX, XIX B): “Freud appears like a negative Jung, his dark pole. The

³⁹⁹ *Kun* (Arab.), hence the word *kawn* (the word; that which exists, Arab.). *Al-kawn al-kabir* is the macrocosm, and *al-kawn as-saghir* is the microcosm.

maniacal obsession with perversion, by way of hidden paths, perverts the intentionality of the subconscious, and, ultimately, its content. The demonic installs itself within the pride of despair and fatally transfers the blame to others... Psychoanalysis of the *collective ego* and its emanations would show the full complexity of its morbid, abortive historic formations. It would point out the uselessness of the transfer of blame to the woman by the «Adam complex», a thoroughly masculine act: «The woman, whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate» (Genesis 3:12) [240].

In spite of the truth, the subordinate condition of the woman that was established since the very beginning, will become a constant leitmotif within the entire Scripture through its extension from the Old Testament to the New one (ch. XX C1).

Although the compilers of the *Bible* displayed intense efforts in this direction, the Scripture contains a series of “slips” that throw a true light on the importance and esteem enjoyed by women in the society of those ancient biblical times.

The earliest text in the Old Testament is “the Song of Miriam (Mary)” (Exodus 15:21), the prophetess of the 13th century BC, thus denoting the substantial position held by the women over the Hebrew antiquity. An entire chapter in the Judges (ch. 5) is devoted to the Song of Deborah also a prophetess and, at the same time, a judge in Israel (Judges 4:4). Another prophetess appearing in the Old Testament was Huldah who was consulted (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22) by the priest Hilqiyah, king’s secretary Shaphan, and the rest of the team appointed by King Josiah (Ahikam, Achbor, Asaiah, the king’s minister), in order to secretly write the “Book of the Law” supposed to be the core of the Deuteronomy (ch. VII). Last but not least, *Song of Songs* is a true hymn of love for the feminine symbol. Actually it described in poetic terms the mystical union (Yoga) taking place in the Kingdom of heavens between the divine Principles Male and Female, called here King and Queen, respectively. Their Hebrew names are virtually the same: *Shlomo* (Solomon, the historical character was known for his wisdom, a feminine attribute specific to any Realized Soul) and *Shulam* (Shulamite; the feminine form from Shlomo), thus denoting that they have the same (divine) origin. To the noninitiate the text seems to bear an erotic connotation, while to the genuine initiate it is a metaphor depicting the ecstatic joy accompanying the Self Realization. With a good reason, some exegetes equate the *Bhagavad-Gita* with *Song of Songs*, both having practically the same meaning. A fact not devoid of interest is that many great theologians devoted large comments to Song of Songs. Some of them were known for their Gnostic views as Clement of Alexandria, others were real initiates such as Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, John

of the Cross, and even genuine saints who have experienced the ecstasy of Self Realization as Teresa of Avila and Bernard de Clairvaux, the latter being the author of more than 80 books commenting Song of Songs.

During Exodus people used to acknowledge women's aptitude of prophecy as it was the above-mentioned case of Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses (Exodus 15:20; Numbers 26:59). Her name was often mentioned and we are told a lot of events from her life: she disapproved Moses; all the three went together to speak to Yahweh unto the tent of meeting; she was punished by God, and all the people refused to move until she was cured after seven days (Numbers 12:1-15); even the place where she finds her death is given (20:1): *Qadesh* (Holy, Hebr.), which is full of significance. Until Miriam, the prophecy was bestowed on men only. God said to the prophet: "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam" (Micah 6:4), thus placing her onto the same position as her prominent brothers. Actually, from the tent of meeting "they went out, *they three*" (Numbers 12:4). As for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Angel of Death spared Miriam and her brothers Moses and Aaron, all of them being gathered to one's fathers due to the Shekhinah's intervention [241]. Miriam is mentioned even in the *Qur'an*: "Mary,... sister of Aaron" (19.29; ch. XX D).

In the old times, the women spiritual charisma manifested in the *rebbes* (term used by the Hasidim for their spiritual guides; different from *rabbi*, teacher, master, Hebr.; *Rah-bin*, the one who sees the way, Persian) those being daughters and wives of the great masters, for the most of the cases.

XX-58 The power of the Queen-mother was so great that Solomon "rose up to meet her, and bowed himself to her,... and she sat on his right hand" (1 Kings 2:19). It was one of her tasks to crown the new king: "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" (Song of Songs 3:11). Or, the Sahasrara is the crown of the head (ch. IV, IX, XV C). A coronation is, at the same time an (mystical) espousal and a rebirth [242] and coincides with the entering of the Spirit of God into the newly anointed king as happened to Saul (1 Samuel 10:6) and David (16:13), in consequence of which he "turns into another man" (10:6). At the coronation-rebirth, the purple mantle placed over the king represented the womb, and in royal Hindu ritual it is still so called. Actually, the Christian ritual of wedding includes, too, the crowning of the bride and bridegroom. The Psalms refer to the divine Queen, stressing on her privileged position: "Upon thy right hand doth stand the Queen in gold" (45:9).

Last but not least, the exegetes refer to a Trinity that was disguised within the Old Testament as the Triple Blessing of Aaron, which only priests were authorized to utter (Numbers 6:24-26): "Yahweh bless thee, and keep thee;

Yahweh make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Yahweh lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” The identity of the Three Persons is thus disclosed: The Father is here “the Lord of Maintenance” (*Vishnu*, Sanskr.), the Mother is “the Shining of the Grace” namely the Shekhinah, the Son is “the Peace.” Actually, Isaiah is calling this Son: “Prince of Peace” (9:6). The topic will be further developed in chapter XXI.

The rabbinical texts enriched the Jewish tradition with the *Shekhinah* concept we were talking about above. We would ask the reader to resort also at chapter XXI since the Shekhinah expresses the relationship Divine XX-59 Mother—Holy Spirit.

In the Talmudic period, “some Jewish sages wrote of God’s Shekhinah in ways that may simply imply that Shekhinah is a goddess. As Wisdom was in earlier centuries, Shekhinah became a predominant feminine mode of God’s activity and, in some passages, seemed to take on a will or life of her own” [243].

The term of *Shekhinah*⁴⁰⁰ (dwelling, rest; from *shakhan*, to reside; *mishkan*, dwelling, residence, Hebr.) first appeared in the early rabbinical writings (ever since the first century AD), pertaining to the divine *presence* among the people of Israel, mentioned in the *Pentateuch* as *glory* (visible under the form of fire, cloud⁴⁰¹ etc.; ch. XI E) hovering over the tabernacle or the sacred mountain (e.g. Exodus 40:34-38; 24:15-17; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezekiel 9:3; 10:4, 18, 19 etc.).

Firstly, the Shekhinah was mentioned in the *Targum*⁴⁰² *Onkelos*, a translation-paraphrase in Aramaic of the Old Testament from the Talmudist period. The text was first drawn up around AD 70 but was finalized in the 4th century AD. Here, the “Shekhinah” or “God’s Shekhinah” replaces “God.” For instance Numbers 5:3 which reads about the “camps in the midst whereof I dwell” became: the “camps in the midst whereof my Shekhinah dwells.” In the views of the same *Targum*, “the Shekhinah of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. And Moses could not enter into the tent of meeting,” thus replacing “the glory of Yahweh” which appeared in the original text (Exodus 40:34-35). Siegmund Maybaum gave other similar instances [244]. Nevertheless, Patai [245] quotes two exceptions. The first refers to the Talmud scholar Rabbi Yehoshua who in the 1st-2nd centuries made a distinction between the Shekhinah and “the cloud of glory” [246]. At the

⁴⁰⁰ *Shekhintah* (Aram.).

⁴⁰¹ *Arabhoth* (plural, of feminine gender).

⁴⁰² Translation (Aram.).

opposite end, the second concerns Rabbi Yose (2nd century AD) who even identified God with the Shekhinah [247]. It should be mentioned that originally, the Shekhinah had neither sex nor gender in the *Talmud*. It was only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah became the female aspect of God. She was matched with Sophia in the Kabbalistic text of the *Bahir*.

The Babylonian *Tashmit* (hearing, listening, Arab.) called her “Lady of the Dwelling Places,” a possible metaphor for the heavens [248].

Some sources of the *Talmud Babli*⁴⁰³ wrote about the intention of God to dwell in the universe since the first day of creation; but that became possible only after the construction of the Tabernacle where His Shekhinah came to rest, as well as on Mount Sinai or, later, in the Jerusalem Temple.

Thus, the Shekhinah appears as the manifestation of God, which it is possible to be known by men (even as an Avatar; see *infra*). That could be characterized through some peculiarities, which perfectly agree with those we have mentioned in the present work.

First of all, the Shekhinah fits well with the Spirit of God (ch. XXI). Like it, she bestowed the divine grace on the prophets (ch. XI A). The *Babylonian Talmud* claims that the Shekhinah is all pervading like God Himself [249]. Nevertheless, she was frequently associated with specific places and persons [250], especially with the prophets: Moses [251] and other outstanding personalities to whom she granted the gift of prophecy [252]. It is said that she rested on the righteous and departed from the unworthy ones [253]. She also granted protection [254]. As in the case of the Holy Spirit (ch. XX C2), the Shekhinah descended only when the believers are gathered, namely when a quorum of ten men (*minyan*) are assembled in prayer [255]. On the other hand, the Kabbalistic Schools of Spain and Safed believed that the Shekhinah could «appear» only to inspired individuals (i.e. the prophets; ch. XI A) [256].

Its forms of manifestation remind us of the Kundalini energy (ch. XI E) as the presence of the Holy Spirit: *fire*—“fire that eats fire” [257], *light*, more radiant than that of the sun, shining on the righteous in heaven [258], or even *vibrations* of the sound [259]. Early Jewish mystics envisioned the Shekhinah as the luminous presence of the Divine, the great light who shines on all creation, while Maimonides, the greatest Jewish philosopher in the Middle Ages (1135 Cordoba—1204 Cairo), spoke of the Shekhinah as “a light that God causes to descend... in order to confer honor on a particular place, in a miraculous way” [260]. The work of the Kabbalah is to recreate the ladder of ascent by which the Shekhinah may return to union with her Creator. The

⁴⁰³ The *Babylonian Talmud* (completed to the end of 5th century AD) is regarded as more authoritative than the *Jerusalem Talmud* (completed by the end of 4th century AD).

reader can recognize easily the Sushumna in the ladder of ascent (ch. IV).

In the *Targum* as well as in the *Talmud*, *Midrashim*⁴⁰⁴ and in many medieval mystical writings, the Shekhinah was equated with *kavod* (glory of God; ch. XI E) heir to the biblical “cloud of glory” that dwelt in the tent as a visible manifestation of the presence of God (Numbers 9:15-22; 10:11 etc.). Also she replaced the “face of God” from the *Bible* (ch. II), since this syntagma parallels “the glory of God” (ch. XI E). In the *Talmud* she is clearly associated with *Ruah ha-Qadesh* (Holy Spirit, Hebr.) [261]. Other times, she corresponds to the grace bestowed by the divinity; for example, when Moses encounters the burning bush, he is told to remove his shoes and prepare himself to receive the Shekhinah [262].

The demiurgic feature of the Shekhinah is also to be connected with the text of the *Zohar* (ch. IV) where the Creation is described as occurring through a series of *sephiroth* (emanations, Hebr.) that emerge from the hidden God, *En-Soph* (Endless, Infinite). Thus, the Shekhinah is identified with the feminine *Malkuth*. It is worth noticing the relation between *Soph* (Father) and *Sophia*, the Greek name of the divine Mother. Here, as with Philo, “the Kingdom” is the female aspect of the deity and is identical with the Shekhinah, the personified, female presence of God [263].

As early as the first manifestation of the Kabbalistic trend, the *Bahir* (c.1180) already contained most of the essential Kabbalistic ideas on the Shekhinah as a feminine aspect of God [264]. Since the 13th century, the Shekhinah emerged out of the Kabbalistic writings with a new vitality, as a distinct female deity, acting independently of God and playing a greater role than he in the affairs of her children, the people of Israel. She is envisaged as *Queen* or *Bride* (the King or Bridegroom being YHWH), and *Matronit* (Hebr.—a term first used by the Kabbalists; from *Matrona*, Lady, Lat.). We shall remark that the Hasidic movement (ch. XXV C) does not make use of the name of Matronit that was commonly employed in the *Zohar* to indicate the Shekhinah.

Other names given to the Shekhinah were: the *Daughter*, the *Widow* (because of her separation of the Godhead; ch. I), the *Stone of the Exile* (*Lapis Exulis*, Lat.), the *Precious Stone* [265]. Through extension she represented the mother of all human souls, although in the Kabbalah she was described as mother of the mystical community of Israel and, eventually, of every Jewish individual [266]. In his liturgical poems, Luria referred to the Shekhinah calling her “Matronit,” “the holy ancient one,” “the old of days.” By assuming of countless images, attributes and names, the Shekhinah becomes thus a symbol of “the Eternal-Womanly” (see also *infra*).

⁴⁰⁴ Plural form of *midrash*.

For the *Zohar*, the Shekhinah is “the Light Woman.” The *Toldot*⁴⁰⁵ (*Zohar Hadash*, the New Zohar, Hebr.) read: “And all of them⁴⁰⁶ gather around the Shekhinah, according to the secret of seven, because the Shekhinah is called *Bath-Sheva* (Daughter of Seven, Hebr.), Daughter of the Supreme Mother who is the principle of the seven stages that are with her.” We can find here the Kundalini as the reflection of the Divine Mother, enlightening the ordering entities all through the ascension of the seven steps of the chakras. Moses Cordovero distinguished between *the Upper Shekhinah* and *the Lower Shekhinah*, based on the *Zohar* which mentions *the Shekhinah Above* and *the Shekhinah Below* [267]. In the Upper Shekhinah we can easily recognize the *Adi Shakti* (both words might have a common root), while the reflection of the latter in the created world (as the Kundalini) represents her Lower aspect and it is assimilated to the sephirah Malkuth (Mooladhara sacrum) [268].

Because the Kabbalists were devoted to the reunification of the dyadic Godhead, all of their prayers began with the invitation of both the YHWH and the Shekhinah, and this form has been preserved and continues to be used [269], such that even today. In all the synagogues and Jewish temples, the Shekhinah is invoked in the Friday prayers using the words: “Come, O Bride!” The same mystical union symbol comes in the Christian marriage ceremonial, too, when the choir sings: “Come from Lebanon, Spouse” (cf. Song of Songs 4:8).

The *Zohar* highlights the importance of the Shekhinah. “How many thousands, how many myriads of celestial cohorts surround the Holy One and follow in his train! Princes of supernal countenances are there, and beings full of eyes; lords of the sharp weapons, lords of the piercing cry, lords of the heralding trumpet, lords of mercy, lords of judgment; and above them the Lord has appointed the Matrona to minister before him in the Palace... He resolved that his whole household be given into her keeping, and delivered to her all his armory, all the lances, all the swords, all the bows, all the arrows, all the spears, all the catapults, all the citadels, and all the weapons of warfare... He said: «From now let my warfare be entrusted to thee; my weapons, my fighters! From now thou must guard them all” [270]. Obviously, by endowing her with the respective weapons and also due to her warlike peculiarities, the Matronit becomes the equivalent of the goddess Durga. Like Steve Davies who have highlighted the resemblance of the Shekhinah and the goddess Kali [271], Patai makes evident the relationship existing between Kali and the frightening aspect of the Matronit in Kabbalah [272]. Another scholar [273] parallels *Song of Songs* text: “I am black, but

⁴⁰⁵ *Toldot* (history, Hebr.).

⁴⁰⁶ Patriarchs associated with the sephiroth.

comely” (1:5) and the description given to the goddess Kali (Black, Dark, Sanskr.) in one of the hymns devoted to her: “Dark art Thou like the blue-black cloud Whose face is beauteous as that of Sankarshana⁴⁰⁷” [274]. The *Sepher Hekhaloth* depicts a warlike Shekhinah, while the *Zohar* discloses her fearful aspects: a titanic woman swallowing mountains and rivers etc. [275]. Patai [276] drew a parallel between Shiva—who is powerful only when united with his Shakti (Goddess, called Durga, Kali etc.; ch. XX A), but is unable even to stir without her—and his consort on the one hand, and the Hebrew couple God—Matronit (Shekhinah) on the other. As shown in the Kabbalistic writings: “The King [that is God] without the Matrona is no king, nor is he great nor highly praised” [277]. Patai explains these correspondences through the occurrence that in the 13th century the Indian spirituality reached Spain through the agency of the Arabs [278].

The name of the Shekhinah was not uttered directly (ch. XV D) and it was as holy as that of Yahweh. It was used the form “That Woman,” rather than her ineffable name. She was paid the greatest respect: “Sanctify yourself and all your limbs to my service by day and night. Let your limbs form a camp within the Shekhinah can rest” [279].

In the *Zohar*, the Shekhinah is oftentimes called the “field of holy apple trees” on the strength of a phrase “like an apple orchard” which in the *Talmud* however merely characterize a particular pleasant odor [280]. Luria’s great hymn wrote: “I sing in hymns/ to enter the gates,/ of the field of apples/ of holy ones/... Between right and left/ the Bride approaches/ in holy jewels/ and festive garments.” It follows the narrative of the *unio mystica*, then “the bridesmen” go forth “to beget souls/ and new spirits/ on the thirty-two paths/ and three branches/... Let the Shekhinah be surrounded/ by six Sabbath loaves/ connected on every side/ with the Heavenly Sanctuary...” [281]. The *orchard* refers to the mystical ascent to the “Heavenly Halls” of God’s palace (*hekhalot*, Hebr.) [282], i.e. through the chakras until the Sahasrara. The *field* is the metaphor of the feminine principle of the cosmos [283] and as it was explained (ch. IV) the apple is the symbol of immortality thus ensuing that the Shekhinah depicted the *Womanly Eternal* (ch. XX A). The *three branches* are the three “pillars” of the sephirothic tree [284], while *thirty-two* is the total sum of 22 letters of the alphabet and 10 sephiroth (ch. IV), all these being regarded as holy numbers. The *Bride between right and left* shows the Shekhinah manifesting herself as a subtle energy within the central channel between the side ones. The *Sabbath loaves connected on every side with the Heavenly Sanctuary* could represent the first six chakras projected on the side channels leading to the heavenly Sahasrara, the only chakra that has no side aspects. A Kabbalistic ritual urges that “man becomes sanctified to be a

⁴⁰⁷ Sankarshana is a name of her consort, Shiva.

chariot for the Shekhinah, in body and soul.” The *Zohar* explains clearly: “Now, what is «the way to the Tree of Life»? This is the great Matrona who is the way to the great and mighty Tree of Life” [285]. Descending the sephirothic tree (it is an *inverted* tree having its crown at the basis; ch. IV), we could notice that the Shekhinah (identified with the Kingdom, *Malkuth*, as it was shown above) comes after *the ninth emanation (Yeshod)* of God. The reader will easily recognize here: the *Avatars* (sephiroth, emanations) and out of them Jesus as *the ninth Avatar (Yeshod)* related with *Yeshoda*, the mother of *Yeshu*—Krishna/Christ; ch. XIX B), as well as the following Avatar, the tenth, that is the last one (ch. XIX) to witness the advent of the Holy Spirit (Shekhinah), the Divine Power (Adi Shakti) announcing Kalki.

As a Feminine Avatar, on ten occasions the Shekhinah descended on the earth every time the humankind went through a crisis. However, she descended nine times until this day⁴⁰⁸ [286]. According to another Kabbalistic text, “Our Holy fathers taught us that the Shekhinah already descended ten times on the earth⁴⁰⁹, but not the Most Holy, blessed be his name, since the creation is the Shekhinah’s work and it is she who looks after the creation like a mother after her children” [287]. Indeed, as it was already shown the divine Father never incarnated (ch. XIX B) and it was the Adi Shakti who achieved the creation (ch. I).

The Shekhinah has her own thinking, will, personality and opinion; she opposes to God whom she even defies trying to influence him. God said: “I shall do as both Father and Mother” [288]. If the Shekhinah is the love aspect of God she also represents the divine punitive power, in accordance with the dual feature of the Hindu goddesses Durga or Kali.

As in the case of Virgin Mary from whom originated a deep form of popular worship (*Mariology*; ch. XX C3), this concept of the Shekhinah was not only the most significant and lasting innovation of Kabbalistic medieval literature but, according to Scholem, “it responded to a deep-seated religious need” among the Jewish people, and maintained a widespread popular recognition [289]. Patai showed that “the *popular-mythical*, as against the *scholar-mystical* view of the Matronit had a marked resemblance to the popular Mariolatry of the Latin countries, where the Virgin is not the Jewish woman whose womb God chose to reincarnate himself in human form—as the official Catholic doctrine has it—but the Mother of God, herself a goddess, who through the ages never ceased to perform miracles, and to whom, therefore, direct and personal adoration is due” [290]. “The parallel between Mary and the Matronit extends to other aspects as well. Like the

⁴⁰⁸ That is until the moment when Rabbi Nathan wrote his text.

⁴⁰⁹ Ch. XIX B.

Matronit, Mary was also considered the spouse of God; like her, she assumed the position of the intermediary⁴¹⁰ between God and men through whom led, if not the only, at any rate the best and easiest way to God⁴¹¹. The old pagan goddess to whom the Israelites sacrificed cakes⁴¹² reawakened among the Christians to new life in Mary whom the Kollyridians, a 5th-century sect of Zealous women, worshipped by carrying cakes in a procession in her honor [291] and among the Jews in the Matronit-Shekhinah, whose identity with Asherah was recognized by Moses Cordovero [292] in 16th-century Safed” [293]. The *Zohar* depicts the Matriona as an intercessor: “Every message which the King wishes to send out is sent through the Matriona, and, conversely, every message sent from the lower spheres to the King must first reach the Matriona, and from her it goes to the King. Thus the Matriona is the messenger between the upper regions and the lower.” The King said: “From now, he who wishes to speak to me must first make known his concerns to thee!” [294]. In like manner the Hindu protocol requests that the prayers (mantras) destined to all the deities have to be addressed through the agency of the incarnated Avatar of the spiritual Master (who includes all of them), that is the Divine Mother (Adi Shakti) in this occurrence, as shown in chapter XIX D.

The popular devotion to the Shekhinah is denoted by the fact that the traditional blessing “*Barukh attah Adonai*” (Blessed are thou, O Lord, Hebr.) was altered to “*Brukha yah Shekhinah*” (Blessed are thou, Shekhinah, Hebr.) [295]. It is worth noticing that besides *Adonai* (or *Adon*, Master, Lord, Hebr.; related to *Adonis*, Gr.—with the same meaning) there exists, too, the feminine form of *Adonath* (Lady, Hebr.; *Adath*, Canaan.) which is equivalent to *Anath*.

At Dura-Europos, on the Middle Euphrates near the northeastern border of Syria, on the wall of a third-century synagogue one can see depicted the infant Moses in the arms of an unnamed woman who constituted the earliest extant portrait of the Shekhinah in a feminine physical form [296]. In that XX - 60 case, the Hellenized Jews overcame the ban on imagistic representation of the divinity [297]. Contrary to the opinion of a historian who claims that this woman was the goddess Anahita [298], many other ascertain that that image designates the Shekhinah. Patai, for instance, is based on the Babylonian *Talmud* [299] and a *Midrash* [300] both establishing a close relationship

⁴¹⁰ Ch. XX C3.

⁴¹¹ “The best Yoga” (see our Introduction and ch. XXV A) and also the easiest one.

⁴¹² See *supra* Jeremiah 44:19.

between Moses and the Shekhinah [301].

A remarkable fact is also that the iconography—otherwise extremely poor XX-57 in Judaism—contains cherubs⁴¹³ having feminine features [302].

The Jews are unique in according the *Torah* a divine *persona* that is God's Bride. Thus, early Jewish stories on Creation showed: "In the beginning... the Torah... (was) lying in the lap of God" [303]. God decided to create the world and asked Torah's counsel. During the feast of Simcat Torah celebrating the *Torah*, adult male Jews clasp its scrolls in the arms and dance with it about the synagogue [304].

To conclude this part devoted to the Hebrew Goddess we shall remark that *Sabbath* is another symbol of her.

In the *Talmud*, Rabbi Hanina says: "Come, let us go to receive Sabbath the Queen," and Rabbi Yannai greets her with the words: "Come, O Bride, come, O Bride!" [305]. In another passage from a *Midrash*, Sabbath is personified and talks to God [306].

The Jewish sect Falasha in Ethiopia (attested in the 12th century) is characterized through a primitive Judaism derived from the Old Testament and the *Book of Jubilees*, but ignores completely the *Talmud* and *Mishnah*. Their basic book, *Teezaza Sanbat* (Commandments of the Sabbath) dating back to the 14th century, is written in the classical Ethiopian language and includes texts from the 5th-7th centuries AD. In it the Sabbath was described as the daughter of God, a divine princess, to whom all angels pay homage and whom God Himself exceedingly loves. We read also that God "sanctified the Sabbath, glorified her, and blessed her through the Holy Spirit" [307]. In another Falasha writing called *Abba Eliyahu*, the Sabbath gets the names of Luminous, Glorified, Honored, Beautiful, Resuscitating, Rejoicing, Beloved, Guardian and it is said that the name Sabbath itself means "I am God alone" [308]. The Ethiopian Jews and Christian population parallel Sabbath and Virgin Mary [309].

The Kabbalah developed the Sabbath in a mythologem. As early as the 13th century, Menahem ben Jacob called her as Queen and Bride [310], as the *Zohar* did [311]. Over the same century, the Kabbalists made a distinction between the *Male* and the *Female Sabbath* identifying the latter with the Shekhinah [312]. Marvin Pope mentioned "Yahweh and his Sabbath Bride" [313]. The Sabbath song *Lekha Dodi* whose words are inspired from the poem of Shlomo Alqabets of Safed (16th century) includes the refrain: "Come, my friend, to meet the Bride,/ Let us receive the face of Sabbath" [314]. In a mystical lyric written in Aramaic, Isaac Luria made an ample mention at the union of God, the King, with His Bride, Sabbath-Shekhinah [315].

⁴¹³ *Kruwb* (Hebr.).

C. THE DIVINE MOTHER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE MOTHER OF JESUS

“Hail [thou] favored one! The Lord [is] with thee”
Luke 1:28

In comparison with the Hebrew Scripture we would be at heavier pains to understand the situation in the New Testament dealing with Virgin Mary, the *Mother of the Son of God!* A possible explanation could rely on either an intentional co-operation (influencing) of the (real or hypothetical) authors of the Gospels and Acts or in a posterior intervention on the text aiming at its censuring by alteration or expurgation, which means a crass *forgery*. Chapter XX C2a analyzes in detail the hypothesis. We take here only the instance of “Marcion [who] complains that apostles are suspected (for their prevarication and dissimulation) of having even depraved the gospel,” in Tertullian’s own words [316].

The contemporary exegesis [317] has shown that the actual canonical texts are the result of successive adages, apologetic inventions and, undoubtedly posterior alterations and suppressions achieved by scribes and copyists [318].

The names of the women in the New Testament are very much fewer than in the Old Testament. Obviously, among them a central position was granted to Virgin Mary.

Like for Jesus, the Old Testament includes a series of prophecies announcing the advent of Mary as mother of the God’s Son. Most of them were presented in chapter XVI. Other shall be mentioned here in parallel with the related text in the New Testament. Zephaniah’s prophecy addressed to the daughter of Zion read: “The king of Israel, Yahweh, is in the midst of thee...Yahweh thy God is in thy midst, a mighty one that will save” (Zephaniah 3:15,17), thus heralding the future Savior as a divine Son. Cf.: “The Lord is with you... thou shalt... bear a son... He shall be great, and shall be called Son of [the] Highest; and [the] Lord God shall give him the house of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages” (Luke 1:28-32). Other clear saying belongs to Isaiah (7:13-14; partly quoted in Matthew 1:23) who addressed to King Ahaz: “Hear then, house of David:... Therefore will the Lord himself give you a sign: Beheld, the virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son.” Cf.: “The angel Gabriel was sent of God to a city of Galilee, of which [the] name [was] Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name [was] Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name [was] Mary. And the angel came in to her, and said: «... thou shalt conceive in the womb and bear a Son»” (Luke 1:26-28,31). Both texts

have in common also the previous establishing of the Son's name.

Isaiah may induce a short analysis. In the Hebrew original there appears the word *almah* (young maid or woman that does not necessarily imply virginity; one can see the analogy with the Latin *alma*—ch. XX A), but the *Septuagint* translation in Greek achieved by the Jewish scholars (3rd century BC) uses the term *parthénos* excluding any ambiguous interpretation, thus designating explicitly “the virgin.” Therefore, the keepers of the tradition re-established the true meaning of the prophecy about the Virgin giving birth to the Savior (ch. XIX B).

Maria, the Latin translation of the name of Jesus' mother *Maryam* (Aram.), or *Miryam* (Hebr.)—*Mariam* in the Greek Gospels—seems to originate in the Goddess' name *Ma-Rhêa*, (*Ma* being the name given to her by the Greeks; ch. XX A), with the manifest view of being easiest accepted by the Roman Empire population. The fact that the 5th-century Roman Emperor Zeno re-dedicated to Virgin Mary the Temple of Rhêa at Byzantium backs this hypothesis. Densușianu brings forth evidences that in the old Pelasgian language *Rhêa* was a plain appellative and meant *Queen*, constituting the *feminine form* of the masculine *Ra*—took over from the Pelasgians and designating the *King* in the Egyptian hieratic speech—and *Rai*—meaning *King*, a word preserved in some Romanian heroic songs. Actually, *Rhêa* was replaced (interpreted) through *Basilissa* (Queen, Gr.) in the Greek legends and *Regina* in the official Roman cult [319]. The special status of Queen conferred to Messiah's mother is the consequence of the frequent use of the Hebrew word *Gebirah*, which designates the mother of the reigning king in both Books of Kings (1 Kings 15:2,10; 22:42; 2 Kings 12:1; 14:2; 15:2,33; 18:2; 22:1; 23:31,36; 24:18 etc.).

The attitude of the evangelists towards women in general and especially Virgin Mary is contradictory and inexplicable.

Luke is the only one who depicted Mary before Jesus' birth with great awe: “The angel Gabriel was sent of God... to a virgin... And the angel came in to her, and said: «Hail, [thou] favored one! The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women»” (1:26,28). “[The] Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of [the] Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God” (1:35). Elizabeth said to her as soon as she caught sight of her: “Blessed [art] thou amongst women” (1:42) and calls her “mother of my Lord” (1:43). Mary replied to Elizabeth: “From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done to me great things” (1:48-49). Luke otherwise referred to her most frequently (in 52 verses) compared to Matthew (21), Mark (12) and John (8). As for the Acts, they say no word about her with only one exception, namely the descent of the Holy Spirit (1:14), which, however, represents the greatest

moment of all.

These facts determined the orthodox priest Serghei Bulgakov (1871-1944) to call Mary “the Great Close-mouthed of the Gospel,” thus reminding Luke: “Mary kept all these things [in her mind], pondering [them] in her heart” (2:19; cf. 2:51).

Schuon parallels the coldness witnessed by the authors of the gospels against Mary whom Christian believers regarded eventually almost as a Goddess (ch. XX C3), with the situation of Rama’s wife Sita, never happy on earth but made divine in Heaven, or that of Maya, the mother of the Buddha, almost forgotten yet later glorified under the form of Tara, “Mother of all the Buddhas” [320].

A dubious fact is that from all the gospels, just that of John—the one Jesus introduced to Mary as her son (John 19:26)—is making minimal mentions of her in only eight verses! This circumstance cannot be explained otherwise than through a posterior censorship of the text (ch. XX C2). The hypothesis can rely on another discrepancy: the *only writing* in the New Testament addressed to a woman was the second epistle of John (otherwise very short, maybe abbreviated as well) starting with the words: “The elder⁴¹⁴ to [the] elect Lady” (2 John 1). Chapter XX C4 will supply with other details.

Later, as the Savior started His public life, things were presented as if Jesus had disregarded His mother. At some point in the wedding in Cana, He said to her (John 2:4): “What have I to do with thee, woman⁴¹⁵?” While being on the cross, Jesus indicated John saying to her: “Woman, behold thy son” (19:26). He used the same word when addressing Himself to Mary Magdalene after His Resurrection (20:13) and then called her by her name only when she did not recognize Him (20:16). In the presence of His mother and brothers, Jesus told His followers: “«Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?» And, stretching out his hand to his disciples he said: «Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in the heavens, he is my brother, and sister, and mother»” (Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). It should be remarked that John remains silent about such rejection of relatives by Jesus.

The facts above contradict Christ’s benevolent attitude towards women even when they were sinful (the adulterous woman and the one who anointed His feet); also the Canaanite woman, Lazarus’ sisters Martha and Mary, Peter’s mother-in-law, the bleeding woman and the bent one, Jairus’ daughter and the widow in Nain.

What could be the explanation? The Savior said: “Every one who has left

⁴¹⁴ Presbyter.

⁴¹⁵ Some exegetes think that that appellation points out to Mary as the New Eve.

houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit life eternal" (Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:29,30; Luke 18:29,30). "For I have come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter with her mother, and the daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law" (Matthew 10:35). "He who loves father or mother above me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter above me is not worthy of me" (10:37). To make Himself better understood, Jesus added: "If any man come to me, and hate not his own father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). In the *Gospel of Thomas* "[Jesus said]: «Whoever does not hate his [father] and his mother as I do cannot become a [disciple] to me. And whoever does [not] love his [Father and] his Mother as I do cannot become a [disciple to] me. For my Mother [...] but [my] true [Mother] gave me life»" [321]. The part at the end of leaf 49 was unfortunately missing, but the respective omission referred to His divine Father and Mother. We may, therefore, understand that Jesus requests us to be detached from any mundane bonds: material (houses, lands), emotional (relatives, for instance) and any other, even our own life. The words He uttered about His mother and relatives have the value of example for the others as they teach us not to set much value on our affective ties and the human limited love but to discover the love of God that is boundless. "Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

The Islam tradition has a similar position. "Narrated Anas: The Prophet said: «None of you will have Faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind»" [322]. And the *Qur'an* read: "Neither your blood-kindred nor your children shall profit you upon the Day of Resurrection" (60.3).

We would have to be misogynists⁴¹⁶ blinded by hatred against Woman and Mother (ch. XX C2) to imagine Jesus, the true embodiment of Love, having disobeyed the fifth commandment given by God, reminded so many times in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16) that was paraphrased and even strengthened in Deuteronomy 27:16: "Cursed be he that slighteth his father or his mother!" Christ, otherwise, reminded it to the Pharisees: "For God commanded saying: «Honor father and mother» and, «He that speaks ill of father or mother, let him die the death»" (Matthew 15:4). See in this respect Exodus 21:17 and Leviticus 20:9.

Jesus had His mother by His side when He performed His first miracle in

⁴¹⁶ From *miseó* (to hate, Gr.) and *gyné* (woman, Gr.).

Cana (John 2:1-2), then in Capernaum (2:12). Mary Magdalene, Jo(h)anna—the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, Susannah, and many other women (Luke 8:2-3) accompanied Him on His travels. All these, together with His mother, Mary—the wife of Cleopas and mother of James and Joses, as well as Salome—the mother of Zebedee’s sons, witnessed the crucifixion (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; Luke 24:10; John 19:25). On the contrary, as soon as Jesus was captured, “all the disciples left him and fled” (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50). Also Justin Martyr said: “after he was crucified, even all his acquaintances forsook him, having denied him” (*pántes apéstesan arnesáménou auton*, Gr.) [323]. It was only John who wrote that he also had been present at the crucifixion (19:26). “All those who knew him stood afar off, the women also who had followed him from Galilee, beholding these things” (Luke 23:49; cf. Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:40). Rosemary Radford Ruether remarks: “All the Gospels are shaped by a dramatic form in which Jesus... is successively rejected by his family and home town, by the religious leaders, by the fickle crowds who once heard him, and finally, by his own male disciples, a betrayal which is climaxed by Peter’s denial. The women disciples thus constitute the «faithful element» who remain with him at the cross and who are the first at the tomb to witness the resurrection and to bring the good news back to the trembling male disciples... Those who have no honor and are not even accounted worth to be witnesses in the dominant religious system are the faithful remnant and first witnesses of the resurrection” [324].

The Gnostic writing *Pistis Sophia* [325] said that when the apostles gathered there were also present Mary, the mother of Jesus, Martha, Salome, and Mary Magdalene—a mysterious biblical character and, unquestionable, a great initiate (ch. XX C4). These women used to question Christ like the other apostles (ch. XX C4).

The high respect paid to women by the early Christians can be seen in the fact (remarked by Evdokimov) that “in the catacombs, the most frequent image is the figure of a woman in prayer, the *Orant*” [326]. This occurrence XX - 61 is more obvious with the Gnostic communities (ch. XX C4). We should add that in the well-known letter of Pliny the Younger addressed to Trajan (ch. XVIII), the author mentioned two deaconesses (*ministrae*, Lat.; the equivalent of *diàkonoi*, Gr.). There was no other known reference to deaconesses until the 4th century when they attained some importance in the Eastern Christendom [327].

The most important moment in the disciples’ life was the descent of the Holy Spirit when they received the *Power* (Acts 1:8). After mentioning the name of the eleven apostles (1:13), the text read: “These gave themselves all with one accord to continual prayer, with [several] women, and Mary the

mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (1:14). This totally contradicts the gospels sayings about the mother and brothers of the Savior (see *supra*).

Faithful to the gynophobic attitude of the *Bible*, many artists depicted the Day of Pentecost only with the apostles, in the absence of the Virgin Mary. XX-62 There were, however, works of art showing Mary amidst the disciples on the descent of the Holy Spirit, one of which being El Greco’s painting, now in Prado Museum, or many icons in Eastern Christianity where Mary was the only female character appearing there while the brothers were absent altogether.

A noticeable fact was the statement made at CNN on April 8, 1996, by Reverend Jerry Murphy O’Connor, a Dominican scholar who arrived at the following conclusion: “I believe in the Jesus movement women were extremely important. They were probably more numerous than men and I think they had a deeper intuitive, sympathetic understanding of what he was trying to achieve than men” [328].

Many exegetes focused their attention on the radiant personality of Virgin Mary. They analyzed thoroughly the texts with great respect and concern, making an attempt at giving her back the place of honor she deserves.

One of them was the Russian scholar Roerich who remarked while he visited the famous Buddhist monastery in Ladakh: “The writings of the lamas XX-63 recall how Christ extolled woman—the Mother of the World” [329]. Roerich discovered the following words of Jesus recorded in the Tibetan manuscripts: “«Reverence Woman, mother of the universe; in her lies the truth of creation. She is the foundation of all that is good and beautiful. She is the source of life and death. Upon her depends the existence of man, because she is the sustenance of his labors. She gives birth to you in travail, she watches over your growth. Bless her. Honor her. She is your only friend and sustenance upon earth. Reverence her. Defend her... Their love ennobles man... Wife and mother—they are the adornments of the universe... From them issues all which peoples the universe... Your best thoughts must belong to women... Do not humiliate her, for therein you will humiliate yourselves... And all which you will do to mother, to wife, to widow or to another woman in sorrow—that shall you also do for the Spirit». So taught Issa⁴¹⁷” [330]. These words are almost identical to those within the Buddhist documents discovered by Notovitch recording, too, the words of Jesus: “Whoso doth not respect his mother—the most sacred being after his God—is unworthy of the name of son. Harken to what I say to you: Respect woman; for in her we see the mother of the universe, and all the truth of divine creation is to come through her. She is the fount of everything good and beautiful, as she is also the germ of life and death. Upon her man depends in all his existence, for she is his

⁴¹⁷ *Issa* was the name given to Jesus in these manuscripts (ch. XXIII A and B).

moral and natural support in his labors. In pain and suffering she brings you forth... Bless her and adore her, for she is your only friend and support on earth. Respect her; defend her... Be submissive to the wife; her love ennobles man... Wife and mother are the priceless treasures which God has given to you. They are the most beautiful ornaments of the universe, and from them will be born all who will inhabit the world... Therefore I say unto you, after God, to woman must belong your best thoughts... Suffer her not to be humiliated, for by humiliating her you humiliate yourselves... All that you do for your mothers, your wives, for a widow, or for any woman in distress, you will do for your God” [331].

In a chapter devoted to Christ’s mother entitled *Maria Avatara* [332], James Somerville reminded the sarcastic words of Pilate used when showing to the mob the scoffed Son of man: “Behold the *Ánthropos* (Man, Gr.)⁴¹⁸” (John 19:5), words that the author transposes in their opposite point, as a worship of His mother: “Behold the *Gyné*⁴¹⁹ (Woman, Gr.)” thus evoking the words uttered by Jesus on the cross (cf. 19:26), an authentic testament left to the entire humankind for the coming age (ch. XIX D). The original meaning of introducing John, His most beloved disciple, to His mother as her future son (that is a genuine initiate, knowing the secrets the Savior entrusted to him; ch. XX C4), therefore regains its accurate signification through reversing the original connotation from 19:26: “Woman, behold thy son!” to: “[My Son,] behold the Woman!” Thus transformed into the archetype of the *Eternal-Womanly* (*Faust*; ch. XX A), Mary was acknowledged the divine Mother status. Likewise, towards the end of Goethe’s masterpiece, she is addressed as “The pure, the Heavenly Queen,/ I know her splendor/ Highest Mistress of the World/... Virgin, pure in brightest sheen/ Mother sweet, supernal,—/ Unto us Elected Queen,/ Peer of Gods Eternal!/... Virgin Holy, Mother, Queen,/ Goddess, gracious be!” [333].

Jesus’ mother is sometimes called “concealed Paradise,” for instance by Cosimo of Maiuma in the hymn of the 9th song in the canon of the Holy Cross Ascension. This ascertains Divine Mother’s status of “Mistress of the Sahasrara” (subtle Paradise; ch. II). There are two psalms having a peculiar position within the Byzantine Marian liturgies: Psalm 45 dealing with a royal epithalamus⁴²⁰ and Psalm 132 exalting the bringing of the Ark in David’s

⁴¹⁸ “Ecce homo!” (Lat.)

⁴¹⁹ In the original Greek language of the gospel, the word used for addressing to Virgin Mary was *Gyné* (John 2:4; 19:26). In Aramaic language the text would have been: “*ha immah*.”

⁴²⁰ A sacred poem recited during the Jewish wedding ritual.

royal citadel. Besides other biblical sources this evokes the connection between “Jacob’s ladder” (subtle body; ch. IV) and the divine residences (chakras). Thus, she is the “Queen of the epithalamus” (*epí*, above, on top of, Gr.; hence dominating the thalamus, which indicates the Sahasrara; ch. II), “Mysterious Paradise” [334]. Furthermore, the Fathers of the primitive Church and the later exegetes compared Mary to God’s Ark, the Holy Tent and the Temple of the Lord, a fact founded on the adjoining of two texts. In the first, David, Christ’s ancestor questioned: “«How shall the ark of Yahweh come to me?»... And the ark of Yahweh remained in the home... three months... “ (2 Samuel 6:9,11). The second regards Elizabeth asking: “«And where [is] this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?»... Mary abode with her about three months” (Luke 1:43,56).

The majestic person of Virgin Mary was unjustly given a secondary place in the Christian Scripture despite her wide acknowledgement as mother and spiritual guide of her Divine Son. To whom is it imputable the lack of respect (a respect we indeed due to the Divine Mother and to women, in general)? Who and how could have perverted the reality to such an extent?

2. TWO MISOGYNISTS: PETER AND PAUL

*“Ye indeed are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians
of no value. Oh that ye would be altogether silent!
and it would be your wisdom”*

Job 13:4-5

*“Leave them alone; they are blind leaders of blind;
but if blind lead blind, both will fall into a ditch”*

Matthew 15:14

In order to approximately establish the date when the oral reports about Jesus’ life were given a written form, the *Bible* scholars considered to be a historical guide-mark the year 70 that corresponded to the fall of Jerusalem. Most of them agreed that the first one was the Gospel according to Mark compiled around the year 67 and the last one, to have been the Gospel according to John, a little before 100 (after the reputed Bible scholar John A.T. Robinson, John’s Gospel preceded the Synoptics). Between these limits, the other two synoptic gospels were placed over the years 80-90 (after others, the last gospel would be that of Matthew, between 85 and 110). In 1994, Dr. Carsten Peter Thiede analyzed three fragments of the Gospel attributed to Matthew preserved at the Magdalen College in Oxford (donated in 1901 by

Charles Bousfield Huleatt). In a highly questionable attempt⁴²¹ he maintains that the Gospel was written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70, therefore in the eyewitness period [335].

Modern scholars (Harnack and Goguel among others) agree that a collection of *Logia* (sayings of Jesus; German critics designate this document as *Q*, the initial letter from *Quelle*, source, Germ.) was at the origin of the Gospel of Mark. Others equate *Q* with the *Gospel of Thomas* (ch. XX C4).

As one may see from Acts and the Epistles, the first decades of the rise in Christianity were tormented by disputes even among those who preached about Jesus' teachings. In those years, some of them brought themselves forward as leaders and played an important part in changing the content of the gospels both directly and, in a roundabout way through their followers educated and promoted in privileged positions by the former ones. From among those leaders, Peter and Paul were the most notable, and they were called, not without reason, the *pillars* of the Christian Church (Galatians 2:9; cf. 2:7) because the Church was known to owe them a lot.

An interesting fact is that towards the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr nowhere refers to the "gospels" but speaks only of the *Memories of the Apostles* (*Apomnemevmata Apostolon*, Gr.) [336]. Also Eusebius (see below) referred to the "oracle" of Matthew. Luke even mentions the title of one of these "Oracles" used by him: *The Divine Wisdom* (11:49). Other collections are known as the *Oxyrhynchus*⁴²² *Papyri 1* and *654*, in Greek. The XX - 64 early Fathers of the Church make references to the *Tradition of Matthias* and - 65 the *Teaching of Peter* that are sources remained unknown to us [337].

Around the year 177, Celsus "says that certain of the Christian believers... have corrupted the Gospel from its original integrity, to a threefold, and fourfold, and many-fold degree, and have remodeled it, so that they might be able to answer objections," in the words of Origen [338].

Eusebius, (c.262-339?), the bishop of Caesarea, is the author of the *Church History* (*Historia Ecclesiastica*) in ten volumes. He divided the writings of the New Testament into three classes: those acknowledged with authority, those whose authority was disputed, and the spurious texts. As a matter of fact, among the supposed authors of the Synoptics, only Matthew could have claimed to have seen and heard the Savior. Indeed, neither Mark (converted by Peter after the Ascension) nor Luke (a Gentile born in Antioch,

⁴²¹ The reputed expert in that field and author of *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Professor G. Vermes regards that evaluation as "unsubstantiated."

⁴²² Called so after the name of the Hellenistic settlement about 200 km south of Cairo where the manuscripts were found at the end of the 19th century in a Christian grave.

converted by Paul) saw or heard Jesus.

In his vast work Eusebius also disclosed how Papias, the bishop of Phrygian Hierapolis modified the Gospels at the early second century: “The same writer gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Savior, and some other more mythical things... but it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Irenaeus... Papias gives also in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord... and traditions as handed down by the presbyter John... Mark having become the interpreter of Peter⁴²³ wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord’s discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them... But concerning Matthew he⁴²⁴ writes as follows: «So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able» [339]. Despite of the main conviction, also Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius insisted on the occurrence that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, while Jerome said that on his time (4th century) he found the Gospel according to Matthew written in Hebrew. Concerning the Gospel of Mark, Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215) stated that at the request of Christians in Rome Mark had written down Peter’s word, since the latter could speak only his native tongue while Mark was a speaker of Greek and Latin. We should add that Peter was talking about Mark calling him “Marcus, my son” (1 Peter 5:13). As for the Gospel of John, Eusebius quotes from the *Hypotyposes* of Clement: “But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement” [340].

Leaving aside the controversy on Matthew gospel’s original language, the rest of the New Testament was originally composed in Greek apart from several words or sentences in Hebrew, like: “*Eli, Eli, lamah sabachtani.*” Neither in Aramaic nor in Hebrew but in Greek! So great was Paul’s desire of “exporting” the Christian faith among the non-Jewish population (Gentiles) and so strong was his influence on the gospels authors!

Acts show that Mark was Barnabas’ close relative and he was Paul’s

⁴²³ We can portray John Mark, the supposed author of the earliest gospel, as Peter’s amanuensis (scribe).

⁴²⁴ Papias.

traveling companion, whereas Paul called another evangelist: “Luke, the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14). Irenaeus and John Chrysostom called the Gospel according to Mark: “Paul’s gospel.” The *Biblical School* in Jerusalem performed an analysis of the method used for writing the gospels starting from several sources. Therefore, it was exposed the influence exerted by Paul over many phases of this process, and especially over the document that stood at the basis of the Gospel according to Mark. It was found that the last editor who compiled this document could be considered to be the same person who also wrote the final versions of Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels. However, concerning the exaggerations of the “Jesus Seminar” (organized since March 1985 by the Westar Institute in Santa Rosa, California), we should keep in mind Schuon’s words referring to the “criticism of sacred facts, a distortion which is at the opposite pole from intellectuality and excludes understanding of the facts in question. Modern exegesis is only a caricature of ancient hermeneutics, if indeed there is still any relationship between them” [341]. Besides the fact that Luke was not among the twelve apostles (and eyewitnesses, too), he was not one of their disciples! Nevertheless to Luke it was assigned the authorship of *two* writings in the New Testament. They are the Gospel bearing his name, and Acts which read on the beginning: “I composed the first discourse, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1), that *discourse* being the Gospel according to Luke, which was addressed to the same Theophilus (Luke 1:3). We should bear in mind that Acts were accepted as a canonical text only with great difficulty and only on Justin’s repeated requests (towards the year 165) and, especially Irenaeus’ of Lyons (end of the 2nd century). We should also add that when analyzing the text the philologists discovered certain peculiarities. As a non-Jew, Luke wrote Acts and his Gospel in a Greek closer to the standard language, the result being apparently less a translation than other parts of the New Testament. Despite this reality, the incipient text seems to be a translation after a writing composed in Aramaic. All the above facts turned Paul into the first doctrinaire of the Church. However, his doctrine had nothing to do with the message of Jesus, as we shall see in the followings (ch. XX C2b).

As already shown (ch. XVII), the list of the canonical writings of the New Testament was not established until the Council of Laodicea in 363, and the present-day version was finalised only in 419 through the Council of Carthage, saying nothing about Revelation which was generally accepted as part and parcel of the Scripture no earlier than the year 692 by the Trullan Synod of Constantinople. These blameable facts enter in flagrant contradiction with Jesus’ words: “It is easier that the heaven and the earth should pass away than that one title of the Law should fall” (Luke 16:17; cf.

Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 40:8).

But the history of the fundamental Christian holy text ended not there. After becoming pope in 1585, Sixtus V was dissatisfied with the Latin Version of the *Bible* realized by Jerome towards the end of the fourth century. Hence, he issued a Bull: only he, the pope, was qualified to decide the authentic *Bible* for the Church. Therefore, he added phrases and sentences, translated according to him, altered references and, “apart from changing the Titles of the Psalms which were considered by many to be inspired, he omitted, probably through carelessness, entire verses” [342]. All existing *Bibles* became instantly obsolete!

As shown by Graves and Podro, Cardinal Newman himself referred to those who gave the New Testament the actual form, acknowledging: “They thought that, when there was a *causa iusta*⁴²⁵, an untruth need not be a lie” [343]. Actually, Origen agreed that “things done according to the history could be adapted to these mystical senses... the Scripture interwove in the history (the account of) some event that did not take place, sometimes what could not have happened; sometimes what could, but did not. And sometimes a few words are interpolated⁴²⁶ which are not true in their literal acceptance, and sometimes a larger number” [344].

XX-66 Professor Dummelow of Cambridge wrote on the authenticity of the New Testament in the form that it has reached us today: “A copyist would sometimes put in not what was in the text, but what he thought ought to be in it.” With a similar view, the Dead Sea Scrolls expert Geza Vermes states: “Qumran manuscripts of Scripture... indicate... that redactor-copyists felt free to improve the composition which they were reproducing” [345]. Tucker, stated about the gospels: “In them the traditional material was used, but there was no hesitation in the altering it or making additions to it, or in leaving out what did not suit the writer’s purpose” [346].

Also the *Qur’an* referred to the corruption of the texts by Christians and Jews (see also ch. XX B): “And there is a sect of them which twist their tongues with the Book, that you may suppose it part of the Book, yet it is not part of the Book; and they say, «It is from God», yet it is not from God” (3.72). “They perverting words from their meaning; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of; and thou wilt never cease to light upon some act of treachery on their part, except a few of them... And with those who say «We are Christians» We took compact; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of... People of the Book, now

⁴²⁵ In the original text: right cause (Lat.).

⁴²⁶ Interpolation: changing the text by inserting a new material not belonging to the original.

there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have concealing of the Book, and effacing many things” (5.16-18). “So woe to those who write the Book with their hands, then say: «This is from God», that they may sell it for a little price; so woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for their earnings” (2.73).

a. PETER

“Woe unto you, the doctors of the law, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; yourselves have not entered in, and those who were entering in ye have hindered”

Luke 11:52; cf. Matthew 23:13

Many enlightened analysts have arisen the question whether Jesus actually appointed Peter as the leader of the disciples. One of them was Luther on whom Eck’s⁴²⁷ account of the debate in Leipzig of 1519 read: “Luther denies that Peter was the chief of the apostles” [347].

The main invoked justification for Simon-Peter accession at the head of the Christian movement was the following sayings ascribed to Christ: “Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly” (Matthew 16:18). However, the Gospel according to John (1:42) mentions (strange fact: at the very beginning of Christ’s public life, just when meeting Peter for the first time, not as late as before the Transfiguration like in Matthew) that the Savior addressed totally different words to Peter: “Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Kephas” (stone, Hebr.), omitting the promise in the second part of the sentence reported by Matthew about Peter’s connection with the assembly (later and falsely interpreted as Church; see *infra*). However, a most important fact is the absence of any reference to that episode in the Gospel according to Mark, whose text was inspired directly by Peter himself (as shown above). Therefore, the text of Matthew 16:18 found no confirmation and even it is denied, since in his first epistle Peter calls Jesus “a living stone... with God chosen, precious” (2:4), “a corner-stone, elect, precious” (2:6), making no reference to his own person. This perfectly corroborate Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians: “Jesus Christ himself being the corner-stone” (2:20), “for other foundation can no man lay besides that which [is] laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11), thus rejecting Matthew 16:18 which found *no echo in the other gospels*, a weighty reason to arise suspicions even to exegetes like Merejkowski, who was committed

⁴²⁷ Official of the Archbishop of Trier.

to the official Church. The Russian author arrived at the following conclusion: “There is much that is against the historical accuracy of these words... «Thou art Peter, the stone» was said not by Jesus, but by the Church about its Supreme Apostle” [348]. Therefore, Simon was not at all the stone Jesus’ assembly was built on. We would see at once what kind of a “stone” was indeed Peter! Jung declares his bewilderment about “the strange fact that it is precisely Peter, who lacks self-control and is fickle in character, whom Christ wishes to make the rock and foundation of his Church. These seem to me to be ideas which point at the inclusion of evil in what I would call a *differential moral valuation*” [349].

Starting from the Gospel according to Luke (24:34) and (especially) Paul’s own words (1 Corinthians 15:5) some biblical scholars consider that Peter was chosen to be the leader of the apostles because he was the first to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection. However, they seem to forget XX-67 that the first person that encountered the resurrected Christ was Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-17; Matthew 28:9 who wrote about a group of women). The fact is authenticated, too, in the *Gospel of Mary* [350]. The tradition of the first Christian community in Jerusalem claims that Jesus was first seen by His brother James [351], in spite of Paul’s denial (1 Corinthians 15:7). In this respect, Jerome quotes the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, maintaining that Christ made His first appearance to James: “The Gospel also which is called the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and which I have recently translated into Greek and Latin and which also Origen often makes use of, after the account of the resurrection of the Savior says: «but the Lord, after he had given his grave clothes to the servant of the priest, appeared to James»” [352]. In any case, this event could by no means be regarded as a privilege, since the Savior “appeared to above five hundred brethren at once” (15:6).

On the occurrence of the visit on the tomb after resurrection paid by “Simon Peter and... the other disciple to whom Jesus was attached” (John 20:2), the former appears less faithful than the latter (John) about whom one says that entering into the tomb and seeing the linen cloths lying and the handkerchief which was on Christ’s head, “he saw and believed” (20:8), while there is no such mention about Peter.

Other exegeses have in view John reporting the talk Jesus had with Peter, when the Savior have assigned him the leadership of Christianity, saying three times: “Feed (shepherd) my lambs (sheep)” (21:15-17). The talk was reported to have taken place after Jesus gave them bread and fish (John 21:13-14; Luke 24:30), then “he disappeared from them” (Luke 24:31)... “and has appeared to Simon” (24:34). Therefore, the others were absent when Peter was appointed leader and consequently the evangelic text is based

exclusively on the testimony of Peter himself! If we look carefully through the gospels to find any possible hint about the leadership of Peter, the only insinuation comes immediately after Jesus connects the latter to Satan⁴²⁸: “But I have besought for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou, when once thou hast been restored, strengthen⁴²⁹ thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

There are strong reasons to believe that Jesus appointed no leader whatever. When being with His followers “Jesus having called them to [him], said: «Ye know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be thus amongst you, but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant; and whosoever will be first among you, let him be your bondman»” (Matthew 20:25-27; cf. 23:11; Mark 10:42-44). “And there was also a strife among them which of them should be held to be [the] greatest” (Luke 22:24; cf. 9:46; Luke 9:46). After that, Jesus mentioned no particular name (and would He not appointed Peter if that would have been His wish?) but taught them humility: “Let the greater among you be as the younger, and the leader as he that serves” (Luke 22:26; cf. Mark 9:48). Seneca used to give the following advice: “Treat your inferiors in the way in which you would like to be treated by your own superiors” [353]. However, neither Peter nor Paul (as we shall explain further on) could not at all be called humble or modest but only strong ego-centered.

Christ rejected the idea of a leader and explicitly told the disciples that they were all equal having only Jesus as their teacher. “For one is your instructor, and all ye are brethren” (Matthew 23:8). This totally contradicted the message that He was said (by *the same* Matthew) to have given *exclusively* to Peter: “I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens” (16:19). But we should not be misled! Graves and Podro brought to light that in Tatian’s second-century *Diatessaron*⁴³⁰ there was no mention about Jesus giving to Peter the heavenly keys, a fact that led the two authors to the conclusion that the episode “was evidently invented by a late edition of Matthew” [354]. The text went on and seems also to indicate Peter only: “And whatsoever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be bound in the heavens; and whatsoever thou mayest loose on the earth shall be loosed in the heavens” (16:19). All this is very questionable if we consider *in the same gospel* a little further (18:18) the almost identical sentences, this time addressed by Jesus *to all His disciples* (not only to Peter), since in *plural form*: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven, and

⁴²⁸ See *infra*.

⁴²⁹ Confirm (in Darby).

⁴³⁰ A cocktail of the four gospels into a single narrative.

whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven” (18:18). Thus, Matthew 16:19 is evidently a fake, an interpolation.

Only on his own accord, also Paul (who not even knew Jesus) arrogated the right of the supremacy to oneself, apart from Peter. Thus, the former declared: “that the glad tidings of the uncircumcision were confided to me, even as to Peter that of the circumcision” (Galatians 2:7). We may well ask: who confided it to Peter? *By no means Jesus!*

Some students of the Scripture believe that Jesus had chosen His brother, James the Righteous, to be the leader. Here is what Thomas reported in his gospel: “The disciples said to Jesus: «We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?» Jesus said to them: «Wherever you are, you are to go to James the Righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being» [355]. In our view, Jesus gave not up the absolute equality of His followers. His words seem rather to appoint James only as an adviser and not as a leader. However, Josephus Flavius and Eusebius showed that Jesus’ brother, James the Righteous, had been the leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem for eighteen years, then he was stoned to death on the orders of the high priest Annas II in the year 62. But James was not the man to oppose Peter’s egocentric impulses, and history described him as “a pious, wise, inspired man who was more meditative than active” [356]. A Gnostic writing disclosed, too, the dominant place occupied by James the Righteous, Jesus’ brother and hero of the first Christians, until Peter has usurped his leadership [357].

Acts contained traces about James’ authority that was, at least temporarily, acknowledged. Thus, Peter, having escaped from prison, said: “Report these things to James and to the brethren” (12:17). Paul wrote about his voyage to Jerusalem where, three years after his conversion, he went to meet Peter, but he “saw none other of the apostles, but James the brother of the Lord” (Galatians 1:18-19). During the assembly of the Christian community in Jerusalem, the one who spoke up to answer Barnabas and Paul was James (Acts 15:13). Paul, on the other hand, mentioned “James, and Kephias, and John, who were conspicuous as being pillars” (Galatians 2:9) in which sequence, James was placed first, even before Peter, and nothing was said on Paul himself as a “pillar.”

Eusebius’ *Church History* read that Peter and John “strove not after honor, but chose James the Just bishop of Jerusalem” [358]. In a letter addressed to the ecclesia of Tripolis, Peter wrote: “observe the greatest caution, that you believe no teacher, unless he brings from Jerusalem the testimonial of James the Lord’s brother” [359].

The Times (London) brought to light the position of the Catholic Church against James: “The role of James, the brother of Jesus, has always been seen

as a threat by the Roman Catholic Church, and from its earliest times the Church has controlled history by removing information about this highly important figure. As recently as 1996, Pope John Paul II issued a statement declaring that Jesus was Mary's only child and that therefore James was not his brother after all. The Pontiff made this strange and completely unsubstantiated statement despite biblical evidence and much scholarly opinion in the contrary" [360]. One could add that Eusebius was against including James' epistle in the New Testament [361].

We shall close the debate of this topic by asking: Who appointed Peter as bishop of Rome? Since he is regarded as the first leader (pope) of the Church. As a matter of fact, his name was missing in the earliest lists of the bishops of Rome. For instance, Irenaeus who was bishop of Lyons until the end of the second century mentioned Linus as the first bishop of Rome. It followed Anacletus then Clement (nominated by Peter), Euarestus, Alexander, and in the sixth place Sixtus whose name justifies this position (with Peter at the head of the list, Sixtus would have been the seventh one). Linus was appointed by Paul who mentions this name in 2 Timothy 4:21. Also Eusebius in his famous *Ecclesiastical History* never associated the name of Peter with the title of bishop of Rome. Neither Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian etc. altogether. Moreover, as shown by Couliano [362], in Marcion's view, the twelve apostles, and especially Peter, "the man of the Law" (*legis homo*, Lat.), led astray peoples [363]. Actually, Marcion (see *infra*) held Peter for a false apostle [364].

Now, let us sketch some of Peter's distinctive traits of character.

The apostle who claimed the leadership over the others is depicted as being not too bright. His (and other apostles') dullness was disapproved by Jesus (Matthew 15:16) who rebuked them: "Are ye also still without intelligence?" which denoted that it had also happened before. Indeed, the *Bible* gives many such examples (Matthew 16:9; Mark 6:52; 7:18; 8:17,21; 9:10,32; Luke 9:45; 18:34; 24:25; John 10:6; 12:16 etc.).

The apocryphal manuscripts discovered in Nag Hammadi, whose authenticity and antiquity could not be questioned, offered many reports of Peter's misogynic behavior.

We shall not sufficiently insist on the importance of studying the apocryphal Scriptures, though we have repeatedly done so in this book. Tradition has handed down the following apocryphal biblical writings: twenty-six gospels, seven acts and ten epistles. We should not forget that in the Middle Ages when the *Bible* was under embargo and was only read in churches in Latin (the *Vulgate*), the apocrypha were at hand for everyone and replaced the official gospels [365]. And if there any doubt about the merit of apocryphal literature could still exist, we would quote here the conclusion of

the contemporary biblical scholar Tristan Hannaniel: “For a long time, the historians have left everyone to believe that all the apocryphal writings were distortions of the canonical gospels. The first documented researches, initiated not long ago, prove just the contrary, namely that the gospels were written by consulting *Midrashim* and the apocryphals of the 2nd century” [366]. Moreover, Goguel considered that certain apocryphal gospels like *The Gospel of the Hebrews* (called by Jerome: *Hebraicum* or *Evangelium Hebraicum*), *The Gospel of the Ebionites*, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, appeared before the middle of the second century. Adolf von Harnack estimated that the two former gospels were written even about AD 65 [367] that is not later than the canonical gospels! We remember that Paul (who died about AD 67; 64 after other historians) had knowledge of other gospels; for instance he referred “to a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6). The *Gospel of the Hebrews* seems to have been used as a parallel source for the Gospel of Matthew although it is shorter (after the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, the former had 2,200 lines as compared to the latter having 2,500) [368]. We may refer also to the instance of the *Gospel of Peter* that was banned by Serapion of Antioch only about AD 200, as “tainted with Gnostic heresy” [369].

The *Gospel of Mary* wrote that at the request of Peter, Mary Magdalene repeated to the disciples the words Jesus have told her after His resurrection. At this, Peter retorted: “«Did he really speak with a woman without our knowledge [and] not openly? Are we to turn about and all listen to her. Did he prefer her to us?»... Levi⁴³¹ answered and said to Peter: «Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us»” [370].

In *Pistis Sophia*, while addressing to Jesus, Simon complained about Mary Magdalene: “My Lord, we will not endure this woman, for she taketh the opportunity from us and hath let none of us speak, but she discourseth many times.” Jesus replies that whoever the Spirit inspires is divinely ordained to speak, whether man or woman. In her turn, Mary confesses to Christ: “I am afraid of Peter, because he threatened me and hateth our sex” [371].

The *Gospel of Thomas* wrote to the end: “Simon Peter said to them: «Let Mary [Magdalene] leave us for women are not worthy of life». Jesus said: «I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven»” [372]. Obviously, it is a metaphor showing that she will achieve Self Realization, identifying herself to the Self (inner reflection of the Male Principle, Atman; ch. XIX C). This was what

⁴³¹ Matthew (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27).

happened to Christ's disciples; but the biblical text remains silent about Mary Magdalene. Now we can understand why.

The misogynic temperament of the man who arbitrarily took over the leadership was to influence the other followers (authors of the Gospels and Acts included) who, otherwise, were not very far from Peter. When Christ had a talk with the Samaritan woman, "upon this came his disciples, and wondered that he openly spoke with a woman" (John 4:27). Their reaction, at the woman putting a precious ointment on the head of the Savior was revealing. "The disciples seeing it became indignant, saying: «To what end [was] this waste?»" (Matthew 26:8). Later, when "the disciples multiplying in number, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews because their widows were overlooked in the daily ministrations" (Acts 6:1).

The above occurrences explain why the Christian Scripture assigned an inferior position to Virgin Mary and the women in general, a fact that might not be put only to Peter's account, as it will be further shown.

Peter himself confessed to Christ when they first met: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord" (Luke 5:8). This is fully confirmed in the *Epistle of Barnabas*: "When he chose his own apostles who were to preach his Gospel, [he did so from among those] who were sinners above all sin" [373]. Jesus blamed Peter for his lack of faith: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). Afterwards, Jesus shouted to Peter's face: "Get away behind me, Satan; thou art an offence⁴³² to me, for thy mind is not on the things that are of God" (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33). Jesus has previously addressed to Satan the same words (Matthew 4:10): "Get thee away, Satan!" (cf. Matthew 25:41: "Go from me, cursed, into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"). So Peter actually was "an offence" and not at all "a rock" to build the assembly (or the Church, as it was misinterpreted) on it. Luke omitted the passage that was found in the other synoptic gospels but mentioned in exchange the followings: "The Lord said: «Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, to sift [you] as wheat»" (22:31). Therefore, wheat instead of Peter-*the rock!* We should not forget, too, that Peter was killed in Rome during Nero's rule, being crucified upside-down XX-71 and the reversed cross was adopted by the Satanists as one of their symbols. Simon-Peter-Satan was not so far from the Devil-"Judas [the son] of Simon, Iscariote" (John 6:70-71)!

Out of cowardice, Peter not only denied the Savior three times just as XX-69 Jesus had foreseen (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:67-72; Luke 22:56-61; John 18:17,25-27) but also began to curse Him (Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71). The denial happened again and again. One time, when Peter said: "We have believed and known that thou art *the holy one* of God" (John 6:69, emphasis

⁴³² *Skándalon* (Gr.).

added; *Textus Receptus* has intentionally replaced the end by “the Christ, the Son of the living God”). Then, even after having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, Peter denied Jesus once more by failing to see Him as the Son of God, since he called Him “Jesus the Nazarene, a man borne witness to by God” (Acts 2:22; emphasis added). Calling Jesus just “a holy” or “a man” instead of the “Son of God” means rejecting His divinity. Apostle’s disregard for Jesus attained impertinence when “Peter, taking him to [him], began to rebuke him” (Mark 8:32; cf. Matthew 16:22). Here, “rebuke” (*epitimán*, Gr.) means also “threaten,” and it is the same word used by Jesus when casting out the devils (Matthew 17:18; Mark 1:25; 9:25; Luke 4:35,41; 9:42).

Christ predicted apostle’s decline in the old age, saying to Peter: “when thou shalt be old... another shall... bring thee where thou dost not desire” (John 21:18). We are inclined to believe that Jesus referred not only to Peter’s corporeal decay but also to his spiritual one, that “another” being a bad adviser (he *shall bring thee where thou dost not desire*), other than the Self, what might signify a demoniac possession.

Unable to understand the message of forgiveness, Peter asked: “«Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?»” Jesus says to him: «I say not to thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven»” (Matthew 18:21-22). “And if he should sin against thee seven times in the day thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:4).

Peter’s unrestrained intolerance and strictness were well known. He had a quick temper that came out, for instance when Jesus was arrested. “Simon XX-70 Peter therefore, having a sword, drew it, and smote the bondman of the high priest and cut off his right ear” (John 18:10). This incident was told about in the other three gospels but without mentioning the name of the doer (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50). Jesus reproved Peter, and healed Malchus’ ear on the spot. Another instance is the episode of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who, both died because of Peter’s severe reprimand. “And great fear came upon all the assembly, and upon all who heard these things” (Acts 5:1-11). Christ disapproved of His disciples’ violence which also manifested at other times, as it happened when they asked Him to call fire down from heaven to kill the inhabitants of a village (Luke 9:54-55).

Violence and crime are not so far from each other.

“Saint Peter was accused of having sacrificed an infant one year old, *puer anniculus*, to assure Christianity a duration of 365 years.” These words that may cause a shock to any Christian belong not to an obscure writer but are invested with all the authority and prestige of the greatest historian of religions, Mircea Eliade [374]. The historian went on mentioning “the fact that Saint Augustine felt it necessary to answer such a calumny,” which proves the long reach of this charge against Peter, lasting until the 5th

century!

In the *Bible* there is even a mention suggesting a possible connection with the accusation directed against Peter. Indeed, it was Peter himself who opens his first epistle recommending the “sanctification... unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). Could it be possible for the previous sentence to be connected to a terrible *imitatio Cristi*, moved into a black magic ritual implying innocent bloodshed? Anyway, the Jewish tradition made reference to “a one year old babe who has not known the taste of sin” [375].

In his turn, Jung wrote about “the accusation of ritual murder leveled by the pagans against the Christians... and «the ball-game in church»... The game of ball with a child is the motif of some secret rite which always has to do with «child-sacrifice»” [376]. The same author [377] referred to “an «unnamable sacrifice» [378]... It is expressed very inaccurately when the scholars speak of a «human sacrifice»: an infant was sacrificed clearly to the divine infant [379]; the child god *Palaimon* also received child-sacrifices on Tenedos” [380].

It seems that in the old times there existed such a tradition adopted from the pagans, and some prominent Christians did not ignore human sacrifices. We shall remind Eliade: “A celebrated episode is the one reported by the Armorican monk Nennius (second half of the tenth century) in his *Historia Britonum* (ch. 18): when the fort that King Gorthingern was building fell every night, the Druids advised him to pour the blood of a «fatherless» child over it, and the king did so. According to the *Life of Saint Columba*, written by St. Adamnan, a similar sacrifice was offered by Columba (Colmcille) when he built the church of Hy” [381]. Eliade sends for further details to the writing of J. Hubaux [382].

Under these circumstances, how could it have been possible for Jesus to choose Peter as the highest in rank over the rest of the disciples?

b. PAUL

“In vain do they worship me, teaching [as] teachings commandments of men”

Matthew 15:9

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but within are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them”

Matthew 7:15-16

It is beyond any doubt that if Peter was the head of the Church, then its true theoretician was Paul.

There were few men in the history of spirituality who took up their position as usurping as Saul (*Shaul*, Hebr.) of Tarsus who later on changed his name in Paul. Actually he was a man who had never met Jesus, who had persecuted the Christian community and who, as a result of an event witnessed only by him, became the reference point of the Church.

Due to his organizational skill and moved by his high aspirations, Paul very rapidly rose at the beginnings of Christianity to a dominant position over the small community consisting especially of the non-Jews called *Gentiles* (from *gens*, *gentes*, alien, Lat., akin with *ginta*—the group running from a communal ancestor).

In his letters addressed to the Christian communities, Paul was not at all interested in recording the facts of Jesus’ life and death. These epistles were written and spread even *before* the gospels had been written! They took up approximately *one third* of the New Testament and, if we also consider that part of Acts which refers to him, then up to *a half of the whole text of the New Testament* is devoted to Paul. Hence, the New Testament in its actual form is dominated by Paul’s character, a fact that brought up the name of *Pauline epoch* ascribed to the post-Christic period. As stressed on by Baigent and Leigh, “the mainstream of the new movement gradually coalesced, during the next three centuries, around Paul and his teachings... an entirely new religion was indeed born—a religion which came to have less and less to do with its supposed founder” [383]. Under these conditions, the debut of the *Johannine era* forsaken for the beginning of the third millennium (ch. XIX D) would signify the restoration of Jesus’ authentic doctrine.

Schuon opposes “the Church of Peter” (visible, exoteric) to “the Church of John” (invisible, esoteric; see ch. XX C4 on John as a genuine initiate), adding that Peter’s Church “seems to have inherited also his denials.” In a note the exegete explains: “It is significant that the Celtic Church, that mysterious springtime world which appeared as a sort of last prolongation of

the golden age, held itself to be attached to St. John" [384].

Paul's doctrinaire claim goes beyond any limit when he sets himself for being an evangelist and refers to "[the] day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to *my glad tidings*, by Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:16; emphasis added), saying that God "is able to establish you, according to *my glad tidings* and the preaching of Jesus Christ" (16:25; emphasis added). Therefore, Paul comes first and only after him it comes Jesus who becomes an insignificant magistrate good only for applying *Paul's Law*! Likewise, he opposed *his* doctrine to Jesus' teachings: "not I, but the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:10); "I, say, not the Lord" (7:12). "But I let you know, brethren, [as to] the *glad tidings which were announced by me*, that *they are not according to man*" (Galatians 1:11, emphasis added; other examples in 2 Corinthians 4:3; Galatians 2:2 etc.). Paul denies that he learned *his* good tidings from the people witnessing Jesus' deeds and sayings: "I took not counsel with flesh and blood, nor went I up to Jerusalem to those [who were] apostles before me" (Galatians 1:16-17). "I give *my* opinion, as having received mercy of [the] Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:25; emphasis added) said Paul, who also boasted that he had neither written any gospel, nor had he used any of those that had been written. Thus, after referring to the glad tidings of others, he stated: "I have used none of these things. Now I have not written these things" (9:15). Indeed, Paul's teaching is *unique* by its *anti-Christ content* (see *infra*) and that entitled exegetes' conviction that "the Pauline creed" replaced the Christian belief. How far are we from the authentic evangelists who start their gospels by writing for instance: "Beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (Mark 1:1). On the contrary, Paul talked only about *his* glad tidings, not that of Jesus'! Paul advised his adepts to not "be imitators [all] together of Christ" but to "be imitators [all] together of me" (Philippians 3:17). He deceptively begins his numerous epistles with the words: "Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1). Too many times to believe in an accidental "slip," Paul (dis)regards Jesus seeing in Him only a simple "high priest" (Hebrews 4:14,15; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21 etc.).

The great historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, was shocked by Paul's audacity: "Paul interprets his experience as analogous to the Crucifixion (Galileans 2:19): he now possesses «the mind of Christ» (1 Corinthians 2:16) or «the Spirit of God» (7:40). He does not hesitate to proclaim: «It is Christ speaking in me» (2 Corinthians 13:3; Romans 15:18). He refers to being mystically caught up «into the third heaven» and to «revelations» that he has received from the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:1-4,7). These «signs and wonders» were granted him by the Spirit of God «to win the allegiance of the pagans» (Romans 15:18)" [385].

After evaluating the existing state of affairs, the Church historian Wilhelm Nestle declared straightly: “Christianity was the religion founded by Paul; he replaced the gospel of Christ with a gospel about Christ” [386]. Dr. Arnold Meyer wrote: “If this is Christianity, then such Christianity was founded by St. Paul and not by our Lord” [387]. Johannes Weiss added: “Hence the faith in Christ as held by Paul was something new in comparison with the preaching of Jesus; it was a new type of religion,” and William Wrede declared: “The point which was everything to Paul was nothing to Jesus” [388].

In the opinion of the German theologian Holger Kersten, teacher of Christian religion in Freiburg: “What we refer to as Christianity today is largely an artificial doctrine of rules and precepts, created by Paul and more worthy of the designation «Paulinism». Many tenets of the dogma are essentially alien to Christ’s message. They are, in fact, primarily the legacy of Paul, who totally differed in his way of thinking” [389].

After studying the topic in a previous work *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, Professor Geza Vermes declared that by comparison to “the religion preached and practiced by Jesus of Nazareth... the ideology of the Gentile Church sounds a definitely alien note” [390].

A short analysis performed by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș discloses similar opinions of D.H. Lawrence, Nietzsche and Emile Cioran. Lawrence was inspired by Nietzsche and Spinoza as well as by all who “revealed the opposition between Jesus as a loving character on one side, and Christianity «as a funeral parlor» on the other. After Nietzsche this opposition is manifested between Christ and Paul: the former—the most kind and loving... who delivers us from priests dominion and any idea of sin, penalty, award, death and what follows to that; the latter—... exerting a sort of «sacerdotal tyranny»... «judgment doctrine»... Christianity invented a new kind of Power: the judgment system. Like Nietzsche, he [Lawrence] sees in that a «revenge of the weak», served by a new race of priests: the Christian priest have to continue the Jewish priest work in order to «turn both against Christ».” Lawrence and Cioran have seen in Paul “a sort of «electoral agent» of Christianity: a Christianity that would surpass—and even contradict—Jesus’ teaching and personal example. Both Lawrence and Cioran assert the thesis—... that through its sitting up Christianity became a mundane Power so much present within history—, and the doctrine itself as well as Jesus’ individual behavior were betrayed” [391].

It is known that the Dead Sea Scrolls, two thousand years old, have been discovered between 1947 and 1956. The team of Catholic and Jewish scholars appointed to study them, thoroughly concealed the documents from the public. They published only some selected fragments, claiming that the rest

were devoid of interest as far as the early days of Christianity are concerned. *The Huntington Library* in California that released photographs of the original scrolls broke this monopoly only in 1991.

In 1991, the book entitled *The Dead Sea Scroll Deception* written by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh was published and next year Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise's volume *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* appeared. Both of these books uncovered details of an exceptional intrigue. Their subtitled like "Why a handful of religious scholars conspired to suppress the revolutionary contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls," and "The first complete translation of 50 key documents withheld for over 35 years," speak for themselves.

Some scholars believe Jesus Christ to be the "Teacher of Righteousness (Faith)" (the topic would be dealt with in chapter XXIII B) and Paul to be the "Wicked Priest," also called the "Liar," the "Spouter of Lies" or the "Scoffer." However, there are also others, like Eisenman, Baigent and Leigh, who consider that the "Teacher of Righteousness" was James, the brother of Jesus, and dissociate Paul as the "Liar" from the "Wicked Priest" supposed to be Annas [392], while in Vermes' opinion the nickname of "Wicked" fitted High Priest Jonathan Maccabaeus (d. 143 BC). On the other hand, Paul obsessively tried to exculpate himself from the blame of being a liar: "I speak [the] truth, I do not lie" (1 Timothy 2:7). "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows... that I do not lie" (2 Corinthians 11:31); or just this fact might point at him as being the "Liar." However, in his contradictory manner he acknowledged to be himself a liar himself according to an ancient *Revised Version* [393]: "my lie abounded unto his glory" (Romans 3:7).

The Essene manuscript known as the *Damascus Document (Rule)* was XX-75 discovered—in a store-room (*genizah*) of an old synagogue in Cairo, in 1896-1897—and was published by Solomon Schechter in 1910. The Qumran caves supplied other two series (called *A* and *B*) of its fragments. That *Document* provides details about the Teacher of Righteousness (*mwrh shdq*, as a hifil participle; *mwrh hshdq*, as a qal participle: *moreh hassedeq*; sometimes *moreh hayyahid*, the unique teacher, meaning "the teacher of the Community"⁴³³; even *yoreh hassedeq*, the one teaching righteousness, Hebr.): "From the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the end of all the men of war who deserted to the Liar there shall pass about forty years. And during that age the wrath of God shall be kindled against Israel" [394]. Another manuscript containing the *Commentary on Habakkuk (Habakkuk Pesher, Hebr.)* "concerns the Wicked Priest whom God delivered into the hands of his enemies because of the iniquity committed against the

⁴³³ *Yoreh hayyahid* (the one teaching the Community, or the unique teacher, Hebr.).

Teacher of Righteousness and the men of his Council, that he might be humbled by means of destroying scourge, in bitterness of soul, because he had done wickedly to his elect” [395]. However, it is known that Jesus has been crucified around the year 30, while Paul (whose connection with the soldiers of the Latin conqueror is well established) was beheaded in 67, and the Romans (called *Kittim* in the Dead Sea Scrolls) destroyed Jerusalem in 70 as a consequence of the Jewish mutiny that developed into a war.

It is interesting that a Qumran document refers to the Leader of the XX-74 Community in terms that remind the prophecy of Isaiah (9:6-7; 11:1-5; ch. XVI) even adding details on his death: “A staff shall rise from the root of Jesse, [and a Painting from his roots will bear fruit.]... the Branch of David. They will enter into Judgment with... and they will put to death the Leader of the Community, the Bran[ch of David]” [396]. Another manuscript of the same origin referred to “the Messiah of Righteousness, the Branch of David” [397].

Eisenman and Wise commented on the fragment at the end of the *Damascus Document*, which they consider to contain Paul’s excommunication [398] from the Christian community summoned at the time of Pentecost (Acts 20:16; 21:17-26). The text required: “let him be expelled from the presence of the Many. The Priest commanding the Many shall speak against him... Boundary markers were laid down for us. Those who cross over them, You curse... You curse their transgressors while we uphold (the Law). Then he who was expelled must leave.” Therefore, the assembly was asked “to curse those who depart to the right or [to the left from the] *Torah*” [399]. However, Paul was known to have repeatedly supported the faith and rejected the Law (*Torah*). He wrote: “As many as are on the principle of works of Law are under curse” (Galatians 3:10). “The Law is not on the principle of faith” (3:12). “For by Law [is] knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). The examples are numerous (Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). This was *exactly the opposite* of Jesus’ teaching who said: “Think not that I am come to make void the Law or the Prophets” (Matthew 5:17 etc.). In the *Qumran Commentary on Habakkuk*, the “Lying Spouter” is regarded as he who “rejects the Law in the midst of the whole congregation” [400]. Eisenman and Wise believed that “the priest commanding the Many” and who delivers this excommunication judgment was James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem. These authors showed that “Acts’ picture of Pentecost can be seen as the mirror reversal of the Pentecost being pictured here” (in the Dead Sea scrolls). Rather than taking his contributions to Jerusalem, Paul was actually about to face excommunication from the community he sought to control. Eisenman and Wise drew the following conclusion: “One thing is sure: one has in these

texts a better exposition of what was *really* going on «in the wilderness» in those times so pivotal for Western civilization than in any other parallel account” [401].

Gaining support from the facts disclosed in the Qumran scrolls, Baigent and Leigh came to the conclusion that “Paul is, in effect, the first «Christian» heretic, and that his teachings—which become the foundation of later Christianity—are a flagrant deviation from the «original» or «pure» form extolled by the leadership⁴³⁴... It also leads him to distort Jesus’ teaching beyond all recognition—to formulate, in fact, his own highly individual and idiosyncratic theology, and then to legitimize it by spuriously ascribing it to Jesus” [402]. “«Christianity», as it will subsequently evolve from Paul, has by now severed virtually all connections with its roots, and can no longer be said to have anything to do with Jesus, only with Paul’s image of Jesus” [403].

No other than Jesus predicted what will happen after His departure and warned people to not follow “the apostle of the Gentiles” as Paul was called, commanding them: “Go not off into [the] way of [the] Gentiles” (Matthew 10:5), that is do not follow Paul’s way!

Both from Acts and Epistles Paul was known to have had frequent conflicts with the others, particularly Peter, James, Barnabas and John Mark. Paul confessed: “When Peter came in Antioch, I withstood him to [the] face, because he was to be condemned” (Galatians 2:11) and charged this one and those close to him “that they do not walk straightforwardly, according to the truth of the glad tidings” (2:14) thinking that they are hypocritical.

In his turn, when Peter said to the disciples that there “shall be also among you false teachers, who shall bring in by the bye destructive heresies” (2 Peter 2:1), he referred to Paul. Peter followed: “Ye therefore, beloved, knowing [these] things before, take care lest, being led away along with the error of the wicked, ye should fall from your own steadfastness” (3:17). On Paul, Peter also used to say: “In all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; among which some things are hard to be understood” and could lead “to their own destruction” (3:16). Sometimes Paul went to blasphemy: “Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse⁴³⁵ for us” (Galatians 3:13). The others reacted quickly.

The first Christians have contested Paul (Galatians ch. 1 and 2; 2 Corinthians ch. 10-12). The beginning of his epistle to the Galatians (1:1-2) shows that only some Christians’ shared his ideas since the text refers to “Paul... and all the brethren with me.” Acts read: “Having arrived at

⁴³⁴ Of James.

⁴³⁵ *Katáras* (Gr.).

Jerusalem he essayed to join himself to the disciples, and all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple” (9:26). The reason of the doubts manifested by the others resulted from Paul’s own confession: “I will not spare. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking to me” (2 Corinthians 13:2-3).

In Istanbul there was found an Arabic manuscript of six hundred pages—written by the theologian al-Jabbar thousand years ago—containing a Christian text translated in the 5th or 6th century from Aramaic used then in Syria. It deals with the members of the Christian community in Jerusalem who blamed Paul for falsifying the Savior’s teaching [404]. Over the 4th century, the Jewish Christian group known as the *Ebionites* (*ebionim*, the poor, Hebr.) reprovved Paul’s teachings, too. Numerous Christian authors like Irenaeus [405], Epiphanius [406], Hippolytus [407], Origen and Tertullian referred in their work to the *Gospel of the Ebionites* of which only fragments have reached us. Eusebius disclosed that the Ebionites considered Paul as “an apostate from the Law” [408] who distorted Jesus’ doctrine. Besides them, there were other early Christian groups that rejected Paul’s epistles (e.g. the Marcionites).

When Paul arrived at Jerusalem (Acts 21:18), James requested him to purify himself for seven days and to bring offerings to be redeemed from not keeping the Law (21:24-27). By submitting himself to the request (21:26) Paul acknowledges the gravity of his offence. “Having seen him in the Temple, set all the crowd in a tumult, and laid hands upon him, crying: «... this is the man who teaches all everywhere against the people, and the Law, and this place»” (21:27-28). During the assembly of Christians in Jerusalem “a commotion therefore having taken place; and no small discussion on the part of Paul and Barnabas against them” (Acts 15:2). Paul’s attacks against James, Peter and John, suggest that they refused to accept him as equal in rank with the twelve genuine disciples, which originated the impostor’s question: “Am I not an apostle?” (1 Corinthians 9:1) and to declare afterwards: “For I reckon that in nothing I am behind those who are in surpassing degree apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:5). He regards himself as the equal of “the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 9:5).

By recognizing himself the distinctive character of his tenets, Paul went as far as accusing the Christian community (that followed Jesus’ genuine teaching) that it “preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached” (2 Corinthians 11:4). His adversity towards the appointed leaders of the Christian community was so great that he referred sneeringly to them as “those who were conspicuous as being somewhat—whatsoever they were, it makes no difference to me” (Galatians 2:6).

Paul was known to have repeatedly supported the faith and rejected the Law and even the deeds. He claimed that man corrects himself through faith

not actions (Romans 3:27,28; 4:13-16). “For by Law [is] knowledge of sin” (3:20), declared Paul. On the contrary, James considered that only the acts and not the faith would improve people, although they both took Abraham for example (James 2:21-24; Romans 4:3). Jesus’ brother attitude whose essence means: “experience instead of blind faith,” does not differ from Sahaja Yoga viewpoint.

Paul treated James as an enemy who made Jews act hypocritically XX-77 (Galatians 2:12-13). The *Clementine Recognitions* recorded that an unnamed enemy “attacked James, and threw him headlong from the top of the steps” (of the Nicanor Gate in the Temple) “and supposing him dead, he cared not to inflict further violence upon him” [409]. Baigent and Leigh demonstrate that the author of the assault was undoubtedly Paul [410]. Also Eusebius reports that according to Clement, James was thrown from a parapet of the Temple, and then beaten to death with a club [411].

One of Paul’s character traits was disclosed when he reported on the most important moment of his life: the so-called conversion to Christianity, a story that was repeatedly retold under various forms. The emphases in the following texts belong to us.

i) “Suddenly there shone *round about him* a light out of heaven, and *falling on the earth he heard a voice...* But *the men who were traveling with him* stood speechless, *hearing the voice but beholding no one*” (Acts 9:3,4,7). Maybe they did not see the light either...

ii) “There suddenly shone out of heaven a great light, *round about me. And I fell to the ground, and heard a voice...* But *they that were with me behold the light* [and were filled with fear], *but heard not the voice*” (22:6,7,9).

iii) “I saw... a light above the brightness of the sun shining from heaven *round about me and those who were journeying with me.* And, when *we were all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice*” (26:13,14).

Therefore, either only Paul listened to the voice (ii, iii) or also the others heard it (i); either only Paul perceived the light (i, iii) or also the others saw it (ii); the light shone either only about Paul (i, ii) or also about his companions (iii).

Now, let us examine the versions of the so-called dialogue following the “vision”:

I) “«Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?» And he said: «Who art thou, Lord?» And he [said]: «I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But rise up and enter *into the city*, and it shall be told thee *what thou must do*»” (9:4-6).

II) “«Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?» And I answered: «Who art thou, Lord?» And he said to me: «I am Jesus *the Nazarene*, whom thou persecutest». And I said: «*What shall I do, Lord?*» And the Lord said to me:

«Rise up, and go to *Damascus*, and there it shall be told thee *all things which it is appointed thee to do*» (22:7-8,10).

III) «Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? [*It is*] *hard for thee to kick against goads*». And I said: «Who art thou, Lord?» And the Lord said: «I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; but rise up *and stand on thy feet, for for this purpose have I appeared to thee, to appoint thee to be a servant and a witness both of what thou hast seen, and of what I shall appear to thee in, taking thee out of from among the people, and the nations, in whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me*» (26:15-18). Here, besides the obvious differences signaled, the latter version was a great deal augmented.

IV) At last, Paul reached the apex of incoherence when he stated that he “*heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter*” (2 Corinthians 12:4).

The forgery of this “event” went as far as Barnabas insisted that Paul not only heard Jesus, but *even saw* Him: “Barnabas... related to them how he⁴³⁶ had seen the Lord in the way” (Acts 9:27) of Damascus. This proves how deep it was the confusion produced by Saul with his contradictory versions.

Under these circumstances how can it be possible to accept the episode of Paul’s conversion?

His dishonest and cowardly personality was exposed when, in order to escape persecution, Paul did not hesitate to declare that he was a Jew (Acts 21:39; 22:3) and, soon after, to claim that he was a Roman citizen, even by birth (22:25,27-28), which was not true. Later on he declared himself “a Pharisee, son of Pharisees” (23:6), then he asked to be judged by Caesar (25:11) as a Roman citizen. Some other times, in his boundless arrogance, he imagined himself as being like the Savior: “Ye received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus” (Galatians 4:14).

From Paul’s psychic profile drawn by Gillabert [412] we learn that “his suppressed impulses strongly came out betraying evident sado-masochist tendencies.”

The masochist side was easy to notice since he declares: “I take pleasure in weakness, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits” (2 Corinthians 12:10). “I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is in my flesh, for his body” (Colossians 1:24). This was also evident in the pleasure he felt when describing his sufferings: “From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes], save one. Thrice have I been scourged, once I have been stoned” (2 Corinthians 11:24-25) etc.

⁴³⁶ Paul.

Paul's sadism became evident during the persecutions he inflicted on Christians: "Saul ravaged the assembly entering into the houses one after another, and dragging off both men and women delivered them up to prison" (Acts 8:3). "Saul still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (9:1). As far as Stephen's murder was concerned, "Saul was consenting to his being killed" (8:1). He admitted himself to "have persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering up to prisons both men and women" (22:4) "and myself shut up in prison many of the saints... and when they were put to death I gave my vote" (26:10).

According to Baigent and Leigh, on his way to Damascus Paul suffered a traumatic experience, which some commentators have interpreted as an epileptic seizure [413], one of the first signs being his falling to the ground (9:4; 22:7). Leonard George wrote openly: "The reported nature of Saul's experience (he fell to the earth with eyes closed, and trembled), and its aftermath (inability to eat, drink or see for three days) have suggested to some researchers that the voice of Christ was a hallucination associated with an episode of EPILEPSY" [414]. Then, there were his own confessions to the disciples, about his convulsions (emphasis added): "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in *much trembling*" (1 Corinthians 2:3). "I will not boast, unless in *my weakness*... there was given to me *a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan that he might buffet me*, that I might not be exalted. For this I thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from me" (2 Corinthians 12:5,7-8). The slapping was a usual practice to made the epileptics regain consciousness. On the other hand, epilepsy is caused by possession (ch. XXII D). Paul's prayers to God for the evil spirit (Satan's messenger) might depart from him, even repeated were not successful. The other disciples resisted the tendency of showing their natural repulsion to epileptic manifestations. "My temptation, which [was] in my flesh ye did not slight nor reject with contempt" (Galatians 4:13-14). That statement also proves that the apostles were aware that Paul's body was tempted (haunted, possessed) by demoniac entities.

Here is the range of the epileptic symptoms (after M. Anty): "Very often, there is an agitated state of confusion and delirium, interrupted by outbreaks of impulsive rage. The mental confusion starts abruptly and lasts for three or four days; meanwhile the patient is very dangerous... Some other times, there are sub-acute confused-delirious states centered around mystical subjects and guiltiness... But what prevails during all forms of epilepsy is the instability of the subject's character. His mood is very unsteady, with a tendency towards impulsive or explosive manifestations. He changes from exaggerated joy to depression." All these fits well with Paul's state of mind. His "blindness" lasted three days since the crisis started (with the falling, the

confused-delirious state, hearing voices that were incoherently reported). This could also be explained through the fact that sometimes, epilepsy causes hemianopy (partial lost of sight). Graves and Podro attributed Paul's transient blindness to hysterical fright caused by his coming near Jerusalem where the Christian community prepared his trial. The two analysts agree on the fact that "the nature of Paul's «thorn in flesh» was a physical disorder, perhaps epilepsy" [415].

Notable physicians like H. Gastaut and Max Weber [416] acknowledged that Paul had a hallucinatory perception. In this respect, Paul described himself as "a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, whether in [the] body I know not, or out the body I know not, such [a one] caught up to [the] third heaven... and heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter. Of such [a one] I will boast" (2 Corinthians 12:2,4-5). This condition appeared again after his return to Jerusalem (Acts 22:17). The same happened with his visions (16:9; 18:9; 22:18; 23:11; 27:23) and hearing invisible voices (9:4-6; 18:9-10; 22:18; 23:11).

Bryant asserted that a tonic-clonic seizure was responsible for Paul's Damascus experience [417]. Other physicians confirmed that the "apostle" was subject to temporal lobe epilepsy.

Paul recognized his psychic disorders: "I have become a fool" (2 Corinthians 12:11; cf. 11:21). "I speak as being beside myself" (11:23). However, sometimes he was close to blasphemy: "We are fool for Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10). "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him" (2:14). In chapter XXII D we will explain the madness—possession relationship.

Paul also refers to another infirmity that he calls "temptation" (Galatians 4:14). The Greek term used here is *peirasmón* is similar to *peirasmós* which means "temptation to sin" (Matthew 6:13), thus denoting that he was not only mental but also spiritual ill, all these coming from his possession. As a matter of fact, Paul himself admitted that what he is doing is evil and the cause lies in something that he calls "the sin," stronger and opposed to his will, acting despite of his self—in fact, an accurate description of a possession case: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell... I do not practice the good that I will but the evil... What I do not will, this I practice, [it is] no longer I [that] do it but the sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:18-20).

La Grande Encyclopedie offered a short characterization: "Paul belonged to the dangerous class of passionate and fanatic people" [418]. The theologian Deissmann called him a "classic of intolerance." His impulsiveness and violence were well known and recurrent. "I have declared beforehand, and I say beforehand as present the second time, to those that have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare" (2 Corinthians 13:2).

“To spare you I have not yet come to Corinth” (1:23). He said also in the same epistle: “Such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And [it is] not wonderful, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (11:13-14). Was this a way to acknowledge his possession? Was this not the awareness of the fact that the light he had seen came not from Christ but just from the opposite? Did he not admit thereby that he was a false apostle and a usurper? His anti-Christ attitude justifies the above hypotheses.

Paul made the following statement: “God has set certain in the assembly: first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; then miraculous powers; then gifts of healing; helps; governments; kinds of tongue” (1 Corinthians 12:28; cf. 12:8-10). Nowhere in the *Bible* was such taxonomy to be found coming neither from God nor from others. It was just one of Paul’s false assertions since it was he who invented that sequence and who attributed it to God in order to make it credible. He went even further, saying: “[Are] all apostles? [Are] all prophets? [Are] all teachers? [Are] all [in possession of] miraculous powers? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” (12:29-30). By dissociating the gifts, he actually attempted at minimizing their importance.

Why did Paul adopt that attitude? There is only one answer: *he did not have the gifts granted by the Holy Spirit* to the authentic apostles, in spite of Acts depicting him as performing miracles—blinding of Elymas the magician (13:8-11), healing of the paralyzed man in Lystra (14:8-10), exorcising of a fortune-teller (16:16-18), resurrection of Eutychus (20:9-12), healing of Publius’ father and of other sick people in Malta (28:8-9). Speaking about the episode of the so-called possessed man in Acts 19:15, Messadié infers that, according to all the testimonies that was not a possession but a case of drug poisoning caused most probably by the *Amanita phalloida* fungus [419]. The stories told by the author of Acts cannot be believed because in his epistles Paul makes no reference to his own so-called miracles and even he is silent about Jesus’ wonders! Besides, Paul made a strange statement: “I thank God that I have baptized none of you, unless Crispus and Gaius” (1 Corinthians 1:14). We can understand easily now why the genuine disciples accompanying him were under divine protection, whereas only Paul had been exposed to incidents in Lystra (Acts 14:9), Beroea (17:13-14) and Corinth (18:12). To tell the truth, Paul was less interested by the spiritual life than by the materialistic side of it: “Have we not a right to eat and to drink?” (1 Corinthians 9:4). “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die” (15:32).

That Pauline attitude of despising the miracles will be echoed later on by the *Apostles’ Creed* and the *Nicene Creed* [420] which, jumping from Jesus’ birth directly to His passions, skip His preachers and prodigies and say

nothing about the apostles.

Paul altogether despised as a whole the gifts granted by the Holy Spirit regarding them as less important while recommending: “Desire earnestly the greatest gifts,” and even pretended to be the qualified guide: “Shew I unto you a way of more surpassing excellence” (1 Corinthians 12:31). What did Paul want to put instead of the Holy Spirit manifestations? Love (ch. 13)! He, the very merciless one (2 Corinthians 1:23; 13:2)! In Paul’s arbitrary classification mentioned above, he paid less attention to the healings and other miracles and, especially, the glossolalia (speaking in tongues) rejecting the latter at the end of his list. “Tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers” (1 Corinthians 14:22; cf. 14:9,19). Therefore, here it comes Paul, the false apostle who never met Jesus, and rejects the first proof granted to the twelve *genuine apostles* who “began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them to speak forth” (Acts 2:4). That did Jesus Himself proclaim as a grace: “In my name... they shall speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17).

Paul’s scorn towards the gifts granted by the Holy Spirit was only equaled by his contempt for women. “I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness” (1 Timothy 2:12). “Let [the] women be silent in the assembly, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the Law also says” (1 Corinthians 14:34). Law, that he had always struggled against, was here resorted to for the sake of the argument. “It is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly” (14:35). “And the Word of God go out from you?” asked Paul (14:36), addressing to women. Here was Paul overlooking that Jesus was the Word of God (*Lógos tou Theou*, Gr.) and He had been born by Virgin Mary. “Submitting yourselves to one another in [the] fear of Christ. Wives, [submit yourselves] to your own husbands” (Ephesians 5:21,22; cf. Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5). But he did not mention a single word about the reciprocity (*to one another*)! “If a woman be not covered, let her hair also be cut off. But if [it be] shameful to a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, let her be covered. For man indeed ought not to have his head covered being God’s image and glory” (1 Corinthians 11:6-7). In other words, Paul accepted the woman only when she no longer resembled a woman any more! Tertullian wrote, echoing Paul: “It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither (is it permitted her) to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say (in any) sacerdotal office” [421].

Paul made an attempt at exonerating Adam of all guilt throwing the responsibility only over Eve as the only “sinner,” rejecting the fact that the so-called sin (ch. IX) was perpetrated by Eve *together with* Adam: “Adam

was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression” (1 Timothy 2:14). However, rather ignoring Eve’s “contribution,” the Easter liturgy proclaims: “O happy fault of Adam!” [422]. We have seen that Bishop Kovalevsky refused that absurd Pauline assertion (ch. XX B). In Paul’s views the woman was but a tool whose only aim would have been to give birth: “She shall be preserved in childbearing” (1 Timothy 2:15).

In his writings, Paul remained silent about his mother, which gives the psychologists a good reason to believe that he had been deprived of motherly affection. In his analysis, Gillabert discerned “the huge void represented by the absence of Christ’s Mother, Virgin Mary, in the work of Paul,” and also noticed that Nature, that is the expression of Mother in the collective subconscious, was never mentioned. Paul only mentioned the *sea* and the *night*, which were, however, placed in the collective psyche under their hostile aspect: the night was identified to darkness and the sea associated to the shipwreck. Gillabert commentaries: “There is a striking contrast between Jesus walking on water and Paul talking about the sea only in connection with the shipwreck” [423]. Nevertheless, as explained by Jung, “the sea is the favorite symbol for the unconscious, the mother of all that lives⁴³⁷” [424].

Quite abnormal was also Paul’s attitude towards marriage and sex. Again his ego was fully exposed, since he proposed himself as a model for the others. “[It is] good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Corinthians 7:1). “I wish all men to be even as myself... I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them that they remain even as I” (7:7-8). “Art thou free from a wife? Do not seek a wife” (7:27). “He that marries himself does well; and he that does not marry does better” (7:38). About the woman who was left a widow, Paul said: “she is happier if she so remain” (7:40), and the same for the divorced woman (7:11). “They who have wives, be as not having [any]” (7:29). Through these words Paul had, in fact, urged sexual abstinence *within* marriage and violated the first commandment God gave to humans blessing them: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). “Yahweh Elohim said: «It is not good that man should be alone»” (2:18). With reference to God’s assignment of man cleaving to his wife (Genesis 2:24; cf. Matthew 19:5), Jesus Himself stated: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Even when Paul yields in (“If they have no control over themselves, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn⁴³⁸”—1 Corinthians 7:9), he warns: “If thou shouldst also marry, thou hast not

⁴³⁷ Meaning Eve (Genesis 3:20); and, similarly, Mary (related to the sea: *mare*, Lat.; ch. XX C1).

⁴³⁸ In the flames of the hell, of course.

sinned; and if the virgin marry, they have not sinned: but such shall have tribulation in the flesh; but I spare you" (7:28).

We could find a possible explanation of his attitude against women in the homosexual tendencies that one might suspect in Paul's unnatural attraction towards Onesimus (fugitive slave and thief) who is described in the epistle to Philemon (16) as "a beloved brother, specially to me, and how much rather to thee, both in [the] flesh and in [the] Lord." Evdokimov ascertains the following (valid now as formerly): "The modern, profoundly masculine world, where the feminine charisma plays no role whatsoever, is more and more a world without God, for it has no mother and God cannot be born in it. It is typical that in such atmosphere, homosexuality asserts itself openly. This disease of psychic splitting (is) a failure in the integration of the soul's male and female elements... Such are the most symptomatic signs of a psychic state that has lost all its sensitivity toward the archetypal feminine value: that of the Virgin-Mother. A too masculine world disregards its eternal origins" [425].

Within "Christianity" Paul keeps on a position similar to that of the *pagan* Greco-Roman antiquity. Pythagoras sharply declared: "There is a good principle which has created order, light and man; and a bad principle which has created chaos, darkness and woman" [426]. After Aristotle: "the male is such in virtue of a certain capacity, and the female is such in virtue of an incapacity" [427], and: "Silence is a woman's glory, but this is not equally the glory of man" [428] (cf. 1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35). Solon's law and the Roman Code regarded woman as an inferior being having no right at all. After, centuries, the Napoleonic Code will establish the sovereign marital power of the husband: woman's testimony had no legal value, or as little as that of an insane or someone otherwise legally incompetent.

It was from Pauline concepts, which were wholly against nature, where it originated the establishment of monastic celibacy that was imposed by Pope Gregory VII after one thousand years of the contrary practice. The former aberrations are supported by the false idea of the incompatibility between spirituality and a normal sex life. How far it is that from the millenary old Indian tradition where the individual devotes himself to the spirituality *only after* accomplishing his normal family life (ch. XV B).

Ambrose stated: "married people ought to be ashamed (*erubescant*, Lat.) of the state in which they live" [429]. For his fight against the abstinence exaggerations the monk Jovinianus was criticized by Jerome in latter's faultfinding treatise *The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary (Against Helvidius)* written in 383, where its author brought into ill-repute marriage and women in general, thus echoing Paul's antifeminist attitude [430].

In spite of the general attitude, some ascetic writings spoke about the difficulty of chastity. Even Augustine used to pray the Lord: “Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet” [431]. Archimandrite Scrima disclosed that “John Climacus said: I know monks who kill their body flagellating themselves but have lost their minds; others who eat normally are quiet, focusing upon their prayer” [432].

On an analogous line of thought, the false idea that fasting (*jejunium*, Lat.) XX - 78 might help in getting close to God that was encountered with the ascetics not only Christian but of other faiths too (ch. XIX B, XXV A, B, C) originated in the idea of crossing the obstacle of the *Void* (abdominal area; ch. I) by making it physically void, which is completely lacking sense since we deal here not with a material but a spiritual process. With the aim of attenuating the concern for diet displayed by some people, Jesus said to His followers: “I have food to eat which ye do not know” (John 4:32), thus referring to the spiritual food obtained through accomplishing the Dharma: “My food is that I should do the will of him that has sent me, and that I should finish his work” (4:34). Ramana Maharishi also referred to fasting and certain diets that are believed to facilitate spiritual ascent, explaining that the realized man “is steady and not influenced by the food he takes” [433].

Proscribing sex to some priests (Catholics, since the Eastern Church has been always rejected the idea of priestly celibacy), monks and nuns does not prevent the birth of illegitimate but innocent infants and caused sexual abuses against victims including children, and many other perversions keeping the headings of the newspapers and TV within the world (ch. XX C2c).

George Bernard Shaw accused Paul of inventing religious celibacy, calling the latter “the monstrous imposition upon Jesus” [434].

However misogynist was Evdokimov, he did not hesitate at making an honest analysis of the situation writing the following: “The concerns of theologians during the patristic period centered on dogmatic questions. Most of them unmarried and monks, they had neither the necessary experience nor the interest for writing a theology of love... The admirable magnificent heroism of the ascetics fought a decisive battle within man himself. It exorcised the demonic powers from him, but at a price. It almost dehumanized the relationship between man and woman, and it was woman who paid. In extremist circles,... ascetic salvation consisted in fleeing from the world (the *fuga mundi*)—more precisely, from everything that was feminine. We sometimes get the impression that what mattered was the salvation of males alone, and that the man who wished to be saved had to flee above all from woman... It seems to view Christianity as defined by celibacy, and makes of marriage nothing more than a tolerated exception... It is easy to comprehend the profound disquiet caused in sensitive feminine souls by

many Doctors of the Church—statements that are often gratuitous, though they come from spiritual authorities who are otherwise above reproach... At one time, serious theologians discussed whether or not woman had a soul; and they questioned woman's direct relationship with God. They praised the *Theotokos*, but they instructed woman to ascend to God through the intermediary of a man. Such a Mariology deprives the *Theotokos* of the feminine, and places every woman at the break between ontological levels... An amazing alienation has been introduced into human history as if it were a normal situation... The forms defined during the rabbinic period of the Old Covenant are applied to women, even today. But in the kingdom of grace inaugurated by the New Covenant, the true dialectic of the Law shows that it is upon woman... that the task falls of transcending «Man-the-Law», and thereby fulfilling the Law itself for its true ministry as a witness" [435].

How blind the people must have been not to see that Paul, who was at the very least sexually suppressed or a great psychopath at best, could by no means develop the teachings of Christ? Jesus had never been against marriage. The proof was His taking part in the Cana wedding when His Power became manifested through His first miracle. "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8). A similar attitude resulted in the well-known theme of God increasing the number of descendants of the chosen people, which spans over the whole of the Old Testament. Other details had been given in chapter IX.

There is still a text containing the only Pauline inconsistency—a sentence that was considered the *Magna Charta* of the feminism: "there is no male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), although Professor Wayne Meeks believes that these words ascribed to Paul belong to the anterior tradition [436]. In spite of this position, the patriarchal Church will stand stock still with the text ending chapter 14 from 1 Corinthians and the second one from 1 Timothy, both used to justify the cultural and ecclesiastic persecution against women.

Clement of Alexandria was a singular character within the primitive Christian tradition. He acknowledged that in Christ "there is neither male nor female" [437]. Moreover, he wrote about the "lap (or bosom) of the Father... And what was inexpressible in his nature became Father, while what was compassionate toward us became Mother. And as a consequence of his love the father took on the nature of a woman, and the clear proof of this is the Son, whom he begot out of himself" [438], thus attributing to God female characteristics as in the Old Testament (ch. XX B). Clement made up a list of women he admired (an exception in the Christian tradition) ranking from those mentioned in the *Bible* (Judith, Esther etc.) to other eminent women

known as writers (Arignote), philosophers (Themisto, Theano⁴³⁹ [439]), painters and poets [440].

Clement⁴⁴⁰ excepted, the Church Fathers coming after Paul all proved to have an insane perseverance to this gynophobic attitude. Thus, there were some who declared: “Every woman ought to be overcome by shame at the thought that she is a woman” [441]. Tertullian considered that “the kingdom of the heavens [is] to eunuchs” [442], and regarded woman as “the devil’s gateway” [443]. While discussing on the women in the Gnostic sects, Tertullian wrote: “The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures—it may be even to baptize” [444]. Hippolytus mentioned even the names of two prophetesses known amongst the Gnostics: Priscilla and Maximilla. Augustine of Hippo went as far as denying the Old Testament (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1), when proclaiming that “not the woman but the man is the image of God” and as “regards the woman herself alone, then she is not the image of God; but as regards the man alone, he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman too is joined with him in one” [445]. Paul VI declared, *in 1975* (!): “the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in concordance with God’s plan for His Church” [446].

c. THE CHURCH

“The Most High dwells not in [places] made with hands”

Acts 7:48 (cf. 17:24; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21,22)

The cornerstone of the doctrine of the Church originated in the sentence attributed to Jesus: “Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18). At least, that was what the text said in many of the *Bible* versions, although, there existed honest translations where the correct (uninterpreted) equivalent of the original Greek word *ecclesia*, i.e. *assembly* (of believers) was used instead of the word *Church*. The same thing frequently appeared in Revelation (1:11 etc.) where the same misleaders interpreted the seven *ecclesias* (assemblies) of Ephesus, Smyrna etc. as “Churches.” At the time of Jesus, He could only have made use of the word

⁴³⁹ A follower of Pythagoras in the city of Croton.

⁴⁴⁰ Considered a genuine Gnostic by many authors (ch. XX C4).

qahal (assembly, gathering of the Jews, Aram.), and He called His followers just “a little flock” (Luke 12:32). The later-introduced word “church” appears in the Gospels only twice, and both times with Matthew (16:18; 18:17). As for the term designating the edifice (*basilica*, Lat.) that originally was assigned to the kingly building (from *basileús*, king, Gr.), it started to designate the church building since the time of Constantine (4th century).

The Evil, described at large in chapters 12 and 13 of Revelation, was portrayed by the beast, which, under its different shapes has remained the same all through the Age of Iron. Certain hints were offered to allow for its identification: “There was given to it authority over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation; and all that dwell on the earth shall do it homage... If any one [leads] in captivity, he goes into captivity. If any one shall kill with [the] sword, he must with [the] sword be killed” (13:7,8,10). In the end, even the clue was given: “He that has understanding let him count the number of the beast: for it is a man’s number; and its number [is] six hundred [and] sixty-six” (13:18).

It would not be hard to see that it is the Church, which had and still has dominion over tribes, people, tongues, and nations were and are doing it homage all over the world. It enslaved and killed by sword in crusades and “holy” wars, such an example among many others being the slaughter of the Native Americans five hundred of years ago.

Many clues point at Rome, the original site of the institution to which people gave the name of Christian Church.

Revelation wrote: “the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and had ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls, having a gold cup in her hand full of abominations and the unclean things” (17:4). “The seven heads are seven mountains, whereon the woman sits” (17:9). “The woman which thou sawest, is the great city, which has kingship over the kings of the earth” (17:18). “And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” (17:6). “And there are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes he must remain [only] a little while” (17:10). Let us try to decipher this text.

XX-80 *Purple and scarlet* are the colors of the bishops and cardinals, respectively. The high priests defy everybody by wearing rich attire and ornaments of *gold and precious stones and pearls*. Any Christian priest *has a gold cup in his hand full of abominations and the unclean things* that being the *wine* abhorred by all the great religions in the world (ch. XV E). Moreover, the priests give that alcoholic drink abominable to God even to children! The *seven mountains* XX-79 *whereon the woman sits* clearly indicate Rome on seven hills, being the *great city, which has kingship over the kings of the earth*: first it was the capital of the Roman Empire, then the Holy See of the Church that took its place and

along history had dominion over many kings, and now it rules over billions of people. The prophet *saw the woman drunk*—alluding at the cup of wine as well as the priests who become drunk often; *the blood of the saints, and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus* refer, too, to Rome reddened with the blood of the Christian martyrs, but also at the turning into account of the moral capital acquired by Rome from the martyrdom of the early Christians; one cannot exclude Paul, guilty of persecuting, torturing and killing of Christians. In the end, let us refer to the *seven kings*. Revelation was written around the beginning of the repression of the Jewish anti-Roman revolt. *Five have fallen*: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. *One is*: Galba, who ruled until January 69. *The other who will come and remain only a little while* will be Otho (who ruled three months, from January to April 69). Other possible interpretation has in view the Avatars: the first five correspond to the first five chakras; the sixth (Jesus)—actual for the New Testament—ruled over the Agya chakra; he who will come (Kalki) governs the Sahahsrara, the seventh chakra (ch. XIX C). The latter was understood to remain only a short time just to judge people.

Nostradamus points at the same direction proclaiming the ineluctable end of the Roman Church: “*O vaste Rome ta ruyne s’approche,/ Non de tes murs, de ton sang & substance:/ L’aspre par lettres fera si horrible coche,/ Fer poinctu mis à tous iusques au manche*” (O vast Rome, thy ruin approaches,/ Not of thy walls, of thy blood and substance:/ The one harsh in letters will make a very horrible notch,/ Pointed steel driven into all up to the hilt, Fr.) [447]. The visionary goes on announcing events we are witnessing presently: “*Aux temples saints seront faits grâds scanda(les),/ Comptez seront par honneur & loüanges/ D’vin que l’on graué d’argent, d’or les medalles,/ La fin sera en tourmens bien estranges*” (In the sacred temples scandals will be perpetrated,/ They will be reckoned as honors and commendations:/ Of one of whom they engrave medals of silver and of gold,/ The end will be in very strange torments, Fr.) [448].

John Hogue asserted that the French prophet devoted 60 quatrains to the emergence of a new belief towards the end of the 20th century: “By clearly predicting the flowering of a new religion, Nostradamus discounts all the familiar established faiths” [449]. We shall quote one of them referring to “*Celuy qu’aura la charge de destruire/ Temples & sectes changees par fantasie*” (Someone will be charged with the destruction/ of temples and sects, altered by fantasy, Fr.) [450]. He also has prophesied about the last six popes [451], describing for instance the connection between Pius XII and the fascists [452], the papacy of Paul VI [453], and even the murder of John Paul I [454].

John described the scarlet woman: “upon her forehead was a name

written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5). Besides LORD, these are the only words written in bold in the entire *King James Version*. Seneca said that the harlots of Rome wore a nameplate or label on their foreheads with their names [455]. The prophecies in Daniel 2 and Revelation 13 made it abundantly clear that the capital of the revived Roman Empire of the Antichrist will be Rome. In the 5th century, Jerome compared Rome to Babylon, when he wrote: “I dwelt in Babylon, and resided with the walls of the scarlet adulteress, and had the freedom of Rome” [456]. In the 13th century, Cardinal Bonaventura, general of the Franciscans, compared Rome to the harlot of Revelation, thus anticipating Martin Luther by three centuries. In 1955, it appeared *The Book of Destiny* by Bernard Leonard where the author infers that the *Bible* declared that during the last days, Satan would take over Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. Referring to Revelation 17, one can read: “The great harlot is a city whose apostasy from the true faith is a monstrous thing. This may point at Rome... And the apostasy of this city, and her becoming the head of an empire that would lead all possible nations and peoples into antichrist worship would indeed meant for her the title THE Great HARLOT. The apostles called ancient Rome «Babylon» (1 Peter 5:13). So the conclusion is clear that the great harlot of the future shall be Rome” [457]. Under these circumstances it is amazing that the Catholic censors with their “Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur” duly authorized Leonard’s book.

Now, let us analyze the meaning of the number **666**.

It is known that there were no special signs for figures in the ancient languages used in the time and area of the primitive Christianity (Hebrew, Greek, Latin), and letters were used instead. The Cyrillic (Slavonic) alphabet (derived from the Greek one) had the same characteristic. This enabled the science of numbers (numerology) to be created, the Kabbalists being among the best known.

Various experts have calculated the beast number.

The numerical value of the word *λατεινός* (*lateinós*, Latin, Gr.) is:

$30 + 1 + 300 + 5 + 10 + 50 + 70 + 200 = \mathbf{666}$.

This discovery is due to Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons.

We remember that when talking to the devil, “Jesus asked him saying: «What is thy name?» And he said: «Legion»” (Luke 8:30). This again points at Rome. It was shown (ch. XVII) that the Romans were guilty for killing the Savior.

The sum total of the *Latin* letters used as figures: **MDCLXVI** is **1666**.

XX-81 The pope arrogantly and usurpingly declared himself as “**VICarIVs FILII**
- 82 **DeP**” (locum tenens of the Son of God, Lat.), where the Latin figures (in bold

letters) have the following value:

$$5 + 1 + 100 + 1 + 5 + 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 + 500 + 1 = \mathbf{666}.$$

Pope Gregory VII, who proclaimed *DICtatVs LeX papae*, had those words engraved on his pontifical scepter. However, the sum of the respective Latin figures is:

$$500 + 1 + 100 + 5 + 50 + 10 = \mathbf{666}.$$

As a matter of fact, Luther did not hesitate in identifying the pope with Antichrist.

All these perfectly fit with the allusion to Peter (the first “pope” considered to be the founder of the Church) contained in Revelation words defining the beast: “If any one shall kill with [the] sword, he must with [the] sword be killed” (13:10), because Jesus said to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Return thy sword for its place; for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52; cf. John 18:11).

It would be awfully naïve from our part to believe that the above refers only to the Catholic Church, to Vatican, since at the beginnings of Christianity there existed only one Christian community, which later on became—through human not divine desire—the institution having its nucleus in Rome. It was only after a millennium, in 1054, that the Great Schism in Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) took place followed by further proliferation into numberless Christian cults.

Jesus was known as an enemy of the religious leaders whom He blamed “saying: «The scribes and the Pharisees have set themselves down in Moses’ seat»” (Matthew 23:2), then disclosing their hypocrisy: “All things therefore, whatever they may tell you, do and keep. But do not after their works, for they say and do not” (23:3). On many occasions He calls them “fools and blind” (23:16,17,19,24,26), “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” (23:13-15,23,25,27,29), telling them: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men; for ye do not enter, nor do ye suffer those that are entering to go in” (23:13; cf. Luke 11:52). Christ admonished them: “Ye know neither me nor my Father” (John 8:19), adding: “ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin” (8:21). The Old Testament is even more specific: “They shall go... to seek Yahweh; but they shall not find [him]: he hath withdrawn himself from them” (Hosea 5:6). “Then will they call upon me, but I will not answer” (Proverbs 1:28). Also to His disciples (those who were not initiated, with the few exceptions that will be shown in ch. XX C4) Jesus told repeatedly: “Ye shall seek me and shall not find [me], and where I am ye cannot come” (John 7:34; cf. 7:36; 8:21; 13:33). The Savior uttered the following general warning: “Therefore I say to you, that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of it” (Matthew 21:43).

A similar opinion appears in the manuscript concerning Jesus that was discovered by Notovitch who gave it the title *The Life of Saint Issa* (ch. XXIII A): “So long as they had no priests, they were governed by the natural law and conserved the simplicity of their souls.” “Therefore, I say unto you: «Fear the day of judgment, for God will inflict a terrible chastisement upon all those who have led His children astray and beguiled them with superstitions and errors; upon those who have blinded them who saw; who have brought contagion to the well; who have taught the worship of those things which God made to be subject to man, or to aid him in his works»” [458]. In a slightly modified manner the two quotations originate from another Tibetan document seen by Roerich: “As long as the nations were without priests, they were ruled by the natural laws and preserved the purity of their soul” [459]. “Issa said: «Beware, ye, who divert men from the true path and who fill the people with superstitions and prejudices, who blind the vision of the seeing ones, and who preach subservience to material things»” [460]. The same manuscript goes on: “They who deprive their brothers of the common blessings shall be themselves stripped of them” [461]. “And Brahmins⁴⁴¹ and Kshatriyas⁴⁴² shall become the Sudras⁴⁴³ of Sudras with whom the Supreme Spirit shall abide unto eternity” [462].

The British theologian Pelagius (c.354-418) preached that salvation is achieved by personal striving and not by simple adherence to Church rules. “The priests feed us hope of salvation and a sense of superiority in knowing that not only are we on the right path but also we are the chosen people. Sadly the cost is to lose the real possibility for transformation or for discovering the truth of who we are⁴⁴⁴” [463]

Khalil Gibran highlighted that “Jesus was not sent here to teach the people to build magnificent churches and temples amidst the cold wretched huts and dismal hovels... He came to make the human heart a temple, and the soul an altar, and the mind a priest” [464].

An interesting statement was done by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, the eminent student of the *Qur'an* in his commentaries on the Islamic Scripture: “The truth does not necessarily come from priests, or from the superstitions of whole peoples. It comes from Allah, and where there is direct revelation,

⁴⁴¹ The first caste, of the priests.

⁴⁴² The second caste, of the noblemen (warriors).

⁴⁴³ The fourth caste, lower than Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (the third caste).

⁴⁴⁴ That is the Self (ch. XIX C).

there is no room for doubt” [465].

In rejecting the prescriptions of the priesthood, Schuon showed: “Christ teaches that one must keep to the essential, and this principle is clearly related to what we might call the *religio perennis*—the primordial, universal⁴⁴⁵ and underlying religion. This is why in the language of the *Qur’an* is designated by the term *Fitrah*: the primordial norm, the profound nature of things” [466].

Actually, even the head of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Cary “declared that Christ himself spent little time in religious buildings and described priests as «hypocrites»” [467].

Christ has warned that the religious leaders will be the last to enter the Kingdom (the last to achieve Self Realization), telling them: “Verily I say unto you that the tax-gatherers and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you” (Matthew 21:31). Indeed, besides the prostitutes and all the other sinners come the tax collectors (publicans, *telónai*, Gr.), which to the *Talmud* “are the same as robbers” [468]. They were the most detested and even hated by the Jews (Matthew 9:10-11; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30). To such people Yahweh said: “The whole vision became unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which they give to one that can read, saying: «Read this, I pray thee»; and he saith: «I cannot, for it is sealed»” (Isaiah 29:11).

There is no reason to believe that the religious leaders of today would be better than those in Jesus’ time! Both disobeyed and still disobey the divine Law, yearned and still yearn not for spiritual ascent but for *power* and *money*. How could they imagine that God might be bought with money, indulgences and other clerical inventions aiming at increasing priests’ wealth? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* when referred to the Church doctrine on Purgatory shamelessly stated: “The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences... on behalf of the dead... An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins” [469]. However, as Luther has shown [470], there is not even a single word of Purgatory in the *Bible*! The matter had an ungodly origin: papal greed, publicly exposed by the same Luther in his ninety-five theses of 1517 [471].

William Blake was a deep mystic, a great enlightened soul, indeed. However, he went up against the institutionalized church, highlighting the value of subjective religious experience. He unveiled the truth behind the sumptuous apparel of the Catholic Church hiding cynicism and lust for power, when portrayed in his *Europe* the grotesque figure of a bat-winged pope accompanied by two angels with scepters [472].

Jesus was against luxury displayed by the potentates: “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven roosting-places; but the Son of man has not where

⁴⁴⁵ *Vishwa Nirmala Dharma* (see our Foreword).

he may lay his head” (Matthew 8:20). He requested His followers to not charge people for the services they performed to them: “Ye have received gratuitously, give gratuitously. Do not provide yourselves with gold, or silver, or brass, for your belts, nor scrip for the way, nor two body coats, nor sandals, nor a staff: for the workman is worthy of his nourishment” (Matthew 10:8-10). “He commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their belt” (Mark 6:8). We are inclined to think that in India (ch. XXIII A) Jesus encountered the

XX - 85 *sanyasi*—the itinerant ascetic (*yatayah*, designating the one who seeks the truth, a renouncer; *yati* comes from the root *yat*, to tend toward, to be eager, to persevere, to be watchful, to be prepared, Sanskr.) who had nothing in his possession and accepted from people just the food that might be taken in the hollow of his hand or, in the words of a Talmudic text ascribed to Rabbi Eliezer the Great, just “a morsel of food in his basket” [473]. The equivalent XX - 84 of the *sanyasi* were the Friars of the Mendicant Order in Germany (13th century) whose influence manifested even within the theological universities [474]. Other noteworthy (but so scarce!) examples were the *anargyres* XX - 86 (without money, Gr.) saints Cosme and Damian, Pantaleon and Hermolaus who helped the poor people while refusing to take money from them.

The Old Testament told us that the Divinity punished Ghehazi since the latter accepted payment for spiritual gifts (2 Kings 5:20-27). There we can also read: “Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat... without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). Obviously, the text refers to the living water of the Kundalini (ch. XI D), the spiritual food, but the reference fits well also with the physical realm. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defined *simony* as “the buying or selling of spiritual things” [475].

The idea of “sin-offerings” that appears in the Old Testament is imputable only to the Levites, the priestly caste. Chapter seven of Leviticus discriminates between sacrifice of peace-offering, consecration-offering and thanksgiving towards Yahweh (7:11-13, 28-30), and those of sin-offering and trespass-offering (7:37). “Hear the word of Yahweh... give ear unto the Law of our God... : «To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?», saith Yahweh. «I am sated with burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and in the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of goats I take no pleasure. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this from your hand—to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations!... »” (Isaiah 1:10-13). Therefore, offerings and sacrifices *cannot atone* for breaking the Law (Dharma)!

As other messengers of God (ch. X), Jesus had not in view His teaching becoming a religion, and so much the less founding the Church organization.

Who can imagine, even for a moment, Jesus wanting to maintain the disaster caused to religion by the priests contemporary of Him? He criticized the religious dogmatism (as shown within entire chapters in the synoptic gospels: Matthew, ch. 15,16,23; Mark, ch. 7,8; Luke, ch. 11,12,16,20), as well as the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes, perfectly similar to the fanatics wearing cassocks and doctrinaires belonging to the Churches of today. Actually, Christ warned against them: “In vain do they worship me, teaching [as] teachings commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). Even Paul states that we should become “ministers of [the] new covenant; not of letter, but of spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens⁴⁴⁶” (2 Corinthians 3:6). Or, as Schuon has noticed about this anti-dogmatic sentence: “it also contains... a «two-edged sword» [476].

The Renaissance humanists, the Protestant reformers and the first printers, all have struggled to emancipate God’s word from the exclusive control of the Church.

“Historians of theology have many times noted that in the early patristic tradition we find no *definition* of the Church.” These are the words of Alexander Schmemmann, a great Christian exegete [477]. He also wrote: “The Church is not an organization but the new people of God” [478]. The ecclesiastic Alfred Loisy manifested his disappointment: “Jesus foretold the Kingdom, and it was the Church that came” [479]. Also the Church devout Merejkowski in his *Jesus Manifest* acknowledged: “the Church instead of the Kingdom was a road into a foreign land instead of home... the Church instead of the Kingdom is ashes instead of fire” [480]. In his turn, Jung stated: “What a joke of the *esprit d’escalier* of history—the substitution for the Caesar of the pontifical office of St. Peter!” [481], that is to replace God with the pope (before the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the Caesar was worshipped as a god).

When referring to the quest for the ideal (divine perfection), Jung wrote: “In actual fact, however, the ideal has been turned by superficial and formalistically-minded believers into an external object of worship, and it is precisely this veneration for the object that prevents it from reaching down into the depths of the psyche and giving the latter a wholeness in keeping with the ideal” [482].

The quotation in the beginning of this section explains that God does not dwell in buildings made by humans (Acts 7:48; cf. 17:24; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18). The *Bible* gives us guidance where shall we find God. “Do ye not know that ye are [the] Temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you?... For the Temple of God is holy, and such are ye” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; cf. Ephesians 2:21,22). “Behold, the tabernacle of God

⁴⁴⁶ Giveth life (*King James Version*).

[is] with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God” (Revelation 21:3). That God who is reflected and dwells in man is the Self, Atman (ch. XIX C), and the Spirit of God that manifests itself in us is the Kundalini. “A holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together⁴⁴⁷ for a habitation of God in [the] Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). “Whose house are we” (Hebrews 3:6), an idea that can be encountered also in Peter’s first epistle (2:5). In the Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch* Jesus said: “Dost thou think that this is that city of which I said: «On the palms of my hands have I graven thee»? This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with me, that which was prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed it to Adam before he sinned... And again also I showed it to Moses on Mount Sinai” [483]. For sure, through these words He distinguished between the urban construction (*This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with me*) and the subtle body (*city*) whose quintessence lies in the *palms* (ch. XI C). The mystery that God disclosed to Adam (ch. XIX C) and Moses (ch. II) concerned precisely the subtle body.

The Savior advocated unobtrusive prayers: “When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets so that they should appear to men... But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber⁴⁴⁸, and having shut the door⁴⁴⁹, pray to thy Father who is in secret⁴⁵⁰” (Matthew 6:5-6). The topic reappears in an ancient Chinese Christian manuscript: “When you worship (God) you should not allow it to be seen or to be heard by others” [484].

The priests were and still are called “fathers,” or “instructors,” thus entering in a clear conflict with the sayings of Jesus: “And call not [any one] «your father» upon the earth; for one is your Father, he who is in the heavens” (Matthew 23:9). “Neither be called «instructors⁴⁵¹», for one is your instructor, the Christ” (23:10). In this book we used the title “Church Fathers” only for historical reasons, to place that individuals (bishops, especially) in

⁴⁴⁷ This designates the collective awareness and stress upon the importance of the collective while taking the prayer (mantra) or performing the meditation (ch. XV D).

⁴⁴⁸ That is the inner prayer (meditation).

⁴⁴⁹ Meaning: detach yourself from the outward world.

⁴⁵⁰ It refers to the reflection of the Father within the heart: the Self or Atman (ch. XIX C).

⁴⁵¹ Or guides, meaning also psalm reader.

the respective period of the early Christianity.

The clergy allegation to be regarded as intermediary between humans and Divinity has no real support. Moreover, believing perhaps that being only an intermediary is too little in their strive for power, they aimed still higher trying to replace even God and assuming His role on the earth. Thus, in an epistle addressed to the community in Corinth, Clement of Alexandria claimed that God delegated the bishops, priests and deacons to be “rulers and governors on the earth” [485]. Whosoever refuses to “submit the neck and fulfill the part of obedience” [486] to those leaders is guilty of insubordination against God Himself and “are punished with death” [487]. In Ignatius’ concept, to separate oneself from the bishop is to separate oneself not only from the Church, but also from God Himself [488]; “ye are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ”; “your bishop presides in the place of God” [489].

Such an ideology was used as an original argument for dividing the Christian ecclesia into *the clergy* and *the laity*. We have seen (ch. XV D) that also the Byzantine liturgy made the inappropriate discrimination between “consecrated people” (clerics) and “non-consecrated people” (laymen). How far we are from Christ’s teaching (John 11:52) who sacrificed Himself on the cross to “gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad”! It should be remembered that at the dawn of Christianity everybody was called a *saint*, making no difference among Christians [490].

Along the centuries, the Church power grew incessantly and the same did the claims of the high priests. As early as the 4th century, John Chrysostom charged the Church of his time with “excessive wealth, enormous power and luxury” and clerics with “lust of authority,” while admitting that pagans rightly accused them with “ambition” and “hypocrisy” [491]. Gregory Nazianzen shared the same view [492]. On the beginning of the 16th century, Luther bluntly declared: “The Church of God is now under a tyranny incomparably worse than that of any synagogue or any nation whatsoever” [493]. Under Pius IX, on the First Vatican Council (July 18, 1870) they decided that the pope is infallible in defining the doctrines concerning faith and ethics [494]! Preceding him, Pope Gregory VII (11th century) drew up a *Dictatus* reading that no one on earth can judge the pope. The Roman Church has never erred, nor can it err until the end of time. A rightly elected pope is, without question, a saint, made so by merits of Peter. That doctrine was reaffirmed at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Peter de Rosa has shown that, however, “in the great biblical texts... Papal supremacy and infallibility, so central to the Catholic Church today, are simply not mentioned. Not a single creed, nor confession of faith, nor catechism, nor passage in patristic writings contains one syllable about the pope, still less

about faith and doctrine being derived from him” [495]. We should add that in the 13th century, the Franciscan Peter John Olivi suggested papal infallibility, but next century Pope John XXII condemned his views as the work of the devil [496].

One of the few honest heads of the Church who had the courage to acknowledge the wrong actions of the clergy, Pope Adrian VI wrote in 1522: “For many years things deserving of abhorrence have gathered around the Holy See. Sacred things have been misused, ordinances transgressed, so that in everything there has been a change for the worse. Thus it is not surprising that the malady has crept down from the Head to the members, from Pope to the hierarchy. We all, prelates and clergy, have gone astray from the right way” [497].

The long row of popes comprised many sinister examples. Closer to us, Pius XII openly supported every fascist dictator in Europe: Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Salazar, and even the Nazi puppet Petain.

In 1972, Paul VI declared: “From some fissure the smoke of Satan entered into the temple of God” [498].

Christ’s words are pertinent even today: “My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers” (Matthew 21:13). Instead of being God’s servants, a great deal of the clergy actually consists of functionaries of a very personal god intended to give them wealth and power. Today there are well-known the connections between the Vatican and the Mafia, and the laundering of money coming from the organized crime, gambling, arms deals, smuggling activities, drugs sales and prostitution, or from the financial transactions performed illegally but with highest profit for the huge wealth of the Roman-Catholic Church secretly kept in the vaults of the Vatican Bank, Ambrosiano Bank and, pinnacle of sacrilege, the one called XX-87 *Banco di Santo Spirito*! In his well-documented bestseller *In God’s Name*, David Yallop ruthlessly exposed the responsibilities of the Catholic leaders in various murders, and especially that of Pope John Paul I. As for his successor, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, after exposing his blamable facts [499], the author concluded: “The Papacy of John Paul II has been a triumph for the wheeler dealers, for the corrupt, for the international thieves like Calvi, Gelli and Sindona, while His Holiness has maintained a very high-publicized image not unlike some perpetual rock and roll tour” [500]. The writer also disclosed that “85 percent of the profit from the [Vatican] Bank goes directly to the pope” [501]. Würtz also denounces all the ecumenical movements together with the sects from Mormons to Theosophists and Anthroposophists, from Neoprotestants to the Witnesses of Jehovah, the Maltese-Johannite Order, Waldorf School, Rotary, Lions “clubs,” YMCA and the like. [502]. For more references to papacy and the Church, we send the reader to other

sources, too [503]. Numerous high priests are notorious collaborationists of secret polices. Many such examples can be found in ex-communist countries [504]. In states regarded as secular (laic) saying nothing about the others, high politicians succumb more and more under the control of clerical organizations that actually promote their own politics (could you ever imagine involved in politics God whose deputies the priests claim to be?) directed towards low mundane targets as money and power. We remain completely astonished hearing these organizations openly declaring their so-called patriotism, and not at all hesitating—when their own interest is at stake—to act against the ideals of their own nations. Priests calling themselves servants of God are actually serving only their mean, private occupations. And what about their ethics? Every day, the media expose outrageous behaviors within the world of robe and cassock bearers (ch. XX C2b) [505]. The oath of chastity is broken. Many priests are known for their immoral conduct, quasi-chronic drunkenness, nevertheless being tolerated and protected by the ecclesiastic authority. “Current estimates, by homosexual activist priests such as AIDS-sufferer Father Robert L. Arpin, indicate that over 40 percent of the priesthood are practicing homosexual behavior in secret” [506].

The so-called ecumenism⁴⁵² in reality conceals a savage fight between Churches to draw towards each of them as many parishioners as possible in order to take full advantage of them. “Once there was a single Christian group, Jesus of Nazareth’s tiny band of twelve apostles; now there are thousands. It has been estimated that there are some twenty-two thousand separate and distinct Christian groups around the world” [507]. But any doctrinaire distinction disappears when money enter the stage, because “money never smells badly.” An example among others is the *International Bank of the Religions* in Romania (which faced bankruptcy in 2000) whose General Manager (former director of the Department of Cults and General Consul of the Romanian Embassy in Paris) is said to had been secret police officer [508], thus confirming the saying: “money is the root of all evil.” Jesus was known for his stormy attitude against the moneychangers sheltered in God’s House: “having made a scourge of cords, He cast [them] all out of XX-88 the temple” (Matthew 21:12; cf. John 2:14-15; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45). “For what does a man profit, if he should gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?” (Matthew 16:26) It seems, however, that people running after money and power pay no attention to these words of Christ.

The situation is not specific to Romania. Polosin wrote about the Russian Church: “It is a known fact that the church received 10,000 tons of tobacco

⁴⁵² Universality (from *oikoumène*, inhabited earth, Gr.); in the *Torah* it is *yequm*, inhabited world, destroyed by God during the flood.

from abroad as humanitarian aid and exempt of taxes and sold it on commercial market for its own gain. The church does the same with vodka, wine and gold” [509]. *The Gazette* reports: Cathedrals... are rumored to be money laundries for Russia’s Mafia. Below the \$500 million Christ the Savior (cathedral), the patriarchy is building a sumptuous residential complex equipped with saunas, sports facilities, restaurants, guest houses and garages... it has bred distrust in a priesthood perceived as more preoccupied with collecting alms than saving souls” [510]. Like in a grotesque competition, the Romanian Orthodox Church has in view the building of a giant Cathedral too, displaying an unashamed contempt for the prevalent poverty faced by the population.

“According to the apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio* (1994), «at the end of the second millennium of Christianity, the Church should become more aware of the sinful state of its sons⁴⁵³ and remember all those times from history where they had moved away from the spirit of Christ and His Gospel, when—instead of bringing the evidence of a life inspired by the values of belief—they had proved ways of thinking and doing that were a real counter-evidence and reason for scandal»” [512]. For the errors committed by the popes, Church and Christians over the history, John Paul II asked for forgiveness for ninety-four times [513]. Such attitudes were appreciated by Quim Monzó, in *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona) not as a profound acknowledgment but rather as a comfortable and profitable marketing exercise [514]. Such hypocritical declarations can be taken as acts of complaisance, proofs of a gross demagoguery, as long as the *de facto* attitude of the clerics has remained unaltered.

Nostradamus’ quatrains on the final six popes before the apocalypse fit well the prophecies made in 1138 by St. Malachy of Ireland (whose original manuscript was not discovered in the Vatican Archives until 1590) who predicted in 112 Latin phrases the entire succession of 111 popes from his contemporary Celestius II to doomsday. Succeeding John Paul I (whom he calls *Labor Soli*, “The Labor of the Sun,” Lat.), only two popes are left on Malachy’s list. As John Hogue remarked, Malachy also predicted the final Catholic apocalypse: “In the final persecution of the Holy Roman Church, Peter the Roman will occupy the See, who will guide his flock through numerous tribulations. These tribulations past, the town of seven hills will be destroyed and the terrible Judge shall judge the people” [515]. However, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus proclaimed that doomsday will be announced by major changes: “for then shall there be great tribulation such as has not been from [the] beginning of [the] world, until now, nor ever shall be” (Matthew

⁴⁵³ There is the feeling that the Church tries to ultimately get rid of any responsibility connected to a phenomenon that it firmly condemns [511].

24:21). And He enumerated the signs that will precede and follow these tribulations: “Ye will hear of wars and rumor of wars. See that ye be not disturbed; for all [these things] must take place, but it is not yet the end. For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. But all these [are the] beginning of throes. Then shall they deliver you up to tribulation... And then will many be offended, and will deliver one another up, and hate one another; and many false prophets shall arise and shall mislead many; and because lawlessness shall prevail, the love of the most shall grow cold; but he that has endured to the end, he shall be saved. And these glad tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations, and then shall come the end” (24:6-14), referring also to the moment “when therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which is spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in [what is a] holy place (he that reads let him understand)” (24:15). That last remark, obviously points at Vatican, while the preceding pictures precisely the contemporary state of mankind. In chapter XIX D, we have explained the meaning of the New Glad Tidings spread all over the world.

After two thousand years of Christendom, the question raised at the time of Jesus is still of actuality: “When the Son of men comes, shall He indeed find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

On May 13, 1917, in the hamlet of Fatima (western Portugal), three children drove the cattle to pasture. They were Lucia de Santos (10), XX-89 Francisco Marto (9) and Jacinta Marto (7). They had repeated visions of Virgin Mary, the last one being accompanied by meteorological and cosmic phenomena (signs from the heaven forecast by the Scripture; ch. XIX D) witnessed by 60,000 pilgrims who had come on that occasion. The apparition disclosed three prophecies to the children. The first and the second referred to the world war and the rising and decline of the communism. The papacy keeps the third as a top secret and it is said to be a frightful one.

Jacinta had two visions that she recounted to Lucia, who recorded them in her memoirs with the remark that they comprise “part of the [third] secret.” Both visions concern the pope: “I don’t know how it was, but I saw the Holy Father⁴⁵⁴ in a very large house. He was kneeling by a table with his face in his hands and he was crying. Outside the house were many people. Some of them were throwing stones at him, others were cursing him and using bad language” [516]. Also, it is worth noticing that Lucia declared that we were already living in the 13th chapter of Revelation, and also Cardinal Ratzinger suggested that Virgin’s message was simply a restatement of this chapter. However, the chapter refers to the number of Evil, 666, and points at the

⁴⁵⁴ I.e., the pope.

Church as we have already shown.

The first reaction of Vatican (in 1960, when the secret had to be revealed according to the instructions given by Virgin Mary to Lucia) was an attempt at diminishing the importance of the Third Secret: “Although the Church recognizes the Fatima apparitions, She does not desire to take the responsibility of guaranteeing the veracity of the words the three shepherd children said that the Virgin Mary had addressed to them” [517]. In 1966, Fr Alonso, appointed as the official expert on Fatima, stated that the Third Secret refers mainly to a spiritual chastisement, which will be far worse, and even more fearsome than famine, wars and persecution. Then, on September 10, 1984, Bishop Cosme do Amaral of Leiria referred to the topic declaring: “Its content concerns only our faith... The loss of faith of a continent is worse than the annihilation of a nation; and it is true that the faith is continually diminishing in Europe” [518]. The bishop now publicly confirms Fr Alonso’s thesis. The message foretells a terrible crisis within the Church. Many people believe that in 1973 Virgin Mary referred to the Third Secret when she told XX-90 to Sr Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa at Akita, Japan: “Pray for the pope, the bishops, and the priests... The Church will be full of those who accept compromises and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord” [519]. In November 1980, at Fulda (West Germany), John Paul II referred to “the gravity of its contents,” adding “we have to be prepared to suffer, before long, great trials... it is still possible to diminish this trial, but it is no longer possible to avert it” [520]. The speech was published in *Stimme des Glaubens*. Cardinal Ratzinger avowed in 1984 that he has read Lucia’s confession and admitted that it refers to “dangers which threaten the Faith.” However, he believed that “to publish the «third secret» would mean exposing the Church to the danger of sensationalism, exploitation of the content” [521]. A clairvoyant known as Brother Michael of the Holy Trinity used the writings of Fr Alonso and Lucia’s testimony to show that the Third Prophecy concerns the Spirit and spirituality and exposes the terrible crisis of the Church: a major conflict will appear within this organization, the believers will question themselves which faith is the true one, the evil will enter the very core of the Church and the priests will become its adherents by preaching its tenets and consequently will be badly punished [522]. Father Nicholas Gruner, a Canadian priest, has widely publicized the work of several Fatima experts who believe that the Third Secret contains a warning that the Catholic Church will undergo a catastrophic loss of faith and discipline—the great apostasy predicted in Scripture as a harbinger of the end times. Actually, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* acknowledged that “the present time is... a time still marked by «distress» and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church” and

“before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers⁴⁵⁵” [523]. About the Fatima prophecies, Walter Mercado wrote: “There is reason to belief that the remainder deals with the destruction of the Church somewhere around the year 2000. On October 15, 1963, a German newspaper printed what I said was the text of a prophecy: «For the Church too, the time of its greatest trial will come. Cardinals will oppose cardinals and bishops against bishops. Satan will march in their midst and there will be great changes in Rome. What is rotten will fall, never to rise again. The church will be darkened and the world will shake in terror»” [524]. Lucia herself (96 years old on March 22, 2003) declared that the punishments predicted by Our Lady in the Third Secret have already begun.

The last secret of Fatima is in full agreement with the earlier message (September 1846) that was delivered to two children (Maximin Giraud and XX - 91 Melanie Mathieu) at La Salette (France) also by the Holy Virgin: “Rome will lose faith and become the seat of Antichrist... The Church will be eclipsed, the World will be in consternation” [525].

There are enough reasons to believe that the Third Secret proclaimed at Fatima about the near at hand crumbling of the Church would be accomplished through the work of the Divine Mother. In fact, things have already started and are in progress. Under the significant heading *End in sight for Christianity?* Reuters referred to the statement made in September 2001 by Cardinal Cormack Murphy-O’Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. He acknowledged the damage and shame brought to this Church by child abuse and scandal involving Catholic priests, and realized that, however, “people are very interested in spirituality,” while Christianity became just one among many sources of moral and spiritual guidance. Recent developments of similar scandals within the Catholic Church in the United States left indelible traces on people’s memory. The Church of England’s Richard Harris, Bishop of Oxford believed that there were also opportunities for Christianity in the downturn, adding: “The positive side is the huge growth in what I call self-defined spiritual people” [526].

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. Luke 18:8; Matthew 24:12.

3. THE MARIAN CULT (MARIOLOGY)

“*De Maria, nunquam satis*”

(*As far as Mary is concerned, nothing is ever too much, Lat.*)

Bernard de Clairvaux [527]

In the light of the facts discussed in chapter XX C1 and C2a,b, the Marian (or Marial) cult is in itself a mysterious and “revolutionary” phenomenon, since after the consolidation of the dogmatic Christology and ecclesiology, it would be hard to conceive the development—more and more necessary—of a Mariology, in parallel with the previous ones.

This situation was the result of a long process which was not free from a strong opposition of the clergy, as Marian’s popular piety preceded that of the ecclesiastic doctrine.

Ever since the end of the first century, there was evidence of the existence of a well-formed Marian tradition within the first Christian communities. The discovery in 1938 of the papyrus containing the prayer *Sub tuum praesidium* unveiled that Virgin Mary was venerated and addressed prayers long time before the Council of Ephesus (431).

The reaction of the clerics was prompt. Therefore, before the Ephesus instant certain important clerical writers (Tertullian, Origen, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers etc.) had no scruple to consider Mary to have been blemished by human imperfection, claiming that she had been a prey to weakness, showed doubts in belief and misunderstanding of the gospels. Chrysostom went so far that he even discredited her with having excessive ambition, boundless arrogance and vainglory. Hilary, in his turn, declared that she would also be subject to the Last Judgment.

Augustine of Hippo, who resembled Paul in many respects (being possibly his reincarnation), thought her blemished by the original sin, claiming that she was conceived in the sin of flesh, like the entire Adam’s lineage. It was he who even created a Christian doctrine⁴⁵⁶ of the “original sin” (thesis on *massa damnata*, mass of perdition, Lat.), especially in his treaty *On Nature and Grace*, surpassing by far the concepts of the Church Fathers about “the ancestral sin” (*propatrikon hamartema*, Gr.). Julian, bishop of Eclanum attacked Augustine’s pessimistic views with irrefutable arguments: “if human nature as represented by flesh was sinful, then Mary’s flesh was sinful and Jesus should have contracted this sinfulness from her... then Augustine in essence made original sin a problem peculiar to males” [528]. This

⁴⁵⁶ *Hamartologia*, Gr.

overwhelming argument sways Church's classical tenet that only male seed transmits the spiritual nature of humans, while the female ovule only provides of the carnal medium.

It was Augustine, too, who vehemently fought the cult of the Mother Goddess that was pagan in his eyes. "The Great Mother has surpassed all her sons, not in greatness of deity, but of crime. To this monster not even the monstrosity of Janus is to be compared... This abomination is not surpassed by the licentious deeds of Jupiter" [529]. In 428, Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, under the influence of Augustine, contested the name of *Theotókos* (however employed no later than Origen and the Alexandrians), saying: "Let us refrain from calling Mary the Mother of God, for fear of being tempted to turn her into a Goddess and so of becoming pagans." He suggested maintaining the term *Christókos* (Mother of Christ, Gr.) that was in agreement with the language in the gospels. Nestorian doctrine was, however, condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431) presided over by Cyril of Alexandria, and Mary was solemnly proclaimed "God-bearer" (*Theotókos*, Gr.), that is Mother of God, thus echoing Isis and Cybele, which were called "Mother of the gods" (*Mater Dei*, Lat.). The title of *Theotókos* was first authoritatively employed for Virgin Mary by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, in his encyclical from 319 against Arius. Later on, *Theotókos* was translated into Latin not as *Deipara* but as *Dei Genitrix*.

Geoffrey Ashe asserts: "If the Church eventually turned its Virgin into a new Isis or Cybele, the reason was not that churchmen drifted absent-mindedly into doing so, but that some positive Goddess-making factor... was stronger than their will not to do so" [530]. He adds that the popular Marian "cult has an intense, mysterious life of its own—the life of the Goddess, mediated through a living daughter of Zion—which the Church has not only been powerless to control but has often submitted to" [531].

Numerous apocryphal writings, about Savior's Mother appeared in reply to her almost ignored position in the New Testament. From amongst those texts about Mary's childhood we shall remind here *Protoevangelium Jacobi* (Protoevangelium of James, Lat.; probably from the 2nd century, since known by Origen in the 3rd century), *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei, sive Liber de Ortu Beatae Mariae et Infantia Salvatoris* (Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, or Book of the Birth of the Blessed Mary and the Infancy of the Savior, Lat.), *Evangelium de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* (Gospel of the Nativity of Saint Mary, Lat.), *Historia Josephi, fabri lignarii* (History of Joseph, the carpenter, Lat.) and *Evangelium infantiae arabicum* (Arabic Infancy Gospel, Lat.).

The earliest story about Mary's last years, dating back to the 2nd (or at

least 3rd) century was *De Transitu Virginis Mariae liber* (another text known as *Transitum Beatae Mariae* from the 3rd-4th century, exists in the Bibliotheca Patrum Maxima) that was attributed to Meliton, the bishop of Sardes. There are known other apocryphal books dealing with the same subject too. It is said that twenty-two years after Jesus' ascension, when Mary felt an inexpressible urge to be with her Son, an angel told her that after three days her soul would be raised to heaven. The apostles whom she wanted by her side, the old patriarchs and Jesus Himself were present at that moment. It was believed that the story originated with the Gnostics or the Collyridians. This story was rejected towards the end of the 5th century through a decree from Pope Gelasius. However, the Catholic Church finally accepted it with several censures and even set up the festival, initially called Dormition (*koimésis*, Gr.), then Assumption of Mary.

There are two prevalent prayers used in traditional Catholic piety: *Lord's Prayer* and *Ave Maria* (Hail, Mary, Lat., also called Angels' Salute). Jesus gave directly the first one (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The second also originated in the gospels ("Hail, [thou] favored one"; Luke 1:28) as it was addressed to Mary as the Mother of our Lord. "*Ave, gratia plena*" (Hail, thou, the full of grace, Lat.; *kecharitómene*, full of grace, Gr.). *Ave* has as its match the Sanskrit *Namah* that comprises both salutation and bending. At the same time, the Latin palindrome *Eva—Ave* expresses the relation Eve—Mary. It should be noticed that within the Rosary, the very substance of the recitations is the *Ave*, much more frequent than the *Pater*. As Schuon has stressed on, "the *Ave* is more excellent than the Lord's Prayer" [532], while "*Ave Maria*—or the name of Mary—is, of the divine names, the one which is closest to man" [533].

In the Christian calendar, all the popular feasts are connected to the Son and/or His Mother, not with the Father, only recalled mostly through the prayer devoted to Him.

A well-known hymn of Athonite⁴⁵⁷ origin dating back to the 10th century begins with the words: "It is truly proper to consider you happy, Birth-giver of God... and Mother of our God." A Marian hymn (*irmos* of the 9th song of the *Ascension of the Holy Cross* canon) calls Mary: "Mystical Paradise." Here we should remind the Greek *Akathistos* hymn to Mary (5th century) out of which we give the following excerpts: "Hail to you through whose joy will shine out;/ hail redemption of fallen Adam;/ hail deliverance of the tears of Eve;/... hail to you through whom creation is reborn;/... hail to you who make ready a heaven for souls;/... hail, key of the gates of Paradise;/... hail, rock giving water to those who thirst for life;/ hail, pillar of fire, leading those in darkness;/... hail, tree of brilliant fruit, from which the faithful are fed;/... hail

⁴⁵⁷ Coming from Mount Athos (Greece).

to you who brings opposite together/... hail to you who draw forth from the depths of ignorance/... hail, boat for those who wish to be saved;/... hail, inexhaustible treasure of life... “ [534]. This hymn full of piety is a synthesis of a remarkable complexity. With Mary we find here Yahweh’s attributes (the pillar of fire, leading, ch. XI E; the rock, ch. XV A), as well as of Isis who was “she who brings the opposite together” [535]. Both cases point at balancing the side channels enabling thus the access to the central channel. Mary appears as a complete Savioress (redeeming Adam and Eve, but also preparing the heaven to receive the souls of others), renewing the Creation (like the Holy Spirit—ch. XI C and XXI), bliss-giver (ananda; ch. XIX C), key of the gate (Agya) leading to the Paradise (Sahasrara), hence Jesus’ Shakti (ch. XIX C), mistress of the Tree of Life (Adi Shakti) bestowed to the faithful one, giving the knowledge (Nirmala Vidya) dispelling the ignorance (ch. IV), boat of salvation (Kundalini; ch. V). Within the Eastern Christianity, in the prayer uttered before the eucharist Mary is called “Most Happy Earth, Bride blessed by God, who made growing up the unsowed ear, the world Savior.” Dostoyevsky used to pray often: “All my hope are Thou, Lord’s Mother, protect me,” which parallels the *heart prayer* addressed to Jesus and used as a mantra by the Hesychasts (ch. XXV A). In his *Demons*, the Russian writer attributes to an old nun saying that the Mother of God is the Great Mother, the vast moistened ground (cf. Genesis 2:6).

Schuon summarizes the situation: “Next to the adult Jesus,... Mary is... his feminine prolongation, the *shakti*: she is, then,... the virginal... complement of the masculine” [536]. Besides, the exegete acknowledges that “the Blessed Virgin is... pure universal Substance (*Prakriti*), the matrix of the manifested divine Spirit and of all creatures” [537]. And furthermore: “Existence in itself is the universal Virgin” [538]. A particular mention should be made of the double invocation *Jesu Maria*, which is also in use among Christians and denotes the equivalence given to them (XIX C). We have shown (ch. XV D) that in addition to the 72 Names of the Christ, Nissard gave a list of “the Names of the Holy Virgin.” Likewise we have the *Golden Legend* where a knight who became monk repeated incessantly the words *Ave Maria* and thus he develops into a highly realized soul (saint) [539], and so duplicated the mantra taken by the Hesychasts (ch. XXV A). Last but not least, Mary designated as the New Eve also acknowledges her Avatar status, fully comparable with Jesus, the New Adam, like the prototypes of Adam and Eve (ch. XIX C).

John of Damascus (675-749) called Mary “the sovereign Lady to whom the whole creation had been made subject by her Son” [540]. He even addressed Mary: “Hail, throne lifted up on high in glory, living throne, representing in thyself the throne of God” [541]. The *Nicene Creed* with

elucidations from the Holy Fathers and the seven Ecumenical Councils also is referring to “Sovereign Lady, Mary.” Pietro Damiano, the Italian Cardinal and Doctor of the Church (1007-1072) gave to the Mother of Christ the name of *Deificata* (Deified, Lat.). In her song *O Virga ac Diadema*, Hildegard of Bingen (12th century) addressed Mary as follows: “O female Savior who pours out a new light upon the human race” (*Unde, o Salvatrix que novum lumen humano generi protulisti*, Lat.) [542]. The following century, the known German mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg (c.1210-c.1285), a Beguine and a lay woman, went so far as to call her “the Goddess.” She made Mary to say: “I was alone the bride of the Holy Trinity” [543]. Cardinal Bonaventura (1221-1274) was a philosopher and an ascetic and had the surname of “the Seraphic Doctor” (of the Church). He did not hesitate to call Mary “the spouse of the Eternal Father” [544]. Nicephore Kalliste (d. c. 1350), author of an *Ecclesiastical History* in 23 volumes (from which only 18 have reached us), has placed on the same rank Jesus and His *Divine* Mother: “He was in all things like unto his Divine Mother” [545]. In her poem written in the year 1399, Christine de Pisan (c.1363-1431) called Mary “the Queen of Heaven” and wrote: “God the Father gave great honor to woman when he wanted to make her his spouse and his mother, the temple of God joined to the Trinity” [546]. Over the Renaissance, the popular piety towards the Holy Virgin in a direct or metaphorical way found an echo in the songs of the troubadours as well as in the literary movement called *Fedeli d’Amore*, in Dante’s writings glorifying Beatrice or Petrarca’s with his Laura, in King Arthur’s legends etc. In the 15th century, Enguerrand Quarton (Charton, Charonton) belonging to the School of Avignon, wrote an inscription on his famous painting *Holy Trinity* stating that Mary is Virgin and Mother of All (*Virginis et Matres totiusque*, Lat.) [547]. In 1670, in his *Life of Virgin Mary* María de Jesús de Agreda assured that Jesus’ Mother was raised and “seated on the same royal throne⁴⁵⁸ of the Most Holy Trinity... as a Queen.”

Under these circumstances, Jung came to the following conclusion: “Mary is elevated to the status of a goddess,” or again: “Both mother and son are not real human beings at all, but gods” [548].

A similar phenomenon happened in India a long time ago. Under the pressure of the patriarchal shepherds, the heads of the official religion temporarily hid the cult of the Great Goddess. Nevertheless, she preserved her rank in the heart of the local population and, in time, ascended back to her place of honor. Starting from a passage out of *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* by Mircea Eliade, Andrei Pleșu [549] wrote in a paragraph about “Shakti, Shiva’s female Power,” that “most of the original paternal Gods step aside

⁴⁵⁸ As a pãredre (ch. XIX C, XX A).

when confronted with the vital force of maternal Goddesses.” He stated that the female deity competed with the male deity with a steadily growing authority. Plešu later quoted Robert Lenoble who showed that “the more the enthusiastic soul of the Renaissance tried to get free from God the Father, the more it needed Mother Nature instead” [550].

Marija Gimbutas explained that within Old Europe in the south of the continent, “the goddess of the Paleolithic and Neolithic is parthenogenetic, creating life out of herself. She is the primeval, self-fertilizing «Virgin Goddess» who has survived in numerous culture forms to the present day. The Christian Virgin Mary is a demoted version of this original deity” [551].

One can remark, however, that, officially, Mary remained the unrecognized Mother Goddess of the Christian tradition. Like all the goddesses before her (Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Hathor, Astarte, Aphrodite, Demeter, Cybele) Mary is both Virgin and Mother and like many of them she gave birth to a child who is both divine and human (as Tammuz, Dumuzi, Osiris, Adonis, Persephone, Attis).

Even after the triumph of Christianity, the cult for the Goddess of the old beliefs was still alive. Thus, in the 4th century, Alexandria celebrated Kóre, whose festival was described by Epiphanes: “They used to go round the image itself, circumambulating the inner temple seven times⁴⁵⁹, accompanied by flutes, drums and hymns... And when questioned on the meaning of the mystery, they answered: «Today, at that hour, the Daughter (Kóre) that is the Virgin, gave birth to the Aeon»” [552]. At the place of Isis’ temple in Paris, that became St. Germain-des-Près, the statue of Isis was venerated until 1514 [553]. Also we shall mention that even presently, in front of the church Santa Maria della Navicella (Saint Mary of the Boat, Ital.) there is preserved Isis’ XX-stone boat that was carried during the processions organized in Rome in her 102 honor (ch. V).

According to Eliade: “The real resistance to Christianity was found in the Mystery religions and the soteriologies (...) and especially in the popular *living* religions and mythologies of the Empire... Whenever we have more detailed information about the pre-Christian religions of Europe, we are made aware of their richness and complexity. But since in their pagan days these peoples produced no *books*, we shall never have a thorough knowledge of their original religions and mythologies. Yet they represent a religious life and a mythology powerful enough to resist ten centuries of Christianity and countless offensives on the part of ecclesiastical authorities. This religion was cosmic in structure, and we shall see that in the end it was tolerated and assimilated by the Church. In fact, rural Christianity, especially in Southern and Southeastern Europe, has a cosmic dimension. So we may infer that

⁴⁵⁹ See. ch. XV F.

Greek religion and mythology, radically secularized and demythicized, survived in European *culture*, for the very reason that they had been expressed by literary and artistic masterpieces. Whereas the popular religions and mythologies, the only *living* pagan forms when Christianity triumphed (...), survived in Christianized form in the traditions of various rural populations... with roots going back to the Neolithic Age, in all probability European religious folklore still preserves a prehistoric heritage” [554]. Notably for these zones is the fact that even now, with the exception of the individuals molded according to the official culture and education, “the rest of the population, especially in Central and Southeastern Europe, still maintains its attachment to a traditional half-Christian universe” originating as early as the ancient times, even protohistory [555].

Now, together with Caitlín Matthews [556], let us take a closer look at the XX-92 so-called Black Virgins. “Black Virgin statues are found throughout Europe, . . . 95 with a notable concentration in southern France and northern Spain, though Italy, Germany and Britain also have theirs. The question of their blackness is always rationalized as the blackening which occurs through the many votive candles burned before them, or extreme ageing of the wood.... We may wonder how much Black Virgins of northern Europe owed to the iconography of Sheba or the Shulamite of the Songs of Songs or to the pre-existent Goddess forms... The Black Virgins of the many regions stem from aspects of former worship of the Goddess as Isis, Diana⁴⁶⁰, Cybele⁴⁶¹, Demeter Melania⁴⁶². The Black Virgins of the West are true upholders of the ancient Black Goddess tradition... The writer of the *Libri Carolini*, representing the official policy of Charlemagne’s court, denounce those who worshipped pagan images and wrote about the very real difficulty in recognizing the Virgin and Child from Venus and Aeneas [557]... A recent example of a pagan statue venerated by Christians is found in the Madonna and Child worshipped at Enna, formerly known as Castrogiovanni, in central Sicily, where, until the nineteenth century, a statue of Ceres with the infant Proserpine in her arms was worshipped with offerings of grain sheaves, flowers and soil. The statue was later authenticated, relegated to a nearby museum and replaced by a more conventional statue [558]... There is a long-held tradition that the original Black Virgin of Chartres, *Notre Dame Sous Terre* (Our Lady Beneath the Earth, Fr.) was of Druidic derivation. It is true that modern Chartres was once the area of the Carnutes, a Gallic tribe... The

⁴⁶⁰ E.g. the Black Diana in Ephesus.

⁴⁶¹ Represented by the black stone of Pessinunt (ch. XV A).

⁴⁶² From *melanos* (black, Gr.).

statue was subsequently unceremoniously burned in the cathedral square on 20th December 1793 during the French Revolution [559].”

Legend says that Mary Cleopas, Mary Salome, Mary Magdalene (together with Martha and Lazarus) all fled from Palestine at Ratis in France, a town where Isis Pelagia, Artemis and Cybele were worshipped. The place is actually called Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the proximity of Avignon, and is famous for its statue of Sarah la Kali (Black Sarah), the patroness of gypsies worldwide. Sarah was the servant of the three Marys. The lineage comes from India, where gypsies originated [560]. Among the great number of Black Virgins we shall mention the examples of the 12th century statue of Rocamadour, France, one of the earliest in Europe, and the more recent one of Czestochowa, Poland. They are the end of a long lineage encompassing Hindu Kali, the Black Maiden Kundry of Norse mythology, the black old woman Cailleach⁴⁶³ (pronounce Kal’yak) in the Celtic tradition, one of the most ancient European Goddess. St. Adamnan’s *Life of St. Columba* mentioned the river Lochaidh in Lochamber, Scotland, which was consecrated to *Nigra Dea*, the Black Goddess, to whom rites were performed until very recently. At the well of St. Declan, Ardmore (county of Waterford), XX - 96 about a century ago masses of people assembled every year on December 22 beneath a female figure described “like the pictures of Calee (Kali), the black goddess of Hindustan.” The Catholic priests actually whipped the folk away from the spot, but to no purpose [561].

There is no surprise that the Catholic countries worship Virgin more than Jesus. To give another example: “Even into the early 20th century the Basque priestess, *serora*, and her female helpers inhabited caves and grottos where they were consulted as oracles and prophetesses. Their status was higher than that of the Catholic priest. The structural linkages between the serora and her helpers and the Goddess and her helpers are evident” [562]. Virgin Mary is still connected to the living water and miraculous healing sources. She is pure, powerful and righteous. She is still the Great Mother, and as the Mother who watched over her children, Mary was repeatedly envisaged gathering XX - 99 humankind in her arms in a protective gesture [563]. According to the folk - 100 sculptures, the Mother of our Lord is depicted as giant and mighty, holding on her lap a miniature Christ. That could be explained by considering that the Virgin incarnate the feminine aspect—or pole—of universal Existence [564]. It is suited to mention here an interesting triptych from France (15th century) portraying Virgin Mary as *La Vierge Ouvrante*. When that triptych is open, XX - 98 one can see inside God the Father and Jesus. Thus, Mary appeared as the Great Mother Goddess who shelters the Father and the Son [565]. Here we shall also mention the mosaic (12th century) in the Roman basilica of St.

⁴⁶³ Coming perhaps from *caille* (veil).

XX-97 Mary in Trastevere where The Holy Virgin and her Son have an equal rank, being seated on the same throne as *paredros* [566].

Mary embodies perfect holiness (*Panagía*, Gr.); she is the Most Holy (*Hyperagía*, Gr.)—a name showing the leading place held by her in the Christian Pantheon. There are several texts (especially verses uttered before the celebration of Mary's entrance in the Temple) suggesting even the *total, primordial holiness*. She is the New Eve (an idea enunciated for the first time in the 2nd century by Justin Martyr or "the Philosopher" and Irenaeus of Lyons, appearing again in 377 with Epiphanius), "Mother of all⁴⁶⁴ humans," the One who generated the new creation and redeemed the original sin as a co-Savior of humankind. Other names given to Mary are the Most Pure (*Achrautos*, Immaculate, Gr.; *Nirmala*, Sanskr.; *Anupalipta*, Pali), Unblemished, Unstained (*Amómos*, *Pamamómos*, Gr.; *Nishkalanka*, Sanskr.), Perfect (*Panamometos*, Gr.; *Purna*, Sanskr.).

In association with the Savior, Mary is mentioned as a co-Redeemer in some Catholic Mariology formulas, as the *Exhortation* of February 2, 1974, but this quality is rejected by the Orthodox Christians, the latter presumably accepting the idea of collaboration and the use of the term *synergós* (singular form, Gr.) that actually appears as plural form (*synergoi*, Gr.) with Paul where it is translated as "fellow-workmen" (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1).

To the extent that faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit comprises a proper compulsory adoration (latry; *latreía*, Gr.), the cult destined to the saints was confined to veneration⁴⁶⁵ regarded as reverence (duly; *douleía*, Gr.; *pujiya*, Sanskr.). Mary was, however, entitled to a higher veneration (hyperduly, *hyperdouleía*; Gr.; *parampujiya*, supreme veneration, Sanskr.). Therefore, veneration gave rise to an intensified form of popular piety (or of superstition): it is better to address Mother rather than Son, saints rather than God. We should not forget, therefore, that this was a very old practice approved by the magisterium (doctrinal authority) and most cherished by the Christian people.

The fact that Emperor Constantine consecrated to Mary the town bearing his name is not devoid of importance. The first Christian church, also devoted to Jesus' Mother, was set up on the very place of the famous temple destined to goddess Artemis of Ephesus (destroyed by the Goths in 242). It was there where the Third Ecumenical Council was held in 431 when Mary was acknowledged as the Mother of God (see *supra*). Other temples were dedicated to Mary, too, that used to belong to the Great Goddess, such as

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Genesis 3:20.

⁴⁶⁵ *Proskynésis* (Gr.).

Athena's of Parthenon and Toulouse, Isis' at Soissons and in Paris, etc. [567].

Another important event took place in 451 on the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, where Mary was accepted as Ever-Virgin (*Aeipárthenos*, Gr.; *Semper Virgo*, Lat.). The term was included to the anathematismal canons on the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (II) in the year 553, more for reasons political than theological. In 649, the Council of Lateran will officially draw up this specific creed: Mary was Virgin before (*ante partum*), during (*in partu*) and after giving birth (*post partum*). The Sixth Council (Lateran, September 680) approved the text of the creed. It is worth noticing that Tertullian (c.150-c.230) and Jerome (c.345-420) have both rejected the virginity *in partu* although the latter accepted the virginity *post partum* in spite of Helvidius [568]. The virginity *post partum* could be explained if we take into account the hypothesis of Jesus having a body made up of pure vibrations (ch. XXIII B). Also, on March 25, 1987, in his Marian encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, John Paul II stressed that Mary reserved her virginity intact [569].

According to Jerome and Epiphanius [570], that concept originates in Song of Songs (4:12): “A garden enclosed is my sister, [my] spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed” (*Hortus conclusus, suror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus*, Lat.). One can easily remark here the analogy with Virgin Gauri ruling over the sacrum bone, the sealed fountain of the Kundalini's shut up spring (ch. XIX C).

The Mariology, common to the Orthodox and Catholics but almost unknown by theology and Protestant religion, was later subject to a matchless radicalism and finally substantiated through two key Catholic dogmas appeared over the last two centuries of the second millenary. The Puritan Revolution went against the worship of Virgin Mary, regarding her as a wholly human character.

On December 8, 1854, Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (*Ineffabilis Deus* papal bull) where Mary was declared *immaculately conceived*. Thus, she was separated from among the rest of mankind and became the only human being (Jesus, the New Adam, of course, excepted) “preserved immune from all stain of original sin” [571]. Hence, it was answered a large and steady popular demand that had started ever since the 12th century.

On November 1, 1950, as a result of a petition signed by 8,000,000 individuals, Pius XII issued the encyclical *Munificentissimus Deus* thus proclaiming the dogma *Assumptio Mariae* (Assumption of Mary, Lat.), so that Mary became the only one who at the end of her mundane destiny “was taken up body and soul into heaven,” without knowing death [572]. Moreover, the text referred to significant writings of the Church Fathers such

as John of Damascus [573] and Anthony of Padova [574]. The Damascene wrote: “The place of the bride whom the Father had espoused was in the heavenly bridal chamber” (*Oportebat sponsam, quam Pater desponsaverat, in thalamis caelestibus habitare, Lat.*) [575]. Anthony of Padova complemented the former: “so in like manner arose the Ark which he had sanctified, when on this day the Virgin Mother was taken up to her heavenly bridal-chamber” (*ita pariter surrexit et Arca sanctificationis suae, cum in hac die Virgo Mater ad aethernum thalamum est assumpta, Lat.*) [576]. These words evoke the Psalm 132:8 reading: “Arise, Yahweh, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength.” To the above, Jung made the following commentary: “Mary as the bride is united... in the heavenly bridal-chamber,... as Sophia, with the Godhead” [577]. A comparison with the Bride (Song of Songs 3:6) sends us to a similar acknowledgement of the divinity of the Bride who is compared with the “pillars of smoke” reminding of Yahweh’s “pillar of fire.”

To the aforesaid, we should add other significant actions taken by the Western Christianity.

In 1954, the Catholic Church proclaimed Virgin Mary “Queen of Heaven.”

Ten years later, on the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI attributed Mary the new epithet of Mother of the Church [578], thus placing her *above the Church*, overlooking the strong opposition of the attending bishops and priests, a fact that caused perplexity and indignation not only for those who were present there but also for the Protestant and Orthodox Christians. The encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* of John Paul II of March 25, 1987 took over the title of “Mother of the Church” [579] granted by his predecessor to Mary. The encyclical rose up the question: “Could she [Virgin Mary] not become the sign of hope for all... ?” [580].

The Second Vatican Council devoted to the Church dogmatic Constitution, also adopted the Marian doctrine within *Lumen Gentium*. Thus, it was established that the way “the books of the Old Testament... the earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light.” “The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God was associated with the incarnation of the divine word: in the designs of the divine Providence she was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer” [581].

When Albino Luciani became Pope John Paul I, he addressed to the people gathered in San Pietro Square on September 10, 1978, talking of God and saying: “He is our Father, even more He is our Mother.” Yallop made the following commentary: “The Italian Vatican experts, in particular, were beside themselves. In a country noted for its macho image to suggest that God

was a woman was deemed by some to be confirmation of the end of the world⁴⁶⁶... Luciano gently pointed out that he had been quoting Isaiah. The male-dominated Mother Church relaxed” [582].

Precisely 18 days after that memorable speech, the brave pope who aimed at an authentic reformation of the Catholic Church died (only thirty-three days after being elected as Peter’s successor). He was allegedly assassinated, this inducing the subtitle: *An investigation into the murder of Pope John Paul I* given by the investigator David Yallop to his book.

Ten years would have to pass until the Vatican would declare the year 1988 “the Year of Marian Devotion.”

Last but not least, the Chartres Cathedral preserves—as a token of high XX-esteem—Mary’s veil that was given to the church in the 9th century by King 103 Charles the Bald. In 1194 when the cathedral was almost totally destroyed by fire, the veil was found undamaged. The new *Notre Dame de Chartres* was rebuilt around the relic of the Virgin [583].

In spite of the mentioned official position, “Catholic feminist theologians... recognize that Catholic doctrine has limited the power of Mary by insisting that Mary is mother of God, but not God the Mother—a figure whose power is derived from her relationship to the Father and the Son” [584] (ch. XXI).

In the attempts made for restoring the place deserved for the divine Mother, the New Testament issued in various versions where there appear sentences like: “Jesus said to them: «When you pray, say: Father-Mother⁴⁶⁷, hallowed be your name, May your dominion come. Give us our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for ourselves forgive every ones indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of Trial»” (Luke 11:2-4). “In the house of my Father-Mother there are many dwelling places” (John 14:2). “If you know me, you will know my Father-Mother also” (14:7). “No one knows the Child except the Father-Mother, and no one knows the Father-Mother except the Child and any one to whom the Child chooses to reveal God” (Matthew 11:27) etc. [585].

Mary as an intercessor as holy as her Son was a fact admitted both by Catholics and Orthodox but viewed as dangerous by the Protestants to whom the only Redeemer was Jesus Christ [586].

Ever since the 6th century, the Eastern Christianity established by decree the day of August 15 to celebrate liturgically the Dormition of Mary, but

⁴⁶⁶ These words comply well with the hypothesis presented in ch. XIX D (also ch. XXI).

⁴⁶⁷ “Other ancient authorities read Our Father-Mother in heaven” (note of the editor).

manifested reticence towards her body taken up to heaven. As shown by Lossky: “The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is foreign to the Eastern tradition, which does not wish to separate the Holy Virgin from the descendants of Adam upon whom the fault of the first parents weighs” [587]. In other words, the Orthodox Church claimed that she could not be exempted from the redemption achieved for the entire human nature (that included Mary too) in and through the Son of God. Thomas Aquinas did not think differently in the 13th century! And in 1483 Sixtus IV had condemned the idea of the Immaculate Conception as being a heresy. Despite of the general attitude, Christians belonging to the ancient rite in Russia (particularly from Kiev and Rostov) acknowledged and even defended the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception over the 17th and 18th centuries. Nevertheless, the Orthodox accepted that the Mother of God was free of any present sin. Anyway, in the light of the “original sin” inconsistency (ch. IX), the debate becomes meaningless.

The Protestant Church never accepted the doctrines of the Dormition and the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Martin Luther refused even to celebrate the feast of August 15 and decreed: “Ye shall sing no more praises to Our Lady, only to Our Lord” [588]. Luther was not only a notorious misogynist, but also a radical anti-Semite, and abhorred sexuality. His concept of an angry God filled the mystic of Wittenberg with wrath, his aggressive character causing a great harm to the Reformation.

Nearly 2000 years after the New Testament was written, Virgin Mary was acknowledged in the dogma of the Church as Mother of God, Perpetually Virgin, Immaculately Conceived, and Assumed into Heaven, body and soul, where she reigns as a Queen. Yet her birth and death are not even mentioned in the Scripture!

4. THE SECRET TEACHING OF THE Gnostics

“He said to them: «To you is given [to know] the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to them who are without, all things are done in parables»”

Mark 4:11 (cf. Matthew 13:11)

Ever since the first century, there was a movement within primitive Christianity, later termed as *Gnosticism*. *Gnósis* (Gr.) came from the Sanskrit root *gna* (*jna*) meaning “to know”; therefore, the Gnostic (*gnostikós*, Gr.) was “the one who knows” (*jnani*, Sanskr.). In Greek, *epistemi* refers to knowledge in the intellectual sense of information gathered, while *gnósis* means

knowledge in the sense of insight or understanding that implies not only the participation of the mind but of the whole being.

Elaine Pagels explains: “achieving *gnósis* involves coming to recognize the true source of divine power—namely, «the depth» of all being. Whoever has come to know that source simultaneously comes to know himself and discovers his spiritual origin: he has come to know his true Father and Mother” [589]. According to its adepts, gnosis “is a question of knowing who you really are⁴⁶⁸, not at the ordinary level of your name and your social class or position. But knowing yourself at a deep level. The secret of Gnosis is that when you know yourself at that level you will also know God, because you will discover that the divine is within you.” As for the Kingdom of God, it “is something that you can enter when you attain Gnosis, which means knowledge... It’s like a state of consciousness. It’s hard to describe” [590]. Actually, in the *Gospel of Thomas* Jesus said it clearly: “Whoever finds himself is superior to the world” [591], adding: “But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty” [592], “poverty” being understood here as “ignorance.”

The awareness of grace and God’s presence in us was generally called spiritual understanding (*gnósis pneumatiké*, Gr.). Hence, gnosis as a revealed gift from God could only be conveyed directly from one initiate to another. By rejecting any cerebral spirituality, the Gnostics estimated that, whereas belief was left to the lower beings, knowledge was the prerogative of higher beings. “Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? For it is hidden from the eyes of all living... God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth its place” (Job 28:20-23).

In Schuon’s opinion, “in gnosis, the first commandment... implies awakened consciousness of the Self” [593].

The *Epistle of Barnabas* [594] defined *perfect knowledge* or *gnósis* (*téleia gnóse*, Gr.) as the deep understanding of the Old Testament allegories that are perceived only by the initiates.

One of the supposed authors of a Gnostic gospel, Philip asked somebody when “heard he reading the prophet Esaias, and said: «Dost thou then know what thou art reading of?» And he said: «How should I then be able unless some one guide me?»” (Acts 8:30-31). Amazingly enough, even Paul referred to allegories, saying for instance that we should become “ministers of [the] new covenant; not of letter, but of spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:6), that is to understand the spirit not the letter of the New Testament⁴⁶⁹.

⁴⁶⁸ Ch. XIX C.

⁴⁶⁹ After a few verses, opposed to that and for the first time Paul uses the syntagma *Old Covenant* (2 Corinthians 3:14).

Origen declared: “it is the nature of higher knowledge (gnosis) to be clear and white and full of light,” “the light of the higher knowledge (gnosis)” [595]. To him, *theologia* meant knowledge, a “*gnósis* of God” (*gnósis Theou*, Gr.), that one receives as grace [596]. “The deifying contemplation of the gnosis is achieved through union with God” [597].

Clement of Alexandria considered himself as an initiate (even a Gnostic after other opinions). He was accounted for exclaiming: “O truly sacred mysteries! O pure light! Amid the gleam of torches falls the veil that covers God and Heaven. I become holy from the moment I am *initiated*” [598]. Also he regarded *gnósis* as the perfection of Christian [599]. In his opinion, “The Gnostic alone, growing old in the Scriptures, preserves the orthodox teaching.” He explains his position: “There are some things which my work will speak in riddles; to some it will display its meaning clearly: some things it will only speak; it will try to say things secretly, to display in a hidden fashion, to show while keeping silence,” and stressed on the significance of “the mystic contemplation, in which we will advance... so that we may be ready to listen to the transmission of the Gnostic Tradition” [600]. The Alexandrine urged: “In whomsoever the eye of the soul has been blinded by ill-nurture and teaching, let him advance to the true light, to the truth, which shows by writing the things that are unwritten” [601], therefore he taught that we must find the *agrapha* in the Scripture itself. An example of *agrapha* is the *Papyrus Egerton 2* purchased in 1934 in Egypt by the British Museum and published in 1935 and 1987. The document dates back from the 2nd century and contains the text from an unknown gospel mixed with sayings atypical for a gospel. A letter attributed to Clement discovered by Morton Smith in 1958 in the Mar Saba monastery (about 20 km south of Jerusalem) reproduce fragments of a “secret gospel” of Mark destined for “initiated into the great mysteries” [602].

Clement remarked: “the grace of knowledge is from him” (God) [603]. He regarded all intellectual efforts as “formless and blind,” without the grace of the knowledge (*gnósis*) bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Actually, in Clement’s views, contemplation and gnosis were the Christ’s blood, which—as remarked by Schuon [604]—are the “greater mysteries,” the essence, being opposed to the Eucharist that is His body and constitutes the “lesser mysteries.” Jesus’ body had to be pierced in order that the blood might flood out. As Meister Eckhart has said, “If you want the kernel, you must break the shell.”

“The Gnostics of Clement constituted an almost esoteric group; they were elected ones living in permanent communion with God”—wrote Evdokimov [605]. As previously explained (ch. XX C2), Clement was a remarkable exception amongst the Fathers of the mainstream Church, showing a high

esteem for the feminine characters mentioned in the *Bible*. He became a Neoplatonist and highly praised the ancient philosophy [606].

To Origen and Clement one should add, in the opinion of Evdokimov, the related concepts of Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor as well [607]. As for Isaac the Syrian⁴⁷⁰, he has defined gnosis as “the knowledge of eternal life” and “the knowledge of secret realities” [608].

The Catholic contemporary writer Paul Vulliaud reviewed briefly the initiation practiced at the dawn of Christianity (also ch. XI B, XXII B): “The primitive discipline of Christianity included an examination at which the *competent* [those who asked for baptism] were admitted to election. This examination was called the scrutiny. The Sign of the Cross was made on the ears of the catechumen⁴⁷¹ with the word *Ephpheta*, for which reason this ceremony came to be called «the scrutiny of the opening of the ears». The ears were opened to the *reception* [*kabbalah*] or *tradition* of the Divine truths... The discipline of the secret was fully justified. Neither the Prophets nor Christ Himself revealed the Divine secrets with such clearness as to make them comprehensible to all” [609]. “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from [the] world’s foundation” (Matthew 13:35). The Old Testament acknowledged, too, the existence of esoteric knowledge concealed in parables (see also ch. IV, XI B). “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter riddles from the old. Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us” (Psalms 78:2-3).

The Gnostics shared their secret science only to those considered worthy (qualified) for “initiation into *gnósis*” that implied mystical experience according to E.R. Dodds and G. Scholem [610]. After receiving the initiation, the newcomers were no more subject to discrimination. Tertullian acknowledged within the Gnostic community the equality between its members: “To begin with, it is doubtful who is a catechumen, and who a believer; they have all access⁴⁷² alike, they hear alike, they pray alike—even heathens, if any such happen to come among them... All offer you knowledge⁴⁷³... At one time they put novices in office; at another time, men who are bound to some secular employment... And so it comes to pass that today one man is their bishop, to-morrow another; today he is a deacon who to-morrow is a reader; today he is a presbyter who tomorrow is a layman. For

⁴⁷⁰ Also called Isaac of Nineveh.

⁴⁷¹ Neophyte (ch. XI B).

⁴⁷² To knowledge (*gnósis*).

⁴⁷³ *Gnósis*.

even on laymen do they impose the functions of priesthood” [611]. Within the early Gnostic communities (and in the 12th century with the Cathari too, who were, otherwise, really faithful to the New Testament [612]) women could accede at the rank of bishop, offered the eucharist, taught, baptized and healed the sick. Ancient religions in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, Greece and Syria allowed women to be priestess in all the temples of the Goddess.

The word “knowledge” had with the Gnostics a broader connotation that it has currently when it is regarded as being essentially intellectual, academic XX or bookish. The former obviously refers to the inner knowledge (*Gnóthi* - 111 *seautón*), because Gnostics considered themselves as “sons of interior knowledge” [613]. The *Teachings of Silvanus* clearly advocate: “Before everything (else),... know yourself” [614]. The same concept might be encountered in some of the Dead Sea scrolls: “Bring forth the Knowledge of your inner self and in... meditate” [615]... “[day and] night meditate on the Mystery of Existence” [616].

According to the Gnostic texts, the knowledge of the Self signifies the knowledge of God (ch. XIX C). Thus, the *Gospel of Thomas* enlightens: “The Kingdom is inside of you⁴⁷⁴, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the Living Father” [617]. By this, the Gnostics understood the knowledge of the supreme Reality, namely the Self, thinking that the emancipation of the Spirit out of the physical bonds was essential. The Gnostics are *seekers*, they *seek after God*, and that distinguish them of the ignorant [618]. According to the mentioned Gospel “Jesus said: «Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the all»” [619]. In the words of Clement of Alexandria quoting from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*: “He, who seeks, will not stop till he find; and having found, he will wonder; and wondering, he will reign; and reigning, he will rest” [620]. Other Gnostic writing advised: “Seek and inquire about the ways you should go, since there is nothing else that is as good as this thing” [621]. In the views of the Gnostic teacher Theodotus (c.140-160), the Gnostic is one who has come to understand “what liberates us is the knowledge of who we were, what we became; where we were, whereunto we have been thrown; whereunto we speed, wherefrom we are redeemed; what birth is, and what rebirth” [622].

The Gnostics considered themselves to be the holders of the secret teaching that Jesus had imparted only to a few apostles. Indeed, Christ said: “All cannot receive this word, but those to whom it has been given... He that is able to receive [it], let him receive [it]” (Matthew 19:11-12). “And having

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Luke 17:21.

turned to the disciples privately he said: «Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which ye behold, and did not see [them]; and to hear the things which ye hear, and did not hear [them]» (Luke 10:23-24; cf. Matthew 13:16-17). John explains: “Many other signs therefore also Jesus did before his disciples, which are not written in this book” (20:30; cf. 21:25). And Revelation goes on: “And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; and I heard a voice out of the heaven saying: «Seal the things which the seven thunders have spoken, and write them not” (10:4).

In a *raccourcy* that embraced the Old and New Testaments, Schuon equated the secrets that God has entrusted to Moses on the Mount of Sinai to the “Christ-given Mysteries” [623].

Origen maintained that “Jesus (sometimes) gave his disciples (secret) private special teaching in the Word of God, so that much remained unwritten because the disciples knew that they must not write down or impart everything” [624].

The *Gospel of Thomas* read: “Jesus said: «I shall give you what no eye has seen and what no ear has heard and what no hand has touched and what has never occurred to human mind»” [625]. The *Acts of John* give the following guidance: “And these things I speak unto you, brethren, for the encouragement of your faith toward him; for we must at the present keep silence concerning his mighty and wonderful works, inasmuch as they are unspeakable and, it maybe, cannot at all be either uttered or heard” [626].

The *Gospel of the Egyptians* credited Jesus with a personal mystical instruction. Therefore, in addition to the literal message of the canonical gospels, there existed a “private and secret teaching,” transmitted “in a mystery” by Jesus, “which our holy fathers have preserved in a silence that prevents anxiety and curiosity... so as to safeguard by this silence the sacred character of the mystery. The uninitiated are not permitted to behold these things: their meaning is not to be divulged by writing it down,” as it was pointed out by Basil of Caesarea [627].

According to the Gnostic *Codex Askew (Pistis Sophia)*: “Our Lord, after his ascension to the heaven, returned again to earth and spent eleven years with his disciples, teaching them many mysteries... Philip, Thomas and Matthew, and all that they saw of, and heard from him during this time, he instructed them to write down” (*Jesus post ascensionem suam in coelum iterum in terram descendisse et undecim annis discipulos suos in variis mysteriis erudivisse atque... Philippo, Thomae et Matthaео eum mandasse, ut dicta et facta sua hoc intervallo temporis audita et visa scriptis connotarent*, Lat.) [628]. The quotation comes most probably from the Schwartze-Petermann Latin variant (1851). In the English translation done

in 1896 by G.R.S. Mead after the Coptic manuscript, *Pistis Sophia* opens with the words: “It came to pass, when Jesus had risen from the dead, that he passed eleven years discoursing with his disciples, and instructing them” [629], showing further that Jesus has appointed Philip, Thomas and Matthew as scribes of His secret teachings [630].

On the same topic, Clement of Alexandria wrote: “The Lord announced in a Gospel, «My mystery is to me, and to the sons of my house»” [631]. The idea was reiterated in the *Clementine Homilies*: “Since we remember how our Lord and Teacher gave us an assignment, saying: «You shall keep my secrets for me and the sons of my house»” [632]. In his *Hypotyposes*, Clement précised: “The Lord after his resurrection imparted knowledge (*ten gnosin*, Gr.) to James the Just and to John and Peter⁴⁷⁵” [633]. However, we shall see that among them John was the greatest Gnostic [634] (see *infra*). Evdokimov shared this view, writing: “The true Gnostic is John who reclined on Jesus’ bosom” [635]. In his turn, Hippolytus stated that the Naassene Gnostics received their secret teachings from Jesus through James and Mary Magdalene [636].

Also Valentine claimed that throughout His lifetime, Jesus disclosed to His disciples certain mysteries, which He kept secret from the outsiders [637], which corresponded to the biblical words: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples” (Isaiah 8:16). However, Marcion pointed out that not all His followers were entitled to the secret knowledge, such as some apostles who “remained unaware of the truth” (*non cognoverunt veritatem*, Lat.) [638]. “I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 15:12). Actually, with a very few exceptions, Jesus’ apostles were devoid of understanding (Matthew 15:15-16; cf. 16:9; Mark 6:52; 7:18; 8:17,21; 9:10,32; 10:38; Luke 24:25,45; John 10:6; 12:16). “And they understood nothing of these things. And this word was hidden from them, and they did not know what was said” (Luke 18:34; cf. 2:50). “But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them that they should not perceive it. And they feared to ask him concerning this saying” (9:45). “Christ said this also: «They that are with me have not understood me»” (*Qui mecum sunt, non me intellexerunt*, Lat.) [639].

The original secret teaching transmitted to the Gnostics from Jesus by way of certain followers became distorted afterwards. In many of the Gnostic writings one can find, however, worthy traces of the original knowledge, hardly discernible from amongst a plethoric idle talk.

The chose ones were the closest disciples to Jesus—John, and particularly Thomas— as well as Mary Magdalene.

In other occurrence (ch. I) it was asserted that John was a genuine initiate.

⁴⁷⁵ *Sic!* However, one can become aware of the sequence.

We have seen that the Gospel according to John is so much distinct from the other three gospels and it is so rich in its substance. Indeed, only John has presented not mostly the facts, like in the other three gospels, but foremost, the teaching of Jesus. As Clement of Alexandria remarked: “John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel” [640].

Within the first half of the 2nd century, the Gospel according to John aroused the opposition of many prominent leaders of the early Christianity such as Papias, Basilides, Hermas and Justin Martyr who did not accept this gospel as authoritative Scripture. “He lies, he lies, he is not worthy of inclusion in the Church,” cried the opponents of John [641]. It was only at the end of the 4th century that John’s Gospel was reluctantly admitted into the Canon by the Ecumenical Church (ch. I).

In his *Ecclesiastic History*, Eusebius portrayed John’s gospel as “one of the greatest mysteries of Christianity” [642]. Indeed, it is “the greatest enigma of Christianity”; it is perhaps the enigma of Christ Himself [643]. “The tenderest of the gospels” (*das zarteste Evangelium*, Germ.) said Luther, and he went on: “For this one gospel I would give all the others and a good part of the New Testament as well” [644]. “Therein for John lies the inadequacy of the synoptics—that they do not sufficiently reveal Jesus in Christ, man in God. That is why we find a *truly* complete Christianity (*pleroma*) only in the fourth gospel” [645]. Meister Eckhart, among others, when referring to the Gospel of John came to the following conclusion that closes his *Book of Divine Consolation*: “his words as well as those of our Lord have often been misunderstood” [646]. Merejkowski explained that “at first, the new (John’s) Gospel may have been only for the narrow circle of the «elect» who had «understanding», but at later stages of development it was made public and only then was it ascribed to the Apostle John” [647].

Verily, not only the gospel itself but also its supposed author, John, is surrounded by mystery [648]. Some would see in him the disciple, the son of Zebedee and brother of James (Matthew 4:21), for others (Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hippolytus) he is the same as the Presbyter, author of Revelation, while a third group (Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom) make a distinction between the two mentioned, and possible also for the author of the gospel bearing this name [649]. Therefore, we might have *three Johns*, as we have also *three Marys* (see *infra*). After Papias and Eusebius, the Presbyter John was different from the author of the gospel. Dionysius of Alexandria recalls that “in Asia, as they say... there are two monuments⁴⁷⁶ in Ephesus, each bearing the name of John” [650], meaning obviously the Apostle and the Presbyter.

⁴⁷⁶ Tombs.

Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus in 190, affirmed in his letters to Pope Victor: “For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis;... who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord” [651].

We have seen that at the end of important episodes or parts of the *Bible* (Revelation—ch. XIX D; Crucifixion—ch. XX C1; The Old Testament—ch. XXIV)—the Gospel according to John being one of them—there are written phrases and words (often encoded) of a tremendous significance. Thus, at the end of the fourth gospel, when John followed Jesus at His request: “Follow me” (21:19), Peter, who was present at the scene and thought himself to be the most prominent amongst the disciples, asked in great amazement (21:21): “Lord, and what [of] this [man]?” Jesus admonished Peter, saying: “If I will that he abide until I come, what [is that] to thee?” (21:22). And the gospel goes on: “This word therefore went out among the brethren that that disciple does not die” (21:23). Indeed, immortality is only for the true initiates, those who receive their Enlightenment⁴⁷⁷ or Self Realization. Jesus announces “the crowd with his disciples” (Mark 8:34): “There are some of those standing here that shall not taste death until they shall have seen the kingdom of God come in power⁴⁷⁸” (Mark 9:1; cf. Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27). Through this, Jesus promised them the Self Realization that they were to receive on the Pentecost day. The *power* associated to the coming of the Kingdom of God (Self Realization) is the energy of the Holy Spirit, which the Hindu sages called the *Kundalini* (ch. XI).

“Follow me” (*akolούθει μοι*, Gr.) designated John as the spiritual follower, receptacle of the true doctrine. Augustine of Hippo reminded about XX John “that at supper he reclined on the Lord’s bosom. From that breast then - 1 04 he drank in secret” (*ex illo pectore in secreto bibebat*, Lat.) [652]. The renowned ecclesiastic and exegete of the *Bible*, Alfred Loisy has revealed the Gnosticism of the Gospel of John and was excommunicated because of it. The Savior’s most beloved apostle disclosed the presence of some initiated disciples to whom he addressed his first epistle: “Ye have [the] unction from the holy [one], and ye know all things. I have not written to you because ye do not know the truth, but because ye know it” (1 John 2:20-21). The fact is confirmed also by the *Apocryphon of John*, which in the beginning presents its content using these words: “The teaching [of the Savior], and [the

⁴⁷⁷ *Photismós* (Gr.) from *phós* (light, Gr.).

⁴⁷⁸ *Dýnamis* (Gr.); *shakti* (Sansk.).

revelation] of the mysteries, [and the] things hidden in silence, [even these things which] he taught John, [his] disciple” [653]. And the *Apocryphon of James* read: “The twelve disciples [were] all sitting together and recalling what the Savior had said to each one of them, whether in secret or openly, and [putting it] in books” [654], thus disclosing the existence of *other gospels* besides the four canonical ones.

How right was the Hesychast Hieroschemomonk Daniel (Sandu Tudor) when writing in his debate about the Foreword to John’s Revelation, that the text “was regarded excessively prophetic from the viewpoint of contingencies of the human history and the *particular events of his epoch* but its *Gnostic* side was not deciphered, its value as pneumatic guide was not well explained” [655].

The second epistle of John remains a singular text within the general gynophobic attitude adopted by the scribes of the New Testament (ch. XX C1). It begins as follows: “The older to [the] elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not I only but also all who have known the truth, for the truth’s sake which abides in us and shall be with us to eternity” (1-2). This short letter contains explanatory elements for “all who have known the truth.” Like John, *the elect lady* was a real initiate, maybe even Mary Magdalene. *Her children*, send not to the physical ones but to her followers whom John indeed loved *in truth*, and “the truth which abides in us and shall be with us to eternity” is precisely the Self (Atman) whose recipient (and, likewise, her disciples as her spiritual sons) is warned against the peril of the principals of the so-called Christian mainstream, essentially, the *false Christians*: “For many deceivers have gone out into the world” (7). However, since in his final part the verse mentioned “they who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh,” we are inclined to believe that we deal here with a later interpolation aiming at blaming the Docetism that rejected the materiality of Jesus’ body (ch. XXIII B).

Jung considered that the Gospel of John implicitly suggested the Gnostic figure of Christ who “symbolizes man’s original unity and exalts it as the saving goal of his development” [656].

Thomas (of whom chapter XXIII B is also referring to) was another XX initiate in spite of John’s gospel attempt to depict him as the only apostle who - 109 doubted the Resurrection (20:25,27). All the other gospels record the event but does not mention Thomas, and state that Jesus addressed to *all* the disciples, thus unveiling a *collective* dubitative attitude. “«Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me having». And having said this he shewed them his hands and his feet. But while they yet did not believe for joy, and were wondering...” (Luke 24:39-41). Indeed, just after the Resurrection took place

they did not believe the women announcing them the resuscitation: “When they saw him, they did homage to him; but some doubted” (Matthew 28:17). When the Resurrection was narrated to the apostles, the “words appeared in their eyes as an idle tale, and they disbelieved them” (Luke 24:11). “Afterwards as they lay at table he was manifested to the eleven, and reproached [them with] their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him risen” (Mark 16:14). Under these circumstances we forward the hypothesis that John’s fragment quoted above is another later interpolation mostly destined to the same discrediting of the Docetist tenets regarded as a heresy. As for the first *real disbeliever*, his name was *Peter!* After Mary of Magdala announced Peter and John the good news of Resurrection, they ran together to the tomb where John arrived the first (John 20:1-4). The gospel just tell that John “saw and believed” (20:8), “but Peter... went away home, wondering at what had happened” (Luke 24:12), from where it results that Peter believed not!

We have seen (ch. XX C2) that some scholars identified the *Gospel of XX Thomas* as being the *Q* gospel that is the “source” (*quelle*, Germ.) of the -108 canonical gospels (although many believe that the former was written afterwards the latter ones). Professor emeritus John Dominic Crossan (DePaul University in Chicago), a reputed biblicist, and others would come to view the *Gospel of Thomas* as having as much claim to historical authenticity as the canonical gospels [657].

The prologue to that gospel read: “These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down.” Then, the first *lógion*⁴⁷⁹ explains that Jesus referred to an initiatory teaching granting immortality: “And he said: «Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death»” [658], reminding the words of John’s Gospel: “If any one shall keep my word, he shall never see death” (John 8:51; cf. 8:52; 11:26). The *Acts of Thomas* gave us a more elaborate representation. First of XX all, Thomas was portrayed as “Twin of the Messiah (*Didymos tou Christós*, -110 Gr)... and sharer of the secret mysteries of the Son of God” [659]. The “doubting” apostle stated further: “Thou hast revealed thy mysteries unto me more than to all my fellows, and hast spoken unto me words with which, lo, I am burning, but which I am not able to utter” [660].

The *Gospel of Thomas*’ leitmotif is the Kingdom of the Father, but it is only in the end that Jesus explained: “It will not be a matter of saying «here it is» or «there it is». Rather, the Kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it” [661], thus reminding Luke: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor shall they say: Lo here, or, Lo there; for behold, the kingdom of God is in the middle of you” (17:20-21).

⁴⁷⁹ Saying (Gr.).

As already shown, the Judeo-Christian tradition replaced the large variety of goddesses honored by other civilizations either with Eve as sinner or Mary as Virgin, Wife and Mother who took part in the salvation beside her Son. As for Mary Magdalene (*Magdalayeta*, Aram.) she was improperly called a “penitent prostitute” (!), and was baselessly identified to the adultery woman of John (8:3). In the fact of matter, the only thing imputable to the former was that of being the woman “from whom seven demons had gone out” (Luke 8:2). Above and beyond that sketchiness, we can easily see that Mary Magdalene’s personality remains covered by a mystery, as we have shown previously for John. In the gospels we met *three Marys* as we have met *three Johns*: the apostle, the evangelist, and the presbyter. No matter how assiduous, we will be at pains to identify Mary of Magdala with one of the main characters mentioned in the New Testament, namely the woman who anointed Jesus before His last coming to Jerusalem. Matthew (26:7) and Mark (14:3) remain silent on her name, while Luke (7:36-50) referred to a similar event that happened beforehand in the house of the Pharisee Simon, claiming that this anonymous woman was a sinner. Though, Jesus granted her absolution: “Thy sins are forgiven” (7:48; cf. 7:47). The only and inconsistent reason for conflating her with the Magdalene would be the fact that the latter was mentioned immediately afterwards (8:2)! It was John alone who identifies the woman who anoints Jesus’ feet as Mary, and we can infer that she was the other Lazarus’ sister since it was said that Jesus was in Lazarus’ house in Bethany together with Martha, the sister of Lazarus (John 12:1-3). In this respect we shall mention two passages. The first shows that in “a certain village... a certain woman, Martha by name, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also, having sat down at the feet of Jesus, was listening to his word” (Luke 10:38-39). More explicit, the second text tells us that “there was a certain [man] sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and Martha her sister. It was [the] Mary who anointed XX – the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother 105 Lazarus was sick” (John 11:1-2). But Matthew (26:6) and Mark (14:3) deny the place mentioned by John (12:1), the latter claiming that the event has happened “in Simon the leper’s house.” Such inconsistencies can make place to speculations on the identity of that woman: Mary the sister of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, another Mary or even somebody having a different name. We may say that this mysterious person combines all of them. At any rate, if that woman would have not a suitable spiritual height, Jesus would prevent her (ch. XXII C) to touch His feet (Luke 7:37; John 12:3), even kissing them (Luke 7:38), and anointing His head (Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3), i.e. His Sahasrara! However, it was only Mary Magdalene who fulfilled this request. Our hypothesis might find support in the following ecclesiastical text: “That

XX Mary, called Magdalene, was a disciple and anointed Christ, the first and the
 - 106 greatest among all the disciples and ointment-bearers... For her great faith, Mary Magdalene was favored being the first human being who saw Christ after his godly resurrection from the dead” [662]. That latter circumstance allowed Moltmann-Wendel to call her the “apostle of the apostles” [663]. We should add that an apocryphal text remembers that “he was seen first by his mother and other women” [664], “and the Church of the first centuries also remembered it” [665]. Augustine manifested an intriguing attitude when declaring that there were two Mary Magdalenes [666].

The name of Mary plays an immense part in Jesus’ earthly life, as shown in the *Gospel of Philip*: “His sister and his mother, and his companion were each a Mary” [667]. Roerich brings support for the privileged role conferred to woman in Gnosticism: “Ancient legends actually attribute to woman the role of the guardian of the sacred knowledge” [668].

We have seen (ch. XX C1) that according to *Pistis Sophia* with the apostles four women were present at the gathering with the Savior: Mary of Magdala, Jesus’ mother Mary, Martha and Salome. Baring and Cashford commented this attitude: “This is a change indeed from the image of women offered by the four Christian Gospels, in which there are no women disciples” [669]. *Pistis Sophia* reports that all have asked Jesus various questions but those of Mary Magdalene far outnumbered the rest, raising 39 out of 42 questions. Indeed, the above-mentioned writing is almost a dialogue between Christ and the last one. Peter got angry with her because she almost monopolized Jesus’ attention. He became even aggressive, thus determining her confession to the Savior: “I am afraid of Peter, because he threatened me and hateth our sex” [670]. Also the *Gospel of Thomas* wrote that “Simon Peter said to them: «Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life»” [671], to which “Jesus said: «I myself shall lead her... she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male⁴⁸⁰ will enter the kingdom of heaven” [672].

In another Gnostic text, Mary Magdalene was one of the three disciples (together with Thomas and Matthew) who were chosen to receive the secret
 XX teaching from Jesus: “She spoke as a woman who knew the All” [673].
 - 107 Indeed, as *Pistis Sophia* read, Christ highly appreciated Mary Magdalene to whom He intended to grant an integral initiation saying: “Mary, thou blessed one, when I will perfect in all mysteries of those of the height”, and again: “Mary, thou are blessed before all women on the earth, because thou shalt be the fullness of all fullness and the perfection of all perfections” [674]. Jesus also used to say: “Mary Magdalene and John, the virgin, will tower over all my disciples and over all men who shall receive the mysteries in the

⁴⁸⁰ That is: she will become the Self (see *supra* ch. XX C2a).

Ineffable. And they will be on my right and on my left⁴⁸¹. And I am they, and they are I” [675].

The *Gospel of Mary* presented its author as having visions and insights surpassing by far those of Peter. “Peter said to Mary: «Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of women. Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember—which you know (but) we do not, nor have we heard them». Mary answered and said: «What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you.»” The fact was acknowledged by Levi (Matthew) too: “Surely, the Savior knows her very well. That is why He loved her more than us” [676].

“The companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene, [... loved] her more than [all] disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [...]” [677]. Slandering people who thought that this was a hint about an intimate relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene exploited that passage from the Gospel of Philip. To tell the truth, the fact should be taken as a symbolical gesture and correlated to the text in the *Gospel of Thomas*: “Jesus said: «He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him»” [678]. Here we can detect also the words similar to those addressed to John and the disciple of Magdala (“I am they, and they are I”). It was a known fact that after their initiation, early Christians use to greet each other with a kiss [679]. We should add that after Tertullian, the Gnostics used to “share the kiss of peace” [680]. Also the Old Testament wrote that God appeared indirectly (in dreams, visions; Numbers 12:6) to other prophets, while about Moses, He said: “Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly” (12:8). The *Zohar* refers to Song of Songs beginning (1:2): “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,” adding: “and then there is joy at the binding together of spirit with spirit, so that one may be completed by the other, and there is wholeness in a single conjunction” [681], thus disclosing their mystic significance. Actually, such expressions are of common use in the *Midrashin* and Kabbalah [682]. Justin described the baptism as a true initiation ending with a kiss: “But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth,... so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss” [683]. Meister Eckhart said about the individual able to achieve union with God: “When the soul receives a kiss of the Godhead, it attains to its greatest perfection and its greatest bliss” [684]. We recall also

⁴⁸¹ These correspond to the male and female channels.

that the Kundalini as sleeping princess (Brunhilde, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty) in a number of legends and tales was awakened with a kiss. Therefore, the kiss conveyed an *initiation*, as it was for the Knight Templars. The neophyte who was accepted, received from the Master of the Brotherhood a kiss on the place where the Kundalini resides. That triggered the awakening of the spiritual energy. We shall see that some Zen masters achieve the same thing by hitting the disciple on the same zone of the spinal column (ch. XXV).

* * *

The Gnostic streams started within Neoplatonist movements and Christianity and lasted until the latter decided to prohibit them as “heretical.” After reading chapter XX C2b, the reader will not be surprised to find that Paul was the first to condemn the movement. He classified their sayings as “profane, vain babblings” and even named two of his Gnostic contemporaries: “Hymenaeus and Philetus, [men] who as to the truth have gone astray, saying that the resurrection has taken place already” (2 Timothy 2:16-18). Similar views were presented with some of the Nag Hammadi texts like the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, *Exegesis on the Soul* and *Gospel of Philip*. Of course, the two (like other) initiates were entitled to such a statement since they received their Self Realization, a thing beyond Paul’s understanding. Acts devoted, too, a long passage (8:9-24) to Simon Magus, one of the Gnostic leaders.

Philip, the author of the mentioned gospel is one of the seven instructors that included also Stephen (Acts 6:5)—the first Christian martyr⁴⁸² who was stoned to death with Paul’s consent (8:1)—and it is noteworthy that the New Testament designated him as “Philip the Evangelist” (21:8). That reference dating back to the 1st century AD is a proof denoting: firstly *the antiquity* of the *Gospel of Philip*, and secondly the fact that the text of that important Scripture was *fully acknowledged* by the Christian mainstream. Nonetheless, it will disappear together with the other Gnostic writings that “became” heretical after a few centuries. Epiphanius also referred to the *Gospel of Philip* [686]. Other evidences on the authenticity of the documents found in 1945 are supplied by Irenaeus (c. 180) who wrote against the *Gospel of Truth* [687], while Hippolytus was knowledgeable of the *Apocryphon of John* using the same sources as that writing [688] which was found among the manuscripts of Nag Hammadi. Likewise there were authenticated *Zostrianos*

⁴⁸² From *mártys*, genitive: *márturos*—witness (Gr.; cf. *smarati*, to recall, Sanskr.). Christians attribute to *martyr* the meaning of “he who witnesses God sacrificing his life” [685].

and *Allogenes*, whose titles are mentioned in the *Life of Plotinus* written by Porphyry [689].

A surprising fact is that despite his imposture and open critical position taken against the Gnostics, Paul used the concept of *gnósis* under the form of *epígnosis* (Romans 10:2; Ephesians 1:17; Hebrews 10:26; *epi* is intensive in compositions). In Romans 1:19 he refers to “what is known of God” (*tò gnostòn tou Theou*, Gr.). Moreover, he claims: “we speak wisdom among the perfect; but wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world... But we speak God’s wisdom in [a] mystery, that hidden [wisdom] which God had predetermined before the ages⁴⁸³” (1 Corinthians 2:6-7). As far as he was concerned it was only a vain boast. Paul might have been aware of the secret teaching he was referring to, yet that teaching belonged not to him but to others, i.e. the initiated in gnosis.

The rejection was mutual since the Gnostic texts such as *The Apocalypse of Peter* used to accuse Christians of heresy who would be considered as “orthodox” presently. In this *Apocalypse*, Jesus criticized the Christian mainstream as follows: “They will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error, and into the hand of an evil, cunning man⁴⁸⁴ and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled heretically. For some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. And they will say evil things against each other... Some who do not understand mystery speak of things which they do not understand, but they will boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone... But many others, who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error, will set up their error and their law against these pure thoughts of mine, as looking out from one [perspective], thinking that good and evil are from one [source]... And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are waterless⁴⁸⁵ canals” [690]. And, we should add that the latter were truly the contrary of the genuine initiates whose *subtle canals* were watered by the living spiritual energy (Kundalini). *The Testimony of Truth* criticized the “orthodox” Christians who say: “we are Christians” but actually are “not knowing... who Christ is” [691].

The great seer who was William Blake pointed out that the true understanding was the privilege of the Gnostics and not of the official uninitiated Christianity, causing thus the envy of the priests. “Uninitiated

⁴⁸³ Or: worlds.

⁴⁸⁴ Perhaps an allusion to Paul.

⁴⁸⁵ Or: dry canals.

Christians mistakenly... believed in Christ...; they accepted Him by faith, but without understanding the mystery of His nature—or their own. But those who had gone on to receive the Gnosis had come to recognize Christ as the one sent from the Father, whose coming revealed to them that their own nature was identical with His—and with God’s... Those who lacked spiritual inspiration envied those who spoke out in public at the worship service and who spoke in prophecy, taught, and healed others” [692].

The Gnostic texts brought forward a completely new concept while compared to what was written down in the canonical gospels. In these apocryphal writings, instead of speaking of sin and repentance as in the New Testament, Jesus speaks of illusion and enlightenment. Instead of coming to rescue us from sin, He plays the role of a guide showing us the path to spiritual understanding. When attaining enlightenment, the follower acquires the same rank as his teacher. Now, let us remind the aforesaid words in the *Gospel of Thomas*: “Jesus said: «He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him»” [693].

Besides the great merit of Gnosticism (especially at its origins), one cannot deny some later errors.

It was an ordinary thing (even if not general; for instance many of the texts in the *Gospel of Thomas* are such exceptions) for the Gnostic writings to use an obscure language that sometimes could even induce perplexity. Their abundant metaphors made the reading difficult in the absence of the key possessed by the initiates.

The main critique has in view, however, the ambivalence or the complementary principles (whose couples the Gnostics called *sýzygos*—united, harnessed; like husband and wife, Gr.) specific for the side energy channels, which was expressed through symbols going from the simple pair masculine-feminine to the one composed of *good* (light) and *evil* (darkness), until the more elaborate dualities of God-Satan, Christ-Antichrist etc. and especially the dualism of a “good” God and an “evil” God. In our opinion, the latter couple of concepts reflect the rejection of Judaism in a posterior phase of Christian Gnostic development when the God of the Jews, the Creator of Genesis was regarded as the evil God being opposed to the good God, the Father of Jesus. Another explanation for the dual Gnostic doctrines might be looked for in the influence of the local (Iranian) spiritual background of Mazdaism and Zoroastrianism that were based on the coexisting antinomic Principles of Good (Ahura-Mazda) and Evil (Ahriman)⁴⁸⁶. Their roots can also originate in the misogynist Judaism and Petro-Pauline tenets (ch. XX B and XX C2a,b) where the good was

⁴⁸⁶ Ch. X.

associated to man (right channel), and evil—to woman (left channel). By the way of an instance, Marinus, the pupil of Bandesanus, conceived the good as luminous and placed on the right (*dexión*, Gr.) and evil as obscure and placed on the left (*aristerón*, Gr.) that corresponded to the female. Irenaeus [694] gave to *Sophía Prúnikos* the name of *Sinistra* (Left, Lat.) [695]. We should not forget that the Ebionites in Palestine believed that God had two opposite sons, and that opinion was maintained within Christianity until the time of the Bogomils and Cathari [696]. Such distinction between *right—good—masculine* and *left—bad—feminine* as that upheld in the Clementine writings referring to God's *right* (*dexiós*, Gr.) and *left* (*aristerós*, Gr.) hands [697], can be explained only by either the denial or the crass ignorance of the biblical texts. To contest such false concepts, let us give several examples: "I saw Yahweh sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left" (1 Kings 22:19). "Thy right hand, Yahweh, is become glorious in power; thy left hand, Yahweh, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exodus 15:6). Some editions of the *Bible*, counterfeited the text in Exodus, by replacing "left" with "right," as if God had two right hands! The exegetes were doing great efforts of imagination to give a sense to this forgery, pretending that: "When the children of Israel perform God's will, they make the left hand his right hand. When they do not do his will, they make even the right hand his left hand" [698]. However, a *Midrash* gives full support to the first-mentioned version: "God's left hand dashes to pieces; his right hand is glorious to save" [699]. The text resonated with the two pillars of the Kabbalistic tree (ch. IV) assimilated with the *judgment* (the right one) and *compassion* (the left one) when regarding the three from the front.

To the criticism directed to pair of Good God and Evil God, Schuon answers that it "is simply a very human way of expressing necessary, hence inevitable fluctuations in cosmic unfolding, or the interplay of compensations proper to the Divine *Maya*" [700]. Jung explains and justifies the reflection of the *good-evil* antagonism as an unavoidable necessity: "Since psychology is not metaphysics, no metaphysical dualism can be derived from, or imputed to, its statements concerning the equivalence of opposites. It knows that equivalent opposites are necessary conditions inherent in the act of cognition, and that without them no discrimination would be possible... For how can you speak of «high» if there is no «low», or «right» if there is no «left», of «good» if there is no «bad», and the one is as real as the other?" [701].

The same dualism *good-evil* may be detected in the Qumran documents in the opposition between Light and Darkness: "Sons of Light" or "Sons of Righteousness" (angels) and "Sons of Darkness" or "Sons of Wickedness" (demons), or, at another level: "the God of Truth" and "the Lords of Evil,"

which is reflected on a different register in “the Teacher of Righteousness” and “the Wicked Priest.”

While talking of Gnostics, Schuon consider that “Their first fault lay in misinterpreting gnosis in a dogmatic mode, thus giving rise to errors and to a sectarianism incompatible with a sapiential perspective” [702]. In Armstrong’s view, “some Christian Gnostics had evolved a kind of metaphysical anti-Semitism by distinguishing the Hidden God of Jesus Christ from the cruel God of the Jews, who was responsible for the creation of the world” [703].

* * *

The conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity hastened the collapse of the Gnostic movement. The changing took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great who firmly backed the Church officials. That maneuver left aside, there are only a few Christians knowing that Constantine was blameworthy for many crimes: drowning in the bath of his second wife XX Fausta, murdering in 326 of his son (by his first wife) Crispus, killing of his - 112 eleven-year-old nephew, then of his brother-in-law—and Pope Sylvester, Bishop of Rome. By two edicts released in 326 and 333, the emperor prohibited any meeting of the Gnostics and ordered their writings to be burned, and by his imperial power he helped the official Church to eradicate the Gnostic “heresy” through the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325. Consequently, the Church began within twenty years of its own liberation from persecutions, to suppress by force of all its rivals, and long before the end of the 4th century secured death-sentence (and other laws) against them. Pope Leon I vigorously sought out heretics and insisted on their execution in the 5th century. They were chiefly Manichaeans.

The Christian authority adopted, however, a position full of light and shade. Despite the general hostile attitude towards the Gnostic doctrine, the Church Fathers accepted the Gnostic substance comprised in the Gospel according to John and, unexpectedly, even in Paul’s epistles. Jung regarded the *Clementine Homilies* written about the year 150 as “a collection of Gnostic-Christian writings” [704]. Several Gnostic myths became more or less visible in the oral and written medieval literature.

In the beginning, the teaching of the Gnostics survived especially outside the Empire borders. They migrated firstly towards Iran and Iraq where the gnosis was preserved within the small sect of the *Mandaeans* (knowers, i.e. Gnostics) where it founded affinities with the ancient teachings of Zoroaster (see *supra*). They used to worship the goddess *Namrus*, Mother of the World, whose sons were the seven planets (i.e. the deities ruling over the seven

chakras), in the same way as for other Gnostics, Sophia was the mother of the seven archons.

Nestorianism had flourished mostly in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and had its center at Edessa. From there it became a well-established tenet all over the Persian Empire of the Sassanids and thus arose the schismatic Persian Church. From this once mighty Church of the East today the last survivors are the Assyrian Christians in Iraq, and the Thomarists (called after the original followers of Thomas) in India. Indeed, the movement knew a period of expansion reaching countries as far as India and China, the latter sheltering several documents of that Christian stream. Roerich stated: “throughout Ladakh are scattered stones with images of a cross... Not far from the site... stand most ancient tombs called ancient Dard graves. Their age is of course considerably more than a thousand years” [705]. “Not far from Leh,... in this valley, too, are Nestorian crosses that XX remind us once more how widespread were Nestorianism and Manichaeism - 113 in Asia” [706]. The study of these documents offered a new ground to better understand the religion of the adepts of *Mani* (*Manichaïos*, Gr.) whose Christian doctrine appeared in 242. Until today, the *Manichaeism* is known only from the texts quoted by its opponents and the Chinese fragments discovered at the beginning of the 20th century (ch. I). There were four documents and one entitled *Chih-hsüan an lo ching* own by Li Shung-to of Tientsin. Professor P.Y. Saeki has published their English translation. Some historians estimate that most of them probably date from the mid-7th century [707]. One of them, the *Hsü-t'ing Mi-shi-so Sutra* (Jesus-Messiah-Sutra, Chin.) begins as follows: “At that time, preaching the laws of Hsü-po (Yahweh, Chin.) who is the Lord of Heaven, the Messiah spoke thus:... “ [708]. Another manuscript read: “Though it is only 641 years since the time of the birth of the Messiah... “ [709].

Manichaeism spread so much in the Greek world, as the corruption of official Christianity deepened, that in the 9th century 100,000 of them were executed and 200,000 deported in Europe [710].

As a consequence, the Gnostic teachings survived through their development in Europe. The first were the *Paulicians* of the Byzantine Empire (4th-7th centuries), then it was the turn of the Balkan area through the *Bogomils* (from the name of the priest Jeremiah Bogomil in the 10th century) reaching Bulgaria and Macedonia, extending towards Russia and Romanian Principalities [711]), then Serbia and northern Italy (*Patarini*), Spain and Germany (*Cathari* from *katharós*, the pure ones, Gr. :) attaining the center and the south of France (*Albigenses*, name connected with the city of Albi, Languedoc). When the Crusaders arrived in Palestine they met there some Gnostic Christians (who lived under Muslim protection) and were conquered

by their teachings. Pilgrims returning in Europe from the Holy Land brought with them the Gnostic texts, which spread all over the mentioned countries.

Pope Alexander III anathematized the Albigenses in 1179 on the Eleventh Ecumenical Council of Lateran (III), and then the movement met its end as a result of a crusade (Albigensiana) ordered by Pope Innocent III (1208) when hundreds of thousand people were killed. The Inquisition Office was hunting these unfortunate people as late as the 14th century. Until the 18th century, all the dual doctrines were included under the generic name of *Manichaeism*.

The phenomenon will exceed the Christian sphere by its influence on the Jewish esoteric trend (Kabbalah, born not without reason in the south of France where the Neognosticism reached its apogee), but also the Islam (Sufism) as well as the hermetic texts based on the Egyptian teachings, and those originating in Neoplatonism. By the beginning of the 20th century, Wilhelm Bousset traced Gnosticism to ancient Babylonia and Persia, while the philologist Richard Reitzenstein noticed the links between Gnosticism and Zoroastrianism. Dumézil established the equivalence between the Iranian goddess Aramati and the Greek Sophia [712].

In his Introduction to *The Nag Hammadi Library*, J. M. Robinson estimated that “the focus of this library has much in common with primitive Christianity, with eastern religion, and with «holy men» (and women) of all times” [713]. In his turn, Gilles Quispel thought that Gnosticism had its roots in the potentially universal “experience of the Self” projected into religious mythology. As for the contemporary orthodox Christian believers, they traced the origins of Gnosticism to Greek philosophy, astrology, mystery religions, and even Indian sources [714]. W. E. Butler maintained that wisdom comes with personal experience and through contact with the own inner Teacher, which he called “the only true teacher.” From this Eternal it “comes the Gnosis, the knowledge that is above knowledge” [715]. Pagels remarks: “Ideas that we associate with Eastern religions emerged in the first century through the Gnostic movement in the West” [716]. We should not be astonished by these conjectures building bridges between so far away spiritual realms. To provide an example, Hippolytus (beginning of the 3rd century AD) was familiar with the Brahmin tenets, which he mentioned: “But there is also with the Indians a sect composed of those philosophizing among the Brahmins⁴⁸⁷... “ [717].

The real reason of the persecution of the Gnostics was that their teaching—as Irenaeus and Tertullian realized—claimed to offer to every initiate direct access to God of which the priests and bishops themselves might be ignorant [718].

⁴⁸⁷ *Brachmánes, brachmanai* (Gr.).

The “work” of eradicating the Gnostic teachings—of inestimable value to the history of the beginning of Christianity—was so well organized that over many centuries Christianity completely ignored their existence apart from a few fragments quoted by the enemies of the Gnostics with the view of criticizing them. However, in spite of the apparent extinction of the Gnostic ideas, they reverberated all through the following centuries until modern times.

The Renaissance was still deeply influenced by Platonism and Gnosis. The 17th century witnessed the beginning of a changing of attitude. The writings of Edward Gibbon, Voltaire, Pierre Bayle, David Hume and other authors of the 18th century had cast a completely false light on the Gnostics, a fact exposed by William Blake in his *Milton*: “this Newtonian Phantasm/ This Voltaire & Rousseau; this Hume & Gibbon/... the Reasoning Power in Man/ This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal/ Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated always” [719].

A few months before meeting his end, Blake wrote to a friend confessing that he was “very near the gates of death... but not in spirit and life, not in the real man... which liveth for ever. In that I am stronger and stronger, as this foolish body decays.” In *The Four Zoas*, the poet envisaged the creation in metaphors close to the Gnostic texts echoing both Genesis and Plato’s *Timaeus*. Blake repeated the doctrine of the Gnostics with sufficient consistency to Crabb Robinson [720].

Another writer who was inspired by the Gnostic concepts was Herman Melville, the well-known author of *Moby Dick* that refers to the Ophites (connected with the Sethian texts of Egypt). Gustave Flaubert evoked the Gnostic sects, for instance in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* that he incessantly wrote again and again over many years. The literary criticism discovered Gnostic influences also with Arthur Rimbaud, the French Symbolism, the German Idealism, the American Transcendentalism, Carlyle, Yeats etc.

However, it was only the 20th century when the Gnostic concepts reached a well-deserved place within the public consciousness. Stephan Hoeller shows: “It was not until recent times, due largely to the efforts of C.G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, Gilles Quispel and other enlightened scholars, that the recognition has dawned upon many that the Gnostics were not syncretistic religious theoreticians, but practical psychologists of great insight and creative genius [721].

Carl Gustav Jung was a keen knower of the Gnostics. He referred to “the vastly superior [compared to that of the Church] intellectual content of Gnosis, which in the light of our present mental development has not lost but has considerably gained in value” [722]. He exalted its “Promethean and

creative spirit... We find in Gnosticism what was lacking in the centuries that followed: a belief in the efficacy of individual revelation and individual knowledge. This belief was rooted in the proud feeling of man's affinity with the gods, subject to no human law, and so overmastering that it may even subdue the gods by the sheer power of Gnosis" [723]. In 1916, the visionary Jung wrote *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (Seven Sermons to the Dead, Lat.) [724], which he attributed pseudonymously to Basilides of Alexandria, a Gnostic from the 2nd century AD. In the early 1950s, Jung was the target of Martin Buber's attacks since the great psychologist equated God and the collective unconscious. When Buber claimed that Jung's God of the Self was actually "the Gnostic God," Jung replied: "Why is so much attention devoted to the question of whether I am a Gnostic?... Why is it not simply stated that I am a psychiatrist whose prime concern is to record and interpret his empirical material? I try to investigate facts and make them more generally comprehensible" [725]. Jung considered that the Gnostic thinking was highly influenced by the psychic experience. Thus, in 1951 he wrote in his *Aion*: "For the Gnostics—and this is their real secret—the psyche existed as a source of knowledge... It is clear beyond a doubt that many of the Gnostics were nothing other than psychologists" [726]. Thus, he contributed to the *Aurea Catena*⁴⁸⁸ beginning from Gnosticism and leading through alchemy to the psychology of the unconscious [727]. The sequence came to an end with the Enlightenment "leading ultimately to the increasing devilish developments we have lived to experience in our own day, and to the evaporation of Christianity under the assaults of rationalism, intellectualism, materialism, and «realism»" [728]. He used to criticize Freud for having left out "that other essential aspect of Gnosticism: the primordial image of the Spirit as another, higher god who gave mankind the vessel of spiritual transformation, a Feminine Principle" [729].

To close this brief review we shall mention Hermann Hesse with his *Demian* (1919) containing an allegory of Jung's archetypes, and *Steppenwolf* (1927) that alluded to the ancient Gnosticism.

* * *

James Bruce acquired the first Gnostic manuscript in 1769 at the proximity of Thebes (Luxor of today), Upper Egypt, which was published only in 1892. It dealt with a dialogue between Jesus and His followers, both men and women.

⁴⁸⁸ The Golden Chain (Lat.)—the sequence of the great initiates connecting Earth and Heaven, starting with Hermes Trismegistus. At the same time, it could be an allusion to the alchemical treatise *Aurea Catena Homeri* (1723).

Another manuscript was brought to England from Egypt, and in 1772 Dr. Askew purchased it in a local bookshop, then it was sold to the British Museum in 1785. It was the largest and complete Gnostic writing bearing the title *Pistis Sophia* and it was published in English in 1896.

The next Gnostic document was brought to light in the 1890s and included a few fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas*, whose integral text was found in Cairo only in 1956 by Professor Gilles Quispel from the Utrecht University.

In 1896, a German Egyptologist acquired in the Egyptian metropolis a set of manuscripts consisting of the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Acts of John* together with a fourth Gnostic text [730].

However, the most important discovery took place in December 1945, in Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt, when two fellahin brothers Muhammad 'Ali and Muhammad Khalifah as-Samman unearthed a jar whose lid was sealed on with bitumen. The jar was buried at the foot of a cliff called Jabal at-Tarif, and it contained numerous writings on papyrus leaves.

The great merit of all the Gnostic writings is that being rejected by the official Church they retained their originality to a very large extent as compared to the canonical texts

The Nag Hammadi manuscripts came, perhaps, from the scriptorium of the St. Pachomius monastery [731] and had been buried with the clear purpose of preservation. "Thus saith Yahweh of the hosts, the God of Israel: «Take these writings... and put them in an earthen vessel, that they remain many days»" (Jeremiah 32:14). The documents were concealed in the year 367 when the archbishop of Alexandria, Athanasius the Great, one of the pillars of the Church, took the decision of destroying all the apocryphal and non-canonical books that he considered heretical. On no account were they buried there to be destroyed, since for that aim other methods were used: "He cut it with the scribe's knife, and cast it into the fire that was in the pan until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the pan" (36:23). The *Life of St. Pachomius* read about the throwing into water of a book by Origen whom Pachomius considered a heretic. Had the book not contained the name of God it would have been burnt in fire. The same rules were observed while Yogis resorted to purification techniques using the fire or, if it was the case entrusted the matter to the earth or the rivers.

Unfortunately, a woman in the peasant family has burned in the oven part of the scrolls, presumably of the Codex XII. Most of the manuscripts were bought from Bahij 'Ali by the antiquary Phocion J. Tano who tried to take them out of the country pretending that he acted on the behalf of an Italian amateur. However, they were seized by the authorities and taken in the custody of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities. On October 4, 1946, they were inventoried by the Coptic Museum in Cairo, and finally nationalized

when Nasser came to power in 1952. A Belgian antiquities dealer named Albert Eid succeeded to lay hands on a major part of the *Codex I*, which was submitted to the expertise of the Egyptologist Jean Doresse in 1947. The expert suggested the acquisition of the codex to the director of the Museum, Togo Mina. Being warned on that possible issue, Eid succeeded in smuggling the document out of Egypt. Hence, it was taken from Cairo to America where Professor Gilles Quispel after checking it, advised the Jung Foundation in Zürich to purchase the manuscript, which became known as the *Jung Codex*. The story ended when, after being published, the precious document was returned to the Coptic Museum.

XX -115 The so-called *Nag Hammadi Library* consisted of twelve codices and eight leaves from the thirteenth one. The codices were numbered I-XIII and included 52 separate tractates. Because of the duplicates there were only 45 distinct titles. Most of them came down from the Gnostic sects and survived in Coptic translation from the Greek originals.

The scholars established that the texts were copied between 350 and 400 after earlier originals. One of the manuscripts outside the Nag Hammadi lot, *Pistis Sophia*, was written at Luxor over the 3rd century. After Professor Quispel, its fourth book dated back to about 225, while in other opinions the other three were from the second half of the same century. For the *Gospel of Thomas*, Gilles Quispel forwarded 140, but later on Professor Helmut Koester from Harvard University estimated that the document probably dates back from the second half of the first century and hence it is as early as the four official gospels [732]. John D. Turner thought that the writing was compiled about 50-125 [733]. "Scholars now accept that this Gospel transmits the original Aramaic sayings of Jesus that were preserved by the members of his brother James' group, and that this was one of the earliest sources drawn on for the sayings in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke" [734]. It is because of acknowledging its high significance that the *Gospel of Thomas* is called presently *The Fifth Gospel*.

The political situation in Egypt following the discovery of the manuscripts and the scholars' rivalry caused a great delay in the study and publication of the texts. After twenty years, in 1972, E.J. Brill started the edition of the facsimiles in twelve volumes that lasted until 1984. Likewise, in spite of the international committee decision taken in 1956 to publish the *Gospel of Thomas*, its text was printed only in 1959, and the *Jung Codex* appeared in six volumes between 1956 and 1975. Finally, Harper & Row published the first complete edition of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts in English language in 1977, thus gathering the results of the team organized in 1966 under the direction of Professor James M. Robinson of the *Institute for Antiquity and Christianity* of Claremont, California. The *Nag Hammadi Library* comprises

also four titles belonging to the Gnostic papyrus from Berlin (*Papyrus Berolinensis 8502*).

The tremendous significance of the Nag Hammadi discovery can be matched only by the finding of the Dead Sea scrolls. The two sets allowed for an accurate understanding of the Gnostic and Essene movement, respectively.

From among the vast and extremely complex Gnostic inventory of concepts we have chosen the themes comprising the cosmogony, Mother Goddess, mystical union and the knowledge about the Kundalini.

The cosmogony of the Gnostics was much different from that of the official Church. The former ones admitted the existence of seven creative angels (archons), which correspond to the entities ruling over the seven chakras of the subtle being. That took them to the definition of the *aeon* (ch. XIX B and C).

The Creation originated in the Undifferentiated God (ch. I), such as mentioned by Epiphanes: “[In] the beginning the Self-Progenitor⁴⁸⁹ ... he whom some call ageless Aeon, ever new, both male and female” [735]. Then, the divine Couple Father - Virgin *Barbelo*⁴⁹⁰ engendered generations of aeons [737]. Hoeller explains: “The Aions⁴⁹¹, patterns of psychic being or archetypes are arranged in pairs, composed of a masculine and a feminine Aion each” [738]. *Barbelo*’s cosmogonic role is described as follows: She “is the first [power⁴⁹² which was] before all of them (and) [which came] forth from His mind, She [is the forethought of the All]— her light [shines like His] light—the [perfect] power which is [the] image of the invisible virginal Spirit who is perfect. [The first power], the glory of *Barbelo*, the perfect glory in the aeons, the glory of the revelation, She glorified the virginal Spirit and it was She who praised Him, because thanks to Him She had come forth. This is the First Thought⁴⁹³, His Image; She became the Womb of Everything, for it is She who is prior to them all, the Mother-Father⁴⁹⁴, the First Man, the

⁴⁸⁹ *Autogenes* (Gr.).

⁴⁹⁰ *Barbelo* is translated through “God is in the Four” [736] (ch. I).

⁴⁹¹ Aeons.

⁴⁹² *Adi Shakti* (Primordial Power, Sanskr.).

⁴⁹³ *Proténoia*.

⁴⁹⁴ I.e. *Parabrahman* (ch. I).

Holy Spirit, the Thrice-Male⁴⁹⁵, the Thrice-Powerful⁴⁹⁶, the thrice-named Androgynous One⁴⁹⁷ and the eternal Aeon among the invisible ones, and the first to come forth” [739]. The Mother’s cosmological functions are evident from Barbelo’s attributes: she “comes forth from herself” and “presides over the heavens” [740].

Despite a large variety of opinions, all the Gnostic writings had in common the worship of the Divine Mother as the Mother of the World who participated in the Creation by side of the Father. A remarkable fact is that the contemporary scholars gathered within the so-called *Princeton Gnosis* movement sometimes defined Godhead as the *Magna Mater* [741]!

The Gnostics used for the Divine Mother the following names: *Sophía* (Wisdom, Gr.): *Pístis*⁴⁹⁸ *Sophía*, *Sophía Zoé*; *Énnoia* (Thought, Gr.; i.e. spiritual Primordial Mother); *Prónoia* (Forethought, Gr.); *Proténoia* (Thought as a primary entity, the superior Consciousness, Gr.); *Sygé* (Silence, Gr.); *Epínoia* (Light, Gr.). The latter is translated literally by “afterthought” (*epí*, after, Gr.), that is beyond, transcending the thought, namely the “thoughtless state” (*nirvichara*, Sanskr.) or *enlightenment*; hence the figurative interpretation as Light given by the Gnostics. “There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness” [742].

The Gnostics maintained that the one who knows Father and Mother will be summoned and has the *Prónoia* that grants the revelation. “Her light [shines like His] light—the [perfect] power which is [the] image on the invisible virginal Spirit who is perfect... She became the womb of everything for She is who is prior to them all, the Mother-Father”⁴⁹⁹ [743]. “I am the *Prónoia* of pure light. I am the thinking of the virginal Spirit, who raised you up to the honored place” [744].

Valentine (Valentinus), to whom the *Gospel of Truth* is ascribed, was the most influential of Gnostic teachers. He arrived in Rome around 140, coming from Egypt. His doctrine was inspired by the tenets of Basilides. Some of the Valentinian writings are known indirectly from the critics formulated by the

⁴⁹⁵ Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva (ch. I).

⁴⁹⁶ The three manifestations of the Adi Shakti: Maha-Saraswati, Maha-Lakshmi, Maha-Kali (ch. I).

⁴⁹⁷ Indicating the couples composed from the Male Principle and its associated Female Principle (Shakti).

⁴⁹⁸ *Pístis* (faith, loyalty, Gr.).

⁴⁹⁹ *Matro-Pater* (Lat.), Undifferentiated God, Parabrahman (ch. I).

Church Fathers. However, even a known enemy of the Gnostics like Tertullian spoke of him as “an able man both in genius and eloquence” [745]. The historian of Christianity, Adolf von Harnack, called the Valentinians the “first Christian theologians” [746].

Valentine proclaimed: “Liberty means knowledge,” thus taking over Jesus’ sayings: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32). Valentine and the followers of his student Ptolemy said that the primal source was a dyad consisting of the Father of All and His Feminine counterpart, Silence (*Syge*), the Mother of All [747]. “You have been invested by a Great Power, by God of All... to rise to what is yours. On the summit there is a masculine element, the Father and a feminine element, the Truth.” Obviously, that was how Valentine described the reflection of the Primordial Power (Adi Shakti) of the Father. The Gnostics say that God had created the world because Wisdom, the Mother, “infused Him with energy” [748]. Valentine also considered that Sophia is “the great creative power from whom all things originate,” that is Eve, “Mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). As Wisdom, she is the “First Universal Creator” [749]. Followers of Valentine and Marcus equated the Mother with “Incorruptible Wisdom” for insight (*gnósis*), “mystical, eternal Silence (*Syge*),” “Grace” and “She who is before all things”: “May [She] who is before all things, and who transcends all knowledge and speech, fill thine inner man, and multiply in thee her own knowledge” [750]. It was she who taught the Self-knowledge to Adam and Eve [751]. Marcus wrote that from the power of Silence appeared “a great power, (the) Mind of the universe, which manages all things, (and is) a male. The other (offshoot), however, is... a great Intelligence, and is a female which produces all things” [752].

Theodore bar Konai attributed to the “Mother of the Living” the role of the World Creator [753], while another Gnostic author asserted that the Father emanated (*proballein*) the Mother of the Living (*emma de hayye*) [754]. Another Gnostic writing refers to “Zoé⁵⁰⁰, being called Eve, as an instructor in order that she might make Adam, who had no soul, arise so that those whom he should engender might become containers of light... Eve... said: «Adam! Become alive! Arise upon the earth!» Immediately her word became accomplished fact. For Adam, having arisen, suddenly opened his eyes. When he saw her he said: «You shall be called Mother of the Living. For it is you who have given me life»” [755].

Similar concepts reached us through the writings of the critics of Gnosticism trends: “From thee Father, and through thee Mother, two names immortal, progenitors of Aeons” [756]. Other Gnostic texts depicted the feminine Principle as the God-Mother: “I am the first and the last... I am the

⁵⁰⁰ Life (Gr.).

wife and the virgin... I am the silence that is incomprehensible... I am the utterance of my name” [757].

One of the most important documents found in Nag Hammadi is the *Trimorphic Protennoia*⁵⁰¹, that suggests the *Triple-form Goddess* (*Trigunatmika*, Sanskr.). The text builds up a hymn devoted to the Great Goddess that, in many regards reminded of the Goddess prosopopoeia in the *Upanishads*. Here are some excerpts:

“I am the Image of the Invisible Spirit⁵⁰² and it is through me that All took shape⁵⁰³, and [I am] the Mother [as well as] the Light which she appointed as Virgin, she who is called Meirothea, the incomprehensible Womb, the unrestrainable and immeasurable Voice” [758]. “I am the Voice that appeared through my Thought... I am called «She who is syzygetic⁵⁰⁴». I am a single one (fem.) since I am undefiled⁵⁰⁵. I am the Mother [of] the Voice⁵⁰⁶, speaking in many ways, completing the All... It is I [who] speak within every creature and I was known by the All” [759]. “O Sons of the Thought, listen to me, to the Speech of the Mother of your mercy⁵⁰⁷, for you have become worthy of the mystery hidden from [the beginning of] the Aeons, so that [you might receive] it” [760]. “It [the Word] is a hidden Light bearing a Fruit of Life, pouring forth a Living Water⁵⁰⁸ from the invisible, unpolluted, immeasurable Spring, that is, the irreproducible Voice of the glory of the Mother,... the source of the All, the Root of the entire Aeon⁵⁰⁹. It is the Foundation that supports every movement of the Aeons that belong to the mighty Glory. It is the Foundation of every foundation. It is the Breath of the Powers⁵¹⁰. It is the

⁵⁰¹ Literally: Triple-form Primordial Thought (Gr.).

⁵⁰² The Holy Spirit.

⁵⁰³ She who created the world.

⁵⁰⁴ Ch. XX C4.

⁵⁰⁵ Attributes (and names, as well) of the Divine Mother: *Ekakini* or *Ekaia* (Unique, Sanskr.), *Nirmala* (Pure, Unblemished, Sanskr.).

⁵⁰⁶ Mother of the divine Son who is the Logos.

⁵⁰⁷ Another name of the Great Mother, the equivalent of Kwan Yin (ch. XX A).

⁵⁰⁸ The Kundalini.

⁵⁰⁹ The Adi Mooladhara, root of the Cosmic being.

⁵¹⁰ The *breath* is the *breeze*, manifestation of the Power (Adi Shakti, Kundalini).

Eye of the Three Permanences” [761]. “The Voice that originated from my Thought exists as three Permanences: the Father, the Mother, the Son. Existing perceptibly as Speech, it has within it a Word endowed with every [glory], and it has three masculinities⁵¹¹, three powers⁵¹², and three names⁵¹³” [762].

Since this doctrine appeared at the dawn of the Christianity, the exegetes [763] are talking even about the *Gnostic Trinity*, while others calls it the *proto-Zoharic Trinity*: Father as Knowledge; Mother as Knower; and Son as He Who is Known (see the Triple Blessing of Aaron; ch. XX B). Therefore, the *Apocryphon of John* has developed the Original Couple into a triad of Father-Mother-Son: “I am the one who is [with you (*plural*)] always. I [am the Father], I am the Mother, I am the Son” [764].

In his book entitled *Sophia: The Gnostic Archetype of Feminine Soul-Wisdom*, Stephan Hoeller declares: “Nowhere is the genius of the Gnostic protopsychology more evident than in the story of Sophia. Sophia is an Aion, a divinely emanated power-entity emanated from the primordial pair referred to by the Valentinian Gnostics as Depth (masculine) and Silence (feminine)” [765].

With the Gnostics, the concept of *Sophia* (Wisdom, Gr.) originated in the Old Testament (*Hokhmah*, Hebr.), and especially in the *Wisdom of Solomon* that gave its description (ch. XIX C; XX B). Sophia is in a close relation with the esoteric teaching since in a prophecy she promises: “I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places” (Isaiah 45:3; cf. 48:6), to which Matthews adds the following commentary: “Those treasures of the Divine Feminine lie deep within us, waiting to be discovered” [766].

Jung remarked that “this Sophia... on the one hand is closely associated with the Hebrew Hokhmah, but on the other hand goes so far beyond it that one can hardly fail to think of the Indian Shakti. Relations with India certainly existed at that time (the time of the Ptolemys)” [767].

Indeed, Sophia is the *paredre* of God, his throne-companion. She is the Bride of God whom Solomon seeks asking God: “Grant me Wisdom, consort of your throne” [768]. In fact, she assumed the same rank as Themis XX (Goddess of Righteousness), *paredros* (even second wife, after Pindar) of -116 Zeus: “There Savior Right is honored at the side of Zeus” [769]. Wisdom is of outmost importance: “She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glorifies herself in the presence of the Mighty One: I came forth

⁵¹¹ Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

⁵¹² The three corresponding Shaktis: Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Parvati (Kali).

⁵¹³ A, U, and M.

from the mouth of the Most High, and I covered the earth like mist. I had my tent in the heights, and my throne was a pillar of cloud" [770], thus identifying herself with the Shekhinah of God (ch. XX B).

Matthews reckons that "Sophia... is clearly distinguished by unique qualities and symbolic representations: she is concerned with the survival and maturation of all creation" [771], thus attributing her with the same function as Vishnu (ch. II).

Gnostic sources have called Sophia "First-Begetress" and "Mother of the Universe" [772]. The *Acts of Thomas* invoked the Divine Mother with the words: "Come, compassionate mother. Come, communion of the male. Come, she that revealeth the hidden mysteries. Come, mother of the seven houses, that thy rest may be in the eighth house" [773]. The text reveals the esoteric content of the Gnostic teaching, and exalted the mystical union (Yoga) achieved by the raising of the Kundalini through the seven chakras (*mother of seven houses*). The eighth house indicates the transcendence of the Goddess, since "the luminous mother is in the highest position, in the eighth" [774].

The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, known as the Slavonic version (*Enoch 2*) presented Wisdom as Creatrix, reminding the seven different chakras⁵¹⁴ (elements, natures). According to that text, God have said "On the sixth day I commanded my wisdom to create man from seven consistencies... And I gave him seven natures" [775]. As shown by Ringgren, this book and the *Clementine Homilies* [776] give Wisdom a greater power than the original text: "One is he who said to his Wisdom: «Let us make man». But Wisdom, with whom he is always, rejoiced as with his own spirit, is united with God like a soul, and is stretched out from him like a hand, creating everything" [777]. The above-mentioned text refers to an interpretation of Simon Magus inferring that the text in Genesis 1:26 ("Let us make man in our image") points at more than one Creator. Peter replies that these are God and Sophia. Gilles Quispel tried to restore the development of the Sophia myth, from an early Jewish Gnostic form: "God creates from Chaos the seven Archons through the intermediary of his Hokhmah, the *humectatio luminis* or Lightdew" [778].

The decadent Gnosticism went so far as calling Sophia the "Whore" [779], and it has replaced the female Sophia through the male Logos, a fact explained by the double translation of the Hebrew *hkmh* (Hokhmah) operated by Philo [780]. The replacing Logos "shows, nevertheless, a pattern of weakness that elsewhere seems to be reserved to femaleness" [781]. Quispel explains the Sophia's fall as a consequence of the Orphic-Pythagorean influence [782].

⁵¹⁴ Ch. I.

According to Matthews “Sophia appears in nearly every culture and society... She is both silent and veiled, unlike her partner, the Logos, who goes forth speaking openly. But the silence of Wisdom precedes the speech of the Logos” [783].

It is a notable fact that within the Eastern Church, as the liturgy proceeds, it is frequently punctuated by the deacon’s exhortation to the faithful: “Wisdom, let us attend!” [784]. To remain in the same area, when the cathedral of Saint Sophia was erected at Kiev, “the Byzantine builders... are said to have painted above the alter an immense image of a woman with hands raised, in order to suggest to the pagan Slavs the association of the Christian feminine deities, Mary and Sophia, with the pagan Great Mother whose image with uplifted arms adorned folk art” [785].

We shall remark the likeness of *Sophia* and *En-Soph* (Endless, Hebr.; ch. IV), or even *En-Soph Aor* (Endless Light, Hebr.), the origin of the *sephiroth* (a word that could be also linked with *Sophia*) tree, that induces the idea that the latter is, too, the Tree of Knowledge. Indeed, only the Divine Mother can give the revelation of the Tree of Knowledge, that comes not from the Father (Archgenitor) [786], since only the maternal Kundalini is able to reveal the subtle body through the enlightenment.

Perhaps the allegory from Song of Songs inspired the Gnostics who paid a particular attention to the *union* of the two Entities, Male and Female. Indeed, the gnosis or the *knowledge* is connected inseparably with the *mystical marriage*, since in biblical terms *to marry* means *to know* the woman. We remind that the fourth chapter in Genesis begins by saying: “Man knew Eve his wife”⁵¹⁵ (4:1), that was *interpreted* as a carnal union (for instance as in the *New Jerusalem Bible*; see our commentary in ch. IX). Actually, the meaning is that through *gnosis* (knowledge) it is achieved the *mystical union*, because Adam and Eve are the Male and Female Principles, projections (manifestations) of the divine Father and Mother (ch. XIX C).

Often, the event takes place in the *bridal chamber* (*thálamos*, Gr.; ch. II). Entering the bridal chamber means achieving the Self Realization. According to another Gnostic term it happens in the *Pléroma*, which is no other than the kingdom of heaven or the Sahasrara. On another occasion (ch. XX B) we referred to the relationship between the unction, crown (Sahasrara) and marriage. The Gnostic texts definitely substantiate these parallels: “He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit. The Father gave him this in the bridal chamber; he merely accepted [the gift]... This is [the] kingdom of heaven” [787]. Therefore, through the Self Realization (Yoga) the disciple is *anointed* (initiated), and he possesses the *resurrection* (eternal life), the *light*

⁵¹⁵ Darby’s translation.

(enlightenment), the *cross* (transcends the cross of the Agya, *chiasma, decussatio*; ch. XIX C). All becomes possible only through the grace of the Holy Spirit (Divine Mother; ch. XXI) whose reflection is the Kundalini.

An odd fact (if we have in view Paul's and his followers' attitude; ch. XX C2b) is that amongst the Seven Holy Sacraments, **only the marriage** is called by Paul *mystery* (*mystérion*, Gr. or *sacramentum*, Lat.; Ephesians 5:31-32). Although originally the word was not used in the sense of *sacrament*, it played a cardinal role in substantiating the *holy* and *secret* quality of the marriage.

Neumann thought that it was in Egypt where the earliest archetype of the *coniunctio* between two principles appeared as the union of the sun god Ra with Ammon, "the breath of life" (therefore, the manifestation of the female Kundalini as *the breath*; ch. XI C), to form the divine figure Ammon-Ra [788]. History recorded as a *heretical aberration* the exploit of Amenophis IV or Akhenaten (around 1350 BC) who replaced the cult devoted to Ammon-Ra through the worship of Aten, the solar disk, as the unique deity, thus repeating the impiety of other nations that proscribed the cult for the Divine Mother (ch. XX A and B).

Jung explains [789]: "The primordial being becomes the distant goal of man's self development... Wholeness consists in the union of the conscious⁵¹⁶ and the unconscious⁵¹⁷... The idea of *coniunctio* of male and female... appears in Gnosticism as the *mysterium iniquitatis*, probably not uninfluenced by the Old Testament... Such things are hinted at not only by certain traditional customs, but by the quotation from the *Gospel of the Egyptians* in the second epistle of Clement" (see below). Indeed, the Gnostic concept of *mysterium iniquitatis* brought to light the esoteric meaning of the divine marriage in the Old Testament (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea etc.; ch. XX B). The mystical wedding (*unio mystica*, Lat.) allegory expressed the union between Atman (individual Self, reflection in man of the Father, Sada-Shiva) and the Kundalini energy (manifestation of the Divine Mother on a human scale), that is the Self Realization. This couple symbolizing *coniunctio* was *syzygia* to the Gnostics.

By no means was this a matter of sexual union, because the Gnostics condemned those who indulged themselves in drinking wine, in sexual activity, and who worked at ordinary businesses like pagans [790]. It was on a spiritual plane that the union took place, since in the *Gospel of Philip* Jesus said to His followers: "[If you (*singular*)] are born a human being, it is [the human being] who will love you. If you become [a spirit], it is the spirit

⁵¹⁶ The individual Self.

⁵¹⁷ The collective unconscious: the Supreme Self, God.

which will be joined to you” [791]. Chrysostom among others used to regard marriage not as an earthly image but a heavenly one: “When husband and wife are united in marriage they no longer seem like something earthly, but rather like the image of God Himself” [792]. We may compare it to the *spiritual wedding* (*pneumatikós gámos*, Gr.), i.e. the union between the soul and the Divine. The *Zohar* also shows that the marriage is decided by the Divine: “Note that all the figures of souls that are to be born stand before God in pairs, and afterwards when they come to this world God mates them” [793].

Jung explained further on: “Concurrently with the continuance of the *hierós gámos* in the dogma and rites of the Church, the symbolism developed in the course of the Middle Ages into the alchemical conjunction of opposites or «chemical wedding»” [794]. “The alchemist tries... to make one out of two,” and Goethe also referred to the “united dual nature” [795]. An old alchemical treatise wrote: “*Ars requirit totum hominem*” (Art⁵¹⁸ requests the human in his wholeness, Lat.) [796].

An apocryphal writing read: “when there is wisdom the left and the right⁵¹⁹ are in harmony: powers, principalities, archons, daemons⁵²⁰, forces, all of them contribute to the harmony of the wisdom” [797]. Jung thought that the alchemical *opus* (*unio mystica* or Self Realization) “is the goal of a lifetime. In its attainment «left and right» are united, and conscious and unconscious work in harmony” [798].

The *Gospel of Thomas* wrote: “Jesus said to them: «When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside⁵²¹, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same⁵²²... then will you enter [the kingdom]»” [799]. In the same spirit were written the following lines from another Gnostic text: “the Lord said in secret: «Unless ye make the right left and that which is

⁵¹⁸ The alchemic art.

⁵¹⁹ Energies of the side channels.

⁵²⁰ Deities.

⁵²¹ By connecting the (inner) energy of the Kundalini with the (exterior) energy of the Paramchaitanya.

⁵²² Meaning not to be on the side channels (neither masculine nor feminine) but on the central one (path of the Kundalini).

above to be beneath⁵²³, ye shall not know the kingdom of God⁵²⁴»” (*Dominus misterio dixerat: si non feceritis dextram sicut sinistram et quae sursum sicut deorsum, non cognoscetis regnum Dei, Lat.*) [800]. Also Clement of Rome quotes the text in his epistles: “For the Lord Himself, being asked by one when his kingdom would come, replied, «When two shall be one⁵²⁵, that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither male nor female⁵²⁶»” [801]. It seems that the concept originated in the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (in use with the sect of Sabellians, among other apocryphal books), out of which Clement of Alexandria gave only a fragment: “The Lord said: «... when the two become one and the male with the female [is] neither male nor female». In the first place, then, we have not this saying in the four Gospels that have been delivered to us, but in that according to the Egyptians” (“«... quando duo facta fuerint unum, et masculum cure femina, nec masculum nec femineum». Primum quidera, in nobis traditis quatuor Evangeliiis non habemus hoc dictum, sed in eo, quod est secundum Aegyptios,” Lat.) [802].

The *Acts of Thomas* also sends to the mystical wedding, when the Mother is invoked (*epiklesis*, Gr.). Dr. Klijn supposed a connection with the Semitic woman mentioned in the first song of Thomas [803]. The commentator underlines that the identification of Mother with the Holy Spirit (ch. XXI) is typical of the Gnostics and could also be found especially with the Syriac authors.

If admitting the disappearance—through *coniunctio*—of any distinction between the two Principles, one can understand several Gnostic sayings, otherwise apparently devoid of sense. Thus, in the *Gospel of Mary* the author said: “He has prepared us to made us into men” [804], while the *Gospel of Thomas* encompass within the idea both Mary Magdalene and Salome [805]. Similar concepts are encountered with the Sikhs’ Scriptures: “The female is in the male, and the male is in the female. Understand this, O, God-realized being!” (*Purakhi mahi naar mahi purkhaa boojhahu brahm giaanee...*) [806].

The *Gospel of Philip* provides a most interesting passage: “The Father of

⁵²³ Some translations add: “and the left right,” and “and that which is beneath to be above,” respectively.

⁵²⁴ With the variant: “ye shall not enter the kingdom of God.”

⁵²⁵ *Hótan génetai ársen oúte thély* (Gr.).

⁵²⁶ *Kaì tò ársen metà tes theleías, oúte ársen oúte thély* (Gr.).

everything united with the Virgin who came down, and a fire⁵²⁷ shone for him on that day. He appeared in the great bridal chamber” [807]. These words refer to the Kundalini (*Virgin*) entering the fetus (ch. II) as a reflection of the Holy Spirit descended on the Earth, while the union pertains to Atman and the Kundalini as equivalents of God Almighty (Sada-Shiva) and His Power (Adi Shakti; Virgin Gauri).

We will quote also a fragment of a Syriac Gnostic text called *The Wedding Song of Wisdom*: “The Maiden is Light’s Daughter/... On the Crown of Her Head the King throneth/... Her bridesmen are grouped round Her,/ Seven in number, whom She hath invited./ Her bridesmaids, too, are Seven/... Their gaze looking out for the Bridegroom;/ That at His sight they may be filled with Light/... In that eternal everlasting Joy” [808]. One can recognize here the aeon couples, male and female, having dominion over the seven chakras integrated through the Self Realization within the Sahasrara (*Crown of the Head*), where takes place the *unio mystica* between Atman-SadaShiva (*King*) and the Kundalini-AdiShakti-Gauri (*Virgin*) manifested as Light (ch. XI E).

The synoptic gospels used similar metaphors. “The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who made a wedding feast for his son” (Matthew 22:2). “[The] Lord our God the Almighty has taken to himself kingly power... for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:6-7). It is easy to see here the parallel couples: God Almighty and His Power on the one side, and the Lamb and His wife, on the other. Jesus is the *Bridegroom* (Matthew 9:15; cf. Mark 2:19), and the disciples are “the sons of the bridal chamber.” John speaks of himself as Jesus’ *paránymph* (Gr.) or *best men*: “The friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices in his heart because of the voice of the Bridegroom: my joy then is fulfilled” (3:29). It is the joy (bliss, *ananda*) bestowed by the enlightenment (Self Realization), hence all indicates the mystical wedding (*unio mystica*). There was no reference at all that the *Bride* would have been the metaphor for the Church, despite the efforts made by the (posterior) students of the Christian institution. Jung proclaimed: “just as the person of Christ cannot be replaced by an organization, so the bride cannot be replaced by the Church. The feminine, like the masculine, demands an equally personal representation” [809].

The papal bull *Assumptio Mariae* given by Pius XII assures that Mary (as Sophia) united herself with the Divinity in the heavenly bridal chamber (ch. XX C3). Thus, the Feminine Principle was awarded the due place in line with

⁵²⁷ Union (Yoga) requires the Kundalini awakening (kindling of the fire) that reaches the Sahasrara (bridal chamber) where it takes place the union of the Father (Self) and the Virgin (Kundalini) descended as early as the embryonic stage (ch. II).

the Trinity (ch. XXI) [810].

The Gnostics were familiar with the spiritual power of the Kundalini. The earliest *Ophites* as well as the *Naassenes* (from *nahash*, serpent, Hebr.; brass, Arab. [811], hence Moses' brass serpent; ch. IX), venerated the biblical serpent regarded as the Savior of the human race. However, precisely for these groups whose name is connected with the serpent, the latter represented the evil, although Sophia used him to pass her message to the primordial humans [812].

Like Jesus in the gospels, the Gnostics designated the Kundalini as "living water" (ch. XI D). Therefore, a text explains that she offers the opportunity of salvation provided its manifestation since it is inside: "Jesus said: «That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves»" [813]. Only those unto whom the *pneúma* (divine breath, Gr.; ch. XI C) was revealed might be set free from the evil. The *Trimorphic Protennoia* read about "[the Three] I established [alone in] eternal [glory] over [the Aeons in the] Living [Water], that [is the glory that surrounds Him]" [814]; "the Spirit that (now) dwells in the soul, (but) which originated from the Water of Life and out of the immersion of the mysteries" [815]. "It is a hidden Light, bearing a Fruit of Life, pouring forth a Living Water from the invisible, unpolluted, immeasurable Spring, that is, the irreproducible Voice of the glory of the Mother" [816].

The Gnostic understood the true significance of the Light as the Kundalini manifestation (ch. XI E), the reflection of the *Adi Shakti*, when considering that the part of the light that is caught within the psychic and physical field is the *power of Mother* and that the *Epinoia* of light is sent to awaken the spiritual principle [817]. At the first step of initiation, the disciple Messos learns about "the power that exists within you" [818]. Then, he perceives the spiritual light (ch. XI E and XXV A): "[I] saw the light that [surrounded] me and the Good that was in me, I became divine" [819]. "There is a Light [that] dwells hidden in Silence and it was first to [come] forth. Whereas she (the Mother) alone exists as Silence" [820].

The Discourse on the eighth and ninth is a Gnostic writing that came to us as fragments. In our opinion its title suggests the transcendent chakras placed beyond the Sahasrara (ch. XIX C). The text reproduces the dialogue between a master and his disciple and explains how it was "received the spirit through the power" [821] (*Adi Shakti*, the Holy Spirit), "the order of the tradition" [822] consisting in climbing up seven steps before reaching the eighth and ninth [823]. "The fountain that flowed to me" [824], i.e. the Kundalini flowing out of the fontanel is also referred to.

The *Treatise on the Resurrection* describes that moment as a new life, the enlightenment experienced by those who will discover through gnosis what

they really are (ch. XIX C) [825]: “It is the revelation of what is, and the transformation of things, and a transition into newness” [826].

Allogenes (that could be translated as “alien,” “belonging to another race,” meaning an *initiate*, who became *another being* through his spiritual ascent) read on the initiate Messos who received a feminine power that is “the all-glorious One, Youel” [827], and who spoke about “the Triple-Powered One” [828]. Messos said: “I was filled with revelation... I received the power... I knew the One who exists in me and the Triple-Powered One and the revelation of His uncontainableness” [829]. The same text makes reference to a meditative technique implying the uttering of a sound that fills the subject with power [830] (ch. XV D).

We shall close our debate by quoting the words of Caitlín Matthews: “Christianity has abandoned its mystical and Gnostic dimensions and is on the decline. We turn now to one of the fastest growing faiths which has its own mystical tradition. Sophia has walked this way as a solitary and veiled figure. As within Christianity and Judaism, she is marginalized so as to be almost invisible, but she is there nevertheless” [831].

D. THE DIVINE MOTHER IN ISLAM

*“She who is to come! Who is She who is to come?
And how will you recognize She who is to come?”
The Qur’an 69.1-3 (transl. by D. Masson)*

The manifest antifeminist attitude of the Muslims could induce the feeling that any attempt at looking for the Divine Mother within the Islamic texts would be a waste of time. However, considering the connections of Islam with both Judaism (Hokhmah, Shekhinah) and Christianity (Virgin Mary), one might infer that a closer examination would be rewarding. The previous monotheistic Book (the *Torah* and the *Gospels*) that had been given by God to Islam “in guidance and light” (The *Qur’an* 5.50) were of such importance that Allah advised Muhammad: “If thou are in doubt regarding what We have sent down to thee, ask those who recite the Book before thee” (10.94).

The Judeo-Christian Scripture includes several words which are completely obscure, as those written by a mysterious hand on the walls of King Belshazzar (Balthasar) palace (Daniel 5:5): “*Mane, mane, tekel, fares.*” Daniel interpreted them as “numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided” (5:25), yet their real meaning remains unknown. The latter word sometimes is spelled *upfarsin* (Darby), or *parsin* (*The New Jerusalem Bible*). Ezekiel renders God’s speech referring to many mysterious words: “Gog, the land of

Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (38:1; cf. 39:1). Other example taken from the ancient Iranian Scriptures discloses that among 238 Gathic stanzas that reached us, almost hundred are partly or entirely incomprehensible [832].

Things are not different with the *Qur'an*, where there exists some groups of enigmatic letters that even give the title to several chapters (*surah*, Arab.), for instance *Ta Ha* (surah 20), *Ya Sin* (surah 36), *Qaf* (surah 50) etc., otherwise they open other chapters: *Ta Sin Min* (surah 28), *Alif Lam Mim* (surah 29), and so on. The exegetes declare that “these letters are one of the miracles of the *Qur'an*, and none but Allah knows their meaning” [833]. All the ambiguous or incomprehensible verses are called *mutashabihat* (Arab.). The *Qur'an* is presented as “the Book, wherein are verses clear that are the Essence of the Book, and others ambiguous... and none knows its interpretation, save only God and those firmly rooted in knowledge... “ (3.5). In other translation, “some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical;... but none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge... those having understanding” [834]. Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti [835] showed that even Ibn Abbas (as well as Abu Bakr and ‘Umar who were all close companions of the Prophet) did not know the meaning of some *Qur'anic* verses, like 9.115 (the word “al-Awwah” has fifteen different meanings), 18.8 (*ar-Rakim*, inscription; a mysterious one within the cave in Ephesus), 69.36. Also the introductory part of surah 29 contains no less than 14 ambiguous words or symbols, for example: *Aim-Alr-Almus-Hm* [836].

Within our present topic, we believe that the least we can notice about the surah 69 title of *Al-Haqqah*, is its strangeness, which gave birth to many interpretations. Thus, some analysts suspected a relationship with *The Day of Resurrection* [837]; other versions are “The Indubitable,” “The Reality⁵²⁸” [838], “The Inevitable” [839] etc. Among them, we think that the one who has a flash of inspiration—seeming closer to the reality—is the eminent translation of the *Qur'an* in French belonging to D. Masson: “She who is to come” [840], that announces the next Great Avatar, the Divine Mother. As a consequence, the first three verses of the surah are: “She who is to come! Who is She who is to come? And how will you recognize She who is to come?” [841]. Chapter XIX D is giving the right answer.

First of all we should notice here the feminine gender of the title indicated by the suffix *-ah*, that might be encountered with some translators. Then it happens that the masculine form used with the article *al-Haqq* signifies God, while *Haqq* without the article means Truth, the latter being a name used to honor the Prophet (ch. XIX C). Therefore, even *the title of a Qur'anic surah*

⁵²⁸ Or: *Ultimate Reality*.

designated the Divine Mother, God of feminine gender! On the other side, according to Islam, God created the world “by the Truth” (*bi ‘l-Haqq*, Arab.) [842], hence the identity of that creative Principle with the Adi Shakti.

Schuon explains: “Woman even in a certain manner incarnates esoterism by reason of certain aspects of her nature and function; esoteric truth, the *haqiqah*, is felt as a feminine reality, and the same is true of *barakah*⁵²⁹” [843]. It is likely that while writing, “with God is creative power with man, transmuting and deifying power,” the author referred to the Adi Shakti (creative power, Sanskr.) [844].

We should add that while God’s name *al-Lah* is grammatically masculine, God’s divine and ineffable Essence, *adh-Dhat* is feminine.

*Umma*⁵³⁰ (*Qur’an* 10.48 translates it through *nation*, while 16.121 interprets it either as *nation* or as *imam* etc.) designates not only the Islamic Community but also the *matrix*, the *mother*. At the same time, *Uma* is one of the names given to the Goddess, in Hinduism (ch. XX A).

We remind that the *Bismillah* (ch. XV D; its full text is *Bismil ‘llahi ‘r-Rahmani ‘r-Rahim*: In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Arab.) opens the *Qur’an* as well as each surah save the ninth one. In this mantra, one of God’s Names is *Rahman* (Merciful, Arab.). *Rahmah* (mercy, Arab.) is of feminine gender as indicated by the suffix *-ah*, and comes from *rahem*. It lies at the origin of both *Rahman* and *Rahim* [845]. In the Semitic languages *rahem* (*rahima*, Arab.) designates the *feminine matrix* (uterus) [846] and it is translated through *bosom* (Numbers 11:12), *belly* (Jeremiah 1:5) or its *inner parts* (Proverbs 20:27), but usually the *womb* (in Arabic language, as well as in the Aramaic and Hebrew texts of the *Bible*). In the New Testament, the term corresponds to *eúsplachnoi* (viscera, Gr.; of God’s compassion) that becomes in the *Vulgate*: *miserericordia* (merciful heart, Lat.), being thus reduced to compassion, forgiveness, sympathy (Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 3:8).

Interesting enough is that while circumambulating the Ka’ba, Ibn al-‘Arabi had the epiphany of a young girl called Nizam, surrounded by a celestial aura, whom he regarded as an Avatar of God and identified as an incarnation of Sophia. He states that Nizam had become “the object of my Quest and my hope, the Virgin Most Pure.” Actually, he believed that women were the most potent incarnations of Sophia, because they inspired love in men, which was ultimately directed toward God [847]—see *infra*.

When the Islam took over elements of the Judaic tenets at the same time it adopted the Shekhinah (*as-Sakinah*, Arab.) having the original signification

⁵²⁹ Divine grace (Arab.), or divine vital energy (ch. II).

⁵³⁰ *Uma* (nation, Hebr.).

(ch. XX B). “Then God sent down on him His Sakinah, and confirmed him with legions you did not see” (The *Qur’an* 9.40). “The sign of his kingship is that the Ark⁵³¹ will come to you, in it a Sakinah from your Lord” (2.248). Other references are given in 2.249; 9.26; 48.4,18,26 etc. Other times, as-Sakinah is depicted like in the Jewish texts as a *divine cloud*: “Narrated al-Bara: A cloud came down and spread over that man, and it kept on coming closer and closer to him until his horses started jumping. When it was morning, the man came to the Prophet and told him of that experience. The Prophet said: «That was as-Sakinah»” [848].

On other occasions, we have been talking about the Feminine Trinity (*Trigunatmika*, Sanskr.) consisting from Maha-Lakshmi, Maha-Saraswati and Maha-Kali as manifestations of the Supreme Goddess (Adi Shakti). The religion of the pre-Islamic period (*jahiliyyah*, state of ignorance, Arab.) used

XX to worship three goddesses called *al-Lat*, *al-‘Uzza* and *Manat*, having their
- 117 shrines at At-Ta’if, Nakhlah (both to the southeast of Mecca) and Qudayd (on
. . 120 the Red Sea coast), respectively. They were often called *banat al-Lah*
(Daughters of God, Arab.) [849]. The historians attribute them various forms, e.g. human (*al-Lat*), sacred tree (*al-‘Uzza*), and white stone (*Manat*) [850]. After other authors, all were represented by meteorites regarded as focusing the divinity (like a *swayambhu*, Sanskr.; ch. XV A): *al-Lat* was worshipped under the shape of a square stone, and *al-‘Uzza* was the morning star and praised as a slab of granite placed between At-Ta’if and Mecca, while *Manat* received homage in the form of a black stone on the road linking Mecca and Medina [851]. According to Ibn al-Kalbi, the Ka’ba is a continuation of the square stone worshipped as *al-Lat* [852]. It seems that the Prophet made an attempt to accommodate the Scripture with the old Quraysh tribe tradition. Thus, he recited two verses praising *al-Lat*, *al-‘Uzza* and *Manat* as intercessors [853]. While referring to the *banat al-Lah*, the historian Abu Ja’far at-Tabari (d. 923) explained, “these are the exalted *Gharaniq* whose intercession is approved” [854]. *Gharaniq* means perhaps “Numidian cranes.” According to Ibn Hisham’s *The Prophetic Biography*, which relies on the testimonies of Muhammad’s companions (*sahabah*, Arab.): “The Apostle of God, as he was reading the chapter of Star (53.19-20) mentioned the idols of Mecca. Satan instilled in his recitation their praises and he (Muhammad) acknowledged their intervention. The infidels were overjoyed and said: «He mentioned our idols (gods) with good words». Then God sent down this verse (22.52⁵³²). Gabriel told Muhammad: «I did not bring to you these verses (about the idols)»” [855]. The event was reported also by as-Suyuti in his

⁵³¹ *At-Tabut* (Arab.).

⁵³² In other translations 22.51.

Asab of the Nuzul [856], *Jalalan* [857], *al-Baydawi* [858], *Zamakh-shari* [859], *Ibn Kathir* [860], and even *Ibn Abbas* and other companions of *Muhammad* [861]. Following *Gabriel's* request, the Prophet replaced the former passage with a passage declaring them mere projections and fabrication of the imagination (53.19-20 sq.). *Merlin Stone* explained that *al-Lat* designated the Goddess, like *al-Lah* is understood as *God* (the supreme god, in the pre-Islamic Arab pantheon). Another name given to *al-Lat* was *ar-Rabba* "the Sovereign." Likewise, *al-'Uzza* meant "the Mighty One" and *Manat* was "the Fateful One" [862]. In *Palmyra*, *al-Lat* was equated to *Athena*, and *Manat* to *Nemesis*, while *al-'Uzza* as well as *al-Lat* were adopted by the *Nabataeans*.

It is significant that the old priestesses who served *al-'Uzza* were replaced later on by the shrine's guardians called "*Ben-i-Shaybah*" (Sons of the Old Woman, Arab.) [863]. That is also the name of a gate to the holy place.

Women had been among Prophet's earliest adherents, and he encouraged their emancipation, supporting them in taking an active part to the life of the *Ummah*. As a matter of fact, the *Qur'an* granted women with legal rights of inheritance and divorce, ensuring absolute spiritual and moral parity of the sexes (33.35). Regrettably, thereafter men took control over the religion (as it happened in Christianity) and the Muslims downgraded women to a second-rate rank.

In the last chapter *Kalimah Muhammadiyyah* (Wisdom in the word of *Muhammad*, Arab.) of his renowned *Fusus al-hikam* (*Bezels of Wisdom*, XXV Arab.), the prominent Sufi *Muhyid-Din ibn al-'Arabi* stated audaciously that - 18 "the best and most perfect kind is the contemplation of God in women" [864]. The author further maintained that the Prophet perceived God in woman, of whom he said: she "was made lovable unto me" (*habiba ilayya*, Arab.), by reason of the very transparency of the feminine theophany [865].

During *Muhammad's* lifetime, the ideal prototype of the Holy Mother was reflected with the Prophet's wives (*Khadija* and *'A'ishah*, particularly) and his daughter (*Fatima*). "The Prophet is nearer to the believers than their selves; his wives are their mothers" (*Qur'an* 33.6). The tradition calls the second Prophet's wife: "'A'ishah, the mother of the faithful believers" [866]. The Islamic tradition refers to "'A'ishah and twelve other companions of the Prophet" [867], like the New Testament mentioned *Mary* amongst the eleven disciples witnessing the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:13-14). *Nafisah ash-Sharifa al-Hasaniyyah* was another example of a woman venerated in Islam, and people used to pronounce traditional prayers over her tomb.

In *Isma'eli Shi'ism*, *Fatima* is called *Fatima Fatir*, or *Fatima the Creator*, which recalls the *Adi Shakti*. She had made it possible the sacred lineage of *Imams* (ch. XIX C), therefore, the *Shi'ites* revered her as the *Mother of Islam*,

equating Sophia, the divine Wisdom, and being also regarded as the Hidden Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*, Arab.) on which God has written. The Divine Couple is thus symbolized through the Pen (God) writing on the Tablet or *tabula rasa* (Female Principle), which preserved the secret tradition of Sufism [868]. Bakhtiar wrote: “Once birth is given to the spirit, this principle remains as Fatima, the Creative Feminine, the daughter of the Prophet, in a state of potentiality within the spirit reborn” [869].

Couliano [870] reports, “An Isma’eli cosmogony of the 10th century features a female hypostasis called *Kuni* (feminine imperative: «Be⁵³³!») that acts like the Gnostic demiurge” [871]. Ibn Ammar used this word to characterize the Perfect Houris of Paradise, to whom God said: “Be, and she was” (*kuni, fa-kanat*, Arab.) [872].

The *Qur’an* acknowledges the *shakti* trait of the woman. Thus, Ibn al-‘Arabi disclosed in his *Fusus al-hikam* that for Muhammad woman is the *Power* (*Shakti*, Sanskr.) whose manifestation is the *Universal Nature* (*Tavi’at al-kull*, Arab.)—see *infra*. Also the *Houris* have to be regarded as Shaktis since they were “created by Allah as such, not from the offspring of Adam” [873]. They accomplish the mystical union with the Male Principle in the Paradise of the Sahasrara. Thus, about the *muttaqun* (pious and righteous soul, Arab.) arrived “in a station secure among gardens and fountains” (Paradise), it is written: “We shall espouse them to... houris” (44.51-52, 54; cf. 52.20; 58.22). The *Qur’an* refers to the same *unio mystica* when mentioning the *bridal couches* (*thrones*) in Paradise: “reclining therein on bridal couches” [874], or “raised thrones” in other variant [875], thus pointing to the culmination of the Sahasrara (ch. II).

The Prophet used to say: “Three things have been made beloved to me in this world of yours,” then enumerating women, perfume and prayer [876]. Here “perfume” is related to the “realm of Breaths⁵³⁴” [877].

While analyzing this three things mentioned by the Prophet, Ibn al-‘Arabi explained: “The Apostle goes on to give precedence to the feminine over the masculine... Thus he says *thalath* (three, Arab.) and not *thalathah* which is used for numbering masculine nouns.” Besides, “He places women first because they are the repository of passivity, just as the Universal Nature, by its form, comes before those things that derive their being from her. In reality, Nature is the Breath of the Merciful (*an-Nafas*⁵³⁵ *ar-Rahmani*, Arab.) in which are unfolded (*naffasa*, Arab.) the forms of the higher and lower

⁵³³ *Kun* (Arab.).

⁵³⁴ For the relationship between the breath and the Goddess see ch. XI C.

⁵³⁵ Actually, *an-nafas* means “expire,” and it is related to *an-nafsahu*, soul (Arab.).

Cosmos” [878]. These lines were commented as follows: “According to this view, Universal Nature—or divine Breath—is quite similar to what Hindu doctrine refers to as Shakti or Maya” [879]. We are not at all far from the Wisdom in *Ecclesiasticus*: “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High” [880]. The Muslims distinguish between *an-nafas ar-Ruh*, regarded as the Divine Word in a direct sense, i.e. the true Revelation, and *ilqa ar-Rahmaniyyah*, which represents a derived or secondary inspiration, both comparable to Hindu *shruti* and *smriti*, respectively (see our Introduction).

The deep respect paid for Woman was revealed in the verses of Jalal ad-Din Rumi: “Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress,/ The Creator’s self, as it were, not a mere creature!” [881]. Bakhtiar explains: “The Absolute manifested in the form of woman is an active agent because of exercising complete control over man’s feminine principle, his soul... That is why woman is creative, not created. For both qualities, active and passive, belong to the Essence of the Creator, and both are manifested in woman” [882]. According to Caitlin Matthews [883], “The secret veiled power of the Divine Feminine is thus actively at work within Islam. Its exoteric forms uncompromisingly address the Divine with masculine pronouns, but its esoteric qualities are all feminine. The Goddess remains the esoteric heartbeat of Islam. She is the beloved of Sufis, «the ultimate image of God the Beloved—the breaker of all images in the shrine of the heart. She is the form leading beyond form, the obstacle to the Way and the Way»,” in the words of Ya’qub ibn Yusuf [884].

The Sufi used to resort to metaphors in their love poems, in which God is addressed under the female name of *Laila*. Laila means “night” but usually she is identified with *Haqiqa* (Divine Reality, Arab.; see *supra*). Muhammad al-Harraq (d. 1845) wrote: “Seekest thou Laila, when she is manifest within thee? Thou deemest her to be other, but she is not other than thou” [885].

The chess invented by the Arabs is, however, a synthesis of the wisdom coming from ancient epochs. Although the King is the most important chessman, the Queen is the one which hold the *power*, thus depicting the Adi Shakti. The Chinese chess discloses a similar relationship.

We have seen that Virgin Mary was depicted as “the Gate of Heaven” (ch. XIX C), and also in Taoism, the Feminine Principle was depicted as “gate” (ch. XX A). A similar concept was found in Islam tradition, where Abraham called Isma’il’s wife: “the threshold of the gate” [886].

The *Qur’an* refers to the Divine Mother giving her the name of “Mother of the Book” (*Umm al-Kitab*, Arab.): “Allah blots out what He wills and confirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother of the Book” [887]. The Islamic tradition read: “Umar ibn al-Khattab said: «O Allah... with Thou is the Mother of the Book»” [888]. The *Qur’an* also mentions “the Mother of

the Book, before Us, indeed Exalted, full of Wisdom” [889], where the Mother Goddess is identified with *Sophia* of the Gnostics (ch. XX C4) or the Jewish *Hokhmah* (ch. XIX C). The *Qur'an* refers often to the latter as *al-Hikmah* (Arab.) (2.272; 3.43,73,75; 4.57,113; 5.109; 17.41; 31.11; 33.34; 62.2 etc.). Also, Wisdom (Sophia) is identified with Virgin Mary (43.63): “When Jesus came with clear proofs, he said: «I have come to you with al-Hikmah»” [890], where the last word is interpreted by the exegetes as “the Wisdom, Sophia, Virgin Mary.”

In the sacred book of Islam, Virgin Mary is granted a particular honor being placed on the same higher rank as two of the seven great prophets acknowledged in Islam (ch. XIX C): “And mention in the Book Mary” (19.16), is a syntagma repeated afterwards in the same surah: “And mention in the Book Abraham” (19.42), “And mention in the Book Moses” (19.52). Thus, Mary leaves behind the prophets. Also, Mary is placed next to other Avatars like Adam (to whom she is the New Eve) and, of course, Jesus. It is remarkable that although the *Qur'an* rejects Jesus’ divinity, He appears in the Scripture as such, being compared to Adam, a divine person (ch. XIX C): “Jesus, in God’s sight, is as Adam’s likeness” (3.52). Like Adam, He had no father (the *Qur'an* does not mention the name of Jesus’ father, or that He had a father). The *Qur'an* also read: “We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs; and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit (*Ruh-ul-Qudus*, Arab.)” (2.81; cf. 2.254; 4.169; 5.109). A *hadith* had in view the exceptional status of Mary and Jesus in contrast to humankind: “Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: «No child is born but he is pricked by Satan... except the son of Mary and his mother” [891].

Not only the *hadith* above, but also the *Qur'an* granted equal rank to Jesus and Mary: “God said: O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say unto men «Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God?»” (5.116). The similar position was acknowledged in the same surah when God said to them: “My blessing upon thee and upon thy mother” (5.109). Likewise, “We made Mary’s son, and his mother, to be a sign” (23.52). “We breathed into her of Our spirit (*Ruh*, Arab.) and appointed her and her son to be a sign unto all beings” (21.91; cf. 23.52; 66.12). In its turn, the Islamic tradition revealed that God “bestowed on Mary a spirit created by Him” [892]. Thus, Virgin Mary is associated with the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity (ch. XXI).

Bartholomew of Edessa (9th century) stated: “Within the whole *Qur'an* we cannot find praises addressed to Muhammad or his mother Aminah, but we find praises glorifying both Our Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Virgin Mary, Theotokos” [893]. Norman Daniel noticed: “There is nothing within the entire *Qur'an* leveling the ardor used when speaking about Christ and His mother. Christ is envisaged as a unique being, but His mother’s personality

appears more significant. The *Qur'an* manifests a cult for Virgin Mary” [894]. Moreover, “some Muslim apologists claimed that Christians were including Mary the Mother of God in the Godhead. In spite of disclaimers of this in Christian responses, especially Byzantine responses, the Muslim critique may well have reflected... Mary at the level of folk religion that were making her into a goddess” [895], as it was shown in chapter XX C3.

The erection in 682 of the celebrated mosque al-Aksa over the old foundations of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem was undoubtedly a historical moment intended to hallow the place where, according to the tradition, the Prophet descended from his celestial journey. Then, Caliph ‘Umar requested the writing upon the mosque wall of a Qur’anic verse glorifying Mary [896], a fact that could be regarded as another proof of the deep respect paid to Jesus’ mother in Islam.

The Scripture devotes an entire chapter (surah 19) to Mary from whom the surah takes its name. The *Qur'an* (19.29) compared Mary, Jesus’ mother to prophetess Mary (Miriam, ch. XX B), the sister of Moses and Aaron (called in the *ahadith* “Musa ibn ‘Imran” and “Harun ibn ‘Imran,” respectively). Other analysts believed that they were even confused to each other. A possible explanation would be that Mary belonged to the family of Aaron (Luke 1:5), *Amran* or *‘Imran* (Arab.), *Amram* (Hebr.; in 1 Chronicles 23:13). The third surah bearing the title: “The House of ‘Imran” was dedicated to Mary, too. She is ranked within other women who attained the climax of holiness; moreover, refuting the calumny of the Jews against her (4.156) it is a truly remarkable fact.

The *Qur'an* spoke of “Mary, ‘Imran’s daughter, who guarded her virginity⁵³⁶, so We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and she confirmed the Words of her Lord and His Books, and became one of the obedient” (66.12). Similar mentioning to Mary’s virginity appear frequently (3.42; 19.20-21; 21.92) and evidently point at Jesus’ mother, and not to Moses’ and Aaron’s sister.

A *hadith* read: “Narrated Abu Musa: Allah’s Messenger said: «Many amongst men reached [the level of] perfection⁵³⁷ but none amongst the women reached this level except Asiya—Pharaoh’s wife, and Mary—the daughter of ‘Imran»” [897].

Therefore, it was not by chance that Mogul Queens bore the revered title of Miryam (Mary): Mother of the World [898].

So high is the respect paid to her—even surpassing paradoxically the place the Christian Scripture granted to her—, that the exegetes spoke of a

⁵³⁶ *Allati ahsanat farjaha* (Arab.).

⁵³⁷ *Al-kamal* (Arab.).

Qur'anic Trinity where her name is usually associated with the Father and Son. From amongst the multitude (e.g. only in the fifth surah the verses 19,50,76,112,114) we give the following example: “When **God** said: «**Jesus** son of **Mary**... »” (5.109,116; emphasis added). Schuon explained that when the *Qur'an* introduced Virgin Mary into the Trinity it equated her with the Holy Ghost⁵³⁸, “which is linked to the feminization, in certain ancient texts, of the divine Pnuma” [899]. By considering “the complementarity of the holy personages” in Islam and Virgin Mary being a link between that religion and Christianity, Schuon arrived at the conclusion that “Christ is the «seal of sanctity», and the Virgin is «primordial sanctity»; now sanctity is essentially inwardness... The Virgin Mary is not only the personification of a particular mode of sanctity she personifies sanctity as such... In her essence she... precedes all forms, overflows upon them all, embraces them all and reintegrates them all” [900]. The exegete also shows that Islam regarded the association (*shirk*, Arab.) of other divine persons for constituting a Trinity as a usurpation of the divine absoluteness [901]. In his profound and inspired analysis, Schuon explains that on the other hand, “Islam would in no way oppose the idea that Divine Unity comprises a ternary aspect; what it rejects is solely the idea that God is exclusively and absolutely a Trinity... The deification of Jesus and Mary, indirectly attributed to Christians by the *Qur'an*, gives rise to a «Trinity» that this Book nowhere identifies with the Trinity of Christian doctrine but that is nonetheless based on certain realities: firstly, the idea of the «Co-Redemptrix», «Mother of God»... On the other hand, according to the Sufi ‘Abd al-Karim al-Jili, the «Trinity» mentioned in the *Qur'an* is capable of an esoteric interpretation—the Gnostics in fact looked upon the Holy Ghost as the «Divine Mother»... The Qur’anic «Trinity» corresponds fundamentally to what the Christian dogmas would have become through an inevitable fault of adaptation had they come to be adopted by the Arabs... So far as the orthodox Christian interpretation of the dogma of the Trinity is concerned, its rejection by Islam is also motivated by considerations of a purely metaphysical kind. Christian theology understands by the Holy Ghost not only a purely principal reality, metacosmic and Divine, but also the direct reflection of this Reality in the manifested, cosmic, and created order; according to the theological definition, in fact, the Holy Ghost, apart from its principal or Divine signification, embraces also the summit or luminous center of the whole creation, that is to say, it embraces supraformal manifestation, which, to use Hindu terms, is the direct and central reflection of the creative Principle, *Purusha*, in the cosmic Substance, *Prakriti*. This reflection, which is the Divine Intelligence manifested, or *Buddhi*—in Sufism

⁵³⁸ Ch. XXI.

*Ar-Ruh*⁵³⁹ and *Al-‘Aql*—... is the Holy Ghost insofar as It illumines, inspires and sanctifies man. When theology identifies this reflection with God, it is right in the sense that *Buddhi* or *Ar-Ruh*—the *Metatron* of the Kabbalah—«is» God in the essential or «vertical» relationship” [902]. “The concept of Trinity as a deployment (*tajalli*⁵⁴⁰) of Unity or of the Absolute is in no way opposed to the unitary doctrine of Islam” [903].

⁵³⁹ The Sikhs call the Holy Spirit: *Ekaa Mayee*.

⁵⁴⁰ Revelation (Arab.)

NOTES

- [1] Vergil, *The Aeneid*, III, v.96, o.t. [2] Goethe, *Faust*, vv.12110-12111. [3] *Ibid.* (transl. by Stuart Atkins), Suhrkamp/Insel Boston, Cambridge 1984. [4] *Ibid.* (transl. by Ștefan Aug. Doinaș); cf. vv.11995, 12009-12012, 12096, 12103-12104, o.t. [5] *Ibid.*, note to p.609, o.t. [6] *Ibid.* (transl. by Walter Arndt), W.W. Norton, New York 1976. [7] *Ibid.* (transl. by Bayard Taylor), Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto 1971. [8] *Ibid.* (Part Two, transl. by Bayard Taylor, revised by Stuart Atkins), Collie-MacMillan Ltd., 3rd printing, London 1967. [9] *Ibid.* (transl. by George Madison Priest), Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1959, note to p.423 (vv. 12110-12111). [10] Nicholas Roerich, *To the Woman's Heart*, Woman's Unity of Roerich Museum, 1933; *apud* Garabed Paelian, *Nicholas Roerich*, The Aquarian Educational Group, Agoura, Calif. 1974, p.66. [11] Nicholas Roerich, *Realm of Light*, Roerich Museum Press, New York 1931, p.258; *apud* Paelian, p.68. [12] *The Laws of Manu* 2.145. [13] *Ibid.*, 3.56. [14] Herbert, note 3 to pp.260, 261. [15] *Legende chinezești*, p.140. [16] Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya*, p.192. [17] Nancy Schuster Barnes, in *Women in World Religion*, p.117. [18] John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, Duckworth, London 1977, p.394. [19] *SGGS*, Gauree, Mehl 5, p.236. [20] Jung, Kerényi, p.162. [21] *Ibid.*, pp.156-177. [22] *Ibid.*, pp.95-96. [23] Schuon, *Gnosis*, p.54, and notes 1 and 2. [24] Olson (ed.), *The Book...* [25] Roerich, *To the Woman's...*; *apud* Paelian, p.66. [26] Merlin Stone, Foreword to Patai, p.14. [27] Arthur Green, *Bride, Spouse, Daughter: Images of the Feminine in Classical Jewish Sources*, in Susannah Heschel, *On Being a Jewish Feminist*, Schocken Books, New York 1983, pp.248-260. [28] Stone, in Patai, p.15. [29] *Ibid.*, p.17. [30] Matthews, pp.5,7-8. [31] Mihai Isvoranu, *Elemente de biologie și genetică umană (Elements of Human Biology and Genetics)*, Ed. Medicală, București 1988, pp.131-132,329-330, o.t. [32] F.J.J. Buytendijk, *Woman. A Contemporary View*, Neuman Press, Glen Rock, N. Y., 1968. [33] Soulier, pp.138,218-219,242. [34] *Ibid.*, pp.225-226. [35] J.M. Robert, *Génétique*, Flammarion, Paris 1983, o.t. [36] Isvoranu, p.390. [37] C. Maximilian, D.M. Ioan, *Genetica medicală (Medical Genetics)*, Ed. Medicală, București 1986, pp.42,43, o.t. [38] Roland, pp.120-121. [39] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou l'éducation*; cf. Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections*. [40] Gimbutas, *The Civilization...*, pp.222,223,342. [41] Casal, pp.45,49, and illustr. to p.46. [42] Ching, p.352. [43] Merlin Stone, *When God Was A Woman*, Barnes & Noble, New York 1993, pp.18,27. [44] Gimbutas, *The Goddesses...*, p.38. [45] *Ibid.*, *The Civilization...*, pp.222,342; cf., p.X, and *The Goddesses...*, pp.9,11. [46] *Ibid.*, *The Goddesses...*, pp.9-10. [47] *Ibid.*, *The Civilization...*, pp.X,XI. [48] Stone, *When God...*, p.36. [49] Graves, *The White...*, p.10. [50] Baring, Cashford, pp.152,155-156. [51] Joseph Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*,

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XXI. WHOSE SYMBOL IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

“He will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you... But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you”

John 14:16-17,26

The Holy Trinity in the Christian iconography is depicted as God the Father, Jesus Christ—the Son, and a white dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit. XXI - Virgin Mary also frequently appeared in this group. However, her presence 1, 2 could not simply be explained by her quality as a co-Redeemer.

It goes without saying that Virgin Mary is the Divine Mother since if there are God the Father and the Son, where is the Mother? How could a father have a son without the help of a mother? This legitimate question appears in the *Qur'an*: “How should He has a son, seeing that He has no consort?” (6.101).

The Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* [1] adopted also a skeptical position: “Some said: «Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit». They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?” thus acknowledging that the Holy Spirit is a Feminine Principle. The great XXI - mystic, Hildegard of Bingen asked in her *Speculum Virginum*, a manual for 3 nuns: “How could the Mother not pre-exist with the Son...? How could she be absent, in whom an eternal decree had laid the foundation of an eternal building, the celestial Jerusalem?” [2].

Jung realized that it is strange how the *rationalism*—about whom the Christian World makes such great fuss—could overlook this situation. Moreover, how could this rationalism accept that God who embraced All does not comprise His pair, the Divine Mother. In order to surpass the handicap, the ancient philosophers of nature used to associate the Trinity (corresponding to the incorporeal, volatile or spiritual elements: Fire, Water, Air) with the Virgin (symbolizing the fourth element, the Earth or the body: *sómaton*, Gr.) [3]. In this respect, Augustine said: “Truth is arisen from the earth, for Christ is born of a virgin” [4].

The dove sent by Utnapishtim, Noah and Deukalion (ch. V) heralded, in fact, the rebirth (of a new humanity).

On many occasions (ch. IV, V etc.) we have been pointing to the preponderance of the bird as a metaphor for the divine entities, angels, spirits and the like encountered with most of the nations. “The bird was the life of the waters, the epiphany of the goddess over the watery abyss of cosmic space... The image of the Bird Goddess as primordial creatrix endures from - 5 25,000 years, from the thirtieth to the fifth millennium BC... The tradition of the very ancient relationship between goddess and bird can be traced through the Egyptian, Sumerian, Minoan and Greek civilizations” [5]. Gimbutas believes that “the Snake Goddess and Bird Goddess may have been secretly worshipped for some time after the advent of the Indo-Europeans, before manifesting themselves again in graphic and sculptural form at a later date.” “The Bird and Snake Goddesses are incarnations of life energy” [6]. As examples we have the bird on the wizard staff in Lascaux (c.15,000-12,000 - 4 BC), Persephone with the dove (Locri, c.450 BC), Artemis as the Winged Bird Goddess, Hera accompanied by birds, serpents and lions, the caduceus having a bird on its tip, even the bird seated on Mary’s scepter (12th century) [7], who, however, is depicted often with the dove on the moment of the Annunciation. The dove descends to become the symbol of Mary in the Coptic *Life of the Virgin*. The dove is also the attribute for Inanna, Ishtar, Atargatis, Isis, and Aphrodite, while Nephthys and other goddesses are usually accompanied by birds. The Assyrians used to worship deified Semiramis, who reigned over the entire Asia excepting India and, according to the legend “turned into a dove” [8]. We shall add that at the coronation of a Pharaoh his spiritual double, the corporeal soul (*ba*, Egypt.) descended on him in the form of a hawk [9]. Usually *ba* had a male head (bearing a little barbet) and we may suppose it similar to the masculine Atman, while the incorporeal energetic principle (*ka*) can be paralleled with the Kundalini. The aim of the Egyptian cult was to reunite after death the *ka* and the *ba* (similar to the union of the Kundalini and Atman in Yoga). In the *Odyssey*, the dove is the messenger sent by gods to the humans [10], and Athena often appears under the form of a bird: “Thus she spoke and Athena of the flashing eyes disappeared flying up into the air, like a bird.” “She herself darted up and perched on the smoked roof-beam of the hall, in the actual form of a swallow” [11]. The myth of the bird-goddess has reached lands as far as Finland [12]. According to Joseph Campbell, “the bird is a universal symbol of the spirit. In India it is the wild gander or hamsa that symbolizes the Atman, or Self. Shri Jesus saw a dove at his baptism. Zeus approached Leda as a swan. For native Indian the feather is the sign of spiritual power” [13]. Mircea Eliade mentioned a multitude of examples when the divine manifests itself as a bird. Among others, he quoted the apocryphal text of the legend of the Sea of Galilee, included in the *List of the Divine Books* and extant in

manuscripts of the 15th and 16th centuries: When neither Heaven nor Earth yet existed, but only the Sea of Galilee, God was flying through the air (probably in the form of a bird) [14]. The cosmic egg (*Hiranyagarbha*) belongs to the mythology of the Bird Goddess, and its souvenir is still alive in the tradition of the Easter eggs. In the *Qur'an*, God says: “And every man—We have fastened to him his bird of omen upon his neck” (17.14). Last but not least, the dove was the messenger of Sophia of the Gnostics and the emblem of the Knights Templar [15].

There is another reason explaining the bird symbolism. In Sanskrit, *dvija* means twice-born (*dvi*, twice, *ja*, born) and the same word is used for “bird.” Indeed, the latter exists already in the egg, and by coming out of the egg achieves a second birth. But “twice-born” is also the name given to realized persons (through the divine grace of the Holy Spirit; ch. XXII B).

The dove metaphor drew its origin from the Gospel of John describing the baptism of Jesus: “John bore witness, saying: «I behold the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him»” (1:32; emphasis added). These were the words of the eyewitness, the only one who had seen the scene (because the crowd did not perceive anything) and it is him that we must believe, the more so as the witness was none other than John the Baptist, chosen by God and granted the power to see what the others could not see. The Baptist clearly said: the Holy Spirit was “as” a dove, i.e. *it was not a dove itself!* He saw a white light hovering in the air above the Sahasrara of Jesus. That was exactly what the manifestation of the Kundalini (Holy Spirit) looks like. The white shining color as well as the hanging in the air (also a certain dimension) must have suggested to him the symbol of the dove. Mark (1:10) and Matthew (3:16) also described the Spirit of God as a dove. Only Luke went as far as exaggerating when saying: “the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon him” (3:22; emphasis added). That event, as well as other elements from the Messiah’s life, has been announced in the Old Testament that did not mention any dove whatsoever. “The Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him” (Isaiah 11:2). “I will put my Spirit upon him” (42:1; cf. Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28).

In order to dissipate any doubt, we shall mention the *Zohar* referring to a quotation from Ezekiel 1:26 talking about “the likeness of a throne,” accompanied by an accurate explanation: “It says «the likeness of a throne», and not «the throne»... The verse cited continues: «and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man». Why say both «likeness» and «appearance» when «likeness» would be enough?” and so forth [16]. That discloses that the Scripture uses the words “like” or “as” to show that it refers not to the actual thing.

The white color of the dove expresses purity and chastity—Virgin’s

qualities. We remember the comparison of the beloved in Song of Songs (6:9) with a spotless dove. Actually, we face again an attempt at hiding the truth. The identification to a dove has no other purpose than covering the identity between the Holy Spirit and Divine Mother, and also the fact that Virgin Mary has manifested the Holy Spirit on Earth. She was the Power (Shakti) of Jesus (ch. XIX C, XX C3). While referring to the Virgin and the Child, Schuon [17] wrote about “purity, which is the vehicle of «God in us».” However, that vehicle is no other than the Kundalini, manifestation of the Holy Ghost.

An agraphon precise that the Holy Spirit is purifying us: “May the Holy Ghost descend upon us and cleanse us” [18].

“A dove hovering over its nestlings is like unto the Spirit of God flying over the watery abyss of chaos,” says the *Talmud* [19].

In his *Panarion*, Epiphanius quotes from the *Gospel of the Ebionites*: “as he came up out of the water the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy Spirit in the likeness⁵⁴¹ of a dove which descended and entered into him... And straightaway a great light shone round about the place” [20]. Justin Martyr wrote in his turn: “when he came out of the water, the Holy Ghost lighted on him like a dove” [21].

An ancient Chinese Christian text proves its utility in that particular case: “the «Cool Wind» descended from the Heaven in appearance of a dove and sat upon the Messiah” [22]. This ascertains the identity between the “dove” and the manifestation of the Divine Mother’s (Holy Spirit’s) grace as the cool breeze of the Kundalini (ch. XI C).

Baring and Cashford showed: “the idea that the Holy Spirit was feminine—the Mother—was foreign only to Gentile⁵⁴² Christians” [23], i.e. those christened by the misogynist Paul and his team.

Professor Quispe also explains: “Jewish Christians were entirely convinced that the Holy Spirit was a feminine hypostasis.” “In a fragment from the *Jewish-Christian Gospel*, the Holy Spirit says to Jesus at His baptism: «My Son, in all the prophets I was waiting for thee».” The exegete also wrote: “Just as birth requires a mother, so rebirth⁵⁴³ requires a spiritual mother. Originally, the Christian term «rebirth» must therefore have been associated with the concept of the spirit⁵⁴⁴ as a feminine hypostasis” [24].

⁵⁴¹ Replaced by “form” in some wrong translations.

⁵⁴² Non-Jews.

⁵⁴³ The second birth.

⁵⁴⁴ Obviously, the quotation refers to the Holy Spirit.

The identity of the Holy Ghost-dove with God the Mother is plainly acknowledged in the *feminine gender* of the dove (as in the Song of Songs, *supra*). Merejkowski explains: “The memory of the Aramaic original has been preserved in the Greek of all the four witnesses in our canonical gospels—where the symbolic Dove is not *peristeros* but *peristerá*⁵⁴⁵. «God is a Spirit» (John 4:24) cannot mean in the words spoken by our Lord in Aramaic that God is only *He*, the Father, but also *She*, the Mother. The orthodox have forgotten this, but heretics still remember: «Descend O Holy Spirit,/ Descend Holy Dove./ Descend hidden Mother» such is the baptismal and eucharistic prayer in the *Acts of Thomas*” [25]. In fact, the *Acts of Thomas* read: “Come Holy Spirit... ; come Giver of life... ; come Giver of joy... ; come Power of the Father and Wisdom...” [26], thus equating the Holy Spirit also with Wisdom-Sophia and the Power-AdiShakti.

Jung made the following assertions: “According to an early Christian-Gnostic idea, the spirit which appeared in the form of a dove was interpreted as Sophia—Sapientia—Wisdom and the Mother of Christ” [27]. Therefore, it was impossible to eradicate that feminine attribute, which is still linked at least with the symbol of the Holy Spirit, *columba Spiritus Sancti*” (the dove of the Holy Spirit, Lat.). The relationship between the Holy Virgin and Sophia (ch. XX C4 and XX D) was materialized in the readings from the text on Wisdom in Proverbs (8:22-35) on the festivities devoted to Mary [28].

Now it becomes quite clear the intention of the anonymous artist who depicted a dove hitting the Sahasrara of Augustine of Hippo with its beak during his baptism performed by Ambrose as it can be seen in the *St. Elizabeth Psalter* (13th century) [29]. Other noteworthy artifacts are the earlier (end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century) representations in the Roman catacombs: the fish and the dove combined. Likewise it is the more meaningful painting of an amphora unearthed in Phaestos, Crete, depicting “a fish bearing on its back a dove, rising from the ocean to the starry heavens, where the dove pecks the honeyed stamens of a full-blown lotus blossom—the food of Paradise” [30]. We find here joined up the symbol of Jesus and of the dove-Holy Spirit (the Holy Mother) linked to that of the lotus (chakras, mainly the Sahasrara), and the rising of Mother Kundalini until the heaven (Paradise) of the Sahasrara.

We are on a firm ground when maintaining the identity between the Holy Spirit, the Divine Mother and her manifestation as the bliss-giver Kundalini energy. Baring and Cashford report: “In Crete, the Great Goddess was experienced as a flowing, dynamic energy... Nikolaos Platon, the director of the museum in Herakleion... says that «a hymn to Nature as a Goddess seems to be heard from everywhere, a hymn of joy and life»” [31].

⁵⁴⁵ In Matthew 3:16 (also in 10:16); Marc 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32.

As previously shown (ch. II, IV, XIX B and C etc.), the trifunctional structure was a feature common to most of the religious systems, for instance *Trimurti* and the three associated Goddesses for the Hindus. Likewise, the last Achemenides honored the triad Ahura Mazda—Mithra—Anahita where Mithra was the son and Anahita the female Principle [32].

Actually, even the exegesis of the New Testament (Matthew 7:7) refers to the *Trinity* interpreted as Mercy (Father)—Wisdom (Mother)—Peace (Son): “Ask [for Peace], and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find it [Wisdom]. Knock, and it [the Gate of Mercy] shall be opened” [33].

When analyzing the Gnostic texts, some experts refer to the *Gnostic Trinity*, whose second member of the divine triad is every time a female figure [34]. In such an example, John affirms that “the [likeness] had three forms” and when addressed to him, it says: “I am the One who is [with you (*plural*)] always. I [am the Father], I am the Mother, I am the Son” [35].

Jesus particularly revered the Holy Spirit in the New Testament where He placed it even higher than the Son. “Whosoever shall have spoken a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming [one]” (Matthew 12:32; cf. Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10). That proves the deep respect He paid to His Divine Mother, and no evangelic text can conceal that truth.

On the other side, the *Qur'an* states that one cannot utter a truth about God if it would be not by the Holy Spirit (cf. 78.38; 5.109).

Revelation (22:17) brings together the Spirit and the Bride. What's more, as already shown, just before dying the Crucified announced the Bride as the next great divine incarnation (Maha Avatar; ch. XIX D).

The Gospel according to John paid an outstanding attention to that future incarnation ascribing it the name of *Comforter* (*Paraclete*, *Counselor* or *Strengtheners*) who would come only after Jesus has left Earth. “I say the truth to you. It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you” (John 16:7). That quotation was correlated by the official exegesis to the passages about the “living water” (Kundalini, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit). “He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified” (7:38-39). “And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you” (14:16-17). “But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send

in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you” (14:26). “When he is come, the Spirit of truth, he shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself; but whatsoever he shall bear he shall speak; and he will announce to you what is coming. He shall glorify me” (16:13-14). “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes forth from with the Father, he shall bear witness concerning me” (15:26).

This is the promised advent of the Holy Spirit who grants to the human the aptitude of evolution, of spiritual life, that spiritual growth of man raised up to the Spirit to the communion with the Father or the state of Yoga, in our words. We would like to stress on the prophecies regarding not only the corresponding Avatar (ch. XIX D) but—as we shall see at the end of this chapter—also the New Era of the Holy Spirit. Now even the Church accepted that prognosis.

Evdokimov explains that “the Syriac texts on the Paraclete⁵⁴⁶ refer to «she who consoles»” [36], instead of “he who consoles.”

The apocryphal *Gospel of the Perfect Life* identifies this Comforter or Counselor with the Divine Mother: “The Counselor, who is my Mother, the Holy Sophia, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” [37].

The *Aquarian Gospel* stressed the fact that “the Spirit of truth” called also “the Comforter” referred to by John was female: “When the Holy Breath shall come in power, lo, she will teach you more and more, and bring to your remembrance all the words that I have said to you. There are a multitude of things yet to be said; things that this age cannot receive, because it cannot comprehend. But, lo, I say, Before the great day of the Lord shall come, the Holy Breath will make all mysteries known... When she has come, the Comforter, she will convince the world of sin, and of truth of what I speak, and of the rightness of the judgment of the Just” [38]. Therefore, in John’s text “she” and “her” must replace “him” and “his.” Dowling denoted the Holy Spirit: *Visel or the Goddess of Wisdom*. “The imperishable records of life, known as the Akashic Records, are wholly in the domain of Supreme Intelligence, or Universal Mind, and the Akashic Record reader must be in such close touch with the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Breath, as the ancient masters call this spirit of Supreme Intelligence, that every thought vibration is instantly felt in every fiber of his being” [39]. The Goddess of Wisdom said: “Behold the Akasha! Behold the Record Galleries of Visel where every thought and word and deed of every living thing is written down.” Then Visel said: “I breathe upon you now the Holy Breath; you will discriminate, and

⁵⁴⁶ Or Consoler, Comforter.

you will know the lessons that these Record Books of God are keeping now for men of this new age” [40], i.e. the Age of Aquarius. “Before creation was, the Christ walked with the Father God and Mother God” [41]. “God the Father is the power of heaven and earth; and God the Mother is the Holy Breath, the thought of heaven and earth; and God the Son, the only son, is Christ, and Christ is love” [42].

Origen [43] quoted “the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, where the Savior himself says, «my mother, the Holy Spirit⁵⁴⁷ took me just now by one of my hairs⁵⁴⁸ and carried me off to the great mount Tabor».” The same Origen identifies the Mother with the Spirit of Divine Wisdom [44]. Also Jerome provides the same quotation from that gospel [45]. Cyril of Jerusalem gave the following paraphrase: “It is written in the *Gospel of Hebrews*: «When Christ wanted to come to earth, the Good Father summoned a mighty power... The power came down into the world, and it was called Mary, and Christ was in her womb for seven months»” [46]. In his turn, Macarius of Egypt wrote about “the good and compassionate Mother: the grace of the Spirit” [47] and the people born “out of the divine womb of the Spirit” [48]. The frequency of these quotations within the writings of the Church Fathers proves their high concern for that topic.

The 3rd century liturgy of Didascalia called the deaconess “image of the Holy Spirit” [49].

On the 4th century, even the Church Father Apraates acknowledged the parental kinship between human being and God and His Spirit as wife: “Man... love and worships God, his Father, and the Holy Spirit, his Mother” [50].

A noteworthy fact is that even Patristic authors like John Damascene went as far as identifying the Holy Spirit with Virgin Mary: “Let it be enough for you to understand that it is by the Holy Spirit, just as it was of the Holy Virgin... “ [51].

Many Gnostic sects such as the Naassenes and Nicolaites among others adored the feminine Holy Spirit who was the Mother of God and of the living [52]. In the teaching of the Jewish sect of the Elcesaites (beginning of the 2nd century), the Holy Ghost was called “the Sister of the Son of God” [53]. Hippolytus adds that according to Elkesai the Son of God was an angel accompanied by a female angel who was the Holy Spirit [54], thus disclosing the role of Jesus’ Shakti played by Mary. There is a known fact that the Ophites used to baptize and partake the communion “in the name of the

⁵⁴⁷ *He méter mou tò hagion pneuma* (Gr.).

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. Ezechiel (8:3): “took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens.”

Mother-Spirit” [55].

The Gnostic texts offer other instances where the Holy Spirit (of God) was identified with the Divine Mother: “The Holy Spirit [... and] Her children are many” [56]. “The soul of Adam came into being by means of a breath. The partner of his soul is the spirit. His mother is the thing that was given to him” [57]. “Adam came into being from two virgins, from the Spirit and from the Virgin Earth” [58].

There is a fresco in a medieval church in Urschalling, Bavaria, where the XXI three Persons of the Trinity are portrayed as three heads belonging to a single – 17 body (thus evoking the Hindu deities with multiple heads: Adi Guru Dattatreya, Brahmadeva etc.). The Father and the Son are bearded and are clearly male, but the Holy Spirit is beardless and, according to Jesuit Scripture scholar Kevin O’Connell, appears to be female [59].

On the 18th century, the Benedictine Dom Pernety wrote a theological treaty about *Virtues, power, clemency and glory of Mary, the Mother of God*, where the Virgin was addressed as a mystic heaven where new stars are discovered again and again. She was the Woman clothed in the splendor of the sun⁵⁴⁹ of rightness whose brightness blinds the most penetrating sight. Becoming the Mother of the Incarnated Verb, she was associated to the Divinity to become one with the Three Persons of the Trinity [60].

Khalil Gibran declared in his turn: “the Mother, the principle of all existence, is the Eternal Spirit, full of beauty and love” [61].

Merejkowski wrote the following inspired lines referring to the Aramaic word for Spirit: “*Ruha* is not He, but She—Spirit, the Breath of God, like a gentle breeze⁵⁵⁰, most gentle of all on earth and yet most irresistible” [62].

Notable theologians like Evdokimov acknowledge the ontological connection between woman and the Holy Spirit: “in its dominant aspects... the feminine (is) «Spirit-bearing» (*Pneumatophóros*)” [63].

Schuon wrote: “the Spirit... is the «creative projection» of Divinity; it is then an «expansion»... *in divinis* at the same time as a «springing forth» *ex divinis*... The Spirit «as creation» is none other than the Virgin in three aspects, macrocosmic, microcosmic and historical” [64]. These lines remind of Adi Shakti’s birth through the splitting of Parabrahman and the expansion of the universe caused by her (ch. I).

In the analysis made about the Eastern theological concepts, Lossky has brought interesting explanation dealing with our topic. “On the eternal level the Persons of Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father” [65]. Therefore, it refers not only to the Avatar of the Son but also to the Person of the Holy

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Revelation 12:1.

⁵⁵⁰ Ch. XI C.

Spirit, while neither there was nor there will be an incarnation of the Father as formerly shown (ch. XIX C). “The Son is sent by the Father and is incarnate by the Holy Spirit” [66]. This implicitly acknowledges that Virgin Mary is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The author also wrote that as the Word was incarnated as a divine Person, “so also the Holy Spirit (in whom the divine will—creator and upholder of the universe—was fulfilled from the moment of creation) was at a given moment *sent into the world* to be present there not only by His operation... but considered as *Person*” [67]. It is easy to recognize what Hindus call the *Adi Shakti* (Divine Power) in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as the divine will that created the universe. As for the identity of the Holy Spirit Person sent on the earth, Gregory of Nyssa wrote that “the Divine power,... like a tender mother... gives to our human nature what it is capable of receiving; and thus in the various manifestations of God to man He both adapts Himself to man and speaks in human language” [68]. In his turn, Lossky refers to the *Revelations of St. Seraphim of Sarov*: “The grace of God—*like a mother full of loving kindness towards her children*—has deigned to comfort your afflicted heart, *at the intercession of the Mother of God herself*” [69]. Thus, it is again ascertained the identity of the Divine Mother and the Comforter (Holy Spirit) mentioned by Jesus.

Also Evdokimov acknowledged: “There is a profound link between the Holy Spirit, Sophia, the Virgin and femininity... According to the expression of Sergius Bulgakov, the Holy Spirit is *hypostatic motherhood*” [70]. Other times Bulgakov used to refer to the Holy Spirit as the “daughter of God” [71]. It was in 1922 when the priest Bulgakov came under the investigation by the Church, being charged of propagating the doctrine of an androgynous Christ, “which, under the influence of Palamism and Kabbalah, regarded God as androgynous and characterized him equally as «Father» and as «Mother»” [72].

In his turn, Alexis Kniazev wrote in his book *God’s Mother in the Orthodox Church*: “The Mother of He who is God in Person, she is also the icon of the Holy Spirit” [73].

There were some initiates who forecasted that after the period witnessing the apparition of the Judaic monotheist religion followed by the one when Christianity was established, there would come a new era dominated by the Holy Spirit. We already presented the case of John of Jerusalem (ch. XIX D).

Another visionary was Joachim of Floris (Gioacchino da Fiore or Gioacchino de Celico, c.1130/45-1202), who was called by Dante “*calabrese abate Giovacchino/ di spirito profetico dotato*” (the Calabrian abbot Giovacchino/ endowed with a prophetic spirit, Ital.). The renowned Cistercian (Benedictine) abbot announced the unbroken evolution of

humankind through three stages (*status*, Lat.) of history. He proclaimed a third age of spiritual liberation implying contemplation (meditation as we should call it), knowledge and integration, *the Age of the Holy Spirit*, when humankind will be lit up by the divine Grace, a time coming after the *Age of the Father* (Yahweh) when people feared God, and *the Age of the Son* (Jesus Christ), the age of faith and love. The *Evangelium Aeternum* (*Eternal Gospel*) will govern that third period of universal Peace and Truth [74]. The concept fully fits what it was shown before (ch. XIX D). According to Joachim's prophecy, the Age of the Spirit would supersede the present age of the Church ruled by clerics, became increasingly a language of dissent against the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Popes and bishops were pictured as having departed from apostolic poverty and simplicity and as having given themselves over to corruption. The clerical Church was seen as having become the Anti-Christ. In the new dispensation of the Spirit, the Spirit would be disclosed in female form [75]. The prophecy refers to the time of the Holy Spirit, in which the institutional papal church, with its sacraments and its revelation hardened in the letter of Scripture, would be replaced by a community of charismatic figures, filled with the Spirit, and by the time of spiritual knowledge.

Mircea Eliade believed that "It was a real tragedy for the Western world that Joachim of Floris' prophetic-eschatological speculations, though they inspired and fertilized the thought of a St. Francis of Assisi, of a Dante, and of a Savonarola, so quickly sank into oblivion" [76]. It is important to stress the continuity between the medieval eschatological concepts and the various "philosophies of History" produced by the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. Over the last thirty years it has begun to be realized what an exceptional role was played by the prophecies of Gioacchino da Fiore in the thirteenth century and continued, in more or less secularized form, into the nineteenth. Gioacchino's central idea had considerable repercussions. This idea run counter to the theology of History accepted by the Church from the time of St. Augustine. According to the current doctrine, perfection having been achieved on earth by the Church, there will be no *renovatio*⁵⁵¹ in the future. Gioacchino da Fiore brings back into Christianity the archaic myth of universal regeneration. He conceives the third age as the reign of Freedom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—which implies transcending historical Christianity and, in the last analysis, abolishing existing rules and institutions. Couliano has shown that "Joachim of Flora, as both Taubes and Löwith had it, remains for Voegelin⁵⁵² the most important character in the renewal of

⁵⁵¹ Renewal (Lat.).

⁵⁵² Taubes, Löwith, and Voegelin are the representatives of the hermeneutical trend.

eschatological expectations” [77]. Joachim’s ideas found an echo with Lessing’s *Education of the Human Race*, Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Krasinsky’s *The Third Kingdom of the Spirit* and Merejkowski’s *The Christianity of the Third Testament* [78], not to forget the latter’s *Jesus the Unknown* [79]. Inspired by Gioacchino, Fr. Baader, Jacob Boehme and even Georges Sand thought, too, about a Third Testament, a third historical epoch.

According to Levi Dowling, the *Aquarian Age* included three phases of consciousness: “consciousness of the omnipotence of God and man; Christ consciousness, or consciousness of Divine Love; consciousness of the Holy Breath, or of Supreme Intelligence” [80].

In the spirit of the above, and recalling Gregory Nazianzen, Evdokimov announced: “A secret germination prepares «the springtime of the Spirit»” [81].

As it was shown (ch. XIX D; XX C1 and C4), in many cases the final texts of the Scriptures comprise prophetic messages, and the *Bible* makes no exception, providing the clue enabling the disclosure of the next aeon. Among the prophecies ending the Old Testament dominated by Yahweh (Father), there is that belonging to Zechariah, who proclaimed the advent of Jesus (Son): “I will bring forth my Servant, the Branch (Sprout)” (3:8). Likewise we can read towards the end of Revelation closing the New Testament: “And the Spirit and the Bride say: «Come». And let him that hears say: «Come». And let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take [the] water of life freely” (22:17). It is a *double indication* pointing to the next Great Avatar: both the (Holy) Spirit and the Bride (ch. XIX D), sending straight to the water of life (Kundalini; ch. XI D), i.e. the Self Realization (Yoga), available to whoever desires it.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* acknowledged: “The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation. But in these «end times» ushered in by the Son’s redeeming Incarnation, the Spirit is revealed and given, recognized and welcomed as a person. Now can this divine plan, accomplished in Christ, the firstborn and head of the new creation, be embodied in mankind by the outpouring of the Spirit...” [82].

The Chancellor of the *Institute of Theology* in Bucharest, Professor Dr. Dumitru Gh. Popescu presented a report on the proceedings of the Ecumenical Council that was held in Canberra (Australia) in 1991 in front of 4,000 participants from whom a number of 800 delegates represented 380 Churches. “The main topic was: «Come, Holy Spirit⁵⁵³ and renew the creation!» Unlike the previous sessions where only the role of the Savior had

⁵⁵³ *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Lat.) became the prayer of the eschatological epiclesis.

been a subject of debate, this time the stress was laid upon the presence of the Holy Spirit that meant the end of a mechanistic concept founded on cause and effect. From that moment, theology had passed on to a new viewpoint centered on the idea of energy. By opening itself to the Holy Spirit the contemporary world has undergone a fundamental breakthrough in its thinking that released itself from the closed, autonomous systems that generated atheism and even communism and embraced the open systems instead.” Another idea was that Orthodoxy has always stressed the dynamic relationship between God and the world, a relation that is “supported by the non-created energies through which God descends in man and man ascends towards God” [83].

NOTES

[1] NHL, *The Gospel of Philip* 55.23-26. [2] Quoted in Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine*, Scholar Press, Aldershot 1987, p.62. [3] Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 107, pp.62-63. [4] Augustine, *Sermones* 189, II, in Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 38, col.1006; also quoted by Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 107, note 52 to p.63. [5] Baring, Cashford, pp.58-60; also pp.302,311,353,609. [6] Gimbutas, *The Goddesses...*, p.147; *The Civilization...*, p.342. [7] Baring, Cashford, illustr. to pp.42,43,84,124,322,323,325,327; Patai, illustr. 7,23. [8] Diodorus Siculus, *Complete Works. Books One & Two* (transl. by Oldfather), W.H. Heinemann, London 1967,1968, pp.359-417. [9] Greaves, Podro, p.105. [10] Homer, *The Odyssey* XV, 160. [11] *Ibid.*, I.431-432; XXII.293-295. [12] Paelian, p.71. [13] Joseph Campbell, *The Inner...*, p.104. [14] Eliade, *Zalmoxis...*, p.94. [15] Baring, Cashford, p.637. [16] *The Zohar* II, 217a, vol. IV, p.238. [17] Schuon, *Gnosis*, p.127. [18] Johannes Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, I, p.450; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.122. [19] *The Talmud*, Hagigah, 15a; Berakhoth, 3a; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.287. [20] Epiphanius, 30.13.6, vol. I, p.130; cf. *The Other Bible*, p.338; also Irenaeus, *A.H.* 30. [21] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, LXXXVIII; also Pseudo-Cyprian, *De Rebaptismate*, 17, *apud* Epiphanius, vol. I, note 31 to p.130. [22] Saeki, § 172, p.43. [23] Baring, Cashford, p.630. [24] Gilles Quispel, *The Birth of the Child*, Spring, Dallas 1973, p.23. [25] Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.213, quoting *The Acts of Thomas*, § 27,49,50. [26] *The Acts of Thomas* § 50. [27] Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 9, part I, § 93, p.45; cf. *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 487, p.323. [28] *Ibid.*, *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 126, note 16 to p.73. [29] *Civilisations, Peoples & Mondes*, Éd. Lydis, Paris 1966-1973, vol. III, p.18, o.t. [30] Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *La Crète ancienne*, V. Lecoffre, Paris 1908, p.105; quotation from Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.288. [31] Baring, Cashford, p.107. [32] *Zend Avesta*, Yašt 10. [33] *Apud* Graves, Podro, p.30. [34] For instance Perkins, p.100. [35] NHL, *The Apocryphon of John* 2.8-9,12-14. [36] In *Chapters on Trinity* (in Russian); *apud* Evdokimov, *Woman...*, pp. 219-220, and note 25. [37] Rev. G. Ouseley, R. Müller, *Das Evangelium des vollkommenen Lebens* 72.10, Bern, 1974, o.t. [38] Levi [Dowling], *The Aquarian...*, 162.5-7,10, p.227; cf. Würtz's commentary, p.135. [39] Levi

[Dowling], *The Aquarian...*, p.11. [40] *Ibid.*, p.9. [41] *Ibid.*, p.6. [42] *Ibid.*, 163.33; p.230. [43] Origen, *The Commentary on the Gospel of John* II.6; cf. Origen, *On Jeremiah, Homilies* XV.4; Resch, Apokryphon 2 [A 14 a and b], p.216; also Graves, Podro, p.467. [44] Origen, *Commentary on Isaiah* IX.9. [45] Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, IV; *apud* Richard J. Clifford, *The Rocky Road to a New Lectionary*, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, Mass. 1996. [46] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Discourse on Mary Theotokos*, 12a, in *The Complete Gospels*, p.430; also in Ron Cameron (editor), *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1982, pp. 85-86. [47] Macarius of Egypt, *Spiritual Homilies* 28.4, in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 34. [48] *Ibid.*, 30.2. [49] Ya'qub ibn Yusuf, *The Redemption of the Shekhinah*, in *Gnosis*, vol. 14 (Winter, 1990), p.55. [50] Hauke, p.293. [51] John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, IV.13 in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 94, col.1145A. [52] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Encyclopedia Press, Copyright 1913; *apud* Christine J. Murray, *Neo-Gnosticism - Sophia - Logos - Christ - Catholic Encyclopedia*. [53] Epiphanius, 53.1.8, vol. II, p.71; cf. 30.17.5, vol. I, p.133; also in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. Elcesaites. [54] Ory, pp.168,245-246. [55] Wilhelm Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, 1906, p.66; reprint Vanderhoek und Ruprecht, Göttingen 1973; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.313. [56] *NHL, The Gospel of Philip* 59.35-60.1. [57] *Ibid.*, 70.22-26. [58] *Ibid.*, 71.16-18. [59] Somerville, p.181. [60] *Apud* Jyoti, *Le nouveau paradigme ou Le jardin des Grenades*, Éd. Publisud, Paris 1998, p.114. [61] Kahlil Gibran, *Broken Wings* (transl. by Anthony Ferris), Citadel Press, New York 1962. [62] Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.328. [63] Evdokimov, *Woman...*, p.261. [64] Schuon, *Gnosis*, p.126. [65] Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.158. [66] *Ibid.*, p.158. [67] *Ibid.*, pp.157-158; emphasis added; cf. pp.156,158-159. [68] Gregory of Nyssa, *Answer to Eunomius' Second Book* 106 (II.419), in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene...*, Series II, vol. V. [69] *Entretiens de S. Séraphim sur le but de la vie chrétienne*; Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.228; emphasis added. [70] Evdokimov, *Woman...*, p. 230. [71] Hauke, p.294. [72] *Ibid.*, p.269. [73] Kniazeff, p.92, o.t. [74] Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, vol. 3, Aubier, Paris 1967, pp.477-527; Jacques Brosse, *Religious Leaders*, Chambers, Edinburgh, New York, Toronto 1991, p.100. [75] Arvind Sharma, p.220. [76] Eliade, *The Myth...*, note 6 to p.145. [77] Couliano, p.259. [78] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, pp.179-180. [79] Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.314. [80] Levi [Dowling], *The Aquarian...*, p.11. [81] Evdokimov, *Woman...*, p.269. [82] *Catechism...*, § 686, p.180. [83] *Curierul Național (National Courier)* (1991, 15 martie), o.t.

XXII. THE POWER OF JESUS

“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him”

Daniel 7:14

We shall start for a short while only to answer a question that maybe it was asked by some inattentive or hurried Scripture readers: How was it possible for the Son of God endowed with all the powers to meet the death on the cross?

Verily, no one was able to cause Him any harm or touch Him. “They cast him forth out of the city, and led him up to the brow of the mountain upon which their city was built, so that they might throw him down to the precipice; but he, passing through the midst of them, went his way” (Luke 4:29-30). “They sought therefore to take him; and no one laid his hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come” (John 7:30; cf. 10:39). “No one took him, for his hour was not yet to come” (8:20). “No one takes it (the life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again” (10:18), i.e. to rise from the dead.

However, we should not forget that the Savior accepted the mission assigned by His Divine Father. Through His free-consented sacrifice to redeem the world, Jesus achieved the opening in the Virata of the Adi Agya chakra, that is of His Gate placed on the Path leading to Resurrection.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT— THE GRACE-GIVING NON-CREATED ENERGY

“Ye will receive a power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you”

Acts 1:8

In his volume dealing with the mystical theology of the Eastern Church, Vladimir Lossky wrote: “That which the western theology calls by the name of the *supernatural* signifies for the East the *uncreated*—the divine energies... In the theology of the Eastern Church... the divinity which the Holy Spirit communicates to men... in making them «partakers of the divine nature⁵⁵⁴»

⁵⁵⁴ *Divinae consortes naturae* (Lat.), 2 Peter 1:4.

in conferring the fire of deity, uncreated grace... The Trinity dwells in us by means of... the energies which are common to the three hypostases, or, in other words, by grace—for it is by this name that we know the deifying energies which the Holy Spirit communicates to us... We remain creatures while becoming God by grace, as Christ remained God in becoming man by the Incarnation... For Eastern spirituality the only way which makes us conformable to Christ is that of the acquisition of the grace which the Holy Spirit confers” [1]. The grace of the Holy Spirit brings along the liberation (*moksha*, Sanskr.): “Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

The Christian Fathers gave the manifestations of God the name of “virtues,” “energies” (*energeiai*, Gr.), and “powers” (*dynámeis*, Gr.) as shown in chapter XXV A. According to Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite “His glory is manifested in the celestial powers, is reflected in man” [2]. “It is by his energies⁵⁵⁵ that we know our God;... his energies descend to us,” said Basil the Great [3] who emphasized the energy aspect (glory, brightness). While referring to Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory Palamas revealed the creative attribute of the Holy Spirit (Power of God or the *Adi Shakti*): “Creation is the task of energy” [4] “His energies, which penetrate everything that exists, that God creates and operates” [5].

Chapter XXV A shall develop the topic above.

B. THE BAPTISM. THE SECOND BIRTH

*“I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said:
«John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized
with [the] Holy Spirit»”*

Acts 11:16 (cf. 1:5)

The words above point out that the Scripture distinguished between two kinds of baptism: *the water baptism* made by John for repentance, and *the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire* made by Jesus which is the real baptism. The Saturday before the Easter is performed the *benedictio fontis* ritual practiced even today in the Catholic Church (its equivalent in the Eastern Church is the “Curative Spring”) that consists of repeating the descent of the Holy Spirit into water (*descens Spiritus Sancti in aquam*, Lat.). Jung made about it the following commentary: “this is exactly the alchemical idea of

⁵⁵⁵ The translator used the term “operations” instead of “energies” (which is more correct).

divine water” [6].

“I will put my Spirit upon him” (Isaiah 42:1; cf. Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28).

These words prophesied Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 12:18; cf. 3:16; Mark 1:10; XXXII Luke 3:22). Savior’s baptism marks the beginning of His activity: “Jesus, full - 1 of [the] Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan” (Luke 4:1; cf. Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12). Immediately after that *true baptism*, He acquired the grace of performing miracles, starting from the place in Galilee whose name, Cana (*qanah*, to acquire, Hebr.) indicates precisely the *acquisition* of the divine powers by the Son of man. “Jesus returned in power of the Spirit to Galilee” (Luke 4:14). Thus, the relation between the Divine Power (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.) and Holy Spirit is confirmed again (ch. XXI). We should remember that Jesus was reluctant in beginning the series of prodigies, therefore He said to His mother: “Mine hour has not yet come” (John 2:4).

The historical moment is described also in the ancient Chinese Christian writings: “After His awakening to «the intelligence of Way», three years and six months thus passed, during which He behaved and practiced so assiduously as to be worthy of a great scribe” [7]. Therefore, Jesus’ public life lasted for three and a half years, a number of a peculiar significance (ch. IX). The text speaks openly about His enlightenment (*Intelligence*) granted through the *awakening* (of the Kundalini) within the Sushumna channel (*Way*).

When Jesus was in the Temple of Jerusalem, “the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders come to Him, and they say to Him: «By what power⁵⁵⁶ doest thou these things? And who gave thee this power, that thou shouldst do these things?» And Jesus answering said to them: «I also will ask you one thing:... The baptism of John, was it of heaven or of men?»” (Mark 11:27-30). Christ’s question remained unanswered, because the priests, scribes and elders failed to understand Him.

The Savior told His disciples: “Ye will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you” (Acts 1:8). While waiting for the day of Pentecost, Jesus announced: “I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city till ye will be clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Actually, the *power from on high* came from the promised Comforter, the Spirit of truth (manifestation of the Holy Spirit; ch. XXI), as Christ have said: “And I will beg the Father, and he will gave you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16-17). “He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall announce [it] to you” (16:14).

The baptism ritual with water represented a deviation from the Jewish

⁵⁵⁶ Or *authority*.

tradition of flesh sacrifice as a sign of the covenant concluded between God and Abraham: “every male among you be circumcised” (Genesis 17:10).

The immersion into water originated in India and is still practiced by the XXII Hindus as fervently as it was thousands of years ago. Manu’s second book of – 2 laws dealing with the sacraments, refers to the command of pouring holy water on a new-born baby before cutting the umbilical cord; then while uttering mantras, a mixture of honey, *ghee* i.e. clarified butter (reminding of the amrut; ch. XV E) and salt was put on his/her tongue using a golden spoon. This practice is also in use throughout India today. The *Atharva-Veda* read: “Whoever has not been cleansed after birth with the Ganges’ water of forgiveness while uttering mantras, will suffer as many wanderings as the number of years spent in uncleanness.” Obviously, the *wanderings* signified punitive reincarnations of the spirit.

Prophet Zechariah was known to baptize with water over the pre-Christian period, when Darius ruled. Before Christians, the Essenes, too, practiced the water baptism through immersion. Josephus informs us that they assemble themselves together into one place; and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they then bathe their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they every one meet together in a place of their own, into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter [8].

However, what made John’s baptism unique was the moral purification implied beyond the immersion ritual.

“John... [was] preaching [the] baptism of repentance” (Luke 3:3; cf. Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:4). Actually, he said: “I indeed baptize you with water to repentance, but He that comes after me... shall baptize you with [the] Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; John 1:33). Also Acts distinguish between the two kinds of baptism: “Repent, and be baptized each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38). The disciples “prayed for them that they might receive [the] Holy Spirit; for He was not yet fallen upon any of them, only they were baptized for the name of the Lord Jesus” (8:15-16).

It is a known fact that not only water but also fire have cleansing powers, a fact acknowledged not only in Hinduism and other ideologies but also in the Old Testament. “[I] will thoroughly purge away⁵⁵⁷ thy dross, and take away all thine alloy⁵⁵⁸” (Isaiah 1:25). “And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried” (Zechariah 13:9). “I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by fire” (Revelation 3:18). These sentences inspired to the Catholic Church the

⁵⁵⁷ Or: “melt out with alkali” (in other versions).

⁵⁵⁸ Or: “lead,” anything mixed with the silver ore (ibid.).

invention of Purgatory as well as the tortures by fire culminating with burning alive of the “heretics” in order to “purify” them by force. We have to go beyond that primitive level of understanding just literally the *Bible*, in order to grasp the deep significance of the Scripture.

Christ announced: “I have come to cast a fire on the earth; and what will I if already it has been kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it shall have been accomplished” (Luke 12:49-50).

XXII As it had been stated (ch. XI E), the *fire* is a metaphor for the Kundalini.
 - 3 Indeed, that was the meaning of the above texts from Isaiah, Zechariah and Revelation. Edsman wrote about the Eastern and Judeo-Christian symbolism of putting somebody to fire, like the fire baptism in primitive Christianity and Gnosticism [9].

On the other side, the “fire baptism” syntagma used in a specific sense today, originally referred to the martyrdom of Christians sent to death for their belief. It was a substitute of the water baptism that they had not had time to receive.

The Old Testament mentioned the sprinkling with water. The Lord says: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your uncleanness; from all your uncleanness will I cleanse you” (Ezekiel 36:25). The text goes on, becoming more specific: “I will put my Spirit within you” (36:27; cf. Joel 2:28; Isaiah 42:1). Jesus adopted a clear position towards baptism that could not be devoid of the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Savior distinguished neatly His baptism from John’s that was performed with water to repentance: “John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit after not so many days” (Acts 1:5; cf. 11:16), thus proclaiming the extraordinary event of the Pentecost. No doubt, the *power* bestowed through baptism was the result of the Holy Spirit descended on the baptized person. Consequently, through Self Realization the recipient becomes a *twice-born* (*dvija*, Sanskr.) or *enlightened* (*buddha*) human being as a result of the Kundalini awakening. If truth has to be told, Justin Martyr acknowledged that reasoning when referred to the authentic baptism: “And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings” [10]. Justin uses the same word, *photismós* (illumination, Gr.) as the Eleusinian Mysteries did to describe the getting of the holies of the holies after the “descent into the underworld” (*katábasis*, Gr.).

The ancient version of Jesus’ baptism existing in the *Codex Cantabrigiensis D* confirms that baptism was a second birth: “Thou art my Son, on this day I have given thee birth” (*huiós mou ei su egó sémeron gegénneká se*, Gr.) [11], instead of the distorted canonical text of Luke 3:22 (ch. XX B). Thus, *Codex D* reminds the Psalmist: “Thou art my Son; I this

day have begotten thee” (2:7). According to Justin (with Merejkowski’s specifications in brackets): “His (Jesus) birth (the second) had to be accomplished for the sake of men, at that moment when their knowledge (*gnósis*) of him began” [12].

The *Gospel of Philip* refers to the same topic: “The world will not receive truth in any other way. There is a rebirth and an image of rebirth. It is certainly necessary to be born again through the image. Which one? Resurrection. The image must rise again through the image. The bridal chamber and the image must enter through the image into truth: this is the restoration... The Lord [did] everything in a mystery, a baptism and a chrism and a eucharist and a redemption and a bridal chamber” [13]. To make things more clear, the gospel went on: “Baptism is «the holy» building. Redemption is «the holy of the holies»⁵⁵⁹. «The holy of the holiest» is the bridal chamber. Baptism includes the resurrection [and the] redemption; the redemption (takes place) in the bridal chamber. But the bridal chamber is in that which is superior to [...]” [14]. “Those called «the holy of the holies» [...] the veil was rent [...] bridal chamber except the image [...] above. Because of this its veil was rent from top to bottom. For it was fitting for some from below to go upward” [15]. As previously shown (ch. XX C4) the Sahasrara or Kingdom of heavens is nothing but *the bridal chamber*, or *the holy of the holies*, placed on the *top* of all chakras, actually of the whole body (the *image* is now the subtle body, then the Kundalini) because it is placed on the head top. The *rent of the veil* is the awakening (*resurrection*) of the Kundalini (*some from below*—since it is at the bottom of the spinal cord) *to go upwards* until it reaches the Sahasrara. This is the *redemption* that occurs in the *bridal chamber*. Indeed, that is the meaning of the *baptism* that comprises both *resurrection* and *redemption*. We should add that the Valentinian baptistery was called *nymphaeon*, the bridal room.

Unlike India, the baptism of the newborn babies was a relatively late ritual in Christianity. Originally, the baptism was performed once a year, on the eve of Easter (see *supra*). It was preceded by a fasting period lasting 40 days aiming at the purification of the catechumen (*katechoumenos*, XXI I called/instructed in a loud voice, Gr.), the one who was prepared to receive – 4 baptism. The ritual itself (see also ch. XX C4) included a number of exorcising techniques (breaking away from Satan), and then the cross sign was made on the forehead, salt was put into the mouth (see *supra* the Hindu custom). The priest blew over the candidate’s face, touched his/hers lips with saliva, and anointed his/her chest and back. On the day of the third exorcism, the candidate said the *Lord’s Prayer* (or else the *Creed* appeared later on)

⁵⁵⁹ *Qadesh Ha-Qadashim* (Hebr.), the residence of the Shekinah, the female aspect of God (ch. XX B).

then was completely immersed into a special pool.

Some of those practices might have had at their origin the high significance familiar with the persons having got their true Self Realization (yogis). When, however, literally taken from the dogma without a proper understanding and mechanically applied by persons in whom the Kundalini is still dormant, such techniques are devoid of any meaning and value, just as it happens in the ordinary baptism that has become an empty ritual. The breathing over the face reminds the Kundalini awakening manifested as a breeze or breath felt, however, on the top of the head and in the center of the palms! We have explained (ch. XIX C) that *Lord's Prayer* is a powerful mantra, but it acts only for the opening of one chakra (Agya). The touching on the chest and back (on the chakras, actually) has the same purpose, but when a person who is not realized performs the gesture, it has no effect whatever. Evdokimov had a good reason when writing: "The way will only be opened through the baptism *ex Spiritu Sancto*" [16]. The way is the Sushumna, and its opening requires enlightenment of all the chakras through the Kundalini awakening.

In contradiction with Dionysius who saw in baptism just "purification," others refer to "baptism, which is called an «illumination»" [17].

The Gnostics were aware of the distinction between the so-called baptism, a ceremony performed by individuals devoid of the divine grace and the genuine baptism to whom they attributed a *spiritual* dimension, calling it "baptism of truth": "The baptism of Truth is something else" [18]. Christians think that baptism guarantees them the salvation. On the other hand, the Gnostics showed: "this, therefore, is the true testimony: when man knows himself, and God who is over the truth, he will be saved" [19]. Physical rituals are irrelevant; baptism does not make a Christian. The *Gospel of Philip* wrote that many people "go down into the water and come up without having received anything and says: «I am Christian»" [20]. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, used to declare: "The perfect Gnosis... is acquired through baptism and Holy Spirit enlightenment" [21]. The Paulicians repudiated baptism, which they interpreted symbolically. Lemerle explained that it was due to Jesus' baptism "with [the] Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; John 1:33) [22]. The Gnostics in Bosnia (also known as Patarini) denied the "Roman" baptism with water, too, and replaced it by a "baptism of the Book."

The emerging out from water (original cosmic matrix) after immersion symbolizes the second birth from which resulted a purified being connected to the divine source of new life. It is the liberation from the earthly state and the rebirth of the spirit into a pure body. The Kundalini is the living water (ch. XI D) that Jesus and the Gnostics (ch. XX C4) told about. It was already

stated (ch. XV D) that the second birth means getting the breeze of the Kundalini similar to the biological birth triggering the breath (start of the respiration). Likewise, the first cry of the newborn repeats the Primordial Sound of the Creation.

With some Native American tribes, the second birth was linked to the cult of Mother Earth. Prophet Smohalka from the Umatilla tribe described the ritual where it was said: “Shall I ever enter Her body to be born again?” [23].

That was also the dilemma of Nicodemus who was told by Jesus: “«Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except any one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God». Nicodemus says to him: «How can a man be born being old? Can he enter a second time into the womb of his mother and be born?» Jesus answered: «Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except any one be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God⁵⁶⁰. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit»” (John 3:3-6). Jesus rhetorically emphasized the lack of knowledge of Nicodemus (3:10), who was, though, a notable person among the Pharisees: “Thou art the teacher of Israel and knoweth not these things?” Then He went on—thus dispelling any doubt about the deep, hidden meaning of His words: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee. We speak that which we know, and we bear witness that which we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not, how, if I say the heavenly things to you, will ye believe?” (3:11-12). André Scrima records the following variant of the text: “be born from the high” (3:7) that he interprets as “from above the head” (*as-samth*, Arab.; from which originates *zenith*), explaining that “«be born anew» means to find the way of *zenith*... You may be born again only if being born from the high” [24]. However, *the way of zenith* is the Sushumna channel leading up to the Sahasrara (*zenith*, culmination of the subtle body).

The *Gospel of Philip* wrote: “Spirit mingles with spirit, and thought consorts with thought, and [light] shares [with light. If you (*singular*)] are born a human being, it is [the human being] who will love you. If you become [a spirit], it is the spirit which will be joined to you. If you become thought, it is thought which will mingle with you. If you become light, it is light which will share with you” [25]. The rebirth is the birth out of Spirit, that is the enlightenment granted by the Kundalini as the manifestation of the former. In order to remove any trace of doubt about its significance, after speaking of the second birth (John 3:7) Jesus continued by mentioning the breeze felt by everyone when the Kundalini has been awakened (ch. XI C): “The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not

⁵⁶⁰ It means that the Self Realization (end of the *samsara* cycle, or immortality) is granted only through the rebirth (spiritual birth).

whence it comes and where it goes: thus is every one that is born of the Spirit” (3:8). After which He reminded Moses lifting up the serpent (3:14), which clearly depicted the rising of the Kundalini (ch. IX).

In Eckhart’s views, it is only through the God’s grace that man might be transformed into a new being and, thus, to return to God [26].

Bruno Würtz [27] underlined that the two thousand years dominated by the Christian clergy proved the inability of the Church to transform the individual. The author warns about the imperative of “being born anew,” as humankind’s **unique alternative: alter-nativ**—born otherwise (Lat.), of Spirit not of flesh.

C. THE HEALINGS

“Jesus coming up spoke to them, saying: «All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth»”

Matthew 28:18

The prophets acquired the power to perform miracles through the Spirit of God (ch. XI A). The Old Testament mentioned the examples of Eliyah’s wonder of the meal and the oil that did not waste (1 Kings 17:14-16), the similar miracle of Elisha (2 Kings 4:2-6), who also multiplied the loaves of barley (4:42-44), and even the cases of resurrection performed by Eliyah (1 Kings 17:22) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35).

The prophets had announced the Messiah’s healings: “Strengthen the weak hands and confirm the tottering knees. Say to them that are of a timid heart: «Be strong, fear not»” (Isaiah 35:3-4). Indeed, Sahaja Yoga has proved experimentally that the fear brings about the catch of the chakra placed at the heart level. Isaiah followed: “He will come himself, and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped; then the lame [man] leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (35:4-6).

The Savior spoke about His powers that were felt by the people around Him. When a woman suffering of hemophilia woman (*haimorroúsa*, Gr.) touched Him, “Immediately Jesus, knowing in himself the power that had gone out of him, turning round in the crowd said: «Who has touched my clothes?»” (Mark 5:30). “Someone has touched me, for I have known that power has gone out from me” (Luke 8:46). And the woman was immediately healed (8:47). “All the crowd sought to touch him, for power went out from him and healed all” (6:19).

However, Christ interdicted His touching in other occurrences, as just after His resurrection when addressing to Mary Magdalene: “Jesus says to

her: «Touch me not»” (John 20:17). That interdiction of *Noli me tangere* XXII (Lat.) gave place to several interpretations (ch. XXIII B). Nevertheless, after - 5 some time He allowed to be touched by the apostles: “Handle me and see” XXII (Luke 24:39). “Bring thy hand and put it into my side” (John 20:27). - 7 Permission was also granted to worthy women. “And they coming up took him by feet and did him homage” (Matthew 28:9).

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, “many strewed their clothes on the way” XXII (Mark 11:8; Matthew 21:8; Luke 19:36) to be touched by the feet of the Son - 6 of man. A remarkable fact is that in India, even today, people uses to spread saris and other garments and clothes in the way of the saints.

An ancient Chinese Christian text wrote: “the Messiah continued to do good deeds and put forth more «energy» than ever” [28].

Jesus imparted that power to the authorized persons. “The glory which thou hast given me I have given them” (John 17:22). “As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (17:18). Therefore, Jesus “sent into the world” seventy disciples to whom He said: “Heal the sick in it” (Luke 10:9). When they returned filled of joy, “he said to them: «... Behold, I give you the power... and nothing shall in anywise injure you»” (10:17-19). As for the twelve apostles, Christ “sent them to preach, and to have power [to heal diseases]” (Mark 3:15). The Savior disclosed it to them that the *power* was due to the Holy Spirit that they would receive themselves (on the Pentecost): “Ye will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you” (Acts 1:8) and indeed, after that day, “many wonders⁵⁶¹ and signs⁵⁶² took place through the apostles’ means” (2:43).

We have seen on many instances that the moment of the Self Realization signifying the receiving of the *power* (*Adi Shakti*, Sanskr.) or the Holy Spirit’s grace stood for “the second birth,” Enlightenment or Resurrection that was the Avatar’s purpose coming on this earth. “I am come down from heaven, not that I should do my will, but the will of him that has sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up in the Last Day” (John 6:38-39). It was not by chance that before His arrest and death—that meant at the same time and especially the *Resurrection*—Christ addressed His Father the following words: “Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son... as thou hast given him power⁵⁶³ over all flesh... He should give them life eternal” (John 17:1-2).

⁵⁶¹ *Térata* (plural; *téras*, singular, Gr.).

⁵⁶² *Semeía* (plural; *semeión*, singular, Gr.).

⁵⁶³ Or *authority*.

The power was transmitted by stretching out the hands (ch. XI C) or by touching. The ancient initiates knew about it and the Yogis had been practicing it for thousands of years.

“Yahweh said to Moses: «... thou shalt lay thy hand upon him»” (Numbers 27:18; cf. 27:23). “Moses had laid his hands upon him” (Deuteronomy 34:9).

Jesus used to do the same. “Laying his hands on a few infirm persons he healed [them]” (Mark 6:5). “There were brought to him little children that he might lay his hands on them and pray” (Matthew 19:13; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15). “As many as had persons sick with divers diseases, brought them to him, and having laid his hands on every one of them, he healed them” (Luke 4:40). “All that were ill... besought him that they might only touch his garment; and as many as touched were made thoroughly well” (Matthew 14:36; Mark 3:10; Luke 6:19). Over a leper, Jesus “stretched out his hand and touched him, saying: «I will; be cleansed». And immediately his leprosy was cleansed” (Matthew 8:3; Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13). For healing Peter’s mother-in-law, Christ “touched her hand, and the fever left her” (Matthew 8:15; Mark 1:31). Jairus’ daughter was resurrected when “he went in and took her hand; and the damsel rose up” (Matthew 9:25; Mark 5:41; Luke 8:54-55). To heal
 XXI I two blind men “he touched their eyes,... and their eyes were open” (Matthew
 - 9 9:29-30). “They bring to him a deaf [man] who could not speak right, and they beseech him that he might lay his hand on him. And having taken him away from the crowd apart, he put his fingers to his ears” (Mark 7:32-33).

The disciples were using the same gesture learned from Christ, who proclaimed: “These signs shall follow those that have believed: in my name...
 XXI I they shall lay hands upon the infirm, and they shall be well” (Mark 16:17-18).
 - 10 “By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders done among the people” (Acts 5:12). “The Lord ... gave witness to the world of his grace, giving signs and wonders to be done by their hands” (14:3; cf. 19:11). “They laid their hands upon them, and they received [the] Holy Spirit” (8:17). “Having prayed, they laid their hands on them” (6:6; cf. 9:17; 13:3). The epistles also refer to the “imposition of hands... ; and this will we do if God permit” (Hebrews 6:2-3). These are only a few out of many examples. The mentioning of Jesus’ name or the prayers corresponded to what the Hindus call *mantras* (ch. XV D). Actually, Jesus has announced those who acquired the grace: “I say to you: All things whatsoever ye pray for and ask, believe that ye receive it, and it shall come to pass for you” (Mark 11:24).

Jesus’ followers were making mysterious movements with their hands that remained without meaning for everyone else. “Alexander, beckoning with his hand, would have made a defense to the people” (Acts 19:33). It was perhaps a gesture of protection similar to the *bandhan* with the help of their hands. The latter is chiefly used to avoid the *contamination* with harmful entities (ch.

XXII D) while transmitting vibrations to another person. Those who declare themselves “healers” but who are unauthorized by the Divine overlook any protection and that’s why they transmit—from one sick individual to another—the catches (negativity, evil entities), which have been at the root of the disease. Without knowing, they become carriers of such “germs” very much more dangerous than the microorganisms generating contagious diseases (ch. XXII D).

The New Testament mentions other examples of the hand movements (Acts 13:16; 21:40; cf. Romans 10:21). While analyzing the real effect of those techniques, Mircea Eliade wrote: “If miracles have been so rare since the appearance of Christianity, the blame rests not on Christianity but on Christians” [29].

The *Zohar* reminds of the “ten celestial powers, the «ten potentates which are found in the city» (Ecclesiastes 7:19), namely, the ten supernal beings who are appointed over the «spreading of hands⁵⁶⁴», to receive the blessings or prayers offered therewith, and to endow them with a power through which the holy name⁵⁶⁵ is glorified and blessed from below... And these «ten potentates» will take of the blessings above, and pour them down upon him who is below. Therefore when man lifts up his hands to heaven, he must be careful... “ [30]. The *potentates* or *celestial powers* are no other than the deities ruling over the sephiroth, i.e. the chakras.

The *Manual of the Inquisitor* by Bernard Guy shows that the neophytes Cathari were “initiated into their sect and into their order by the laying on of the hands effected according to their rites” [31].

Modern medical science is known to have reached a high level of specialization: for skin diseases we go to see a dermatologist, to heal our heart we attend a cardiologist and so forth. If things are going to continue, we shall soon call in one doctor for the left hand rheumatism and another doctor for the right hand rheumatism! This approach seems to ignore the man as a whole and the fact that the disease is the result of disturbing a harmony that is not only an intrinsic but also an extrinsic one, since the human being is part of a structure and finally integrated into the assembly of the creation (ch. II). As early as many thousands of years, the Eastern peoples were knowledgeable of that integrative (holistic) concept. Such an example is the Ayurvedic medical science relying on the holy texts of the *Vedas*.

Würtz analyzed the concept of *ek-sistere* (Lat.) to draw the conclusion that health could not be obtained by *staying outside* but only through integration. *Existing* means disease, while *being* is redemption. *To be redeemed* means

⁵⁶⁴ Ch. XI C.

⁵⁶⁵ Adonai.

not to exist but to be one with the being [32] (with the Self, we should say).

Yoga acknowledges that all the diseases have a common cause, namely the loss of the subtle balance of energy. By removing the deficiency at the level of the chakras and energy channels, the cause is annihilated and the disease disappears. The problem is rather simple but the patient needs to have his/her Kundalini energy awakened. Recently, a book presenting different treatments through Sahaja Yoga has appeared under the title of *Medical Science Enlightened* [33]. Its author is Professor Umesh C. Rai (MD, PhD), a worldwide distinguished personality who is the director of the Sahaja Yoga Research and Health Center in Belapur, India. A medical team organized by Dr. Ramesh Manocha is performing similar researches in Australia. Other studies on Sahaja Yoga treatments were achieved in the United Kingdom and Russia. Symposiums on Sahaja Yoga therapy are held in Russia every year since 1993. The *Romanian Journal of Acupuncture* published several papers recording medical researches using Sahaja Yoga methods [34]. Other studies were presented on the 11th National Acupuncture Congress (Bucharest, June 4-6, 1998) and appeared in a volume devoted to complementary therapies [35].

Daniel Goleman wrote: "In 1984 the National Institute of Health (NIH) released a consensus report that recommended meditation (along with salt and dietary restrictions) above prescription drugs as the first treatment for mild hypertension. The official report was a catalyst in the spread of meditation and other relaxation techniques as treatments in medicine and psychotherapy" [36]. George Patrick, Ph.D., Chief of Recreational and Rehabilitation Therapy of National Institute of Health, Washington, DC, called Sahaja Yoga a "complementary medicine" and added: "NIH believes in energy medicine and complementary medicines and sees the powerful role of spirituality in the healing process. Sahaja Yoga is fine for prevention and good health" [37].

The results of a poll in 1997 showed that "94% of HMO executives believe prayer, meditation, or other spiritual practices can help medical treatment. 83 percent of HMO executives said relaxation and meditation should be a standard part of formal medical training" [38]. William Collinge, Ph.D., wrote about "evidence that meditation has immune-enhancing effects. For example, medical students who meditated during final exams had a higher percentage of «T-helper cells», the immune cells that trigger the immune system into action. Nursing-home residents trained in meditation had increased activity of «natural-killer cells», which kill bacteria and cancer cells. They also had reductions in the activity of viruses and of emotional distress. Cancer patients have also experienced the benefits of meditation. In one study, patients with metastatic (spreading) cancer who meditated with imagery regularly for a year had a significant increases in natural-killer cell

activity” [39].

Long time ago Galenus Claudius was guided by the principle “*Sanitas est simetria, morbum autem ametria*” (Health is symmetry, and disease is asymmetry, Lat.). *Symmetry* and *asymmetry* refer to the distribution—balanced or not—of the energy within the subtle body.

Before him, Plato wrote: “Now, every one can see whence diseases arise. There are four natures out of which the body is compacted, earth and fire and water and air⁵⁶⁶, and the unnatural excess or defect of these, or the change of any of them from its own nature place into another, or—since there are more kinds there are one of fire and of the other elements—the assumption by any of these of a wrong kind, or any similar irregularity, produces disorders and diseases for when any of them is produced or changed in a manner contrary to nature, the parts which were previously cool grow warm, and those who were dry become moist, and the light become heavy, and the heavy light; all sorts of changes occur” [40]. The commentary accompanying the text read: “The principle lying at the basis of almost the whole Greek medicine acknowledged that health is the result of a balance of the ultimate elements constituting the body” [41]. We can easily see here the concepts customary in Yoga and other traditional techniques (acupuncture etc.) claiming that any disease results from the excess or deficit of energy (energy unbalance) within the chakras (referred here through the elements) or side channels designated through the opposites: cool-warm, dry-moist etc. (ch. II).

Sahaja Yoga has been using the power of the natural elements (Earth, Fire, Water, Air) in its techniques, some of which having already been mentioned in this book (e.g. in ch. XV C etc.). The vibratory energy could be transferred to the water, oil and other food ingredients (ch. XV E, XIX C) that are either taken in or applied on the skin of the patient.

To heal the deaf man who could hardly speak, Jesus “having spit, He touched his tongue” (Mark 7:33) and He did the same to cure the blind man in Bethsaida (8:23). The disciples “anointed with oil many infirms, and healed them” (Mark 6:13). “Is any sick among you?... let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of [the] Lord” (James 5:14). Actually, it is a common practice for Yogis to associate mantras to their specific healing techniques (ch. XV D). “Lord... only speak a word, and my servant shall be healed” (Matthew 8:8). “The prayer of faith shall heal the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” (James 5:15). “[The] fervent supplication of the righteous [man] has much power” (5:16).

The Islam tradition has spoken of *ar-Rukya*, the Divine Speech recited as

⁵⁶⁶ A noticeable fact is that Plato enumerates them precisely in the sequence of their corresponding chakras: Mooladhara (Earth), Swadhsthana (Fire), Nabhi (Water), Anahatha (Air).

a means of curing disease. For instance, the treatment is performed by reciting the surah *al-Fatihah* or any other surah of the *Qur'an*, and then by blowing one's breath with saliva over a sick person's body part. The water utilized by Muhammad to wash himself was revered as hallowed and put to use as such [42].

Christian tradition mentioned the *healing source* (the Orthodox Christians have a special festival when water is "hallowed" and the Catholic Church use the "holy" water too). That water, as well as some springs which did not possess properties confirmed by the official medical science, were considered to have healing properties. In fact, any water reputed as "holy" is devoid of any specific properties unless in presence of an authorized source of subtle energy. The Orphic tradition told about a fountain that granted eternal life to the sons of heaven and earth belonging to the celestial race [43]. The Irish legend of the Mag Tuiread battle mentioned a miraculous fountain where wounded warriors from the tribe of the Goddess Danaan (*Ancient, Irish*) were immersed in order to recover. The same tradition was connected to the fountain in Glanum (southern Gaul) being, otherwise, spread in all the Celtic countries, particularly Brittany, and Virgin Mary (*Notre Dame*) is believed to protect this fountain. The Mimir fountain of the Germanic peoples had the water of knowledge in its depth and was so much appreciated that Odhinn sacrificed one eye to be allowed to drink from its water of knowledge and prophecy. This last quality implied a direct reference to the Holy Spirit.

As in early times, there also exists a category of "healers" today. Some of them are just charlatans; but if you have fallen into their hands you can consider yourself lucky because they have taken only your money and your loss is no greater than this. But others are quite dangerous. They really do have some powers but these do not come from God. Through their powers, they will bind you to evil entities that will no longer leave, using you as a tool for their damnable purposes and endangering your chances of salvation. Their way has got a name that frightens those who are well informed—it is the *magic (smashan vidya, Sanskr.)*! Through their damned science they manage to attract the dead souls and introduce them into the patient's body. Once settled there, the dead spirit will take full control over the body and perhaps the latter will be cured, only to become a better instrument for the evil entity. But what price would be paid for it? Certainly, things will not end up here. The miserable creature fallen victim to the evil spirit will start living a double life. His own spirit is no longer the master of his body; now the new master is the evil entity. The man will start hearing voices that belong to the ghost inside. He will perceive things induced by the dead entity, that psychiatry calls hallucinations—they may pertain to the hearing, smell, touch, sight etc. His senses no longer belong to him but to "the other one." The patient, having

been cured by his former disease, will have the mischance to become a patient again, only, this time, he will be incurable. The disease is called schizophrenia and is characterized as a “double personality.” What we have described above is exactly what is happening. The “healers” are actually those who cause—by their actions—mental and spiritual disorders. The various religions have been aware of such manifestations and called them possessions. They will be more largely referred to in the followings.

D. THE EXORCISM

“In my name they shall cast out demons”

Mark 16:17 (cf. Luke 10:17; Acts 16:18; 19:13)

Occult practices using dead spirits (ghosts) were condemned by all the great religions (ch. XV C).

The priests in the Old Testament were forbidden to touch the dead or even come close to them. Jesus told a disciple: “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22). “God is not God of [the] dead, but of [the] living” (Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38). Wherefrom the saying: “the living with the living ones and the dead with the dead ones.” Later we shall see that unclean spirits are attracted to graveyards.

The spirits of the deceased are to go to a place that has been reserved for them (*preta*⁵⁶⁷ *loka*, Sanskr.) or the collective subconscious (*para loka* or *bhoot*⁵⁶⁸ *loka*, Sanskr.). Clearly, this designated not at all a certain *space*, being rather a *state* of the divine Creation that included the All. Evdokimov explains: “the surroundings of the Kingdom are not places but states and spiritual worlds” [44]. Christ Himself declared: “In my Father’s house there are many abodes” (John 14:2). He also said: thou “shalt be brought down to hell⁵⁶⁹” (Matthew 11:23). Clement of Alexandria wrote: “there are various abodes, according to the worth of those who have believed” [45]. The Old Testament calls the place of the dead *Sheol* (Job 7:9-10; Psalms 16:10; 30:3; Proverbs 30:16; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isaiah 28:15 etc.). “Art thou brought down

⁵⁶⁷ *Preta* (ghost, Sanskr.).

⁵⁶⁸ *Bhoot* (wandering soul, Sanskr.).

⁵⁶⁹ Hades, in some versions.

to Sheol” (Isaiah 14:15⁵⁷⁰), that is the prophecy about Jesus’ descent in the inferno (*limbo*, Lat.) similar to Orpheus’. On this occurrence (14:16), too, it appeared the syntagma “Is this the man” used by Pilate (in John 19:5) to designate Jesus: “*Ecce homo*” (Behold the man!, Lat.). Actually, in almost all the mythologies the divinities have dominion over all the three regions (states) of the Creation: the lower one (subterranean, infernal, belonging to malefic creatures), the median one (terrestrial, destined to the humans beings) and the superior, supreme one (celestial, of the Divine). The Old Testament wrote that “the shades” (*rephaim*, Hebr.; Job 26:5) descend in Sheol, in the depth.

It is worth noticing Jesus’ connection with the extremes (sometimes called the *Beginning* and the *End*) of the evolution Path: *infernus* (the place below, of the depth, Lat.) that is the bottom of the Sushumna, the Mooladhara chakra and, its opposite, the *limbic* zone (*limbus*, margin, Lat.; in botany that is the wider part of the leaf, petal, sepal)—seat of the Sahasrara. They both are governed by the Son Principle: Ganesha-Adam (Mooladhara), and Kalki (Sahasrara), the Alpha and Omega, respectively.

Some of the dead spirits (*bhoots*) were extremely attached to their former earthly life and they wish to continue with and so they penetrate into the body of a living person where they live as parasites and disturb the person’s own Spirit. Other disembodied spirits (ghosts) are invoked and used by those who practice magic; many of the latter are false gurus, masters of occult sciences, spiritualists and so-called healers. They have always existed and are not the exclusive product of modern times. Last but not least, there exists the demonic spirits who may also become incarnated. Jesus told the apostles: “«Of you one is a devil». Now He spoke of Judas [the son] of Simon, Iscariote” (John 6:70-71). The New Testament contained precise references to the struggle “against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual [power] of wickedness in the heavenlies” (Ephesians 6:12).

Cain was the first possessed man mentioned in the *Bible*. Actually, his name, *Qain* comes from *qanah* (possess, Hebr.), which fully explained the fratricide perpetrated by him (Genesis 4:8).

The *Book of Enoch* wrote: “evil spirits shall they be upon earth” [46].

Besides the *Bible*, references to the possession by the dead ghosts and their exorcism can be found also with the Talmudic literature and Josephus Flavius [47] as well as in later developments of the Kabbalah and Hasidism (see *infra*).

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Supreme Being talks about those “whose minds are carried away... and who partake of the nature of demons” [48]. The *Bible* provided the relationship between demonic possession and madness: “He has

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. Isaiah 14:9,11; Ezekiel 32:21 etc.

a demon and raves” (John 10:20).

Schuon shows that according to Islam, “lunatics are living-dead, most often a pray to dark influences” [49]. A person possessed by an evil spirit (*jinn*, Arab.) is called *majunn* (Arab.).

In his *Faust* Goethe refers to possession: “Two souls, alas, are housed within my breast” (*Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust*, Germ.) [50]. However, as stated above, that is exactly the schizophrenia described by the psychiatrists as a “double personality.”

Paracelsus used to define the mental disorders as *passio* or *morbus animi* (spiritual suffering or disease, Lat.) and the same did Jung [51]. In order to uncover the relation between the dead entities and the violence displayed by the diseased in mind, Jung emphasized on the etymological link existing between *Geist* (ghost, Germ.), *gast* (Anglo-Saxon), *aghost*, the northern *geisa* (furious being), *usgaisyan* (to go out of one’s mind, Gothic), *Wust* (anger, Germ.) and eventually, the possession [52]. He also referred to “a lunatic asylum... or a crowd in a collective possession,” adding that “there is not much difference between them because the madman... is moved by impersonal, overwhelming forces” [53]. He considered that “consciousness hedged about by psychic powers, sustained or threatened or deluded by them, is the age-old experience of mankind” [54], in other words he referred to what the religions call *deities* and *demons*, respectively. When talking of the divine archetypes, Jung said with greatest awe that they “were, and still are, living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously, and they have a strange way of making sure of their effect. Always they were the bringers of protection and salvation; their violation has at its consequence the «perils of the soul» known to us from the psychology of primitives. Moreover, they are unfailing causes of neurotic and even psychotic⁵⁷¹ disorders, behaving exactly like neglected or maltreated physical organs or organic functional systems” [55]. “I always advise my patients to take such obvious but invincible nonsense as the manifestation of a power and a meaning that they have not yet understood” [56]. The great psychologist saw the connection between the subtle body and psyche, in full agreement with “the philosophers, or the «sons of wisdom»⁵⁷² as they called themselves... By «spirit» they understood a semimaterial pneuma, a sort of a «subtle body»” [57].

All supernatural (extrasensory) powers (*siddhi*, Sanskr.) that are the object of *parapsychology* are nothing but the effects produced by *parasite dead entities*. The practitioners of magic, spiritualism and other occult techniques are able to acquire such powers and may transmit them to the persons either

⁵⁷¹ Schizophrenia, paranoia, psychosis like the maniacal-depressive syndrome etc.

⁵⁷² I.e. the Gnostics.

attracted toward such anti-divine deeds or dominated by the former. Among these there are the visionary powers (*drishti siddhi*, Sanskr.), the oratory powers (*vani siddhi*, Sanskr.), the above-mentioned “healing” powers, voyages into the astral plane, trance, telepathy, hypnosis the feeling of transcendence (power to stop the cerebral activity, evidently having no connection with thoughtless awareness), which mainly interests those practicing transcendental meditation, etc. The presupposed “heredity” of the schizophrenia originates, too, in a possession: the dead entity of a relative becomes the parasite of the closest living individual. The hypotheses promoted by some psychiatrists who try to offer an explanation of the phenomena are wholly unconvincingly, while honest psychiatry treatises are less categorical and more hesitant, and talk of a hereditary *vulnerability*.

Taking into account just the simple relation established between the mental-ill patient and the medical staff (doctor, nurse), Jung declared that as far as the latter is concerned, “the patient influences him unconsciously none the less, and brings about changes in the doctor’s unconscious which are well known to many psychotherapist: psychic disturbances or even injuries peculiar to the profession, a striking illustration of the patient’s almost «chemical» action... But the effects are often much more subtle, and their nature can best be conveyed by the old idea of the demon of sickness. According to this, a sufferer can transmit his disease to a healthy person whose powers then subdue the demon—but not without impairing the well-being of the subduer... The stage of transformation is grounded on these facts, but it took more than twenty-five years of wide practical experience for them to be clearly recognized. Freud himself has admitted their importance and has therefore seconded my demand for the analysis of the analyst” [58]. “The doctor, by voluntarily and consciously taking over the psychic sufferings of the patient, exposes himself to the overpowering contents of the unconscious and hence also to their inductive action” [59]. “It is inevitable that the doctor should be influenced to a certain extent and even that his nervous health should suffer. He quite literally «takes over» the sufferings of his patient and shares them with him. For this reason he runs a risk—and must run in the nature of things. The effects of this on the doctor or nurse can be very far-reaching. I know of cases where, in dealing with borderline schizophrenics, short psychotic intervals were actually «taken over», and during these periods it happened that the patients were feeling more than ordinarily well. I have even met a case of induced paranoia in a doctor who was analyzing a woman patient in the early stages of latent persecution mania. This is not astonishing since certain psychic disturbances can be extremely infectious” [60]. Jung arrived at the conclusion that the above “fact, which can be easily be established by experiment, is the reason why

psychoneuroses and psychoses have from time immemorial been regarded as states of *possession*” [61].

Mircea Eliade also declared “that the psychiatrist is putting his own sanity in jeopardy by his constant contact with mental illness” [62].

We will quote, *hic et nunc*, the case—investigated within the Psychiatric Institute of the Columbia University—of two monozygote twins 26 years old who although having the *IQ* less than 60, therefore marked under normal, knew accurately what day of the week was any date between 1000 BC and AD 4000 and remembered very well every detail of their life, but were unable to count up [63]. We believe that only the possession can explain that case.

Towards the second half of the 20th century, many countries encouraged researches on telepathy for evidently blamable purposes. Medical investigations carried out in Romania proved that telepathy is a case of possession. Therefore, we shall refer to *Intelligence of the Matter* by Professor Dumitru Constantin-Dulcan (MD, Ph.D.). First, the book stated that the experiment requires “a particular psychic state,” “a state which is difficult to define accurately” [64]. “The electro-encephalogram recorded during the preparation aiming at receiving the message showed a well definite alpha rhythm... the subject was... relatively relaxed, the respiration was ample and profound. However, immediately after making gestures, the electro-encephalographic line showed parasites... We ascertain a marked state of exhaustion of the receptive subject. Every new try requires a considerable effort. The eyes seem to indicate a person who was for a long time either deprived of sleep or weeping. The blood pressure raises by 30-40 mm Hg above the normal, and the rhythm of cardiac contractions increase by 20-40 beats per minute” [65]. The author measured the cutaneous resistance of several specific sites showing, for instance, that “ R_1 , the electric resistance measured for the forefinger⁵⁷³ was before the experiment 300 kohm, and during the experiment declined to 64 kohm” [66]. However, the investigations conducted by Professor Dr. Rai demonstrated that the state described above is diametrically opposed to relaxation when the electric resistance increases [67], which clearly confirms the apparition of a high stress. The same conclusion results from the trend of the other symptoms: acceleration of the heartbeats, increase of the blood pressure. Professor Constantin-Dulcan refers to another acupuncture site R_{VG19} “situated nearby the vertex... the only site that remains «awakened» while sleeping. Unlike the other sites, there the electric activity increases during the sleep.”

⁵⁷³ According to Sahaja Yoga, the forefinger corresponded to the Vishuddhi chakra, the link with the collective conscious; for the experiment reported here it represented the link with the collective unconscious where the dead entities are located.

Nevertheless, it is said that “before the experiment its electric resistance was 120 kohm, while during the experiment it went down to 40 kohm” [68]. We might suppose that telepathy (as well as other possessions) involved a major decay of the *protective shield of energy*. The author described it as “a growth in accessibility, an «opening of the gate» at that level, towards the field carrying information” [69]. He is quite right, for the misfortune of the respective person, because the «gate» is opening within the protective barrier thus allowing the invasion of the malefic, demoniac field, generated by the parasite dead entity. Other times, the subject sees objects—invisible for all the other present persons because of the obstacles hiding those things [70]. The *unique* sound explanation is that *somebody else* (parasite entity) sees the hidden thing and informs the possessed subject.

Professor Vasiliev acknowledged that the successful telepathic experiments rely on repeated hypnosis [71], thus disclosing the link between phenomena having a common cause.

Scott wrote that the Sufis were avowed enemies of telepathy whom they regarded useless and sterile like all the other extrasensory efforts. They acknowledged the existence of individuals and communities generally unknown to the public, who had telepathic and other supernatural aptitudes that they used for selfish purposes. In spite of their successes for a limited period, in the end they destroyed themselves and involved also their partners who were tempted by such purposes [72].

On another occasion (ch. XX C2) it was explained that epilepsy is caused by a possession (see also *infra*). We witnessed an experiment performed in 1958 by Dr. Lew Mirahorian in the great amphitheatre of the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest where he triggered through *hypnosis* an epileptic fit to a decent old lady, widow of a well-known mathematician who was a professor in that institute. One might raise the objection that it was indirect evidence. Yet there exists another proof, and that time it is a direct one: a person under hypnosis acquires aptitudes *otherwise absent in his normal state*. That result cannot be explained without admitting that these aptitudes came from an alien entity (possession). We should not forget *the remote hypnosis*, which requires a similar explanation. Thus, even the hypnosis considered by many as harmless is far from that. Actually, the hypnosis, like the shamanism, mesmerism, invocation of the dead etc. used the term of *trance* that defined an analogous state noticeable not only with the false spiritual masters but also with their “disciples” (*slaves*, to be more accurate). Under various names (Tantra, Hatha etc.) these so-called gurus conceal the practicing of the occult techniques granting them powers (so as real as blamable) that they exert over the unfortunate fallen unto their clutches. Some of these “masters” strive for fame, others for material satisfaction or control

over other persons. The temporary advantages later produce irreparable damage to the body, mind or soul. Those trying to practice control over the entities of the subconscious (*preta siddhi*, Sanskr.) will soon lose that control and be tortured like the “sorcerer’s apprentice.” After becoming total slaves of the “master,” this kind of seekers give away all their possessions to him without realizing what is happening to them. Others take their refuge in drugs while many end up in asylums or commit suicide.

In the normal state, the shield (barrier) of divine energy protects every person. Yahweh told Abraham: “I am thy shield” (Genesis 15:1). “Yahweh is... my shield... of my salvation” (Psalms 18:2). Likewise read a sapiential writing intended to be who has to fight the enemy (not only outside but inside too): “From now on, let you be clothed in God’s love as in a armour” [73]. It was shown (ch. XV F) that Sahaja Yogis could strengthen their barrier by surrounding either one chakra or the entire subtle body through the *bandhan* (a protective aura of their own vibrations).

XXI I
- 14

In a person endowed with a weak protection, those who are practicing magic can use some techniques for breaking the shield of energy. On the one side they reduce the organism defense, for instance through a long period of starvation, and on the other, they utilize specific techniques like doing anticlockwise rotations over the chakras as already explained in chapter XV F. We shall add here new details showing that the latter technique was known since the old times and used for harmful purposes. Such an instance was Circe, the ill-reputed witch in the Greek mythology who produced her sorcery by doing sinister⁵⁷⁴ circles. Horace wrote: “Canidia, desist from incantations now/ And with all haste reverse, reverse your magic wheel⁵⁷⁵!” [74], hence undoing the magic by reversing the rotation in its auspicious direction. Also Theocritus wrote in his second idyll *Simaetha* (The Spell): “And as this wheel of brass turns by grace of Aphrodite, so turn he⁵⁷⁶ and turn again before my threshold” [75]. The theme became obsessive with poet Callimachus of Alexandria: “By the wide crossroad, boys turned quick whirligigs,... in circles they turned them... Turn just your whirligig!... / Thus, turn, o Dion, in your circle” [76].

On the other hand, Djuna, the well-known occult practitioner in Russia requested the famous poet and singer Vladimir Vysotsky when he was seriously ill: “Allow me to heal you by giving up your power for three days” [77]—thus acknowledging her inability to act against his protective barrier.

⁵⁷⁴ Left-oriented (Lat.).

⁵⁷⁵ *Turbo* (Lat.).

⁵⁷⁶ Delphis.

Once inside, the dead entity settles itself in a subtle energy center (*chakra*) that loses its divine attributes and as a result the failure in the barrier becomes permanent. That is why, to cure such a patient, it is essential to also prevent the evil entity from returning in the body of the former by restoring the lost qualities of the chakras. Otherwise, even if a possessed person benefits of temporary exorcism, the existing breach enables the dead spirit to return any time it chooses. Such cases are frequent when unauthorized persons, usually priests devoid of any grace and proper knowledge, practice the exorcism. Otherwise, the crises of madness alternate with longer or shorter periods of relief when the dead entity chooses to leave the body. Then the crisis reappears suddenly. That is why the exorcism must be followed by the restoration of the energy shield through the strengthening of the entire subtle system. The *Bible* was quite explicit in this respect: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of the man, he goes through dry places seeking rest; and not finding [any] he says: «I will return to my house whence I came out». And having come, he finds it swept and adorned. Then he goes and takes seven other spirits worse than himself, and entering in, they dwelt there; and the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first” (Luke 11:24-26; cf. Matthew 12:43-45).

All the mystics stress the need for mental stability as a prerequisite for subtle practices. In the Jewish mysticism, Ben Azzai who died, and Ben Zoma, who went mad, were just classic examples. Some Buddhist masters considered that if a neurotic person couldn't be cured through their techniques this will only make him sicker. In Armstrong's view, “The strange and outlandish behavior of some European Catholic saints who were revered as mystics must be regarded as aberrations” [78], if not patent cases of schizophrenia, we should say.

We can therefore infer that the state of *trance* constitutes the most direct evidence of the possession (in many cases even multiple possession). The dead entity enters and makes use of the body of the *medium*.

The exorcism was known in many ancient countries. The Egyptians knew about the “demonic, evil possession when one or more spirits entered the body of a man causing him various illnesses” [79]. There, exorcism was practiced as early as the Middle and New Empire as disclosed by the text referring to Ramesses II on a commemorative monument deciphered by Prisse in 1847. The Pharaoh went at Thebes in 1279 BC where he appointed a doctor who “knew the things” (*rekh khet*, Egypt.) to go in the kingdom of Bekhten and exorcise a woman called Bentent-resht. The exorcism implied invocation of the gods and the use of the seven vowels⁵⁷⁷ corresponding to the seven heavens of the Egyptian mythology [80]. In Sumer, the ghosts of evil

⁵⁷⁷ The Greek language has also seven vowels.

people (*gigiru*, Sumer.) were considered to be demons rising from hell to torment people [81]. In the Mesopotamian civilizations a specialized priest did exorcism, including also the absolution from sin. The same happened in Christianity where the *energumen* (possessed by an evil ghost) was subjected to a special ritual performed by an exorcist priest. A famous textbook of psychiatry read: “The symptoms and behaviors of schizophrenia were reported as early as 1400 BC in Sanskrit writings” [82].

It is evident that the exorcism could be successfully performed only on realized persons as we can see from the metaphor used by Jesus who said: “But if I by [the] Spirit of god cast out demons, then indeed the kingdom of god is come upon you” (Matthew 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20). Therefore, by Savior’s power, the evil entity was cast out forever and the individual received the Self Realization. Also Yogis can cast out dead entities that are considered to be the main cause of mental disorders.

The *Bible* describes the manifestations of evil ghosts as well as their casting out through exorcism. People used to say that the possessed “has a demon” (John 7:20; 8:48-49,52; 10:20).

The best-known example in the Old Testament was that of Saul: “The Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Yahweh troubled him” (1 Samuel 16:14). The evil ghost manifested itself through violence and criminal instincts. Instigated by the spirit, Saul attempted to spear David (18:11; 19:10) and ended up by killing the priests of God (22:21). The exorcism was done by David himself (ch. XV D): “It come to pass, when the [evil] spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand; and Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him” (16:23). Obviously, “refreshed” indicated the – 8 feeling of the divine cool breeze (Kundalini).

An evil spirit was sent between Abimelech and the people of Shechem that become hostile to each other (Judges 9:23). A spirit enticed Ahab through the mouth of the prophets (1 Kings 22:21-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-22). God sent a spirit of perverseness to the Egyptians (Isaiah 19:14), and a spirit of deep sleep to the Babylonians (29:10).

Spirits of the dead were known to have certain powers. Herod said: “He is risen from among the dead, and because of this these works display their force in him” (Matthew 14:2; cf. Mark 6:14). These powers inflicted diseases. The official exegesis sent for correlative texts to the healing of the 38 year old, paralyzed man (John 5:14) and the driving of the unclean spirit out of a man (Luke 11:24-26). It may be deduced that paralysis was provoked by possession. Other times the texts were more explicit: “They brought to him a dumb man possessed by a demon. And the demon having been cast out, the dumb man spoke” (Matthew 9:32-33; Luke 11:14). “Then was brought to him

one possessed by a demon, blind and dumb, and he healed him, so that the dumb [man] spoke and saw” (Matthew 12:22). Epilepsy was also produced by possession: “The spirit immediately tore him; and falling upon the earth he rolled foaming” (Mark 9:20; cf. Luke 9:42). “How long a time is it that it has been like that with him? And he said: From childhood” (Mark 9:21).

The gospels even gave a clinical picture of a schizophrenic. When Jesus came to the country of the Gadarenes “there met him going out of the tombs - 11 a man possessed by an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no one was able to bind him, not even with chains and no one was able to subdue him. And continually night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying and cutting himself with stones” (Mark 5:1-5; cf. Matthew 8:28-32; Luke 8:26-33).

XXII The Scripture reports many cases where Jesus and later the apostles - 12 exorcised the people (Matthew 8:28-32; 9:32-33; 12:22; 17:14-21; Mark 1:21-26; 5:2-15; 7:25-30; 9:17-29; Luke 4:33-36; 8:27-29; 9:38-42 etc.), - 13 because the Savior “gave them power over unclean spirits, so that they should cast them out” (Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:15; 16:17; Luke 9:1). Christ told the seventy disciples: “I give you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions and over the power of the enemy... Yet in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens” (Luke 10:19-20). This confirms the above showing that extrasensory powers (*siddhis*) should not be looked for but only the spiritual elevation.

Ramana, the sage of Arunachala stated: “The occult powers (*siddhis*)... are not natural to the Self. That which is not natural, but acquired... is not worth striving for... Occult powers will not bring happiness to anyone, but will make him all the more miserable!... By the words «a spiritual aspirant» you did not mean a seeker of powers (*siddhis*)” [83]. Schuon explains: “the miracles of Christ are not «occult powers» (*siddhis*) that can be exercised or not exercised, but divine manifestations” [84]. In fact, no one of the Avatars had occult powers.

The encyclopedic reference of *Britannica* fully agrees with the above: “Powers of occult (or *siddhis*) are viewed as real, but they can also be dangerous and are not of interest to genuine mystics, who have warned against their likely misuse” [85].

Just as the healing of the mental disorders was sometimes accompanied by uttering of mantras (prayers), the same was the practice used in exorcism (Matthew 7:22): “Have we not through thy name cast out demons?” Jesus found out about the disciples not having been able to cure a lunatic and told them: “«O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? Bring him here to me». And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon went out

of him, and the boy was healed from that hour» (17:17-18). The disciples asked: “«Why were not we able to cast him out?» «Because of your unbelief» told them Jesus... «But this kind does not go out but by prayers and fasting»” (17:19-21).

Tibetan lamas (e.g. the *lama-tulku*) and tantrikas (ch. XV F) are placed on the opposite, excelling in their knowledge on dead ghosts (*bhootvidya*, *pretvidya*, *smashanvidya*, Sanskr.), and the practice of propitiating the malign forces has become an essential part of their daily rituals. They are practicing the *Bon-po* or *Black Faith*, and their ceremonials are the contrary of Buddhism. They represent the swastika in an inverted direction [86], and it was under their influence that Hitler adopted the sign. Its unauthorized and criminal utilization brought about the latter’s destruction. The procession of these lamas in temples is done anticlockwise (ch. XV F). Mircea Eliade wrote about “the possibilities of «magical creation» which exist in traditional societies, and which are real,” while mentioning the “implications of the Oriental philosophies and techniques (especially the Indian), which thus find a place in the same traditional horizon” [87]. Evidently, here the historian referred to tantrism.

The Kabbalists were aware of the relationship existing between possession (*demon*) and violation of Dharma (*sin*), which hindered (by obstruction, hence catches—the real causes of diseases) Self Realization that is depicted as *unio mystica* of the Female Principle (*Shekhinah*, that is the Kundalini) and Male Principle (*the Holy One*) before reaching the heavenly *throne* (Sahasrara): “Rabbi Abba says: «... Since every sin of man creates a demon, it comes that these demons interpose themselves between the Holy One, blessed be him and the Shekhinah and separate them beneath the throne»” [88].

In order to expel a *dibbuq* (plural form: *dibbuqim*, Hebr.) of the body of the possessed person, the Kabbalah applied a ritual consisting in the recitation of an incantation, a special formula invoking the *unification* (*yihud*, Hebr.) of God and His Shekhinah. In the talmudic literature the term *dibbuq* designated an *attachment*, and in the Kabbalah—the *malefic spirit of a dead person* that was believed to be able to take possession of the body of a living individual and thereby causing him great suffering. It referred not to a demon but to a spirit of a dead person who due to his grave sins could not enter even *Gehena* (hell, Hebr.). The technique used for the exorcism was the recitation, often for hours on end, of *yihudim*, accompanied by the blowing of the *shophar* (ch. XI C), by adjurations, and often by causing physical pain to the patient [89]. Although some *yihudim* have their roots in the ancient times, they reached their full expression within the Safed Kabbalah of the 16th century, being developed by the Hasidism. That’s why if the exorcism was

originally entrusted to a master of Kabbalah, it became afterwards the attribute of a *tzaddiq* of the Hasidic community (ch. XXV C). A similar ritual was used for the purpose of making an evil person repent, for atoning of sins, and for purifying the person who became impure because of the sin [90].

The *Talmud* advocated to drive out evil spirits by means of *lehisha*, i.e. whispered passages from Scripture, sometimes including God's name [91].

Likewise the Muslims believe that reciting some verses of the *Qur'an* in specific circumstances might chase away demons and heal the illnesses [92]. The most practiced are the two last surah of the *Qur'an* (113.1-5; 114.1-6) utilized even by Muhammad himself. Dervishes (ch. XXV B) believe to acquire protection against the spell and unclean wandering spirits when proclaiming God uniqueness (*tawhid*, Arab.): *ilaha illa' Llah* (There is no divinity except Allah, Arab.) while performing *dhikr* [93].

E. THE SECRET OF POWER

“I have power to lay it⁵⁷⁸ down, and I have power to take it again. I have received this commandment of my Father”

John 10:18

“He taught them as having power, and not as their scribes”

Matthew 7:29

The powers granted by the Holy Spirit were meant only for the persons authorized by the Divine (ch. XI B). Like other divine incarnations or prophets, Jesus used parables—mentioned either in the canonical or the Gnostic texts—that concealed many secrets from the non-initiate. “I will open my mouth in parables⁵⁷⁹; I will utter things hidden from [the] world's foundation” (Matthew 13:35).

When questioned by the priests, the scribes and the elders: “«By what power thou doest these things, or who is it who gave thou this power?»” Jesus said to them: «Neither do I tell you by what power I do these things»” (Luke 20:2,8).

He repeatedly required people to keep the secret on His power. When the Transfiguration occurred, while addressing to the disciples “Jesus charged

⁵⁷⁸ The life.

⁵⁷⁹ *Parabolé* (Gr.).

them, saying: «Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man be risen up from among [the] dead»” (Matthew 17:9; Mark 9:9). Moreover, “He enjoined on his disciples that they should say to no man that he was the Christ” (Matthew 16:20; cf. Mark 8:29-30; Luke 9:21). “He healed them all; and charged them strictly that they should not make him publicly known” (Matthew 12:15-16). The same happened with the leper (Matthew 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14), the two blind men (Matthew 9:30; Mark 7:36; Luke 5:14), Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:43), the deaf-mute (7:36), the blind man of Bethsaida (8:26) etc. He required the silence not only from the sick persons but also from the ghosts (1:34; 3:12).

“Great crowds came together to hear and to be healed from their infirmities. And he withdrew himself, and was about in the desert [places] and praying” (Luke 5:15-16). “He was praying alone⁵⁸⁰” (9:18). After having cast out many demons, “rising in the morning long before day, he went out and went away into a desert place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). “And he rose up and went away thence into the borders of Tyre and Sidon; and having entered into a house he would not have any one know [it]” (7:24; cf. 9:30). The *Gospel of Thomas* read: “Blessed are the solitary and the chosen, for you will find the kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return” [94].

The solitary retreat, far from the crowd, meant the recollection of His thoughts for meditation and for communication with God the Father and also for keeping the secret of His prayers (mantras). As for the importance of the prayer or mantra, it was shown (ch. XV E) that before sharing the bread and the unfermented fruit of the vine, Jesus “had given thanks” (*eucharistésas*, Gr.) to God (Luke 22:19). Likewise, “as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance became different” when the Transfiguration took place. Strabo, Jesus’ contemporary, was knowledgeable that Hindu medical science was based on incantations (*epódoi*, Gr.), i.e. mantras and Indians had the reputation of counting just a few sick people as a result of their temperate life and abstinence from alcoholic drinks [95].

Only those who will be born a second time, and thus become similar to babies, will know the secret of the grace granted by the Holy Spirit (Self Realization). “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit and said: «I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes⁵⁸¹»” (Luke 10:21; cf. Matthew 11:25). His words send, however, at the attributes of the Divine Child, which have to be established in the person who received the grace (ch. XIX C).

⁵⁸⁰ *Katamónas* (Gr.).

⁵⁸¹ *Nepíois* (Gr.).

The legend of Asklepios killed by the lightning of Zeus was generally regarded as a punishment inflicted on the person unauthorized to use certain powers (resurrection of the dead, ch. XV C). However, that also signified the healing and resurrection being placed under the sign of the cosmic fire (Kundalini).

NOTES

[1] Lossky, *The Mystical...*, pp.86-88,162,243. [2] *Ibid.*, p.75. [3] Basil, *Letter 234*, § 1 (*Epistula 234 ad Amphiloichium*), in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 32, col.869; cf. Lossky, *The Mystical...*, pp.71-72. [4] Gregory Palamas, *Capitula physica, theologica, moralia et practica*, capita 143 in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 150, col.1220 D; *apud* Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.73 and note 4. [5] Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.74. [6] Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 161, p.101. [7] Saeki, §§ 63-64, p.115. [8] Josephus, *The Wars...*, II.8.5. [9] Carl-Martin Edsman, *Le Baptême du feu*, A. Lorenz, Uppsala 1940, pp.93 sq., 134 sq., 185 sq. [10] Justin, *Apology*, (*Apologiae*), I.61.21. [11] Resch, p.344; cf. Bauer, p.121; cf. Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.306. [12] Justin, *Dialogue*; *apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.308. [13] NHL, *The Gospel of Philip* 67.11-30. [14] *Ibid.*, 69.22-29. [15] *Ibid.*, 69. 34-37; 70.1-4. [16] Evdokimov, *L'amour...*, p.130, o.t. [17] Schuon, *Gnosis*, note 2 to p.128. [18] NHL, *The Testimony of Truth* 69.22-23. [19] *Ibid.*, 44.30-45.4. [20] NHL, *The Gospel of Philip* 64.23-24. [21] Cyril of Jerusalem, *On Exodus* II; in Migne, *P.G.*, col.432A. [22] Couliano, p.196. [23] Bălă, Chețan, pp.34-35, o.t. [24] Scrima, *Timpul...*, p.36, o.t. [25] NHL, *The Gospel of Philip* 78.28-79.3. [26] Meister Eckhart, *Sermon: Euge, serve bone...*, in Ancelet-Hustache, p.74. [27] Würtz, p.15. [28] Saeki, § 189, p.44. [29] Eliade, *The Myth...*, p.158 and note 14. [30] *The Zohar* II, 67a, vol. III, p.209. [31] Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l' Inquisiteur*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1964, vol. 1, p.18. [32] Würtz, pp.210-211. [33] Rai, *quoted work*. [34] *Revista Română de Acupunctură (Romanian Journal of Acupuncture)*, no.3 (1995), no.1 (1996), no.1-2 (1997), no. 1-2 (1998). [35] *A II-a Conferință Internațională pentru Terapii Complementare din România (The 2nd International Conference for Complementary Therapies in Romania)*, November 6-8, 1997. [36] Daniel Goleman, *The Meditative Mind*, G.B. Putnam's Sons, New York 1988, p.172. [37] Quoted in Jagbir Singh, p.1553. [38] *ABC NEWS*, December 16, 1997; quoted in *ibid.*, p.1549. [39] William Collinge, *CNN, WebMD*, June 22, 1999; quoted in *Ibid.*, p.1550. [40] Plato, *Timaeus* 82a-b, in *The Collected...*, pp.1202-1203. [41] *Ibid.*, note 165 to the Romanian edition, o.t. [42] *NQ*, p.1009; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, *hadith* 479; Irving, p.189. [43] Marcel Brion, *Un enfant de la terre et du ciel*, A. Michel, Paris 1943, pp.130-131. [44] Evdokimov, *L'amour...*, p.94, o.t. [45] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, VI.14(114). [46] *The Book of Enoch* 15.8. [47] *Apud* Hastings (ed.), *Dictionary...*, p.280. [48] *The Bhagavad-Gita* 7.15. [49] Schuon, *Understanding...*, note 70 to p.90. [50] Goethe, *Faust* I, v.1113, o.t. [51] C.G. Jung, *Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 13: *Alchemical Studies*, § 148, p.113 and note 4. [52] *Ibid.*, *Psihanaliza*

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Literature), Rubin Mass, Jerusalem 1983. [90] Patai, pp.161,195. [91] Graves, Podro, p.252. [92] Schuon, *Understanding...*, note 10 to p.46; cf. Irving, pp.186-187. [93] Nadia Anghelescu, *Introducere în Islam (Introduction to Islam)*, Ed. Enciclopedică, București 1993, p.40. [94] *NHL, The Gospel of Thomas* 41.27-30 (L.49). [95] Strabo, XV, 1.45, p.706, in *Fontes...*, pp.10,25; cf. also Megasthenes, fragm.40, *apud* Strabo XV, 1.60, in *Fontes...*, pp.29,17.

XXIII. THE SECRET LIFE OF JESUS

The present chapter will bring into the reader's attention an array of documents, reports, opinions and legends pointing at a hypothesis that thunderstruck the western world since the end of the 19th century. Following Notovitch's discovery, many books were published and were well received by the general public, but found no echo among specialists. All the same, on the A&E program (Biography Series) during the movie *The Unknown Jesus* (produced in 1999) mention was made about Notovitch's outstanding finding as well as on History Channel's movie *The Lost Years of Jesus*.

The following short elucidations would enable a better perception of the facts hidden under the cover of some legends accompanying Jesus' unknown life. More details would be given later on. Pertaining to the role of the myths in understanding real history we recall the discovery of Troy by Schliemann who believed in the miraculous legends narrated by the rhapsode Homer. Closer to our time, the historian Aurel Stein who translated the remarkable chronicle of *Rajatarangini* stated: "Popular tradition has fortunately in Kashmir proved far more tenacious than the traditions of the learned. I have often derived from it very valuable assistance in my local search for particular data. The experience gained on my antiquarian tours has convinced me that when collected with caution, and critically sifted, such local tradition can safely be accepted as supplementary to the information of our written records." Stein draws attention to the specific position enjoyed by Kashmir's historical records: "Kashmir can claim the distinction of being the only region of India which possesses an uninterrupted series of written records of its history, reaching back beyond the period of the Muhammadan conquest and deserving the name of real chronicles... they testify to the continued existence among the population of the valley of that genuine historical sense in which the Indian mind on the whole is so conspicuously deficient" [1].

The chapter is structured into a section trying to perceive the mystery enveloping Jesus' young years, and a section concerned with the period after His crucifixion.

A. CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

“*Et cum factus esset Iesus annorum doudecim...*”
(*And when Jesus was twelve years old...*, Lat.)

Luke 2:42

Extremely little is known about the childhood and adolescence of Jesus. The gospels tell us only that at an early age He went to Egypt accompanied by Mary and Joseph, from where He returned to Israel. At the age of twelve years He was in Jerusalem where He stayed for three days in the Temple without His parents knowing about it. From that moment until around the age of thirty, when He was baptized, absolutely nothing was known about Him (ch. XVII).

After the event in the Temple at the age of twelve, the Gospel according to Luke directly recalled His having been baptized by John: “Now, in the fifteen year of the government of Tiberius Caesar...” (3:1). The link between the two periods separated by about two decades was simply put like this: “And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (2:52). Matthew also opened his third chapter by: “Now in these days comes John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea” (3:1) while the previous verse (2:23) talks about Jesus and the Baptist being only a couple of years old, because it was soon after Christ’s return from Egypt. In another occurrence, John wrote: “After that Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples” (21:1). We could not know how long in time was “after that” (*metá taúta*, Gr.). The gospel authors used to write about events separated by a long period of time as if they had followed one another at short intervals.

In his *Myth and Reality*, Mircea Eliade remarks: “this Christ is not «historical», since popular thought is interested neither in chronology nor in the accuracy of events and the authenticity of historical figures” [2].

Merejkowski in his *Jesus the Unknown* depicts the situation: “From their second and third chapters, respectively, Matthew has a silence of thirty, and Luke of twenty, years’ duration. All is forgotten, there is nothing but a dark abyss. «He was twelve years old» (Luke 2:42), «And Jesus himself was beginning to be about thirty years old» (Luke 3:23); not a word concerning all that lay between these two points, although these are the very years when man reaches maturity and must have been decisive for Jesus” [3].

Even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* acknowledges: “Christ’s whole life is mystery. Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity” (we should wonder: is it only that?) “do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a greater part of his public life is not recounted” [4].

For any reader too enthusiastic about the manner in which the events were reported in the Gospels and Acts, we would quote the explanatory words of Knight and Lomas: “History it seems is not so much a record of past events, more a catalogue of preferred beliefs expounded by people who have a vested interest. As George Orwell observed in his novel *1984*, the victors always write history and whoever controls the writing of history books controls the past. Without doubt, the most consistently powerful force in the western world over the last two thousands years has been the Roman Catholic Church and consequently history has often been what it wanted it to be. The Church has always been the provider of western cultural «truths», but, as more and more hard evidence emerges, it has had to concede that the papacy is not as infallible as it once claimed. For instance, Galileo was sentenced to life imprisonment and his work burned when he argued that the Earth moved through space, and it was not until 1992 that a papal commission acknowledged the Vatican’s error in opposing him. In the nineteenth century, the Church viciously attacked Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, but in 1996 the Vatican once again had to admit that it had been wrong. In times past the Church provided answers to life’s puzzles when no one had a better solution, but as science has advanced, the need for myths has receded. However, while the Vatican moved slowly and cautiously... it hardly moves at all concerning its interpretations of events described in the New Testament, despite considerable amounts of new historical evidence” [5].

There may be many reasons to explain this mysterious lack of information. It should not be forgotten that the Savior Himself required the secrecy about some events. Jesus did not frequently agree with people finding out about His miracles, nor to the others knowing that He was the Messiah (ch. XXII E). The disciples knew certain things not destined to be known by the crowd (ch. XX C4), although sometimes themselves did not fully understand them (ch. XX C2). The habit of secrecy was preserved in the Christian tradition of the first centuries (ch. XI B), namely, over the interval when it was established the final form of what we call today the New Testament. We may thus suspect that a number of passages must have been left out which may have brought some light into the mystery surrounding the whole life of the Savior, apart from the three and a half years of public life thoroughly described within the gospels.

Several evidences lead to the conclusion that Jesus spent His adolescence
 XXXIII in India. We shall see that the “three days” when He remained in the Temple,
 - 1 actually represent a larger interval (between the age of twelve and twenty-nine) when Christ was far away from His parents, to whom He said (Luke 2:49; *The New Jerusalem Bible*): “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” However, we have seen that

the terrestrial Paradise was situated in northern India (ch. III).

The Russian historian and writer Nikolai (Nicholas) Notovitch (born in XXIII 1858) was the first who brought essential information about the secret life of - 4 Jesus to the knowledge of the Christian world, and this came just from India.

One of his many expeditions took that passionate traveler to the northern part of India where Kashmir bordered on the region of Ladakh situated on the western side of the Himalayas. While visiting the Buddhist monastery of Mulbekh in close proximity to the hamlet of Wakkha, he had an astonishing conversation with the lama there, later reported [6] as follows, when the Buddhist monk told him about the Europeans:

“«Not only do they profess the essential principles of monotheism, but they are, in a sense, adorers of Buddha⁵⁸², with almost the same rites as the lamas who inhabit Thibet. The only fault of the Christians is that after having adopted the great doctrines of Buddha, they have completely separated themselves from him, and have created for themselves a different Dalai-Lama... »

«Which Dalai-Lama of the Christians do you refer to?» I asked him. «We have one, the Son of God, to whom we address directly our fervent prayers, and to him alone we recur to intercede with our One and Indivisible God».

«It is not him of whom it is a question, Sahib», he replied. «We, too, respect him, whom we reverence as son of the One and Indivisible God, but we do not see in him the Only Son, but the excellent being who was chosen among all. Buddha, indeed, has incarnated himself, with his divine nature, in the person of the sacred Issa⁵⁸³, who, without employing fire or iron, has gone forth to propagate our true and great religion among all the world. Him whom I meant was your terrestrial Dalai-Lama; he to whom you have given the title of «Father of the Church». That is a great sin... »

I understood now that he alluded to the Pope. «You have told me that a son of Buddha, Issa, the elect among all, had spread your religion on the Earth. Who is he?» I asked.

At this question, the lama's eyes opened wide; he looked at me with astonishment and pronounced some words I could not catch, murmuring in an unintelligible way. «Issa», he finally replied, «is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas. He is greater than any one of all the Dalai-Lamas, for he constitutes part of the spirituality of our Lord... His name and his acts have been chronicled in our sacred writings, and when reading how

⁵⁸² We remember that the Buddha (Enlightened) is a collective name given not only to Gautama but also to other great divine incarnations. Hence, also Jesus was the Buddha (ch. XIX B).

⁵⁸³ As already shown (ch. XVI) the Tibetans called Jesus: *Issa* ('*Isa*).

his great life passed away in the midst of an erring people, we weep for the horrible sin of the heathen who murdered him, after subjecting him to torture».

I was struck by this recital of the lama. The prophet Issa—his tortures and death—our Christian Dalai-Lama—the Buddhist recognizing Christianity—all these made me think more and more of Jesus Christ. I asked my interpreter not to lose a single word what the lama told me.

«Where can these writings be found, and who compiled them?» I asked the monk.

«The principal scrolls—which were written in India and Nepal, at different epochs, as the events happened—are in Lhasa; several thousands in number. In some great convents are to be found copies, which the lamas, during their sojourn in Lhasa have made.»

Finding out that the settlement, being of minor importance, did not shelter such documents, the daring Notovitch set off to Ladakh in the autumn of XXIIII 1887. He reached the famous Buddhist monastery in Himis, on the Indus - 7, 8 valley, 34 km south of Leh, the capital of the district. The Russian historian made use of much diplomacy to get the information that these manuscripts were really there. Here is his discourse with a monk [7]:

“«The name Issa is very much respected among the Buddhists», he replied, «but he is only known by the chief lamas, who have read the scrolls relating to his life. There have existed an infinite number of buddhas like Issa, and the 84,000 scrolls existing are filled brim full of details concerning each one of them. But very few persons have read the one-hundredth part of those memoirs... Our gonpa⁵⁸⁴, among others, possesses already a great number, which I read in my leisure hours. Among them are the memoirs of the life and acts of the Buddha Issa⁵⁸⁵, who preached the same doctrine in India and among the sons of Israel, and who was put to death by the Pagans, whose descendants, later on, adopted the beliefs he spread,—and those beliefs are yours... Simultaneously with the appearance of Buddhism in China, the same doctrines began to spread among the Israelites. It is about 2,000 years ago that the Perfect Being, awaking once more for a short time from his inaction, incarnated in the new-born child of a poor family... When this sacred child attained a certain age, he was brought to India, where, until he attained to manhood, he studied the laws of the great Buddha, who dwells eternally in heaven».

«In what language are written the principal scrolls bearing upon the life of Issa?» I asked...

⁵⁸⁴ *Gompa* (lamasery, Tibetan).

⁵⁸⁵ The Buddha Jesus was the ninth Avatar of Vishnu (ch. XIX B).

«The original scrolls brought from India to Nepal, and from Nepal to Thibet, relating to the life of Issa, are written in Pali language and are actually in Lhassa; but a copy in our language—I mean the Thibetan—is in this convent».

«How is Issa looked upon in Thibet? Has he the repute of a saint?»

«The people are not even aware that he ever existed. Only the principal lamas, who know of him through having studied the scrolls in which his life is related, are familiar with his name.»

Then, the two parted, with the promise that on his next visit, Notovitch would be allowed to read these scrolls. Indeed, the historian returned after a short time, but he had an accident in which he broke his leg. After insistent requests, the monk brought two thick books with their pages turned yellow by the passage of time, from which he read while Notovitch was lying in bed.

“This curious document is compiled under the form of isolated verses, which, as placed, very often had no apparent connection with, or relation to each other,” reported Notovitch who, very conscientiously and carefully put down everything of the translation into his traveling note-book [7].

When in Mure (Murree or Mari, in Pakistan), Notovitch met Count André de Saint Phall to whom he confessed his intention of publishing the memorials on the life of Jesus Christ found in Himis. Returning from his journey, the Russian placed the verses in chronological order and so succeeded in getting a coherent story.

Notovitch then contacted the orientalist and historian Ernest Renan who was the chief of the Hebrew Department at the Collège de France. The latter made very clear his position of defending the dogmatic Judeo-Christian texts against any outer injunction when writing: “On the same extent the Jew, Catholic, Protestant in a neuter institution are entitled to not constantly sacrifice their faith to other religious belief” [8]. Renan was interested in Russian’s notes, but only in order to use them for his own purposes, which the latter did not agree. During Notovitch’s interviews with some high dignitaries of both the Orthodox Church (Monsignor Platon of Kiev) and the Catholic Church (Cardinal Rotelli in Paris and the pope’s counselor in Vatican), they tried unsuccessfully either to threaten him or to buy his document.

Notovitch’s book was finally printed in Paris in 1894 under the title *La vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ* [9].

After describing the circumstances of the journey, the author reproduced his notes taken in Himis, entitled *The Life of Saint Issa* [10].

The first three chapters contained the short version of the life of Mossa (Moses), the period of the Judges, the Kings, the invasion of Israel by the pagans amongst whom were the Romans.

After the supplications of the inhabitants, “At that time the moment had come for the compassionate Judge to re-incarnate in a human form; And the eternal Spirit, resting in a state of complete inaction and supreme bliss, awakened and separated from the eternal Being, for an undetermined period, So that, in human form, He might teach man to identify himself with the Divinity and attain to eternal felicity; And to show, by His example, how man can attain moral purity and free his soul from the domination of the physical senses, so that it may achieve the perfection necessary for it to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is immutable and where bliss eternal reigns. Soon after, a marvelous child was born in the land of Israel. God himself spoke, through the mouth of this child... The divine child, to whom the name Issa was given, commenced in his tender years to talk of the only and indivisible God, exhorting the strayed souls to repent and purify themselves from the sins of which they had become guilty” [11].

The story then continued with Issa reaching the age of thirteen years when Israeli man had to take a wife. Then He secretly ran away from home, leaving Jerusalem in the company of merchants and going to Sindh (Indus). When He was fourteen, He reached the land of the Aryans beloved by God, beyond Sindh. While crossing the country of the five rivers (Punjab) and Rajputan, He was taken along by the believers in Jaina (Mahavira). But He soon left them and went to Sholabeth (Ceylon) and from there to Jaggernath (Jagannath, Puri of today), in the country of Orsis (Orissa) which sheltered the remains of the Sage Vyasa and where He was welcomed by the white priests of the Buddha. They initiated Him in the *Vedas*. He remained in Jagannath for 6 years; then in Rajagriha (Rajgir), Benares (Varanasi) and other holy cities. Afterwards He settled down among the Sudras (the lower caste) where He preached against the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Being threatened by the two latter ones, Issa left Jagannath and went to live in the land of the Gautamides where Sakyamuni had been born. He learned the Pali language and studied the *Sutras* holy scrolls. After six years He left Nepal and the Himalayas, descending into the Rajputan Valley, and He went westwards crossing the pagan lands where He condemned idolatry. On His voyage through Persia He criticized the magi but they did not harm Him. He reached Israel when He was twenty-nine years old.

In spite of the power and authority of the Church, Notovitch's work knew an instant triumph. No less than eight editions appeared in France in 1894, and three English translations were published independently of each other in the United States. The next year another English rendition was printed in London and the book was further on translated into Italian, German, Spanish and Swedish languages.

Under the Church's influence, different personalities tried to discredit

Notovitch. One of them was the renowned German orientalist Friedrich Max-Müller (1823-1900), Professor of the Universities in Heidelberg and Oxford, editor of *The Sacred Books of the East*. His strong support for the Church was declared in one of his letters to a friend in 1876: “India is much riper for Christianity than Rome and Greece were at the time of Saint Paul... I should like... to take part in a work, by means of which the old mischief of Indian priestcraft could be overthrown and the way opened for the entrance of simple Christian teaching” [12]. All that remained just a wish since Max-Müller never set foot in India. That, however, did not prevent him from publishing the paper *The Alleged Sojourn of Christ in India* [13], where he refers to letters that he received “not only from missionaries, but lately from English officers also passing through Leh, who, after making careful inquires on the spot, declare that no Russian gentleman of the name of Notovitch ever passed through Leh, and that no traveler with a broken leg was ever nursed in the monastery of Himis” [14].

With the view of attacking Notovitch, the Church Mission in India appealed also for Ahmad Shah, a converted to Christian faith and for Professor J. Archibald Douglas from the Governmental College in Agra. Ahmad Shah lived in Ladakh between 1834 and 1874 and wrote *Four Years in Tibet*. He acknowledged that his visit in Ladakh was done only for “rejecting the discovery of Notovitch, a Russian, about a manuscript unknown until then of a Tibetan version of the life of Christ between 12 and 30 years.” Douglas visited Leh in 1895 for a similar reason and published a paper under the title *The Chief Lama of Himis on the Alleged “Unknown Life of Christ”* [15]. The author took the statement of the chief lama claiming that no sahib copied a manuscript. However, this does not contradict the assertions of Notovitch who listened to the translation done by the monk while lying in bed. The Russian recorded in his notebook what he heard, being unable “to copy” the document written in a language unknown to him. Indeed, in his article previously mentioned Max-Müller referred to the “*Life of Christ* dictated to him by Buddhist priests in the Himis Monastery, near Leh, in Ladakh” [16], and also to the fact that “M. Notovitch... not pretending to a knowledge of Tibetan, had the Tibetan text translated by an interpreter” [17]. In spite of his attacks against Notovitch, Professor Douglas acknowledged that a Dr. Marx has treated Notovitch for a toothache at the Moravian hospital in Leh (see *infra*).

Per Beskow is another author who has expressed his disagreement with Notovitch, however, he stated: “Notovitch had even been to Leh and had been treated... for a toothache at the Moravian mission station” [18].

Sir Francis Younghusband, the British Ambassador to the court of a Kashmiri Maharajah, who was also playing into the hands of the Church,

could not help from confessing his having met Nicholas Notovitch whom he called “an adventurer who had... made a not very favorable reputation in India.” The ambassador adds that Notovitch “afterwards published what he called a new *Life of Christ*, which he professed to have found in a monastery in Ladakh, after he had parted with me. No one, however, who knew M. Notovitch’s reputation, or who had the slightest knowledge of the subject, would give any reliance whatever to this pretentious volume” [19].

In the letter addressed to his publisher in English, Notovitch declares of “having learnt from him”⁵⁸⁶ that *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ* is no XXXIII novelty to the Roman Church; that the Vatican Library possesses sixty-three - 3 complete or incomplete manuscripts in various Oriental languages referring to this matter, which have been brought to Rome by missionaries from India, China, Egypt and Arabia” [20]. These are just a part of the secrets preserved in the archives of the hardly accessible Vatican Library whose secret shelves total up tens of kilometers (ch. XI B). “In am of the opinion,” avowed the biblical scholar Rudolf Bultmann, “that we can know practically nothing about Jesus’ life and personality, since the Christian sources had no interest in such matters.”

Moreover, after the publishing of the testimonies of Notovitch, Roerich and Swami Abhedananda (see *infra*)—facts which triggered the wrath of the Christian officials—all the documents seen by them inexplicably vanished from the Tibetan monasteries. Interviewed by the journalist Richard Bock, Swami Prajnanananda denounced the fact that the original in Pali was taken out from the Marbour monastery and sent to Lhasa. Indeed, as it was shown by Johan Forsström, incessantly since then, “old documents referring to the life of Jesus in India and Kashmir were hunted after, purchased, seized and stolen” by the Church [21].

History knows notorious robbers like Sir Aurel Stein (United Kingdom), Albert von Le Coq (Germany), Sven Hedin (Sweden), Paul Pelliot (France), Langdon Werner (United States) and Otami (Japan). In 1907, Sir Aurel Stein deprived the national patrimony of the foreign country that welcomed him, and alienated thousands of manuscripts and documents in Semitic writing as Sogdian (derived from the Aramaic spoken during the lifetime of Jesus) XXXIII discovered at Dunhuang and Turfan (ch. I) and concealed these information - 2 for the sake of the Christian Church. With the aim of reducing the importance XX of these texts, Stein declared that those manuscripts contain the teachings of - 114 Mani, which include almost the same doctrine as the one of Jesus [22]. From a few texts translated and published by Professor P.Y. Saeki—out of which we gave many excerpts—our reader was able to judge by himself of the high value of such documents.

⁵⁸⁶ Cardinal Rotelli.

James Deardorff has performed a thorough analysis [23] of the main accusations against Notovitch, thus demonstrating their inconsistency and providing answers to all the questions raised by the critics of the latter (especially for Max-Müller, not forgetting J.A. Douglas, Younghusband, Goodspeed, and Beskow).

Notovitch was not the only one who referred to the traces of Jesus in India. We would mention other proofs concerning the maturity and old age of Jesus in the next section XXIII B.

The *Natha Namavali*, an old Hindu Sutra of the mystical order of the Nath Yogis upheld that Jesus (called there *Isha Natha*) arrived in India at the age of fourteen [24].

The Sheikh as-Said-us-Sadiq, otherwise known as “The Truthful” was a famous historian who died at Khurasan in 381 A.H. Among the three hundred books he wrote, the most famous was *Kamal-ud-Din* or *Ikmal-ud-Din* written in the year of his death and first printed by Aga Mir Baqar in the Syed-us-Sanad Press in Iran in 1201 A.H., then translated in 1901 into German by Max-Müller. In this book the author referred to the travel of Yuz Asaf (another name given to Jesus; ch. XVI): “The angel, therefore, guided him to leave the country... and then leaving Sholabeth (Ceylon) he proceeded on his journey” [25].

In support of Notovitch’s founding of Buddhist documents recording the stay of Jesus in India we shall refer to a book by the renowned pilgrim I-Tsing referring to his own travels from China to India by sea, between 671-695. The author wrote: “It is indeed curious to find the name of Messiah in a Buddhist work, though the name comes in quite accidentally.” The reference pertains to *The New Catalogue of the Buddhist Books compiled in the Chiang Yuan Period*, in the new Japanese edition of the Chinese Buddhist Books (Bodleian Library, Jap., 65 DD). The author also mentioned the teaching of the Messiah (*Mi-shi-ho*), the equivalent of *Masih* [26].

Prinsep states that Jesuits Grueber and Dorville who returned from China in 1661 “conclude from what they saw and heard, that the ancient books of the Lamas contained trace of the Christian religion, which must, they thought, have been preached in Tibet in the time of Apostles” [27].

During 1812-1813, Mir Izzatullah reported his travels in Central Asia. The text was translated into English by Captain Hendersson, a Foreign Office attaché to the Government of India, and the book was issued after six decades [28]. Its author mentioned a *Bible*, which was revealed to the Tibetans in a language that had become unintelligible. We believe it is a reference to the manuscripts concerning Jesus, written in the ancient Pali language used for the sacred Buddhist texts whose canons appeared during the period 483-250 BC. After so many years, the language became the prerogative of a few

learned monks but remained completely unknown to the Tibetan laymen.

Muhammad Raza wrote in his book published in 1838: “Jesus was thirteen years old when he left for the far eastern” [29]. A similar mention appeared with Maithai Chapan Gupta in 1901 [30].

Long before Notovitch’s sojourn in Himis, in 1854 a Mrs. Hervey went to the same monastery and made a reference to some Scriptures on Issa [31].

Swami Abhedananda (born Kaliprasad Chanda), a well-known exponent of Vedanta in Europe and America, was in a close relationship with Professor Max-Müller. Having his own doubts about the Notovitch’s writings, Abhedananda went in 1922 to Himis. According to Janet Bock’s report [32], he acknowledged to have gone to Himis to “expose” Notovitch. At the monastery, a lama showed him a manuscript about Issa (possibly the same seen by Notovitch) consisting in a translation into Tibetan of an original (written in Pali and kept in the monastery at Marbour, close to Lhasa). It included 14 chapters and 224 verses (244 verses in Notovitch’s record, the additional ones coming perhaps from a second manuscript presented to the Russian). With the help of a local lama interpreter, Abhedananda had the document translated, and reported the results of his inquiries firstly in a published serially starting May 1927 in the monthly *Vishvavani*, then, in 1929, as a book having first the title *Parivrajaka Swami Abhedananda*. The title was changed later to *Kashmiri O Tibbate* (Bengali). The next edition was published in 1954, also in Bengali. The English translation (fifth edition of the text) appeared in 1987 as *Journey into Kashmir and Tibet* where chapters 12 and 15 reproduce fragments of the Tibetan manuscript [33], which confirmed the discoveries of Notovitch (given in Appendix II [34]).

Ashutosh Ghosh recounts other details about Abhedananda’s inquiry: “He reached the «Himis Monastery» on the 4th October, and discovered a manuscript of the unknown life of Jesus Christ which was previously recorded by a Russian traveler, Nicholas Notovitch, and with the help of a senior Lama he got a translated copy of the important portions of the life of Jesus and had it incorporated in Bengali in his book *Kashmiri O Tibbate*” [35]. We would add a remark made by Abhedananda, as recorded by Mary LePage, one of his biographers: “The years preceding Christ’s ministry had been said to have been spent in India with the Yogis of Tibet” [36].

Swami Ramatirtha who was also in Kashmir came to the following conclusion: “there are many reasons to prove that He (Jesus) came to India, the same India where he learned his teaching” [37].

In her turn, Henrietta S. Merrick recorded that “In Leh is the legend of Christ who is called Issa, and the monastery at Himis holds precious documents fifteen hundred years old which tell of the days that He passed in Leh where He was joyously received and where He preached.” She went on

telling us that Issa, because of His descent was described as a Prince and was somehow connected with Sholabeth (Ceylon) [38].

U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas made a trip to Himis and wrote that this largest monastery in Ladakh shelters an apocryphal writing stating “that Jesus visited the place, that he came here when he was fourteen and left when he was twenty-eight, heading west, to be heard of no more. The legend fills in the details, saying that Jesus traveled to Himis under the name of Issa” [39].

Only a short time elapsed between the issue of Notovitch’s work and the printing of the famous *Aquarian Gospel* (ch. XIX D) whose sixth and seventh books wrote also about the period spent by Jesus in India.

While in the Temple of Jerusalem, the Prince of Orissa heard the twelve-year-old Jesus talking to the scholars. Deeply impressed he took the boy with him to India to help Him deepen His studies. In the Jagannath temple He studied the *Vedas* and the *Laws of Manu* astonishing the Brahmins with His wisdom. After four years spent there, Jesus began to openly condemn the caste division, showing that God the Father had created all humans equal among themselves, which incurred the anger of the Brahmins. Jesus preached in many towns in Orissa, in Bihar, on the banks of the Ganges, in Benares where He had even stayed for a while. His teachings encountered the opposition of the priests who forced Him to leave. Then He went to Kapilavastu in the Himalayas where He studied the *Vedas*, *Zend-Avesta* and Gautama’s teachings. Jesus talked to the Buddhist sages about God the Father and Mother and they recognized a new incarnation of the Buddha in Him. Jesus reached Lhasa in Tibet where He read the sacred manuscripts, and then He went to Leh where He remained for a long time healing sick people through uttering of mantras. He went further on to the Kashmir Valley accompanying a caravan of merchants, then to Lahore where He did not stay long.

The eighth book told of Jesus who after crossing the Indus reached Persepolis where He met the famous three Magi who had seen Him in Bethlehem. “And when they met, a light very much brighter than the light of day surrounded them, and men who saw the four in the way declared they were transfigured; seeming more like gods⁵⁸⁷ than men” [40].

In its ninth book, the gospel revealed to Levi Dowling referred to Jesus crossing the Euphrates, His voyage through Chaldea and the sojourn in Ur and then in Babylon. After many days, He crossed the Jordan and entered His native country, finally reaching Nazareth.

About His travels to the East He told no one but His Mother, requesting

⁵⁸⁷ Indeed, the three Magi are supposed to be incarnations of the Trimurti: Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu.

her to keep that secret. Indeed, after He was “lost” in the Temple for “three days,” Jesus came to Nazareth finding His parents, “and his mother kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51; cf. 2:19). Other versions replace things with “words” (*debarim*, Hebr.; *logoi*, Gr.) but in Hebrew that signify also “acts,” “events,” “circumstances.” Actually, Jesus told His parents where He has been: “He said to them: «Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?»” (see *supra*). “And they understood not the thing that he said to them” (2:49-50) in such extent were amazing these *things—acts—happenings*.

We believe that there are not many people, who have met such a wide international acknowledgement, as the Russian scientist and painter Nikolai XXXIII Konstantinovich Roerich (1874-1947) who was a friend of Leo Tolstoy. As -5 early as 1898 Roerich was a Professor of the Imperial Archaeological Institute. In 1909 he was elected an Academician of the Russian Imperial Academy of Fine Arts and became first vice-president of the “World of Art.” Also he was a member of the National Academy of Rheims, member of the Legion of Honor, member of the Salon d’Automne in Paris, honorable protector of the Paris Academy, a founding member of the Ethnographic Society in Paris, member of the International Research Association in Paris, of the French Society of Prehistoric Research, of the Parisian Society of Antiquarians, honorable member of the Vienna Secession, vice-president of the Mark Twain Society in the United States, member of the New York Society for the Protection of the Historical Monuments, vice-president of the American Institute of Archaeology, honorable president and Ph.D. in literature of the International Buddhist Institute in San Francisco, honorable member of the Jagadis Chandra Bose Institute in Calcutta, member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, of the Yugoslavian Academy of Science and Arts, of the International Institute of Science and Literature Academy in Bologna, and the list is still far from complete. Last but not least, in 1929 and 1935 Roerich was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Under these circumstances it would be difficult to find a person authorized to dispute Roerich’s testimony confirming the existence of Buddhist texts concerning Jesus.

About Professor Roerich, *Library Digest* wrote: “Two years ago... his admirers brought out a monograph... telling incidentally of documents he had found in old Buddhist monasteries in Tibet, which, he believed, furnished proof that Jesus has spent ten years studying in that part of Asia prior to his preaching in Palestine” [41].

The *Chicago Tribune* mentioned Professor Roerich as the one who spent “three years travels through unexplored regions of Asia, and found in a Tibetan monastery Buddhist manuscripts dealing with a travel made in India

by Jesus Christ when he was twenty-nine... These manuscripts also refer to the judgment of Jesus Christ by Pontius Pilate” [42].

Roerich has spent many years in Tibet. On April 1, 1925 Roerich was sending V. Shibaev “greetings from the Kashmir lakes,” also writing about his intention to go from Srinagar to Leh in Ladakh. He also informed Shibaev about the suspicion of the British authorities, which might not allow him to enter the region. The Englishmen were suspecting the great scientist as well as his fellow national Notovitch of no less than... spying! [43]. Details on this travel in Central Asia from India through Kashmir and Ladakh region, to Karakorum, Khotan (Ho-Tien, Chin.), over Altai Mountains into Mongolia, Central Gobi and Tibet during 1924-1928 are given in Roerich’s *Altai-Himalaya* and *Heart of Asia*. His wife Helena and his son George^{XXIII} accompanied the professor in that expedition. George was a remarkable – 6 anthropologist, whose presence facilitated both the examination for authenticity and the translation of the original Scriptures. He achieved his orientalist studies at Harvard and the School for Oriental Languages in Paris, and was at home with the Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan languages. Louis Marin, the ex-president of the Ethnographic Society in Paris, signed the preface to Dr. George Roerich’s Asian journeys published in 1931 under the title of *Trails to Innermost Asia* [44] where the author gave an exciting account of the expedition in Central Asia performed with his father.

In the followings we shall give passages from the *Heart of Asia*, *Altai-Himalaya* and other writings of Roerich like *Banners of the East*, which explains some repetitions.

Roerich reported: “In Srinagar, we first encountered the curious legend about Christ’s visit to this place⁵⁸⁸. Afterwards we saw how widely spread in India, in Ladakh and in Central Asia was the legend of the visit of Christ to these parts during the long absence mentioned in the gospels” [45].

“Three items of information reached us in one day about the legends of Jesus. A Hindu said to us: «I have heard from one Ladakhi official that according to the words of the former Abbot of Himis, there was a tree and a small pool in Leh beside which Jesus taught» (This is some new version⁵⁸⁹ about a tree and a pool, unheard before)...

A good and sensitive Hindu spoke meaningfully about the manuscript of the life of Issa: «Why does one always place Issa in Egypt during the time of his absence from Palestine? His young years of course were passed in study. The traces of his learning have naturally impressed themselves upon his latter

⁵⁸⁸ We shall give further details on the discoveries from Srinagar on the second section of the chapter (XXIII B).

⁵⁸⁹ Other versions will be presented in the followings.

sermons. To what sources do these sermons lead? What is there in them of Egyptian? And why does one not see traces of Buddhism—of India? It is difficult to understand why the wandering of Issa by caravan path into India and into the region now occupied by Tibet, should be so vehemently denied. The teachings of India were famed far and wide; let us even recall the description of the life of Apollonius of Tyana and his visit to Hindu sages»” [46].

(We might suppose that the above mentioning of Apollonius of Tyana was not unintentionally, since some authors [47] identified him with Jesus!)

“Another speaker reminds us that in Syria there was found a slab with an inscribed governmental edict about the persecution of the followers of Jesus as enemies of the government. This archaeological find must be curious for those who deny the historicity of Jesus the Teacher... In what possible way could a recent forgery penetrate into the consciousness of the whole East? And where is the scientist who could write a long treatise in Pali and Tibetan? We do not know such an one” [48].

“Leh is a remarkable site. Here the legends connected the paths of the Buddha and Christ. The Buddha went through Leh northwards. Issa communed here with the people on his way from Tibet. Secretly and cautiously the legends are guarded. It is difficult to sound them because lamas, above all people, know how to keep silent” [49].

“In Leh, we again encountered the legend of Christ’s visit to these parts. The Hindu postmaster of Leh and several Ladakhi Buddhists told us that in Leh, not far from the bazaar, there still exists a pond, near which stood an old tree. Under this tree, before His departure to Palestine, Christ preached to the people. We also heard another legend of how Christ, when young, arrived in India with a merchant’s caravan and how He continued to study the higher wisdom in the Himalayas. We heard several versions of this legend, which has spread widely throughout Ladakh, Sinkiang, and Mongolia; but all versions agree on one point: that during the time of His absence, Christ was in India and Asia. It does not matter how and from where the legend originated... It is valuable to see that the legend is told in full sincerity” [50]. “It is still more unexpected to hear in Tibetan mountains beautiful words about Jesus. Yet Buddhists preserve the teachings of Jesus, and lamas pay reverence to Jesus who passed and taught here... Why is it incredible that... he could have been in India? Whoever doubts too completely that such legends about the Christ life exist in Asia, probably does not realize what an immense influence the Nestorians have had in all parts of Asia and how many so-called Apocryphal legends they spread in the most ancient times. And then, how much truth is veiled in the so-called Apocryphal legends! It is significant to hear a local inhabitant, a Hindu, relate how Issa preached beside

a small pool near the bazaar under a great tree, which now no longer exists. In such purely physical indications you may see how seriously this subject is regarded” [51].

We read in Roerich’s diary: “September 19⁵⁹⁰. We learned how widespread are the legends about Issa. It is important only to know the substance of these legends. The sermons related in them, of unity, of the significance of woman and all the indications about Buddhism, are so remarkably timely for us. Lamas know the significance of these legends. And why do people resent and slander these legends?... Who can fail to recognize that many of the so-called «Apocrypha». For slander does not need a high intelligence. But who can fail to recognize that many of the so-called «Apocrypha» are far more basically true than many official documents?... It is better, instead of useless discussions, humanly to reflect on the facts and thoughts which are communicated in the legend of Issa, «the best of human sons»” [52].

“In every city, in every encampment of Asia, I tried to unveil what memories were cherished in the folk-memory. Through these guarded and preserved tales, you may recognize the reality of the past. In every spark of folklore there is a drop of the great Truth adorned or distorted” [53].

“The story of the life of Issa, the Teacher, is accepted and lives through the entire East, on the borders of Bhutan, and in Tibet, on the walls of Sikkim, on the peaks of Ladak and in the Mongolian Khoshuns... That which, for the West, is a sensation, is for the east an age-old Knowledge” [54].

Garabed Paelian explains: “Believing as did Pliny, that one is led to truth through the interpretation of a myth, Roerich lent an attentive ear to local legends and was interested to find that certain fundamental tales were common to nearly all oriental peoples” [55]. Ananda Coomaraswami wrote: “Myth is the closest vicinity to the absolute Truth, possible on a conceptual plane” [56]. Jung upholds that myth is the product of an orally transmitted tradition going back to an age often impossible to be estimated, considering that “originally, the myths are... no less than allegories of the physical events” [57]. Matthews adds that whenever archaeology runs out of ideas, one may resort to the analeptic memory even if that is not an academically acceptable practice [58].

Let us go back to Roerich who follows: “Regarding the legends of Jesus—first there was a complete denial. To our amazement denial first comes from the circle of missionaries. Then, slowly, little by little, creep in fragmentary, reticent details, difficult to obtain. Finally it appears that the old people in Ladakh have heard and know about the legends. Such legends about

⁵⁹⁰ It refers to the year 1925.

Jesus and the *Book of Shambala*⁵⁹¹ lie in the «darkest» place... And how many other relics have perished in dusty corners? For the Tantrik-lamas have no interest in them” [59]. Roerich found out from Lun-po, whose brother was the treasurer in Himis, “how many secret objects there are not known to visitors” [60].

This circumspect position of the lamas was also recorded by a publisher of Notovitch’s book, Virchand Raghavij Gandhi (1864-1901), who remarked: “the monks and other custodians of the sacred literature of the East have been unwilling to give full information about manuscripts” [61]. The same suspicious attitude persists even today, at least for the Himis monastery, said the tibetologists David Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski [62].

Roerich’s report went on: “Many remember the lines from the book of Notovitch, but it is still more wonderful to discover, on this site, in several variants, the same version of the legend of Issa. The local people know nothing of any published book but they know the legend and with deep reverence they speak of Issa. One may wonder what relation Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists have with Issa. But it is still more significant to see how vital are great ideas and how they penetrate even the most remote places” [63].

Roerich wrote further: “the old king lama⁵⁹² came himself.. From the conversation it became apparent that the family of the king knows of the manuscripts about Issa. They also informed us that many Mohammedans would like to possess this document” [64].

In *Altai-Himalaya*, Roerich recorded that “among the Kalmucks is very widely spread a legend about Jesus which is nothing else than one of the manuscripts already known to us, «Issa, the Best of Human Sons». Of course it has been penetrated here⁵⁹³ not from Himis but from another original source” [65]. “The Olets know of the legend about Issa as well as do the Torguts... Every enlightened lama speaks confidently about Issa as about any other historical fact” [66]. “The Buddhists⁵⁹⁴ also know about the legend of «Issa, the Best of Human Sons»” [67], as well as the Muslims do [68].

The Russian scholar draws the conclusion: “Thus, the legends of Asia weave such an image of Jesus, so ennobled and near to all nations. And Asia preserves in its mountains such legends” [69].

⁵⁹¹ It refers to prophecies on the coming of Kalki (ch. XIX B and D).

⁵⁹² Of Ladakh (called also The Little Tibet).

⁵⁹³ This refers to Kucha, the capital of Tokhars.

⁵⁹⁴ Of Mongolia.

Roerich also gave details about the documents shown to him: “Let us hearken the way in which, in the mountains of Tibet, they speak of Christ. In the documents which have the antiquity of about 1500 years one may read: «Issa secretly left his parents and together with the merchants of Jerusalem turned towards India to become perfected in the Divine Word. And for the study of the laws of the Great Buddha»” [70].

“In the legends that have the estimated antiquity of many centuries, it is related that Issa secretly left his parents and together with the merchants of Jerusalem turned toward the Indus to become perfected in the highest teaching. It is related that «He passed his time in several ancient cities of India such as Benares. All loved him because Issa dwelt in peace with Vaishas and Sudras whom he instructed and helped... Many... decided to kill Issa. But Issa, forewarned, departed from this place by night. Afterward, Issa went to Nepal and into the Himalaya mountains... Issa taught that men should not strive to behold the Eternal Spirit⁵⁹⁵ with one’s own eyes but to feel it with the heart, and to become a pure and worthy soul». Upon his return to the land of Israel, Issa taught: «... succor the ailing in order that you be entirely pure and just upon that last day which I am preparing for you... »... Another version also speaks about the life of Jesus in Tibet: «Near Lhasa was a temple of teaching with a wealth of manuscripts. Jesus was to acquaint himself with them. Meng-ste, a great sage of all the East, was in this temple. Finally, Jesus reached a mountain pass in the chief city of Ladakh, Leh, he was joyously accepted by monks and people of the lower class. And Jesus taught in the monasteries and in the bazaars; wherever the simple people gathered—there he taught»... Among the Ladakhis, Jesus passed many days, teaching them” [71].

Roerich’s report is matching essentially the text of Notovitch about *The Life of Saint Issa* for at least sixty verses that are common to both historians without being identical. It is worth noticing that Roerich mentioned passages that were unknown to Notovitch [72].

Clare Prophet spoke of another evidence brought by Elisabeth Caspari. In 1939, during a pilgrimage at Mount Kailash, she and her husband arrived in Himis. There, the librarian of the monastery showed them three books consisting of parchment leaves bound between linen wooden covers. After opening one of them he explained: “These books say your Jesus was there.” The manuscript was written in Tibetan and the guests didn’t ask for a translation, however, they took photographs [73].

Another witness was Dr. Robert S. Ravicz, Professor of anthropology at California State University at Northridge, about whom Prophet wrote: “While at Himis in 1975, Dr. Ravicz was told about the Issa manuscripts by an

⁵⁹⁵ That is the Self.

eminent Ladakhi physician” [74]. Janet Bock adds: “In a discussion with the Head Abbot, he was told that the texts and documents in the monastery could be studied by people coming from abroad, but it would take great effort and would be an arduous task... He was told it would be necessary for someone to live in the monastery for several years and learn classical Tibetan before being allowed to look into the materials” [75].

Prophet also mentioned Edward F. Noack and his wife to whom, in the late seventies, a monk told: “There are manuscripts in our library that describe the journey of Jesus to the East” [76].

In his book dealing with lost years of Christ, the physician Charles Francis Potter noticed: “It seems that many Hindus believe that Jesus’ «Lost Years» were, partly at least, spent in India, getting much of his best teaching from the *Vedas*. Didn’t he say: «Take my yoga upon you and learn from me, for my yoga is easy⁵⁹⁶»?” [77] (see our Introduction).

To the above reports we would like to add the presence of three crosses and inscriptions carved on a large rock at Tankse (Drangtse) neighbouring Ladakh. One of the inscriptions, in Sogdian, includes a word that seems to be “Jesus” [78].

The Glimpses of World History read: “All over Central Asia, in Kashmir and Ladakh and Tibet and even farther north, there is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa traveled about there. Some people believe that he visited India also. It is not possible to say anything with certainty, and indeed most authorities, who have studied the life of Jesus do not believe that Jesus came to India and Central Asia. But there is nothing inherently improbable in his having done so. In those days the great universities of India, specially Takshashila⁵⁹⁷ in the northwest, attracted earnest students from distant countries, and Jesus might well have come there in quest of knowledge. In many respects the teaching of Jesus is so similar to Gautama’s teaching that it seems highly probable that he was fully acquainted with it” [79].

Enthusiastic about the subject, Holger Kersten set off in the tracks of Notovitch in the spring of 1979. The journey was described in his *Jesus Lived in India*.

Kersten arrived in Himis after he had obtained a letter of recommendation from the highest religious authority in Tibetan Buddhism. After four days of waiting the mentor to the superior, Dungsey Rimpoche, received him. Kersten handed to the mentor his credentials and he told the latter that he was doing research for the interests of Christianity. With a lenient smile,

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Matthew 11:29-30.

⁵⁹⁷ Taxila. The name comes from Prince Taksha put on the throne of Gandharvadesha (Gandhara) by Shri Rama, according to the *Ramayana*.

Rimpoche advised the German to first find the truth about himself before trying to change the world, after which he informed him that these writings had been looked for but could not be found. A strange character with western features, saying that he was an Australian, attended the meeting as an interpreter, since Rimpoche could speak only Tibetan. Oddly enough, because Nawang-Tsering—the secretary and interpreter to the superior—who could speak perfect English, was also in the monastery. The “Australian” translated only a part of what the Tibetan had said. Everything leads us to believe that the unusual stranger was none other than an emissary from the Vatican, who had well known relationship with the author of the letter of recommendation. It is therefore evident that the letter had been given to Kersten out of complaisance while its effect was secretly annihilated and the interview closely supervised by the “Australian.” Both the manner in which they left Kersten to wait for four long days and the monk’s final answer denoted a polite but firm refusal.

Deeply disappointed, Kersten then visited the local mission of the Moravian Church that had been founded by the Herrnhuter Order of lay brothers as early as 1885. There he asked about the diary of Dr. K. Marx who had visited Tibet in the previous century but the document had mysteriously vanished three or four years before. Fortunately not before some pages had been photographed by Professor Hassnain, a distinguished Ph.D. of Indology and Archaeology, Director of the State Archives, Archaeology Research and Museums in Kashmir, whom Kersten met in Srinagar and who made the diary’s photos available, so that Kersten could reproduce fragmentary one of them in his book, while the full copies of pages 118 and 119 were published by Hassnain and Levi, then by Mohammad Yasin [80]. Hassnain also drew Kersten’s attention to Al-Haj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad’s pioneering work *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, a remarkable book on this topic published in 1952, which contains abundant evidences on Christ’s stay in India.

Later on, Professor Hassnain wrote together with Dahan Levi a volume rich in references and illustrations, dealing with Jesus presence in India, which appeared in 1988 under the title *The Fifth Gospel*.

We shall conclude this section by giving the sketch of the itinerary supposedly followed by Jesus. He left Jerusalem through Damascus, continuing south of the Caspian Sea (ancient Hyrcania), crossing Iran and Afghanistan, then the province of Sindh (southwestern Pakistan), the southern Punjab, Rajputan (Rajasthan), following the Malabar Coast, down to Sholabeth (Ceylon), then going north towards Jagannath (Puri) in Orissa, Rajagriha (Bihar), Benares on the Ganges, towards Kapilavastu in Nepal, reaching Leh (Tibet) and from there Kashmir. He returned through Lahore (Punjab), crossing the Indus River, the Iranian plateau through Persepolis,

traversing the Euphrates, Chaldaea, Ur, Babylon and over the Jordan back to Jerusalem.

B. MATURITY AND OLD AGE

“His days shall be a hundred and twenty years”
Genesis 6:3

The *Bible* contained a number of passages about the stay of Jesus on this earth after His resurrection.

The prophets had formerly announced that: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hands” (Isaiah 53:10-11). It obviously resulted from those words that a longer period was implied (*he shall see a seed*). “He hath sent me... to proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh” (61:1-2), where it is highly improbable that the text referred to a terrestrial year (see ch. XV B for the divine measure of time with the Jews and Muslims).

The *Apocryphon of James* wrote that after resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples “five hundred and fifty days since he had risen from the dead” and they conversed with him, and only later on Jesus ascended [81]. Another apocryphal text of the second century, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (which was not a heretical but an ecclesiastical work [82]) foretold that “he will rise on the third day and will remain in that world for five hundred and forty-five days.” Later this text wrote: “In Jerusalem, indeed, I saw how they crucified him on a tree, and likewise (how) after the third day he remained (many) days” [83].

A Sethian-Ophite text read: “Jesus remained for eighteen months after the resurrection” [84], while a Valentinian writing refers to “his eighteen months’ stay with the disciples after the resurrection of the dead” [85].

Other Gnostic writing tells: “It came to pass, when Jesus had risen from the dead, that he passed eleven years discoursing with his disciples⁵⁹⁸, and instructing them” [86]. After being abducted to the heaven by a great “light-power” (*dýnamis*, Gr.), He came back the day after to the Mount of Olives, and gave the disciples an account of that trip [87].

The Acts wrote that after He had suffered, Jesus “was seen by them⁵⁹⁹ forty days” (1:3), which was apparently a striking contrast with the

⁵⁹⁸ *Mathetai* (plural; *mathetés*, singular, Gr.).

⁵⁹⁹ The disciples.

mentioning above.

In the beginning of the former section, it has been explained that the authors of biblical writings used to compress long periods of time, talking about events that occurred decades before, as if they followed one another at a short interval. The Jews, as it has already been shown (ch. XIX A), may denote a period of time, using the word “yom” meaning “day” instead. Thus, “the three days” of Jesus missing from home at the age of twelve might very well mean about “three decades” etc. Likewise, those “many days” mentioned by Isaiah might have been “many years” or “many decades” (see also ch. XXIII A). God Himself equated “a day” to “a year”: “After the number of the days in which ye have searched out the land, forty days, each day for a year shall be for your iniquities forty years” (14:34). Actually, even the motto of this section taken from Genesis 6:3 equates *days* and *years*. It would be easy to understand the correspondence of *a day* with *a year* if we compare the forty days spent by Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2) with the forty years spent by the Jewish people in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33; 32:13).

We shall notice that also the chronology since the Creation of the world considered *a day* equal to *a year*. Therefore, Daniel announced that 70 weeks will pass till the coming of the Messiah, the Anointed: “Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to close the transgression, and to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of holies” (9:24). Hence, we get the number of “days”: 70x7 meaning 490 *years*, in full agreement with the chronology given by Darby [88]. As for Enoch, by “a week” he understood “seventy generations” [89].

Blaise Pascal uttered the following enigmatic words: “Jesus was not able to rest on this earth except in the tomb” [90]. However, according to the *Bible*, Jesus remained in the tomb only for three days (when He actually descended into the hell), then He resurrected. Hence we may wonder what was the tomb hinted at by the French philosopher other than the one of Jerusalem?

The next century after Christ’s crucifixion Irenaeus wrote: “On completing his thirtieth year he suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age. Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while he still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. And he remained

among them up to the times of Trajan. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to the [validity of] the statement” [91]. In the words of Pagels: “Irenaeus argued that Jesus was more than fifty years old when he died” [92]. We should bear in mind that Trajan commenced his rule in AD 98.

The apocryphal *Testament of Isaac*, translated after the Arabic version says that archangel Michael came to announce Isaac that he will die and go to the heavens. After the angel’s departure, Isaac told to his son Jacob: “And hereafter twelve mighty ones⁶⁰⁰ shall come forth, and Jesus the Messiah shall come of thy seed of a virgin whose name is Miriam, and God shall abide upon him till a hundred years be fulfilled” [93].

In his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius wrote: “I know that even after his resurrection he was in the flesh; and I believed that he is still so” [94]. However, Eusebius showed that Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch, was condemned and sent to Rome to face death during the reign of Emperor Trajan, therefore after AD 98 [95]. Since the text of Ignatius is written in the present, not the past tense, it means that Jesus was still alive towards the end of the first or even in the beginning of the second century.

To remain within the Christian tradition, we shall mention the Hesychast Daniel (Sandu) Tudor who pertaining to the time when the Revelation of Patmos was written (during the reign of Diocletian, around 90 or 95 in the opinion of most scholars), asserted that although “crucified less than two generations before, Jesus lived, after the believers who held that He was resurrected” [96].

Hadrat Fatimah stated that the Prophet told that Jesus reached the age of one hundred and twenty years [97]. Gibb and Kramers, the authors of a well-known Islamic encyclopedia referred to Jesus when writing: “He is said to have died at the age of 120 years” [98]. Ghulam Ahmad also mentions: “reliable reports in the *Hadith* show that the Holy Prophet said that Jesus was 125 years of age” [99], sending to the collection of *ahadiths* known as *Kanz-al-Ummal* that, in fact, disclosed that Jesus died at the age of 120 years, according to the words of Abu Huraira [100]. The Islamic Ahmadiyya movement “teaches that Jesus escaped from Jerusalem, wandered to the East, settled at Srinagar in Kashmir and died there, where his tomb is still shown” [101].

We shall mention here a hypothesis of the leader of that movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He thought that *Srinagar* is “the place of Sri” (*nagar*, place, town, Sanskr.), named thus as a reminder of Golgotha, connected to *Gilgit* (a

⁶⁰⁰ Meaning Avatars. Twelve is a sacred number, which sends either to the completion of the zodiacal circle, or to the twelve Imams (ch. XIX C) etc.

town in Kashmir, north of Srinagar) corresponding to *Sri* [102]. Actually, *Sri* or *Shri* means “Lord,” in Sanskrit.

The above texts are in a good concordance with God’s words about Man: “His days shall be a hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3), which obviously is valid for Jesus, “the Son of Man,” that is man’s divine Prototype.

Now, going back to Acts, they describe the event of resurrection like that: “He was taken up, they beholding [him], and a cloud received him out of their sight” (1:9). It could be presumed that after “taken up” there were inserted the words “into heaven,” which were probably missing in the original text, since it was only afterwards that two men clouded in white have informed the apostles that Jesus ascended into heaven: “This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner which ye have beheld him going into heaven” (1:11). The words seemed mysterious and were supposed to announce the Savior’s second coming; however, the things are perhaps simpler and closer to that moment.

Graves and Podro interpreted this text as describing the moment when “the disciples last saw Jesus disappearing into low-lying cloud as he ascended the Mount of Olives on his way to Bethany” [103]. Let us send again to the text of the Acts quoted above, saying that after His resurrection Jesus was “seen by them during forty days” (1:3). Hence, we can understand now that afterwards He went out of their sight through a natural phenomenon (heavy clouds came low, as it often happens on mountains, and their mist engulfed Him), which by no means signified that He left this earth but only the country. That reminds that after Lord’s resurrection and meeting with the apostles: “He disappeared from them” (Luke 24:31; “He vanished out of their sight” in *King James Version*), where there are used the words: *áphantos egéneto* (he withdrew himself from them; he went out of their sight, Gr.). John recorded other instances when Jesus disappeared from the sight of people: “Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple going through the midst of them, and then passed on” (8:59; also 10:39).

One may wonder why the authors of the gospels said so little about the ascension of Jesus.

Both Matthew and John do not even mention the ascension.

Mark is describing that most important event in the life of Jesus (besides the resurrection) into a single sentence as it have been reported by another person: “The Lord therefore, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God” (16:19). It was as simple as that. That passage is a forgery, since all the most important manuscripts—Codices *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus* and *Sinaitic Syriac*⁶⁰¹— do not contain this verse.

⁶⁰¹ Found in 1892 by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson at St. Catherine Monastery on Mount Sinai. It dates back to AD 200.

Eusebius declare: “in the accurate manuscripts Mark ended with verse 8 of chapter XVI” [104], in fact the last words in Mark’s gospel are *ephoubounto gár* (for they were afraid, Gr.). Many other Fathers of the Church manifested similar views. Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria and Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil, and Gregory Nazianzen do not even mention this passage, neither Tertullian, nor Cyprian rely on this verse. Jerome also confirmed this: “Nearly all Greek manuscripts have not got this passage.” Many critics have proved that the vocabulary, grammar and style of the original Greek from verse 16:9 to 16:20 (known as the “Marcian Appendix”), are different from the rest of the gospel, and they cannot be from the same author [105]. The reference “sat at the right hand of God” is a mention taken from the Psalm 110:1.

As for Luke, as Templeton explained [106], “after a disclaimer stating that he was not an eyewitness but a simply passing on what he has been able to learn through his research, then presume to quote verbatim... concluded by stating that the resurrected Jesus, after meeting with the apostles in Jerusalem «led them out as far as Bethany, and having lifted up his hands, he blessed them. And it came to pass as he was blessing them, he was separated from them and was carried up into heaven»” (24:50-51). Professor Dummelow admits that “the ancient authorities omit these words,” and adds that if the words “and was carried up into heaven” are omitted, it is possible to regard this event, not as an ascension, but as a disappearance of Jesus at the end of the interview [107]. Luke’s story in the gospel is in manifest contradiction with the recount in Acts (commonly attributed to the same Luke), on notable points: the apostles were led on the Mont of Olives (1:12), and from there Jesus was taken up to heaven (1:9). According to Matthew (28:16), Jesus addressed His last words to the disciples on an unknown mount in Galilee. Mark (16:14-19) placed the event immediately after the meeting when He admonished them for their unbelief, i.e. in Jerusalem (Luke 24:33), while Luke states that from there they went with Jesus in Bethany where He left them and ascended to heaven (24:50-51). Therefore, from where took Jesus His ascent? John (21:1-22) induces us to believe that the place “is not known, perhaps he never ascended to heaven at all but walked away into the distance along the shores of the Lake of Tiberias,” to quote the words of Merejkowski [108].

Erich von Deniken expressed his doubts about the authenticity of the ascent: “If Jesus had ascended into heaven in full view of everybody, or at least in the circle of his disciples, the news would have spread through the streets of Jerusalem like a forest fire on the very same day, for the people had taken a lively interest in the trial and crucifixion... The evangelists show only the most rudimentary knowledge of them and they were not eyewitnesses. It was a *crux interpretum*” [109] (torment of interpreters, Lat.).

The *Gospel of Philip* plainly affirmed: “Those who say that the Lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for He rose up first and (then) died” [110].

We believe that the problem of the death of Jesus requires a scrupulous investigation.

It seems that influenced by Ghulam Ahmad’s *Masih Hindustani mein* (*Jesus in India*) published in 1899 (translated in English and printed in 1962, in Pakistan)—where the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement claimed that Jesus has not met His death on the cross—Kersten tried to support the former’s theory by mentioning some texts in the gospels and the *Qur’an*. Other authors (Ernest Brougham Docker, Robert Graves and Joshua Podro, J.D.M. Derett, Nazir Ahmad, Fida Hassnain and Dahan Levi, Deardorff [111] etc.) have followed, too, Ahmad Ghulam’s example, and one can find among them even a novelist, Gerald Messadié, who wrote a fiction entitled *Jesus of Srinagar*.

At the outset, Kersten referred to Matthew’s gospel using the analogy between Jesus and prophet Jonah who did not die after being swallowed by a whale: “For even as Jonas was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, thus shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights” (12:40). Likewise Odysseus descended into the hell, and Muhammad, too, went down to the infernal world (*isra*, Arab.). As a matter of fact, the exegetes held that the episode in the *Bible* is a metaphor for the three nights of complete darkness between the disappearance of the old moon and the appearance of its new crescent, thus symbolizing the transition between two successive ages.

Then Kersten gives a quotation from the *Qur’an* (4.156): “And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Mariam a grievous calumny. And their saying: «Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Mariam, the apostle of Allah»; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so and most surely those who differ are only in doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure” [112]. Further, the author considered that the Arabic word for crucifixion signifies “death on the cross” in this context and this doesn’t mean being nailed on the cross only.

Kersten’s assertions might be easily contradicted. First of all, the above *Qur’anic* quotation seems rather ambiguous. But let’s go deeper into this Scripture. In the surah devoted to Virgin Mary, Jesus said (19.34): “Peace be upon me, the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive!”—a sequence that denies Kersten’s hypothesis depending on the *Qur’an*. Moreover, “Allah said: «O Jesus! Lo! I am gathering thee and

causing thee to ascend⁶⁰² unto Me» [113]. Here Marmaduke Pickthall interpreted *mutawaffika* as “I am gathering thee,” supported by some respectable Muslim commentaries translating that verb as “to cause to die,” thus indicating that the death of Jesus preceded His ascension. In the aforesaid, the verb employed has the root *b'th*, designating a physical resurrection.

Schuon declared: “As for the apparent denial of the crucifixion by the *Qur'an*, we have always held that this is a question of theology rather than of history.” He remembered the same point of view met in a work of Louis Massignon [114]: “Abu Hatim, basing himself on the opinion of one of his masters (who is not named), declares that the beginning of the Qur'anic verse (4.156) in no way denies the crucifixion, and that it must be interpreted after taking account of its ending: «and they slew him not of a certainty (*yakina*); God raised him up to Himself», and, since Jesus died a martyr, recollecting the verses (2.149; cf. 3.164) on the death of martyrs: «And say not of those slain in God's way: They are dead; rather they are living, but you are not aware»” [115]. Indeed, from the above it can be understood that in reality resurrected Jesus overcame death, while the Jews believed they had killed Him. On the other hand, in their exegeses of the verse 4.156, Zaehner and Parrinder [116] have stressed on the fact that the text is not saying that Jesus was not crucified but that *the Jews* did not crucified him, which is true since it was Pilate responsible for this crime (ch. XVII).

Kersten also said that even the Jews were then not sure about the death of Jesus. Matthew wrote that the Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb were paid by the counsel of high priests and elders (28:11-12) to state, “that his disciples coming by night stole him [while] we [were] sleeping... And this report is current among the Jews until this day” (28:13,15). At last, Kersten signals that the procurator had some doubts: “Pilate wondered if he were already dead” (Mark 15:44). But the German author forgets to add that afterwards Pilate has checked if Jesus was indeed dead: “having called to [him] the centurion, *he inquired of him if he had long died*. And when *he knew* from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph” (15:45; emphasis added).

In order to support his assumption, Kersten resorted also to the controversial “Turin shroud.” We are not at all in the best position to decide on its authenticity. Scientists from three reputed laboratories working independently of each other established that the Turin shroud dates back to 12th century [117]. At the same time, partisans of authenticity claim that the dating was altered by various factors. Out of the four authors of the gospels, John alone was an eyewitness both at the crucifixion (the other disciples ran

⁶⁰² *Rafa'* (Arab.).

away) and descent from the cross as well as of the visit to the tomb after the resurrection. In his gospel, John denied (three times) that the Savior was wrapped in a shroud. First of all, he reports: “They took therefore the body of Jesus and bound it up⁶⁰³ in linen⁶⁰⁴ with spices⁶⁰⁵, as it is the custom with the Jews to prepare for burial⁶⁰⁶” (19:40). When visiting the tomb together with John, “Simon Peter... sees the linen clothes lying” (20:6; see also 20:7): “*theorei ta othónia keímena*” (Gr.). In the precedent sentences Darby used “linen” and even “linen clothes,” which constitute a deliberate misrepresentation. However, we have seen that the word used by John instead of “linen (clothes)” was *othónia*, the Greek for linen *stripes* or *bandages*. The same happens with Luke 24:12 where the same word *othónia* is also altered in “linen clothes.” When Mark spoke of true “linen cloth” cast about the body of a running men (14:51) he used the Greek term *periblebleménos sindóna*, which might be understood as “shroud.” Indeed, *sindón* (Gr.) means a cloth wrapped around the body. The word is equivalent to *sadin* (Hebr.) designating the shirt or mantle as in Judges 14:12-13 or linen cloth (garment) in Proverbs 31:24 (body linen). We shall remind the case of Lazarus whose dead body was wrapped and bound (like the corpse of Jesus in John 19:40) XXIII in bandages like a mummy. After being resurrected, “the dead came forth, - 9 bound feet and hands with grave-clothes, and his face was bound round with a handkerchief. Jesus said to them: «Loose him and let him go»” (John 11:44). The second-hand reports in other (synoptic) stories maintain that the Savior had the “body wrapped in a clean linen cloth,” (Matthew 27:59), “swathed in the linen” (Mark 15:46), and “wrapped in fine linen” (Luke 23:53, Darby; even “wrapped in a shroud” in *The New Jerusalem Bible*).

On another occasion (ch. XX C2b) we have mentioned the hypothesis upheld by some scholars (for instance J.L. Teicher) about the identity between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness, relying on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Professor Vermes among others (e.g. William Sanford LaSor) rejects such a hypothesis. Indeed, it would be difficult to claim that Jesus was one of the Essenes. One main reason is supplied by the *Damascus Document*, which situated the advent of the Teacher 420 years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC thus placing the event in 166 BC. On the other side, enlightened people guided the Essenes (ch. XXV C), a fact

⁶⁰³ *Édesan* (Gr.).

⁶⁰⁴ *Othoníois* (Gr.).

⁶⁰⁵ *Metá tòn aromáton* (Gr.).

⁶⁰⁶ *Entaphiázlein* (Gr.).

that might explain the similitude of their teachings with that of Jesus (and not only).

Laperrousaz, Dupont-Sommer and Brownlee [118] remarked that that syntagma used in the Qumran documents that appears in the *Essene Commentaries to Psalm 37* reading about “the Priest, Teacher [of Righteousness],” was familiar within the Old Testament itself (the *Vulgate*: Psalm 84:6; Isaiah 30:20; Hosea 10:12; Joel 2: 23). Other versions of the *Bible* replaced the syntagma by *autumn* (or *early*) *rain*—due to the semantic equivocal between the latter and the Hebrew word for “teacher”—for instance: “the early rain covereth it with blessings” (Psalm 84:6; after Darby). The text appearing in that psalm in the *Vulgate* is: “*et enim benedictionem dabit legislator*” (and the law-giver has given them blessings, Lat.) while other times “law-giver” equated “teacher” or “instructor” [119]. The words in Joel 2:23: “for He has given you autumn rain as justice demands” (*The New Jerusalem Bible*) or “former rain” (*King James Version*) or “early rain”⁶⁰⁷ appeared in the *Vulgate*: “*quia dedit vobis doctorem iustitiae*” (Lat.), translated in the *Bible* of Dhorme [120]: “for He gave you the Teacher of Righteousness.” Other translations of Hosea 10:12 read: “rain righteousness” (*King James Version*, and Darby’s translation). Last but not least, a *Hymn* discovered at Qumran used a similar equivalent: “But Thou, O my God, hast put into my mouth/ as it were rain for all” [121].

“He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart” [122]. The Teacher said in another *Hymn*: “For Thou hast known me from (the time of) my father, [and hast chosen me] from the womb. [From the belly of] my mother Thou hast dealt kindly with me, and from the breast of her who conceived me have Thy mercies been with me... Thou wilt care for me; for my father⁶⁰⁸ knew me not and my mother abandoned⁶⁰⁹ me to Thee” [123]. The appellations of Son of God and Son of the Most High can be encountered in other Qumran manuscripts in a context similar to Luke 1:32-35 (“He shall be great, and shall be called Son of [the] Highest... shall be called Son of God”... “and of his kingdom there shall not be an end”): “He will be called the son of God; they will call him son of the Most High... His Kingdom will be an Eternal Kingdom, and he will be Righteous in all his Ways. He [will jud]ge the earth in Righteousness, and everyone will make peace... His rule will be an Eternal rule, and all the

⁶⁰⁷ *Hammoreh lisedaqa* (Hebr.).

⁶⁰⁸ Interpreted as Joseph.

⁶⁰⁹ Believed to be the moment when Jesus was called holy to the Lord, as the first-born according to the Jewish Law (Luke 2:22-23).

boundaries..." [124].

He was "the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets... the Priest [in whose heart] God set [understanding] that he might interpret all the words of His servants the Prophets" [125]. Hence, his teachings allowed the disciples to go deeper into their own knowledge⁶¹⁰ of the Scripture, to be initiated—beyond the literal meaning—in "the wonderful Secrets" held by the revealed texts, inspired by God, as written in the *Thanksgiving Hymns*: "Thou hast made me... a discerning interpreter of wonderful mysteries... Thou hast put teaching and understanding, that might open a fountain of knowledge to all men of insight" [126]. "I, the Master, know Thee O my God, by the spirit which Thou hast given to me, and by Thy Holy Spirit I have faithfully hearkened to Thy marvelous counsel. In the mystery of Thy wisdom Thou hast opened knowledge to me, and in Thy mercies [Thou hast unlocked for me] the fountain of Thy might." "Through me Thou hast illuminated the face of the Congregation and hast shown Thine infinite power. For Thou hast given me knowledge through Thy marvelous mysteries, and hast shown Thyself mighty within me in the midst of Thy marvelous Council. Thou hast done wonders before the Congregation for the sake of Thy glory, that they may make known Thy mighty deeds to all the living" [127].

It is interesting that in a *Hymn* found in Qumran the Teacher talks about "They who bore the yoke of my testimony" [128], thus paralleling the words of Jesus referring to Yoga (yoke, Sanskr.; see our Introduction and ch. XXV): "Take my yoke upon you... " (Matthew 11:29).

In other *Hymns* the Teacher says: "I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast upheld me by Thy strength. Thou hast shed Thy Holy Spirit upon me that I may not stumble. Thou hast strengthened me before the battles of wickedness, and during all their disasters Thou hast not permitted that fear should cause me to desert Thy Covenant" [129]. These lines were compared to the moment of weakness in the Gethsemane Garden (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42) and the succeeding sufferings. Another *Hymn* wrote that the Teacher of Righteousness was tied up and on that attempt many disciples abandoned Him as it occurred to Jesus (Matthew 26:56; cf. 27:2; Mark 14:50): "My arm is torn from its socket [and I can] lift my hand [no more]; my [foot] is held by fetters... [I have no word] for my disciples." Further on, the *Hymns* present analogies with the episode of judgment and the answer given during the hearing: "I will reply to him who slanders me and I will rebuke my oppressor; I will declare his sentence unjust and declare Thy judgment righteous. For I know Thy truth, and I choose Thy judgment upon me; I delight in my scourges" [130]. However, a more realistic explanation

⁶¹⁰ *Gnósis* that is knowledge of the Self, identification with Atman.

could be that the sentences above were inspired from the prophecies on the Messiah provided by the Old Testament (ch. XVI).

In the views of some exegetes the scrolls depicted the separation from the disciples, and from the native land (called “exile”), and reaching of the old aged. “*I will exile the tabernacle of your king... from my tent in Damascus*⁶¹¹... The *star* is the Interpreter of the Law⁶¹² who shall come to Damascus as it has been written: *A star shall come out of Jacob...*⁶¹³” [131]. “They have banished me from my land like a bird from its nest; all my friend and brethren are driven far from me” [132]. Actually, as it shall be disclosed, Jesus went far away—among foreigners, departing from most of those close to Him—leaving His country and first reaching Damascus. “I thank Thee, o, Lord, for Thou hast not abandoned me whilst I sojourned among a people [burdened with sin]... Thou hast caused me to dwell with the many fishers who spread a net upon the face of the waters, and with the hunters of the children of iniquity; Thou hast established me there for justice. Thou hast confirmed the counsel of truth in my heart and the waters of the Covenant for those who seek it” [133]. “Until I am old Thou wilt care for me” [134]. In the following we shall see that in the end, Jesus attained Kashmir where He lived among the *Mlechchhas* (equating precisely: “burdened with sin”), taught them the Truth, reached “the old age,” and was buried there. Kashmir is also renowned for its numerous rivers and lakes (ch. III) where the inhabitants catch fish.

One cannot doubt the human existence of Jesus, His death in the flesh and resurrection in the flesh, in spite of the Peter’s perplexing words claiming that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh, but made alive in [the] Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18). As a matter of fact, the Savior Himself made the following statement: “The Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again” (John 10:17-18).

On the other hand, He was the pure Spirit, the only incarnation beyond the physical elements. Many times we have made mention of the light accompanying Him (ch. XI E). “If therefore thy whole body [is] light, not having any part dark, it shall be all light as when the lamp lights thee with its brightness” (Luke 11:36). Therefore He had nothing material in His body, *not having any part dark*. The hypothesis (presented by the *Aquarian Gospel* in the followings) that Jesus was able to “manifest in flesh, or in the higher

⁶¹¹ It is the text of Amos 5:26-27.

⁶¹² Another name given to the Teacher of Righteousness.

⁶¹³ It is the text of Numbers 24:17.

planes of life, at will,” though astounding cannot be easily rejected. We should remember the *casse-tête* of the physicists: one and the same physical reality, the light (as well as any other form of radiant energy or even the electron), has properties that some times cannot be explained otherwise than accepting that it consists of waves, and other times only by admitting that it is made up of particles (photons). That so-called “duality wave-particle” (or the most general “duality matter-energy” discovered by Einstein) that is acknowledged on the whole by the modern scientists might be regarded of the same caliber of illogicality as the “duality material-immaterial” manifestation of Jesus. The divine is beyond human understanding, therefore, “all things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27; cf. 14:36; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27).

The *Bible* provides us with enough reasons to uphold the above-mentioned viewpoint. Firstly there was the Primordial Couple, namely Avatars with an immaterial (spiritual, ethereal) body. When these Principles manifested themselves in earthly shape they needed a skin (therefore material, human) covering. “And Yahweh Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). The word *skin* comes from *avir* (air, ether, Hebr.) by deleting the *dot* (*yod*), a symbol of Divinity. However, Jesus was the *New Adam* (ch. XIX C). His spiritual feature appears also in the biblical text telling us that “the last Adam [was] a quickening spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Another example was Hiawatha who received a “pneumatic body,” a breath-body [135]. Here again we met the coolness (*quickenings*, meaning “freshening”) and the breath or breeze (spirit; ch. XI C).

The *Zohar* strengthened the *Bible*: “We have learnt that four pillars (i.e. angels) are waiting there with a form of a body in their hands, and with this it gleefully clothes itself and then remains in its appointed circle in the Garden of Eden for its allotted time” [136].

In Islamic tradition, the *jinn*s were created by God from fire, like human beings from mud, and angels from light [137].

John supplies a hint in the opening of his gospel, saying about Jesus: “He was in the world” (1:10). However, *mundus* (world, Lat.) means also *pure* (having as antonym *immundus*, impure, Lat.). For Christ’s body that signified the absolute purity becoming immateriality.

Luke (9:29) accurately described the Transfiguration: “the fashion of his countenance became different” (*to eidos tou próspon autou hétéron*, Gr.). After His resurrection, “he manifested *in another form* to two of them as they walked, going into the country” (Mark 16:12; emphasis added)—that is Emmaus. “Jesus himself drawing nigh went with them; but their eyes were holden so as not to know him” (Luke 24:15-16). The same happened on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias: “Jesus stood on the shore; the disciples did not know that it was Jesus” (John 21:4). Likewise it came about when Jesus

showed Himself to Mary Magdalene who failed to recognize Him “she supposing that it was the gardener” (John 20:15). When she wanted to touch Him, He stopped her uttering the famous words (20:17): “*Noli me tangere!*” (Touch me not, Lat.).

The apocryphal *Gospel according to the Hebrews* came to us only as fragments by means of its Christian opponents like Cyril of Jerusalem [138], Origen [139], Clement of Alexandria [140], and Jerome [141]. Thus, the latter referred to such a segment: “In the *Hebrew Gospel* that the Nazarene read it says: «The whole fountain of the Holy Spirit comes down on him. For the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit is, there is freedom»” [142]. Jerome used to pay a great respect to that gospel referring to it as “the Gospel also which is called the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and which I have recently translated into Greek and Latin and which also Origen often makes use of” [143].

The eastern Gnostic branch of the Valentinians considered the body of Jesus to be a pure *dokein* (seem, Gr., wherefrom the name of *Docetism* given to this concept), similar to the angelic bodies mentioned within the Old Testament. Valentine used to say that Jesus “has brought a special body from heavens.” *Pistis Sophia* explains that the “light-power” (*dynamis*, Gr.) is Christ’s pleromatic garment (*endyma*, Gr.) of Light, containing in itself all the secret names of the levels above heaven; that enables Him to pass across all the doors (*pylai*, Gr.) of the firmament (*steréoma*, Gr.), i.e. the chakras. When reaching the first Sphere (*sphaira*, Gr.), His brightness becomes forty-nine times stronger, and the same multiplication is repeated for the subsequent spheres [144]. Again we find the connection with the number of the chakras, seven: $49 = 7 \times 7$.

The systematic Docetism later reappeared with the Manichaeans, Cathari, and Paulicians. Thus, some radical Cathari believed that Jesus suffered and died *in his heavenly body*, and his resurrection is therefore true [145]. According to a 14th century Glagolitic manuscript about the Patarini from Bosnia: “They say that our Lord Jesus Christ did not have an actual human body” [146].

According to Clement of Alexandria, “Jesus needed no food” [147]. Around the year 140, Marcion’s *Euaggelion* described Christ as having an ethereal body. Tertullian confirmed that according to Marcion, Christ did not have a body made up of material elements (*haec paupertina elementa*, poverty-stricken elements, Lat.) [148], however, although deprived of a physical body, Christ suffered and died on the cross [149], which has made Tertullian protesting: “a phantom could not truly suffer” [150]. According to another Gnostic source, after resurrection the Savior told to Peter: “I am the

intellectual Spirit⁶¹⁴ filled with radiant light” [151]. Indeed, Jesus governs over the Agya chakra, which controls the mind activity and has Light as its element (ch. XIX C). In the *Acts of John*, the author says to the disciples: “Also there was in him another marvel: when I sat at meat he would take me upon his own breast; and sometimes his breast was felt of me to be smooth and tender, and sometimes hard like unto stones, so that I was perplexed in myself and said: Wherefore is this so unto me?... Another glory also will I tell you, brethren: Sometimes when I would lay hold on him, I met with a material and solid body, and at other times, again, when I felt him, the substance was immaterial and as if it existed not at all” [152]. Then John added that he has checked carefully for footprints, but Jesus never left any: “Oftentimes when I walked with him, I desired to see the print of his foot, whether it appeared on the earth; for I saw him as it were lifting himself up from the earth: and I never saw it” [153]. All of this proved to John that the nature of Jesus was spiritual, not human.

To the above we should add what the *Acts of Thomas* wrote: “To thee be the glory, Jesus, manifold in form!” (*polymorphos*, Gr.) [154].

Amazingly enough, even the Fathers of the mainstream Church shared similar views with their Gnostic enemies. At the confluence of the second and third century, Clement of Alexandria [155] wrote about the body of Jesus: “It is accordingly related in traditions, that John, touching the outward body itself, sent his hand deep down into it, and that the solidity of the flesh offered no obstacle, but gave way to the hand of the disciple.” It seems that Clement had had in view the quotation above from the *Acts of John*.

Origen (c.185-254) referred to “those which are in an ethereal body” [156]. He also added about Jesus: “Being himself, he appeared not as himself to man (*Cum fuisset ipse quasi non ipso omnibus videbatur*, Lat.). “He had not one countenance, but altered it in accordance with how each one might see him; to each he appeared in the form of which that one was worthy” [157], thus sharing the view of Apollonius (see below). Antonin Martyr, a pilgrim of the 6th century stated the same thing: “The face changed constantly before the eyes which looked at it” [158]. Indeed, it so happens to the face of a *Maha Avatar* (Great Incarnation, Sanskr.).

Hilary of Poitiers believed that Christ’s flesh was of a special nature, since His body disobeyed the common laws: “only the body of our Lord could be borne up by the power of his soul in the waters, could walk upon the waves, and pass through walls, how can we judge of the flesh conceived of the Holy Ghost on the analogy of a human body? That flesh, that is, that Bread, is from Heaven; that humanity is from God... For his body possessed a unique nature of its own” [159].

⁶¹⁴ I am the Self (ch. XIX C).

The *Aquarian Gospel* showed Jesus saying to Apollo: “My human flesh was changed to highest form by love divine and I can manifest in flesh, or in the higher planes of life, at will” [160]. In fact, even Paul discerned between “a natural body (*psychikón*, Gr.)” and “a spiritual body (*pneumatikón*, Gr.)” (1 Corinthians 15:44). A question might arise: Who was this Apollo? Could he have been Apollos of whom Acts and 1 Corinthians spoke? Or, maybe, even Apollonius of Tyana? Acts gave a very appreciative account of the former: “an eloquent man, who was mighty in scriptures... He was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in his spirit, he spoke and taught exactly the things concerning Jesus” (18:24-25), while Paul’s epistle acknowledged in him one of the brethren (16:22) of a rank equal to Peter-Cephas or Paul himself (1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6).

Last but not least, Bishop Kovalevsky wrote: “The glorious body of Our Lord, of a subtle and transfigured matter, passed through doors⁶¹⁵ and was present at the same time in many places⁶¹⁶” [161].

The following considerations deal with the travel of Jesus and His sojourn in India after He parted from the disciples.

But, why it was India of all places?

India was the country where spirituality had by far exceeded the level attained in other parts of the ancient world. The Kashmir was not unknown to the Jews. They were connected to it through their ancient history. The ancestors of the people settled in Palestine in Abraham’s time could have come from those parts (ch. VI). There are legends and places in Kashmir reminding of Moses (ch. XII) as well as of Solomon (ch. XIII), and there are good reasons to believe that the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel still live on that land (ch. XIV). Other explanations were provided in the former section (ch. XXIII A).

In the views of Elaine Pagels, “What we call Eastern and Western religions, and tend to regard as separate streams, were not clearly differentiated 2,000 years ago. Research on the Nag Hammadi texts is only beginning: we look forward to the works of scholars who can study these traditions comparatively to discover whether they can, in fact, be traced to Indian sources” [162].

Jesus told repeatedly to His apostles that He would break away of them: “Ye shall seek me and shall not find [me], and where I am ye cannot come” (John 7:34; cf. 7:36; 8:21; 13:33). “He said to the disciples: «Days are coming, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see [it]. And they will say to you, Lo here, or Lo there; go not, nor

⁶¹⁵ John 20:19.

⁶¹⁶ Luke 24:13,15, 18 sq.

follow [them]»” (Luke 17:22-23).

In order to prevent the fellow countrymen to find Him, Jesus left His native country going far away. “The Jews therefore said to one another: «Where is he about to go that we shall not find him? Is he about to go to the dispersion... ?»” (John 7:35). In the fact of the matter it has been proved that the ten lost tribes of Israel were “dispersed” precisely in Kashmir (ch. XIV), and these Jews were called “the children of God who were scattered abroad” (John 11:52). The Lord said: “I will myself feed my flock... I will seek the lost” (Ezekiel 34:15-16). No doubt, Jesus referred to the lost tribes which were designated as such (ch. XIV): “Israel is a hunted sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones” (Jeremiah 50:17). “They were scattered because there was no shepherd... My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill, and my sheep have been scattered upon all the face of the earth, and there was none that searched, or that sought for them” (34:5-6). The description given for the embossment fits well Kashmir with its mountains and hills, and the Good Shepherd was Jesus who was chosen to fulfill that desire of the Father. “He answering said: «I have not been sent save to the lost sheep of Israel’s house»” (Matthew 15:24). “The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). Also He urged the disciples, saying to them: “Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6). “I have other sheep which are not of this fold: these also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice” (John 10:16). No doubt, Jesus referred to the lost tribes.

Christ will spread out His teaching to people *beyond the Jordan*, who will follow Him as the gospel showed: “great crowds followed him from... Jerusalem, and beyond the Jordan” (Matthew 4:25).

The Christian poet Commodus (late 3rd century) “was acquainted with a good many interesting apocryphal writings” [163]. The first section of the Book II of the *Instructions* of Commodus is entitled “Of the hidden holy people of Almighty Christ the living God” and begins with the ensuing text: “The last holy hidden people, of whom we know not where they dwell, are desired.” The author speaks of the two and half tribes who are separated from the nine and a half, then returns to the main topic in line 21: “But then the things told in the law hasten to be fulfilled: Almighty Christ comes down to his elect, who have been hidden from us so long and grown to so many thousands. That is the true heavenly people... They are (now) hidden to come over to the Lord from that region... Nor less does the Lord himself come forth with them. He passes to our lands, they come with their heavenly King, and on their journey how shall I tell what God accomplishes for them? Mountains sink down before them, and springs break forth. All creation rejoices to see

the heavenly people. And they hasten to rescue their captured mother” [164]. Beyond the geographic similitude with Kashmir, the text reminds of the following metaphors: the emerging of the living water (*springs break forth* on the Sushumna path; ch. XI D), release from *captivity* (sacrum bone) of the *Mother* (Adi Shakti, whose reflection is the Kundalini). Also one could identify here the *journey* under heavenly (divine) protection (crossing of the chakras towards the Paradise of the Sahasrara) and the removal of the ego and superego obstacles on the path (*mountains sink down*; ch. XIX C).

The story appears again in *Carmen Apologeticum*: “Then Almighty God, to fulfill all that I have spoken of, will bring forth a people hidden for a long time. They are the Jews who were cut off by the river beyond Persia, whom God willed to remain there until the end. The captivity caused them to be in that place: of twelve tribes, nine and a half dwell there... They look for a resurrection to come... The stars excite no evil influence on them... , because they purely obey all the law... And with them God will come to fulfill the promises. All through the journey they exalt in the presence of God... ; the creature itself rejoices to receive the holy ones” [165]. *The river beyond Persia* is the Indus, since the lost tribes of Israel live beyond it (ch. XIV).

The Ethiopic *Acts of Matthew* told that Matthew had lately been in the land called Prokoumenos, which was interpreted as “Those who rejoice.” There he found a Christian people visited constantly by Lord (Jesus) Himself. Matthew asked them how this came about and their answer was: “Hast thou not heard the story concerning the nine tribes and the half tribe whom God Almighty brought into the land of inheritance? We are they... The water we drink floweth not from cisterns hewn by the hand of man but... floweth from Paradise... When the winds raise we smell the scent of Paradise, and in our country... there are winds, and they are always pleasant” [166]. Here we find again the Kundalini’s metaphors: the living paradisiacal water and the cool breeze (ch. XI C and XI D).

About the same theme, we have also “*The Narrative of Zosimus*, a hermit who visited the secluded land and found it inhabited by the descendants of the Rechabites” [167]. The *Bible* mentions the Rechabites as a clan of ascetics similar to the Nazirites.

The *Zohar* echoes the texts above: “In the lower Paradise there is a secret and unknown spot... in which a thousand palaces of longing are concealed. No one may enter it, except the Messiah, whose abode is in Paradise»” [168]. We have seen (ch. III) that the lower (i.e. terrestrial) Eden is placed in Kashmir, and it was precisely there that Jesus went.

The *Qur’an* provides hints about the place where Jesus and Mary went after crucifixion. “We made Mary’s son, and his mother, to be a sign, and gave them refuge upon a height, where was a hollow and a spring” (23.52).

“And mention in the Book Mary when she withdrew from her people to an eastern place” (19:16). Both descriptions could be indicative of Kashmir.

In his book *Masih Hindustan Mein*, Ghulam Ahmad referred to the journey of Jesus in India while looking for the lost tribes of Israel, and His last halt in Kashmir [169]. The same topic was dealt with *The Second Life of Jesus Christ* by Brukner T. Nelson and Kurt Berna, as well as *Jesus Died in Kashmir* by Andreas Faber-Kaiser [170].

According to Acts (19:10), through Paul’s work of two years “all that inhabited Asia, heard the Word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” Yet Paul was known to have never traveled beyond Anatolia. However, a multitude of Jews were also in Kashmir. There are no reasons to doubt the information in Acts saying that a short while after Jesus left the disciples, somebody took Word of the Lord to those Jews living in Asia. But, that one was not Paul for sure. Who was he, then?

For a mysterious motive (but we can guess that Jesus wanted to conceal His travel to India), both the Savior and the Holy Spirit forbade every (unauthorized, we should say) disciple to go in Asia. Acts clearly wrote about the disciples “having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia... And having come down to Mysia, they attempted to go to Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them” (Acts 16:6-7). However, Bithynia is Asian Turkey (Anatolia) of today.

“The Spirit of Jesus did not allow them!” Or, more probably, it was Jesus Himself who did not allow them to enter Turkey? The variant “the Spirit of Jesus” instead of “Jesus” could have two possible explanations. Either it would have been impossible for the disciples to believe in seeing Jesus otherwise than as Spirit, so much were they convinced of His ascension into heaven, or else the author of Acts willingly used that metaphor to not deny the authenticity of Christ’s ascension.

Leaving out of account the unbelievable encounter on the road to Damascus narrated by Paul (ch. XX C2)—when at his best he saw not Jesus but just a great light and heard a voice—Paul mentioned on other occasions his meeting with Jesus in person. Thus, after narrating the death and resurrection of the Savior, Paul asked himself, rhetorically (1 Corinthians 9:1): “Have I not seen Jesus, our Lord?,” then specified: “He appeared to Kephas, then to the twelve... He appeared to me also” (15:5,8). The text referred to the genuine encounters between Jesus and Simon also called Kephas-Peter (Luke 24:34) as well as the *eleven* (!) apostles (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:33; John 20:19,26; 21:1; Acts 1:3,4,6), so Paul has been talking not of a vision but a true fact. At last, Paul claimed: “the glad tidings... neither did I receive them from man, neither was I taught, but by revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12). These sayings made various commentators to

suppose that Paul have met Jesus in person after His resurrection, probably in Syria, maybe in Damascus [171], or even in Edessa [172].

Now, let us retrospect the abundant gathering of sources enabling us to restore the eastward itinerary followed by Jesus after His resurrection (and by Thomas as well).

Hazrat Abu Huraira mentioned in a *hadith* that God guided Jesus to go away from Jerusalem to escape persecution, saying: “O Jesus! Move from one place to another” [173]. Another *hadith* reports the words of Jabar: “Jesus always used to travel; he went from one country to another” [174].

In his celebrated *Tafsir ibn-i-Jarir*, Imam Abu Ja’far Muhammad wrote: “Jesus was like unto the Holy Prophet. He and his mother, Mary (as a result of Jewish persecutions) had to migrate from Palestine and leave for a far off country and he went from country to country” [175].

The historians Graves and Podro reconstitute the way followed by Jesus as follows: from Jerusalem, ascending the Mount of Olives towards Bethany, then through Peraea, crossing the land ruled by King Aretas, accompanied by Mary to take refuge “in the land of Nod⁶¹⁷, toward the east of Eden,” like Cain (Genesis 4:16) “preaching repentance to his coreligionists in the Far East” [176]. The Septuagint read “over against Eden” (*chatenanti Edem*, Gr.; cf. Exodus 19:2; 32:5; 1 Chronicles 5:11; Zechariah 14:4), i.e. not far from Eden. The two authors associate the land of Nod to the province beyond Euphrates, Susiana and Parthia. Ancient sources (e.g. Bichart, Huetius) tried to locate this territory in Susiana (Cissia) or even India.

A Hebrew document refers to “the Saints of the New Covenant” (or “the Covenant of Repentance”) whose group in Damascus was visited by Jesus [177].

Three kilometers away from Damascus there is a place that originally was called Rabwah, but since the journey of Jesus to this day the name was changed into Maqam-i-‘Isa, the place (of rest) of Jesus. In Islam, *maqam* (Arab.) is the name given to the place visited by a saint and blessed by him over his lifetime, or where he appeared after his death to the visionaries. Other sacred places of pilgrimage were called *mawqi* (Arab.) as the cave of the Seven Sleepers (ch. XIX C) in the neighborhood of Amman. *Mahal* (Arab.) was the historic place connected to religious events, as the Taj Mahal in Agra.

While being at Damascus, Jesus received a letter from the king of XXXIII Osrhoene, Abgar V Ukama (or Ushana, Uchomo, the Black). He moved his - 10 capital from Edessa to Nisibis (about 150 kilometers east of Edessa) that was placed on the caravan road linking Damascus to Mosul (c. 150 kilometers southeast of Nisibis), on the Tigris River, close to the Turkish side of the

⁶¹⁷ It signifies *wilderness*, and also *exile*, *wandering* (Hebr.).

frontier with Syria. Abgar V reigned between AD 9-46 (15-50 after XXIII Gutschmid [178]). King Abgar Ukkama was a contemporary of Ezad about -11 whom Josephus Flavius [179] said that he was crowned in AD 36 in Adiabene (on the left bank of the Upper Tigris). The letter was brought by Anan (Anania), the king's scribe (tabulator) who informed Jesus that the king had fallen "sick of a grievous disease" (probably leper) and asked Him to come and heal the king. Jesus promised to send a disciple who would be followed later by Himself [180]. Christ's messenger went to see the king and informed him about the imminent coming of his Master.

The Greek *Acts of Thaddaeus* mention, too, the story of Abgar [181], recounted also in the *History of the Portrait of Edessa* composed in 945 at the court of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenete. According to the latter, Jesus imprinted on a towel His image when washing His face then gave the linen to Abgar's messenger, Anania. When the king touched the towel he was instantly cured. According to the Syriac Doctrine of Addai, the event took place in AD 32 or 33.

Eusebius [182] has seen by himself the letters (of Syriac origin coming from the royal archives of Edessa) and quoted fragments of them, identified the disciple as Thomas⁶¹⁸ and localized the city as Nisibis. Towards the end of the 5th century, Pope Gelasius and the synod presided by him have rejected the texts attributed to Abgar. However, after three centuries, Pope Stephen II founded one of his sermons on history upon these documents.

Around 1840 in the Natron Valley (Lower Egypt) there were discovered Syriac manuscripts containing similar versions of the story about Abgar [184].

Messadié believes that the story of Abgar was too frequent and tenacious in the ancient texts, to be rejected as a pious production [185].

The Persian scholar Muhammad Raza wrote down that Thomas already healed the king when Jesus reached Nisibis together with His companions. Abu Ja'far Muhammad said that the stay of Jesus in Nisibis became dangerous and His life threatened every time He appeared in public.

Mir Muhammad bin Khawand was the author of the celebrated *Rauzat-us-Safa fi Sirat-ul-Ambia wal Maluk wal Khulafa* (*The Gardens of Purity concerning the Biography of the Prophets and Kings and Caliphs*) that was first published in seven volumes in 836 A.H. and was translated in English after about 450 years. It contains two passages about the journey of Jesus. The first is entitled *Migration of Jesus from Jerusalem* and said: "Jesus and Mary set out (from that city) and went to Syria" [186]. Further it was said that on the journey, Jesus carried a rod ('asa; see *infra*) [187] and used to sleep

⁶¹⁸ After another author the disciple was Thaddeus, or a disciple sent by Thomas called Addai [183].

on the ground with a stone under His head [188]. The second heading, *The Journey of Jesus to Nasibain*⁶¹⁹ read: “In the time of Jesus, there was a King in the principality of Nasibain who was extremely haughty and cruel, and the Prophet⁶²⁰ having set to preach to him went to Nasibain. When he reached its neighborhood, he asked his companions: «Who would go to the city and proclaim that Jesus, a servant of God and his Messenger, is without the city?» Among them one Jacob offered to do so... Jesus sent Thomas with him... Jesus (warning them) said that there were his enemies within the town. They went and preached... but people abused them and said unpleasant things about Jesus and Mary. They were (ultimately) produced before the King... who had their hands and feet cut off... Shamun (one of his Ministers) suggested that Jesus be asked to come and establish his claim for he was nothing but a magician and he is bound to fail... Jesus came... Shamun asked Jesus to cure his own disciples first. Jesus placed the cut off hands and feet next to their bodies and passed his hands over them and said: «By the order of God» and they became whole... Jesus setting a seal of silence on his lips set out on his journey further” [189].

After describing the entering to Nasibain, *Tafsir ibn-i-Jarir* adds: “The King was a cunning man... people tried to kill him (Jesus) and he ran away” [190].

Muhammad Raza stated that during the journey, Jesus was accompanied by His mother Mary and wore garments and turban of white fleece and walked carrying a rod in His hand. The chronicle said also that Jesus went to preach to the king of Nasibain and from there they arrived in the land of Mashaq, for there was the tomb of Sem (Shem), son of Noah [191]. Mashaq could be connected to the place mentioned in Psalm 120:5 as *Mesech*; while *Meshech* designates a person in Ezekiel. *Mashaq* also appeared (as *mashaq*) in a Qumran manuscript [192] as well as in the Masoretic text (as *ke-mashaq*). George Rawlison assumed that Mashaq is a land in Syria, west of Euphrates [193]. The name could also be equated to Mashhad (Meshed) in Iran.

There are other similar accounts of this journey [194].

While in Leh, Kersten was told—by an ethnologist from Luxembourg who had been staying several years among the Kurdish of eastern Anatolia—that there have been stories told even presently about the sojourn of Jesus after His resurrection in the eastern part of the present Turkey [195].

XXIII Jesus and His mother could also have visited Ephesus in western Turkey, -12, 13 where there is a “House of Virgin Mary” (*Meryem Ana Evi*, Turk.). Abbé

⁶¹⁹ Nisibis.

⁶²⁰ Jesus (in Islam regarded as a prophet).

Gouyet of Paris—who followed the descriptions given by Anne Catherine Emmerick, a German visionary nun—has discovered the ruins in 1881. Situated 9 km ahead of Ephesus on the top of mountain Bulbul, the place was previously worshipped by the local people as “the Door of the Virgin” (*Panaya Kapulu*, Turk.; from *Panagía*, the Most Holy, Gr.). Mgr. Timony, archbishop of Smyrna has authenticated the monument in 1892. Pope Leo XIII had declared the site a place of pilgrimage. Pius XII stated: “This holy house is unique through the world” [196]. Paul VI (July 26, 1967) and John Paul II (November 30, 1979) have paid visits to the house.

An ancient Sutra called *Isha Natha* mentioned the sojourn in India of Jesus. After reminding of His crucifixion in Israel, the Hindu Scripture wrote that Guru Chetan Natha led him off on the sacred land of the Aryans. Isha Natha then established an ashram in the lower regions of the Himalayas [197].

From Nisibis on, many traditions will attribute to Jesus the name of *Yuz Asaf* (ch. XVI) signifying *Jesus the Healer* (Persian), with the variants *Yusu* (Urdu), *Yuzu* (Persian). In Hebrew, *asaph* means “gatherer” (see 2 Chronicles 20:14). Muhammad Badshah explained *yuz* as meaning “seeker” or “leader” and thought that both words are Hebrew [198]. Syed Ahmad Dehlvi gives the following interpretation: “In the time of Hazrat ‘Isa, when lepers were cured by him, they, on being admitted among the healthy people who were free from all diseases, were called «asaf»” [199]. After Kersten, *asaf* means *purified*, therefore *Yuz Asaf* would designate the leader of those who were cured (and became pure not just in their body but in spirit too, we shall add).

In our turn we propound the relation between the *healer* (*Yuz*) *Asaf* and the noun *mechasya* (healing, Hebr.) connected to the “chief of the pest,” met in the *Zohar* [200], which suggests the *Masih* (Messiah). We also consider that *‘Isa* could be connected with the miraculous power of healing Jesus has been endowed with, according to the sequence: *‘Isa* (*‘Aissa*)—*asya* (Aram.) or *asa* (healer, Hebr. [201]; related to *asaf*)—*yssyn*—*Essene*. However, Professor Vermes stated that there is no general agreement regarding the name of the latter (*Essaioi*, *Essenoi*, Gr.; *Esseni*, Lat.) whose designation may signify “the Pious” as well as “the Healers” (of body and soul) providing a parallel to the Therapeutes (*Therapeutai*, Gr.; *Therapeutae*, Lat.), a title given by Philo to a Jewish ascetic sect (akin to the Essenes) established by Lake Mareotis in Egypt.

Sheikh Faizi, the poet in the court of Emperor Akbar (The Great, Arab.), used to praise Jesus: “Ai ki nam-i to Yuz o Kristo” (O, thou whose name is Yuz and Christ) [202].

Hassnain and Levi also support the idea that “*Asaf* or *Ya-Asaf* was a mystical name of Jesus Christ” [203].

Agha Mustafa ascertained that Yuz Asaf and Jesus were one and the same person [204]. He also noticed that the sayings of Yuz Asaf recorded by the Iranian tradition were similar to those of Jesus. In this respect, Muhammad Isma'il devoted a chapter to the *Description of the events concerning Yuz Asaf* where he gave details about His teachings and ascribed Him over fifteen parables [205].

Here are two samples of Yuz Asaf's sayings quoted by Sheikh as-Said-us-Sadiq: "O, people! Heed my words: they are of truth and wisdom: they will enable you to distinguish between right and wrong. This indeed is the religion of the Prophets of yore... Whoever will discard it he shall not enter heaven... The time (of death) is nigh... Treat as you would like to be (treated), shun worldly desires, give up calumny, anger and back-biting... your minds and actions should be pure and identical" [206]. "When a sower goes to sow and sows, some seed fall by the wayside, and the birds pick up the seed. Some fall upon the stray land, and when they reach the stony foundation they wither away. Some fall among thorns and grow not: but the seed which falls on the ground land, grows and brings forth fruit. By the sower is meant the wise, by the seed is meant his words of wisdom. The seed picked up by birds mean those people who understand not. The seeds on the stony ground are like the words of wisdom which go in one ear and out of the other. The seed which fell among thorns are like unto those who hear and understand but act not accordingly. Other seeds which fall on good ground are like those who bear the words of wisdom and obey" [207]. Kersten gives a slightly different translation [208]. The parable is astoundingly similar to that of the Sower in the gospels (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15).

As it was previously shown, Mir Muhammad bin Khawand wrote that from Nisibis "Jesus and Mary set out and went to Syria" [186].

Jesus told to the disciples: "ye know where I go, and ye know the way" (John 14:3-4). Immediately after hearing these words, "Thomas says to him: «Lord, we know not where thou goest, and how can we know the way?»" (14:5). However, it was precisely Thomas who was destined to go to far away countries.

The *Acts of Thomas* [209] provided valuable information on the journey of Jesus after leaving Palestine, and that is why we shall devote an ample analyze to this apocryphal writing.

Leucius (Leukios Charinos), a Gnostic belonging to the Valentinian school, was the author of some apocryphal Acts, like the *Acts of John*, that he apparently composed at Ephesus (where the fourth gospel was written down), being perhaps one of the disciples gathered around John [210]. He wrote also *Acta Thomae* in the beginning of the second century. This work was based on several letters from Thomas himself and recorded the information received

from an embassy from southern India that reached Rome after passing through Edessa and Jerusalem. In his disastrous decree in 494, Pope Gelasius condemned this book as tainted with Manichaeism. Indeed, by the beginning of the third century, the *Acts of Thomas* was in current use among the Manichaeans. After analyzing the consequences of the decree, Filliozat draw the conclusion that “this fact creates a presumption in favor of certain historical basis” [211]. The bishop of Salamina, Epiphanes collected in 368 all the earlier writings used also as references. Thilla published the *Acts of Thomas* in 1823, and Tischendorf in 1851. The English translation from Syriac is due to Dr. W. Wright, while the German translation from Greek belongs to R.A. Lipsius and Max Bonnet [212]. Dr. W. Cureton inserted the *Acts of Thomas* in his work [213]. The text was included also in volume XX of *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. It is to be noted that there were some differences between the Syriac (Wright) and Greek (Lipsius and Bonnet) variants.

After quoting *Encyclopaedia Britannica* attesting a general consensus on the historical truth of the core of the *Acts of Thomas*, Messadié concluded himself at their original historical sources [214]. Here it is the recent expert opinion of Professor Martin Palmer: “Although *Acts of Thomas* is often dismissed as a Christian romantic fiction, oral tradition in India holds to a story that should not be lightly dismissed... So the oral tradition on which the details of the *Acts of Thomas* were based could be historically true... Thomarist Christian legend, possibly based on reality, says that St. Thomas, the Doubter, came along these trade routes to India in the early to middle decades of the first century... It is now accepted by all but the most timid scholars that Thomas did indeed end up preaching in India, where he was martyred” [215].

The *Acts of Thomas* are in a close connection with the *Gospel of Thomas* that was mentioned about 230 by Hippolytus in his report on the Naassenes [216].

An essential fact is that the early Church acknowledged *Acta Thomae*. Both the *Gospel of Thomas* and *Acts of Thomas* were read in all churches up to the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius declared them as heretical, the real cause being for the latter that it establishes the presence of Jesus long time after His ascension. Even so, *Acta Thomae* is read and accepted even today by the Assyrian Church.

The *Acts of Thomas* enabled the reconstitution of apostle’s missionary action in Edessa where the earthly remnants of Thomas were brought in the year 163 [217] after he was put to death in Madras, where his empty tomb can be seen presently.

Like John, Thomas was a favorite disciple of the Savior (ch. XX C4). Out

of the rest of the disciples, Thomas distinguished himself as the most faithful to Jesus, for whom he was ready to sacrifice his life, as it has been shown by John: “He says to his disciples: «Let us go into Judea again». The disciples said to him: «Rabbi [even but] now the Jews sought to stone thee, and goest thou tither again?»” (11:7-8). “Thomas, therefore called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples: «Let us also go, that we may die with him»” (11:16).

Thomas regarded Jesus not only as his Lord, but also his God according to the same gospel (20:28), and called Him “God of the Truth” [218]. The same did John, who said: “He is the true God” (1 John 5:20). How were they different from Peter, for instance, who called Christ “a man” (Acts 2: 23).

The name of Thomas means “Twin” (*Toma*, Aram., *Didymos*, Gr.—John 11:16; 20:24) that denotes how close to Jesus was this disciple. In the Coptic texts, “fellow companion” often replaces “twin.” In Arabic literature, the disciple of Jesus is called *Ba'dad* or *Ba'bad* that signifies “twin,” too.

The *Acts of Thomas* witnessed, too, about that particular relationship existing between Christ and that disciple. Jesus declared: “I am the brother of Judas” (Thomas) [219]. Another version of the apocryphal text [220], called Thomas “Twin of the Messiah and Apostle of the Most High, and sharer in the hidden word of the Life-giver, and receiver of the secret mysteries of the Son of God,” while in a different variant the sentence ended by: “who shares in the knowledge of the hidden word of Christ, recipient of his secret pronouncements” [221]. Obviously, that referred to mantras (ch. XV D and XXII E).

Since the very beginning, the *Book of Thomas the Contender* wrote that it unveils “the secret words that the Savior spoke to Judas Thomas” [222]. While addressing to Thomas, Jesus might also be supposed to address to the reader: “Since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself and learn who you are” [223]. “I am the knowledge of the truth. So while you accompany me, although you are uncomprehending, you have (in fact) already come to know, and you will be called «the one who knows himself⁶²¹». For he who has not known himself has know nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of the all” [224].

The *Gospel of Thomas* acknowledged that privileged position of the apostle. “Jesus said to his disciples: «Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like». Simon Peter said to him: «You are like a righteous angel». Matthew said to him: «You are like a philosopher». Thomas said to him: «Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like». Jesus

⁶²¹ The one who knows his Self (who identifies with his Self)—*Gnóthi seautón* (ch. XIX C).

said: «I am not your (*singular*) master. Because you (*singular*) have drunk⁶²², you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out». And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him: «What did Jesus say to you?» Thomas said to them: «If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them to me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up» [226].

Kersten estimated that “Thomas had evidently attained a profound state of consciousness and seemed to be almost an equal of Christ” [227].

Thomas talked like a genuine initiate when saying about Jesus: “Thou art the discloser of hidden secrets, and the revealer of mysterious sayings. Thou art the planter of the good tree, and through thy hands all acts take place. Thou art hidden in all thy works” [228].

The conversion was a major topic within the *Acts of Thomas*, and the sacred ritual of initiation was often repeated. Anointment, consecration and eucharist completed the conversion [229]. Baptism either preceded or followed the anointment and the candidate was called a servant of God, benefited of the divine power, and was considered a sheep in the fold [230]. Hence we find again many metaphors familiar to us.

On the onset the *Acts of Thomas* disclosed that to take Lord’s word into the world, the disciples “divided the countries among them... And India fell by lot and division to Judas Thomas the Apostle. And he was not willing to go, saying: «I have not strength enough for this, because I am weak. And I am Hebrew: how could I teach the Indians?»... Our Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night, and said to him: «Fear not, Thomas, because my grace is with thee». But he would not be persuaded at all, saying: «Withsoever thou wilt, our Lord, send me; only to India I will not go»” [231].

The *Bible* urges us to pay attention to Divinity when it appears in our dreams or deep sleep: “For God speaketh once, and twice,—[and men] perceiveth it not—. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed. Then He openeth men’s ears, and sealet their instruction” (Job 33:14-16; cf. Numbers 12:6; Joel 2:28).

One of the earliest historians of Christianity, the bishop of Rome Hippolytus (c.160-225) described the mission of the apostle: “And Thomas XXIII preached to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Bactrians, Indians, Hyrcaneans⁶²³, - 14 and was thrust with a spear at Calamania, the city of India, and was buried there” [232]. Sir William Hunter showed that Calamania was the ancient

⁶²² In the Gnostic writings, Jesus said that “spiritual love is wine” [225], therefore the quoted text refers to drinking living water that grants Self Realization.

⁶²³ Inhabitants of the shores of the Caspian (Hyrcanean, Lat.) Sea.

denomination of the Malabar Coast [233], but actually the latter is southwest of India therefore opposite to Madras!

Origen [234] and Rufinus [235] acknowledge the presence of Thomas in Parthia, while Fabricius quoted Ambrose for saying that Thomas was in India. Also did Ephraim, Jerome, Sopromius, Gregory of Tours. Assemani told us that Thomas was apostle in Mesopotamia and India, and mentioned “the House of St. Thomas in the city of Maelapore” (Mylapore) [236], which is very close to Madras (Chennai of today). In the 6th century, Cosmas Indicopleustes reports the existence of Christians at Male (?Malabar), while
 XXXIII in the 13th century Marco Polo referred to the tomb of Thomas in India [237].

- 15 From Origen sayings [238], and the *Church History* of Eusebius: “The holy apostles and disciples of our Savior were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus” [239]. Actually, the appellation *apostle* signifies *messenger* (*apóstolos*, Gr.; *apostolus*, Lat.).

The tradition about the sojourn of Thomas in India was also acknowledged by the *Syriac Didascalia Apostolorum*, that may have been written in Edessa about AD 250 [240].

According to the Anglo-Saxon *Life of Thomas*, which is ascribed to Elfarc, Jesus appeared to Thomas and commanded him to go to India.

The *Acts of Thomas* wrote that to be sure that Thomas will reach India, Jesus resorted to an unusual method: He sold him to a merchant “and bargained with him for twenty [pieces] of silver [as] his price, and wrote a bill of sale thus: «I Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter, from the village of Bethlehem, which is in Judea, acknowledge that I have sold my slave Judas Thomas to Habban, the merchant of King Gudnaphar»” [241].

According to John Reyland, Thomas entered India during the reign of Gondaphares⁶²⁴. He reached Attock where Abdagases introduced him to Gondaphares [242].

Now we shall invite the reader to accompany us in a historical tour not devoid of interest. It is known that by AD 19 the power of the Scythians disintegrated at the hands of the Parthians. The first and most important king of the Scythian-Parthian dynasty that ruled in northwestern India, on the
 XXXIII Indus banks was Gondaphares who enthroned around 21 and ruled until 60
 - 16 (50 after other sources). The conquerors extended their dominion in West Pakistan, Seistan and southern Afghanistan. These information are confirmed through the coins and medals discovered in Arachosia, at Herat and Peshawar that bore inscriptions in Bactrian (*Maharajasa Gudaphorasa*; *Gadaphara*

⁶²⁴ Also called *Gountaphóros*, *Goundiaphóros* (Gr.); *Gundaforus*, *Gundoforus* (Lat.); *Gundaphar* (Syriac).

Sasa), and in Greek (*Basileyontos*⁶²⁵ *Yndopherrou* or *Gondopharou*). Filliozat [243] adds the names of *Vindafarna* (He who brings victory; supposed to be the original Persian form), *Guduvhara* (Indian form in the inscriptions). The Armenians called him *Gathaspar*. Some recognize in him the Magus *Gaspar*. The king was known also under the name of *Vidnapharna* (winner of the brightness) and had his fortress at Kuh-i-Hodja (Lord's mountain, Persian) on an island of the lake Helmund, in Afghanistan [244]. The latter is known today as Hamun-i Helmand or Sistar Lake on the Iran-Afghanistan border, and it is fed by Helmand (Helmund) and other rivers. The main town of Gondophares is believed to have been Taxila (formerly part of Gandhara).

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* wrote: "Now it is certainly a remarkable fact that about the year AD 46 a king was reigning over that part of Asia south of the Himalayas now consisting of Afghanistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab and Sind, who bore the same name Gondophernes or Guduphara. This we know both from the discovery of coins, some of the Parthian type with Greek legends, others of the Indian type with legends in an Indian dialect in Kharoshthi characters. Despite sundry minor variations the identity of the name with the Gundafor of the *Acta Thomae* is unmistakable and is hardly disputed. Further we have the evidence of the Takht-i-Bhai inscription, which is dated, and which the best experts accept as establishing that the King Guduphara possibly began to reign about AD 20 and was still reigning in 46" [245].

Sir Vincent Smith wrote: "The most interesting person among those princes is Gondopharnes, whose name is clearly Persian or Parthian. His reign may be placed between AD 20 and 48. He ruled an extensive realm that included Arachosia or the Qandahar country, Kabul, and the kingdom of Taxila. The name of Gondophernes or Gondophares has become more or less known to European readers because early ecclesiastical legends, going back to the third century AD, affirm that the apostle St. Thomas preached Christianity in his dominions and was there martyred. Another group of traditions alleges that the same apostle was martyred at Mailapur (Mylapore) near Madras" [246]. In other work, the author showed: "After a series of rules and about AD 20 Azes was succeeded by Gondaphares, who seems to have conquered Sind and Arachosia... When he died about AD 60 his kingdom was divided up, the Western Punjab falling to the share of his brother's son Abbagases... and the country in about six or ten years was annexed by the XXIII Kushan kings. The Yüeh-chih, as the Kushan Kings were called⁶²⁶, had in -16 fact conquered Kabul in AD 50." There was also said that Abbagases (or

⁶²⁵ *Basileus* (king, Gr.).

⁶²⁶ By the Chinese.

Abbanes) succeeded Gondophares for a short time [247]. An inscription of Takht-i-Bhai read that Abbanes was the son of Gad, the brother of Gondophares [248], while a text on a pedestal in Dehri palace near Charsada connected the name of Gad with a ceremony [249]. The *Acts of Thomas* mentioned Gad to be the brother of Gudnaphar [250]. Coins found in Takht-i-Bhai bear the name of Gondophares [251].

An inscription in Aramaic discovered in Taxila (now in the Lahore Museum) recorded an event occurred “in the twenty-sixth year of the great King Gondophares, in the Samvat year three and one hundred in the month of Vaisakh, the fourth day... “ [252], which indicated that the Bikrami era calendar was being used. However, that era started in 57 BC, therefore the Samvat year 103 would be AD 46, which being the 26th year of king’s dominion it resulted that Gundaphares was enthroned in AD 20.

Professor Rapson (1861-1937) mentioned: “AD 21-50. Gondapharnes, Pahlava king of N.-W. India. The Pahlava power culminated and probably began to decline under this king. His Takht-i-Bhai inscriptions shows that he ruled in Gandhara, and, if its dates are correctly interpreted, that he began to reign in 21 AD and was still reigning in 47 AD... The fame of King Gondopharnes (or Gondopherres, as the name appears in the Greek coin-legends) spread even in the West, and he is known in the legends of the early Christian Church as the king to whose country St. Thomas was sent as the apostle of the «Parthians», or, according to other authorities, of the «Indians», i.e. the people of the Indus country. The story of the mission of St. Thomas and of the king’s conversion to the Christian faith is told in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*, of which there are extant versions in Syriac, Greek, and Latin, the earliest of these, the Syriac, belonging probably to the third century AD” [253].

According to the chronology of the aforesaid historical records, the events described about Jesus and Thomas in the *Acts of Thomas* must have occurred in about AD 48-49 [254].

The fact that Thomas was “sold” as a slave could also have a deeper significance. The buyer was Habban, however *Abba* in Hebrew meant Father, i.e. the name by which Jesus used to call His heavenly Father. Thus, in the Garden of Gethsemane “he said: «Abba, Father»” (Mark 14:36). Therefore, Thomas was to be considered an initiate, a servant of the Father. Actually, when asked by King Mazdai⁶²⁷ (Misdæus, Lat.) whether he was a slave or a free man, he replied: “I am a slave, but thou hast no power whatever over me...My Master is thy Master and [the Master] of the whole world, and the Lord of Heavens and of earth” [255]. In the *Bible* to be servant of God meant a honourable title, implying even the participation in the revelation of the

⁶²⁷ The tradition placed him in Madras.

divine plan. The examples are not missing, particularly with Isaiah: “Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect [in whom] my soul delighteth! I will put my spirit upon him” (42:1). “He said unto me: «Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will glorify myself»” (49:3). “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and be lifted up, and be very high... so he astonish many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him... “ (52:13,15). “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant instruct many in righteousness... Therefore will I assign him a portion with the great” (53:11-12).

It is worth remembering the identity of the historical character known as *Abbanes* (Abbagases) and that one mentioned by *Acta Thomae: Habban* (Syriac), or *Abbanis* (Gr.), *Abban* or *Abbanes* (Lat.) [256].

Thomas and Habban arrived in the city of Sandaruk⁶²⁸ [258] or Andrapa (Iskilip of today, not far from the harbor of Sinope on the southern shore of the Black Sea, possibly connected to their travel by ship), in the ancient Paphlagonia, a former Greek colony that belonged to the Roman province of Galatia since 7 BC. There they attended the wedding of king’s daughter [259], where a Jewish girl played the flute for them [260]. “And when she had stood over him a long time, Judas did not lift up his face, but was looking all the while on the ground” [261]. That might remind us of how Lord Krishna played his flute thus enchanting Radha, the incarnation of the Primordial Mother. Thomas later sang a song about “the daughter of the light”: “On her head dwelleth the King... her ten fingers have opened the gate of heavens. Her bridal chamber is lighted up, and full of sweet odour of salvation.” The song later said about the bride and the bridegroom [262]. As we have seen (ch. XX C4), all these were Gnostic metaphors. “And when he had sung this song, all who were beside him were looking at him, and were seeing that his aspect was changed” [263]. When Thomas accomplished a miracle, the Jewish flute-player came to his feet and exclaimed: “This man is either God or the Apostle of God” [264]. After that transfiguration reminding that on the mount and denoting enlightenment, Jesus showed Himself in the bridal chamber in the likeness of Thomas, and said to the king: “I am not Judas, but I am the brother of Judas” [265]. Thus, the event turned into a mystical wedding [266] disclosing its initiatory significance [267], especially as Jesus has requested the bride and bridegroom to remain virgin, adding that through this “ye shall see the true wedding feast; and ye shall be in it praises (of God), and shall be numbered with those who enter into the bridal chamber” [268], the latter word designating the Sahasrara (ch. IV, XX B and C4).

⁶²⁸ Or *Sanadruk* (Syriac); *Andropolis* (Gr.); *Andranopolis*, *Andranobolys*, *Andronopolis* or *Adrianopolis* (Lat.) [257].

According to his *Acts*, Thomas shall sing another song known as the *Hymn of the Pearl*, where we shall encounter many known symbols. The story was about a prince from the East who was sent forth loaded abundantly with very precious stones, to look for the unique pearl (Sahasrara, signifying Self Realization; ch. XV A) in the midst of a sea surrounded by a loud-breathing serpent (Kundalini). The prince was attended on this endeavor by two guardians (Bhairava-Michael and Hanumana-Gabriel governing over the side channels), who left him immediately after his arrival at the destination. There, he was to rouse the serpent (that is to awaken it). When the prince forgot his duty, he was warned by “the Father, the King of kings, and the Mother, the Mistress of the East” also called “the Queen of the East” (evidently, the divine Father and Mother): “Up and arise from thy sleep... Remember the pearl for which thou wast sent.” He was told that after conquering the pearl “thou shalt be in our kingdom” (Sahasrara). The message flew in the likeness of an eagle (Garuda, the vehicle of Krishna-Vishnu, Master of spiritual evolution; ch. IX and XIX B). The prince succeeded in his task by uttering the names of his Father and Mother (i.e. the corresponding mantras; ch. XV D): “my Father’s name I named over him... and of my mother, the Queen of the East.” Afterwards, “I turned to go back to my Father’s house... and took my way straight to come to the light of our home the East” (Sushumna being the *straight way*; ch. XIX C). His “awakener” that preceded him on the road, guided him with its light and love. On his return the prince got back the garment decorated with glorious colors and stones (rubies, sapphires, diamonds, evoking the *chakras*, signifying the recovery of his control over the chakras), which were previously removed when he was sent to look for the pearl [269].

The existence of a wedding song from Kerala (Malabar Coast) entitled *Thomas Rabban Patta* (Song of Thomas) dating back the apostle’s arrival to AD 50 substantiate the above story of Thomas singing at the wedding.

The traveler walking from Nisibis towards east, might choose between two variants: one that goes from Mosul through Nishapur and Herat to Kabul, another through Susa (biblical Shushan; modern Shush) and Hermuz (Gediz) to Sindh. Jesus selected the first one.

It is worth mentioning one of the tribes in Afghanistan named *Isa Khel*, showing that they were followers of ‘Isa (Jesus) [270]. Deardorff [271] signals that within several villages scattered around Herat there are about 1,000 devotees of Isa, son of Maryam, who revere him as Yuz Asaf, their ancient teacher. They believe that after crucifixion, Isa went to India, where he had been before in his youth and later settled in Kashmir. According to Omar Michael Burke [272], their leader, Abba Yahiyya was able to recite the name of other leaders (teachers) through nearly sixty generations back to Yuz

Asaf himself, perhaps to the end of the first century AD. Hassnain and Levi [273] gave an excerpt from a gospel of the *Isa Khel* tribe written in Urdu: “Once, ‘Isa was going with his mother, Miriam on a long journey. She was very old and weak. It became impossible for her to move or walk. Issa kept her at a place and himself went to the forest to search some herbs. In the meanwhile, Miriam became unconscious and died” [274].

Although following different roads, Jesus and Thomas were together in Taxila where Gondophares was ruling about the middle of the first Christian century, as the historical records have proved.

The *Acts of Thomas* mentioned that after the wedding they continued their journey to India [275]. “And when Judas had entered into the realm of India with the merchant Habban, Habban went to salute Gūdnaphar, the king of India” [276]. Thomas who was sold as a carpenter [277] had to build a palace to the king [278]. The story goes on saying that since the apostle gave the king a palace in heaven instead of the earthly one [279], the king became angry and wanted to kill Thomas and Habban [280], but eventually Mazdai was so deeply impressed by the miracles accomplished by Thomas that the apostle was released [281].

Among the Aramaic inscription found in Taxila there is a text reading that a “dear foreign carpenter, pious devotee of the Son of God, built this palace of cedar and ivory, for the king” [282]. In the original text [283] there are Sanskrit words (in *italics*): *priya* (dear), *nagruda* (carpenter), *rideshiya* (foreigner), *Rudradeva* (Son of God, the latter being here Rudra, called in the white *Yajur-Veda: Maha-Deva*, the Great God [284]).

Sir Vincent Smith wrote about Thomas: “he preached with such zeal and grace that the king, his brother Gad, and multitude of the people embraced the faith. Many signs and wonders were wrought by the holy apostle” [285].

Proceeding with their journey, Jesus, His mother and Thomas reached Mari (Murree) situated 2,300 m above the sea level and only 70 kilometers XXIII I far from Taxila. -18

Mary passed away there and was buried at the place now called Pind-Point, indicating the proximity to Rawalpindi (about 65 kilometers east of Murree). Until 1875 when the spelling was changed, Muree was known as Mari after the name given to the mother of Jesus by Afghans, Jews and Kashmiris [286]. The tomb of Mary is now neighboring the Defense Tower XXIII I and even today it is called *Mai Mari da Asthan* (resting place of Mother 19, 20 Mary). It is pointed from east to west according to the Jewish custom (such tombs are called *mosai*) and not from north to south as the Muslim graves lie. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq [287] mentioned that tomb, and Notovitch also visited the place.

The other Russian, Nicholas Roerich had a talk with the Muslims of

Srinagar who told him “about legends saying that the tomb of Jesus is in Srinagar and the tomb of Mary in Kashgar” [288]. That decided the former to go there, and to visit the burial place of Virgin Mary. The tomb is located north of Ladakh, in the vicinity of the province of Sinkiang (Xinjiang, China of today), 10 kilometers from Kashgar (Kashi). Here it is Roerich’s record: “About six miles from Kashgar is the *Miriam Mazar*, the so-called tomb of the Holy Virgin, Mother of Christ. The legend relates that, after the persecution of Jesus in Jerusalem, Miriam fled to Kashgar where the place of her burial is marked by a *mazar*, worshipped even today” [289]. “Not far from the village of Artish... in the middle of the cemetery, the tomb of Mary the mother of Issa is pointed out. The details of the legend are slipping away. Why, just Mary in Kashmir, nobody can tell. It is the same concerning Issa in Srinagar” [290]. Kersten [291] let us believe that it could actually belong to another Mary (Mary of Magdala, the most probably) who had accompanied Jesus in Kashmir.

De Transitu Virginis Mariae liber, ascribed to Meliton (ch. XX C3) informed that Virgin Mary was buried in Josaphat’s valley, meaning the valley of *Yuz Asaf*!

After Muree, Jesus and Thomas proceeded to Kashmir, entering this land through a valley called *Yusu-Marg* (the Way of Jesus) on the route followed by merchants coming from Afghanistan through Kaghan. The Kaghan Valley touches on one side Muree and on the other Kashmir. The same route links *Yusu-Marg* with *Aish-Maqam*, about 80 kilometers from Srinagar. *Aish* is a corruption of the name *Issa*⁶²⁹ (or *Isha*, Lord, Sanskr.) given to Jesus, while *maqam* designates a place of rest, as it was told before. *Nur Nama* recorded a sojourn of a prince at this place for some time, and that the place was named after him. Another text wrote about the destruction of *dev* (evil spirit) and was entitled *Dastan-i-Kushta Shudan-i-Dev Az dasti-i-Brohan le dar zaman-i-‘Isa pahalwani bud* (The story of the destruction of a dev at the hands of Brohan who was a wrestler in the time of Jesus) [292].

The name of Jesus was related to many toponyms, as shown by Nazir Ahmad [293]. East of Afghanistan, not far from Ghazni (former Ghazna, the ancient capital, 100 kilometers from Kabul) and Jalalabad (near Khyber Pass) there are two prairies named after *Yuz Asaf*, where it is said that Jesus sat and preached. However, most of the toponyms are met in Kashmir, coming from *Issa*, *Yuzu* (*Yuz*) and their variants: *Arya-Issa*, *Issa-Brari*, *I-yes-Issa*, *Kal-Issa*, *Issa-kush*, *Issa-mati*, *Issa-eil*, *Ram-Issa*, *Issa-Ta*, *I-yes-th-Issa-vara*, *Aish-maqam*, *Yuzu-dha*, *Yuzu-dhara*, *Yuzu-gam*, *Yuzu-hatpura*, *Yuzu-kun*, *Yus-mangala*, *Yuzu-maidan*, *Yus-nag*, *Yuzu-para*, *Yuzu-raja*, *Yuzu-varman*, and even *Yusu*. Last but not least, leading to Kashmir there is the narrow valley

⁶²⁹ Ch. XVI.

of *Yusu-marg*, 40 kilometers away of Srinagar, between the villages Naugan and Nilmag. All those names denoted that Jesus traveled a lot across Kashmir. After Deardorff, “This carried considerable weight as evidence, since there is no reason why geographical locations and towns within Hindu/Buddhist regions of Kashmir would have renamed themselves around the name of Christianity’s leader unless he had been there and perhaps taught a philosophy close to that of Hinduism or Theravadin Buddhism than to Christianity” [294].

According to the existing texts and the roads in use at that time, one can restore the itinerary of the second journey of Jesus to India as starting from Jerusalem through Bethany to Damascus, going further northwards to Antioch⁶³⁰ (the Syrian name; former Hatay, present Antakya) and, if we consider the hypothesis of Mary (and Jesus) going to Ephesus (next to Izmir) then of Jesus being with Thomas at Sandaruk (contemporary Iskilip), it is not unreasonable to suppose that they reached these Anatolian cities by ship. The travel continued eastward to Edessa (former Osroe, modern Sanli-Urfa) and Nisibis (Nusaybin of today), traversing Mosul (Nineveh) in Iraq, then following the caravan track (the ancient *Silk Road*) in Iran through Ecbatana (metropolis of Medes, present Hamadan; biblical Achmetha of Ezra), Teheran (ancient Rhagae or Rayy), Damghan and Gorgan in Hyrcania (ancient province southeast of Caspian Sea), towards Nishapur (current Neyshabur) and Mashhad (Meshed), then passing Afghanistan through Herat (Alexandria Areion in the times of the Macedonian conquest), Kabul, Jalalabad, over the mountains through Khyber (Kheibar) Pass, reaching Peshawar (once the Kushan capital; ancient Purushapura) then Taxila, Rawalpindi, Muree, along the valley of *Yusu-marg* and arriving in Kashmir, at Srinagar and its surroundings.

That route was well known to the ancient Hebrews as shown by Irene Franck and David Brownstone when recounting the history of the Silk Road around the first centuries BC and AD: “caravaneers were generally Greek, Syrian, or Jewish, but increasingly the commercial language was Aramaic, the language of Babylon and Jesus—as it had been before Alexander’s appearance on the scene” [295].

Such a long journey could explain why Jesus was regarded as a reputed traveler. A Muslim scholar, Aarif-Billah al-Malik states in his book *Siraj-ul-Malik* about “Isa, the Ruhullah⁶³¹, and the Kalimatullah⁶³², who was the leader

⁶³⁰ In Pisidia.

⁶³¹ The Spirit of God (Arab.).

⁶³² The Verb of God (Arab.).

of the righteous, and the chief of travelers” [296]. *Lisan-ul Arab* read: “Jesus was named the «Messiah», because he wandered about, and because he did not stay at one place” [297].

The most important document dates back to the time of King Shalivahan, and consists of a chronicle where Jesus was mentioned under the name of *Isha (Issa) Masih* (the Lord/Jesus the Messiah). Shalivahan founded a dynasty and ruled over the kingdom of Andhara that reached its climax during his reign. He was famous over the present-day Maharashtra state where he set up his capital at Pratishtan, on the Godavari River. According to A. Daniélou, Shalivahan ruled at Ujjayini (called Ozenos by the Greeks), which was the capital of the ancient kingdom Avanti and exists even today at the border of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The monarch was killed during the battle of Karar in AD 124 [298]. In his *Rajatarangini*, Kalhana confuses Shalivahan with his grandfather Vikramaditya known, however, for inaugurating the Vikrama era commemorating his victory over the Scytho-Parthians (Saka) in 58 BC. Some authors (Boyer, Filliozat) mistake Shalivahan(a) with Nahapana (protector of the people, Persian), supposed to have reigned for a long time, at least up to AD 125. The latter was mentioned as Mambanos (after Boyer) at the end of the first century AD in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. According to Filliozat, Shalivahan (Salavahana, Satavahana, or Satakani) followed after Nahapana [299], the author ignoring that the Shalivahan era started in AD 78.

Vikramaditya was extolled in a poem by Jirham Bintoi (who lived 165 years before Prophet Muhammad). The regime of Vikramaditya was depicted as follows: “Fortunate are those who were born (and lived) during king Vikram’s reign. He was a noble, generous dutiful ruler, devoted to the welfare of his subjects. But at that time we Arabs, oblivious of God, were lost in sensual pleasures... But the present dawn and pleasant sunshine of education is the result of the favor of the noble king Vikramaditya whose benevolent supervision did not lose sight of us—foreigners as we were. He spread his sacred religion amongst us and sent scholars whose brilliance shone like that of the sun from his country to ours.” The poem and the chronicle are engraved on a gold dish kept in the Ka’ba shrine at Mecca [300].

The chronicle is entitled *Bhavishya Maha Purana* and is attributed to Pandit Sutta. The document included several parts (*adhyaya*, Sanskr.) and was written in the year 3191 of Laukika Era (that began in 3076 BC), which corresponded to AD 115.

Generally speaking, it is difficult to establish the antiquity of the *Puranas*. The *Atharva-Veda* was mentioning them [301] as well as the most ancient *Upanishads* [302]. After J.-C. F. Eden Pargiter, the *Puranas* would have been

composed no later than the first Christian centuries [303].

The manuscript of the *Bhavishya Maha Purana* is kept in the State Library of Srinagar and was printed firstly in 1897, then in 1910 [304]. There exists also an edition issued in 1917 [305]. We have made use of the *Bhavishya Mahapurana*, Satip-pani Moolamatra, Mudak Va Prakashak (basic text accompanied by annotations), edition of Shri Venkatesho Vijayate, published by “Shri Venkateshwara” Steam Press, Bombay, in the Samvat year 2015 (AD 1959), the editor and printer being Khemaraj Shri Krishna Das.

The fragment given below comes from the third book, second section XXIII (dvitiyodhyayah, Sanskr.), verses (*shloka*, Sanskr.) 17-32. The most - 25 important Sanskrit terms were given in round brackets (*italic* characters) and the same for the explanations that were necessary, in our opinion. The square brackets supply the words enabling for a better understanding of the text.

Dr. S. K. Mathur from New Delhi and R. D. Kulkarni from Pune, India, as well as Professor Radu Bercea, Director of the Center for Eastern Researches in Bucharest, Romania, to whom we express our deep gratitude, achieved the following translation:

“King Shalivahan, the grand son of Vikramaditya succeeded to his paternal kingdom. Having conquered the invincible Scythians (*shaka*), the inhabitants of *China* and the inhabitants of Tartary (*tittiri*, i.e. the Tartars, Tatars), the Bokhars (*bahlika*, the Bactrians), the Parthians (*kamarupa*; living east of Bengal and western Assam), the inhabitants of Rome (*romajan*, born in Rome), the inhabitants of Khura (*khurajan*; born in Khura, i.e. Khurasan), [all these] wicked people. He grabbed their treasury and got them punished. He established the boundary (*maryada*; meaning also “rules of conduct”) for the Barbarians (*mlechchha*) on the one side, and for Aryans on the other, and declared that the great kingdom of Aria [nation] be called Sindhusthan (*sindhudasha*, land of Sindh). The country of the Barbarians (*mlechchhasthan*) was established beyond the Sindh, by him, the Magnanimous one (*mahatma*, great soul).

One day, the ruler [of the] Shakas (that is Shalivahan) came to a snowpeak (*himatunga*, on the Himalayas). The mighty king saw an auspicious (*shubha*; also: distinguished, noble, pure, good, handsome, wonderful) man (*purusha*) of fair complexion (*gauranga*) wearing white clothes (*shvetavastra*), living in the middle of the Huna country (Ladakh, by then a part of the Kushan Empire [306]). [The king] asked him: «Who are you?», [and] he replied joyfully: «O, king, know me as the Son of God (*Isha-putra*), born from the womb of a Virgin (*kumari-garbha-sambhava*). I preach the Law (*dharma*; also religion) to the Barbarians (*mlechchha dharma*) and I made the vow of Truth (*satyavrata*)». Having heard this, the king asked: «In which Law (*dharma*) do you believe?» Having heard [this], he answered: «O, great king!

With the decline of Truth and moral rules (*maryada*) in the land of Barbarians (*mlechchhadasha*), I have come as a Messiah (*masiha*: the one that enlightens for removing of darkness). Wild ignorance of God (variant: queen of demons⁶³³) arose among the pagans (*dasyu*, strangers, barbarians; signifying non-Arians [308]). I have met it with the Barbarians but now I assumed the state of Messiah (*Masiha*: killer of the ignorance⁶³⁴/queen of demons). Among the Barbarians I established the Law (*dharmā*). O, king, listen to this: In our body we have impurities, there are so many good and bad things in it. Every person [should] purify one's mind resorting to repetition of the [holy] name (*japa*: repetition within a formula or *mantra*, of deity's name taken out of the scriptural texts, *naigama*) and constantly meditating upon the Ultimate Purity (*Nirmal Param*). Through meditation (*dhyana*), a man [should] worship God (*Pujayedisha*; *Isha*, the Lord) present in the Sun (*suryamandala*), with righteousness, true speech and concentration of mind. This God is steady (*achala*), as the Sun is always steady (*suryachala*). He gathers the moving elements from all sides. O, king, by doing this, the ignorance (or queen of demons) vanished and the image of God (*Ishamurti*) entered and established in my heart that is ever pure, auspicious and benevolent. After this, my name was established as Isha Masih».

Having heard this, the king paid obeisance to the one worshipped by the Barbarians (*mlechchha-pujaka*), and established him in that terrible country of Barbarians (*mlechchhasthan*). The king went to his kingdom and performed sacrifice of the horse. He went to heavens after ruling for sixty years” [309].

Mlechchhas might be interpreted either as “non-believers,” or “barbarians” (meaning non-Hindus, non-Aryans, strangers, nonconformist to Hindu institutions), or “dirty,” or “having impure, filthy desires”—from *mala*⁶³⁵ *ichchha* (*ichchha*, desire, Sanskr.).

Schuon explains: “in fact Hindus venerate without distinction Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian saints, and indeed were it otherwise the term *Mlechchha Avatara* (Divine Descent among the Barbarians) would be meaningless.” The author mentioned also “The opinion that Christ was the *Mlechchha Avatara*, the «Divine Descent of the Barbarians» (or «for the Barbarians»), that is to say, the ninth incarnation of Vishnu” [310]. Also A. Daniélou reported that “many books of astrology mentioned a foreign Avatar

⁶³³ *Ihamasi*; we have rejected this translation. Messadié explained that this name is unknown to all mythologies [307].

⁶³⁴ Hindus regard ignorance as the utmost sin (ch. IV).

⁶³⁵ *Mala* (impure, Sanskr.), *malina* (dirty, Sanskr.).

(Mlechhha) born amongst the western barbarians. Jesus was often pointed at” [311] (ch. XIX B).

Three main sources provide three different English translations, rendering the approximate signification. Actually, as far as his variant, Kersten refers to “parts of which are translated literally here.”

We would like to submit here some remarks about these variants in their chronological sequence:

(1952) Khwaja Nazir Ahmad employed a translation from Sanskrit carried out by Vidyavaridi Dr. Shiv Fath Shastri, apparently after the edition of 1967 Bikrami Era (AD 1910), issued in Bombay with the same publishing house as our source. The edition was done at the request of Maharaja Shri Partap Singh of Kashmir, who sent the manuscript to the Research Institute of Pune. The language was the Sanskrit, although the Sharda alphabet was used. The translation wrote (verse 22) that Jesus has encountered King Shalivahan “at Wien, a place of sulphur spring, about ten miles northeast of Srinagar” [312]. The idea appeared also with Hassnain and Levi [313]. In the edition used by us there is no mention at all about “Wien.”

Nazir Ahmad wrote for three times the king’s name: *Shalevahin*, using for Jesus—instead of the right word *Ishaputra*—the inaccurate *Yusashaphat*, therefore a non-Sanskrit spelling, maybe of Iranian origin. In the text appears the word *maleech*, translated by “infidel” [312].

(1983) Holger Kersten used the spelling *Bikrama Jit* for Shalivahan’s grandfather. The term *mleacha* was translated through “non-Hindus.” The author reproduced the photograph of the Puranic text [314].

(1988) Hassnain and Levi utilize *mleecha*, interpreted as “those who do not profess Hinduism,” a term equated by the authors with *Amalekites* [315] (a people of Canaan, descendants of Esau, hereditary enemies of Hebrews until dispersed by Saul). They published also the photograph of the Puranic text.

The reasons that were taken into account by Messadié in asserting the historical authenticity of the event described in the *Bhavishya Maha Purana* certainly are not devoid of interest: “a) the unexpected presence (without any apologetic intention) in the Hindu chronicle of a foreign character, who was almost accurately described; and b) the historical reality of Shalivahan and the approximate concordance of the dates. The Hindu chronicler had no reason to introduce a character like Jesus playing no role in the religious or political history of India, without being provided with a tradition on that matter” [316].

Kersten maintained that “According to Professor Hassnain, King Shalivahan ruled in the Kushan era from 39 to AD 50” [317]. In fact,

Hassnain just said “Shali-Yahana⁶³⁶ ruled over the valley of Kashmir and other mountainous region of the Himalayas, during 39-50 AD” [318]. Leaving aside the wrong orthography of the name, that is a completely different thing. However, the Saka (Shalivahan) calendar—in use still today in Maharashtra (King Shalivahan had his capital within this state, in Pratishtan)—starts counting the years from AD 78 on, since this was the year of Shalivahan’s victory against the Sakas. To be more specific, Shalivahan Era—known beyond Kashmir, also in southern India as Saka Era—began on 1st Vaisakh 3179 Kali Yuga Era (originating in 3101 BC), which corresponded to March 14, AD 78 [319]. About this year, the king left Kashmir to go in Dekkan for annihilating there some sedition. Therefore, when Jesus has met the king in Kashmir, the former was over eighty years old.

Mullah Haider wrote that Yuz Asaf came to Kashmir in the second year of the Shalivahan Era, that is in AD 80 [320].

In the beginning of that section we have analyzed several prophecies about the old age reached by Jesus: a hundred or a hundred and twenty years. After the latter hypothesis, when the *Bhavisya Maha Purana* was written in AD 115 Jesus might have been still alive or recently passed away at about 120 years of age (see *supra*).

Mullah Nadiri, already mentioned (ch. XIV), was the first great historian of Kashmir, and lived during the reign of Sultan Zaynul Abidin. Within Nadiri’s chronicle *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* the remarks about the sojourn of Jesus (Yuz Asaf, equated to ‘Isa) in Kashmir are interwoven with well-known historical records. Thus, Nadiri wrote about the rule in Kashmir of Raja Gopadatta (or Gopananda—not to be confused with the Gopadatta of Gandhara): “After him his son Raja Akh [whose name was Ach], came to the throne. He ruled for sixty years. It is said that he founded the village [of] Achabaal in Kothar district. After him his son, Gopananda, took (the reigns of) Government and ruled the country under the name of Gopadatta. [During his reign] many temples were [built] and on top of Mount Solomon⁶³⁷ the dome (of the temple) became cracked. He deputized one of his ministers named Suleiman, who had come from Persia to repair it... During this time Hazrat Yuz Asaf having come (*marfu*, elevated) from the Holy Land (*Bait-ul-Muqaddas*) to this holy valley (*Wadi*⁶³⁸-*e-Aqdas*) proclaimed his prophethood. He devoted himself, day and night, in [prayers to] God, and

⁶³⁶ *Sic!*

⁶³⁷ *Koh-i-Suleiman*.

⁶³⁸ *Wadi* (creek, river bed, Arab., Hebr.).

having attained the heights of piety and virtue, he declared himself to be a Messenger [of God] for the people of Kashmir. He invited people [to his religion]. Because the people of the valley had faith in this Prophet, Raja Gopadatta referred the objection of Hindus to him [for a decision]. It was because of this Prophet's orders that Suleiman, whom Hindus called Sandeman, completed [the repairs of] the dome. Further, on one of the stones of the [flank walls encasing the] stairs he [Suleiman] inscribed: «In these times Yuz Asaf proclaimed his Prophethood. [Year] Fifty and four» (*Dar een wagat Yuz Asaf da 'wa-i-paighambar-i mikunad. Sal panjah wa chahar*), and on the other stone of the stairs he also inscribed that: «He [Yuz Asaf] was Yusu, Prophet of Children of Israel» (*Aishan Yuzu paighambar-i-ben-i-Israel ast*). I have seen in a book of Hindus that this prophet was really Hazrat 'Isa, the Spirit of God (*Ruh-Allah*) on whom be peace (and salutations) and had also assumed the name of Yuz Asaf. The [real] knowledge is with God. He spent his life in this [valley]" [321]. Nazir Ahmad, Kersten and Hassnain and Levi published photographs of Nadiri's text [322].

The analysts of the text above identified *Bhavisya Maha Purana* with the Hindu book referred to by Nadiri.

The archaeologists discovered on Takht-i-Suleiman four inscriptions in *Sulus (Khat-i-sulus)* script that was in use from ancient times in Persia and continued to be so in India and Afghanistan until the time of Timur who invaded India in 1398. Mir 'Ali of Tabriz, one of Timur's historians, introduced the present Persian script known as *Nastaleeq*. The two other inscriptions (besides the two aforementioned) on the pillars supporting the roof are: "The mason of this pillar [is] Raj Bihishti Zargar. Year fifty and four" (*maimar een satoon Raj Bihishti Zargar. Sal panjah wa chahar*), and "Khwaja Rukun son of Murjan erected this pillar" (*een satoon bardast Khwaja Rukun bin Murjan*). While these inscriptions are in good state even today, after the conquest of Kashmir the Sikhs mutilated the other two inscriptions referring to Jesus, which are still visible but cannot be read intelligibly [323]. The reference showed that the repair was made during the regime of Gopadatta [324]. Nazir Ahmad, Kersten, Hassnain and Levi provided images of the intelligible inscriptions [325].

On the time of Emperor Jahangir, Haider Malik Chaudurah noted down: "Then Raja Gopananda came to the throne after his father. He put up many temples and repaired the one on the Koh-i-Suleiman. About two thousand years have passed but the temple is intact. He ruled for sixty years" [326]. Chaudurah referred to all the four inscriptions, yet without mentioning their text [327], while Mufti Ghulam Nabi Khaniyari indicated the text of the last three [328].

Major H.H. Cole published photographs of the two texts not connected

with Jesus [329], making the remark: “There are also two mutilated inscriptions on each side of the two flank walls encasing the stairs. Their characters are in Persian” [330].

Mirza Saif-ud-Din Baig recorded, too, the repairs of Takht-i-Suleiman during the reign of Gopadatta [331]. Pandit Narayan Kaul Ajiz wrote: “Some thousands of years ago Raja Gopadatta had repaired a temple on Koh-i-Suleiman” (Mount of Solomon) [332].

Tarikh-i-Jadul read: “He (Gopadatta) repaired the temple called Zishi Shore, on Koh-i-Suleiman... Sandiman (Suleiman) was minister of Gopadatta and he had been assigned to repair the temple” [333].

After carrying out a thorough analysis, Nazir Ahmad [334] determined that the year 54 mentioned in the inscriptions on Takht-i-Suleiman referred to the year 3154 of the Laukika (or Haptrakeshwaran) Era that started in 3076 BC, thus giving AD 78. On the other hand, if we consider the date as pertaining to the 54th year of the reign of Gopadatta (who ruled 60 years since AD 53 or 49), we get AD 107 or 103, respectively, when Jesus was still alive.

“Jesus (peace be with him) has said: «The world is a bridge. Pass over it, but do not settle down on it!»” “Jesus (peace be with him) has said: «The world is a proud house, take this as a warning and do not build on it!»” These are two *ágrapha*⁶³⁹ (sayings ascribed to Jesus, however not found in the *Bible*). Actually, they are not found in any Christian source.

Referring to the hidden years of the life of Jesus, Penelope Chetwode wrote: “There has always been a strong tradition that these [years] were spent in Kashmir where a collection of Our Lord’s sayings from this mysterious period of his life is still preserved: one of them was quoted by Akbar on his
XXIII Victory Gate at Fatehpur Sikri: «Said Jesus, on whom be peace! The world
- 22 is a bridge, pass over it but build no house there. He who hopeth for an hour, may hope for eternity; the world is but an hour, spend it in devotion; the rest is worth nothing»” [335]. Hassnain and Levi gave a slightly different translation: “Jesus, son of Mary said: «This world is a bridge. Pass over it but build no house upon it. He, who hopes for an hour, hopes for eternity! This world does not last more than an hour. Spend it in prayers, for what follows is unknown».” Kersten published a photograph of the inscription in Fatehpur Sikri [336].

According to the tradition, on the gate of the city Kasha, an inscription attributed to Yuz Asaf would exist, with the following content: “The palaces of kings are devoid of three virtues: Wisdom, Patience and Religious Wealth” [337].

The celebrated chronicle on the Kashmiri kings, *Rajatarangini*, included

⁶³⁹ Literally: unwritten (Gr.); oral preaching.

a story whose significance might be connected to Jesus. Due to its length we selected here only excerpts from the original text (verse number in parentheses):

“The king had a minister called Samadhimati⁶⁴⁰, the greatest of sages, who was distinguished by his wonderful life and devotion to Shiva⁶⁴¹” (65). “[It came about that] wicked men raised the king’s hatred against that trusted adviser, by telling him to beware of a person of such wonderful mental power. Full of wrath the king then banished him without any reason from his presence, deprived him of all property, and reduced him to life-long poverty” (67-68). “At that time there spread by the force of future events a mysterious report from house to house which declared: «To Samadhimati will belong the kingdom»” (72). “The king thereupon... threw him into prison... until the tenth year was completed” (73-74). “The king when about to die... thought... to kill him” (75-76). “Then, by the king’s order Samadhimati was at night put to death on the stake by savage executioners” (79). “When the news of Samadhimati’s end reached his Guru, Isana by name, the heart of this self-controlled person broke away from control” (82). “He proceeded to the place of execution in order to perform proper funeral rites for this amiable man, who, it seemed, without sympathizer” (84). “Then as he was preparing to perform the proper funeral rites, he read on his forehead a verse inscribed by the Creator to this effect: «He will have a life of poverty, ten years’ imprisonment, death on the stake, and still thereafter a throne». As he saw the meaning of three padas⁶⁴² of that verse fulfilled, he was reasonably anxious to see whether the sense of the fourth pada would come right” (90-91). The Guru remembered several cases when the dead were brought to life by God’s will (94-96). “Then once in the middle of the night, while he was kept awoken by the thought of this mystery, Isana smelt a heavenly perfume of incense” (98), and witnessed the resurrection of Samadhimati (105) and his anointing (106). “Then a voice was heard: «May you not be in fear, O, Isana... He who, when chosen by us, was joined (*samadhita*) with a heavenly body, will be known on earth [by name of] Samadhimati and on account of his noble character as Aryaraja⁶⁴³». Then Samadhimati, who wore a magnificent dress and a wreath, and was adorned with heavenly ornaments,

⁶⁴⁰ Absorbed in Samadhi (Sansk.).

⁶⁴¹ I.e. God Almighty.

⁶⁴² It has been asserted (ch. I) that every perfect thing has *four* padas (literally: feet, parts, limbs, sides etc., Sanskr.).

⁶⁴³ King of the Arians.

recovered the memory of his past and reverently greeted his Guru” (109-111). “At the bidding of his Guru he being free of desires, with reluctance consented to the prayer of the citizens to rule the country which had no king” (116). “In right royal attire and accompanied by his army he entered the city which was rendered auspicious by the blessings uttered by the citizens, while there poured a rain of parched grains from its mansions [as a greeting]” (119) [338].

Although in an altered sequence, we easily recognize the similitude with the episode of Jesus *entering the city* of Jerusalem in triumph, accompanied by an enthusiastic “*army*” of (civilian) *citizens uttering* ovations of “Hosanna” (the similitude with the cry: *O, Isana!* should be noticed), and *greeting* Him with branches of palms (Matthew 21:8-9; Mark 11:8-9; Luke 19:37-38; John 12:12-13), His *anointing* while the house was filled with *the perfume of incense* (nard; John 12:3; cf. 11:2), followed by the *imprisonment*, the crowning with a *wreath* (of thorns), while a *magnificent dress* (purple robe) was put on Him (Matthew 27:28-29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2), the name given to Him: *King* (of the Jews; Matthew 27:11,29,37; Mark 15:2,9,18,26; Luke 23:3,37,38; John 18:33,39; 19:3,14,19,21), then the *execution* on the cross resembling to a *stake*, and His *resurrection* in the end.

It should be noted that according to Dr. G.M.D. Sufi, Samadhimati (or Samdhimati, Sandhimati) Aryaraja was minister to Jayendra (61 BC – AD 24) and followed him as King Samadhimati Aryaraja, thus being contemporary to Christ. He belonged to Vikramaditya Dynasty as well as King Shalivahan whose name is related to Jesus. This dignitary was a great sage and ascetic. Nazir Ahmad supposes Samadhimati “to have an historical individuality,” even though confuses him with Sandiman, the minister of Gopadatta [339].

Isana inhabited *Isbar* (place of ‘Isa) on the border of the Dal Lake in Kashmir, a place that is still held in great awe [340].

God-man Isana was the last Kashmir’s reformer in the first Christian century [341].

Towards the end of the 19th century, it seems that a coin on which it was inscribed the name of Jesus in Pali characters was discovered in Punjab. Presumably, the local ruler had become a follower of Jesus, and issued it as a token of the kingly honor granted to Jesus. There is mentioned also a coin bearing the figure of a Jew supposed to be Jesus [342]. However, both coins might be of questionable authenticity.

There is a legend still circulating in Kashmir, talking about a stick made of olive wood, called either “the rod of Moses” or “the rod of Jesus” (*‘asa-i-Isa*; from *‘asa*, rod, Arab.), supposed to have been owned by Moses when he had been in the country and which later would have been used by Christ. Also

it is said that Yuz Asaf was a descendant (*as ahfad*) of Moses [343]. The stick was also called '*asa-i-sharif*' (the revered rod). Captain Colin Enriquez wrote: "In case of epidemic and other diseases intercession services were held in all the mosques. The reputed stick of Christ, which is kept in Shah-i-Hamadan, was brought out. If an improper use is made of this reputed stick of Christ, it is said to bring floods" [344]. There are other ancient sources mentioning the rod of Jesus, '*asa-i-Issa*' [345].

According to the tradition, 600 years ago the stick was consigned to Zayn-ud-Din Wali, by Hazrat Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali who received it from Amir-i-Kabir Hazrat Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani of Kashmir. The rod was also given the name of *Balagir* (Catcher of evil). About a hundred years ago the stick was preserved in Pahli (Hazara district), then it was taken to Mohalla Khaniyar, in Srinagar, and at present it is kept in the shrine of Hazrat Zayn-ud-Din Wali in Aish-Maqam (not far from "the stone of Moses"; ch. XII), where that great saint of Islam Zayd-ud-Din was said to have lived in the time of Sultan Zaynul Abidin Badshah (1408-1461).

Christians are familiar with the story of Barlaam and Joasaph⁶⁴⁴ that went around over the Middle Ages and was attributed to John of Damascus who lived in Jerusalem about the year 700. It is also mentioned by Hasdeu as "a Byzantine production, of Indian origin, but ascribed to saint John of Damascus" [347]. The Indian source was the Sanskrit writing *Lalita-vistara* (*Book of Exploits*) [348]. The story was translated into many languages. Some variants had the heading *The Prince and the Dervish* [349]. Joasaph converted the people from Islam to Christian faith. The mentioning of *Abenner* or *Abaner* (from *aba*, father, Hebr.; *ab*, Aram.), a mighty king of India who was the father of Joasaph, suggested the relationship between the heavenly Father and Yuz Asaf-Jesus.

Joseph Jacob's *Barlaam and Josaphat* refers to the visit paid by Yuz Asaf to Kashmir [350]. There is also known an Arabic version called *The Book of Balauhar and Budasaf* [351] telling the story of Yuz Asaf's death. Kersten - 23 [352] believed that *Balauhar* was the Sanskrit equivalent for *Bhagavan* (Vishnu, i.e. God the Father), while *B(Yudasaf)* coming from *Yuz Asaf*, meant that Jesus was a Bodhisattva. However, his hypothesis was rejected by Gibb and Kramers: "Yuz Asaf... must not be explained as a corruption of Bodhisattva" [353].

The Book of Balauhar and Budasaf wrote: "And he reached Kashmir, which was the farthest region at which he ministered, and there his life ended. He left the world and bequeathed his inheritance to a certain disciple called Ababid who had served him. Everything that he did was perfect. And he

⁶⁴⁴ With the variants: *Josephat* (Hebr.), *Judasaph* (Arab.), *Yusasaph* (Kashmir.) [346].

admonished him⁶⁴⁵ and said to him: «I have found a worthy shrine and decorated it and brought in lamps for the dying. I have collected the flock with the true face, which had been dispersed and to whom I was sent⁶⁴⁶. And now I shall draw breath through my ascent from the world, by the separation of my soul from my body. Obey the commandments that were given to you, and do not deviate from the path of truth but keep firmly to it in gratitude. And may Ababid be the leader». He then commanded Ababid to level off the place for him; he stretched his legs out and lay down. Then, turning his head northwards and his face eastwards, he passed away” [354].

Beyond any doubt, the text above was accommodated to fit Islamic requirements. This results from the fact that the tomb of Jesus was really arranged eastwards as for a Jew and not at all northwards as for a Muslim.

Nazir Ahmad [355] recorded a better version drawn out from *Kamal-ud-Din*: “Then Yuz Asaf after roaming about in many cities, reached that country which is called Kashmir. He traveled in it far and wide and stayed there and spent his [remaining] life there, until death overtook him, and he left the earthly body and was elevated towards the Light. But before his death he sent for a disciple of his, Ba’bad by name, who used to serve him and was well versed in all matters. He [Yuz Asaf] expressed his last will to him and said: «My time for departing from this world has come. Carry on your duties properly and turn not back from truth, and say your prayers regularly». He then directed Ba’bad to prepare a tomb over him [at the very place he died]. He then stretched his legs towards the west and head towards the east and died. May God bless him” [356].

We remember Muhammad Ismail’s book that rendered the parables of Yuz Asaf fitting well those in the gospels. The author also described the death of Yuz Asaf: “He went to many cities and preached to [the people of] those cities. At last he reached the city of Kashmir. He invited its inhabitants to righteousness and resided there till death approached him, and his holy spirit departed from his earthly body and went to rest with God. But before his death he called his companion Ba’bad and made a will... and directed him to construct a tomb for him. He laid himself with the head towards the East and stretched his legs towards the West, and went to the place of Eternity” [357].

A question might arise: Who was the companion of Jesus? However strange could it be, *Ba’bad* or *Ba’dad* was the name given to Thomas by the Arabs, and his meaning was *the twin* (see *supra*).

Another renowned historian of Kashmir was Muhammad Azam, Khwaja

⁶⁴⁵ Ababid.

⁶⁴⁶ Thus, the story supports the above-mentioned hypothesis about Jesus’ mission among the lost Jewish tribes in Kashmir.

of Deeda Mari. He wrote in his *Tarikh-i-Azami* about Yuz Asaf's tomb: "Besides that grave⁶⁴⁷ there is a tomb⁶⁴⁸. It is well known amongst the people of the locality that there lies a prophet who had come to Kashmir in ancient times. It is now known as the Place of the Prophet. I have seen in a book of history that [he had come] after great tribulations from a great distance. It is said that a prince, after undergoing a good deal of penance and perseverance and through devotion and prayers, had become the Messenger of God to the people of Kashmir. On reaching Kashmir he invited people [to his religion], and after death was laid to rest in Anzmarah. In that book the name of the Prophet is given as Yuz Asaf. Anzmarah is in Khaniyar. Many pious people, and especially the spiritual guide of the author: Mullah Inaiyatullah Shaul, say that while visiting the tomb Divine grace and blessings of prophethood were witnessed" [358].

Amir-ud-Din Pakhliwal appropriated the above story, writing: "There is a tomb [in Khaniyar] which is called the Place of a Prophet... (here it follows the known text of Muhammad Azam)... whose name was Yuz Asaf" [359].

According to Mirza Saif-ud-Din Baig: "It is said that a Prophet, Yuz Asaf by name, appeared for the guidance of the people of Kashmir. He is buried in Mohalla Khaniyar. [During his life] he invited people to his religion. He lived near about the reign of Raja Gopadatta who had also built a temple on Mount Solomon" [360].

Wasil Ali Khan wrote: "The tomb is described by the people of the locality to be that of a Prophet of the People of the Book (*Paighambar-i-Ahli-i-Kitab*)" [361]. That title designated Jesus, since as it has been pointed out (ch. XIX C) "the People of the Book" (i.e. of the *Bible*) was the name given by Muslims to the Jews and Christians.

We would add that other sources show that Jesus was also called *Shahzada nabi*, "the Prince prophet" [362].

Abdul Qasim admitted that the tomb of Yuz Asaf (believed to be a disciple of Christ!) dates back on the time of Jesus: "The assertion of the people of knowledge is that one of the disciples of Jesus Christ (*yake as hawariyun*) is buried there, from whose tomb emanates Divine grace and blessings" [363]. On the contrary, Muhammad Sadiq devoted an entire chapter to the tomb of Yuz Asaf, in order to demonstrate with the help of historical evidences that Yuz Asaf was the name given to Jesus Christ in Kashmir [364].

Mufti Ghulam Nabi Khaniyari gives a description of the sepulcher: "The

⁶⁴⁷ Belonging to Syed Nasir-ud-Din, in Khaniyar.

⁶⁴⁸ *Darih* (Arab.), the name given by Muslims to the sepulcher containing the earthly remnants of a saint.

tomb of Syed Nasir-ud-Din is in Mohalla Khaniyar and is also known as Rauzabal. There is also the tomb of Yuz Asaf, the Prophet. He was a prince and had come to this place. Through prayers and [because of his] piety he had come as a Messenger to the people of Kashmir, and he preached to them. There was a hole (window) in the western wall [of the tomb] out of which the aroma of musk used to emanate” [365]. Mir Saadullah Shah provided a similar version [366].

Nicholas Roerich was enticed by the mysterious tomb he has heard about even before getting there. “Before he arrived there, Roerich came upon various versions about Christ’s stay in Asia. The Muslims in Srinagar told the painter that Issa found not his death on the cross but... went to Srinagar where he taught the people and died later on. To him it was shown even the tomb at the basement of a private house, where it was said that Jesus had been buried. Roerich considered it is worth mentioning that in his writings” [367].

Swami Abhedananda has paid a visit at the tomb of Christ, which is reported as follows: “On descending from the top of Hari Parvat the Swami went to visit the tomb of Jesus Christ which is situated in a locality called Khana-yari... It is said that the tank with whose water Jesus performed his ablutions while on his way from Kabul to Kashmir is still in existence. The keepers of the tomb told us that the matter has been described in an ancient book of the Arabs called the *Tarikh-i-Azham*. The tank is referred to as Yusuf Talao... The Swami commented: «If proper research is conducted in India, the gaps in the life story of Christ can be suitably filled in»” [368]. The Swami was evidently talking about the already mentioned *Tarikh-i-Azami* by Khwaja Muhammad Azam

Mention should also be made of a speech under the caption *The Spiritual Power that Wins* delivered by Swami Ramatirtha who was in Kashmir: “Rama (Swami Ramatirtha) had been there and found many signs of Christ having lived there... There were many places called by his name, where Christians never came. Cities were called by the same names as many of the cities of Jerusalem through which Christ passed. There is standing a grave of nearly 2000 years. It is held very sacred and called the «Grave of Eash» (Isha), which is the name of Christ in Hindustani language, and «Eash» means «prince» [369].

Sir Francis Younghusband made the following commentary: “There resided in Kashmir some 1900 years ago a saint of the name of Yuz Asaf, who preached in parables and used many of the same parables as Christ used, as, for instance, the parable of the sower. His tomb is in Srinagar, and the theory... is that Yuz Asaf and Jesus are one and the same person. When the people are in appearance of such a decided Jewish cast it is curious that such a thing should exist” [370] (*sic!*).

The Christian journal *Al-Hilal* issued in Beirut, wrote: “In Mohalla Khan-i-yar of the city there is a tomb. The people of Kashmir describe it as that of Prophet (*Nabi*) Yuz Asaf. The ordinary people of the locality visit the tomb regularly. In certain books of history it is stated that Yuz Asaf was a Nabi who had come from a far off country. He died there and was buried in that city” [371]. However, in their Encyclopedia of Islam, Gibb and Kramers denied that hypothesis writing: “His tomb at Srinagar is still known, but is mistaken for that of a prophet called Yuz Asaf” [372].

Colin Enriquez stated in his turn: “During my stay in Srinagar I came upon curious traditions concerning some of the tombs in the city. There is one tomb said to be that of Christ” [373].

We have seen that the sepulcher of Yuz Asaf is next to the smaller tomb of the saint Syed Nasir-ud-Din Rizvi, who by asking that his tomb be next to Jesus witnessed, perhaps, a deep veneration towards the latter. Both tombs are inside the building of Rauzabal in Anzmarah, in the Khaniyar district XXIII (mohalla), downtown of the old Srinagar. *Rauza* is a word designating only 26, 27 the tombs of the prophets (*nabi*), while the tombs of the saints (*wali*) are called *ziarat*. Therefore, *Rauzabal* means “place of the tomb” (*bal*, place). An inscription above the passage leading to the burial chamber read that Yuz Asaf reached the valley of Kashmir many centuries before, and all his life he sought after the truth. The two tombs are oriented from north to south in Muslim tradition and covered with tombstones. However, through a small aperture one can see that the sarcophagus sheltering the earthly remnants of XXIII Yuz Asaf is placed from east to west according to the Jewish custom. An -28 ancient manuscript announce that it is the tomb of ‘Isa Ruh-u-Ilah (Jesus, the Spirit of God). The descendants of the ancient Israelites call the monument “the tomb of Hazrat ‘Isa Sahab” (Lord Jesus). Another document is mentioning a building that was erected around the sepulcher as early as AD 112.

The respect paid to the burial places of prominent representatives of the spiritual history was common to many traditions and existed also within early Christianity. Thus it is known that in the days of Epiphanius the cult for saints was in close connection with the places of their burial. The veneration of the sacred earthly remains is, however, a constant and basic element for the Christian cult devoted to the saints.

On 11th Jamadi-us-Saani 1184 A.H. (AD 1766), the custodian of the tomb received the following scroll from the Great Mufti of Kashmir, Rahman Mir: “In this Kingdom in the Department of Learning and Piety and in the Court of Justice Rahman Mir, the son of Bahadur Mir, states that at the holy shrine of Yuz Asaf the Prophet (*Paighambar*), may God bless him, nobles and ministers and kings and high dignitaries and the general public come from all

directions to pay homage and make offerings... After recording evidence it has been established that in the reign of Raja Gopadatta who repaired the building on the Mount Solomon and built many temples, a man came here whose name was Yuz Asaf. He was a prince by descent and had given up all worldly affairs and was a law-giver. He used to spend most of his time alone in meditation. This happened after the first great flood of Kashmir and when people [of Kashmir] had taken to idol-worship. The Prophet Yuz Asaf had been sent as a Prophet to preach to the people of Kashmir. He used to proclaim unity of God till death overtook him and he died. He was buried in Mohallah Khaniyar on the bank of the lake, which is known as Rauzabal. In the year 871 A.H., Syed Nasiruddin Rizvi, a descendant of Imam Musa Ali Raza, was buried besides Yuz Asaf' [374]. A photograph of the document was published by Nazir Ahmad, Hassnain and Levi [375].

XXIIII All the three main sources (Nazir Ahmad, Kersten, Hassnain-Levi) published photographs of the tomb and a carving depicting Yuz Asaf's soles - 29 bearing marks (*stigmata*, Gr.) of the crucifixion [376].

Professor Hassnain was able to notice (and take snapshot) from the carving in spite of the thick layer of wax produced by the candles lighted even today. Memorial footprints exist in the case of the great Avatars: for Jesus in a chapel erected on the Via Appia Antica near Porta San Sebastian in Rome, and in the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives in XXIIII Jerusalem; for Muhammad within the holy treasure from the Topkapi - 30 Museum in Istanbul; for Buddha on his lying giant statue in Gal Vihara, Polonnaruva (Sri Lanka); and those documented for Avalokiteshwara (ch. XI). The "Virgin's footprint" imprinted in a large flat stone is held in great honor a few kilometers from Mur-y-Castell, towards Llanfair. Sacred footprints are still venerated in southern India.

Any inspection inside the crypt was forbidden since 1981.

NOTES

[1] Kalhana, II, 385; also the quote from K.Z. Islam, *Kashmir: A Paradise on Earth*, in *Holiday* (Holiday Publications Limited, Bangladesh), May 17, 2002. [2] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, pp.172-173. [3] Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, p.212. [4] *Catechism...*, p.117. [5] Knight, Lomas, p.2. [6] Notovitch, *The Unknown...*, pp.75-79. [7] *Ibid.*, pp.142-146;151-152. [8] Ernest Renan, *La chaire d'hébreu au Collège de France*, Paris 1863, pp.200-201, o.t. [9] Nicholas Notovitch, *La vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ*, Paul Ollendorf, Paris 1894. [10] Notovitch, *The Unknown...* pp.155-218. [11] *Ibid.* IV.1-5,8, pp.163-165. [12] Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, Chatto & Windus, London 1974, p.325. [13] F. Max-Müller, *The Alleged Sojourn of Christ in India*, in *The Nineteenth Century* (London) pp.515-521 (1894, October). [14] *Ibid.*, p.516. [15] J. Archibald Douglas, *The Chief Lama of Himis on the Alleged 'Unknown Life of Christ,'* in *The Nineteenth Century* (London), pp.667-677 (1896, April). [16] Max-Müller, *The Alleged...*, p.516. [17] *Ibid.*, p.517. [18] Per Beskow, *Strange Tales about Jesus: A Survey of Unfamiliar Gospels*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1985, p.62. [19] Sir Francis Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent*, J. Murray, London 1937, 2nd revised edition, p.212. [20] Notovitch, *To the Publishers*, quoted by Prophet, p.107. [21] Johan Forsström, *The King of the Jews*, Sri Lanka and East West Books, Hangö, Finland 1987, p.187. [22] Sir Aurel Stein, *On Central-Asian Tracks*, Phoenix Edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1974, pp.187-188. [23] Deardorff, *Jesus...*, pp.103-125. [24] Iqbal Malhotra, *Did Jesus live in India?* in *The Indian Express*, copyright 2001; also Miguel Serrano, *The Serpent of Paradise*, (transl. by Frank MacShane) Rider & Co., London 1963, pp.142-143. [25] Ash-Sheikh as-Said-us-Sadiq Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn-i-Ali ibn-i-Hussain ibn-i-Musa ibn-i-Baibuyah al-Qummi, *Kamal-ud-Din wa Tmam-un-Nimat fi Asbat-ul-Ghaibat wa Kshf-ul-Hairet* (transl. by Maulawi Ata-ur Rahman), Buhar Library, Calcutta, p.358. [26] I-Tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion Practised in India and the Malaya Archipelago* (transl. by J. Takakusu), Clarendon, Oxford 1896, pp.223-224. [27] H. T. Prinsep, *Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia*, W.H. Allen, London 1852, pp.13-14; quoted by Ghulam Ahmad, p.120. [28] Mir Izzatullah, *Travels in Central Asia*, Foreign Departmental Press, Calcutta 1872. [29] Faqir Muhammad ben Qazi Muhammad Raza, *Jami-ut-Tawarikh*, 1838, vol. II, p.81. [30] Maithan Chapan Gupta, *Bharta Bharati*, 68, Madras 1901. [31] Mrs. Hervey, *The Adventures of a Lady in Tartary, China & Kashmir*, Hope & Co., London 1854, vol. II, p.136. [32] Janet Bock, *The Jesus Mystery: Of Lost Years and Unknown Travels*, Aura Books, Los Angeles 1980. [33] Abhedananda, pp.119-121,164-166. [34] *Ibid.*, pp.VII-XXVII. [35] Ashutosh Ghosh, *Swami*

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XXIV. ON REINCARNATION

“Behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahweh”
Malachi 4:5

“«But I say unto you that Elias (Elijah) has already come»... Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist”
Matthew 17:12-13; cf. Mark 9:11-13

The concept of reincarnation (or, to a certain extent, transmigration of the soul, metempsychosis⁶⁴⁹, metensomatosis, palingenesis⁶⁵⁰) has existed in the history of spirituality since early times. According to the concept, after the death of the body (human, animal, plant) the spirit gets detached from the latter so that, after some time, it can enter back in the earthly life, through a newborn individual.

Throughout its bodiless existence the soul does not evolve. The *Bible* is in perfect agreement with that idea: “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol⁶⁵¹, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). One of the ancient Chinese Christian manuscripts read that any beneficial action is possible only while we are in this world: “You may purify your mind and body, and worship and adore (God) with reverence or observe His disciplinary rules with strictness, violating none of them whilst you are here in this world, but not in that world” [1]. Goethe believed that “the Godhead is at work in the living, not in the dead” [2].

Jung wrote: “It is most important that you should be born; you ought to come into this world otherwise you cannot realize the self, and the purpose of this world has been missed⁶⁵²” [3].

Hence, to evolve, reincarnation of the spirit is a necessity. Evolution means purification until the soul reaches perfection—a goal that coincides with the merging into the Universal Spirit (Yoga, the union of Atman with

⁶⁴⁹ From *meta* (after, over, Gr.) and *psyche* (soul, Gr.), *empsychos* (animated, living, Gr.).

⁶⁵⁰ From *pálin* (again, Gr.) and *génésis* (birth, Gr.). This word appears in Matthew 19:28, translated-interpreted as “regeneration.”

⁶⁵¹ *Sheol* (the dwelling of the dead; ch. XVI).

⁶⁵² See below the “spiritual suicide.”

Brahman). Only then “the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) is a metaphor depicting the return—after the vicissitudes of many events (lives)—of the son (Self) to the father (God) from whom he originated. “I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16:28).

The concept of reincarnation seemed to have been acknowledged within almost the entire ancient world with very few exceptions (Epicureans being the most notable). It was familiar within the Egyptians [4], in Hinduism and Buddhism, in Hellas (in the 6th century BC with the Pythagoreans⁶⁵³ and Orphics), with the Celts (Druids), the early Germanic peoples as well as some Native American (e.g. the Inuit, Hurons, Tlingit, Carrier tribes) and Australian aboriginal tribes; its traces can also be found in Indonesia and Oceania. In Peru the dead were placed in a fetal position, ready to be born again [5]. Such positions were known with many prehistoric populations and were encountered in the 19th century among African tribes in the shape of *sherbro*, *mende* and *kissi* (Guinea, Sierra Leone) [6].

For the sages of ancient India, the ultimate goal of human life was to attain liberation (*moksha*, *mukti* or *apavarga*, Sanskr.) from the bonds (*bandha*, Sanskr.) of the chain of transmigrations (*samsara*; literally: endless movement, Sanskr.). This goal is attained through Yoga in Hinduism, or Nirvana (eternal peace) in Buddhism.

XXV

The propelling force of reincarnation is the *karma*. Karma signified^{7, 8} originally the sacrifice performed properly, allowing for an actual and/or future reward (*punya*, Sanskr.). The meaning was later spread out to any action and volitional act (*karman*, Sanskr.; *kamma*, Pali) thus instituted in a *capital of existences*, which determined the next incarnation into a higher level for the good deeds or into a miserable life (inferior caste or even animal, plant etc.) as a penalty for the previous negative deeds. “People inherit of their acts,” used to say the Buddha, while the *Upanishads* wrote: “Verily, one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action” [7]. “He, however, who has not understanding, who is unmindful and ever impure, reaches not the goal, but goes on to reincarnation (*samsara*)” [8].

The early seers (*rishi*, Sanskr.) have put into practice the knowledge of karma. The Yogis of the ancient Sankhya system scrutinized karma to deep levels. According to their mystical vision a plasmatic fluid pulsates within the subtle body and embedded in the plasma there are the seeds of all past actions. In each lifetime, certain of these karmic seeds are released into the subtle system as coded impulsions and tendencies affecting the present actions. Karma is one of the primary tattwas called *niyati tattwa*, a spiritual-

⁶⁵³ See *infra*.

magnetic energy form. Each karma generates a vibration, a distinct oscillation of force, a *vasana* or subliminal inclination that continues to vibrate in the system [9].

The karmic concept is known within Judaism, too: “we are suffering like this through our own faults” (2 Maccabees 7:18). “Thou renderest to every man according to his work” (Psalms 62:12; cf. Job 34:11; Proverbs 24:12; Jeremiah 17:10; 32:19). As for Christianity, the New Testament offers many examples out of which we shall quote only the words of Jesus: “Verily, verily, I say unto you: Every one that practices sin is the bondmen of sin” (John 8:34). “The Son of man... will render to each according to his doings” (Matthew 16:27; cf. Romans 2:6; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 9:6; Galatians 6:7; Revelation 2:23; 20:12). “Each shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:5). Last but not least, comes the epistle of James (3:6) talking about “the wheel of life” (Romanian translation by Cornilescu), some other times called “the course of nature” (*King James Version*, Darby etc.; ch. XIX A).

Paul Brunton wrote about that topic: “Although karma is really a scientific law it was appropriated by the Asiatic religions as well as by the pagan faiths of primitive Europe. But for an apparent accident of history it might also have been an item among the tenets of modern Christianity, for it lived in Christian faith for five hundred years after Jesus. Then a group of men, the Council of Constantinople, banished it from the Christian teaching, not because it offended the ethics of Jesus (what could be nobler than its perfect harmony with the Master’s own statement: Whatsoever ye sow that ye shall also reap⁶⁵⁴?) nor because it offended the integrity of Christianity (where there is a clearer advocacy of it than in the writings of the great Patriarch Origen⁶⁵⁵?) but because it offended their own petty personal prejudices. Thus a little band of foolish men sitting near the shores of the Sea of Marmara so late as five hundred and fifty years after the appearance of Jesus, have been permitted to banish a Christian tenet which did not suit their own cast of temperament. Thus they have robbed the West of a religious belief which, in the turn of history’s wheel, must now be restored to the modern world for the scientific truth that it really is” [11].

Eliade showed that “in the light of the law of karma, sufferings not only find a meaning but also acquire a positive value. The sufferings of one’s present life are not only deserved...they are also welcome, for it is only in this way that it is possible to absorb and liquidate part of the karmic debt that

⁶⁵⁴ Actually the text came from Galatians 6:7: “Whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap.”

⁶⁵⁵ We think that it concerns the end of *De Principiis (Peri archon)*, I, in Jerome’s translation given in the *Epistle to Avitus* [10].

burdens the individual and determines the cycle of his future existences” [12].

However we have to precise that the karmic law concerns only *jivatman*, the embodied soul, and not at all *Atman*, which is beyond life and death by its own nature.

Jung estimated that the concept of reincarnation is very expanded and showed that “the idea of rebirth is inseparable from that of karma... When I die, my deeds will follow along with me” [13]. Thus, he referred to his concern of psychiatry, writing that “the more one sees of human fate and the more one examines its secret springs of action, the more one is impressed by the strength of unconscious motives and by the limitations of free choice” [14], pointing thus at the karma influence. He also was aware “that we carry the whole living past” with us [15].

However, the doctrine of karma is no less hermetical than the Indian one, in the first case its equivalent being *Adrasteia*, a goddess commissioned with rendering justice. She appeared as in the Greek pantheon *Nemesis* and *Hecate*.
XXIV
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That the spiritual entity representing the real individual is released in the end of the necessity to recover a physical form only when the regenerative process is developed enough for allowing it to give up a future association with the body. The tendency that brings a soul into the body has to be depleted before the soul would be able to give up the body. Svedenborg believed, too, that regeneration must begin while the soul is still within the body, to be continued until an advanced stage, before the soul would be able to give up the body.

The individual karma bears the mark of the collective karma. Parental acts fall on their children. “I, Yahweh thy God... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and to the fourth [generation] of them” (Exodus 20:5; cf. 34:7; Leviticus 26:39; Numbers 14:18,33; Deuteronomy 5:9 etc.), thus leading to the togetherness of the human race. The love for our fellow man (ch. XIX C), so many times preached by Jesus originates here. “A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another” (John 13:34). “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself “ (Matthew 19:19; cf. 22:39) was His second command (after the love for God). And also: “Bear one another’s burdens, and fulfill the law of the Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

The ancient Chinese Christian texts were using such concept, too. Thus, as far as wicked people were concerned, “they will get re-born into this world, but they will have to live among the low and the poor in «out of the way places»” [16].

Islam also referred to karma: “Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah’s Messenger said: «When carried to his grave a dead person... relatives and his property return back while his deeds remain with him»” [17]. It is a strange

assertion since Muslims ruled out⁶⁵⁶ any idea of reincarnation that, however, it was widespread in the early days of Islam. Thus, *hulul* (embodiment, Arab.) meant the periodic reincarnation of the perfect man or deity, while *rijat* was the return of an Imam or spiritual leader after death, and *tanasukh* designated the reincarnation of the souls of ordinary people. Muhammad stated clearly: “I have been charged to fulfill my mission since the best of the ages of Adam, from age to age down to the age in which I now am” [18]. Also the immortal al-Khidr is believed to have been either the prophet Eliyah or Uways al-Qarani of Yemen regarded as the patron of the Gnostics (‘*arifun*) [19].

The doctrine of karma and reincarnation appeared also with Plato who wrote about the souls: “Now, when they should be implanted in bodies by necessity... then in the first place it would be necessary that they should all have in them one and the same faculty of sensation, arising out of irresistible impressions; in the second place, they must have love, in which pleasure and pain mingle; also fear and anger, and the feelings which are akin or opposite to them; if they conquered these they would live righteously⁶⁵⁷, and if they were conquered by them, unrighteously⁶⁵⁸” [20], “and if... he did not desist from evil, he would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature which he had acquired” [21]. “He that grows better shall make his way to the better souls and he that has grown worse to the worsen, and so, in life, and throughout the series of deaths... This doom of heaven be sure neither thyself nor any other that has fallen on ill ways shall ever claim to have escaped” [22].

The idea of reincarnation appears even with Augustine of Hippo who held Plato in highest esteem: “The message of Plato, the purest and most luminous of all philosophy, has at last scattered the darkness of error, and now shines forth mainly in Plotinus, a Platonist so like his master that one would think they lived together, or rather—since so long a period of time separates them—that Plato was born again in Plotinus” [23].

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Blomfeld and Franklin Egerton report that clear allusions about souls transmigration existed as early as the *Rig-Veda* [24]. The *Puranas* claim that there are eight million and four hundred thousand forms of life, starting from germs and amoebae to fishes, plants, insects, reptiles, birds, animals and finally to human beings and *Devas* (deities, Sanskr.). According to their own free will, the human beings are

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. *Qur'an* 4.171.

⁶⁵⁷ According to Dharma.

⁶⁵⁸ In an adharmic way.

ceaselessly reborn amongst these life forms. The Spirit will not take a human form until millions of existences within the inferior species have passed. Had the individual attained this privileged state without knowing his Self, he would have been perpetrated a *spiritual suicide* and assumed the risk of being born again in a lower form (as animal, vegetable) during his future reincarnation. Chapter XIX B dealt with some specific biological and genetic human features in contrast to other developed animal species. Jean Herbert explained that the “Realization of God, that is liberation” is possible only in a human state or, in other words, man is the highest being of the creation for only he accedes to liberation [25]. The *Aitareya Aranyaka* stated: “Atman is developed only in man” [26]. The *Bible* also distinguished between man and other creatures since God has decided: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26), while for other beings things were settled down in a different way: “Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind” (1:24). An unexpected divergent position occurs in Ecclesiastes: “man hath no pre-eminence above the beast” (3:19).

The classical philosophic and literary epic *Shrimad Devi Bhagavatam*, regarded as “the ripe fruit of the Vedic tree of Scriptures,” contains the teachings on reincarnation told in the form of stories. One of them talks about King Chitraketu who was grieving his son’s death and then, the sage Narada summoned the child’s spirit and made it go back into the body. The spirit thus revealed the laws of Karma: after the fruit of his material deeds, the Self, the living being, transgresses from one body to another, sometimes amongst the Devas, sometimes even amongst the lower species of animals and plants, sometimes amongst the humans. Another story told about the Maharaja (Great King, Sanskr.) Bharata who left his throne and joined the ashram Pulaha, near the river Gandaki, at the foot of the Himalayas. Here he grew fond of a little baby deer and started to neglect his meditation. In this way he went astray from the path of spiritual Realization, which is the real goal of human life. Before his death the only thing that mattered to him was the fate of the deer so that he incarnated as a deer. The author of the *Acharangasutra* declared: “Because of my carelessness I am born in many births, experience many feelings” [27]. Also the *Bhagavad-Gita* wrote: “Thinking of whatever state [of being] he at the end gives up his body, to that being does he attain... being ever absorbed in the thought thereof” [28]. According to that Scripture, at the end of the reincarnations, each one becomes what he venerated [29]. The *Shrimad Bhagavatam* explained that influenced by *Maya* (Illusion, Sanskr.) all the beings wandered through the universe using the body vehicle provided by the physical energy resulting from actions [30]. The Spirit creates its body through its personal wishes; God’s external energy only wraps it into the material clothing that will enable the fulfilling of these

wishes [31]. Originally, the living being was a pure spiritual entity, but its desire to taste the pleasures of the material world made it fall from that higher position. As a consequence of the gradual evolution, the being will acquire a human shape, having thus the chance of liberating itself from successive transmigrations. If it misses this chance, it will re-enter the succession of births and deaths under different forms of life [32]. Influenced by the gunas, the Spirit gets into different bodies: Devas, humans, dogs, trees etc. Influenced by Maya, the illusive energy of the Supreme Being, the living soul will identify itself with one or another of these bodies. When we get rid of Maya and start to understand that the Spirit belongs to no form of the material world, it means that we have reached the spiritual level. Once the living being has regained its spiritual shape and original awareness, it will immediately surrender to the Supreme Form that is God [33]. “Some go into a womb for the embodiment of a corporeal being. Others go into a stationary thing⁶⁵⁹, according to their deeds⁶⁶⁰, according to their knowledge” [34].

As said by the *Upanishads* “the fine body” and “the moral subtle” will survive even after the world’s absorption into Brahman and will affect the repetition of the personal existence until unity with Brahman is attained (“Atman is Brahman”) and the illusion of multiple existence is transcended through the acquisition of knowledge. It is easy to remark the parallel between the completion of the cosmic cycle through absorption into the Creator and the end of the reincarnation chain through absorption of the individual Self (Atman) into the Supreme Self, the Absolute (Brahman).

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna expounded the reincarnation topic to Arjuna. “Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these lords of men, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we all shall cease to be. As the soul passes in this body through childhood, youth and age, even so is its taking on of another body” [35]. About the Self (Atman) it was said: “He is never born, nor does he die at any time, nor having [once] come to be will be again cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain” [36]. And Krishna goes on: “The dweller in the body of every one... is eternal and can never be slain” [37]. “Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new” [38]. “For to the one that is born death is certain and certain is birth for the one that has died” [39]. “He who knows thus in its true nature My divine birth and works, is not born again, when he leaves his body but comes to Me” [40]. “From the realm of Brahman downwards, all worlds are subject to return to

⁶⁵⁹ Plant.

⁶⁶⁰ Karma.

rebirth, but on reaching Me... there is no return to birth again” [41]. “This Unmanifested⁶⁶¹ is called the Imperishable. Him that speak of as the Supreme Status. Those who attain to Him return not” [42]. Otherwise, he who dies in ignorance will be born again in a lower form of existence [43].

Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri explains: “Every individual has this spiritual potential for wisdom and for knowledge of the supreme. What a teacher does is to communicate or transmit energy vibrations, which awaken our spiritual potential. It is only through the awakening or actualization of our own spiritual energy⁶⁶² that we can know the truth. The light of truth cannot be transferred. It has to flower within an individual. A teacher can only help us to activate our own spiritual potential” [44].

During the initiation period, the spiritual master (Guru) accepts to wholly take onto himself the disciple’s karma. If the latter entirely complies with the teaching given by the Guru, he comes to be released from the chain of reincarnations. That is why the disciple worships his Guru, by taking the following mantra [45]: “Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devo Maheshwara, Gurur sakshat (or Gurureva) Parabrahma. Tasmai Shri Guruve Namaha” (Sanskrit): “Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is the Supreme Lord (Shiva); verily, Guru is Parabrahman (the Unique God). To the Divine Guru I bow.”

Ramana Maharishi explained: “What is a Master? He is the Self after all... God, Guru, and the Self are identical... The Master is God... There is no difference between human-guru and God-guru... The Master is within” [46]. The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* [47] also read: “Guru is God and God is Guru” (*Gur Parmesur eko jaan*). With a similar view, the Sufis insist on the fact that nothing is possible apart from divine aid (*tawfiq*, Arab.) [48], seeing here the help of the Sufi master (*sheikh*, Arab.).

However, according to the Indian concept, God sends the Guru, and no man finds the Guru unless Lord Himself has drawn that person to the Guru He has sent. The Sikh Scripture read: “*Pooraa Satgur taa milai joo nadar kreyee*” (One meets the Perfect True Guru only when Lord bestows His Glance of Grace on him) [49]. Actually, the Gospels wrote precisely the same thing: “No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him” (John 6:44; cf. 6:65). In other words, when a soul becomes ready, God sends him help as a True Guru; one must first earn God’s grace (*prasada*, Sanskrit.) to meet a True Guru. Indeed, despite all efforts of the disciple, “when the Kundalini is sleeping it will be aroused by the grace of the Guru” [50].

“At the root of dhyana is the form of the Guru. At the root of the puja are

⁶⁶¹ Parabrahman.

⁶⁶² The Kundalini.

the Feet of the Guru. At the root of the mantra is the word of the Guru. And at the root of all liberation is the grace of the Guru” [51].

“Says Nanak: «the inner Guru has revealed God to me, and now I see that there is no such thing as birth or death»” [52]. “O, mother, without the Guru, Divine knowledge is not obtained. Man without knowledge wanders around, weeping and crying out in various ways. But the Lord of the World does not meet them. The body is feed up with emotional attachment and sorrow, and so it is lured into countless reincarnations” [53]. “Those who turn their backs on the Lord will be separated from Him and consigned to reincarnation over and over again” (*Vemukh hoye Ram te lagan janam vijog*) [54].

In his *Reflections on Gurbani*, T. Singh quoted from that sacred book: “Through the association with the saintly souls, the Kundalini is awakened, and the Lord of supreme bliss is enjoyed (*Kundilinisurhji sat sangat parmanand guru mukh machaa*)” [55], The exegete explained: “The Kundalini can be awakened or released either by Yoga or by the system of the spiritual Masters... The path of spiritual Masters includes joining the *Saadh Sangat* or the company of the saintly souls... In Saadh Sangat, one attains self-control and mental purity necessary for awakening the Kundalini. This path is proclaimed by the spiritual Masters to be more practical, simple and effective for this age of Kali Yuga (Dark Age). The state of awakened Kundalini is called by many names in Gurbani including opening of the «tenth gate»... In summary, the awakening of the Kundalini is essentially the same as: Opening of *Dasam Dwar*⁶⁶³ or the tenth gate; Self Realization; Realization of the Spirit; Hearing of *Anhad Naad*; Hearing of five sounds or *panch shabad*; Attainment of eternal bliss; Being established in the «true house»; Liberation from the three modes of Maya; Jivanmukta or liberated man; Complete absorption in devotion; Attainment of the fourth state or *Chautha Pad* etc.” [56].

Pythagoras believed in reincarnation and claimed for the recollection of his earlier lives [57]. Empedocles said on the former that “when he stretched out with all his mind he easily saw each and every thing in ten or twenty human generations” [58].

In his turn, Empedocles considered that the soul “must wander... from the abodes of the blessed, being born throughout the time in all manners of mortal forms, changing one toilsome path of life for another” [59] before the final purification that would enable it to merge into the Divine from which it had been separated. He acknowledges “This way I myself am now going, a fugitive and wanderer from the gods, who trusted in mad strife” [60]. He introduced himself: “For already have I once been a boy, and a girl, and a bush, and a fish that jumps from the sea as it swims” [61].

⁶⁶³ *Dasham Dwar* (Sanskrit.) indicates the Brahmarandhra, the Sahasrara.

Plato [62] reported that Socrates used to say: “We may admit that each soul wears out a number of bodies.” When Crito asks: “In what way shall we bury you, Socrates?” Socrates answers referring to his immortal Self (*real me*): “In any way you like, but first, you must catch *me*, the real me...you are burying my body only” [63].

Plato himself wrote on reincarnation. In *Phaedo* and other of his *Dialogues* [64], the orphic concept was turned into a philosophical doctrine of immortality through a sequence of human or animal bodies. Since the law of contraries governs nature, we have to assume that life will follow death just as death follows life. Being impossible for life to be born out of nothingness, everything would end up by absorption into death if the beings that we see dying do not have to return to life.

For Proclus man is a soul who makes use of a body.

Little before Christ, the great poet Ovid wrote about reincarnation in his *Metamorphoses* [65].

The idea of metempsychosis would develop with the Gnostics and their followers (ch. XX C4). Hence, within the Christian Church only the Gnostics and the Manichaeans received the teaching on soul transmigration. The Gnostics considered the human soul as a “spark” or element of the cosmic (universal) soul. The individual soul was compelled to successively incarnate in a new body as long as it knew nothing of its true nature (the Self; ch. XIX C) and had no desire to return at its origin [66]. The *Apocryphon of John* advocates the idea of redemption. All souls would partake of salvation, including those that have been led astray by their counterfeit spirit—the latter only after having been instructed by the other souls who possess the Spirit of life. Only sacrilegious blasphemy against the Spirit entails eternal punishment [67]. This reminds of the gospels: “whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming [one]” (Matthew 12:32; cf. Mark 3: 29; Luke 12:10). The counterfeit spirit is antagonistic to the Living (Enlightened) Spirit, which is the only granting salvation. The Gnostic Theodotus wrote: “What liberates is the knowledge of who we were, what we become, where we where, wherein we have been thrown; whereto we speed, wherefore we redeemed, what birth is, and what rebirth” [68]. Speaking of Naassenes, Hippolytus told that “they have these varied changes (of the soul) set down in the gospel inscribed «according to the Egyptians»” [69]. The Cathari of Provence admitted that reincarnation might be possible also in the animal realm, to which the Manichaean doctrine adds the domain of plants [70]. As for the radical Cathari, they believed that the souls “transmigrate from body to body until they reach the knowledge of truth” (*vadunt incorporando se de corpore in corpore, dum veniunt ad cognoscendum veritatem*, Lat.); after such numerous transmigrations from

body to body, the soul may recover its heavenly body and spirit. The Patarini of Bosnia believed that the souls “will return to heaven after making penitence in one or more bodies,” according to a manuscript of the 14th century extant in the fund Nanni of Bibliotheca Marciana, Venice [71].

The doctrine of reincarnation was found also with Plotinus (c. AD 205 - c.270), in his *Ennead*⁶⁶⁴: “In all the changing doom of life, it is not the man, the inner soul that grieves and laments but merely the phantasm of the man, the outer man, playing his part on the boards of the world” [72]. According to Émile Bréhier in his *Philosophie de Plotin*, the thinking of this Neoplatonist was marked by the philosophy of the *Upanishads*.

Contrary to the opinion generally embraced by Christians, the *Bible* was no exception among the ancient writings that acknowledged reincarnation. Although there were attempts to eradicate the idea from the *Bible*, its traces are still present both in the Old and New Testament.

Jean Herbert noticed that the idea of reincarnation “never was rejected by the Catholic Church, although prominent catholic authors were against it” [73].

The Old Testament included clear records of the belief in the rebirth of the soul (*neshamah*, Hebr.) into a new body. We shall give here just two examples.

The first one deals with the *Book of Jonah*, which Weinreb considers an allusion to the punitive reincarnation in the form of the cattle, like in the story of Nimrod [74].

The second refers to the end of the Old Testament, which is concluded through the prophecy of Eliyah’s reincarnation: “Behold, I send unto you Eliyah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahweh. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children...” (Malachi 4:5,6).

Meyers Encyclopedia shows: “Jews at the time of Christ held the general belief of the transmigration of the soul⁶⁶⁵. The Talmudists assumed that God had created just a finite number of Jewish souls which would return as long as there were Jews, with occasional punitive reincarnations in an animal form, but on the Last Judgment Day all would be purified and reborn in the body of the righteous in the Promised Land” [75].

In his *Nishmath Hayem*, Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657) wrote: “The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is a firm and infallible dogma accepted by the whole assemblage of our church with one accord... We are therefore in duty bound to accept this dogma with acclamation... as the truth

⁶⁶⁴ *The Nine* (Gr.).

⁶⁶⁵ *Gilgul* (Hebr.), from *galgal* (wheel, Hebr.), *gilgel* (to roll, Hebr.), sending to the cycle of reincarnations.

of it has been incontestably demonstrated by the *Zohar* and all the books of the Kabbalists.” S. Ansky (real name: Solomon Judah Rappaport, 1863-1920), author of *The Dybbuk*, believed that through many transmigrations, the human soul is drawn by pain and grief to the source of its being, the Exalted Throne above [76].

In the New Testament there were evident references to reincarnation but they have been either deliberately overlooked or incorrectly interpreted. The belief in reincarnation was generally admitted in the primitive Christian communities. The situation lasted until the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (II) held in 553 on the instigation of Emperor Justinian (soon after the death of Empress Theodora) when reincarnation was declared to be a heresy and was completely excluded from the Christian doctrine [77]. The council—where the pope was forbidden to attend—decided on anathematizing the writing of Origen regarding reincarnation (pre-existence of the souls, for instance). In fact, the controversy around Origen’s works started about 250. Methodius of Olympus, Epiphanius of Salamis, Theophilus, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Jerome were among his ancient critics, thus facilitating the task of Justinian who composed a tract proposing nine anathemas against Origen’s chief work, *De Principiis (Peri archon)*. The Council of 553 condemned eventually Origen’s writings charging them with fifteen anathemas [78].

On the same topic, Joe Fisher wrote: “Since AD 553, when the «monstrous restoration» of rebirth was denounced by Emperor Justinian, the faithful have been taught to believe in eternal life while ignoring immortality’s spiritual sister, reincarnation... The bishops implicitly condemned the rebirth doctrine twice more at the councils of 1274 and 1439⁶⁶⁶ with thunderous assertions about heaven, purgatory and hell. Yet the ancient belief that many lives are as essential to our spiritual evolution as a succession of years are to our physical development wouldn’t be stamped out” [79].

James Morgan Pryse [80] reviewed the abundant passages in the New Testament that implicitly referred to reincarnation.

Several centuries after the prophecy of Eliyah’s return on this earth, the Angel of God announced to Zacharias the birth of a son (John the Baptist) who “shall go before him in [the] Spirit and power of Eliyah, to turn hearts of fathers to children... “ (Luke 1:17). We would be surprised to find here the same idea of Malachi 4:5-6 ending the Old Testament by making a reference to Eliyah’s return on this Earth! Hence, Eliyah reincarnated as John, was the bridge across centuries to join the two parts of the Scripture. The first element

⁶⁶⁶ The 14th Ecumenical Council of Lyon (II) and the 17th Ecumenical Council of Florence, respectively.

of angel's news—announcing John the Baptist as a divine messenger (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27)—existed, too, within the final book of the Old Testament: “I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1; cf. Isaiah 40:3). The time elapsed between the two texts was about 870 years!

Jesus said the same thing: “All the prophets and Law have prophesied unto John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come” (Matthew 11:13-14). Only that the Christian theology *refused to receive it!* And Jesus went on: “He that has ears to hear, let him hear” (11:15). However, the Christian clergy *turned a deaf ear to those words and did their best to make others deaf to the words of Jesus!*

It seemed that Christ wanted to be better understood; that is why, for a second time, in the same gospel, when asked by His disciples: “Why then say the scribes that Elias⁶⁶⁷ must first come?... He answering said to them: «... Elias has already come»... Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:10-13). The same account appeared in the Gospel according to Mark (9:11-13).

Both incarnations of the Disciple Principle had hairy garments (2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4), however woven of light that manifested itself both with Eliyah (taken up into the heaven in a chariot of fire; 2 Kings 2:11), and John (“He was the burning and shining lamp, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light”—John 5:35). Likewise were Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21; ch. XIX C and XXIII B).

Also, the liturgy celebrated for Eliyah called him forerunner, he who prepare the way (cf. Malachi 3:1), like John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:17,76; John 1:23).

Since John (1:21) denied at being Eliyah, the Christian opponents to reincarnation take this opportunity for rejecting the hypothesis above. However, the explanation is quite simple: either John had in view the *biological distinction* between he and his former incarnation (Eliyah), or just *ignored* that he was indeed the latter. Anyway, accepting that opportunist viewpoint would mean doubting the word of Jesus that proclaimed Eliyah's next incarnation as John the Baptist.

“He asked them saying: «Who do the crowds say that I am?». But they answering said: «John the Baptist; but others, Elias; and others, that one of the old prophets has risen again»” (Luke 9:18-19; Matthew 16:13-14; Mark 8:27-28). The point to make is that Jesus said *nothing against any* of the disciples' hypothesis that implied reincarnation.

Another important evidence in the gospels was about the healing of a man born blind. “His disciples asked him, saying: «Behold, who sinned, this [man]

⁶⁶⁷ Eliyah.

or his parents, that he should be born blind?»” (John 9:2). This question undoubtedly showed that the disciples acknowledged reincarnation; otherwise, how could a *man born blind* have suffered for *his own sins*? When had he had the time to sin if he was already born blind? *Only before his birth, that was in a previous life!* Here, not only the reincarnation but also the principle of karma is found as a punishment for the trespassing in a past life.

While being “in Hades” (Luke 16:23), a rich man asked Abraham that poor Lazarus should be sent to the earth: “I beseech thee then, father, that thou wouldest send him to the house of my father” (16:27), and Abraham answering said that the relatives of Lazarus “not even if one rise from among [the] dead will they be persuaded” (16:31). Here the rich man referred to reincarnation and not at all at resurrection, which was supposed to take place the Doomsday.

The epistles read: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51).

Last but not least, the *Gospel of Peter* inferred that John the Baptist believed in reincarnation [81].

These examples, we believe, speak for themselves. Otherwise, the resurrection of the dead that has everywhere been spoken of means nothing else other than reincarnation. Jesus Himself is to incarnate for His second coming announced by the New Testament, to say nothing about His former incarnation as Melchisedek whom is also said to return at the end of the world (ch. XIX B).

The enemies of reincarnation doctrine make vain efforts to fight against it by using various biblical texts. We shall review their arguments by opposing our counter-arguments.

1) At the death of his son, David said: “But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Samuel 12:23). Indeed, David had no power to resuscitate his son. Anyway the quoted text does not attack the idea of reincarnation since David’s son would have not return under his former shape; moreover, the event would have taken place only after the death of David himself.

2) The same book wrote: “We must needs die; and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; and God has not taken away his life” (14:14). Here the text evidently refers to the splitting of the body material components ensuing death, hence the hopeless reconstitution of the body. The fragment thus denies the childish opinion about the resurrection of the bones, their clothing with flesh. However, the Spirit continues its afterdeath existence, otherwise the adage: “God has not taken away his life” concerning precisely the Spirit life would have been devoid of signification.

3) “The eye of him that hath seen me shall behold me no [more]; thine

eyes are upon me, and I am not. The cloud consumeth and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to Sheol shall not come up. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him again” (Job 7:8-10). As the quotation above, that text referred to the decay of the physical body. It is understandable that when the Spirit is reincarnated, “he shall return no more to his house,” namely his old (rotten) body, and he shall not recognize his new physical feature.

4) “They were flesh, a breath that passeth away and cometh not again” (Psalms 78:39). The text has surely a physical connotation (flesh), such as the “breath” here means not at all the disappearance of the Spirit but only the arrest of physical respiration.

5) The address of Jesus to the good malefactor: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43) signifies that the latter got his Self Realization, meaning that by Christ’s grace the paradise of the Sahasrara was opened for him.

6) The text of the second epistle to the Corinthians (5:1,4,8) has in view the separation of the Spirit from the physical body. The building from God, eternal in the heavens is destined only for those who are released from the bonds of reincarnation.

7) All the New Testament references to the Judgment (Matthew 25:31-34,41,46; Mark 8:38; 10:40; Luke 13:27-29; John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11-15 etc.) invoked to deny reincarnation, actually concerned the end of the Great Cycle (ch. XIX A).

8) Paul’s personal view: “As it is the portion of men once to die, and after this judgment” (Hebrews 9:27) is based on a fact depending not on the human but the divine will: “thus the Christ also, having once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear to those that look for him the second time without sin for salvation” (9:28). Within the chain of reincarnation, the karmic law acted after every death like the judgment for the former life behavior.

Jesus Himself has often referred to *liberation*, and we should understand by this the deliverance from the karmic law, from the captivity of the endless chain of reincarnations. “He has sent me to preach to captives deliverance” (Luke 4:18), that is the release from reincarnations captivity. John gathered valuable statements on this topic within the same chapter 8: “If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be really free” (8:36). “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (8:32). Because, “if any one shall keep my word, he shall never see death” (8:51).

The *Qur’an* also referred to reincarnation. “You were dead and he gave you life, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life, then unto Him you shall be returned” (2.26; cf. 2.151). “You were longing for death before you met it; now you have seen it, while you were beholding” (3.137).

“God is He that created you, then He provided for you, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life” (30.39). “We have decreed among you Death; We shall not be outstripped; that We may exchange the likes of you, and make you to grow again in a fashion you know not” (56.60-61). “Thou bringest forth the living from the dead, and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living” (3.26). “You shall surely ride stage after stage” (84.19).

The Sufi master al-Junayd used to say that “man have to return to the state where he was before being” [82], while the Persian mystic Aziz Nasafi stated: “At the death of every living being the spirit returns to the world of spirits and the body to the world of bodies. But only the bodies change in the process” [83].

In his turn, the eminent poet Sufi, Jalal ad-Din Rumi wrote in his poem *The Wakil of the Prince of Bukhara*: “I died as a mineral and arose a plant/ I died as an animal and arose a man/ Why then should I fear to become less by dying?/ Again when I suffer dissolution as an angel,/ I shall become what passes the conception of man!/ Let me then become non-existent, for non-existence/ Sings to me in organ tones: «To Him shall we return»” [84]. The last verse sends us to the *Qur’an*: “We belong to God, and to Him we return” (*inna li-Llahi wa inna ilahyi raji’un*, Arab.; 2.151) (ch. XXV). Likewise, Rumi followed his great teacher Shams of Tabriz who wrote: “There were times when we were in the form of grass. We came into the form of plants, then birds, then beasts. Ultimately we came into the glorious form of man. We have reached the pinnacle of creation. O soul, let us now make the most of this opportunity” [85]. Rumi expressed the human strive to reintegrate God depicted as the infinite ocean of love (ch. XIX A) with which he identifies himself: “The ocean that I am is drowned in its own waves. Strange limitless ocean that I am!” [86].

A similar text might be found in the Sikh Scripture: “For countless incarnations, you were a worm and an insect;/ For countless incarnations, you were an elephant, a fish and a deer./ For countless incarnations, you were a bird and a snake./ For countless incarnations, you were yoked as an ox and a horse” [87].

While taking over and developing the reincarnation tenet existing with the ancient Jews, the Kabbalah enabled the Pythagorean metempsychosis to achieve a popular recognition [88]. In the words of Papus, according to metempsychosis “soul is immortal, but does not attain heavenly happiness until it has become perfect, and to accomplish this, it is often obliged to live within several bodies... All souls were created at the beginning of the world, and when all are perfected, the Messiah will come” [89]. The *Zohar* wrote: “the souls have to reintegrate in the absolute substance they originated from. But to that they have to develop their perfection whose seed is within them.

If they will not comply to that during a lifetime, they will have to start a second, a third and more, until the fulfilling of the conditions enabling their reunion with God” [90]. That concept was adopted later on by the Hasidic doctrine (ch. XXV C). The *Zohar* referred also to the karmic concept, when talking on the “man who is perpetually in the state of making reparation for past misdeeds, making good the defects of his former life on earth” [91]. After the Kabbalistic *Safed* School (flourishing in the 16th century), “the souls of Israel who went out of Egypt and received the *Torah* at Mount Sinai numbered 600,000. According to the laws of transmigration and the distribution of the sparks into which the soul disintegrates, these 600,000 primordial souls are present in every generation of Israel” [92]. “The exile of the body in outward history has its parallel in the exile of the soul in its migrations from embodiment to embodiment, from one form of being to another. The doctrine of metempsychosis as the exile of the soul acquired unprecedented popularity among the Jewish masses of the generations following the Lurianic period” [93].

Eckhart’s thinking was focused on the idea that the soul desires God. Having come from Him, it must return to Him who is its end as well as its beginning, as it was shown by the Rhenish Master in his sermon *In Johannem*: “the nature of the creature wants to love God more than itself... The origin and the end... are identical” [94].

The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), burnt alive as a heretic by the Catholic Church, maintained that soul was not a body, being able to inhabit one body or another, and also to migrate from one body to another [95].

Voltaire wrote during Enlightenment: “The idea of metempsychosis is perhaps the oldest dogma of the known universe.” He asserted that the doctrine of “reincarnation was neither absurd nor useless,” and added: “After all, it is no more surprising to be born twice that it is to be born once” [96].

Here we would give an excerpt from an interview taken to Mary Ann South (born in 1817, and who became Mrs. Atwood later on), recorded by Elizabeth de Steiger: “Alchemy is Divine Chemistry, and the transmutation of life; and therefore that which is the medium between soul and body is changed and the soul freed from the chains of corporeality. The body is left as a mere husk. These people put on their bodies as mere coats... In the Philosophical Dissolution, body, soul and spirit are separate; the body lies without breath; the other two are united to it as by a thread and this continues until the refixation takes place” [97].

In a letter to George Whatley, Benjamin Franklin made the following deduction: since existing in this world, one may believe that one will exist forever under one form or another [98]. In his turn, the former American

president John Adams wrote to Jefferson: “In the History of the Rebellion of innumerable Hosts of Angels in Heaven against the Supreme Being, who after some thousands of Years of War conquered them and hurled them down to the Region of total darkness, where they suffered a part of the Punishment of their Crime, and then were mercifully released from Prison permitted to ascent to Earth and migrate into all sorts of Animals, Reptiles, Birds, Beasts and Men according to their Rank and Chara[c]ter, and even into Vegetables and Minerals, there to serve on probation. If they passed without reproach their Several gradations they were permitted to become Cows and Men. If as Men they behaved well... they were restored to their Original rank and Bliss in Heaven” [99].

Being not only a writer but also a well-informed scientist, Goethe stated: “I am certain that I have been here as I am now a thousand times before, and I hope to return a thousand times” (*Ich bin gewiss, wie Sie mich hier sehen, schon tausendmal dagewesen und hoffe wohl noch tausendmal wiederzukommen*, Germ.) [100]. As it was shown on another circumstances, the philosophy of the titan of Weimar was familiar with the Indian spirituality (*Sakuntala* was just one example among many).

According to Thomas Carlyle: “Death and Birth are the vesper and matin bells, that summon Mankind to sleep, and to rise refreshed for a new advancement” [101].

Lamartine asked himself: “Have we thus lived two or one thousand times? Is our memory only a shaded image brought back to life by the breath of God?” Balzac wrote: “Death is the post-house of the journey” and: “All human beings go through a previous life” [102], while Victor Hugo thought that “the body is only the journey of the soul. We change our attire in the grave and the sepulcher is the cloakroom of heaven.” Gustave Flaubert came to the following conclusion: “My present individual is the outcome of my disappeared individualities... Many things could be explained if we were able to know our true extraction.” Théophile Gautier (*Le roman de la momie, Le pied de la momie*) also admitted metempsychosis.

Emerson recorded in his diary that the soul comes from outside and enters the human body as though in a temporary residence, to go out again. It migrates unto other dwellings, since immortal. He also stated: “It is the secret of the world that all things subsist and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again... Nothing is dead; men feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries and there they stay looking out of the window, sound and well, in some strange new disguise” [103]. In his *Brahma*, Emerson wrote: “They know not well the subtle ways/ I keep and pass and turn again” [104].

In *Song of Myself*, Walt Whitman confessed: “I know I am deathless...

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers. There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them” [105].

In his turn, Leo Tolstoy thought: “As we live through thousands of dreams in our present life, so is our present life only one of many thousands of such lives which we enter from the other more real life... and then return after death. Our life is but one of the dreams of that more real life and so it is endlessly, until the very last one, the very real life, the life of God” [106].

A hero of Jack London declared: “I did not begin when I was born, nor when I was conceived. I have been growing, developing, through incalculable myriads of millenniums... All my previous selves have their voices, echoes, promptings, in me... Oh, incalculable times again shall I be born... There is no death. Life is spirit, and spirit cannot die. Only the flesh dies and passes” [107].

In Hermann Hesse’s words: “None of them died, they only changed, were always reborn, continually had a new face: only time stood between one face and another” [108].

In an interview Henry Ford declared: “I adopted the theory of reincarnation when I was twenty-six. Genius is experience. Some think to see that it is a gift or a talent, but it is a fruit of long experience in many lives” [109].

Richard Bach wrote: “We choose our next world through what we learn in this one... But you, you learned so much at one time that you didn’t have to go through a thousand lives to reach this one” [110].

The concept of reincarnation was also present in the works of many philosophers of the West displaying a large range of personal conviction: Fourier, Jean Reynaud, Pierre Leroux, Leibniz, Amiel, Maeterlinck, Henri Regnault [111], and even great personalities like McTaggart and Arthur Schopenhauer. Thus, the latter stated in his specific witty way: “Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him: It is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of nothing, and that his present birth is his first entrance into life” [112].

Carl Gustav Jung avowed: “I could well imagine that I might have lived in former centuries and there encountered questions I was not yet able to answer; that I had to be born again because I had not fulfilled the task that was given to me” [113].

The examples mentioned formerly are far from being isolated cases, since “reincarnation... is a belief held by an estimated 25 percent of Western Europeans” [114]. “According to the 1981 Gallup poll on religion in the United States, some 38 million Americans (23 percent) profess to be believers in reincarnation. A more recent Gallup poll of Canadian views on an afterlife

shows that nearly one-third of the population (29 percent) believe you are reborn into another life here on Earth after death” [115]. A 1989 Gallup poll established that 58 percent of the Americans either believe completely in rebirth or consider it a distinct possibility; [about] ten years later, the figure is rising at 72 percent [116].

Since times immemorial, human mind tried to answer three great questions that have always tormented the human mind: *Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I heading towards?* According to Raymond J. de Souza (Pontifical North American College, Rome, Italy), John Paul II declared in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason)*, in the chapter entitled *Know Thyself*, that “a cursory glance at ancient history shows clearly how in different parts of the world, with their different cultures, there arise at the same time the fundamental questions which pervade human life: *Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going?* ... These are the questions which we find in the sacred writings of Israel, as also in the *Veda* and the *Avesta*; we find them in the writings of Confucius and Lao-Tze, and in the preaching of Tirthankara and Buddha; they appear in the poetry of Homer and in the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles, as they do in the philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle. They are questions that have their common source in the quest for meaning, which has always compelled the human heart. In fact, the answer given to these questions decides the direction which people seek to give to their lives.” He also wrote: “With its enduring appeal to the search for truth, philosophy has the great responsibility of forming thought and culture; and now it must strive resolutely to recover its original vocation.” The pope asked: “How could it be an exercise of true freedom to refuse to be open to the very reality which enables our *self-realization*?” [117].

Indeed, each philosophical system has attempted to provide the correct answer to the three above-mentioned essential questions. But, there cannot be more than one truth. The TRUTH is unique.

Chapter XIX C gave the answer to the first question: *Who am I?*

Where do I come from? Every Spirit originates in God. Our Self is the manifestation of God Almighty (Sada-Shiva). We come from a previous life.

Where am I going? The destination depends only on our desire. God has left everyone the full freedom of choosing his own path: *downwards* or *upwards*. We may head towards another life or liberate ourselves from the chain of reincarnations. As it was shown above: missing the chance of this human existence that was granted to us after many other lower living forms means a spiritual suicide. To reach or not the final liberation from out of the endless chain of lives and deaths at the end of this life, that it stands in the desire of each of us. Liberation means *union with God*.

NOTES

- [1] Saeki, § 128, p.100; cf. §§ 125-127. [2] *Apud* Tompkins, Bird, p.113. [3] Jung, *The Psychology of Kundalini...*, Lecture 2, 19 October 1932, pp.28-29. [4] Herodotus, *Historiae* II.123. [5] Soulier, p.17; Simone et Roger Waisbard, *La vie splendide des momies péruviennes*, Julliard, Paris, appendix. [6] Aldo Tagliaferri, Arno Hammacher, *Fabulous Ancestors*, Ed. Il Polifilo, Milano 1974. [7] *The Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad* 3.2.13. [8] *The Katha Upanishad* 3.7. [9] *Karma: Special Section*, in *Hinduism Today*, February 1994. [10] *Apud* Origen, *De Principiis (Peri archon)*. [11] Brunton, *The Hidden...*, p.391. [12] Eliade, *The Myth...*, pp.98-99. [13] Jung, *Memories...*, pp.317,318. [14] Jung, *The Psychology of the Transference*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 16: *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, § 365, p.176. [15] *Ibid.*, *Psychology and Religion*, in *The Collected Works*, vol. 11: *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, § 56, p.35. [16] Saeki, § 211, p.105. [17] *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, *hadith* 521. [18] Quoted by Schuon, *Understanding...*, p.107. [19] Schuon, *Understanding...*, note76 to p.174. [20] Plato, *Timaeus* 42a-b, in *The Collected...*, p.1171. [21] *Ibid.*, 42b-c, p.1171. [22] *Ibid.*, *Laws* X, 904e-905a (transl. by Benjamin Jowett), p.1460. [23] Augustine, *Contra Academicos*. [24] *The Rig-Veda* 4.2.18; 4.26.1; 4.27.1; 10.16.3; also Basanta Kumar Chatterji, *The Vedas and Transmigration*, in *Kalyana Kalpataru* (Gorakhpur), p.688 (November, 1936). [25] Herbert, pp.106,107, o.t. [26] *Apud* T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Invitation to Indian Philosophy*, Arnold Heinemann, India 1974, p.392. [27] *The Acharangasutra* 2.55. [28] *The Bhagavad-Gita* 8.6. [29] *Ibid.*, 9.25. [30] *Srimad Bhagavatam* 6, ch. 31. [31] *Ibid.* 2.9.2. [32] *Ibid.* 4.29.4. [33] *Ibid.* 10.1.43. [34] *Katha Upanishad* 5.7. [35] *The Bhagavad-Gita* 2.12-13. [36] *Ibid.*, 2.20. [37] *Ibid.*, 2.30. [38] *Ibid.*, 2.22. [39] *Ibid.*, 2.27. [40] *Ibid.*, 4.9. [41] *Ibid.*, 8.16. [42] *Ibid.*, 8.21; also 12.7. [43] *Ibid.*, 14.15. [44] Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, *The Essence of Spiritual Philosophy*, Thorsons Publ. Group, UK 1990, p.145. [45] *Guru Stotram*, in *The Vishwasaratantra*. [46] Ramana, §§ 23, 31, and 363, pp.21,39,330. [47] Gurbani, *SGGS* 864. [48] Schuon, *Understanding...*, note 15 to p.137. [49] Gurbani, *SGGS* 424. [50] *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* III.7 (2). [51] *Kulamava Tantra*. [52] *SGGS*, Gauree, Mehl 1, p.152. [53] Gurbani, *SGGS* 532; cf. 1399. [54] *Ibid.* 135. [55] *Ibid.* 1402. [56] T. Singh, *Reflections on Gurbani*. [57] *Apud* Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic...*, pp.103-111. [58] Empedocles, B 129; *apud* Jonathan Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, Penguin Books, London 1987, p.83; Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, 30. [59] Empedocles, *Purifications (Katharmoi)*, B 115, in James Fieser (ed.), *Presocratic Fragments and Testimonials*, Internet Release, 1996, adapted after John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892. [60] Empedocles, B 115.1.12-13; *apud* Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic...*, p.498. [61] *Ibid.*,

Purifications, B 117 = 34 Z; *apud ibid.*, p.103. [62] Plato, *Phaedo* 87d, in *The Collected...*, p.70. [63] *Apud The Bhagavad-Gita*, note 1 to p.109, as a commentary to 2.25. [64] Plato, *Phaedo* 70c-d, 77c-d, 113a; *Meno* 81b; *Phaedrus* 248c sq.; *Republic* X, 617d sq.; *Timaeus* 41c sq., 90e sq.; *Laws* X, 903d sq., 904e, in *The Collected...*, pp.53,60-61,93,364,495 sq.,841 sq.,1170 sq.,1209 sq.,1459,1460. [65] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV, vv.158-164. [66] Baring, Cashford, pp.620-622. [67] NHL, *The Apocryphon of John* 26.15-22; 27.17-20,29. [68] Quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 78.2; *apud Pagels, The Gnostic...*, p.XIX, *Adam, Eve,...*, p.59; see also Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. 1958, p.45. [69] Hippolytus, *A.H.* 5.7. [70] Couliano, pp.178,222,223. [71] Ignaz von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. I: *Geschichte des gnostisch-manichäischen Sekten im früher Mittelalter*, 1890, reprint Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1968, pp.242-243. [72] Plotinus, *Ennead* 3.2.15. [73] Herbert, p.102, o.t. [74] Friedrich Weinreb, *Das Buch Jonah*, Origo Verlag, Zürich 1970, p.90. [75] *Meyers Grosses Konversations-Lexikon*, s.v. Seelewanderung, Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig und Wien 1907, 4th edition, vol. 18, p.263, o.t. [76] David Christie-Murray, *Reincarnation: Ancient Beliefs and modern Evidence*, Prism Press, 1988, pp.39-40. [77] Paul Liekens, *Reîncarnarea (Reincarnation)*, Ed. Roza Vânturilor, București 1992, p.14; Aurel Popescu-Bălcești, *Spirit și Suflet. Reîncarnarea (Spirit and Soul. Reincarnation)*, Ed. Larry Cart, București 1993, pp.11,40; Martin J. Sorge, *Reîncarnarea dintr-o nouă perspectivă (Reincarnation From a New Viewpoint)*, Ed. Vestala, București 1994, p.8. [78] Kevin Williams, *The Early Christian Doctrine of Reincarnation*. [79] Joe Fisher, *The Case for Reincarnation*, Collins Publications, 1984, pp.1-3. [80] James M. Pryse, *Reincarnation in the New Testament*, Kessinger Publishing Company, Kila. [81] *The Gospel of Peter* 6.14; R. Thiel, *Jesus Christus und die Wissenschaft*, Berlin 1938, p.309. [82] Sourdel, p.201, o.t. [83] *Apud E. Schrödinger, What is Life? And Other Scientific Essay*, Doubleday, Garden City, N. Y. 1956, p.219. [84] Rumi, *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, book III, story XVII, second edition, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, London 1898, p.159. [85] Darshan Singh, *The Secret of Secrets*, Sawan Kirpal Publications, Bowling Green, Va. 1979. [86] Quoted by Schuon, *Understanding...*, note 37 to p.36. [87] *SGGS*, Gauree Gwaarayree, Mehl 5, p.176. [88] Graves, Podro, p.519. [89] Papus, *The Qabalah*, p.53. [90] E.D. Walker, *Reincarnation. A Study of Forgotten Truth*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1888, p.212. [91] *The Zohar* II, 75a, vol. III, p.227. [92] Scholem, *On The Kabbalah...*, pp.64-65. [93] *Ibid.*, p.116. [94] Ancelet-Hustache's commentaries to Eckhart, *Sermon: In Johannem* I.43, in Ancelet-Hustache, p.59. [95] William Boultong, *Giordano Bruno, His Life, Thought and*

Martyrdom, Kegan Paul, London 1914, pp.163-164. [96] *Apud* Emil Block, *Wiederholt Erdenleben*, Stuttgart 1952, p.31, o.t. [97] *Apud* Scott, p.152. [98] *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, J. Sparks, Boston 1856, vol. X, p.174. [99] John Adams to Jefferson, Quincy Feb. [-March 3] 1814, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (ed. Lester J. Cappon), The Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London 1988, pp.427-428. [100] Johannes Falk, *Goethe aus näherem persönlichem Umgange dargestellt*, Morawe & Scheffelt Verlag, Berlin 1911, p.62, o.t. [101] Thomas Carlyle, *Sarfer Resartus. The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh*, AMS Press, New York 1974, ch. VII. [102] Honoré de Balzac, *Seraphita*, Books for Library Press, Arno, N. Y. 1970, pp.175,176. [103] *The Selected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (Brooks Atkinson editor), The Modern Library, New York 1950, p.445. [104] Quoted in S. Radhakrishnan's commentary to *The Bhagavad-Gita*, 2.19, note 2 to p.107. [105] Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, in *Leaves of Grass*, The Viking Press, Compass Books, New York 1965, pp.43,77. [106] Leo Tolstoy, *The Voice of Universal Love* (Moscow), no.40, p.634 (1908), o.t. [107] Jack London, *The Star Rover*, Macmillan Co., New York 1943, pp.241-242. [108] Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, Buccaneer, Cutchogue, N. Y. 1976, p.150. [109] Henry Ford, *San Francisco Examiner* (1928, August 26). [110] Richard Bach, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, Pan Books Ltd., London 1973, p.54. [111] Henri Regnault, *Tu revivras*, Paris 1926. [112] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Clarendon Press, Oxford; Oxford University Press, New York 2000, II, ch. 16. [113] Jung, *Memories...*, p.318. [114] *The World Religions* (Dr. Peter B. Clarke consulting editor), A Reader's Digest Book, Pleasantville, N. Y. 1993, pp.14-15. [115] Harpur, pp.73-74. [116] Tara Katir, in *Hinduism Today*, April 1998. [117] *L'Osservatore Romano* (in English), 14 October 1998; emphasis added.

XXV. UNION WITH GOD

The striving for unity is an intrinsic component of human nature. It is manifested both on a theological level (see *infra*) and with the actual researches of modern physics aiming at discovering a unifying theory for the known four types of fields. Actually, in every science there is a natural endeavor for unification, for rising human experience up to the highest degree of generalization.

Taking that wide striving to unite with God as a starting point, no one can deny today certain analogies existing between *Yoga*, *Hesychasm*, *Sufism* and *Hasidism* movement (to not forget *Gnosticism* lying at the origin of the latter three). The present chapter will substantiate the above assertion.

The *Absolute* man striving for, is linked with the Latin word *absolvere*, meaning “to loosen,” “to release,” which parallels the Sanskrit *moksha* (*mochao/mozhao*, Chin.; *mokusho*, Japan.) or *mukti* that comes from the root *much*, to release, to set free.

We should not be surprised by the similitude of Indian *Yoga* and Christian *Hesychasm*. Since the Sanskrit term of *Yoga* means *yoke* (see our Introduction and ch. XXIII A), the words of Jesus (Matthew 11:29-30) might be read: “Take my *Yoga* upon you, and learn from me... and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my *Yoga* is easy, and my burden is light.” Many enlightened scholars, like Frithjof Schuon, are not at all reticent while talking presently about “Westerners endowed with unusual aptitude for contemplation, who discover Asia, and then go on to rediscover Christianity with all it contains that is «Asiatic» and timeless” [1].

However, that spiritual confluence was not confined within the mentioned trends. Victor Mair showed that “there are so many correspondences between *Yoga* and *Taoism*—even in the smallest and oddest detail—throughout the history of their development that we might almost think of them as two variants of a single religious and philosophical system. Both conceive of conduits, tracts, channels, or arteries through which the vital breath, or energy, flows. They view the main channel as originating in the «root, or «tail», region of the body, then passing through the spinal column and flanked by two subsidiary channels... Both *Yoga* and *Taoism* maintain that there are certain points in the body where energy is held, or bound, and that there are supports that guide the vital breath... Practitioners of both disciplines are said to possess an outer radiance that reflects a refined inner essence... Both resort to the use of various... sacred syllables... as aids in meditation and for conveying secret knowledge.” Both acknowledge the existence of “wheels or fields” of this energy and at the top of the skull the “way to Brahman” (i.e. the *Brahmarandhra*, for *Yogis*) and “the Narrow

Way” (for Taoists) [2]. Professor Julia Ching infers that “«embryonic respiration»⁶⁶⁸ was an advanced stage of Taoist practice involving complex techniques... It also involves the quest for inner peace and the integration of the personality. Taoists speak of finding the «True Self» within and achieving greater harmony with the rhythm of the external cosmos. This «True Self» is often envisaged in terms of a new birth” [3].

Another notable analogy is that each of the Hesychasm, Sufism and Hasidism movements acknowledge the necessity of a spiritual guide, similar to the *guru* in Yoga. They are the *starets* (Slavonic); the *sheikh*, *murshid* (Arab.), *pir* (Persian), *khwaja* (Kashmiri); and the *tzaddiq*, also known as “miraculous rabbi,” or more properly *rabbenu* (Hebr.), respectively.

Embraced by the Japanese around AD 1200, *Zen* joined the pragmatism of Chinese Confucianism, spontaneity of Taoism, Buddhist and Indian mysticism all together within the meditative practice (*chaian*, Japan.; *chan*, Chin.; coming from *chan-na*, Chinese pronouncement of *dhyana*, meditation, Sanskr.). Here, as well as in Yoga, the experience of enlightenment (*satori*, Japan.) transcended every thought. *Zen* enlightenment does not oblige to seclusion but on the contrary it involves an active part within community. The *Rinzai* School prepared the disciple for mystical experience by essentially attempting at enlightenment through *koan* method directed towards cessation of thinking. The training takes many hours a day by XXV practicing *zazen*⁶⁶⁹ exercises including appropriate postures and particular 4 - 6 breathing techniques. Its goal consisted in acquiring a harmonious unity of mind and body in order to allow meditation and for opening the way to enlightenment. *Koan* meditation asked for a long time intensive concentration leading afterwards spontaneously to *satori*; however, that state was sometimes triggered by suddenly uttering of a word or sound, or even by hitting the backbone with a stick (see *sorcova*, ch. IV).

Another instance was the Neoconfucianist movement in China which incorporated elements drawn from Taoism and Buddhism, advocated concentration (*chik*, Chin.), contemplation (*kuan*, Chin.), mystical apprehension (*chih*, Chin.), mystical absorption (*ting*, Chin.) and, as ultimate goal—*samadhi* [4].

In spite of all these “classical” methods of Yoga requesting a very long, excruciating preparatory period of training (which is just an apprenticeship and whose final results are uncertain), one might acquire perfection living the daily life in a natural, spontaneous (*sahaj*, Sanskr.) way. It fully explains why Shri Mataji created *Sahaja Yoga* at this time of Resurrection. This brand new

⁶⁶⁸ See ch. II and XXII B.

⁶⁶⁹ *Zazen* (Japan.), *tso-ch'an*, *zuochan* (Chin.) designates the sitting in meditation.

method enables the practitioner to attain instantaneously the state of union with the Absolute. “My Yoga is easy, and my burden is light.” That had another striking analogy with a quotation in the *Bible*: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: . . . we shall all be changed, in an instant, in [the] twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Indeed, we shall *all* be changed, since it is high time for that, and through Sahaja Yoga *en-masse* Self Realization becomes possible.

In passing, let it be said that the anonymous *Meditations on the Tarot* advised: “Learn at first concentration without effort; transform work into play; make every yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light” [5].

A. IN CHRISTIANITY

“*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*”⁶⁷⁰
Psalms 42:2; cf. 63:1

Emerging within the Jewish population, Christianity included only Jewish-Christian communities until around the year 50. Through spreading it came to include more and more Christians of pagan origin (*Gentiles*)—many of who were Greeks and Romans—who confessed their belief in Jesus Christ without having passed through the Mosaic Law. In the 4th century the converted area included Asia Minor (Constantinople, Nicaea, Cappadocia, Armenia), the area of Alexandria and that of Carthage. As far as the zones of Italy (Rome, Milan), Greece, Gaul, Spain, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Damascus are concerned, they were among the places with a comparatively low number of Christians.

When the Roman Empire became under Constantine the Great a Christian empire, the city named after him became the New Rome. There were distinct dioceses in Rome and Constantinople. In the 4th and 5th century the so-called Church Fathers brought an important doctrinal contribution. Known as the Greek Fathers (Clement of Alexandria c.150-c.215, Origen c.185-254, Cyril of Jerusalem 315-386, Gregory Nazianzen 329-c.390, Basil of Caesarea c.330-379, Gregory of Nyssa 335-395, John Chrysostom c.350-407, Cyril of Alexandria 370-444, John of Damascus 675-780) and the Latin Fathers (Tertullian c.150-c.230, Hilary of Poitiers c.315-367, Augustine of Hippo 354-430), they had an unquestionable influence on the Eastern and Catholic Christianity respectively.

⁶⁷⁰ *Elohim hayyim* (Hebr.).

In 1054 it occurred the Great Schism that separated the Church into the Western (Roman Catholic) Christendom and the Eastern (Orthodox, or Greek) Christendom, but that event did nothing other than to re-enact a situation that had existed many centuries ago.

A new crisis that comprised Jews, Muslims and Christians appeared towards the middle of the first millennium. In 1453 the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire was destroyed. Instead of it, Russia became the leader of Eastern Christianity. In January 1492, the Christian Emperor of Spain conquered Granada, the last Islamic bastion in Europe. Two months later, as a consequence of the religious intolerance, all the Spanish Jews were expelled (or converted to Christian faith, by force). The same happened to the Spanish Muslims. The Roman Christianity was submerged by the consecutive waves of Reformation splitting Western Europe into Catholics and Protestants: Martin Luther (1483-1546), Zwingli (1484-1511), Calvin (1509-1564) etc.

The Catholic Church distinguished itself through its rather out of common intolerance. Its countless “holy” wars, crusades, massacres on a mass scale, monstrous tortures and executions amongst which was the burning alive of the “heretics”—all on behalf of the “faith”—were in obvious opposition to the teaching of forgiveness preached by Jesus. For this reason, certain concepts of great depth and understanding of the spiritual essence could only appear within the more tolerant climate of Greek Christianity. But these concepts remained almost unknown on the western side of the continent. They rely on the notion of grace as an uncreated energy imparted by the Holy Spirit (ch. XXII A) and the obtaining of the union between man and God. Finally they determined the emergence and the development of the Hesychasm.

The current known as the *Hesychasm* (from *isychia*, quietude, peace, repose, Gr.) appeared in the ascetic tradition of the Eastern Church and probably goes back to an ancient past. It is our firm belief that one cannot deny the Gnostic filiations of Hesychasm as some ancient authors expressed it. We would like to remind here the example of Evagrius who stated: “love keeps the door to true knowledge” [6], that is gnosis (*tés alétheios gnóseos agápe*, Gr.), explaining that “essential gnosis” is due to the enlightenment [7]. Saint Seraphim of Sarov prophesied a similar belief: “The fruit of prayer is the godlike love that is nothing else than the grace acquired inside the soul, but also an uncreated gift—«a divine energy»—that «continuously kindle the soul and unites it with God through the power of the Holy Spirit»” [8]. In his turn, Evdokimov believed that the goal of the mystic is achieved when “The soul expands and get accomplished as cosmic compassion” [9].

Following the example of the Gnostics, at the beginning the teaching was

orally conveyed from a master to his disciple. In a less explicit form, as elements of what will be later called “the prayer of the heart,” the Hesychasm was met for the first time in the 5th century with Diadochus of Photicaea (*Photike*, Epir), who advised the purification of the heart through the remembrance of Jesus [10], consisting in incessantly uttering “*Kýrie Iesouís*” (Lord Jesus, Gr.) [11]. John Climacus (579-649) and Hesychius of Sinai (8th century) developed that technique. A systematic doctrine will be given a written form no sooner than the beginning of the 11th century in the treatises attributed to the Abbot of the monastery St. Macras in Constantinople, Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), named thus to be distinguished of Gregory Nazianzen who was also called “the Theologian.” During the 13th century Hesychasm was dealt with in the writings of Nicephorus the Monk and in the beginning of the 14th century the trend was established on the Mount Athos by Gregory of Sinai.

Hesychasm was never well received in the West due to the ill-intentioned criticism [12]. In 1339, a Thomist admirer, the Calabrian monk Barlaam violently attacked Gregory Palamas and the Hesychasm practiced on the Mount Athos, strongly disapproving its ascetic exercises and experience of uncreated light (see *infra*). Although the Council of the Orthodox Church condemned Barlaam in 1341, other monks (Gregory Akindynos, Nicephoras Gregoras, Prochoros Cydones) supported him. Their example was followed by priest Martin Jugie, as well as Irénée Hausherr, S. Guichardan and J. Bois who considered Hesychasm (called Palamism, or Palamist doctrine) as a dangerous dissident innovation. It was until the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century that the Catholic theologians maintained their views against Hesychasm regarded as an oddity between unwonted and heresy. In 1920, Dom Villecourt claimed that the *Spiritual Homilies* ascribed to Macarius of Egypt and kept in a high esteem by all the Hesychasts are nothing but the *Asketikon* of the Messalians that was proscribed in 383 [13]. However, W. Jaeger [14] rejected that hypothesis. The Messalians were the Hebrew equivalents of the Euchetes (*euchetae*, enthusiasts), a Gnostic sect that flourished in Pamphylia and on whom Epiphanius [15] and Michael Psellus [16] wrote.

Schuon separated himself from the Western Church official attitude when stating: “What is more important from the standpoint of spiritual realization is the teaching of Hesychasm on the means of perfecting the natural participation of the human microcosm in the Divine Metacosm... and finally into union and identity” [17]. Archimandrite André Scrima showed in his turn: “Hesychasm appeared not only as one of the highest spiritual realization that was still living within Christianity, but also as an open door towards the religions universality” [18].

The Hesychasm was the object of the 1341 and 1351 synods, which warranted it and excommunicated its opponents. Then, the spokesman of the new trend who also gave life to the dogmatic debates was Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), a former monk at the Mount Athos who became later archbishop of Thessalonica.

Under the influence of the monks in Athos (especially of the Cutlumush monastery), the Hesychasm became widespread in Russia and the other Orthodox countries. Ever since the 14th century it has appeared in the Romanian Principalities (first mentioned by Nicodemus of Tismana) where it remained an unbroken presence. Its followers were known as *sichastres*, (hermits; coming from *Hesychasts*). Anton Dimitriu considered the Romanian Hesychasm to be the perpetuation of the ancestral ascetic traditions practiced by the Geto-Dacians in the lineage Pythagoras-Zalmoxis [19]. The movement met its climax in the 18th century, under the superior of Neamts monastery, Paisius Velitchkovsky (Great, Slav.), a native of Poltava. This former monk of Athos was the great reformer of Hesychasm both in Russia and Romania [20]. Centers of Hesychasm have been preserved in Romania until this day, one example being the assembly within the Antim church in Bucharest, known as “the Kindled Bush Group” or “the Antim Group” [21]. It took birth in 1943 under the influence of father John the Stranger (John Culighin, the former confessor of Metropolitan Nicholas of Rostov), who came from the famous Hesychast hermitage (founded as early as the 16th century) located in Optino, close to Kozelsk in the neighborhood of Moscow.

* * *

Vladimir Lossky devoted a thorough analysis to the mystical theology of the Eastern Church, and came to the conclusion that “there is no theology apart from experience; it is necessary to change, to become a new man... No one who does not follow the path of union with God can be a theologian” [22]. Lossky’s pertinent specifications might help to better understand the essence of Hesychasm.

In *Vita Plotinus*, Porphyry attributed Plotinus with “the grace of enlightenment” stating: “union with God is his purpose and target” [23]. Actually, Plotinus insisted on the fact that only contemplation unites the soul with God.

Getting enlightenment means regaining of our original natural state. In this respect, Origen believed that through contemplation (of God, *theoria*, Gr.), the spiritual being is able to retrieve its primordial state, of pure spirit since this being “has not lost the power of restoring itself to that condition of fervor in which it was at the beginning” [24]. Nonetheless, in his writings the

term “ecstasy” had a pejorative meaning, of alienation or loss of mental balance, obviously referring to the false saints sometimes suffering of mental disorders. Actually, most of the authors prefer instead the use of the Greek word *kenosis* meaning the self-emptying ecstasy of God, which would become crucial in both Kabbalah and Sufism.

Athanasius of Alexandria (293-373) regarded deification (*theósis*, Gr.) as a movement of love toward God, which all spirit beings are involved in [25], but he carefully omitted to mention contemplation that according to Origen and Clement had been the means of deification and salvation.

Even Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*: “thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee” [26].

Symeon the New Theologian said: “God unites himself only with gods” [27]. Hence, his writings were destined only for monks with an extensive experience in the contemplative life, thus attesting their adhesion to a secret and mysterious profundity, which ought not to be divulged. Keeping the secret was a common denominator to all esoteric knowledge (as seen before in Gnosticism; ch. XX C4). Lossky [28] developed this topic: “Among the variety of meanings that can be noticed in the Fathers of the first centuries, Tradition sometimes receives that of teaching kept secret, lest the mystery be profaned by the uninitiated [29]... They call to mind the *doctrina arcana* of the Gnostics, who also laid claim to a hidden apostolic tradition” [30]. Basil of Caesarea distinguished between *dóγμα* and *kérygma*: “the former is observed in silence; the latter is proclaimed to all the world” [31], and referred to a “teaching (*didaskalía*, Gr.) unpublished and secret, that our Fathers kept in silence, free from disquiet and curiosity, well knowing that in being silent one safeguards the sacred character of the mysteries” [32]. These “unwritten customs” (*tà ágrapha*), these “mysteries of the Church” (*ágrapha tes ekklesías mystéria*) were so numerous that one could not expound them in the course of a whole day [33]. In fact, very few have escaped the eradication performed by the official Church, like the *Syro-Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Cantabrigiensis D*. The theologian Théodore de Bèze found the latter during the 16th century in St. Irenaeus monastery of Lyons. He was so afraid by its *agrapha* that in 1581 when he sent the manuscript secretly to the Cambridge University, he added the remark: “better secret than made public” (*asservandum potius quam publicandum*, Lat.). And there it remained hidden for two centuries [34]. Even so great a scholar as Harnack has said: “It is best to leave all *agrapha* alone” [35]. However, the Church Fathers, from Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria to Jerome, have testified to the authenticity of that old version [36], and some of the fragments of *Codex Bezae (Cantabrigiensis D)* were confirmed by the *Italocodices*, and appeared in the New Testament edited in Paris by Stephanus (Robert Estienne) in 1551

[37].

A similar attitude was advocated by the *Hagioritic Tome* (see *infra*) [38], which—as shown by Lossky—reserved the knowledge (or, rather, the practice) of these mysteries only to the saints, i.e. those who live in perfect union with God, transformed by grace and belonging rather to the future life than to our earthly life [39]. The Athonite writing refers to “those who are worthy of it [and] receive grace and spiritual and supernatural strength,” adding: “That is not known except by God and by those who have had experience of His grace” [40].

Irenaeus of Lyons and Athanasius declared: “... God became... man that man... might become... God” [41] (ch. XIX B).

Bishop Diadochus of Photicaea—regarded by some historians as the founder (or at least the precursor) of the Byzantine Hesychasm—said about the likeness with the Divine: “It will be only through enlightenment that we will know the perfection of that (likeness)” [42], and referred to “a divine grace” which continually inflames the soul and unites it to God through the breeze of the Holy Spirit [43]. In his turn, Macarius of Egypt (c.300-390) reminded of “the fire of the grace kindled by the Holy Spirit in the heart of people” [44]. Irenaeus thought that a man is imperfect unless the Spirit is not united with the soul in man [45], thus alluding at the union between the Kundalini (reflection of the Holy Spirit) and Atman (Self, sometimes improperly called “soul”). St. Seraphim of Sarov called the heart “the altar of God” [46], the place where the heavenly Father meets the believer (the Self, projection of the divine Father).

“This is the grace which works in persons and through persons as though it were their own strength—the divine and uncreated power, *appropriated* by human persons in whom the union with God is brought to pass. For the Holy Spirit bestows divinity upon human persons called to realize in themselves this deifying union. This mystery will be revealed in the age to come but its first-fruits show themselves even now in those who give themselves to God” [47]. We find in that *likeness to the divinity*, the idea that the divine attributes are reflected in the qualities of the chakras when enlightened by the Holy Spirit as the Kundalini.

Evagrius Ponticus (c.345-399) was a fervent reader of Origen and a close friend of the three great Fathers of Cappadocia. During the establishment of the monasticism whose rules were formulated by Basil the Great, Evagrius was appointed by the latter as *lecturer*, ordained deacon by Gregory of Nyssa and traveled to Constantinople together with Gregory Nazianzen. However, it was precisely that former monk from the Black Sea (*Pontus Euxinus*, Lat.) region—who had left the monastic community since considered it devoid of love for philosophy and divine truth—who inaugurated within the ascetic

tradition, the writing of *Centuries*, called thus since they included a hundred *capitula* (chapters) or definitions. About his teachings, Lossky wrote: “At the summit of contemplation, in what Evagrius calls «pure prayer», the human *nous* sees the light of the Trinity which deifies it. In the act of contemplating God, the human intelligence comprehends itself; it sees itself in seeing Him. This perception is simultaneous: in knowing God, the *nous* knows itself as the place of God’s presence, as a receptacle for the light of the Trinity... In Evagrius this vision of the light of God in the deified *nous* is the summit, the final end which knows nothing transcending it” [48]. The writings of Evagrius, although castigated in 553 on the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II), remained however available by falsely attribution either to Basil or Nilus Sinaiticus, and were used by Maximus the Confessor (580-662) who gathered also the learning included in the *corpus* of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. Armstrong [49] remarks: “the leading Hesychast Evagrius... was proposing a sort of Christian Yoga.”

Gregory Nazianzen showed: “Some will be welcomed by the unspeakable light⁶⁷¹... which now shines upon them with greater brilliancy and purity and unites Itself wholly to the whole soul, in which solely and beyond all else I take it that the kingdom of heaven consists” [50]. Actually, states Lossky, “All creatures are called to perfect union with God which is accomplished in the «synergy»” [51]. The Pseudo-Areopagite believed that union with God implies “«co-operation», the agreement of wills and therefore liberty,... for it is in this synergy, in this co-operation of man with God, that the union is fulfilled” [52]. “For creatures, from the moment of their first condition, are separated from God; and their end and final fulfillment lies in union with Him or deification” [53]. John of Damascus wrote in his turn: “Man, however, being endowed with reason and free will, received the power of continuous union with God”; “Man then the Creator made... , giving him to share in His own divine grace, and bringing him thus into communion with Himself” [54].

Lossky upheld that the divine “will has created all things *by* the energies in order that created being may accede freely to union with God *in* the same energies”—in full agreement with Maximus the Confessor to whom deification (*theósis*, Gr.; *deificatio*, Lat.) was the crux of spirituality, too [55]. “The energies appear as the grace in which created beings are called to union with God. The entire universe is called to enter... into the eternal Kingdom of God” [56]. The creative role of the *Adi Shakti* (the all-pervading energy of God) is acknowledged also as follows: “It is through His energies, which penetrate everything that exists, that God creates and operates” [57]. That divine energy exists in every creature: “It is in creatures—beings created from nothing by the divine will...—that the infinite and eternal energies abide”

⁶⁷¹ *Ellampsis* (divine enlightenment, Gr.).

[58].

As far as the distinction between the inaccessible *ousia* (essence, Gr.) and its natural proceedings, *energeiai*, or revealing works were concerned, the Byzantine theologians regarded Basil of Caesarea as an authoritative personality. He explained that by stressing on the energy (*operations, glory* etc.), “we say that we know our God from His energies⁶⁷²... His energies come down to us” [59]. He pointed out that there was no gift granted to a creature that should not have the Holy Spirit in it [60].

John Damascene made the same distinction between *ousia* and the divine virtues or energies (designated by him as *kinesis*, movement, or *exalma Theou*, impulse from God, Gr.) [61].

Gregory Palamas [62] wrote: “The divine and deifying illumination and grace is not the essence but the energy of God.” However, “God wholly reveals himself in his energies” [63].

Lossky described the working of that energy⁶⁷³: “Man is united to God as he adapts himself to the fullness of the being which opens up in the depths⁶⁷⁴ of his very person. In the ceaseless struggle of the way of ascent, the way of co-operation with the divine will, created nature is more and more transformed by grace until the final deification which will be fully revealed in the Kingdom of God... The faith... cannot remain blind in the persons who come to union with God. The Holy Spirit becomes in them the very principle of a consciousness which opens up ever more and more in the discernment of the divine realities” [64]. The author follows: “In Eastern theology,... the divine ideas present themselves under the dynamic aspect of forces⁶⁷⁵, wills and creative words⁶⁷⁶... The unshakable foundation of a world created out of nothingness consists in the fulfillment which is the end of its becoming. Now, He who fulfils, and who bestows plenitude upon all created being is the Holy Spirit” [65]. In his turn, Evdokimov wrote: “God «comes forth» through his energies where he is fully present. The «energy» is not a «part» of God, it is revealed God” [66].

As a *genuine* saint, Seraphim of Sarov was aware that the acquisition of the Holy Spirit is the essence and goal of life [67], thus echoing Cyril of

⁶⁷² The translator used the term “operations” instead of the more appropriate term of “energies.”

⁶⁷³ The Kundalini.

⁶⁷⁴ The subtle body.

⁶⁷⁵ The Adi Shakti, manifested as the Kundalini.

⁶⁷⁶ Mantras.

Alexandria who explained the union with God through the intervention of the Holy Spirit [68].

A question arises here: whether the union with God remains only a lifetime premise and cannot occur until after the Last Judgment, in the “coming age” (as it was asserted by Christian dogma)?

In the fifth century, Diadochus insisted that this deification was not delayed until the next world but could be experienced consciously here below [69]. God told Symeon the New Theologian during one of his visions: “Behold, I have created you, as you see, and I shall make you God” [70]. Therefore, Symeon also talks about “the entering into eternal life, being fulfilled here and now, before death and the resurrection, in the saints who live in uninterrupted communion with God” [71]. Lossky imparted the following message to his contemporary fellows: “Today the Spirit dwells among us and makes Himself more clearly known... But the very Person of the Holy Spirit who reveals these truths to us and who renders them inwardly luminous, manifest, almost tangible to us, nevertheless remains Himself undisclosed and hidden, concealed by the deity which He reveals to us, by the gift which He imparts” [72]. This is what really happened because the Great Avatar is Maha Maya (Great Illusion, Sanskr.). We shall not insist on that topic, which was analyzed in chapter XIX D.

Gregory Palamas explains: “This experience of the divine is given to each according to his capacity, and may be greater or less according to the worthiness of him who experiences it” [73]. But Macarius of Egypt stated that, nevertheless, “few are those who experienced that” [74]. In his turn, Lossky acknowledged that although “those who are worthy attain to the vision of «the Kingdom of God come with power»⁶⁷⁷ even in this life, a vision such as the three apostles saw on Mount Tabor... few, even of the great saints, reach this state in their earthly life” [75]. Indeed, we had already reported about the scarcity of the Realized souls during the ancient times (ch. XIX D; also IV—the case of Nachiketās). The situation was the same for the western Christianity. In the 6th century, Barsanuphius of Gaza acknowledged that Christianity included only three perfect individuals: one in Rome, other in Corinth, and the third in Jerusalem [76]. The Sikh Scripture made no exception, when writing: “O, servant Nanak, amongst millions there is hardly any mortal who attains the Lord’s meditation” (*Jan Nanak kotan mai kou bhajan Ram ko pave*) [77]. “Rare is the one amongst millions, who enshrine the Lord in his Mind, O, Nanak” (*Kotan mai Nanak kou narain jih cheet*) [78].

⁶⁷⁷ Mark 9:1.

Hesychast practice was also known as “the method of the inner prayer” (or “prayer of the heart”), which is recited countless as the Buddhist monks are XXV doing with the “Om mani padme hum” formula during the *nienfo* (Chin.) or -3 *nembutsu* (Japan.) practice (ch. XV D), likewise the Muslim while -2 performing their specific *dhikr* (ch. XXV B).

Hesychast repetitive prayer enters apparently in a flagrant contradiction with the commandment of the gospel: “when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as those who are of the nations” (Matthew 6:7). In reality, Jesus disqualified just the practice of unauthorized persons (who have not got their Self Realization) to whom the recitation of any mantra is a vain effort (see below Ramana’s commentaries). On the other side the New Testament advocated: “Pray unceasingly” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

In the following we shall see that all the stages and methods of the classical Yoga method might be encountered in Hesychasm, too. The Sanskrit names of the corresponding Yoga members (*anga*, Sanskr.) described in Patanjali’s classical treatise are given in parentheses:

- purifying techniques (*yama*—moral conduct; and *niyama*—self-control);
- rhythming and controlling of breath-vital force (*pranayama*);
- body postures (*asanas*);
- invocations (*mantras*);
- detachment from the sense objects, interiorization of the mind (*pratyahara*);
- concentration (*dharana*);
- meditation (*dhyana*);
- thoughtless awareness (*nirvichara samadhi*).

The three last *angas* make up *samyama*.

No reason could explain why the *asanas* have proliferated so much over time. Actually, only a handful is described in the ancient texts. Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra* mentioned *no poses at all!* Indeed, *asana* literally means *seat*. The 14th century *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the ultimate classical Hatha Yoga manual by Swami Svatanmarana listed just 15 *asanas* (most of them variations of the cross-legged sitting position) for which the text gave very sketchy instructions. The 17th century *Gherandha Samhita* described only 32. Iyengar’s modern Hatha Yoga treatise [79] depicts more than 200 [80]. By XXV no means can Yoga be reduced at simply performing *asanas* and *pranayama* -9 since its aim is entering the *samadhi* state as stated from the very beginning of the classical *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali (ch. XIX C), which is mostly concerned with the science of meditation.

Ramana, the great sage of Arunachala, a perfect Yogi himself, pointed at a series of specific aspects of the Yoga practice, aiming at rejecting the false ideas about the respective angas. “Posture really means location and steadfastness in the Self. It is internal. The others refer to external positions.” According to that concept, one might use to meditation the natural posture “*sukha asana* (easy posture or the half-Buddha positions) i.e. just sitting cross-legged in half-lotus... Meditation is not prohibited in the absence of *asanas*, or prescribed times, or any accessories of the kind.” As for “controlling the breath” it is useful only “if you practice it by yourself without other help, then the mind is controlled⁶⁷⁸. Otherwise, the mind comes under control spontaneously in the presence of a superior power. Such is the greatness of association with the wise (*satsangha*)... *Vichara*⁶⁷⁹ surpasses *pranayama*... Reality can be reached by holding on to *prana* or intellect. *Hatha Yoga* is the former: *Vichara* is the latter... Is *Hatha Yoga* necessary? It is one of the aids—not that it is always necessary... The realization is the result of the Master’s grace⁶⁸⁰ more than teachings, lectures, meditations, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and essential... Yoga aims at union of the individual with the universal, the Reality... Therefore the Path of Knowledge⁶⁸¹ tries to find out how *viyoga* (separation) came about. The separation is from the Reality only... For a realized being the Self alone is the Reality... the Self transcends the intellect—the latter must itself vanish to reach the Self... Yoga... is itself an aid to Self Realization, the goal of all... Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables (*mantras*) picked up casually? No. He must be competent and initiated” [81]. As for achieving the superior state of consciousness *nirvikalpa samadhi* (doubtless awareness, Sanskr.), Ramana explained: “if the eyes are closed, it is *nirvikalpa*; if open, it is... *savikalpa*. The ever-present state is the natural state, *sahaja*” [82]. Other sages wrote, too, on the state of Sahaja: “Complete merger of the mind with the Brahman is the highest bliss. This is also known as «Sahaj Samadhi». Men with such experience are rare indeed” [83]. Guru Nanak urged: “By the gentle path of Sahaj attain God, purest of the pure.” “In the calm of sahaj’s cave you can discover the True One, sayeth Nanak, the True One loves the truthful” [84]. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* explained: “When the mind is still, united with

⁶⁷⁸ *Chitta-vritti-nirodha* (Sansk.).

⁶⁷⁹ Introspection (Sansk.).

⁶⁸⁰ Ch. XXIV.

⁶⁸¹ *Gyana, jnana* (Sansk.).

the Atman, and prana moves through the Sushumna, then Amaroli, Vayoli and Sahajoli can be reached” [85]. “The primordial state (Sahaja) and Turiya⁶⁸², all these are synonymous” [86].

Dr. G. Wunderle showed that the Hesychasm “implies the bodily side, certain techniques to control breathing, the position of the body during the prayer, the prayer rhythm, but this external discipline has only one purpose: to make concentration easier” [87].

Jung came to the conclusion that “The religious exercises of Ignatius of Loyola’s are Christian counterparts to the Indian meditations” [88]. Ignatius “treated mysticism almost as science and technique rather than art, handled it in *almost Yoga fashion*, brought under the control of the human will, disciplined... goes so far as to prescribe what the outward bearing of the exercitant should be during meditation, how to breathe in and out, what his body posture should be. He prescribed the specific time when the exercitant should look upon a certain object or when he should contemplate fresh flowers in order to call in mind «the blossoming of the spiritual life». All such exercises to be performed under the direction of a «Master of the Exercises», a sort of Christian *guru* who adapts the schedule to the particular aptitudes of the exercitant” [89]. Ignatius also guided Teresa of Avila to focus on specific objects as various attributes of the Almighty [90], as in some specific Yoga techniques.

Being considered the culmination of Christian ascetic life, *apátheia* (Gr.) was the state when man was no longer subject to passions (released from suffering, which constituted the essence of the Buddha teachings). The goal of *apátheia* is the pure love⁶⁸³ (*agápe*, Gr.), crowning the asceticism.

The Pseudo-Areopagite advised Timothy to have secret contemplations (*mystiká theámata*, Gr.): “It is necessary to renounce both sense and all working of reason, everything which may be known by the senses or the understanding, both that which is and all that is not, in order to be able to attain... to union with Him who transcends all being and all knowledge... a purification (*kátharsis*, Gr.) is necessary... One must then scale the most sublime heights of sanctity leaving behind one all the divine luminaries, all the heavenly sounds and words” [91]. The gospels otherwise also included the urge to what Yogis call meditation. For instance, Jesus advised His disciples: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed [is] ready, but the flesh weak” (Matthew 26:41; cf. 24:42; Mark 13:33; 14:38; Luke 22:40,46).

Plotinus said that, to come near the One, you have “to turn yourself away

⁶⁸² Ch. XIX C.

⁶⁸³ I.e. divine love, different from selfish, earthly love (*éros*, Gr.).

from the seen objects that are the last of all, until you have reached the first objects, you must be free of any vice since you are heading towards the Good; you must turn yourself to the inside principle and become one instead of many, if you are to contemplate the principle and the One” [92].

About the nature of the One, Plotinus said: “Its qualities are in the being whereby it becomes multiple” [93]. This, of course refers to the multitude of the chakra qualities—the divine attributes that are manifested in man. The same was the meaning of “distinctions” (*diakriseis*, Gr.) that were called “virtues,” and “powers” (*dynámeis*, Gr.) by Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, while Lossky regarded them as proceedings (*próodoi*, Gr.) of God beyond His nature, and manifestations (*ekphánseis*, Gr.) of Him imparted to the created beings. Likewise, the beings are raised up to divinity through enlightenment, meaning that they transcended these manifestations [94]. This is the pinnacle through which God makes Himself known.

Maximus the Confessor believed that “through the Holy Spirit we completely enter unto His divine attributes nature as far as it is possible for the human spirit” [95], and “only he who tries even partially to discover the truth of Its attributes deserves the name of theologian of all the individuals” [96].

When referring to his inward illuminations (*innere Erleuchtungen*, Germ.), Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) wrote: “When both thy intellect and will are quiet and passive to the expression of the eternal Word and Spirit, and when thy soul is winged above that which is temporal, the outward senses and the imagination being locked up by the holy abstraction, *then* the eternal Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking will be revealed in thee. Blessed art thou therefore if thou canst stand still from self-thinking and self-willing, and canst stop the wheel of the imagination and senses” [97].

As for the technical aspect of the prayer (mantra), the entire attention should be focused on the words of the short prayer matched to breathing: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God” (during inhalation), “have mercy upon me, a sinner” (during exhalation). Apparently, the formula was inspired by the words addressed to Jesus by the publican: “God, have compassion on me, the sinner” (Luke 18:13), or by Barthimaeus, the blind man: “O, Son of David, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:48). Schuon [98] explains that its repetition “is the essential element of every monastic rule of prayer” and can “replace the XXV Office and all other prayers, since its value is universal.” He also stressed on – 1 the fact that its power consists in uttering the Holy Name. “Not only God is invoked by this Name—He is already present in the invocation. This can certainly be said of every Name of God” [99].

Further on, Schuon shows: “In Greek and Slav monasteries a knotted chaplet forms part of the investiture of the Small Schema and the Great

Schema: it is conferred ritually on the monk or the nun. The Superior takes the chaplet in his left hand and says: «Take, brother N., the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, to pray to Jesus without ceasing, for you must constantly have the Name of the Lord Jesus in the mind, in the heart and on the lips, saying: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*» [100]. One could suppose that this habit of repeatedly uttering the holy name comes from the first epistle to the Corinthians intended to “all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2).

With the same effect one can utter *Kýrie Iesoús* (Lord Jesus, Gr.; a mantra used by Diadochus; see *supra*) or *Kýrie eleison* (the latter being an abridgement of the Prayer of Jesus in the Eastern Church). A significant story is the *Golden Legend* where a knight who became monk repeated incessantly the words *Ave Maria* and turned into a highly realized soul (saint). We should remind also the double invocation *Jesu Maria* (ch. XV D; XIX C), which is also in use among Christians [101].

The mantra used by the Hesychasts had been already known by the Church Fathers of whom Diadochus, and John Chrysostom who advised the monk: “when one eats and sleeps, when sitting or serving the others, or does any other thing, let him say ceaselessly: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me... Insist ceaselessly upon the Name of our Lord Jesus, allowing your heart to drink the Lord and the Lord to drink your heart such as the two become one!” [102]. And Basil wrote on the names that we give to God, that they disclose His energies descending in ourselves [103], which is in a complete agreement with the Indian doctrine on mantras.

It seems that as early as Nicephorus the Solitary, the repetition of the holy name was associated to the respiratory rhythm: “Therefore, sitting in your quiet cell and collecting your thoughts, let your mind follow the path of your breath and force it to descend with your breath into your heart. And, once there, your mind having joined with the soul, is filled with an unspeakable pleasure and joy⁶⁸⁴.” Isaac the Syrian said: “The Christian mystic, on the other hand, entering into himself, and enclosing himself in the «inner chamber» of his heart, finds there, deeper... the beginning of an ascent” [104]. That is, obviously, the influence of the gospel that reads: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret” (Matthew 6:6). John Climacus also wrote: “The uttering of the name of Jesus should be clearly attached to your breathing⁶⁸⁵, and then

⁶⁸⁴ Bliss (*ananda*, Sanskr.).

⁶⁸⁵ Uttering of the mantra according to the respiratory rhythm.

you shall feel the benefits of quietude⁶⁸⁶ [105], which was also stated by Hesychius Sinaiticus. Thus, it was recommended for the chin to be held against the chest and shoulders bowed, the look and spirit to be focused on the navel or heart. In later variants, the breathing was slower: the prayer was uttered after inhaling, while the air was being held in the lungs, then, while breathing out, the spirit was pushed to the heart where it became one with the soul. Under the influence of Gnosticism that lies at the root of Hesychasm, some mystical writers were talking about *nous* or *pneuma*. With obviously the same purpose, the Sikh Scripture wrote: “I turned my breath inwards, and pierced through the six chakras of the body, and my awareness was centered on the Primal Void of the Absolute Lord” (*Ultat pawan chakra khat bhede surti sun anuraagee*) [106], the Void being, as we know, organized around the navel (ch. II). We shall also notice that the text mentions only six chakras, either taking into account just those above the sacrum (abode of the Kundalini), or ignoring the seventh one since it was not awakened in the Virata at that time (ch. XIX C).

The breathing rhythm is naturally associated to the other vital rhythm: the heart beats. That is why the Taoists admit that the heart governs breathing. At the right place (ch. XIX C) it was explained that the Anahatha chakra controls both the heart and the lungs, i.e. both rhythms. The exhalation symbolizes the creation of the Universe (*kalpa*, Sanskr.) while the inhalation—its re-absorption or dissolution (*pralaya*, Sanskr.). Breathing represents the assimilation of the power of the Air element (symbol of the Spirit, the breath) and hence the acquiring of the spiritual power. The rhythmical breathing in Yoga aims at making the spiritual concentration easier. The equivalent used in the Chinese T’ien-tai Buddhism and in the Muslim *dhikr* is also based on counting of the breaths. A close symbol can be found with the Sufi Persian poet Saadi of Shiraz [107], in the year 1258 (ch. XXV B). Essentially, *dhikr* implies the uttering and repeating of the divine names (similar to the Hindu *mantras* that are repeated during the *japa* practice; ch. XV D) while adopting specific positions of the body recalling the *asanas* used by the yogis. Eliade believes that a possible Indian influence on this practice should not be dismissed [108].

However, things are not as simply as that. The ancient Indian texts claim: “The highest stage is that in which Brahman is perceived in all things. The middle stage is that of meditation, the lower that of hymns and rosary. Still XXV lower is the stage of external worship” [109]. “Hence the man who wishes to - 1 0 renounce the world should worship only in his own heart and fear external - 1 1 forms of worship so that he may not live again” [110].

The ancient Chinese Christian texts disclosed that prayer is useless outside

⁶⁸⁶ *Isychia* (Gr.).

the meditative state, i.e. the connection to God: “You must wait for the manifestation of the One God Himself, and only then you can worship Him” [111].

Raphael Sanzio who was a great realized soul confessed to Leonardo da Vinci the “secret” of his work of genius: “I have noticed that when one paints one should think of nothing; everything then comes better” [112].

Meister Eckhart wrote: “The best and nobles way in which thou mayest come into this (mystic) life is by keeping silence and letting God work and speak. Where all the powers are withdrawn from their work and images, the more thou canst draw in all thy powers and forget the creature, the nearer are thou in this, and the more receptive” [113].

With a similar perception, the Hesychasts regarded the incessant prayer as being just a preliminary stage: “It is the first step in the ascent... But it is necessary to go beyond the intelligence since the attainment of an object, which is superior thereto, is in question. Speculation gradually gives place to contemplation, knowledge to experience” [114]. “At a certain level when one leaves the psychic realm, in which the spirit is active, all movement is at an end, and even prayer itself ceases... The mind has ascended here above the prayer, and, having found what is more excellent, it desists from prayer” [115]. “Any movement ceases, the nature of the prayer changes: «the soul prays out of the prayer». That is Hesychia, the silence of the spirit” [116]. Evagrius used to say: “even the simple thoughts have to be removed from the mind” [117]. He also declared: “prayers means the shedding of thought” [118], and added: “Prayer ceases, and one becomes astonished, caught up in wonder at the Light of God” [119].

Isaac the Syrian showed: “The movements of the soul partake of the influence of the Holy Spirit, on account of their complete purity” [120]. “It is the «spiritual silence», which belongs to the kingdom of Heaven” comments Lossky. Isaac explains wonderfully: “As the saints in the world to come no longer pray, their minds having been engulfed in the Divine Spirit, but dwell in ecstasy in that excellent glory; so the mind, when it has been made worthy of perceiving the blessedness of the age to come, will forget itself and all that is here, and will no longer be moved by the thought of anything” [121]. Actually, even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* referred to the fact that “contemplative prayer is *silence*” [122], or, in the words of St. John of the Cross, “silent love” [123]. Here we find again the Yoga concept about going beyond the mantra uttering and entering the Nirvichara Samadhi (thoughtless awareness) preceded by the rising of the Kundalini (*soul movement*), and the need to cleanse these centers (*soul becoming clean*) otherwise enlightenment (*partaking of the Holy Spirit*) is beyond reach. Isaac also wrote: “If you are pure, heaven is in you. It is inside

you that you will see the angels and the Lord of the angels” [124], i.e. the entities ruling over the chakras. Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite was talking about the soul spiral: “The soul moves with a spiral motion whatsoever is enlightened with truths of Divine Knowledge” [125] (i.e. *gnósis*), which accurately describes how the Kundalini is moving throughout the side channels. However, according to the Yogis, the attention must remain on the central channel of the Kundalini and not on the side channels. That must have been well-known by Isaac the Syrian who confessed about his fight against “falling” on the right or on the left: “Many times have I been tempted by those on the right and on the left side” [126].

In his turn, Nilus Sinaiticus urged: “During your prayer, struggle to keep your mind deaf and mute and so you will be able to pray” [127]. “It is the «silence of the mind» that is above prayer. That «rapture» in a state of «silence» or «quietude» (*isychía*) is sometimes called ecstasy” (*ékstasis*; from *stásis*—state and *ék*—outside of, Gr.) [128].

Macarius of Egypt wrote: “When the grace comes to master the heart passions⁶⁸⁷, it rules over all the parts of nature, over all the thoughts. Because the Spirit and all the thoughts of the soul reside in the heart” [129].

The terms like: “union of mind with the heart,” “descent of mind into the heart,” “watch of the heart through the mind,” permanently occur in the ascetic literature of the Eastern Church.

A most interesting fact is that *damam* (silence, quietude, Hebr.) is close to the word *damah* (to be like, to resemble, Hebr.), thus resulting that “the silence of the mind” (quietude, *isychía*, Gr.) enables people to go all through the way of achieving the likeness of God, the godliness the Church Fathers were talking about.

In that manner the Hesychasm was against the Western opinion (which infers that reality and the knowledge of reality could be expressed in mental concepts) and came close to the Eastern conviction, which maintains that reality and the experience of it lies beyond the mind and all mental processes [130].

In the 19th century, Seraphim of Sarov used to say: “Prayer, fasting, vigils, and all other Christian practices, although wholly good in themselves, certainly do not in themselves constitutes the end of our Christian life... For the true end of the Christian life is the acquiring of the Holy Spirit” [131], that is Self Realization which becomes possible only through the work of the Adi Shakti (divine power, strength or energy): “On account of this, every man existing in this world obtains life⁶⁸⁸ and continues his existence by the

⁶⁸⁷ See ch. XXV B.

⁶⁸⁸ That refers to eternal life.

strength of the Lord of Heaven. Only then every man can peacefully⁶⁸⁹ remain in his own abode⁶⁹⁰, and his mind may be able to attain (a rest)" [132].

The genuine saints and visionaries were able to perceive the Kundalini manifestation as light, a phenomenon objectively recorded on a large extent by the Sahaja Yogis (ch. XI E).

Christian believers have always related the Light to the Holy Spirit manifestation. Thus, after performing the eucharist, the people say: "We saw the true Light, we received the heavenly Spirit."

Lossky explains: "In the mystical theology of the Eastern Church these expressions are not used as metaphors or as figures of speech, but as expressions for a real aspect of the Godhead... *Gnosis*, the highest stage of awareness of the divine, is an experience of uncreated light, the experience itself being light" [133]. He also wrote: "The divine light manifests itself in this life... It is revealed in history... it is eternal, it involves going out from historical existence;... the mystery of true knowledge and the perfection of gnosis" [134].

Clement of Alexandria thought that gnosis is the perfection of the Christian [135]. The same believed Symeon the New Theologian who refused the name of Christian to those who have not had in this life the experience of the divine Light [136].

Like some of the ancient Christian ascetics, the Hesychasts, too, claimed that they could see the divine light that was like the one perceived during the Transfiguration on the mount (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:29). In the following we would refer to some of their commentaries and experiences.

Lossky writes: "Eastern saints have very frequently been transfigured by the inward light of uncreated grace, and have appeared resplendent, like Christ on the mount of Transfiguration" [137].

One of the most ancient examples was Macarius of Egypt who referred to the fire of grace kindled in the hearts by the Holy Spirit: "The immaterial and divine fire enlightens the soul... This fire descended on the apostles in the form of fiery tongues... This fire Moses saw in the burning bush; this fire in the form of a chariot caught up Elijah from the earth... Angels and spirits in the service of God participate in the brightness of this fire... It is the power of the resurrection, the reality of eternal life, the enlightenment of holy souls, the strengthening of the heavenly powers" [138]. The ascetic of Egypt referred to revelation (*apokálypsis*, Gr.) when writing: "Those who achieved that level, see the soul as we see the sun, but those who had that experience are few" [139].

⁶⁸⁹ *Isychia*.

⁶⁹⁰ Inner peace.

Gregory of Nyssa explains that God “becomes visible through his energies (*energeiai*, Gr.), showing himself on the particular occurrences of his nature” (*én tisi tois perí autón kathopoménois*, Gr.) [140]. Gregory Palamas added: “God is called Light, not with reference to his essence, but to his energy” [141]. He used to call these manifestations quite simply “divinities,” or “uncreated light,” or “grace” [142].

Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite were among those that experienced the divine light. Like Dionysius, some Fathers applied to the energies the name of “rays of divinity,” penetrating the created universe. Pope Gregory I the Great (540-604) referred to “the ecstasy of St. Benedict of Nursia, who saw the whole universe as if it had been gathered together into a beam of the divine light” [143].

Jesuit Diego Ruiz de Montoya (1562-1632) also called Didace⁶⁹¹ Ruiz believed that “the allhappy cannot see but an effect outside God and not God himself” (*quasi videatur ab illis aliquis effectus Dei, et non ipse Deus*, Lat.) [144].

John Climacus made reference to “an endless light that might be seen with the eyes of the mind... , a light coming from Christ” [145], thus disclosing the connection with the Agya chakra controlled by Jesus (Omkaara; ch. XI E and *infra*).

John of Damascus assured: “those who have done good will shine forth as the sun with the angels into life eternal” [146].

Symeon the New Theologian displayed a keen interest for that topic; to him, “the experience of light, which is conscious spiritual life, or gnosis, reveals the presence of grace which a person has acquired” [147]. He proclaimed: “We do not speak of things of which we are ignorant, but we bear witness to that which we know... This light without change, without decline and never extinguished enlightens us... God is Light, and those whom He makes worthy to see Him, see Him as Light; those who receive Him, receive Him as Light. For the light of His glory goes before His face, and it is impossible that He should appear otherwise than as light” [148]. Symeon thought that the Holy Spirit revealed Himself in us as light, on the superior level of eternal life. “God... makes Himself seen in His simplicity, formed in light without form, incomprehensible, ineffable” [149]. The great ascetic stated: “«I often saw the Light; sometimes it appeared to me within me, when my soul possessed peace and silence; sometimes it only appear afar off, and even hid itself altogether... the Light reappeared like the sun” [150]. He also told: “The grace of his most Holy Spirit will shine like a star on the just, and in the midst of them Thou wilt shine forth, O Thou, Inaccessible Sun!” [151]. However, for the uninitiated, Symeon seemed to assume an

⁶⁹¹ Preacher.

inconsistent attitude: on the one side he asserted the visible feature of that light, and on the other, he called it “invisible fire” [152], and wrote: “It is a truly divine fire⁶⁹², uncreated and invisible, eternal and immaterial, perfectly steadfast and infinite, inextinguishable and immortal, incomprehensible, beyond all created being” [153]. Those who achieved divinity, “all will be enlightened according to the measure of their faith... in the measure of their purification and illumination by the Spirit.” “God is light⁶⁹³, and to those who have entered into union with Him He imparts of His own brightness to the extent that they have been purified” [154], acknowledging that “the divine grace showed itself as uncreated light.” The New Theologian related enlightenment to immortality: “For those who have become the children of light, and sons of the day which is to come, for those who walk at all times in the light, the day of the Lord⁶⁹⁴ will never come, for they are always with God and in God. Thus, the day of the Lord will not appear to those who are already enlightened by the divine light” [155]. “Those who have not received this light, have not yet received grace, one receives the divine light and God Himself... Those who have not yet received, who have not yet participate in this light, find themselves always under the yoke of the law⁶⁹⁵, in the region of shadows and fantasies⁶⁹⁶” [156]. In his *Hymns of Divine Love* Symeon used to invoke the Holy Spirit as follows: “Come, true light... come, hidden mystery;... come, incessant joy;... come, O powerful one, who fulfilllest, transformest and changest all things by thy will alone; come, invisible one, wholly intangible and impalpable. Come, thou who retest always immovable and who, at all times, movest thyself and comes toward us... Come, thou... who hast willed that I desire thee... Come, breath and my own life” [157]. We shall find here the attributes of the Kundalini: its subtle nature (*hidden, invisible, wholly intangible and impalpable*), latent state (*immovable*), but active as well (*moving*), having the Adi Shakti as its source (*powerful*) and propelling inner force (*desire*) that *transformest and changest* its manifestations (*light, breath-breeze*), granting Self Realization (*fulfillment*) and eternal bliss-ananda (*incessant joy*).

A true saint, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) entitled her book *Scivias*,

⁶⁹² *Pyr to Theou* (Gr.).

⁶⁹³ 1 John 1:5.

⁶⁹⁴ Doomsday.

⁶⁹⁵ The karmic law.

⁶⁹⁶ Maya.

meaning *Know the Ways*. She was aware of the relationship between the Holy Spirit (Kundalini) and its fiery manifestations: “O Holy Spirit, Fiery Comforter Spirit... The Holy Spirit is a Burning Spirit. It kindles the hearts of humankind.” Further, she depicts her experience at the age of forty-two: “A burning light of tremendous brightness coming from heaven poured into my entire mind. Like a flame that does not burn but enkindles, it inflames my entire heart and my entire breast.” Some of her biographers admitted that her views were deeply influenced by ancient Goddess religions, of the Roman Aurora, the Egyptian Isis, the old German Horsa and the Hebrew Hokmah. Actually, she is regarded as the “Grandmother of the Rhineland mystic” movement, which involved Francis of Assisi, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich (indirectly), and Nicolas of Cusa [158].

Gregory Palamas used to depict that phenomenon as “communion with God where the righteous will be in the end transfigured⁶⁹⁷ by light and become themselves as bright as the sun... The one who takes part in the divine energy, somehow becomes himself a light” [159].

The *Hagioritic Tome* (*Ho hagioreitikòs tómos hýpèr tòn hesychazónton*) was so called after the place where it was written: the Holy Mount (*Hágion Óros*, Gr.) Athos. It was a Hesychast apology composed in 1339-1340 under the guidance of Gregory Palamas by his friend and disciple Philotheus Kokkinos who became later on Patriarch of Constantinople. This work, devoted to the Light of Transfiguration, read: “Christ, during His earthly life always shed forth the divine light—which, however, remained invisible to most men. The Transfiguration was not a phenomenon circumscribed in time and space; Christ underwent no change at that moment, even in His human nature, but a change occurred in the awareness of the apostles, who for a time received the power to see their Master as He was, resplendent in the eternal light” [160].

In the *Revelations* of Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), that saint appeared in a shining light to his disciple Motovilov who described the event that took place the winter of 1831: “I can’t look at you, Father—I replied—your eyes shine like lightning; your face has become more dazzling than the sun, and it hurts my eyes to look at you... Imagine in the middle of the sun, dazzling in the brilliance of its noontide rays, the face of the man who is speaking to you.” Then, Seraphim explained what he felt in such moments: “When the Spirit of God descends on a man, and envelops him in the fullness of His presence, the soul overflows with unspeakable joy, for the Holy Spirit fills everything He touches with joy” [161]. And here it is Lossky’s commentary on the above: “In this simply account of an experience are contained all the doctrines of the Eastern Fathers on «gnosis», that knowledge of grace which

⁶⁹⁷ *Metamorphóte* (Gr.).

reaches its highest degree in the visions of the divine light. This light fills the human person, who has attained to union with God” [162]. The light emanated by the face of the saints reminds that of Moses after his encounter with God: “When Moses came down from the Mount of Sinai... the skin of his face shone” (Exodus 34:29; cf. 34:35).

The above references to the “sun” are nothing else than the Omkara, the light of Jesus manifesting at the Agya chakra (ch. XI E).

Other spheres of spirituality reported similar luminous manifestations. First of all, these phenomena were all well known by the Indian Yogis since ancient times (as well as by the Sahaja Yogis of today). Shri Gyaneshwara wrote in the 13th century AD: “Kundalini is one of the greatest energies. The whole body of the seeker starts glowing because of the rising of the Kundalini” [163]. Another example was that of Honen Shonin, the most famous representative of Japanese Amidism [164]. Also one could mention prominent Sufis like As-Suhrawardi, Kabbalists as Abraham Abulafia, Hayyim Vital and others (see the two following sections).

B. IN ISLAM

“People are unaware of the real hidden relationship which Sufis have.”

“Things are repeated again and again in the Teaching because people hear but do not listen.”

Rumi’s teachings to his disciples [165]

On a less known episode of the life of Gregory Palamas, it happened that the renowned doctrinaire of Hesychasm was obliged to stay in Asia Minor conquered by the Ottomans at that time. There, he met the son of Emir Orkhan, to whom he told: “Beyond all that could be said, in our depth we are not so far from each other, and perhaps a day will soon come when we will be able to understand each other” [166].

Like the Gnostic Christians who claimed on having got their knowledge from the couple of disciples to whom Jesus disclosed His hidden teaching, the same did the adherents to the Islamic esoteric stream known as *Sufism*, who regarded themselves as followers of the secret doctrine imparted by Muhammad to a few chosen ones. Scott affirmed that they were ninety men and women who established a group after the death of the Prophet in 632, took an oath of fidelity, and adopted the name of *Sufi*. According to the existing descriptions, it came out that those disciples were familiar with a superior state of awareness. One of them was the Persian Salman who was a

former partisan of Zoroastrianism, then went from one Christian teacher to another undergoing many sufferings culminating in his selling as a slave. These failed experiences lead him unto the above-mentioned group. Other historians have in view also Uways al-Qarni (d. 657) but that one never met Muhammad in person [167].

The concept of *Islamic gnosis* originated in the revelation bestowed on Niffari, a prominent representative of the Muslim esoteric trend, when Allah said to him: "Attach thyself to the Sunna in thine outward doctrine and practice, and attach thyself in thine inward soul to the Gnosis which I have given thee; and know that when I make Myself known to thee, I will not accept from thee anything of the Sunna except what My Gnosis brings thee, for thou art one of those to whom I speak; thou hearest Me, and thou seest that I am the source of all things." Niffari relates further on: "And He said to me: «My exoteric⁶⁹⁸ Revelation does not support My esoteric⁶⁹⁹ Revelation»" [168]. Some *ahadith* claimed that the Prophet told that the *Qur'an* has been revealed in "seven different readings" (*sab'at-I-ahruf*, Arab.) [169]. It is what Islam defines as *ta'wil*, understanding on several levels (literally: taking something back to its source).

According to Sufi concept, their doctrine was said to be inscribed as a filigree in the *Qur'an* like the oral teaching conveyed in the form of sentences and advices called *ahadith* that are regarded as important as the *Qur'an* itself. We have discussed (ch. X) about the changes brought to the *Qur'an* as well as to other Scriptures. The variants of the text were accompanied by deviations of the rationalists (*Mu'tazilism*) or of the defenders of the esoteric doctrines, which opposed the *concealed meaning* (viewed as the only true; ch. IV) to the *literal meaning* of the verses [170]. That tendency met with a strong protest coming out the *Qur'an*: "When thou seest those who plunge into Our signs⁷⁰⁰, turn away from them" (6.67). Many of the symbols and metaphors in the *Qur'an* lay in the heart of the meditation performed by the Mystics⁷⁰¹; such examples are the bird as the sign of the soul immortal (ch. XXI), the tree as the token of fate (ch. IV) etc. [171]. Actually there was always a cleavage rested on whether *tawil* (interpretation) was to be made synonymous with *tafsir* (exegesis), namely either following the *Qur'an* and the Tradition (*sunna*) as the Sunnites maintained, or turning towards the

⁶⁹⁸ *Zahiri* (Arab.).

⁶⁹⁹ *Batini* (Arab.).

⁷⁰⁰ *Ayat*, meaning *signs* and *verses* (Arab.).

⁷⁰¹ *Arif* (Arab.).

allegorical exposition, in the Shi'ite style. Ibn Khaldun remarked that "the Sufis were saturated in the theories of Shi'ism" [172].

Abu Bakr was very close to the Prophet as his faithful adviser and he gave his daughter 'A'ishah to be latter's wife. Abu Bakr literally means *father of the virgin*. Sunnites believed that the Prophet had appointed him to be his successor, so that he became the first caliph. However, the partisans of the Shi'a movement regarded as inheritor Hazrat 'Ali, son of Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Leaving aside the two Islamic branches, both these caliphs allowed for the preservation and transmission of the esoteric doctrine that later on shall be given the name of *tasawwuf*, translated through *sufi*. In other opinions, the name of that stream would come from the garments of coarse wool (*suf*, Arab.) wore by its ascetic adherents. It seems that over the pre-Islamic age there existed an Arabic tribe called *sufa*, which was in charge with the maintenance of the temple in Mecca. At the same time, *suffa* was the little bench in Medina where the Prophet's companions used to sit. One says that the first man bearing the name of *Sufi* was Abu Hashim of Kufa. Last but not least, others believed that the etymology originated in *safu* (purity, Arab.), in the Kabbalist term *En-Soph* (ch. IV), even in *sophia* (wisdom, Gr.). Idries Shah considered that the sound corresponding to the spelling *s-uuuuf* would act on the human mind [173].

Besides Muhammad's teachings, several scholars related Sufism with Zoroastrian and Hindu writings as well as those of Gnosticism, Greek Neoplatonism, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite and Christian monasticism [174], perhaps the Buddhism within Turkestan and the surrounding area. Five centuries after Muhammad passed away, the Sufi master Hakim Jami denied the formal Islamic origin of Sufism suggesting instead an unbroken lineage from Plato, Hippocrates, Pythagoras and Hermes [175]. The Sufis worshipped a pious woman, freed slave from Jerusalem, Rabiah al-Adawiyyah (717-801) by her name, whose words evoked the Christian mysticism; e.g. she spoke of love in a way that Christians would have found familiar. However, the Sufis declared more ancient origins for their doctrine, claiming to extend back as early as Abraham.

In his book devoted to *The People of the Secret*, Ernest Scott dealt in detail with the influence exerted by Sufism on other spiritual trends concerning the Celts in Ireland, medieval troubadours, Arthurian novels, Kabbalah, Cathari and alchemy⁷⁰², of course [176].

Professor Rom Landau investigated the influence of Ibn al-'Arabi on the European literature [177]. The research of Palacios established that also Dante suffered the influence of Sufism [178]. Perhaps the same happened with Meister Eckhart [179]. Dr. Li Soong performed a thoroughly analysis on

⁷⁰² *Al-kimia* (Arab.)

the effect of the Sufi masters and their school on China and the Gobi desert, aiming at “the maintenance and sustaining of the most ancient human developmental teaching which we would do well to investigate if we are to arrive at a higher destination of humankind” [180].

In fact, the influence of Sufism on Christian (and Jewish) mysticism and esoterica was mutual. For instance, many Sufis revered Jesus as the prophet of the inner life. Some even amended the *shahadah* (profession of faith, Arab.; ch. XV D), to say: “There is no God but Allah and Jesus is His Messenger” [181].

The history of Sufi movement started in Iraq and its development crossed four periods.

The first period of Sufism as such (c.750 - 1050) was characterized by combining asceticism—that made its apparition since the prehistoric period of Sufism (650 - 750)—with mystical meditations and pantheist concepts rooted in the *Qur'an*: “Whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God” (2.109).

Born in Balkh, Ibrahim ibn Adham was at home with Buddhism in Bactriana and used to pay visit to the anchorites from Syria (where he otherwise found his death in 777). He defined “the service of God” as “meditation and silence, except for mentioning God.” Virtually, it was then when repetition of the divine names (*adh-dhikr* or *zikr*, Arab.) began [182] (see *infra*).

One first-rank Sufi character (already mentioned in chapter XIX C) was Husayn ibn Mansur (858-922) usually known as al-Hallaj (wool-carder, XXV Arab.) who after broking away from his teachers (one of them was al-Junayd) - 13 went in India where he met the sages of different concepts, then proceeded to Turkestan and up to the Chinese border. He had his first mystical experience during a fasting performed at Mecca.

He paid with his life the audacity of proclaiming openly: “*Ana al-Haqq*” (I am God, Arab.), thus advocating the union (identification) of the individual Self with the transcendent Self (God). “I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I... If thou seest me, thou seest Him, and if thou seest Him, thou seest us both” [183]. “If you do not acknowledge God, at least acknowledge His sign. I am the creative Truth since through the Truth I am eternally a truth” [184]. Al-Hallaj argued that he had not been blasphemous: since according to the *shahadah* there is no reality but Allah, all men are essentially divine. On a former occasion we have explained the difference between *Haqq* (Truth, Arab.) and the form used with an article *al-Haqq* (God, Arab.). To that it has to be added the distinction between the *exoteric Law* (*shari'ah*, Arab.) and the *esoteric Truth* (*haqiqah*, Arab.). Al-Hallaj also used the term of *ittihad* (identity between God and the soul, Arab.) [185].

Afterwards, people paid homage to the tomb of the great Sufi as for a real saint, in spite of what was previously regarded as a heresy. For Al-Hallaj all the great religions made a single whole: “I pondered on the faiths trying to understand them, and I regard them as a unique Principle with many branches. Therefore, do not request a person to take in a specific faith, otherwise that gesture would have estranged him from the basic Principle; what it is sure is that the Principle Himself have to look for him, He in whom all measures and significations are clarified; and then the person will understand” [186]. Al-Hallaj suggested that the true pilgrimage was not that to Mecca, but the spiritual journey, which the mystic could carry out in his own room.

A *hadit qudsi* (sacred tradition) wrote on melting into God: “When I love Him, I become His Ear through which He hears, His Eye with which He sees, His Hand with which He grasps, and His Foot with which He walks” [187].

Here, we shall mention also the Turkish poets Nesimi (9th century) who was burnt alive in Aleppo for his ideas, and Niyazi (11th century).

Sufism divided itself in two schools ever since its first period.

Within the first one, Abu-l-Qasim al-Junayd from Baghdad (d. 910) was the partisan of a system in full agreement with the Muslim dogmatism. He advocated that “he who realizes union” (*muwahhid*, Arab.) have to practice sobriety (*sahw*, Arab.) and keep himself from intoxication (*sukr*, Arab.) and libertinism (*ibahiyah*, Arab.) [188]. His sober school taught that after reaching the mystical state the believer should return to the world of everyday activities and live within the bounds of the *shari'ah*, fulfilling his duties to God and his fellow men, but giving them a new meaning. He left many treatises dealing with the spiritual practice meant to realize the soul absorption into God.

As a representative of the second school we shall mention the Persian Abu Yazid (or Bayazid), also known as al-Bistami (d. 875) who had a pantheist inclination. It was he who brought about the doctrine of the complete absorption (*istighraq*) and extinction or annihilation—of the ego (“ego death” [189]; see ch. XIX B,C)—(*fana*⁷⁰³; coming perhaps from *nirvana*), enabling man to go beyond individual consciousness when he was in union with God. He displayed an audacity that could have been deadly for him, when stating that he discovered God in his own heart [190]. He felt that nothing separated him of God who has said to him: “«There is no God but I». Then He changed me out of my identity into His Selfhood...Then I communed with Him... saying: «How fares it with me with Thee?» He said: «I am through Thee; there is no God but Thou»” [191]. Bayazid is known as the one who has exclaimed: *Subhani* (Glory to Me, Arab.) [192]. His disciples organized the

⁷⁰³ That term was also used by al-Junayd.

fehmiya (visionaries, Arab.) group. After the experience of union with God, the followers of this tenet were intoxicated with a sense of divine presence, such that their life was henceforth lived in solitude; they did not care whether they incurred blame by neglect of the duties laid down in the *shari'ah*, and might even welcome such a blame as a way of helping them to turn away from the world (*malamati*, Arab). Thus, the *shari'ah* was regarded as the *outer path*, in opposition to the *tariqah*, the *inner path* of meditation.

The importance given by Sufis to the collective manifested in early times by the founding of monasteries (*ribat*, Arab.), although the *Qur'an* had specifically forbidden monastic life in Islam. The first monastery (*zawiya*, *khanqa*, Arab.) was founded by the Persian Abu Said in Khurasan. Another was raised around 775 in Ramla (Ramleh), not far from Jerusalem, while Saladdin erected another in Egypt. With Sufis, the celibate was not mandatory. Those who had families lived outside the monastery but regularly came there for their collective prayers.

The second period (c.1050 - 1450) corresponded to the removal of the pantheistic essence and the fusion of Sufism with Muslim traditionalism.

The great Islamic reformer and scholar (*ulemalele*, Arab.), the Persian Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111) nicknamed “the Spinner” was a partisan of the *dhikr* practice and was interested in enabling the union between the soul and God. The 12th century witnessed the emerging of the Afghan tradition of the Sufis who used *dhikr-i-qalbi* (prayer of the heart, Arab.; an identical concept to that from Hesychasm—ch. XXV A).

In Islam, *the All* becomes manifest in ourselves in “the eye of the heart” (*'ayn al-qalb*, Arab.), regarded in the Muslim esoteric trend as a spiritual organ and seat of the divine *Uncreated*. Al-Hallaj used to say: “I saw my Lord with the eye of the heart. I said: Who art Thou? He answered: Thou.” And Ibn al-'Arabi added: “When you know yourself, your «I»ness vanishes and you know that you and Allah are one and the same” [193]. According to the Iranian Sufi Alaud-dawleh Semnani, “the subtle organ of the heart (*latifa qalbiya*, Arab.) contains the embryo of a mystical progeny which is in this *latifa* like a pearl in a conch; this pearl, or this progeny, is none other than the subtle organ which will be the real Self (*latifa ana'iya*, Arab.), i.e. the true personality.” A few lines later, in the description of the “seventh subtle organ (*latifa haqqiya*, Arab.), which is the eternal «seal» of the person, the Real Self, the one that houses the «rare pearl», it is again stated that the embryo of this Real Self started taking shape in the subtle center of the heart” [194]. “O, happy man,” sings Jami, “whose heart has been illumined by *dhikr*” (mantra) [195]. In Baghdad, al-Ghazali had a breakdown before quitting the *kalam* (formal theology) to become a Sufi. He assumed that to be a Sufi means to permanently dwell with God and to live in peace with the people, advocating

that as a religion, Islam is the path to union and wholeness. His basic dogma was called *at-tawhid* (unity, or the act of uniting, Arab.). The point to make is that the jurists of Islam (*qadi*, Arab.) regarded Sufism with the utmost suspicion until it was rehabilitated by al-Ghazali [196].

The medieval period was marked by the creation of the great Sufi orders (*tariqah*, Arab.) led by Sheikhs who were worshipped as saints like the Imams within the Shi'a movement. As a consequence, over the 12th and 13th centuries the Sufis ceased to be a lesser group and became prevalent in many Muslim countries. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1078-1166) and the great poet XXV Mawlana⁷⁰⁴ Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273) born in Khurasan were among - 14 the main founders of these orders.

XXV Besides those orders, there were the errand Sufi beggars or pilgrims called - 15 *faqir* (poor; from *faqr*, poverty, Arab.; *dervish*, Persian) who owned nothing, living with the public assistance like the Hindu beggar ascetics (*sanyasi*, Sanskr.), who obtained their food only from optional donations. The act of charity, *sadaqa* (Arab.; *tzedaqah*, Hebr.) suggested the term of *sadhaka* (disciple, Sanskr.) or *siddiq* (disciple; he who follows the Prophet; plural: *siddiqun*, Arab.). Some of them were truly pious but the other so-called Sufis compromised the good reputation of the movement. Actually, the *faqir* was the "poor in spirit," which is related to the saying of Jesus: "Blessed [are] the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens" (Matthew 5:3; cf. Luke 6:20). Schuon explains that here "poverty" corresponded to realizing that the ego is only illusory, and "me" is but "the Self." In Christianity that parallels the "humility," and in Hinduism it is similar to "childlikeness" (*baliya*, Sanskr.) [197], the latter concept being also used by Jesus (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; Mark 9:7; 10:14; Luke 18:16; 20:36). We would like to suggest that "poor in spirit" might correspond also to the Eastern concept of emptiness of mind (thoughtless awareness). An ancient Chinese Christian text (probably influenced by Taoism) depicted the original (adamic) state as follows: "Their minds were empty, they were content; and their hearts were simple and innocent. Originally they had no desire" [198]. Therefore, it would mean spiritual concentration, or rather its negative and static aspect of non-expansion, in the sense of cessation of the passions [197]. The notion is encountered with Evagrius, too: "Blessed is he that has descended into infinite ignorance" (*Makários ó phthásas eis tèn apéronton agnosías*, Gr.) [199]. Lossky explains: "Evagrius means by *apérontos agnosía*—«infinite ignorance»—the exclusion from the mind of all knowledge except knowledge of God... the intellect becomes infinitely ignorant of all that is inferior to this divine gnosis" [200], that is what Sahaja Yoga denotes as *Nirmala Vidya*

⁷⁰⁴ Or *Mawlavi*, meaning "our leader (master)" or "my leader (master)"; it is a surname that the disciples have given to Rumi.

(Pure Knowledge, Sanskr.).

Rumi wrote, among other things, the epic poem of rhyming couplets *Mathnawi-i-Ma'nawi* consisting of 25,700 verses. His following daring words might be taken as a heresy: "We have taken the essence of the *Qur'an* and thrown the carcass to the donkeys" [201]. In the *Diwan* dedicated to his spiritual master Shams of Tabriz he advocated the inner religion, superior to the main outward "religions": "I am neither Christian, Jew, Parsi nor Muslim. I am neither of the East nor of the West... I have put aside duality,... I seek the One, I know the One, I see the One, I invoke the One. He is the First⁷⁰⁵, He is the Last⁷⁰⁶, He is the Outward⁷⁰⁷, He is the Inward⁷⁰⁸" [202]. As Schuon observed: "The Sufi remains in the timeless present⁷⁰⁹...; he remains at the limitless center where the outward and the inward are merged or transcended" [203].

Rumi was the first who instituted the devotional dances that currently are still used by the whirling dervishes (brotherhood of *Mawlawiyyah*) enabling them to attain an ecstatic state. XXV
- 16

Other important poets were Farid ud-Din Muhammad ben Ibrahim, known mostly as Atthar (c.1120-1190) as well as Shyihab ad-Din Yahya as-Suhrawardi (c. 1155-1191), and particularly the Iranians Saadi (1184-1291) and Hafiz of Shiraz (1326-1390) who encounter a well-deserved international fame together with Rumi.

Atthar left important works like *Tadhkirat al-Awliya* (Memorial of the saints, Arab.) granting the leading place to al-Hallaj, *Mantiq at-Tair* (Language of the birds, Arab.), an initiating metaphorical poem urging people to find the individual essence hidden in their depth.

Yahya As-Suhrawardi was the founder of the *Ishraqi*⁷¹⁰ School that realized the fusion between spirituality and philosophy. Perhaps it is not without connection to the ancient Eastern Hindu wisdom that *ishraq* also designates the light of daybreak coming from the East, which is regarded not only as a source of light but also of Enlightenment. The same must have been the original meaning of the gospel: "as the lightning goes forth from the east

⁷⁰⁵ *Al-Awwal* (Arab.).

⁷⁰⁶ *Al-Akhir* (Arab.).

⁷⁰⁷ *Az-Zahir* (Arab.).

⁷⁰⁸ *Al-Batin* (Arab.).

⁷⁰⁹ Ch. XIX C.

⁷¹⁰ Enlightened (Arab.).

and shines to the west” (Matthew 24:27; cf. Luke 17:24 where “the east” was intentionally replaced by “[one end] under heaven”! and the same happened to “the west”).

As-Suhrawardi’s masterwork is *The Wisdom of Enlightenment (Hiqmat al-Ishraq, Arab.)*. He believed in an original unique doctrine that was delivered by the ancient sages. In the beginning of that *Aurea Catena* the knowledge was revealed to Hermes (the same as Enoch in the *Bible*, or Idris in the *Qur’an*), went on through Pythagoras and Plato, and reached the Middle East (Zoroaster).

As-Suhrawardi wrote: “Through the spiritual influx, that is the blessing (*barakah*) received by the disciple during the initiatic transaction, the sheikh inaugurates the filiation requested by the second birth” [204]. Like other mystics, he experienced God as light (ch. XI E; XXV A) and described it in his *Hiqmat al-Ishraq*: “Suddenly I was wrapped in gentleness; there was a blinding flash, then a diaphanous light” [205].

XXV - 17 Muhyid-Din ibn al-‘Arabi was born in 1165 at Murcia (Spain) and settled in Damascus where he met his death in 1240. He was considered “the greatest master” (*ash-sheikh al-akbar, Arab.*) of Sufism or even “the greatest among the Gnostics” (*sultan al-arifin, Arab.*). He was and still is nicknamed Ibn Aflatun (Son of Plato, Arab.). Shihab ad-Din ‘Umar bin Abd Allah as-Suhrawardi⁷¹¹ (1144-1234) called al-‘Arabi “an ocean of divine truths” [206]. If truth should be told, he was familiar with the Yoga state (*station of spiritual synthesis*) as a follower of the *Sufi Way*, and also was aware of the Yogi dominion over the cosmic forces (ch. I): “We know that cosmic bodies are susceptible to the powers of souls raised to the station of spiritual synthesis, having observed such things along the Way” [207].

Al-‘Arabi was the pupil of two Sufi ladies, Shams of Marchena and Fatima bint al-Muthanna of Cordoba, the latter being over ninety-five. At the age of 36, while performing in a state of mystical awareness the seven circumambulation round the Ka’ba, he had the vision of a maiden called Nizam whose surname was Ayn ash-Shams wa l-Bahia (Eye of the Sun and of Beauty, Arab.), who meant to him what Beatrice was for Dante and Laura for Petrarca. She inspired his mystical poem, *The Interpreter of Ardent Desire*, where she was named “the Virgin Most Pure” [208]. Later on Goddess Wisdom appeared to him as “a priestess, a daughter of the Greeks, without ornament, in whom you contemplate a radiant source of light” [209]. During another mystical circumambulation, he had the revelation of the words: “I am knowledge, I am he who knows and I am what is known” [210], that echoed Aristotle: “I am Sophia, philosophy and the philosopher” [211].

That teacher of the Islamic gnosis used to say: “My heart is open to every

⁷¹¹ To not be confused with his predecessor Yahya as-Suhrawadri (see *supra*).

form: it is a pasture for gazelles⁷¹², and a cloister for Christian monks, a temple for idols, the Ka'ba of the pilgrim, the tables of the *Torah*, and the book of the *Qur'an*. I practice the religion of Love⁷¹³, in whatsoever direction⁷¹⁴ His caravans⁷¹⁵ advance, the religion of Love shall be my religion and my faith" (*tar juman al-ashwaq*, Arab.) [212]. Since his teachings were so close to the Isma'ilis, they were included in the theology of the latter, in spite of the fact that he was a Sunni. In his greatest and most elaborate of the writings, *Meccan Revelations (Al-Futuhat al-makkiyyah)*, Arab.), Ibn al-'Arabi claimed that man may discover God by going deeply into the Self and maintained that "knowledge of mystical states can only be had by actual experience, nor can the reason of man define it, nor arrive at any cognizance of it by deduction" [213]. His teachings aimed at the reintegration in the Primordial Unity, enriched by the experience of the consciousness of Self. He advocated the need for esotericism: "This kind of spiritual insight and knowledge must be hidden from the majority of men by reason of its sublimity. For its depths are far reaching and the dangers involved great" [214].

Ibn al-'Arabi played a part in establishing the idea of Universal Man (*al-insan al-kamil*, Arab.), an equivalent to the Christian Logos, the archetype (*al-'ayn ath-thabitah*, Arab.; means also: immutable) of Universe and man—as a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm. It contains the Platonist essence and constitutes the pattern man have to endeavor at, a concept that was familiar to Dante Alighieri (see *supra*), too.

Another tendency was manifested in the 12th century under the leadership of al-Ishraqi who was executed for heresy like al-Hallaj. It was a dualist concept often seen as a Manichaean development. The doctrine held as the ultimate principle of existence the Primal Light that brings all things into existence by enlightening the darkness. When man attains a complete knowledge of the true nature of reality, he reaches the world of light, achieves complete cosmic awareness, and realizes his identity with the origin of all.

We shall also mention within the same epoch the great Sufi saint Nizam-XXV ud-Din Auliya from Delhi (13th century), where he had his magnificent - 1.9

⁷¹² *Ghazal*, spiritual state (Arab.), corresponding to *raas* (Sanskrit.) and having the same significance: *mood*.

⁷¹³ It refers to the pure love, the love of God.

⁷¹⁴ An allusion to the *Qur'an*: "Whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God" (2.109).

⁷¹⁵ Literally: "his camels," signifying, like the "gazelles" above, the realities of the spirit.

funeral monument close to river Yamuna, to not forget the greatest mystical Arab poet 'Umar ibn al-Farid (1182-1235) whose poetry reminds *Song of Songs*.

The modern period (c.1450 - 1850) was known in the history of Sufism as the *period of poets* although numerous poets lived over the previous period. Worth mentioning are the Persian Jami (1492) and Esh-Cha'rānt (1565), as well as some Turkish poets who were greatly inspired by the Persian ones.

XXV In India, the poet and philosopher Kabir (1435-1518) has reached a high - 20 spiritual level. He succeeded in joining Hindu and Sufi doctrines. That's why we should not be surprised when finding in India Sufi poems starting with the invocation of Allah then proclaiming Krishna as a great prophet of Islam. In his poems, Kabir talked about the same God, irrespective of His being called Rama, Hari or Allah. "Allah is invisible in each body,/ understand this in your heart./ He dwells equally in the Hindu and the Turk" [215]. Beyond the message of universality, the verses refer equally to the inner (within the chakras) manifestation of the divine presence, or the specific one of the Father within the heart subtle center (ch. XIX C).

In Iran, the main exponent of Sufism was Sadr ad-Din Shirazi, usually known as Mulla Sadra (c.1571-1640) whose concepts were close to that of the Kabbalists and Hesychasts. Like the latter he maintained that union with God could be attained even in the present life by means of enlightenment: "all that can reach man of what constitutes his retribution in the world beyond, have no other source than the essential «I» of man himself" [216]. God and heaven are not an outer but inner reality that has to be discovered in the own self, in the personal world of pure images (*alam al-mithal*, Arab.).

Contemporary with Mulla Sadra and his teacher Mir Damad, another Iranian scholar, Mir Abu al-Qasim Findiriski (d. 1641) spent a good deal of time in India studying Hinduism and Yoga [217].

Unfortunately, the modern period of Sufism was dominated by obscurantism, the use of amulets and magic practices, probably under the influence of the Kabbalah also developed in Egypt from where it had expanded throughout the entire Arabic world.

The contemporary period (after 1850) produced a handbook of mystical directions that became widespread, whose recommendations reminded those of the Hesychast monks (ch. XXV A): "Be seated; close the eyes; make your humility perfect;... concentrate all your senses; expel all preoccupations and wayward impulses of the heart; and direct your perception toward God."

The great poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was compared to Rabindranath Tagore, and became for the Muslims of India what Gandhi was for the Hindus. He described the stages to be followed by the initiate: belief

in the Unseen, search after the Unseen, knowledge of the Unseen gained by looking into the depth of one's soul, and Realization. The meaning of life is the discovery of God, as Inayat Khan (1882-1926) used to say: "Why was I born, O God, if not to find Thee?"

Ernest Scott provided with a large space the Sufi movement in Central Asia and its masters [218].

One may reckon the development all over the world of the concern for Sufi entanglements when reading the *Index Islamicus* written in 1962 [219], which reports that every seven days a new volume on Sufism appeared during 1956-1960 [220].

The Sufi techniques were not disclosed to the newcomer and the one who transmitted them estimated who was worthy to receive them and he chose the right place and the right time for it. Since it was only by obeying these rules that the divine Power could work. The seeker (aspirant) was a *Dervish*, while the *Sufi* was the one who found (God). One knows the case of Lucy Garnett who lived in Turkey for many years in the beginning of the 20th century. She strived for perceiving the Sufi secrets [221]. Eventually, what she achieved was very meager (certain devotional elements, religious formulas, respect paid to the women and some miracles), failing in her attempt at framing the movement in any of the known categories [222]. The *dervish* has his equivalent in the Hindu wandering monk (*bhikshu*) begging his food (*sanyasa*) as well as in the Christian wandering monk or pilgrim.

The Sufis were grouped together in brotherhoods (*tariqah*, Arab.): whirling dervishes, wandering dervishes (who roamed about villages, cities, deserts in their quest for a master or experience that would let them attain a new spiritual stage⁷¹⁶). However, there were also blacksmiths, peasants, bankers, and military dervishes. Although decimated by religious persecutions, the Sufis were highly respected and prosperous over the Middle Ages, and they came to seek the safety of anonymity and discretion. Many, however, who pretend to be Sufis presently, are only pitiable impostors. Sufism is the most prevalent in India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt and lesser in Syria. Idries Shah, Inayat Khan and his son Vilayat devoted their life to spread the Sufi tenets to the Western countries. Richard Netton gives a (partial) list of the Sufi orders [223].

The foremost duty in Sufism was to actualize and revitalize the religious knowledge into the present. The asceticism and rituals were only an insignificant part of the work. Despite the fact that working on the own person was essential for the individual's evolution, the *work* really became meaningful as soon as it was projected on the whole of mankind. Self Realization was the ultimate goal, which was preceded by self surrendering

⁷¹⁶ See ch. XXIV.

and passing from the awareness of the lower ego to the one of the superior Self.

Here are some of the principles agreed with by Sufis: Absolute Being (God) is also Absolute Beauty. Since beauty tends toward manifestation, Absolute Being developed the phenomenal world. To win a sense of direct communication with the Absolute Being behind the phenomenal world, one should practice the quietist⁷¹⁷ virtues (poverty, austerity, humility, fortitude, and discipline), devote oneself to the ways of inwardness (withdrawal, silence, solitude, and self introspection) and keep in mind a constant awareness of God (faith, awe, and desire).

By following these directions with perseverance, one will advance through the following stages (the equivalent in classical Yoga is given in brackets): concentration (*dharana*), apprehension of the oneness of everything (*Yoga*), sudden and unpredictable enlightenment (*Self Realization*) called *ishraq*, blissful ecstasy (*ananda*), sense of union with the Divine (*Yoga*), sense of one's own nothingness and of the nothingness beyond nothingness. The breathing techniques (*pranayama*) were not overlooked either, since the *Qur'an* read: ««Lord, open my breast», said Moses, «and do Thou ease for me my task»» (20.26-27). It is likely that the text refers to the subtle work (Self Realization), since Moses made the supplication before performing miracles in front of the Pharaoh (ch. VIII). Islam was defined as *inshirah*⁷¹⁸ (expansion, Arab.; here: of the chest). «Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam» (6.125; cf. 94.1, opening the surah entitled plainly «The Expanse»). Obviously, the «right-guided» designates the Enlightened (Realized) one. Schuon has seen here the connection with «the initiatory meaning of breathing and also of the heart [which] is a key of the first importance for understanding the Sufic⁷¹⁹ Arcanum» [224].

Breaking all mundane connections, the Sufi used to retire to an isolated place and, irrespective of the conditions of existence, was exclusively involved in the religious practice. But he would not meditate on the commentaries to the holy texts, nor listen to traditions, he «would not split his mind in reading the *Qu'ran*» because then the *Qu'ran* would have become an idol just like the rosaries or the prayer rug and might have produced an excess of devotion leading to idolatry. George Fox (17th century) displayed a similar reasoning when asking for: «the Holy Spirit not the Scriptures» [225].

However, when he did not let anything else to come into his spirit but

⁷¹⁷ That term is an accurate translation of the Greek *isychia*.

⁷¹⁸ It is obvious the relation *inshirah*—*inspire*.

⁷¹⁹ Ch. XXV B.

God, when, having eliminated all thoughts, his attention was redirected to his depths, the Sufi attained such a state of self-forgetfulness that he was taken away in ecstasy.

According to the Sufi concept, the Spirit that also existed before the body was closed in it like in a cage. Only through death it went back into divinity. That metempsychosis enabled the soul who had failed to accomplish his mission on earth, to be purified and be worthy of the union with God. The union that was desired ardently was not meant for everyone because it was the fruit of God's grace⁷²⁰ (*fadh'l-ullah, fayazan-ullah*). During his stay in the body, the Sufi was careful to meditate only on the union with God (*wahdaniya*), on the invocation (*dhikr*, remembrance, mentioning) of God's names and the progressive advance in the "path" (*tariqah*; also designated as *ihsan*; see *infra*) until reaching union with God. The dervishes call any invocation *shughl* (job, occupation, Arab.). By no way should we be astonished that the Sufis came to the same conclusion that the Hesychasts: the inner prayer, the prayer of the heart (*adh-dhikru-l-qalbi*, Arab.), or the secret prayer (*adh-dhikru-l-khafi*, Arab.) is superior to the oral prayer (*adh-dhikru-l-jahri*, Arab.) [226]. Thus, according to a *hadith* narrated by 'A'ishah, the Prophet said: "That remembrance of Allah, which even the Hifza (Malaika⁷²¹) do not listen is seventy times better than the one that they listen to" [227].

The remembrance of God (*dhikru 'llah*, Arab.) in the Muslim practice was adopted by the Sufis in virtue of the *Qur'an* verses advising the believers to often call upon God: "Say: «Call upon God, or call upon the Merciful; whichever you call upon, to Him belong the Names Most Beautiful" (17.110; cf. 7.179). "Your Lord has said: «Call upon Me and I will answer you»" (40.62). "God's remembrance is greater" (29.44). "So remember Me, and I will remember you" (2.147). A *hadith* read: "Whenever men gather together to invoke Allah, they are surrounded by angels, the divine favor envelops them, and Shekhinah descends upon them, and Allah remembers them in His assembly" [228]. Among other kind of formulas, the Sufis used to utter "Allah is here!" in order to facilitate concentration on the quest for mystical union with Allah.

At length the practice of *dhikr* developed and combined the repetition of the sacred names or many thousands of holy phrases (reminding the mantras) with special postures, physical movements, and breathing exercises. The Sufis practiced *dhikr* in silence, together with peculiar techniques of breathing called *hosh dar dam* (conscious breathing; *hosh*, mind, *dar*, in,

⁷²⁰ Ch. XXIV.

⁷²¹ The angels.

dam, breath, Arab.), and with concentration of the attention on certain parts of the body. In most cases it was a collective ritual (*hadra*, Arab.). One of the Sufi masters declared: “This Order is built on breath,” while Shah Abul Janaab Najmuddin wrote in his *Fawah ul-Jamaal*: “*Dhikr* is a flowing in the body of creatures by the necessity of their breath, because through their breathing, the letter «Ha» of the Divine Name «Allah» is the very sound made with every exhalation and inhalation” [229].

Schouon explains that “from the point of view of Realization or of the Path,” the stages are the following: “First there is *al-iman*⁷²², the accepting of Unity by man’s intelligence; then, since we exist both individually and collectively, there is *al-islam*, the submission of man’s will to Unity, or to the idea of Unity;... finally there is *al-ihsan*⁷²³, which expands or deepens the two previous elements to the point of their ultimate consequences. Under the influence of *al-ihsan*, *al-iman* becomes «Realization»...—knowing becomes being—while *al-islam*, instead of being limited to a certain number of prescribed attitudes, comes to include every level in man’s nature... By virtue of *al-ihsan*, *al-iman* becomes gnosis, or participation in the divine Intelligence, and *al-islam* becomes extinction in the divine Being” [230].

The human life was considered as a journey (*safar*), and the seeker of God as a traveler (*salik*, singular; *salikun*, plural). In that metaphor we can recognize the recollection of Muhammad’s initiatory journey, equated by some historians with the similar journey mentioned by the Mazdaean Scripture *Ardha Viraf Nameh*. The purpose of the spiritual journey (*suluk*) was to attain the knowledge (*ma’rifah*⁷²⁴) of God. In this state, all vanishes but God, the human qualities of the traveler being replaced with divine qualities, and man and God are united in love. However, the soul could not return to God until after having been through a number of levels (*manazil*, *maqam*, literally: place of rest⁷²⁵), since man’s natural state is mankind (*nasut*). The disciple must observe the Law (*shari’ah*) and obey all the rites of the believers. Another level was the angelic nature (*malakut*) where the way of purity and the power (*jabrat*) were reached, a rank that corresponded to the truth (*haqiqah*). The traveler was subject to an external renunciation (deserting wealth and mundane honors) as well as to an internal one (giving up any profane desires). But, he had to mainly avoid idolatry that could mean

⁷²² The Faith (Arab.).

⁷²³ Literally: “the Virtue” (Arab.); here is understood as “the Path.”

⁷²⁴ The equivalent of *gnósis* (Gr.), or *jnana* (*gyana*) as *nirmala vidya* (Sanskrit).

⁷²⁵ The equivalent of *statio* (Lat.).

either the worshipping of mundane satisfactions or the exaggerated practice of prayers and fasting.

For this purpose, the traveler had three supporters available: (a) the attraction (*indiidhah*), an act of God who drew to Himself the man who already had a tendency or inclination; (b) the devotion (*'ibadah*), a consequence of both a (limited) way to God and also of an (infinite) way within God; (c) the elevation (*'urudi*).

The journey could not be made by oneself but only in the company of a guide. The Sufi master (*sheikh, murshid*, leader, guide, Arab.; corresponding to *pir*, Persian) organized the *halka* (ring, Arab.) of a chosen group, where the former was the teacher himself or appointed a substitute (*khalifah*, Arab.). Many halkas constituted *tariqah* (path, Arab.; a name attributed to the respective school, brotherhood, order). It seems that the early Christian abbots (derived from *abba*, father, Hebr.; *ab*, Aram.) have inspired the function of the *murshid* who, however, distinguished between what could be attained through human effort and what could be reached only through the work of divine grace. The training aimed at turning the soul away from all the distractions of the world and freeing it for the elevation towards the union with God, and included: *sohbat* (conversation, Arab.; between teacher and disciple), *dhikr* (spiritual exercise), *mujaheda* (vigilance, Arab.; against his own weakness), then *awakening* using the shock and the surprise elements (see *supra*, Zen method). The master had the repute of disclosing to the initiate a secret prayer (*wird, hizb*, Arab.).

The believer, after having been *talib* (educated man, doubting God's real nature) and *murid* (willing to continue his search), became *salik* (traveler) and was placed under the spiritual authority of the Sufi guide who made him serve God (*'ubudiya*) until the divine influence made him attain the level of love (*'ichk*). The divine love removed any worldly desires from his heart and made him reach seclusion (*zuhd*); then he lived in contemplation, passed through the rank of *m'arifa* and attained enlightenment, ecstasy (*wajd*). After he had received the revelation of God's true nature (*haqiqah* level) he reached the level of union with God (*wasl*). From there he could proceed further but only death enabled him to attain the absorption⁷²⁶ (*fana*, extinction; or *istihlak*, annihilation) within the Divine. The behavior of the disciples in the master's presence was determined by the rules inspired by those imposed to the dervishes. Some Sufi masters speak even of *fana al-fana* (extinction of extinction), a more advanced stage leading to the ultimate state of awareness.

There were also some authors who distinguished among seven levels in the Sufi journey, corresponding to ranks in the heavenly sphere where the soul was admitted after death. The Persian Sheik Abu-Said, considered no

⁷²⁶ The equivalent of *nirvana* (Sanskrit).

less than 40 stations (*maqamat*) realizing corresponding states (*ahwal*) along the way taking the dervish to the Sufi state from which we mention as examples (the position of the station is given in brackets): intention (1), steady attention (6), invocation (8), surrender (12), asceticism (14), restrain (16), annihilation (21), gnosis (25), love (28), ecstasy (29), meditation (31), union (32), detachment (35), and finally the Sufi state or *tasawwuf* (40).

The Yoga elements are easily identified in the above list as in the case of Hesychasm. The “stages” are analogous to those of the *scala perfectionis* of the medieval Christian monks, while the “states” find their equivalent in Hindu and Buddhist doctrines.

C. IN JUDAISM

*“Think of your soul as part of the Divine Presence,
as the raindrop in the sea”*

Dov Ber of Mezerich (second half of the
18th century) [231]

Judaism was aware, too, of the esoteric doctrines including certain elements of Yoga like the Hesychasm and Sufism. We shall mention only that the members of the Essene sect (*floruit* c. 200 BC - AD 70) were instructed by priests “learned in the *Book of Meditation*” [232].

In this section we would refer, however, to the movement that appeared within Central and Eastern Europe in the 18th century and was known under the name of *Hasidism* (*hasidut*, Hebr.).

The morphology of the Jewish mystical experience is rich and complex. In the 12th century, there was a movement within Judaism that aimed at combining of the ecstatic mysticism with some cosmological concepts. That orientation was not alien to the ideas of Christian Gnosticism that had survived due to the Cathari in Languedoc (south of France). From here the trend spread over to Catalonia and the rest of Spain (ch. XX C4). A multitude of dynamic aspects of the Divine were discovered there and their complex interactions was interpreted through a symbolical exegesis. That exegesis assimilated the Scriptures (the apocryphal and non-canonical texts included), the tradition, the concrete acts of the religious life, and the vocabulary, if not also the philosophical concepts. It was considered that there was an action of the Divine on the human and vice-versa. The new esoteric trend known under the name of *Kabbalah* (ch. II) claimed its roots to have been as early as or maybe earlier than the revealed Law. The Kabbalistic concepts started from ancient esoteric teachings like those of the rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and

Sepher ha-Bahir, which shall become the basic book of Hasidism. The influence of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus, was not to be excluded either. Patai propounded the hypothesis that Indian doctrines reached Spain in the 13th century by means of the Arabs and were conveyed to the Kabbalists by Abulafia, Isaac Albalag and others [233]. Also, after Scholem, the teachings of Abulafia (born in 1240 in Saragosa and dead in 1291, hence a contemporary of Moses of Leon to whom the *Zohar* was assigned) “represent but a Judaized version of that ancient spiritual technique which has found its classical expression in the practices of the Indian mystics who follow the system known as *Yoga*,” including such features as “technique of breathing,... body posture,... certain forms of recitation,... ecstatic visions” [234]. According to Abulafia, while being in ecstasy, the practitioner is filled with a supernatural light (ch. XI E, XXV A). He stressed on the necessity that in the Kabbalah the disciple should be guided by a spiritual master, or else he might suffer a devastating experience as himself had in his youth.

Among the basic books of the Kabbalah already mentioned (ch. II) we shall remind the brief and frequently obscure texts called the *Books of the Hekhaloth* (singular: *hekhhal*, heavenly palace, Hebr.), which describe the rooms and the palace which the seeker have to cross through his journey before arriving in the seventh and last *hekhhal* where the Throne of Glory is found. Twelve or forty days of ascetic exercises consisting in fasting, ritual chants, repetition of the Holy Names and special postures prepared the ecstatic journey. Usually, the union with God was referred to as *devekuth* (adhesion to God’s emanations, the *sefiroth*; ch. IV), implying a state of grace that surpasses ecstasy.

When the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, the disaster was compared to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70. The exile led to a stronger and deeper form of mysticism, a new concept of God, and a new form of Kabbalah, which acquired a Gnostic expression due to Isaac Luria (1534-1572), nicknamed *Ari* (the full name was *ha-Ari ha-Qadosh*, the Holy Lion, Hebr.). He founded an influential Kabbalistic School in Safed (Galilee), since Palestine was the land where an important part of the Jewish diaspora have been established after being successively chased away from an anti-Semitic Europe until the end of the 15th century: Linz and Vienna (1421), Cologne (1424), Augsburg (1439), Bavaria (1442), Moravia (1454), Perugia (1485), Vicenza (1486), Parma (1488), Milan (1489), Tuscany (1494). Starting from there, the Kabbalah rapidly spread all over the entire Asia and the centers of the diaspora in Africa and Europe, where it became a popular movement thus preparing the way to the Messianic movement of Shabbatai Zevi (1626-1676). Another notable center for the exiled Jews was the Balkan

part of the Ottoman Empire.

Luria has shown that man's mission was to restore the mystical union between the Shekhinah and the individual Self (i.e. the Kundalini and Atman), since by then the Jew has begun to think that he was called up to collect the light sparks swallowed by the darkness of evil and "repair" the breach that was pre-cosmic in the divinity reflected as *cosmic* in the contrasts of the visible universe, *historical* in the exile of Israel, and *individual* in the soul of the sinner. He had two ways to follow: the *ordinary* one consisting in strictly obeying the Law, and the *exceptional* one achieved within the Messianic movement of Shabbatai Zevi whose failure was at the origin of a new ideological force. Vital Hayyim described the immensely emotional effect of Luria's disciples (keeping vigil while everybody was asleep, fasting when others were eating, withdrawing into seclusion for a while). He felt that he was in another world, and would find himself shaking and trembling as though possessed by a force outside him (ch. XXIII D). Actually, Luria have insisted that before beginning the spiritual exercises, the disciple should achieve peace of mind, chasing away remorse, guilt and anxiety, anger and aggression, adding that the Shekhinah cannot live in a place of sorrow and pain, and stressing on the fact that happiness and joy were essential [235]. Luria's ideas concerning the union (*yihudim*, Hebr.) of Shekhinah and divinity were attacked much later by the opponents of the Hasidim movement, for instance by Rabbi Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793), a distinguished Talmudist of the epoch.

The ascetic tendencies taken over from the Cathari together with their doctrine were later consolidated in the Germanic countries through the Hasidism, supplied by the same Christian Gnostic sources as the Kabbalah. Hence, Christianity influenced paradoxically Hasidism that hated the former so much.

XXV The name of the movement came from *hasid* (pious, devout; plural: 21, 22 *hasidim*, Hebr.), the equivalent of "righteous" (*tzadiq*, singular, *tzadiqim*, plural, Hebr., in Amos 2:7; signifying also "meek"). This name should be not confused with the ancient *Hasidim* (*Asidaeans*, Lat.) who supported the Maccabees in the 2nd century BC.

In the 18th century a large number of Jews lived in Eastern Europe (one million only in Poland, i.e. one tenth of the population) who willingly received the new pietistic trend which first appeared in Podolia towards the year 1720 and further extended to Poland (Galicia being considered as its traditional cradle), Russia, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Romania, right up to the 20th century.

Hasid is the one who achieved a harmonious balance of the powers acting above him. He is the world everlasting foundation (Proverbs 10:25), which

exists for his sake. The pious man (*hasid*) could rise up to God, feeling himself one with Him in the blissful ecstasy. But neither assiduous study of the Law nor ascetic life of renunciation were required for this; it was just enough to manifest a fervent love for God, a love attained in His service, in simplicity and joy, due to a freely chosen master. These charismatic spiritual guides known as *tzaddiq* (righteous), and also called “miraculous rabbis” or *ve Rabbenu* (our leader, Hebr.) were the animators of that movement. Some exegetes believed that the necessity of having a guide resulted in the fact that although the Hasidic literature extended over two centuries and it was very voluminous, it was also difficult of access because of its linguistic and stylistic peculiarities as well as its ideological premises and the concepts it operates with.

Assuming that the *Talmud* had always been the privilege of a restricted number of intellectuals it was estimated that Judaism owed this movement a popular spiritual renewal together with the use of the Kabbalah concepts for introspection and the creation of a group discipline. As a consequence, from a special discipline reserved only for a few initiates the Kabbalah became a widespread form expressing the Jewish piety.

God is present in every thing created. Thus, there is a divine spark, a good element even in the worst man. The heavenly Father created man whose mission is the release the divine spark from his center. That is the main purpose of the initiation in Mysteries. The Kabbalists called that operation *makifim* (surrounding lights, Hebr.) which enabled the inferior to be transmuted unto a superior plane. The subtle body became similar to an inverted tree having its roots in the heaven (ch. IV).

Israel ben Eliezer (c.1700 - 1760) also called Ba’al Shem Tov (master of the Good [divine] Name, or of Good Renown), or, simply, the Besht, was born in Romania. He is considered to be the founder of Hasidism [235]. He left no writings behind him save a few letters disclosing the essence of his program. His teachings, often conceived as fables and parables, were written down by his disciples and underlay the vast Hasidic literature. He insisted in saying that communion with God (*devekuth*, Hebr.) is much more important than the study of the sacred books. Ba’al Shem acknowledged the women’s prophetic aptitudes (ch. XX B).

In the 15th century, the personified source of revelations assumed the character of a *magid* (literally: sayer or teller; plural form: *magidim*, Hebr.) that is a heavenly mentor. Repeatedly or even regularly, the magid addressed the Kabbalist in a dream, or spoke from his mouth when he was awoken. The magid phenomenon lasted throughout the 18th century, and the next century witnessed other kind of visionary experiences too. The most important five Kabbalists of the Safed group in the 16th century (Isaac Luria, Josephus

Caro, Shlomo Alqabetz, Moses Cordovero, and Hayyim Vital) had their individual magidim and reported in detail their experiences. To give just one example, we shall refer to a secret diary entitled *Magid Mesharim* (Teller of Truths) that reached us only in a fragmentary form. There, Caro (1488-1575) identified his magid with the Mother, Shekhinah, Matronit—all these terms designating her as God’s spouse (ch. XX B). In a passage she said: “I am the mother who chastises her children, I am she who is called Matronit, I am the *Mishnah*, who speaks in your mouth, I am she who dries up the sea⁷²⁷, who pierces Rahab⁷²⁸, I am the chastising mother, I am the angel who redeems the mystery of Jacob” [236].

Concerning the visions it is important that they remind the same manifestations as those noticed by other mystics like in Christian faith (ch. XXV A). First there is the report on the woman seen by Jeremiah in a vision, who introduced herself as Mother Zion, “she who had seven sons” who evidently were the Avatars governing over the seven chakras. She was first mentioned in a Palestinian *Midrash* (perhaps from the 7th century AD), entitled *Pesiqta Rabbati* [237]. There were also other similar visions. The Kabbalist Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi Berukhim (c.1515-1593) also depicted the apparition of the Shekhinah under the form of a woman called Mother Zion [238]. Hayyim Vital (1542-1620) saw a woman like the sun, standing on top of a ladder where she lifted the visionary who called her Mother. The flame of a great fire came out of it, sweeping back and forth like the appearance of a lightning, with great strength [239]. In the appearance of that Avatar, we may easily recognize the luminous manifestation of the Omkara (Sun), the ladder leading up to the heaven (Sahasrara) being the metaphor of the Sushumna. Although the word “Shekhinah” was not mentioned explicitly, in other text Vital referred to the radiance of the Shekhinah [240]. Patai mentioned other visions of the Shekhinah too [241], out of which we remember that of Rabbi Isaac Judah Jehiel Safrin (Sifrin), to whom the Shekhinah appeared like a great light falling (*naphal*, Hebr.) inside the whole house, brighter than the sun at noon, like the shape of a virgin, but he saw not her face. A 17th century Kabbalist of Safed said that a group of mystics sitting in seclusion “imagine the light of the Shekhinah above their heads, as though it were flowing all around them and they were sitting in the midst of light” [242]. Other time he saw a light surrounding his master. Here we find again the Omkara, and the rainbow of the Sahasrara XXV lotus as well as the master surrounded by that light as in the case of Seraphim - 12 of Sarov (ch. XXV A).

⁷²⁷ Isaiah 51:10.

⁷²⁸ “And wounded the Dragon” (Isaiah 51:9).

Dov Ber of Mezerich who was the follower of Ba'al Shem, emphasized the importance of meditation. This practice—using the traditional Hebrew prayers in a mantra-like manner—was central to the teachings of the great rebbes, as it has been to the mystical predecessors. Dov Ber claimed that God and man were a unity: a man would only become *Adam* as God has intended on the day of Creation when he would lose his sense of separation from the rest of existence and became the “cosmic figure of primordial man” [243]. On the above, Armstrong gave the following opinion: “It was a distinctively Jewish expression of the Greek or Buddhist belief in the enlightenment which made human beings aware of their own transcendent dimension” [244] (ch. XIX C). Dov Ber taught the need of clearing the mind and forgetting the self in prayers. He urged: “Think of your soul as part of the Divine Presence, as the raindrop in the sea” [245]. That was what the Hesychast Evagrius of Pont called “the divine ocean” [246]. The *devekuth* (mystical union, cleaving to God, Hebr.) was assimilated to the Kabbalistic term of *kavanah* (deep meditation; plural form: *kavanoth*, Hebr.). Shneur Zalman explained: “This kavanah must be recited in one’s heart” [247], therefore not aloud, as Sahaja Yogis while taking the affirmations.

In order to restore the unity between God and His Shekhinah, the Kabbalistic and Hasidic authors stipulated in their writings the duty of reciting the formula *l’shem yihud*, and thus this practice became part of the everyday life of the community at large, and even the simple Jew did this ten or fifteen times a day. *Yihudim* was recited “over everything” [248], in the same manner as are recited the mantras over the chakras and channels, food and aliments to be charged with vibrations etc. (ch. XV D and XIX C).

Hasidim regarded man as a chariot for the Shekhinah. “This is the purpose of man: to purify his matter [i.e. his body] until it becomes a chariot for the Shekhinah, in body and soul... to enable her to unite with her Husband. This is the true wedding ceremony, and understand it” [249], thus disclosing its esoteric meaning. The body have to be purified of *qlippah* (husk, Hebr.) meaning the dark forces (evil spirits) of *sitra ahra* (the other side, that is the dark side, Hebr.; of the Tree of Life), which corresponded to the term of *bhoot* (Sansk.).

We shall conclude that section by mentioning the Hasidic school *Habad*⁷²⁹, founded at the end of the 18th century by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lodi/Lyady (1745-1813), regarded as one of the most remarkable Hasid character. His doctrine was fully explained in *Tanya*, originally called by its author: *Liqqute Amarim* (Collection of sayings). It was he who inserted in the sephirothic tree (ch. IV) a new sephirah called Daath (Knowledge, that is Gnosis) between Hokhmah (Wisdom) and Binah (Understanding), thus

⁷²⁹ An acrostic of three sephiroth: *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, and *Da’ath* (ch. IV).

acknowledging—again and again—the relationship between the Kabbalah and Gnosticism. The name of *habad* comes from the initial letters of these three sephiroth. From *habad*, it originated *habotnik* (Slav.), signifying ascetic, man of strictness. Armstrong showed: “The disciplines of Habad made Kabbalah a tool of psychological analysis and self-knowledge, teaching the Hasid to descend, sphere by sphere, even more deeply into his inner world until he reached the center of himself. There he discovered the God that was the only reality” [250].

The main drawback of the Hasidism resulted from the cult of personality (the *righteous*) and the consequent inconveniences, as well as that of refusing any cultural contact with the surrounding world. These were the reasons bringing about discrimination in the aforesaid countries, with regard to other Jews, inducing the clear splitting of the Jewish society into the *Hasidim* and their opponents (*Mitnagdim*), leading as far as boycotting the marriage between the members of the two fractions coming close even to a schism of Judaism in the 19th century. The new stream, *haskalah* (Hebrew enlightenment), put an end to that dispute, by blaming both *Hasidim* and *Mitnagdim*.

NOTES

[1] Schuon, *Gnosis*, p.65. [2] Victor H. Mair, *Tao Te Ching*, Bantam Books, New York 1990, pp.146-147. [3] Ching, p.435. [4] Needham, vol. 2, p.454. [5] *Meditations of the Tarot*; quoted in Matthews, p.77. [6] Evagrius, *Prayer LX*, in Gabriel Love, *The Beginnings of Christian Moral Psychology*, Senior Thesis, Wesleyan 1995; cf. *Centuria* IV.50 (ed. W. Frankenberg), p.293. [7] *Apud* Lossky, *In the Image...*, p.35. [8] Seraphim of Sarov, *The Ascetic Word*, Ed. Popov, vol. I, ch. 16, p.43. [9] Evdokimov, *L'amour...*, p.57, o.t. [10] Diadochus, capita 97, in Diadoque de Photicé, *Cent chapitres...*, p.165. [11] *Ibid.*, capita 85, p.147, and note 2 to pp.66-67. [12] Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.210. [13] Dom L. Villecourt, *La date et l'origine des Homéliees spirituelles attribuées à Macaire*, in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 5 (1920); cf. Fr. J. Stiglmayr, *Pseudo-Makarius und die Altermystik der Messalianer*, in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 49 (1925), pp.244-260. [14] W. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius*, Leiden 1954. [15] Epiphanius, 80.1-3, vol. II, pp.629-631. [16] Michel Psellus, *De daemonibus*, in Marsilio Ficinius, *Auctores Platonici, Iamblichus de mysteriis Aegyptiorum*. [17] Schuon, *The Transcendent...*, pp.134-135. [18] Scrima, Introduction to Schuon, *Despre unitatea...*, p.17, o.t. [19] Anton Dumitriu, *Terra Mirabilis*, in *Eseuri*, p. 678. [20] Evdokimov, *La connaissance...*, p.74. [21] Scrima, *Timpul...*[22] Lossky, *The Mystical...*, p.39. [23] Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, in Plotinus, *Ennead*, Bude's Collection, I, pp.26-27. [24] Origen, *De Principiis (Peri archon)*, II.8.3, also in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 11, col.222-223. [25] Athanasius, *Epistula ad Serapionem* 1.24, in Migne, *P.G.* vol. 26, col.585,588. [26] Augustine, *Confessions* ch. I, § 1 (transl. by Albert C. Outler), in *Library of Christian Classics*, vol. VII, Westminster Press 1955. [27] Quoted by Evdokimov, *La connaissance...*, p.19, o.t. [28] Lossky, *In the Image...*, pp.144-145. [29] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VI.61. [30] Ptolemy, *Letter to Flora* 7.9. [31] Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* XXVII.66. [32] Basil, in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 32, col.188C-189A; quoted by Lossky, *In the Image...*, p.145; cf. p.209. [33] *Ibid.*, *P.G.*, vol. 32, col. 188A, 192C-193A; quoted in *ibid.*, p.147. [34] Resch, pp.339-341. [35] *Apud* Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, pp.117-118. [36] *Ibid.*, p.306. [37] Resch, note 1 to p.340. [38] *The Hagioritic Tome*, in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 150, col.1225-1227. [39] Lossky, *In the Image...*, p.50. [40] *The Hagioritic Tome*, in Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 150, col.1833D. [41] Irenaeus, *A.H.*, III.19; Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, LIV.3, Migne, *P.G.*, vol. 25, col.192B; cf. *Catechism...* § 460; also Schuon, *Christianity/Islam*, p.169; De Souzenelle, p.33. [42] Diadochus, capita 89, in Diadoque de Photicé, *Cent chapitres...*, p.152, o.t. [43] *Ibid.*,

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AFTERWORD

TOWARDS A NEW AWARENESS

“Open mine eyes, and I shall behold wondrous things out of thy Law”

Psalm 119:18

“That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, that which we contemplated... and bear witness and report to you”

1 John 1:1-2

“Truth is what it is. We cannot change it. The only thing we can do is to experiment it”

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Here we are, author and reader, at the end of a road that, for some people, might be the beginning of a new voyage. Let us remember, therefore, the parable of the sower and ask what soil does the seed of this book fall on?

Some will reject the book: they are convinced atheists, are they not? Others will react similarly, however placed at the opposite end: they are the slaves of a false religiousness, not being aware that it is coming from the outside and not from the depth of their spiritual being. They have been left in the chains of the prejudices fervently cultivated all through two millenniums of Christian ignorance. Since, as it was shown in the beginning of this writing, although the *Bible is the most read book*, it is, paradoxically, *the least understood* at the same time. It is exactly what we have tried to prove all through the present work. This is addressed neither to the former nor to the latter; also we believe it is not meant for those who will rather consider it as a *curiosity*, a *speculation*, a simple mental exercise, maybe interesting, but... nothing more!

Bible Enlightened is a challenge for those who can be called the SEEKERS OF TRUTH. After hard efforts made through countless lives—that were not recorded by human memory but whose reflection in their subtle structure nevertheless granted them a privileged position—they have come to reach a high level of spiritual evolution. They *feel* that mankind has attained a moment of deep crisis and has stepped on a no-return way for most of the people. At the same time, they become aware of the more and more oppressive manifestation of the negative forces that have spread over the

world and that, through the weeds of evil want to stifle the luminous side of the divine creation, to prevent the highest achievement, the crowning of the spiritual evolution, the union with the Supreme Being, that represents the final goal of every creature. The sensing of danger, the intuition of the possible approach of an eschatological end for the entire creation, induces in them a special state of alertness and hence a potential opening towards anything pertaining to spiritual growth. That was the reason for calling them SEEKERS OF TRUTH. It is the TRUTH, the discovery of which is the purpose of their life on this earth.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* included the following invaluable advice: “When thy mind leaves behind forest of delusion,/ Thou shalt go beyond the Scriptures of times past and still to come./ When thy mind that may be wavering in the contradictions of many Scriptures,/ Shall rest unshaken in divine contemplation, then the goal of Yoga is thine” [1].

This book was written for them and we are convinced that they will receive its message just like the heat-withered plant awaits the blessed dew of the dawn. It is the dawn of a new day, of a new age, of a new Yuga.

Any journey, no matter how long, starts with a single step⁷³⁰, one single step that can be decisive. This book is just the first step, the start of a voyage towards the pure knowledge (*Nirmala Vidya*), towards the divine knowledge.

The difficult process of knowledge begins by the knowledge of the Self. *Gnóthi seautón*, “know thy Self,” as the ancient Greek wisdom said, as well as the wisdom lasting for millenniums at the feet of the Himalayas. We here remember the advice given to Kersten by the old Tibetan monk: before trying to change the world you should better start by finding the truth about yourself.

The need for a change begins from introspection: before getting down to work, we make the inventory of the personal disaster, we try to estimate the distance separating us from the divine qualities that the Universal Archetype reflected within our human microcosm.

Yoga is a path. *SAHAJA YOGA* is the shortest and the simplest path. It was a gift granted to the humankind because the man living presently has not been left much time; anyway, not too much time. The Last Judgment has begun! The great selection, sifting the chaff from the wheat, is in progress!

Amaury de Riencourt wrote these prophetic words towards the end of the millennium: “While our normal present-day form of self-consciousness may have appeared sporadically in our anthropoid ancestors, only to become the norm today, hundreds of thousands of years later, the higher stages of consciousness provided by the awakening of this mysterious force, which appears only occasionally here and there in mystics and geniuses, will

⁷³⁰ “A journey of a thousand *li* begins with a single step,” said Lao-tse.

become the norm of the future for the whole human race. If and when this happens, all present-day institutionalized religions and denominations will melt away like butter under the sun. Blind faith will no longer be required because it will be replaced by *knowledge*... He will see, hear, touch and taste the truth that lies beyond the space-time world... He will become a deliberate participant in the great task of raising human consciousness to ever higher levels... It might well be that mankind is now on the threshold of a psychological and physiological revolution of a magnitude that will overthrow all the social and political revolutions of our century—made possible by the seemingly incongruous, yet perfect logical marriage between sciences and Eastern mysticism's insight" [2].

All along this path that you are to follow, the path to pure knowledge, the knowledge of thy Self, the way of the Universal Dharma (*Vishwa Nirmala Dharma*), you, my unknown brother or sister reader, are not left alone! Because, if mankind counted only a few initiates in the earlier days, it has hundreds of thousands today. All of them have entered a new state of awareness, and they have already made the decisive evolutionary leap that they had been waiting for thousands (or millions) of lives! It is the leap from out of the illusion state (*Maya*) of the ego, confusing the individual as a representative of (the old) humankind, towards the higher awareness of the Self (Atman). This Self Realization achieved *at once and without any manifest effort* in SAHAJA YOGA, allows for the individual awareness to be connected to the collective awareness, to enter a higher state of awareness, to be united with the Universal Unconscious, namely God Himself. This is a helping hand that, through the divine grace, the GREAT AVATAR stretches out to the whole world in these crucial days. From now on, it is up to you, reader, my unknown brother or sister...

NOTES

[1] Juan Mascaro, *The Bhagavad Gita* 2.52-53, Penguin Classics 1962. [2] De Riencourt, pp.196-197.