

**‘CHAKRA’
The Symbol of Dharma**

**By
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Transaction no. 51

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE
Bangalore-560 004**

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TRANSACTION NO 51

Professor B R Sharma who is U G C Professor at the Oriental Institute in Mysore was invited to deliver the Founder's Day address at the Indian Institute of World Culture on August 19, 1978. The meeting was presided over by Smt. Sophia Wadia.

Professor Sharma chose the concept of CHAKRA as a Symbol of Dharma in Brahminical literature—the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Mahabharata on one hand, and the Buddhistic scriptures in Pali and Sanskrit on the other.

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Printed by W. Q. Judge Press, 25, Residency Road, Bangalore 560 025 and published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore 560 004. Printed in India

Chakra: The Symbol of Dharma

By Professor B. R. SHARMA

I

In my address this evening I am making a brief survey of the concept of CHAKRA as a symbol of Dharma in Brahmanical literature,—the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Mahabharata, on one hand, and the Buddhist scriptures in Pali and Sanskrit, on the other. I have excluded the Tantra literature from the purview of my survey for the reason that it is irrelevant to the theme of my address today. The most intricate symbols we come across in Tantra literature are of different nature and they are employed in rituals by the *Tantriks* for achieving magical power which could be utilized for ends other than self-development and spiritual uplift. The black magicians and sorcerers who stealthily secure havens in this system resort to utilize their power for demoniac purposes and harmful ephemeral gains which at the end precipitate their own utter ruination. Again the Yoga system of philosophy, which is closely connected with Buddhism, with its characteristic practice of self-concentration, abstract meditation and mental abstraction, dwells on the mystic chakras as part of its yogic *Sadhana*. These *Chakras* of Yoga literature, it may be noted, are the technical or conventional terms representing the nerve centres located in one's own body, — the ascending steps of graded spiritual potencies called variously and figuratively as *Koshas*, *Padmas*, or *Kundalis* in Yoga philosophy. This is actually a rugged path with thorns, winding through the difficult terrain of hard discipline and self-mortification, leading one, sometimes, nowhere near the spiritual salvation. Bhagavan Buddha, after undergoing untold hardship and also subjecting himself to self-inflicted sufferings, abandoned this extreme recourse only to seek Madhyama-yana, the moderate '*Middle Path*' which bestowed on him the bliss of attaining enlightenment, eternal peace and, ultimately directed him to the path of Nirvana. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Bhagvan Shri Krishna too deplors the rigidity of the spiritual extremists belonging to the Asuric nature who, in their pursuit to attain supernatural power, not only torment every limb of their body but even the *atman* himself dwelling within the innermost core of their body.¹

I have, therefore, excluded this literature too from the focus of my today's lecture. Both these systems are highly *individualistic*, and consequently by their very nature are of limited appeal. They are not inspired with a desire to serve the suffering fellow beings and lead them to the path of enlightenment and weal. Eventually the Chakras, both in Tantra and Yoga literature, represent something different, — they are the mystic symbols forming part of the mysterious ritual practices in Tantra; and the gradual ascending steps in *Sadhana*, the Yoga discipline. The message of the Bhagavad-Gita and the preachings of Bhagavan Buddha are essentially for *lokasamgraha*, for leading all suffering beings to bliss and happiness through the path of Dharma.

Now before touching the main theme it will not be out of place if I say a few words about symbolism as reflected in the ancient scriptures of Hindus as of Buddhists.

The symbols in the form of visible or audible signs or emblems were used by the primitive people all over the world for the purpose of conveying simple ideas, — thoughts, emotions or experiences, — which could, riot otherwise easily be conceived and expressed in the limited vocabulary known to them. But the symbols used by the highly civilized

people of the world in the past were of different nature. They were used to express higher thoughts, to represent the religious mystery and metaphysical concepts which are too deep for words. It may be noted in this connection that “the more refined and abstract symbolising represents a later phase of speculative thoughts and marks a forward step in the progress of philosophic insight”²

Among the religions of the world Hinduism, for that matter Buddhism as well, makes the most use of symbolism. In these two greatest religions of the world even names and titles are something symbolic. For instance, the Sanskrit alphabets invested with perfect phonetic value are regarded as of divine origin, — said to have been revealed by Mahadeva Himself through the rhythmic sound produced by the *Damaru*, held high in his hand during His *Tmdavanritya*, the great cosmic dance. They are, therefore, significantly called *Akshara-samanaya*, the imperishable divine symbols descended from eternity, expressly indicating the purpose for which they were brought into being. *Akshara*, in philosophical term, indeed stands for Brahman, the ultimate reality and also is used as an epithet of Brahman, *aksharam brahma paramam* as in the Bhagavadgita.³ Similarly the Vedic metres as also the *padas* and *aksharas* that constitute a Vedic metre, are all symbolic when they are represented in the mantras, even as the *aksharas* found in the mystic words and phrases. The Vedic mantras will be of no consequences if recited without the full knowledge of the significance of the metres in which it is composed, of the deity to whom it is dedicated and of the Rishi to whom it was revealed.⁴ The Vedic metres, even as the Vedic deities, are offered oblations in sacrifices. The Gayatri, the shortest among the Vedic metres with three *padas*, which had originally only four syllables each, ‘holds the forefront of the sacrifices’⁵ as the Vedas say. This most mystical Vedic metre is referred to as the great *Golden Bird* who brought down the celestial Soma, the drink of immortality, from the highest heaven at the behest of sages and gods. This Great Bird was escorted in her mission by a female goat with a lighted torch who wins Soma for the Gayatri, which was kept hidden in the depth of formidable fort in the highest heaven,⁶ *parama vyoman*. This Vedic legend, in which the Gayatri and the celestial Soma figure prominently, is wrapped in a language replete with riddles and symbols, and is not in its entirety easily understandable to immature human mind. It speaks in the language of the Rishis, the adepts in esoteric doctrine, a language which « understood only by the enlightened scholars, designated as *Kavayo vipasheitah*, who are gifted with vision and metaphysical insight, *i.e.*, *pakena manasa*, as said in Vedic terminology. Symbols in Hinduism as in Buddhism constitute distinctly marked signposts for guiding the initiated into the secrecy of occultism and then lead them to the right direction on their onward journey. They take them to a realm which is higher and nobler but at the same time invisible to the physical eye and also beyond and above thought or word. The esoteric knowledge, which is acquired by yogins through persistent hard penance and irksome trials and passing through the cycle of incarnations, is always kept secret, — hidden in the depth of their heart, — *Dhamasya tattvam nihitam guhayam*, —like the precious jewels by the mythical serpents in the depth of their hidings, anxiously guarded; This secret knowledge termed as *adkyatma-jnana* or *brahma-vidya*, in Upanishadic language, is carefully concealed in the language of symbolism and the key to this most secret and precious treasure, *guhyat guhyatara vidya*, handed over only to those selective few, who, after¹ strict observation and hard spiritual test were chosen and initiated. They are then admitted into the circle of adepts as novices; they can open and enter the secret chamber of Brahavidya. A guru at no circumstances will part with the secret knowledge to a disciple unless he felt fully confident that his chosen disciple is worthy of being a *chela* to inherit the great tradition, the tradition referred to by Bhagavan Shri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita.⁷ We may note in this connection the strict scriptural injunction, that one may rather opt to die right with the *gupta-vidya* he possessed, than

suffer transmission thereof to one proved to be unworthy to receive it — *vidyaya sardham mriyeta / na vidyam Usare vapet*.⁸

Again the deities, Hindu or Buddhist, whether with four or more hands holding different objects or showing different *mudras* are all visible emblems of expressions of abstruse philosophical concepts, — of course, the stepping stones that would lead the worshippers ultimately to the invisible higher plane of reality, — *asatye vartmani sthitva tatah satyam samihate* —⁹ as Bhatrihari, the great grammarian philosopher said. A *sadhaka* does not worship the mere symbol, the idol in stone or metal, in clay or wood, — he does not stop at it and if he does, the procedure degenerates into meaningless ritualism. The symbols are like the toys dear and educative in the hand of infant learners — *upayah shiksamananam balanam upalalanah* —. The time an infant realizes that they are only the lifeless toys and not the real ones, he- at once throws the toys away saying *neti, neti*, “not this, not this” that he would want. Through the symbol a worshipper endeavours to go beyond, in quest of reality, in search of Truth. Through the unreal to the real; through the untrue to the True. “Through the nonbeing to the being; through darkness to light” as the Upanishads say — *asato ma sad gamaya. tamaso ma jyotir gamaya*¹⁰.

The whole structural design of a Hindu temple with its premises represents an epitome of the universe as conceived by the great architect Maya of the Asura race. The idol installed in the *sanctum sanctorum* the innermost apartment of a temple, symbolizes the universal soul dwelling therein. The ornamental designs and figures on the exterior structures of a temple and its *go pur as* are deeply symbolic. The rituals followed as also the mode of warship practised are often suggestive, im-pregnant with great significance. It is a form of visual education for the devotees and neophytes, the ‘first step towards the path of gradual spiritual development’ leading to liberation and ultimate merger in the *divya-jyotis*, the great divine light, or to Nirvana, complete extinction in the term of Buddhist philosophy. I may, in this connection, point out just one instance, *i.e.* the act of *nirajana*, one of the sixteen ceremonies, that is performed almost at the conclusion of *puja* by a worshipper. This is done after the offering of *dhupa* (burning of incense), *dipa* (lustration) and *naivedya* (offerings) to the deity. In the act of *dhupa* the live cinder covered with smoke of incense represents the individual *atman* enveloped by ignorance.¹¹ The worshipper after showing the *dhupa* to the deity lights¹² a lamp, a *dipa*, with wick made of three cotton shreds rolled into one and soaked in ghee, which he waives round the deity thrice. In the fourth round, however, he finishes it half; lowers and takes it towards the feet of the Lord; then keeps it down and lastly extinguishes the light. This lamp symbolizes the individual *atman*, *i.e.*, the worshipper himself, fired with the burning desire to merge with the *divya-jyotis*, the great Divine Light, and the waiving of lamp represents the cycle of incarnation. Then comes *naivedya*, the ceremony of offerings of the cooked food, fruits etc., at the feet of the Almighty God, represented by the idol in our present context. The renunciation of the hard-earned fruits of one’s own action is regarded as a great sacrifice, a real *tyaga*, and still greater if one could renounce the fruits of one’s all actions in toto,— *sarva-karma-phala-tyaga*—,¹³ which is indeed a most difficult task for a *dehabhrit*, an embodied¹⁴ soul. The ritual of *naivedya* symbolizes the *karma-phala-tyaga*, which leads a devotee one step nearer to *Brahma-nirvana*, the eternal peace.¹⁵ An individual *atman*, blessed with the grace of God, leading pure and dedicated life with devotion and practising *sadhana* purifies himself more and more in each of his subsequent incarnations. By this process, passing through the waive of incarnations the individual *atman* emerges brighter and purer burning down the pairs of opposites and the *sams- karas* of the past lives. The series of *nirajanas*, the waivings of light round the deity, represent the gradual spiritual development of the *Sadhaka* through a series

of incarnations, and then the last and conclusive lustration in this series, which is done with camphor, burns itself completely and disappears leaving nothing behind, unlike the earlier *nirajanas* done with wicks which leave char behind. A *sadhaka*, who has reached the highest stage of spiritual development, when he transcends his material existence and rises to the ultimate goal, will have all *samskaras* and *vasanas* of his *karma*, past and present, consumed in the flame of devotion, in the fire of penance, as the blazing flame reduces the fuel to ashes¹⁶. No more *skandhas* will be left behind when a Buddha attains Nirvana, complete extinction.

Among the innumerable symbols represented in the scriptures of Hindus and Buddhists some are presentative of qualities or attributes, as the lotus, the well-known symbol in Indian literature representing pristine purity that is preserved in impure surroundings, and some are suggestive of higher thoughts and philosophical insight as the third eye of Mahadeva. The ancient Aryans of this great land had made a penetrating study of the occult science, and subsequently the mystical symbols are the reflections of a secret language used in ancient scriptures, — the codes in which the key to occultism and philosophical insight is concealed. There are frontiers, we must know, where language as a medium of communication for attainment of purely human ends no longer suffices, where its limitations, when we deal with metaphysical subtleties of thoughts and expression, become too obvious. The ancient literature of the Hindus as of Buddhists is, therefore, prone to symbolizing proclivity. It is adorned with allegory and metaphors which are often very hard to understand and explain. The Sanskrit is a language of utmost delicacy and flexibility with an almost unlimited vocabulary, which could be minutely analysed and described exposing all the shades of meaning, including the subtlest, pregnant therein. This treasure of language proved to be the apt medium capable of expressing even the most abstract philosophical theories, metaphysical subtleties and esoteric doctrines in a style rich in beauty and suggestiveness unparalleled in the history of any other language. For this reason it is regarded by the sages as gods¹ own language — *sanskrtam nama daivi vag anvakhyata maharshibhih*,¹⁷ — not invented by man for attainment of purely human ends.

For our address today we have picked up just one of such symbols from our ancient scriptures, I mean *chakra*, the most mystical and well-known symbol in the Aryan tradition.

BRAHMANICAL LITERATURE

The Vedic Period:

1. *Etymology*: To begin with let me assure you that the symbolization of *Chakra* in its many varieties and ramifications could be traced back to the Vedas. Etymologically the word is connected with the Sanskrit root $\sqrt{\text{car}}$ or $\sqrt{\text{kr}}$ meaning to move forward. Yaska, one of the oldest known Vedic interpreters,¹⁸ whose exegesis has come down to us, attempts to derive the term from roots $\sqrt{\text{cak}}$, car , or $\sqrt{\text{kram}}$, all broadly meaning to move forward, but imbibing even such minute semantic subtleties which the word *chakra* carries in its various contexts. Sayana, the well-known Vedic commentator of the 14th century, who closely follows the foot-steps of Yaska in this respect, explains *chakra* as follows: *cakanac caranat kramanad va cakrani rashmayah*¹⁹ “the ray (of the sun) that shines or permeates”; *punah punah kramanashilam mandaldkhyam rathacakram*:-²⁰ “the orb (of the sun) identified with the wheel of a car which incessantly rolls on”; *cankramanani kamtani*²¹ “(one’s own) karma that closely follows behind”-. This amazingly pleasing flexibility of etymology, not a very uncommon phenomenon, of the Sanskrit language-, enabled us to unearth, different facets of meaning, the term *chakra* conveyed. For a student of philosophy *chakra* is no longer a simple material object; no more an ordinary wheel with spokes and nave. For him it represented varieties of abstract notions, abstruse philosophical concepts relating to esoteric doctrine, too deep for words.

The word *chakra* philologically means intensive or repeated action and it is used in the sense of a wheel as its nature is to rotate and move forward. Since the Sun, time, and life ever continue to move on incessantly, they were allegorically termed as *wheels* by the people in ancient times. It also later became an eloquent symbol of invincible power, temporal and spiritual, and many deities and legendary monarchs such as Prithu, Mandhata etc., possessed the wheel as one of their indispensable and celebrated decorations or weapons. For Bhagavan Buddha the wheel symbolized the eternal doctrine which he preached and propagated through his sermons and discourses. Many legends and myths later grew around the wheel, a fact, which becomes abundantly clear as we glance through the Buddhist religious literature. It has gradually evolved itself into a very complicated symbol in Tantric Buddhism imbibing innumerable complex and colorful conventional signs. Then again we have the six mystic chakras such as muladhara, svadhisthana etc., referred to in Yoga literature. Thus, *chakra* later turned out to be a difficult technical term, indeed a cryptic expression netting within its perimetre a variety of things which taxed the mind even of an adept. While the mechanised modern world has adopted it as an expressive sign of mechanical and industrial progress or power, India still looked at it as an expression spreading the message of *ahimsa*, compassion and as such, the symbol has rightly found a proud place in our national emblem. But the wheel adopted by the modern mechanised industry as a symbol of material progress and prosperity is a wheel with dentures of war-tank or armoured car which would destroy and suppress everything that comes in contact with it. Whereas the wheel of *Dharma* carried a different message, a message of liberation and elevation and not of destruction and suppression. Nevertheless, the wheel, thus, rolled on through the ages, as a symbol most simple, most complicated and most powerful, and is decorating today even the modern material world. It is, therefore, worthwhile, to delve into the complexity of this cosmic symbol and understand its mystery.

2. *Rigveda*: In the Rigveda the *chakra* is primarily a symbol of Time and the Sun, but in a few references, according to Geldner,²² the well-known German Vedic Scholar, it

also symbolizes sovereign authority. There are hymns and verses scattered here and there in the philosophical hymns of the Rigveda as of the Atharvaveda which dwell on cosmogony, Creator of the universe, the cosmic order which governs the destiny of the universe and the ultimate reality. In some of the philosophical speculations reflected in these references *chakra* as a symbol figures prominently. The infinite time is likened to *chakra* with its divisions of seasons, months, fortnights, days and nights which are depicted as constituting different parts of the figure of *chakra* and thus completing the whole form. The famous *Asya Vsmasya*⁸⁸ hymn is one of such hymns in the Rigveda in which the allegory representing time, the Sun, as also the ultimate reality is carried to such an extent that the exact meaning of many a verse in the hymn remains shrouded²⁴ in deep mystery. The whole hymn, profuse in symbolism, obscure in meaning and intricate and confounding in expression is too complicated to be explained in plain words. In this one of the most difficult hymns of the Rigveda, the chariot of the Sun has been taken as a symbol of Time Supreme that governs the universe and its only wheel is described as having *three naves* which are interpreted by the scholists²⁵ as representing three divisions of time, viz., past, present, and future. This cosmic wheel is described as decay less, *a-jaram*, and also as devoid of wear and fatigue-, *an-arvam*, and further it is said that this mighty wheel stands as the firm support for the entire universe which rotates on this ever revolving wheel,- *yatrema vishva bhuvanani tasthuh*²⁶. This hymn with its apparently contradictory statements is full of riddles which may baffle even the Rishi who composed*⁷ it. For instance in the above verse the cosmic chariot of the Sun is said to have only one wheel,- *ratham eka-cakram*-, and that it is drawn by a single horse, *eko ashvo vahati*-. But in the very next verse the same chariot is described as having seven wheels and as drawn by seven horses, *imam sapta-cakram sapta vahanty-ashvah*-.²⁸ Sayana, the Vedic commentator, caught in a dilemma here, attempts to solve the riddles by explaining *chakra*²⁹ in *sapta-cakram* as the cosmic rays which, he says, are seven and *ratha*³⁰ as the solar orb and lastly *ashva* as an adjective meaning ‘pervading.’ Again both Yaska and Sayana interpret *sapta* in this context to mean *ever-moving*,³¹ *incessantly rolling on*-, a meaning more aptly applicable to the wheel of time, than anything else-, and this *Kalachakra*, moreover it is said, even the Almighty God cannot bring to a halt. We may quote just one of such verses from this hymn in which the allegory is carried almost to perfection:

*dvadasharam nahi taj-jaraya varvarti cakram pari dyam rtasya\
A putra agne mithnunaso atra sapta shatani vimshatishca tasthuh*³²

Here, the phrase *rtasya cakram varvarti* is of immense interest to us in our present context. It refers to the enormous wheel of cosmic order, which rotates incessantly day and night round the universe yet never gets worn out, nor fails a moment,- *na hi taj-jaraya*. *Rita* in the Rigveda, as Dharma in later literature, stands for cosmic order that governs the destiny of visible and invisible universe. The Wheel of Time is further described in another verse as “the five-footed universal father with twelve forms who is obscured by the mist in the farther half of³³ heaven.” The heavy-laden axle of this enormous wheel never gets heated, and its nave always remains strong and in perfect³⁴ order. Time, which marks the beginning and end of the universe, governs the events and happenings therein every moment. It pervades the present through the past and the future through the present. Therefore, it is equated with *ashva*, a horse, or is said as drawn by *ashva*, that runs, without a halt or rest for ever. There are some more verses in this and some other hymns which speak of the mysteries of Time Supreme, described as a wheel of eternal, all-powerful and imperishable nature. The *seer* of this *Asya Vamasya* hymn of the Rigveda is known as *Dirghatamas* by name who, born blind as many are before being initiated, passes through

long nights of darkness before he could see the rays of light of dawn; before he was favoured with the bliss of attaining enlightenment. Hence he is called *Dirghatmas*, *Long-darkness*, a name meaningfully invented, indeed symbolic. This eternal cosmic wheel has been referred to later in the Mahabharata as the chakra of the Supreme Kalapursha and in the Buddhist Literature as the chakra of the Eternal Dharma-, the one in the Mahabharata is said to have been turned by Janaka, the Rajarshi, and the other by Bhagavan Buddha.

The visible sun has been described as golden wheel-, *surash-cakram hiranyavam*-,³⁵ as also his own eye-, *suryasya caksuh*-,³⁶ which Indra, the great Vedic god, is said to have turned to dispel darkness³⁷ from the world. Indra also is accredited to have turned the wheel of sovereign authority *maghonam cakram*³⁸ as the Chakravartins, the Universal Monarchs, did later according to the Buddhist canons.

Besides the sun, it may be noted, some more Vedic deities, viz., Soma, Pusan, the Maruts and the Ashvins are said to have possessed the chariots. Among these deities, Soma and Pusan have a seven-wheeled chariot with five reins, which, though normally traverses the heavens, can, at will, move to any realm and any direction. This chariot of Soma and Pusan can be yoked and driven by mere thought-, *manasa yujyamanam*³⁹-. Among all the chariots mentioned in the Vedas, the golden chariot of the Ashvins presents us with riddles, most formidable, most mysterious, and clearly defying our understanding of its secrets. It has *three* wheels⁴⁰ but only two are visible to the ordinary eyes; it travels *three* worlds-bhur, *bhuvah*, *svah*, on its two wheels, keeping the third, that is most beautiful, always hidden; and it has *three* seats !

The hymn,⁴¹ in which this riddlesome chariot has been described, is among the most difficult hymns of the Rigveda, as abstruse as the hymn of *Asya Vamasya*, if not more; It speaks in the language of occultists, the language which is understood, only by gods and *kavis*⁴² (Mahatmas) — as the Vedas say. The apparent subject of this hymn, known as Surya-hymn, is the marriage of Surya, the only daughter of the sun, who proposes her to Soma. This hymn has eventually found an important place in our marriage rituals. Soma, is a deity who has successfully eluded our understanding of his identity or personality being the most mystical and evasive Vedic divinity. His natural dwelling is in the highest region, the effulgent, ever-bright realm of heaven, whence he observes the functioning of the cosmic order. “As the earth is held in its place by truth, as the heaven is held by the sun, as the Adityas⁴³ keep their position by cosmic order so doth Soma stand on the top of heaven”-⁴⁴ thus begins the hymn. The greatness of the earth, the strength of the Adityas, and the shining of the constellation in the highest heaven are all sustained by the mysteries of Soma, who lives amidst the constellation⁴⁵ far beyond in the third⁴⁶ heaven. Further the Vedic Sage expressly says in this hymn that it is only the brahmans led in the *Brahmavidya*,- not the ordinary folk,- who can know what is Soma in truth. Soma is wrongly identified, says the Rishi, with a plant of that name by the ritualists who crush the plant and drink the juice thereof assuming it to be the real Soma and believing that it would lead them to immortality, although “No ordinary mortal can think of tasting even a drop of this Soma”- *na tasyashnati kashcana*⁴⁷ This was the Soma that was brought down by that great golden Bird, the mystic Gayatri, from far off heaven at the behest of sages and gods.

Surya, the solar bride of the celestial Soma too is as mysterious. Her companions are none other than the two Vedic *richas*, viz., *Raibhi*, the verse of magic power,- by reciting which gods and sages attained heaven-; and *narashamsis*, the eulogistic hymns, which glorify and explore the mysteries of the Mysterious; her robe is adorned with gatha, divine music; heaven and earth constitute her great treasures; wisdom is her cosy pillow; vision

provides *abhyanjana*, the auspicious unguent to her eyes.⁴⁸ The chariot on which she rides is again not less mysterious. The Saman hymns form the cross bar of the pole of this chariot; her own two ears serve as the wheels;⁴⁹ *vyana*, one of her five life-breaths, that permeates the whole body, is the axle; *kurira*, the Vedic metre, represents the cushion laid inside the chariot, or furnishes its interior decoration; the wide heaven acts as its roof; her own mind forms the body; the sun and moon are the horses that draw this chariot; and the path for the drive is high in heaven wide open,- *divi pant hash⁵⁰ caracarah-*. Mounting on this most intriguing unique chariot, Surya, the bride, flanked by the Ashvins⁵¹ on both sides and with Agni in front leading the bridal procession, proceeds to meet Soma, her would-be husband.⁵²

The chariot of the Ashvins in question drawn by a mighty⁵³ ass, is again another riddle not less formidable, not less intriguing, than the one described above. The Vedic *Rishi* being unable to understand the mystery of this chariot asks the Ashvins themselves to explain the riddle but the answer was rather⁵⁴ evasive. While two of the wheels of this chariot which are visible, could be interpreted by the *brahamans*, well-versed in sacred lores, the third, the most mysterious one, which always remains hidden in *guha* or high in the head⁵⁵ of the Bull (aghnya), is understood only by those who have reached the highest stage in self-realization⁵⁶ i.e., by the *jivanmuktas*. It is again said that while two of the wheels of the Ashvins' Chariot traverse the regions independent of each⁵⁷ other, the one, the most mysterious and beautiful,⁵⁸ of these three, remains hidden. The entire chariot of the Ashvins including its shaft, its axle and its wheel, are all made of gold and travel across the three worlds, *bhur*, *bhuvah* and *svah*. The Vedic rishi baffled by the mystery of this chariot asks the Ashvins themselves:

“whose are the three wheels of your triple chariot, where are the three seats thereto firmly fastened ?

When will ye yoke the mighty ass that draws it, to bring ye to our sacrifices, Nasatyas?⁵⁹

The network of allegories and riddles carefully wrapped in cryptic diction are difficult to understand, much more so to explain in clear terms. The Vedas often speak in the language of occultists, the language familiar to the *kavis*, the Mahatmas of Vedic age, through whom the secret doctrine was transmitted to posterity. This was the language of gods too. Therefore, the traditionalists say that the Vedas are *a-pauruseya* i.e., the Vedas are not the works of the ordinary human mind. They embody the revelations of the inner faculties of the purified minds, the great sages of the past age. This eternal wisdom revealed to the Mahatmas, *the great ones*, is correctly called *Brahmavidya* in Vedic terminology and is understood by none but *Brahmavid*, one who has realized the highest Truth. In the old Vedic language the word *Brahman* in neuter gender means the Vedic mantra which embodies the eternal wisdom and Brahman in masculine gender is one, who has realized that wisdom, who can correctly interpret the Vedic mantras unearthing the knowledge hidden in the cryptic expressions of the great sages. Kavi, Brahavid and Mahatman are the synonymous terms but the word Kavi is generally used in this sense only in the Vedic Samhitas, the oldest written documents in which the wisdom of the by-gone age is preserved.

This vast realm of esoteric knowledge becomes unmanifest, *antarhita*, at the end of each *yuga*, and is revealed again in the beginning of each *kalpa* to the Maharshis, initiated by *Svayambhu*⁶⁰ Himself. For this reason the emphasis is always on *guru*, through whom this tradition is kept alive, and is preserved intact for posterity. On *upanayana*, i.e., on initiation into the secrets kept hidden in one's own *guha-Upanqyana* literally means *leading near to-*, a guru leaves his *chela* there at the door of *guha* with key allowing him freedom for his own

spiritual development, - the progress may be fast or slow depending on his past *samskaras*, the achievements of his past lives. This wisdom that has come down through the ages may, by passage of time, be lost in the womb of time but it is again brought back by the great realized souls, the Mahatmas, who 'never die nor are they born' Bhagavan Shri Krishna refers to this wisdom as *immortal yoga* that has come down through *parampara*,⁶¹ the traditional disciplinary line, the live wire of spiritual magnetism, from ancient time.

Many are the hymns in the Vedas that speak in riddles. Only a Brahavid, an occultist, well-versed in Brahavidya, who has identified himself with Brahman like a plumber with his work, could feel quite at home with these bewildering mass of riddles. That is why it is said *Brahavid brahmaiva bhavati*, one, who has known Brahman, becomes mysterious like *Brahman*, the esoteric wisdom, or becomes as omniscient as Brahman, the Supreme Spirit. Only such a person can unravell the secrets concealed in riddles. But then they may be beyond and above thought or words, - too obscure, too mysterious to be explained. It is rightly said in Sanskrit *gurostu maunam vyakhyanam*, i.e., explanation of the mysteries of Brahman is done well by keeping mum! Therefore, it would be wiser on our part to observe it in the present context. Well, the Brahmanas, the theological treatises of the Vedas, while explaining the mantras, the Vedic legends, and the sacrificial rituals often emphasize the fact that the gods reveal the truth indirectly and in secret language, *-paroksa priyd devah*. The cosmic Chariot of the Ashvins representing the cosmic phenomena, Surya, the bride, symbolizing the inexhaustible cosmic energy, and Soma, the mysterious Vedic divinity dwelling at the top of the third heaven and emanating *amrita*, the immortal life force, and controlling *rita*, the cosmic order, to whom Surya, the sun, offers his only daughter, are all the most puzzling riddles understandable only by the Brahvids. I, therefore, stop speaking any more of the Rigvedic riddles. But certainly I keep the third privileged seat vacant in the bridal chariot driven by the Ashvins for any one who thinks he or she can have the fortune of a free ride sitting by the side of the cosmic bride and bridegroom round the universe!.

3. *The Atharvaveda*: Now coming to the Atharvaveda we see that time has been elevated in this to the status of a divinity. Here *Kala* is addressed as the primeval deity- *pratham nu*⁶³ *devah*, and the entire universe forms the wheels of his car on which he rides, *tasya cakrd bhuvanani vishva*-. The Kalapurusha is described here as looking on with thousand eyes, as immune to old age and decay, and as most prolific. While the entire universe tied to the spokes of the wheels of Time helplessly rotates round and round without stop, the learned sages freed themselves from the bonds of *Samsara* mount on this wheel of Time, *-tam arohanti*⁶⁴ *kavayo vipash-citah* and cross over to the realm leading to the highest, goal of life, i.e., the timeless domain by escaping from time's dominion, characterized by the cycle of births and deaths. The Atharvaveda also conceives a cosmic wheel covering the entire universe, with half of which the world is said to have been created. It wonders as to what happened to the other half and where it did disappear!! Bhagavan Buddha later refers to two wheels, one being the wheel of life with the unending chain of life and death, popularly called as *Bhava-chakra*, and the other being the *Dharma chakra* representing the Dharma Supreme, which he turned to enlighten his followers. It is exactly this wheel of *Samsara*, the boundless ocean of life, that has been referred to in the Atharvaveda. A yogin, a mystic, is not lost in this ocean, nor is he carried away by the wheel of *Samsara* in its merciless rotation through the unending chain of life and death. He treats this wheel only as a means, as a vehicle, on his road to progress. He mounts on it and crosses over to the invisible cosmic wheel, through which he reaches the Supreme Goal whence he never returns, *yat gatva na nivartante tad dhama parantam*⁶⁶ *mama*. The first is known as *Bhava-chakra* and the second as *Dharma-chakra* in Buddhist philosophy.

In the Atharvaveda we come across a celestial golden *kosha* with eight wheels and nine portals and covered by refulgent light. This *kosha* is said to have been situated in the

impregnable fort of gods- *devunam pur ayodhya*⁶⁷, and to have three spokes and three axles, wherein dwells the *Animated Being*, that is known, only to the *Brahmavids*. Obviously, this is a reference to the energy centres called chakras or koshas in Yogic and Tantra terminologies. While the Rigveda forms one of the sources for the *mantras* of sacrificial rituals, which are often misunderstood and misinterpreted, as also a source for philosophical theories, the Atharvaveda stands as the primary source for the ancient mystic knowledge and esoteric doctrines.

4. *The Upanishads*: Among the major Upanishads of the pre-Buddhist period, the *Shvetae- shvatara* describes in detail what it calls a revolving *Brahma-chakra*⁶⁸, a most complicated wheel ever conceived, with a frightfully large number of component parts to symbolize almost all basic concepts with which the grand edifice of the Upanishadic philosophy has been erected. This *Brahma-chakra*, which brings within its compass, the fundamentals and basic principles of Upanishadic philosophy and metaphysics in their entirety, is being caused to rotate in its axle by the *mahima*, the glory of the Almighty God,- *Yenedam bhramyate brahmacakram*⁶⁹. This chakra, which is another term for the Bhavachakra of the Buddhists, is characterized as having *triple tire (trivrt)* representing the three qualities, viz., *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*; sixteen end-parts (*sodashanta*),- made up of five elements (*bhutas*) five organs of perception (*buddhindriyas*), five organs of actions (*karmendriyas*) and the mind; fifty spokes (*shatardharam*),- comprising of the five *Viparyayas*, twenty-eight *asaktis*, nine *tustis* and eight *siddhis*,-; twenty counterspokes,- being the ten senses (*indriyas*) and their ten objects,-; six sets of eights,- being (1) eight producing causes of *prakriti*, viz., the five elements, mind, *buddhi* and *ahankara*; (2) eight-*dhatu*s; (3) eight *aishvaryas*, the supernatural powers: (4) eight *bhavas*: (5) eight gods, and lastly (6) eight *gunas*,-; manifold ropes (*vishvarupaika-pasham*) or desires; three different paths (*tri-marga-bheda*),- being *dharma, a-dharma* and *a-jnana*,-; and one illusion (*moha*) with *punya*, and *papa*. as the two conditioning causes. The Jivatman termed as - *hamsa* flutters about in this *Brahma-chakra* and makes his appearance felt in everything that the endless wheel of Brahman carries, reflecting life and vitality therein. He gets himself freed from his entanglements in this Brahmachakra and attains *moksa*, liberation, when he realizes that Jivatman and Ishvara are one and not different, and is favoured by the Supreme Soul with His blessings⁷⁰. The *Brhadaranyaka- Upanishad* says that the *Paramatman* is the overlord and king of all,- *sa vd hyayam- atma sarvesam bhutanam adhipatih sarvesam bhutanam raja*, and that the gods, living beings, the worlds and everything in the universe radiate from and are attached to the Supreme Soul just as the spokes radiate from the hub and are attached to -the *felly of a wheel-yetha ratfumdbhau ratha-* nemau carah sarve samar pitah evam evasmin atmani sarvani bhatani sarve devah sarve lokah sarve pranah sarve ita atmanah samarpitah⁷¹.

Among the later Upanishads the *Nrisimha*⁷²-*purva- tapaniya Upanishad* belonging to the Atharvaveda, speaks of a wheel called *mahachakra* resembling the one referred to in the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* with five sets of spokes of varying number to symbolize various abstruse philosophical concepts.

Again the *Nrisimhai-tapaniya Upanishad*, another Upanishad of the Atharvaveda, describes in detail the famous *Shri chakra*, a magical diagram, symbolizing the orb of the earth, with instruction to draw it with the *bija-mantras*, mystic syllables, written in different spots marked therein⁷³. The Yoga Upanishads generally speak of the six mystical⁷⁴ chakras, the conventional energy centres, located in different parts of the human body, where a yogin, practising severe penance concentrates his spiritual energy and raises it from chakra to chakra ultimately reaching the *sahasrara*. the thousand spoked chakra, located in the crown

of the head. Here he remains, as long as he desires, enjoying the bliss of *amrita*-. These chakras are also called in yogic terminology, as we have said earlier, as koshas, padmas and kundalis in general. From the position of the *sahasrara* through the *Brahma-randhra*, a crevice in the crown of the head, a yogin would pass away leaving his physical frame at the appointed time and merge with the Supreme Soul. Finally we may remember the famous parable depicted in the Katha⁷⁵-Upanishad of an individual *atman* sitting in a chariot. In this Upanishad the body is identified with chariot, *buddhi* with charioteer, mind with reins and lastly the *indriyas* with horses. In this allegory, however, the wheels, so important a part of a chariot, have found no mention at all. A pilgrim sitting in the car, the Upanishad assures us, will safely reach his destination, the ultimate goal of one's life, provided he is in complete control of his mind and is led by none but his *Vijnana-sarathi*, i.e., by own discerning judgement and wisdom.

We have thus made a brief survey of the concept of chakra in the Vedas and the Upanishads, where chakra has allegorically been depicted as Kala, the Sun, the supreme cosmic order and mystic power and in the Upanishads, in particular, it has been taken as an expressive symbol illustrative of the vast Samsara and the esoteric philosophy- This allegory is carried further in the later literature, Brahmanic and Buddhist, duly adapted to illustrate their respective theories and expound their respective doctrines.

III

POST-VEDIC PERIOD

The Brihad-Devata (400 B.C.), a Rigvedic ancillary work, traces the origin of the concept of the *seven divine treasures*⁷⁶ of a Chakravartin to the Rigveda, where in VI.74.1 the word *sapta ratna*⁷⁷ is found mentioned. The seven treasures referred to here belong to two Vedic deities, viz., Soma and Rudra, whom the devotees beseech with prayer that they, with these divine jewels, be present in every home for the well-being of all creatures, whether bipeds or quadrupeds,- *dame dame sapta ratna*⁷⁸ *dadhana sham no bhutam dvipade sham catuspade*-. These treasures are simply symbolic and the Chakravartins, that the Brihad-Devata mentions, may not be the human personages at all. Further, the *Chakradharas*, that the Mahabharata speaks of, are, according to Nilakantha, the commentator, not different from the famous Chakravartins who are included among the invisible super-human beings in the Mahabharata⁷⁹.

The chakravartins referred to above, it is presumed, are a form of the; Supreme Creator, who evolved Himself into various active creators such as Prajapati, Purusha etc. The concept of seven divine treasures is assumed to be of Assyrian origin and is traced back to Pre-Vedic period. "... these seven treasures" says Waddell, in his article on *Assyrian^ Source of the Seven Treasures* "were the famous divine treasures of life and immortality won by the gods of light in their great struggle against the power of darkness and the deep, in the context turned by the Indians as 'the churning of the ocean'... This conflict, forming a chief episode in the *Mahabharata* and Ramayana epics, whilst incorporating a rude version of the cosmic struggle of Nature's forces in revolving the universe from chaos, marks also, in view of the present writer, the final breaking away of the Indo-Aryans from the Assyrian gods which their Aryan ancestors had borrowed from their western neighbors when in Iran⁸⁰." Although

the Mahabharata (400 B.C. to 500 A.D.) does not expressly mention the wheel in its seven treasures⁸¹, 'the mild moon of a thousand rays' of its list is believed to be the same as the chakra of the *Brihad-Devata* mentioned above.

What interests us most in our present context is the episode relating to the turning of wheel, *chakra-pravartana*, mentioned in the *Ashvamedha-parvan* of the Mahabharata with all its Vedic and post-Vedic implications. This event happened in the court of king Janaka, that great royal philosopher of *Videha*. A brahman was tried by the king for some grave offence committed by him and was also convicted to be exiled from his kingdom. At this juncture, after the pronouncement of judgement, the brahman draws the royal philosopher into a long and revealing conversation. The Rajarshi immediately realizes that the brahman is no other than *Dharma* in disguise who has come to his kingdom eager to learn something about the Rajarshi himself. The brahman was set at liberty at once and was allowed to live in the kingdom of Videha enjoying royal hospitality as long as he would want, - *usyatams yavad utsaho bhujyatam yavad isyate*-. Then the brahman giving high compliments to the king replies: "O king know me to be Dharma, come here to learn (something) about you. You are the one person to *turn this wheel* (italics mine), the nave of which is the Brahman, the spoke the understanding, and which does not turn back and which is checked by the quality of goodness as its circumference."⁸²

It may be observed in this connection, that the expression of *chakrasya pravartakah*, 'the turner of wheel' is used here in the same sense as is done in the Buddhist literature; Janaka, the king and philosopher, can, in Buddhist terminology, aptly be called a chakravartin, a 'turner of wheel', The royal philosopher turned this *Brahma-chakra* for *Brahma-labha*.⁸³ for the achievement of Brahman Supreme, by freeing himself from the cycle of births and deaths. This was the same *chakra* that was turned by Bhagavan Buddha and later elaborately described in Buddhist canons. It is expressly made clear that this chakra will ever roll on and on and can never be stopped and turned back even by the Almighty God⁸⁴ Himself!

The *Mahabharata* again in the same *parvan* describes a wheel which is quite different from the *chakra* turned by either Rajarshi Janaka or Bhagavan Buddha. Here the wheel is designated as *kalachakra*, which in fact, is another term for *Bhava-chakra* of the Buddhist canons. The Anugita contains a most elaborate description of this *kalachakra*, covering almost everything that relates to life, and everything that goes to make out a whole human body. The *kalachakra* of the *Mahabharata*, unlike its Vedic counter-part, actually refers to the wheel of life, that is, the body which *jiva* enters and rotates through the chain of life and death.

This mortal frame, which in philosophical term, is called the *sthula-sharira*, is described as the abode of old age and sufferings, - *jaro-shoka-samavistam*-, as a source of disease and afflictions, - *vyadhi-vyasana-sambhavam*-, as bound by and subject to time, - *ahoratra-pariksepam*-, and lastly as rotating in space and time, - *desha-kala-vicari*-. The Mahabharata identifies this wheel of individual life with the bigger wheel of time, i.e., the *kala-chakra*, which in the popular term is known as the *samsara-chakra*, the wheel of worldly life. This enormous *kala-chakra*, turns incessantly with the speed of mind, *mano-javam* and yet it is devoid of *cetana*, consciousness, *acetanam*-. The Mahabharata counsels the entire world, - including the world of so called immortals, who too are bound by and subject to time and space, and also to births and deaths, - that they should be aware of the disaster and calamity wrought out by the *kala-chakra* in this world; understand well the far-reaching effects of its activities and then try to free themselves from its rotation, and then

suppress and destroy it,- *visrjet samksipec- capi bodhayet samaram-jagat*-. It further assures us that one who understands correctly the movement and cessation of activities of the wheel of life never gets deluded or misled, but, on the contrary, released from all *samskaras* of his karma past and present, transcending all pairs of opposites, and freed from all sins, attains the highest goal:

kalacakra-pravrttim ca nivrttim caiva tattvatah
 Yas tu veda naro nityam na sa bhutesu muhyati
 Vimuktah sarva-samskaraih sarva-dvandva-vivarjitah
 Vimuktah sarva-papebhyah prapnoti paramam gatim⁸⁶

We also come across such allegory in relation to individual gross body, *sharira*, which is compared with a wheel, fragile and impermanent, and pervaded by disease and sorrow, - *rogashoka- samavistam*⁸⁷. This wheel too is termed as *kalachakra*,-actually a wheel of Impermanence, though rests on the *atman*, yet moves with difficulty, *dushcaram*, in this world:

dush-caram sarva-loke'smin sattvam prati samashritam
*etad eva hi lake'smin kalacakram pravartate*⁸⁸

Thus we see that the Mahabharata actually describes two kinds of wheels, one referring to the *Samsara*, from which, it says, one must try to get freed oneself and the other referring to Brahman, from which it does not ask us to run away but turn it and then through it reach the ultimate goal whence one never returns. This wheel, the Mahabharata informs us, never turns back, nor stops, but always goes forward, ultimately taking one to the Supreme Brahman.

IV

BUDDHIST LITERATURE

1. After briefly surveying the Brahmanic literature, we have now lastly come to the Buddhist., which gave the worldwide currency to the concept of wheel of Dharma. Here the first reference to the *Dharma-chakra* with its full metaphorical representation is found in Bhagavan Buddha's memorable sermons in Varanasi. To illustrate I quote just a relevant portion from this sermon: "The spokes of the wheel are the rules of the pure conduct; justice is the uniformity of their length; wisdom is the tyre; modesty and thoughtfulness are the hub in which the immovable axle of truth is fixed"⁸⁹. Buddhism, particularly Tantric Buddhism, it may be noted employs a large number of obscure and complicated symbols in their mystic diagrams and religious paintings which are suggestive of wide range of ideas and events happening in this *bhava*. Chakra among these originally represented the eternal doctrine preached by Gautama Buddha, but later by its very phenomenal nature lent itself to its being represented, as it did in earlier Brahmanic literature, as *Bhava- chakra*, which too is known to have neither beginning nor end and is said to revolve incessantly on its axle with all its miseries and temptations, and sufferings and avarice. Hindu philosophy, for that matter, Buddhist as well, primarily preaches the ways and means to save oneself from the powerful ever-rotating wheel of *samsara* or *bhava* for the attainment *moksha* or *Nirvana*. Buddhism asserts that this ever-revolving wheel of worldly life can never be stopped or turned back by any,- "*samana* or *brahma* or *Brahma* or *Mara* or God or anyone"⁹⁰ else"-, in this universe.

We may mention here that the allegory of wheel in the Buddhist scriptures is carried far beyond than in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Mahabharata. For instance, the *Chakkavatti-sihanada-suttanta*, like the *Brihad-Devata* referred to earlier, speaks of *Chakravartins*, the universal Monarchs, and their seven⁹¹ divine treasures which are all more symbolic to the extent of being considered mythical, than real. The chakra, among these treasures, occupies a unique position symbolizing Dharma Supreme and at the same time controlling the destiny of the possessors thereof. This mystical chakra would make its appearance and also would remain in a commanding place in front of the royal palace so long as the universal Monarch, however, powerful he might be, strictly and faithfully followed the trodden path of Dharma, without deviating a bit there from. But even then the wheel would not remain in the front of the royal palace indefinitely. It will start to sink down slowly from its proper place marking time for the Monarch to hand over the reign of his kingdom to his successor and renounce the world to lead the life of a Buddha. Then the wheel gradually goes down from the sight and in seven days it entirely disappears from its proper place in front of the royal palace. For, this wheel of Dharma, says the *Chakkavatti-sihanada-suttanta*, is no *paternal heritage*, to go down from father to son. Each successor should '*walk in the haunts*' where his fore-fathers roamed, and acquire the wheel. That is, each successive ruler should try to gain the wheel by acting upto the noble ideal of duty set before himself by the true sovereigns of the world. In short, the wheel will reappear in front of the royal palace again provided the successor walked on the trodden path of Dharma without faltering. But if he strayed even a bit from that time honoured tradition the wheel will instantly disappear from its place bringing in its trail the untold miseries to the Monarch and his subjects and eventually to his entire kingdom. If, on the contrary, the successor faithfully carries out what are termed as 'The Aryan duty of a Wheel turning Monarch' then on the day of the feast of the full⁹² moon the celestial wheel will manifest itself on the chief upper terrace of the royal palace, "with its thousand spokes, its tyre, navel, and all its parts complete". Thereupon, the king rising from his seat, and uncovering his robe from one shoulder, in his left hand a pitcher, and with his right hand sprinkles up water over the celestial wheel saying- "Roll onward, O Lord wheel! go forth and overcome O Lord Wheel⁹³". The wheel then followed by the king along with his fourfold army, rolls on to all four quarters from the east to the north, conquering each region. Wherever the wheel stopped the rival kings of the respective regions paid homage to the Chakra-vartin and besought his advice. The king in reply instructed them: "Ye shall slay no living thing. Ye shall not take that which has not been given. Ye shall not act wrongly touching bodily desires. Ye shall not speak lie. Ye shall drink no maddening drink. Enjoy your possessions as you wont⁹⁴ to do". This is what is known as *pancha shila*, the famous code of conduct laid down in Buddhist canons. The wheel after conquering the earth from sea to sea, returns to the royal city and stands in front of the judgement hall of the Chakravartin. The victory of the celestial wheel is, in truth, the victory of the gospel of Bhagavan Buddha. This conquest by the wheel is again free from the horrors and crimes of war and, the mission of the Wheel is essentially for propagating the message of non-violence, love and compassion. The dissemination of Indian culture and philosophy from time immemorial, whether within or without *Bharatavarsha* was effected not with brutal force, nor by means of deceitful methods. The seekers after truth prompted by their own inner urge spontaneously came forward and absorbed and assimilated whatever they realized as true and worthy of acceptance.

2. *The Lakkana Suttanta*, which defines the marks and features of the body of a *mahapursa*, superman, includes *chakra* amongst its 32 bodily marks. The boy, detected to possess the mark of chakra, "if he lives the life of the House, becomes the Monarch, Turner of Wheel, a righteous Lord of the Right, ruler of the four quarters, conqueror, guardian of the people's good,

owner of the Seven Treasures...” But if such a boy go forth from the life of the House into the homeless state, he becomes Arhant, a Buddha Supreme, rolling back the veil from the world⁹⁵.” Such a superman as a Monarch, or as Buddha Supreme, occupies an unrivalled position in the world, the former symbolizes the personification of the temporal power and the latter of the spiritual. This Wheel-turning Monarch conquers the world and establishes his kingdom “not by scourge, not by the sword but by righteousness”. Thereupon, this earth “void of barrenness, pitfalls or jungle, becomes mighty, prosperous, secure fortunate and without blemish and his people, ministers, tributary kings, attendants, Brahmins etc., pure-hearted. “As Monarch this doth he⁹⁶et”. But if he becomes Arhant, a Buddha Supreme, “he is not liable to obstruction from any foe or adversary within or without, out of lust or hate or illusion, whether recluse or brahman or deva or Mara or Brahma or anyone in the world. As Buddha this doth he⁹⁷ achieve”. This Suttanta describes in detail he achievements of a superman, whether as a Wheel-turning Monarch or as a Buddha Supreme who establishes the rule of Dharma wherever he moves spreading the message of love and affections, **and** of purity and truthfulness with devotion to duty.

From these Suttantas it becomes clear that this wheel “with a thousand spokes, complete in its parts with rim and navel” whether on the feet of a Buddha Supreme or among the treasures of a chakravartin represents something definite i.e., it is a symbol of supernatural or superhuman power, temporal and spiritual; it is also a revealing symbol of Dharma and justice. Writing about the wheel, in his book: “Life of Buddha” E. J. Thomas observes: “Whatever the wheel may have once meant it is here the symbol of the universal rule, and all the phraseology about turning the wheel of the doctrine is merely adaptation of this symbol to the spiritual reign of the king of the Dharma⁹⁸”.

3. In his *Visuddhimagga*⁹⁹ Buddhaghosha mentions a *Bhavachakra* with twelve *nidanas*, viz., and *jaramarana jati, bhava, upadana, trsna, vedana, sparsha, sadayatana, namarupa, vijnana, samskara*, and *avidya* in *pratiloma* i.e., in reverse order. These *nidanas*, are believed to be the primary causes for the transmigration of soul from life to life or repetition of birth and death, with all its attendant sufferings in this *bhava*. The rotation of *bhava* and *mrttyu* has been figuratively styled as *Bham-chakra* by Buddhists, of which these twelve *nidanas*, the primary causes, are the mainstay, the firm spokes. One, who wants to save oneself from this wheel, should first destroy these *nidanas* and then ultimately the *Bhavachakra* itself. This imaginery wheel has been elaborately drawn in various ways by Buddhists to give a comprehensive picture of the *Samsara* with meaningful figures and scenes carefully painted in representative colours, to symbolize hell and heaven, day and night, love and hatred, passion and lust, miseries and sufferings-in short, all such feelings and experiences that the world abounds in. A relieving feature of this *Bhavachakra* in picture is the image of Buddha drawn on right hand corner above the *Bhavachakra* standing and directing the world to the circle of *Nirvana*. These wheels are drawn with five or six spokes and, in some cases, more, and normally, with one or two navas. Bhagavan Buddha himself is said to have ordered to inscribe this wheel over the gateway of the Veluvana monastery at Rajagriha. The instructions recorded in the *Divya-vadana* to draw this Wheel of Becoming is as follows: “The five-spoked wheel... is to be made with five destinies (*gatis*), the hells, animals, ghosts (*pretas*), gods, and human beings. Therein to hells are to be made at the bottom, the animals and ghosts above, then gods and human beings; the four continents, *Purvavideha, Aparagodaniya, uttarakuru*, and *jambudvipa*. In the middle (the nave) passion, hatred, and stupidity are to be represented; passion in the form of a dove, hatred in the form of a snake, and stupidity in the form of a pig. An image of Buddha is to be made pointing out the circles of *Nirvana*. Apparitional beings are to be represented by means of a windlass as passing away and being reborn. All round is to be represented the twelvefold causal Origination in direct and reverse order. The whole is to be represented as swallowed by

Impermanance (*anityata*), and two verses are to be written:

“Make a beginning, renounce your home,
To the Buddha-teaching apply yourselves;
Smite away the army of death,
As an elephant a house of reeds,
Who in this law and discipline
Shall vigilantly lead his life,
Abandoning the round of birth,
Shall verily make an end of pain”
Divyavadana¹⁰⁰ (300)”

Lastly in the *Dasuttara Suttanta* we come across four kinds of wheels which represent four different concepts, viz., (1) the orbit of favourable place of residence, (2) the orbit of association with the good, (3) perfect adjustment of one's self: and (4) the cycle of merit wrought in the past¹⁰¹.

4. Thus we see four kinds of wheels depicted in Buddhist scriptures to represent four different concepts. The first, that was turned by Bhagavan Buddha, represented the Eternal Doctrine. preached by him. The second was the wheel of life with twelve *nidanas*, a wheel most frightful from which a wise man must try to free himself. Bhagavan Buddha preached the ways and means to save oneself from the whirlwind of this Wheel of Becoming and then pass on to the other wheel, the Wheel of Dharma Supreme, which leads one to *Nirvana*. This wheel of *bhava*, as it is called, represents individual life as also the entire *Samsara*. The Causal Formula expounded in the *Paticca- samuppada* is conceived in the form of a wheel for obvious reason. “The Causal Formula” says E. J. Thomas referring to this wheel, “does not appear to have been at first conceived as a wheel but as a line in the series of transmigrations of unknown beginning. But it easily lent itself to such a presentation¹⁰².”

Thirdly we have the Celestial Wheel of Chakravartins symbolizing justice, merit and purity winch each Monarch has to cultivate by his good conduct and character and also by not deviating from die path of Dharma, just as his predecessors did in the past. The Wheel of Chakravartins goes from quarter to quarter conquering the entire world without bloodshed, without hurting anyone. The Monarch just follows the wheel wherever it goes, spreading the message of love and *a-himsa*. The Wheel would continue to stay in the royal city so long as the Monarch abides by the rules of Dharma; leads a pure and pious life.

Fourthly we come to the wheel-mark on the feet of a superman. This wheel-mark, according to the Buddhist belief, indicates that the person possessing this sign on his feet would live either the life of a Universal Monarch or the life of a Buddha in homeless state.

CONCEPT OF AVATARA

Now, before coming to the conclusion it will not be irrelevant if I say a few words about the Buddhist concept of re-incarnation. For instance the *Chakkavattisihanada Suttanta* referred to earlier, makes a prophecy of a future Buddha called¹⁰³ Metteya. The *Saddkarmapuddarika* mentions a fabulous number of Buddhas who had in the past attained enlightenment and then *Nirvana*. It says, Buddha is born again and again in this world of living and in his each incarnation he preached Dharma. turned the Wheel of Dharma. In this connection it cites the name of the *Tat hag at a Mahabhijnajnanabhibhu*, who had turned the wheel of law immense time ago, at an inconceivably far off time, long before the Gautama Buddha was¹⁰⁴ born. Further the *Saddharma-pundarika* asserts that the Buddha is an ideal, a personification and not a person and that he “had existed from eternity, or what comes to the same, from the very beginning, from time immemorial¹⁰⁵,” and is to live for ever. A saint in his *sadhana*, in his gradual spiritual ascendancy, is subjected to severe tests and trials as he passes through several stages of self-development. He, in his course of pilgrimage, overcomes by leaps and bounds all obstacles in his weary route and rises higher and higher in the spiritual plane. Thus when he surmounts the very last grade of that vast and laborious ascent he can ‘scale the heavens’ and pluck the ever fresh and ever fragrant flowers from the *kalpa-taru*¹⁰⁶, the divine wish-yielding tree, i.e., the immortal wisdom from its very resplendent source- This is nobler than the noblest achievement a *Sadhaka* can ever aspire for and when he attains it he becomes a Buddha, a *jivanmukta*¹⁰⁷. The primary duty of a saint, of a Bodhisattva or of a Buddha who has reached this supreme height in his spiritual ascent is to communicate his knowledge to those who deserve and are willing to receive it A Buddha, an Omniscient Being, like a *jivanmukta* of Hindu tradition can, if so desired merge in the *divya-jyotis*, the great Divine Light, i.e., he can attain complete extinction of his individual existence or individual soul. leaving no trace of himself behind. A Buddhist saint, going through several incarnations gradually reaches the state of Bodhisattva, the last grade in his laborious ascent before he attains Buddha hood. When he reaches this highest state of enlightenment, he will have relinquished the burden of the *skandhas*, the five forms of mundane consciousness; will have destroyed in their entirety all the *samskaras*, pairs of opposites, etc. *Skandhas* in Buddhist philosophy represent the five constituent elements of being, viz., *rupa* (form), *Vedarta* (feeling) *samjna* (perception), *samskara* (aggregate of formation) and *vijnana* (consciousness or thought faculty). These *skandhas* eagerly await in the mundane world, carrying the burden of all *samskaras*, the remnants of the past lives, only to pounce upon and re-enter the soul on its return to earth in its each incarnation. A Bodhisattva, who has attained the Buddhahood, the highest state of spiritual development, before attaining complete extinction, will have liberated himself from the chain of the *Bhava-chakra*: completed his last round in the cycle of births and deaths annihilating even the remaining slightest vestiges of the *skandhas*¹⁰⁸. Similarly a yogin after passing through several incarnations purifies himself gradually cleansing his soul of the *samskaras* and *vasanas* of the past lives. In his each incarnation with the cumulative experiences of the past lives he pursues his *sadhana*, makes steady progress towards his destination, in his long pilgrimage, in his search of the ultimate Truth, he too has to overcome all obstacles on his way of progress and cross over the fearful and unfathomable ocean of delusion. When he attains the state of *jivanmukta*, he will have purified his soul of all sins; liberated himself

from the bonds of all pairs of opposites; and thus, released from all *samskaras* and sins, he succeeds in his great journey to his final destination; reaches the ultimate goal; - *tato yati param*¹⁰⁰ *gatim*.

We may, in this connection, mention the undisputed dictum or guiding principles in hermeneutics known as *ekavakyata*, i.e., consistency in meaning maintained by the different systems of Vedanta philosophy while interpreting the scriptures recognised as fundamental sources, as the works of undisputed authority, the *Prasthanas*. The thread of consistency, as far as the main objective is concerned, is maintained throughout by the different schools while interpreting the scriptures in support of their apparently contradictory theories. This *ekavakyata*, the unanimity in the core of thoughts or theories may equally apply to Buddhist thought reflected in the vast Buddhist scriptures on the one hand, and to the Brahmanical doctrines expressed in the various Hindu sacred texts on the other, in the matter of expression of metaphysical subtleties, in explaining the intricate doctrine, in propounding the Ultimate Truth. It is quite natural if Buddhism which originated in the land of Brahmanism has cultivated conceptions of the Enlightened One indistinguishable from the highest conceptions of Brahmanical deity. Whether Buddha was regarded as a “follower of some philosophic system in the genre of PatanjaliV¹⁰” or not as far as the final destiny, the ultimate goal, *para gati*, is concerned there is near unanimity in their theories. The difference is often in the way of approach and not in the ultimate destination. The hardened orthodoxy combined with the aggressive proficiency in hermeneutics and superior mental activity spent all the energy in dilatory dialectics and in subtleties of crafty arguments hardly caring to reach the inner core of the esoteric doctrine. A sadhaka, Buddhist or Brahmanical, is least interested in verbose exercises, in dialectics and syllogism¹¹¹. The same orthodoxy in its arguments which breathes the spirit of hatred and contempt and not convincing reasoning, did not hesitate to address the great Bhagavan Shankara-Acharya with contempt, as *pracchanna-buddha*, 'Buddha in disguise' and it went even to the extent of disclaiming his authority to interpret the great tradition, which Bhagavan Shree Krishna calls *yoga* in the Bhagavad-Gita, that has come down through the lineage of divinities and great¹¹² adepts.

Now coming back to our point we may say that a Buddha, though could merge with the Supreme Spirit to his complete extinction, often opted to come down to this *Bhava*, in order to serve all living creatures, in all ages to come-; to strive for the enlightenment and weal of fellow- creatures; to assist the fellow-being to pass over from the wheel of avarice and temptation, love and hatred to the wheel of Dharma, leading to final emancipation, to Nirvana; i.e., in short, he opted to come down for *Dharmachakra-pravartana*, for turning the wheel. It is truly regarded that devoting oneself to the spiritual weal of others is higher than self-acquired knowledge of dharma, the eternal law. A sage who has reached the state of a *jivanmukta* seeks *brahma-nirvana*, eternal peace by dedicating the rest of his life in the service of humanity in promoting the welfare of all beings,- *sarvabhata-hite ratah*. as the Bhagavad-Gita puts it. He perceives Brahman present everywhere¹¹³ and in everything.

Bhagavan Buddha, discarding the princely status willingly accepted the hardship of the life of an ascetic. After the enlightenment he wandered from place to place striving for the welfare and salvation of fellow-beings. He lived a detached life like lotus in the mire dedicating rest of his life entirely in the service of his fellow-beings and working for their welfare and enlightenment. This is exactly what is known as *lokasamgraha* in the language of the Bhagavad-Gita; for, a yogin or a Buddha, though there remains nothing to be achieved higher in life yet he actively engages himself in the service of others:

*nanavaptam avaptavyam varta eva ca karmani*¹¹⁴. He neither aspires for heaven nor for

complete extinction,- na svargam napunarabhavam,- but strives to relieve the distressed of their sufferings and pain,-

kamaye duhkha-taptanam praninam artinashanam-

Coming back to the doctrine of Avatara, we must say that the Buddhist belief in the rebirth of the Buddhas is not different from Brahmanic concept of *Avatara*. This clearly speaks of the strong influence of the Brahmanic faith in the divine incarnation wielded on the Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhism, as we pointed out in the foregoing lines, asserted that Buddha had existed from the very beginning and that he came down from eternity. Bhagavan Shri Krishna says that he too passed through several incarnations, *bahuni me vyatitani janmani*¹¹⁵ and that he had taught the eternal yoga to Vivasvan in hoary, antiquity which then came down through the line of Prajapatis and which many Rajarshis had come to know in the past.¹¹⁶ This is the immortal wisdom referred to in Buddhism which Buddha in each of his incarnations communicated to the Bodhisattvas who are charged with the office of preaching. This ancient yoga, which is imperishable,-a *vjaya* and also *aksara* in the term of the Bhagavad-Gita is valid for all time, for the entire human race, not particularly for any one spiritual brotherhood. It is referred to as *sarva-guhyatama*¹¹⁷, the most secret of all knowledge which Bhagavan Shri Krishna revealed to Arjuna who was indeed very dear to him, *istosi me*¹¹⁸ *drdham* and was born with divine virtues,- *abhijatoshi pandava*¹¹⁹-. Further Arjuna. was eager to learn the esoteric doctrine¹²⁰ from Bhagavan Shri Krishna Himself in whom he sought refuge seeking guidance. Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita answers the position of a Bodhisattva in Buddhism. He was a true *chela*, and also a *Bhakta* as Bhagavan Krishna calls him again and again and as such, he is qualified to receive and assimilate the supreme secret¹²¹, *uttamam rahasyam*, from His Supreme Guru. The ancient scriptures of the Hindus as of Buddhists admitted of exoterical as also esoterical interpretation. This was the greatness and glory of the Vedas¹²², which embodies the revelations derived from a virtually eternal source, as the Hindus believe, i.e., from the Supreme Brahman Himself¹²³. Hence this immortal wisdom anxiously kept hidden in the ancient scriptures of the Hindus as also of the Buddhists, is written in a language richly symbolic, highly flexible admitting exoteric as well as esoteric explanation as pointed out above. These ancient scriptures are invariably anonymous, not easily attributable to any individual authorship. It is believed that the supreme wisdom was revealed by the Creator in the beginning of each kalpa, and that it recedes back and disappears in Him at its end. The Maharshis realize it again at the dawn of each Kalpa through meditation. Bhagavan Buddha who 'scaled the heavens' to pluck the immortal wisdom made the *Gridhra-kuta* on the highest peak of the mountain at Rajagriha as his constant abode, i.e., he gained the status of a *kutastha* in Vedanta terminology wherefrom he communicated this knowledge to the Bhikkus. Gridhrakuta means the summit of eagles, the great birds; indeed a symbolic name it is; a Bodhisattva has to surmount the peak to acquire the great wisdom from the Buddha, who dwells thereon. Bhagavan Shri Krishna who reveals the eternal yoga to Arjuna, refers to himself as *kutastha* and *acala* in the Bhagavad-Gita. Thus, this immortal wisdom, the imperishable esoteric doctrine¹²⁴ was communicated to one who can surmount the laborious ascent of the mountain, the *acala* and remain there unshaken by the vicissitudes of the world. In brief we have seen similarity, nay almost unanimity, between the thoughts and teachings of both the creeds, Buddhist and Hindu. We may say this is the same stream of thoughts which descended from the unscaleable height of the Himalayas which was preached by two sublime beings;-not by ordinary individuals,- who lived a short span of life somewhere in India, but the doctrine taught by them transcended space and time; it was *sanatoria*, eternal.

According to the Hindu belief, the Supreme God is born whenever there would be

Dharmasya glanīh, the decline of Dharma, and rise of *a-dharma*. Bhagavan Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that he takes to Avataras whenever occasion warrants, for the sake of *Dharma-samsthāpana* for re-establishment of Dharma in this world¹²⁵. The mission of Bhagavan Buddha too was not different as we have already made it clear in the foregoing lines.

VI

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude we may note that chakra as a mystical symbol goes back to the Vedas. Indra turned and hurled it down in order to recover the lost light, to dispel darkness and annihilate the evil spirits. We also find chakra used as a symbol of eternity, i.e., of time, that never gets worn out nor grows old, *-ajara*. Again the same chakra is termed in the Rigveda as the wheel of rite, of the eternal cosmic order or law. Among the chakras mentioned in the Rigveda the chakras of the Ashvins' car are the most mysterious ones. They have no relevance to the wheel either of the sun or of time. They may represent the esoteric knowledge, the germ of secret doctrine, acquired by one by undergoing, severe discipline comprising of *abhyasa*, *dhyana* and *tyaga*, corresponding to the three Buddhist vehicles, viz., the vehicle of discipline, of pratyaksabuddhas and of Bodhisattvas-; and the golden car of the Ashvins which freely traverses the three worlds of *bhur*, *bhuvah* and *svah*, on these three wheels may stand for the *Brahma-nirvana*, eternal bliss which transcends space and time. Two of the three wheels of this car, which are within the range of vision of the learned brahmins, may represent the learning that one gains through the study of scriptures, and the third, which is beyond the vision of even the learned and is kept concealed in *guha*, the well-guarded cave, may symbolize the *adhyatma-jnana*, realized through *dhyana*, deep and continuous meditation that is always done in seclusion unnoticed by others. This third wheel is said to be bright, it remains constant, not moving, and fixed in front of the car and, at another place the same chakra is said to have been concealed in the crown of the head of an indestructible bull. It is difficult, we must say, to identify, correctly and to our satisfaction, these wheels of Ashvins, their golden chariot, and lastly the Ashvins themselves, who drive this mystic chariot. A proper understanding of these riddles, Buddhist or Brahmanic, is indeed not possible, without a deeper and wider study of the scriptures, ranging from the Vedas¹²⁶ to the Puranas guided by the spiritual insight and divine intuition. Moreover, the tradition or what is maintained as *parampara* in the scriptures, the magnetic line radiated from the spiritual fountain-head, keeps the key to the secret store-house of esoteric doctrine reflected in the ancient scriptures. Therefore let us frankly confess our inability to probe into the riddles of Ashvins' car and leave the chariot for the present allowing it to float freely high in the heavens unobstructed. The immature imagination of purile mind certainly cannot take to that height and disturb the serenity of the divine atmosphere. "The knowledge of secret doctrine, of Brahmanvidya, cannot be gained by instruction nor by intellect nor by much learning¹²⁷," as the Upanishads clearly tell us. The golden koshas mentioned in the Atharvaveda, which are figuratively termed as wheels by the mystics, represent, as we have already mentioned, the nerve centres in our body. They are the, potential sources of vitality for the development of spiritual energy¹²⁸ and magic power. For the mystic the body is a vehicle mounted on these wheels and constitutes a formidable instrument which he uses as a means to attain salvation-*shariram adyam khalu dharma-sadhanam*¹²⁹. By self-restraint and mental concentration as described in the Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra he can awaken and harness

the supernatural power dormant in sahasrara-chakra and attain complete tranquility equal to Brahmic bliss, i.e., Brahmananda.

When we come down to the Upanishads and the later Brahmanical literature we find the allegory of wheel is fully carried out to represent the doctrine expounding the Supreme Soul as also the ever-changing Samsara. The *Shvetashvatara-Upanishad* gives a lead in the matter of symbolization bringing in its purview wide range of concepts and also explaining than more elaborately. The Ashvamedha-parvan of the Mahabharata expands the idea still further bringing in its focus all that is said in the Vedas and Upanishads about this most mystical and well-known symbol. It is again here that we meet, for the first time, with the concept of *Dharmachakra-pravartana*, of turning the wheel of eternal doctrine attributed to Janaka by a brahman in unambiguous terms with metaphors touching everything that the chakra could symbolize.

Buddhism later gave wider currency to the symbolization of the wheel, ty incorporating therein all the above ideas and concepts and making it a household word for Buddhists. In the Vedas the wheel represented the sun. But in Buddhism it is the full moon that appears in place of wheel, as narrated in the Buddhist Canons in the context of the celestial Wheel of the Wheel-turning Monarch, who watches the divine wheel, rising in the east at night on the day of the royal feast held, on his main terrace. The day of the full moon in the lunar month of Vaishakha is of the greatest significance in Buddhist history. Though the rise of the celestial wheel of the Chakravartins is not expressly said to have synchronised with the *puṇima* of the month of Vaishakha, we should assume, that this might have been the day to attest their merit or demerit after they ascended the throne. In the Mahabharata too, “the mild moon of the thousand rays”, has been included among its seven divine treasures, instead of the usual wheel. In the Vedic rituals the wheel is employed to represent¹³⁰ the sun and not the moon. In the Vedas it is a symbol of the regular course of the sun, as also of *rita*.¹³¹ the cosmic order. Both in Brahmanical and Buddhist literatures, the *seven treasures* are merely mystical or symbolical, since they are endowed with supernatural power. The expression *turning the wheel* also goes back to the Vedas, ‘Indra turns the wheel’ bringing light to the Aryans roaming in the dark. We find the expression used also in the Mahabharata in the context of the dialogue between Janaka, the royal philosopher, and the Dharma Supreme in his court. No, doubt, Bhagavan Buddha made it a household phrase in Buddhism but we cannot say on this account, that he originated and gave currency to this phrase. He *might have* picked it; up from its current usage in esoteric philosophy of the land. Thus the symbolism of chakra, the concept of chakravartin and the phrase *turning the wheel* are as old as the Vedas.

Lastly the wheel as a symbol has long crossed the frontier of greater India and rolled on to many far off countries. It has a parallel in Greek as *kuklos*, in Latin as *circus*, in old Slavic as *Kolo*, in Anglo-Saxon as wheel, and in English as *wheel*, all being cognate words have the same meaning. It was used as a symbol by the Scythian race of Central¹³² Asia. It found a place in the Midsummer fire rituals¹³³ in Europe; in magical rites in Greece; and in the hand of the Celtic¹³⁴ god. In all these countries, the wheel was employed just as a symbol of the sun. But as we discussed above, in Brahmanical and Buddhist literatures it is much more than that. Chakra as a *circle* has neither beginning nor end; and in value it is infinite. It is, in plain, a symbol of eternity; a sign of completeness - *puṇata*-, that can never get exhausted¹³⁶, as also of nothingness, of priceless *zero*,-*shunyata*- of inestimable value. It is an expression of continuity and incessant progress, and above all, in Buddhism in particular, it is a divine symbol of Eternal Doctrine, the Dharma of the ‘Middle path’ which leads to insight, supreme wisdom and ultimately to NIRVANA.

NOTES

¹. “The senseless men (who perform severe penance,) not only torment every element in their body but even *Me* who dwell in their inner body....” BG. XVII 6. Bhagavan Shri Krishna explaining the yoga of self-control observes:- “the yoga is not for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who is given to too much sleep, nor for him who is ceaselessly awake.” “Yoga, which rids one of woe, is accomplished only by him who is regulated in diet and recreation, regulated in performing actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking” BG. VI. 16-17.

3. ERE. Vol. 12, pp. 142.

4. BG. VIII. 3.

5. A teacher who teaches the Vedas and a priest who officiates in sacrifices without knowledge of the rishi, metre, and deity of the mantras they recite, will meet with dire consequences according to the injunction laid down in the *Brahmanas*. vide I.I. 6, Arseya Brahmana, edited by B. R. Sharma.

6. *Brahmavadino vadanti kasmad satyad gayatri kanistha chandasam sati yajnamukham pariyayeti yadevadah somam aharat tasmad yajnamukham paryait tasmad tejasvitama* “The theologians say ‘For what reason is it that the Gayatri- the smallest of the metres holds the forefront of the sacrifice’. Because she brought down Soma, it held the forefron, of the sacrifice; therefore it is the most glorious (of the metres).” TS. VI. 1-6; A. B. Kieth.

⁶. The Soma legend with some variations found depicted in the RV, the Yajurveda Samhitas and the Brahmanas as also in the Mahabharata. A large number of scattered verses and also a few hymns (RV.X. 114.5-6; I 68 b; IV 26.6 etc.) of the RV contain references to this legend. The nucleus of the myth in its different versions or an epitome thereof, is reflected in the scattered references found in the RV. The Yajurveda Samhitas and the Brahmanas narrate the legend in greater detail with slight difference in their versions. The Taittiriya-samhita of the Yajurveda narrates it as follows: “Kadru and Suparni had a dispute (for the sake of) each other’s form. Kadru defeated Suparni. She said ‘In the third heaven from here is Soma; fetch it, and by it buy your release’. Kadru is this (earth), Suparni Yonder (heaven), the descendants of Suparni the metres. She said “for this do parents rear children”; in the third heaven from here is Soma; fetch it, and by it buy your release”, so has Kadru said to one’. The Jagati flew up of fourteen syllables, but returned without obtaining it; it lost two syllables, but returned with the (sacrificial) animals and consecration. Therefore, the Jagati is the richest in cattle of the metres, and consecration waits upon a man who is rich in cattle. The Tristubh flew up, of thirteen syllables, but returned without obtaining it; it lost two syllables but returned with the (sacrificial) gifts and penance. Therefore, in the world of Tristubh, the midday oblation, the gifts are brought. ‘That in truth is penance’, they say if a man gives his wealth’. The Gayatri flew up, of four syllables, together with a female goat with light. Then the goat won (Soma) for her, and the goat has the name. The Gayatri brought back the Soma and the four syllables, and so became of eight syllables. The theologians say ‘for what reasons is it that the Gayatri, the smallest of the metres holds the forefront of the sacrifice? Because she brought down Soma, it held the forefront of the sacrifice; therefore it is the most glorious (of the metres). By the feet it grasped two of the oblations, and by the mouth one. The one it grasped by the mouth it sucked; therefore two oblations are made up of pure Soma, the morning and midday oblations; therefore at third oblation they pour out the dregs of the Soma; for they regard it as sucked as it were—“T.S.VI 1.6 (A. Bu Kieth). For detailed information vide “Reflection

on Suparna in the Vedas” by B. R. Sharma, J. of L.S.I. Vol. XXII 1961.

⁷. “This secret teaching should never be imparted to a man without austerity, nor to one without devotion, nor even to him who is unwilling to hear, nor again to him who finds fault with me” BG.XVTII. 67.

⁸. Sam.up.Br.III.10. The emphasis in our scriptures,- Brahmanas, Upanishads and Smritis-, is to transmit the great heritage only to such person who is capable to preserve the learning undiluted and with all purity and vigour. The goddess Vidya herself is said to have approached a brahman asking him to protect her, not to pass the precious knowledge to the undeserving and conceited disciple who has no regard to the great heritage-, *Vidya ha vai brahmanam ajagama tavaham asmi tvam ma palayasva-anarhate manine naiva ma dah/gapaya ma/jshreyase te'ham asmi//* (Sam.up. Br.III.9) The sacred knowledge. If passed on to an undeserving disciple. will destroy both the teacher and the taught as the wild fire born of wild tree destroys the entire *forest-agniriva kaksam dahati brahma-prstham anadrtam-* (Sam.up.Br. III, 14; ed. by B. R. Sharma.

⁹. Vakyapadiya (?)

¹⁰. Br.up. 1-3-28.

¹¹. “As flame is enveloped by smoke, mirror by dirt and embryo by the amnion, so is knowledge enveloped by it (ignorance)” BG, III. 38

¹². *After offering the Dhupa, a lamp lighted by the worshipper himself with threefold wick, is waived before the idol beseeching to save the worshipper from the cruel miseries of the world:*

“sajyam trivarti-samyuktam vahnina yojitam may a
dipam grhaha devesha trailokya-timira’paha

bhaktya dipam prayacchami devaya paramatmane

trahi mam narakad ghorad divya-jyotir namo’stu te

¹³. vide. “By renunciation the sages understand rejection of actions done with desire. The wise define tyaga as the renunciation of the fruit of all actions.” BG. XVIII. 2.

¹⁴. “since it is impossible for embodied being to abandon all actions in their entirety, it is said that he who has renounced the fruit of action has only renounced” BG. XVIII. II.

¹⁵. vide. “For, wise men endowed with equanimity, renouncing the fruit of actions and freed from the shackles of birth, repair to the seat of supreme happiness/’ BG.H.51.

of. “He who is possessed of devotion, abandoning the fruit of actions attains the highest tranquility..BG. V. 12.

¹⁶. vide “For, as the blazing fire reduces the fuel to ashes, Arjuna, even so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes”. BG.IV.37

of. “The wise call him learned, whose acts are all free from desires and fancies, and whose actions are burnt down by the fire of wisdom.” BG.IV.19

¹⁷. Kavyadarsha by Dandin, 1.33

¹⁸. Commenting on the verse 1,164.2 Yaska explains: *eka-cakram* as *eka-carinam/cakram cakater va carater va kramater va/* (Nir.IV.27). He derives the word *cakra* from the root *cak*, *car* or *kram* implying that all these roots broadly carry the same meaning. But according to Panini, the grammarian, *cak* means to shine, repulse or destroy. Durgacharya, the

commentator of Nirukta explains it further, as: *cakram cakana-dharmikam cakanam calanam ucyate carana-dharmi kramana-dharmi va*, i.e.,

“always disposed to move forward”. Yaska, however, in some other contexts explains *cakra* to mean the rays of the sun.

¹⁹. RV. 1.164,3

²⁰. RV. 1.164 II

²¹. RV.IV 31.6

²². For instance in RV.X.93.9 Geldner has interpreted *cakram* as *das rad (der Herrschaft)* connecting the word to *maghonam* of the 1st hemistich. In the notes below he says again: “*Cakram*” ‘Rad’ hier wohl wie spacter das symbol der Herrschaft”. Der Rig-Veda, Vol. III. p. 294.

²³. RV.1. 164.

²⁴. Speaking about the hymn as a whole Geldner observes: “Die wonder der Nature and des Menschenlebens, Spekulationen ueber die Zeit, ueber die menschliche, bes, die dichterische sprache warden in Allegrieen und Ractself- ragen gekleidet. Eingemale ist die allegorische Hinkleidung dem Ritual entnomen:.. "Da Rigveda Vol.m RV.I:164.

²⁵. *bhuta-bhavisyad-vartamanakhyas trayak kalas trinabhayah* Sayana RV.I. 164.2.

²⁶. RV.I. 164.2; cf. also 13-14.

²⁷, The whole hymn is so complicated with riddles that the Rishi himself in some places tries to explain some of them in the form of questions and answers. Just an example is given below:

“I ask thee of the earth’s extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee, I ask thee of the Stallion’s seed prolific; I ask of highest heaven where Speed abideth”.

This alter is the eath’s extremest limit: this sacrifice of ours is the worlds centre.

The stallion’s seed prolific is Soma. This Brahman’s highest heaven where speech abideth," RV.1 .164.34-35 Vide FN. 42.

²⁸. RV. 1.164.3: the sun’s chariot is described as having seven wheels in II. 40.3; 1.164.12; AV XIX 53.2 and as having only one wheel in RV. 1.164.2; II; 13; 48; 1.12.13 etc.

²⁹. *Cakanac carnat kramanad va cakrani rashmayah te sapta...*

³⁰. Sayana in such context often identifies *ratha* with the solar orb,- *aditya-mandala*-, and interprets *ashva*, as *vyapana-shila*- disposed to spread, to pervade.”

³¹. *Sarpana-svabhava*, vide Nirukta IV 26; Sayana RV. 1.164.3. This interpretation appears rather fanciful, but it fits well in the present context as also in many other places where *sapta*- has been employed as an adjective, and where its numerical meaning appears not quite appropriate. The nature of light and rays of the sun, is to pervade and of the wheel of a car is to roll on. The word *sarpana* implies both these meanings, vide *On Sapta-in the Rigveda* by B. R. Sharma, Bulletin D.C.R.I. Vol.18, 1957.

³². “Formed with twelve spokes by length of time unweakened rolls round the heaven this wheel of enduring order. Herein established, joined in pairs together, seven hundred sons and twenty, stand O Agni!” (Griffith) RV. 1.164.11 cf.1.164.48.

³³. “The five-footed Father of twelve forms, they say, is obscured by mist in the farther

half of the heaven. But then others say that he is far-seeing and is placed on the six-spoked and seven-wheeled car in the nearer half of the heaven.” RV. 1.164.12 (Griffith).

³⁴. “Upon this five-spoked wheel revolving ever all living creatures rest and are dependent. Its axle, heavy-laden, is not heated, the nave from ancient time remains unbroken.” RV. 1.164.13 (Griffith).

³⁵. RV. VI 56.3

³⁶. RV. 1.164.14

³⁷. RV.1.130.9

³⁸. RV. X 93.9

³⁹. “Soma and Pusan, urge your chariot hither, the seven-wheeled car that measures out the region.

That stirs not all that moves to every quarter, five-reined and harnessed by the thought, ye Mighty.” RV. 11.40.3 (Griffith).

⁴⁰. “Come to us with your chariot triple-seated three-wheeled of triple form, that rolleth lightly...” RV. 1.118.2. cf.1 .157.3.

⁴¹. RV. X 85.

⁴². The great Mahatmas whose thought can transcend space and time are often referred to as *Kavis* in the Vedas. The Vedic Rishis, faced with riddles, approach the *Kavis* with all humility praying to solve the riddles, seeking guidance in unravelling the truth hidden in the mysterious utterings, in the cryptic expressions, of the sages of bygone age recorded in the ancient scriptures. The Vedic word *Kavi* is translated by the commentator as *Kranta-darshin*, meaning “one who can see beyond space and time.” In three of the verses of RV. 1.164 the Rishi, exploring the mystery of the Supreme Spirit, asks the *Kavis*:

“Who hath beheld him as he sprang to being, seen how the boneless One supports the bony?

Where is the blood of earth, the life, the spirit?

Who may approach the man who knows, to ask it?

Unripe in mind, in spirit undiscerning, I ask of thee the god’s established places;

For up above the yearling Calf the sages (*kavis*), to force a web, their own seven threads have woven”,

I ask, unknowing, those who know, the sages (*kavis*) as one all ignorant for sake of knowledge.

What was that ONE who in the Unborn’s image hath established and fixed firm these worlds’ six regions.” RV. 1.164.4-6. (Griffith).

⁴³. The word *Adityas* stands for twelve suns, as well as gods in general-, both the *Adityas* and gods, are regarded as the sons of *Aditi*, the Vedic deity, representing infinity.

⁴⁴. *Satyenottabhita bhumih/suryeno’ttabkito dyatuh/*

rtena’dityas tisthanti/divi somo adhisthitah // RV. X.84.1

⁴⁵. *Somena’ditya balinah/somena prthivi mahi/*

atho naksatranam esam/upasthe soma ahitah // RV. X.85.2

⁴⁶. “From here Soma is in the third heaven; Gayatri brought him down (from there)” TB.HI.2.1.1.

⁴⁷. “One thinks, when they have brayed the plant, that he hath drunk the Soma’s juice; of him whom Brahmans truly know as Soma no one ever tastes.” RV.X.85.3 (Griffith).

⁴⁸. RV.X.85.6.7 49.

⁴⁹.RV.X.85.8-12

⁵⁰.RV.X.85.11

⁵¹, *suryaya ashvina vara’gnirasit purogava*RV.X.85.8

⁵². *ano manasmayam surya’rohat prayati patim*// RV.X.85.12

⁵³. RV.1.34.9

⁵⁴. RV.X.85.15

⁵⁵.RV.1.30.19

⁵⁶.RV.X.85.16

⁵⁷. RV.VIH 22.4

⁵⁸.RV.V.73.3

⁵⁹. RV.1.34.9. (Griffith)

⁶⁰.Yugante’ntarhitan vedan se’tihasan maharasayah/
lebhire tapasa purvam anujnata svayambhuva//
vide Upodghata to Rigveda, by Sayana.

⁶¹. “I taught this immortal Yoga to Vivasvan (Sun-god), Vivasvan conveyed it to Manu, and Manu imparted it Ikshvaku. Thus handed down from father to son, Arjuna, this yoga remained known to the Rajarshis. By great efflux of time, however, it has more or less disappeared. The same ancient yoga has this day been imparted to you by me, because you are My devotee and friend, and also because this is a supreme secret.” BG.IV. 1-3.

⁶². Mund.Up.3.2.9. “He, verily, who knows that Supreme Brahma, becomes very Brahma.” cp. *Brahmavid brahmani stithah*. BG.V.20 and also “He, who is happy within himself, enjoys within himself the delight of the soul, and even so illuminated by the inner light, such a yogi identified with Brahman attains Brahman, who is all Peace.” BG.V.25.

⁶³.“ AV.XIX.53.2

⁶⁴. Kalo ashvo vahati sapta-rashmih sahasrakso ajaro
bhuri retah/tamarohanti kavayo vipashcitas tasya
cakra bhuvanani vishva// (AV.XIX.53.1

⁶⁵.“up, eastward, downward in the west, it rolleth, with countless elements, one-wheeled single-fellied. With half it hath begotten all creation. Where hath the other half become unnoticed”. AV.X.8.7

⁶⁶. BG.VIU.21

⁶⁷. Asta cakra nava-dvara devanam pur ayodhya /
tasyam hiranyayah kosah svarge jyotisa’vartate //
tasmin hiranyaye koshe try-are tri-pra-tishthite /
tasmin yad yaksam atmanvad tad vai brahmavido viduh // AV.X.2.31-32

⁶⁸. *Brahma*, in this context, has been interpreted by Bhagavan Shankara-acharya as *karya-*

karanatmakam. It is clear, from this that *brahma-cakra* actually means *samsara-cakra*. While referring to the Supreme Spirit in the passage immediately following, it is characterized with an attribute, *paramam-udgitam etat paramam tu brahma-* Again this *brahma-chakra* is mentioned in Shvet.Up.6.1 as being revolved by the greatness of God. From all this it is quite clear that this Brahma-wheel stands for what is known as *Bhava-chakra* in Buddhist philosophy.

⁶⁹. “Some sages discourse of inherent nature (svabhava) others likewise of time, deluded by me. It is the greatness of God in the world, by which this Brahma-wheel is caused to revolve.” Shvet.Up. 6.1 (Hume).

⁷⁰. “We understand him (as a wheel) with one felly, with a triple tire, with sixteen end-parts, fifty spokes, twenty counterspokes, with six sets of eights, whose one rope is manifold, which has three different paths, whose one illusion (moha) has two conditioning causes.”

In this which vitalizes all things, which appears in all things, the Great - In this Brahma-wheel the soul (hamsa) flutters about, thinking that itself (atmanam) and the Actuator are different. When favoured by Him, it attains immortality. (Shvet.Up. 1.4-6 (R. Hume). For details see Shankara’s commentary.

⁷¹. “(Verily, this Soul is the overlord of all things, the king of all things). As all the spokes are held together in the hub and felly of wheel, just so in this Soul all things, all gods, all worlds, all breathing things, all selves are held together.” Br.Ar.Up. 2.5.15. See also Chand.Up.7.15.1; Prashna.Up. 2.6.6.; Mund. Up.2.26.

⁷². Nr. P.Tap.Up.5.1.

⁷³. Nr. T.Up. 2.2-3.

⁷⁴. They are:- (1) *muladhara* situated above the generative organs; (2) *svadhisthana* situated in the umbilical region; (3) *Manipura*, on the navel; (4) *Anahata*, in the root of the nose; (5) *Vishuddha* the hollow between the frontal sinuses; (6) *Ajna*, the frontanelle or the union of the coronal and sagittal sutures.

⁷⁵. Kath. Up. 1.3.3-9; for detailed information see FN.129.

⁷⁶. “chakra, car, jewel, wife, territory, horse and elephant - these are the seven treasures of all emperors (chakra- vartins)” BD.V.123.

⁷⁷. According to the BD the seven jewels referred in RV are none but the seven royal emblems. See FN.76.

⁷⁸. RV.VI.74.1.

⁷⁹. MBh. 14.16.23.

⁸⁰. ERE.Vol.7.p.554.

⁸¹. The critical edition of the MBh (B.O.R.I. Poona) deletes *Airavana*, the elephant, from the list and counts only six, viz., the moon, lakshmi, sura, horse, kaustubha, and Dhanvantari, vide MBh. 1.16.33-37.

⁸². MBh. 14.32.25-26. (K.T. Telang, SBE.Vol. VIII p.306).

⁸³. The critical edition reads *brahma labhasya* for *brahmanabhasya* and Nilakantha, the commentator, interprets it as *Brahmalabhasya hetoh*.

⁸⁴. Buddhist Suttas, SBE. XI. 0.153.

⁸⁵. The MBh describes the Kalachakra as follows: ‘The wheel of life moves on; a wheel of which the spoke is the understanding, of which the pole is mind, of which the bonds are the group of the senses, of which the outer rim is the five great elements, of which environment is home; which abounds in old age and grief, which moves in the midst of disease and misfortune, which rotates in space and time; the noise of which is trouble and toil, the rotations of which (constitute) day and night; which is encircled with cold and heat; of which pleasure and pain are the joints, and hunger and thirst the nails fixed into it, of which sunshine and shade are the ruts, which staggers in the opening or closing of an eyelid, which is enveloped in the fearful waters of delusion, which is ever revolving and void of consciousness, which is measured by months and half months, is ever-changing, which moves through (all) the worlds; the mud for which is penance and regulations, the mover of which is the force of the quality of passion, which is lit up by the great egoism, which is sustained by the qualities, the fastenings in which are vexations; which revolves in the midst of grief and destruction, which is full of action and instruments of action, which is large, and which is extended by means of attachments, which is rendered unsteady by avarice and desire; which is produced by ignorance of various (matters), which is attended upon by fear and delusion, and which is the cause of the delusion of all beings, which moves towards joy and pleasure, which has desire and wrath as its appurtenances, which is made up of (the entities) beginning with the Mahat and ending with the gross dements, which is unchecked, the imperishable source (of all), the speed of which is like that of the mind, and which is (never) fatigued. This wheel of life, which is associated with the pairs of opposites, and which is devoid of consciousness, all the world, together with the immortals, should cast away, abridge, and check.’ MBh. XIV 45.1-10-(K.T. Telang. SBE Vol. VIII, Anugita XXX. 1-10).

⁸⁶. “That man, among all creatures, who always accurately understands the movement and stoppage of the wheel of life is never deluded. (That) sage, released from all impressions, transcending all pairs of opposites, and released from all sins, attains the highest goal”, *ibid.* 11-12.

⁸⁷. The Anugita describes *sthula-sharira*. the human body as: “It is settled, that the body in which the colour is fire, the flowing (element) is water, and the feeling of touch is air, the hideous holder of the mud is earth, and likewise the sound is space; which is pervaded by the five currents; which is made up of five elements; which has nine passages and two deities; which is full of passion; unfit to be seen; made of three qualities and three constituent elements; pleased with contacts and full of delusion; Anugita XXVII 55-57.

⁸⁸. “—This same (body) which is difficult to move in this mortal world, and which rests on the real (entity), is the very wheel of time which rotates in this world”. (K. T. Telang. SBE Vol. VUI, Anugita XXVQ 58). It continues further; It is a great ocean, fearful and unfathomable, and is named delusion. The world, together with the immortals, should cast it aside, curtail it and restrain it.” 59-60-.

⁸⁹. The Gospel of Buddha, compiled by Paul Larus, *The Sermon at Benares*.

⁹⁰. SBE Vol. XI. p. 15 (Buddhist Suttas).

⁹¹. The seven treasures referred to in the Chakkavatti-sihanada *suit onto* are the same as mentioned in the BD except for the *House-father* and *counsellor*. vide Chakkavatti-sihanada-suttanta, D 1112,177 29; see also Lakkhana- suttanta D. III 2.177.29 and BD V.123 (FN 76).

⁹². The Universal Monarch after succeeding to the throne arranges a royal feast at night on the day of full-moon on the upper terrace of his palace. This is the solemn occasion for

testing the worthiness or otherwise of the new successor to the throne; to check whether he has been able to execute faithfully the duties of his office. The Chakka- vatti-sihanada-suttanta says in this connection:—"Then it may well be that if thou carry out the Aryan duty of a wheel- turning Monarch and on the feast of the full-moon thou wilt go with bathed head to keep the feast on the chief upper terrace, lo! the celestial wheel will manifest itself with its thousand spokes, its tyre navel and all its parts complete." D. in 60, SBB Vol. IV pp. 61-62-

⁹³. *ibid.*, D III 62. p. 63.

⁹⁴. *ibid.*, pp. 63-64

⁹⁵. D III 142; SBB Vol. IV p. 139

⁹⁶. D in 2. 177.29; SBB Vol. IV p. 141

⁹⁷. D in 1.147.5; SBB Vol. IV p. 140

⁹⁸ The life of Buddha, p. 220 (1952)

⁹⁹. The Pali Text Society edn., London, 1921 Vol. II p. 582.83; See also Patieccasamuppada.

¹⁰⁰. The History of Buddhist Thought by E. J. Thomas, pp. 68-69 (1959).

¹⁰¹. Dasattura suttanta, D HI. 1.276, SBB Vol. IV, p. 254.

¹⁰². The Life of Buddha by E. J. Thomas, pp. 216-219.

¹⁰³. D II. 76.25. We may note here that the Buddhists believe that a sadhaka after passing through several incarnations reach the state of Bodhisattva, the highest state of enlightenment next only to Buddha hood. Bodhi means perfect knowledge or wisdom and Bodhisattva is one who has only (me birth to undergo before attaining the state of supreme Buddha which ultimately leads one to Nirvana.

¹⁰⁴. Vide Saddharmapundarika, chapter VII.

¹⁰⁵. *ibid.*, Introduction p. XXIV.

¹⁰⁶. Kalpataru is a mythical tree of gods grown in heaven which is known to grant whatever one asks for. Bhagavan Shri Krishna, entreated by Satyabhama, one of his consorts, is said to have brought down one of these trees to earth. The flowers of these trees never fade nor do they lose their fragrance.

¹⁰⁷. A saint, who is emancipated while living, is called jivanmukta-, a liberated soul from all liability to future birth.

¹⁰⁸. "The burden verily are the five khandhas,
The burden-taking is the individual;
Grasping the khandhas is pain in the world,
Laying down the burden is happiness;
When he has laid the heavy burden down,
And has not taken up another burden,
Has drawn out craving with its root,
Free from hunger he has won Nirvana."

Samy, iii 25 (Hist, of Buddhist thought p. 100)

¹⁰⁹. "O descendant of Kurus, there he comes into contact with knowledge which belonged to him in his former body, and then again through that he strives with greater vigour than before for perfection, for self-realizing. For even though reluctant, he is led away by the self-

same former practice, and although he only wishes to learn devotion (Yoga), he rises above the (fruit of action laid down in the) divine world. The Yogin, however, working with great efforts, and cleared of his sins, attains perfection after many births and then reaches the supreme goal." BG. VI43-45.

¹¹⁰. In chapter: *Early Doctrine: Yoga* of his History of Buddhist Thought, E. J. Thomas says that this system "goes to a very early period and the fundamental rules must go back to the beginnings of order", and at the end he remarks: "It is certain that the philosophic system came to exist, with theories of nature of the individual, his career according to a law of causation, and the doctrine of his final destiny; and then with the Mahayana movement a trans" formation of all the problems through a new theory of reality and conception of the Enlightened One which made him indistinguishable from the conception of Hindu deity."

Hist. of Buddhist Thought, p. 57.

¹¹¹. vide, "This soul (Atman) is not to be obtained by instruction, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He is to be obtained only by the one whom he chooses; To such a one that Soul (Atman) reveals his own person.

Kath. Up. 2.23. (R.E. Hume).

¹¹². "I taught this immortal yoga to Vivasvan (sun-god). Vivasvan conveyed it to Manu (his son); and Manu imparted it to (his son) Ikshvaku.

"Thus handed down from father to son, Arjuna, this yoga became known to Rajarshis. By great efflux of time however, it has more or less disappeared. "The same ancient yoga has this day been imparted to you by me, because you are My devotee and friend, and also because this is a supreme secret." BG. IV. 1.3-

¹¹³. "The sages whose sins have perished, whose doubts have been dispelled (by knowledge), who are self-restrained, *who are actively engaged in promoting the welfare of beings*, attain Brahman, who is all Peace."

"To those wise men, who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued their mind and have realized, God, Brahma, the above of eternal Peace is present all round." BG. V. 25-26.

¹¹⁴. "Arjuna, There is nothing in the three worlds for Me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me; yet I continue to work". BG. III. 22.

¹¹⁵. Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births. I know them all, while you do not, Terror of foes!" BG. IV. 5.

¹¹⁶. BG. IV. 1-3.

¹¹⁷ "Thus has knowledge, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Having reflected on it fully, do as you like." "Hear, again, My supreme word, the most secret of all. You are very dear to Me; therefore, I shall tender you this salutary advice."

¹¹⁸. BG. XVIII. 64

¹¹⁹. BG. XVI. 5

¹²⁰. "... Tell me that which is decidedly good for me; I am your disciple. Pray instruct me, who have sought refuge in you." BG. II. 7

¹²¹. *Bhaktos' si me sakha ceti rahasyam hyetad uttamam.* BG. IV. 3

¹²². The term Veda stands for the entire corpus of literature including the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

¹²³. The Vedas emerged out of the primeval sacrifice performed by the Gods in the beginning of the Kalpa. See RV. X. 90.9; vide also FN. 60.

¹²⁴. The word Upanishad in Sanskrit means secret knowledge, *rahasya*, which is communicated by a teacher only to the deserving disciples.

¹²⁵. Vide “Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, and then I create myself.

“For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma on firm footing, I am born from age to age.” BG. IV 6-8.

¹²⁶. The scriptures ranging from the Vedas to the Puranas are collectively called *Vidyasthanas*, the primary sources or fountains of knowledge. An integrated study of these books is essential to enable one to sift the grain out of chaff. The books are: four Vedas, six Vedic ancilleries, the Puranas including two epics, Nyaya, Mimamsa and Dharmashastra.

¹²⁷. *nayam atma pravacanena labhyo na medhyaya va bahuna shrutena*” Mund. Up. 3.2.3; vide Kath. Up. 2.23, cf. “this soul (Atman) is not to be obtained by one destitute of fortitude. Nor through heedlessness, nor through a false notion of austerity (*tapasya*). But he who strives by these means provided he knows. Into his Brahma-abode this Soul (Atman) enters.” Mund. Up. 3.2.4.

¹²⁸. There are altogether seven energy-centres figuratively called wheels or kundalis in Yogic terminology, located in one’s body, extending from above the generative organs upto the *brahmarandhra* an aperture in the crown of the head. The last among these, that is located in the crown of the head, is called *sahasrara*, thousand-spoked, a great resort of a yogin in his yogic discipline. The soul of a yogin, at the time of his death, is believed to pass through the brahma-randhra in the head and merge with the Supreme Spirit. By yogic practices and meditation a yogin gradually raises the life energy from wheel to wheel till it reaches the shasrara chakra where he remains in samadhi enjoying the eternal bliss equal to Brahmananda, while in this body itself. He will have developed the supernatural power known as *aishvarya* by this time, and would be able to leave his body at will without being subjected to the pangs of death.

¹²⁹. Kalidasa, Kumarasambhava; In the Katha-Upanishad, the body is actually compared with chariot as follows:

“Know thou the soul (atman, self) as riding in a
chariot, The body as the chariot.
Know thou the intellect (buddhi) as the chariot driver,
And the mind (*manas*) as the reins.
The senses (*indriyas*), they say, are the horses,
The objects of sense, what they range over.
The self combined with senses and mind Wise men
call ‘the enjoyer’ (*bhoktr*)
He who has not understanding (a-vijnana) whose
mind is not constantly held firm,
His senses are uncontrolled,
Like the vicious horses of a chariot-driver.
He, however, who has understanding,
whose mind is constantly held firm-
His senses are under control,
Like the good horses of a chariot-driver.

He, however, who has no understanding,
 Who is unmindful and ever impure?
 Reaches not the goal,
 But goes on to transmigration (*samsara*)
 He, however, who has understanding,
 Who is mindful and ever pure?
 Reaches the goal,
 From which he is born no more.
 He, however, who has the understanding of a chariot-driver,
 A man who reins in his mind-
 He reaches the end of the journey,
 That highest place of Vishnu.”

Kath. Up. 1.3.1-9.

¹³⁰. See Kieth, Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas, p. 65.

¹³¹. cf. *rtasya cakram*, RV. 1-164.21

¹³². See G. D. Alriella, “Prayer wheels” ERE. Vol. X. p. 214

¹³³. P. E. Crawley, ‘May Midsummer.’ ERE Vol. VIII. pp. 501-3 and ‘Magical Circle’, pp. 521-4.

¹³⁴. See J. A. Mac Culloch. ‘Charms and Amulets (Cettie) ERE. Vol. VIII, p. 413a.

¹³⁵. Purnam idam purnam adah purnat
 Purnam udacyate/purnasya purnam adaya
 Purnam eva’va shisyate // Br.Ar.Up. 5.1.1.
 “The yon is fullness; fulness, this.
 From fulness, fulness doth proceed,
 Withdrawing fulness’s fulness off,
 E’en fulness then itself remains”.
 (R.E. Hume).

ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Atharvaveda
BD	Brihad Devata
BG	Bhagavad-Gita
B.O.R.S.	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
Br.Ar.Up.	Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad
Chand.Up.	Chandogya Upanishad
D.C.R.I.	Deccan College Research Institute, Poona
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
FN	Foot-notes
J.L.S.I.	Journal of Linguistic Society of India, Poona
Kath.Up.	Katha-Upanishad
Mund.Up.	Mundaka Upanishad
MBh.	Mahabharata
Nir	Nirukta
Nr.P.Tap.Up.	Nirisimha-Purva Tapaniya Upanishad
or.T.Up.	Nrisimha Tapaniya-Upanishad
Prashn.Up.	Prashna Upanishad
RV	Rigveda
Sam.Up.Br.	Samhitopanishad Brahmana
Samy	Samyutha Nikaya
SBB	Sacred Book of the Buddhists
SBE	Sacred Book of the East
Shvet.Up.	Shvetashvatara-Upanishad
TB.	Taittiriya Brahmana
TS	Taittiriya Samhita (Yajurveda)