



A Study of Ancient Speech and Writing

By Charles Johnston

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A First Lesson in the Lemurian Language

[Selection drawn from “From the Highlands of Lemuria”]

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“The First Race,” says H. P. Blavatsky, in *The Secret Doctrine*, “was, in our sense, speechless, as it was devoid of mind on our plane. The Second Race had a ‘sound-language,’ to wit, chant-like sounds composed of vowels alone. The Third Race developed in the beginning a kind of language which was only a slight improvement on the various sounds in Nature. When the law of evolution led the middle Third Race to reproduce their kind sexually, an act which forced the creative gods, compelled by Karmic law, to incarnate in mindless men, then only was speech developed. But even then it was no better than a tentative effort. The whole human race was at that time of ‘one language and of one lip.’ Speech then developed, according to Occult teaching, in the following order:

“Monosyllabic speech; that of the first approximately fully developed human beings at the close of the Third Root-race, the ‘golden-coloured,’ yellow-complexioned men, after their separation into sexes, and the full awakening of their minds. Before that, they communicated through what would now be called ‘thought-transference.’ This monosyllabic speech was the vowel parent, so to speak, of the monosyllabic languages mixed with hard consonants, still in use among the yellow races.

“These linguistic characteristics developed into the agglutinat-

ive languages. The latter were spoken by some Atlantean races, while other parent stocks of the Fourth Race preserved the mother-language. And as languages have their cyclic evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, fall into matter, admixture with other languages, maturity, decay, and finally death, so the primitive speech of the most civilized Atlanteans decayed and almost died out.

“The inflectional speech—the root of the Sanskrit, very erroneously called ‘the elder sister’ of the Greek, instead of its mother—was the first language (now the mystery tongue of the Initiates) of the fifth Race.”

We have already quoted the same author as saying that “the Polynesians belong to the very earliest of surviving sub-races.” we shall now try to show how completely the Polynesian languages bear out the above quotation as to the origin and development of speech.

First a word as to the general growth of languages, the materials of which they are made. Speech, in general, is a flow of breath from the lungs, to which sound and tone are given by the vibration of the vocal chords; the change in position of the lips and the mouth giving the differing sounds which we call vowels. If speech went no further, we should have the primal “vowel-language.” But there are two further elements. The first is a partial closing of the lips, or a partial, but incomplete, approach of the teeth, or of the tongue to various points along the palate, thus causing, for the lips, the sounds of *f* and *v*; for the teeth, the sounds of *s*, of *th* and *dh*; for the tongue, the sounds of *l* and *r*, (formed by the tip of the tongue, partially, but not completely, stopping the vowel air-stream;) the sounds of *kh* and *gh*, when the root of the tongue comes close to the palate. Thus are formed the semivowels or liquids, which stand half-way between the vowels and the full consonants, or, as the Sanskrit grammarians better call them, the “contacts.” In Sanskrit, there are five points in the mouth at which full contacts are formed: (1) the throat or back of the mouth, where the sounds of *k* and *g* (hard) are formed; (2) the top of the mouth where, by a contact with the underside of the tip of the tongue, turned backwards, a hard *t* and *d* are formed, which are nearly like the very hard *t* and *d* of the English language; (3) the true dentals, formed by

pressing the tip of the tongue against the teeth, like the soft t and d in Italian and other continental languages. The fact that Englishmen, not noticing the difference, use their own hard t and d when pronouncing continental languages, is one of the things which keep them from "talking like the natives," who use the soft t and d. (4) a blend between t and sh, with the tongue against the teeth, giving the sound ch, with its corresponding sonant, j; and (5) the lip-contact, forming the labials, p and b. In Sanskrit, there are, for each of these five points of contact, first, the surd sounds, like k, ch, t, p; then the sonants, like g, j, d, b; then the same sounds aspirated, or followed by an immediate out-breathing, giving the sounds k-ha, g-ha, t-ha, d-ha, ch-ha, j-ha, p-ha, b-ha; and, finally, the nasals, formed by setting the organs of the mouth in position for pronouncing each group and then sending forth the breath, not through the mouth, but through the nose; sounds something like this: nga, for the throat; nya, for the ch-sound; the hard and soft na; and, finally, ma, for the lip-contact.

This pretty formidable battery of sounds represents the highest and fullest development, that of the early Fifth Race. We have given it in its completeness, as a basis of comparison for the very simple range of sounds in the extremely early, and, therefore, comparatively undeveloped, Polynesian languages, those of "the earliest surviving sub-races." And, at the risk of appearing to bore even the most tolerant readers, we venture to arrange these Sanskrit sounds in a little table, to be followed, presently, by a similar table for the Polynesian tongues:

SANSKRIT CONSONANT AND SEMI-CONSONANT RANGE

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|-----|----|------------|
| | ka | k-ha | ga | g-ha | nga | ha | (kha) |
| (hard) | ta | t-ha | da | d-ha | na | ra | sha (hard) |
| (soft) | ta | t-ha | da | d-ha | na | la | sa |
| | cha | ch-ha | ja | j-ha | nya | ya | sha (soft) |
| | pa | p-ha | ba | b-ha | ma | va | (fa) |

Each of the above sounds (except the two in brackets) has a letter to represent it in the Sanskrit alphabet, and, in that alphabet, the sounds

are arranged in their physiological order, pretty much as in this table; first, the throat sounds, then the sounds of the roof of the mouth, then the sounds of the ridge of the palate, then the sounds of the teeth, then the sounds of the lips. Thus a Sanskrit dictionary follows the natural order of these sounds, as they are formed by the organs of speech, justifying the idea that this highly scientific arrangement was reached by men who fully understood the mysteries of sound, men who spoke the "mystery tongue of the Initiates," as said in *The Secret Doctrine*. In contrast, our own alphabet is absolutely unscientific, a mere jumble of sounds without any order at all; first, an open vowel, then a lip sound, then a dental sibilant, then a dental surd, then another vowel, and so on. It is an adaptation of the Greek alphabet, named from its two first letters, alpha-beta; this is, in its turn, an adaptation of the Semitic Phoenician or Hebrew, where the two first letters are aleph ("an ox") and beth ("a house"); our capital A being an ancient picture of the head of an ox, now turned upside down, while the second letter, B, is a conventionalized house. In like manner, our G is the head of a camel, the Hebrew gimel; while our L is an ox-goat; they are all blurred pictures, representing the initial sounds of the objects depicted.

We now come back, duly furnished with bases of comparison, to the Polynesian languages, with their very early, very slightly developed, range of sounds.

There are, first, the vowels which, as we shall see, play a very great part in Polynesian, a survival of the earlier all-vowel language. Next, there are the semi-vowels or breathings of the throat and lips, the sounds of ha and wha, va or fa, and the liquids, r and l. Then there are three contacts or full consonants: that of the throat, or ka; that of the teeth, or ta; that of the lips, or pa. Throughout the whole Polynesian regions, of enormous extent, there are (with almost no exceptions) the surd sounds only, never the sonants; that is, we find the sounds ka, ta, pa; but not the sounds ga, da, ba. Finally, there is a nasal for each of the three contacts, namely, nga, na, and ma. To show how undeveloped this sound range is, we shall arrange the Polynesian sounds in the same way as we arranged the very highly developed sounds of Sanskrit:

POLYNESIAN CONSONANT AND SEMI-CONSONANT RANGE

| | | |
|----|-----|---------------------|
| ka | nga | ha |
| ta | na | la (or) ra |
| pa | ma | wa (or) wha (or) fa |

And that is all; only nine contacts, instead of the thirty-three of Sanskrit.

It seems, then, that the beginning was made with streams of vowel-sound only; that the half-contacts or semi-vowels, breathings and liquids and nasals, were then developed; that the full contacts came last, beginning, perhaps, with the lip-contact, which is the easiest and simplest to make; the contacts of the teeth and throat, the sounds of ta and ka, coming later. Further, that all the surds were developed first, and then only later the sonants; the aspirated surds and sonants, as in Sanskrit, coming last of all.

This gradual development, from pure vowel sounds, through breathings and semi-vowels, to full contacts or consonants, seems to record exactly that *fall into matter* described in *The Secret Doctrine*; it seems to have gone on parallel with the complete materialization, externalization and development of the fully formed physical man, remaining as an exact record and register of that development. And it seems probable that, if we could get the exact range of consonants natural to each race or sub-race, we could, using that range of sounds as an index, place the races in their correct order in the historical plan of development; that we could grade all the races by this index alone. So marvellous a thing is language, so mysterious and magical is sound.

We come, at length, to the Polynesian vowels, the oldest element of language and the most potent. It is curious and significant that, in the Polynesian tongues, the vowels still retain their primitive spiritual value; many of them, simply, or united, form the divine names, the names of the Gods. Thus, A means God; Ao is heaven, the state of the blessed; ao, as a verb, means to regard with reverence; as a noun, ao means authority; aoao means supreme, or, to be supreme; aio means peace, quietude; Io is the mystery God, the Supreme Being who,

according to the Polynesian belief, is everywhere potent, without form, having no house; they will not even name that God in a house or among men, but first withdraw to the wilderness, "where nature is unpolluted." Io also means the soul, life, power, mental energy. The vowel O alone means space, capacity, the ability to be contained; and, more familiarly, an enclosure, a garden. U means that which is fixed or firm, not easily to be shaken or moved.

To come next to words of one or more vowels, genuine survivals of the primal vowel language; we shall be surprised at their great variety and expressiveness in Polynesian.

Besides meaning God, the vowel a is also used as an article, as a prefix to proper names, as a preposition meaning to, or belonging to; as an interjection. Aia means to have authority over, as ao means to reign. Ae is used to signify agreement, meaning yes, in answer to an affirmative question, and meaning no in answer to a negative question. The pure vowel word aeaea, accented on the second and fourth vowels, means to rise to the surface like a bubble; aeaea means to pant, to be out of breath, to breathe hard; the fundamental meaning evidently being breath, or, more metaphysically, spirit. Ai means to give life, while aia means an abode, a place where one lives; ai is also an interjection of surprise. Ao, besides meaning personified Light, as a divinity, signifies also daylight, daytime, dawn; as a verb, ao means to gather, to collect; aoa means to bark like a dog, while aoaoa is the indistinct noise made by persons at a distance; these two last belong to the category of Nature sounds, spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine*. Au means smoke, the current of a stream, and, more materially, a sharp thorn or needle; auau means to pick out, as thorns or fish-bones are picked out; au further means firm, stable, sure, and, as an exclamation, exactly what "sure" means in American. Also, as an imitative sound, au signifies a dog's bark, or, as a verb, to bark. Aua is the name of a small fish. Aua also means "I know not (and care not)!" Aua has the further meaning of far on, at a distance, while auau has meanings as different as to lift, and a basket of seed potatoes; perhaps the meaning shades thus: to lift, to gather together, to gather in a basket, and so on. Aue is an exclamation of sorrow, like alas! It further means a clamour, a noise of woe.

We have, therefore, of pure vowel words beginning with a, the following: A, ae, ai, ao, au; aae, aeaea; aia; aoao, aoaoa; aua, auau, aue. This is already a fair illustration of the primal vowel language.

E is used as a sign of the future tense; as a preposition, it means by; it is used as the sign of the vocative case. Ea is an exclamation of surprise; it further means to rise above water, and, by a development of the meaning, to return home, as war captives return; and thence liberty, escape; while eaea means, to escape repeatedly. Starting from the meaning, to rise, eaea comes to mean exalted, honourable. The beautiful word eaoia, each letter being distinctly pronounced, means but. Ei is an interjection, used at the ends of lines in poetry; while eia means a current or tide. Eo is said to mean a flat rock, but seems not to be generally used.

The vowel i is used to form indefinite past tenses, and to connect a verb with its object; it is also used as a sign of the accusative case, or with the meaning of to. Accented, i means to ferment; ii has the meaning of fermented, sour, mouldy; ia means he, she or it; with the additional meanings of that, the aforesaid; ia also means a current or stream, while iaua means hold! stay!

The vowel o, besides meaning space, an enclosure, something contained, comes to mean provision for a journey, a present, and, as a verb, to penetrate, to go deep, to dig a hole; then to husk a coconut, to pierce with any sharp instrument. As a possessive pronoun, it means your, belonging to; it is also an exclamation, in answer to a call. Oi means to shake, to shudder, with an intensive oioi, to be greatly agitated; oioi then comes to mean rapid, swiftly, quickly; to move. Oi, accented on the second syllable, means to shout; oioi is also the name of a bird and of a plant. Oa, in Hawaiian, means a board, a rafter; while oaoa means split or cleft, like a tree cut into planks. Ou means you, or your; oue is a kind of flax; while ouou means a few, and further, thin, feeble.

U, as we saw, means something firm or fixed; and then, to reach the land, to touch, as a boat or ship on the rocks, to come face to face, to face danger, to run up against anything, to prevail, to conquer. Ua is the back-bone, uaua is a sinew, a vein, an artery, with the more abstract meanings, courage, firmness, resolution, a brave man.

Backbone has just the same secondary meanings with us. Ua means rain, to rain, while ue means to weep. Ua as an adverb means when; it is also used as a particle of expostulation. Ue, besides meaning the fourth day of the moon's age, signifies to shake, to tremble, while ueue means to stimulate, to incite; uei means to try to set going; ueue means to call people to war. Ui means to ask, to inquire; an invitation; uiui means to ask questions repeatedly.

When in addition to the five vowels, we take the simple breathing ha, or the slightly more concrete, but still open wa and wha, we can multiply our vocabulary many times. Thus, aeha, aewa, ahau, ahe, ahea, aheahea, ahi, ahiahi, aho, ahu, ahuahua, ahua, awa, awawa, awe, aweawe, awha, awhe, awheawhe, awheo, awhi, awhiwhiwhi, awhio, awhiowhio, and so on for the other vowels.

Then come the liquids, l and r; then the nasals; and, finally, the full contacts or consonants.

It will be noted that, in many cases, an intensive is formed by doubling the original word; awhe, for example, means to gather in a heap; awheawhe means to set to work with many persons; awhio means to wind about, while awhiowhio means a whirlwind. This is the simplest form of agglutination, the "gluing together" of words, spoken of, in *The Secret Doctrine*, as characteristic of the second period of speech. Here is a pretty example of agglutination, from Samoan: lagi means sky; lalolagi means under the sky; lalololagi means the earth; fa'a lalololagi means earthly. If one repeats these words in series, lagi-lalololagi-lalololagi-fa'alelalololagi, one gets an effect that is distinctly Lemurian; and not in fancy only, but in reality; the words have actually survived since Lemurian times.

But there is a further evidence that, in the Polynesian tongues, we have the survival of a far older all-vowel tongue—the Miocene survival of an Eocene speech, as one writer says. The word kanaka has been used very widely to mean a native of the Hawaiian islands, or indeed of the islands in general; it really means a man, a human being, in the Hawaiian tongue. The word consists of a hard contact, a nasal and another hard contact, each followed by the vowel a. But, at the other end of Polynesia, the word is no longer kanaka but tangata; thus Tangata-maori means a native of New Zealand, literally "an

indigenous man," or, as we say, a Maori. Here again, the word consists of a hard contact, a nasal and a hard contact, each followed by the vowel a; but, while the three vowels remain the same, the contacts and nasals are altered, interchanged. The Hawaiian form of the word has the throat contact k; the dental nasal n, the throat contact k, with the three a's; the New Zealand word has the dental contact, the throat nasal, the dental contact, with the three a's. It is evident that the three a's are the essential part, the root of the word, the old and original basis, while the contacts or consonants were filled in later, and filled in differently, at different parts of Lemuria. In Samoan, the tongue of the group of islands which lie halfway between these extremes, and about two thousand miles from either end, the word is tagata, the nasal being softened to a sonant, a sound which is not found in the original range of Polynesian contacts; in Tahiti, a thousand miles south-east of Samoa, the central nasal is dropped altogether, or has never been added, and the word is ta-ata. In Moriori, it becomes rangata. In Fiji it is tamata. In Vanikoro it is ranaka. Thus we get the series of forms: Ta-ata, tagata, tangata, rangata, ranaka, kanaka; the vowels being the essential thing, while the consonants are put in, and variously put in, to give the word more substance. The same thing may be illustrated by another well known word: in Mangaian, aroa means love, or beloved; in Maori it is aroha; in Samoan it is alofa; in Hawaiian it is aloha; showing the substitution, in the one case, of one liquid for another; in the other, of one breathing for another. In the same way, atarangi, a shadow, in Maori, becomes akalani in Hawaiian; ata-ani in Marquesan. Kaha, a rope, in Maori, becomes aha in Tahiti, 'afa in Samoa, kaa in Mangaian, kafa in Tongan. So the Samoan word lagi, meaning sky, which we have already quoted, is in Maori rangi; in Mangarevan it is ragi; in Tahitian it is rai; in Hawaiian it is lani; in Motu it is lai. So we get the series, rangi, rani, rai, lai, lani, lagi; showing, as before, that the vowel-combination is the essential element, the real root of the word, the survival from the all-vowel period.

Two things in this baby-talk of mankind may have seemed very familiar, even to those who know nothing of Polynesian: first, this substitution of one consonant for another; second, the doubling of syllables or words, or even their repetition several times running. The

truth is, that both these linguistic peculiarities survive among the small early-Third Race people who are continually arriving in our midst, and whom we prosaically call babies, quite overlooking the fact that, in a great many things, they are a genuine apparition of the long gone sub-races. For have they not the exact character of the sexless, mindless sub-races, not fully mastering their material bodies, not yet inhabited by manas? Do they not express themselves in streams of vowel speech, before they come to the semi-vowels and liquids, and, finally, the hard contacts or consonants? And do they not indulge in the trick of reduplication or repetition, saying, with entire content, such words as papapapa, or mamamama, or tatatata, which their progenitors quite unwarrantably take to themselves? And do they not, often to their fourth or fifth year, mix up the consonants just as do the recognized Lemurians, the peoples of the Polynesian islands, generally using ta for ka, just as the Maori says tangata for kanaka?

This is but one of many illustrations of the law of reversion or survival, in accordance with which the individual, in the earlier stages of his career, reverts to the characteristics of past periods and races, nay, even of past Rounds. So there are, all around us, opportunities for studying the most ancient Lemurian speech. We need not go to the South Seas to hear it. All babies talk it; all babies, up to a certain age, talk the same language, and that language is a reversion to the speech of the earliest races, long before complete humanity had been attained.

So, from our survey of the Highlands of Lemuria, we get these results: Over this vast space of islands dotted amid the ocean, a space from twelve to fifteen millions of square miles, or equal to a third or a fourth of the land surface of the globe, the speech is singularly uniform even though the island tribes that talk it have been separated from each other for long ages. And everywhere, with the sameness of speech, there are the same large, fundamental ideas, the same world-concepts, the same divinities, the same ancient traditions of the early world. Without doubt, we are in presence of a once united, though now endlessly subdivided people, a common culture, a common historical or prehistoric past.

And, at the basis of this vastly extended speech, there is an identity of metaphysical or spiritual meaning. The vowels, which are its

dominant element, have large, abstract ideas attached to them or, rather, evidently inherent in them. They stand for heaven, the sky, the soul, life, breath, space; the great, formless forces and powers that are the root of all things. And, even after the few, simple consonants or contacts were developed, the words remained essentially vowel-words; the vowel part of them is uniform and unchanging, over the whole vast area, while the hard contacts or consonants are variously filled in, as gutturals in one part of the Lemurian area, as dentals in another, but, according to an evident phonetic system, by no means haphazard.

It is interesting that Dana, who wrote an admirable account of the early days, and of a cruise to the Pacific coast nearly a hundred years ago, records that a group of Kanakas, whom he found at San Diego, had a series of very ancient religious chants, which were composed of vowels only, as though the older speech, before the formation of consonants, had been preserved as a mystery tongue. It is interesting also that, in the older Upanishads, there is a tradition which accords closely with the historical evolution of the Polynesian languages; the vowels, we are told, belong to the gods, to the heavenly world; the breathings and semi-vowels belong to the mid-world; the consonants belong to the material world, the world of death. Here again is the tradition of a *fall into matter*, for the speech of mankind as well as for man himself.

The Speech of the Gods

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The Theosophical doctrine, while endorsing many of the views of the Darwinian system of evolution, has so supplemented that doctrine with another—that of man's spiritual descent or downward evolution from the planetary spirits—as to alter entirely the view to be taken of man's character, constitution and dignity in the universe. Of man's various powers, perceptions and potencies, some belong to the arc ascending from the *monera*, some to the arc descending from the divine and spiritual ancestors.

That the Aryan tongue, the language of the intuitional Fifth Race, belongs to the latter category and is man's inheritance from the planetary spirits, we hope to be able to show.

Philological research has demonstrated that the Indo-European or Aryan languages are reducible to a few hundred primitive roots, from which all subsequent stages and variations of language are by various modes of combination derived. In these days of enlightenment, when man is brought into unpleasant proximity with several very disagreeable poor relations, it is interesting to all mankind, and especially to the Aryan nations, to trace exactly the source from which our ancestor—the Aryan, not the ape—derived his few hundred primitive roots, for in their source and character we have a measure of his mind, a finger-post pointing either heavenwards to man's divine progenitors, or ape-wards to the prognathous and hairy chimpanzee.

On the one hand we shall expect to discover a spiritual relation

between sounds and the various powers, forms and colours and the universe, the value of which was intuitionally perceived by the earliest Aryans; on the other, we shall look to find the echoes of the grunts and squeals of our poor relation perched on a tree-branch mumbling his acorns.

Roots, say the theorists, were at first either a matter of convention, or were formed by imitating the sounds of nature, and by exclamations and interjections. The chief objection to the first theory (which indeed was never very seriously defended) is that contrary to hypothesis the Aryan roots, as a whole, do not express the wants and notions of such a primitive people as we were led to postulate. We find for example comparatively few words, such as *bow*, *arrow*, and, *tent*, while there are a great many expressing abstract or reflective ideas, like *to shine*, *to fly*, *to know*, *to burn*. The second also is all very well *as a theory*, but at the first rude contact with fact it collapses. We find very few words which could possibly be formed according to its principles, and this for the simple reason that there are no distinctive sounds in nature accompanying the majority of the ideas expressed in these Aryan roots.

The theory which we put forward, on the other hand, is that sounds have by nature a spiritual or innate relation with various colours, forms or qualities, and that the Aryan roots were formed with a clear intuitional perception of this fact. It is probable that the process of their formation was instinctive and unconscious, rather than intentional and deliberate.

To make the theory more clear, we may say that it appears to us that the entities on each plane have a spiritual relation to the entities on the other planes. A particular sound, for instance, corresponds to some one colour, to some one taste, to some one odour, and to some one simple figure or form. In order to connect the Aryan roots, or, to speak more correctly, the sounds of the Aryan roots with their values on the other planes—thus showing their origin to be spiritual and intuitional—it will be necessary to analyse the chief sounds used in this branch of human speech, and to assign to them their spiritual values; and having discovered these values to apply them to the Aryan roots or to the words of any early language akin to the Aryan. It will be seen that besides the values to be assigned to them intuitionally, a parallel

series of values will be discovered arising from physiological reasons, such as the position of the organs of speech while pronouncing them; but it must in all cases be borne in mind that the intuitive is the primary meaning, though reasons for it cannot, from its very nature, be stated argumentatively; in most cases, therefore, physiological reason alone will be given. For the convenience of those unacquainted with Sanskrit phonetics, we shall adhere as far as possible to the English alphabet.

To begin with B and M (pronounced *bă* and *ăm*), if we analyse their character and difference from other sounds and from each other, we find that with the exception P (*pă*) a slight variant of B, they are the only sounds which require the complete closure of the mouth for their formation. Whether it be preceded or followed by a vowel, B cannot be correctly pronounced without first closing the lips and then opening them. It is evident therefore that as *Bă* is the only sound which is made by the bursting forth of the breath from closed lips, it is more suited than any other to express "the beginning of life," or "life." M differs from B in this, that it is made not by the breath coming from the just opened lips, but by closing them and stopping the breath completely for a time, then the breath finds an outlet by its upper channel, the nose. Taking these facts into consideration, we perceive that it should mean something extreme, like "end," "height" or "death," or, more fully, the stoppage of the life energy and its transfer to a different channel. (We may here remark that this value agrees with the characteristics of Siva, in the mystic syllable Om, or Aum, representing Brahman the Creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer and regenerator). It is a similar sound to M, but differs from it in this, that the stoppage of the breath, before its transfer to the upper outlet, is incomplete. It means "continuance" or change without any real end. P is a variation of the sound for life, its significance is less though similar, it means "formation of a part," "division," or "smallness.". The principal characteristic of V is its indefiniteness, it means "vagueness." F, its companion sound, means "airiness" or "lightness," it would refer to floating or flying objects. The harshest of the primary sounds is J (*Jă*), its meaning therefore to accord with this peculiarity must be "matter," "heaviness," or "earth" (as one of the five objective elements). The hard sharp sound of K (*Kă*), at once defines

its meaning—"hardness," "sharpness," or "brilliance." The analogous sound of G (gā) means "smoothness" or "reflection." The Brahmanical doctrine of emanations teaches, as is well known, that absolute spirit, or Parabrahm (the great underlying reality of the universe), by its expansive activity created the First and Eternal emanation of the Logos, or Spirit; from this was produced the second emanation of ether, the astral light of the Kabbalists, corresponding to akasha; from the ether was produced the element of light or fire; from fire was produced air; from air was produced water; from water was produced earth; from earth was produced the vegetable kingdom; from the vegetable kingdom were produced animals, from animals man.

Here we find that earth is, as it were, the turning point to which downward evolution reaches, and from which upward evolution begins. It is a remarkable and significant fact, but none the less a fact, that, if we take the liquid semi-vowel or ethereal series of sounds, and classify them in the order they come in the throat and mouth, their intuitional or spiritual values in this order will correspond accurately to the order of the elements in this Kabbalistic doctrine of emanations.

The first of these ethereal sounds A (pronounced like the a in *atma*.) Is the first sound of the human voice formed farthest within the throat, and the breath necessary to form all other sounds must pass from the A, the value of A therefore is "God" the "first cause" or the "self." The next sound of this series is R (ar, as in *for*), from its peculiar fullness and undefinable sound its meaning is "wind," "breath," "movement" or "spirit;" it is the spirit which, in the words of Genesis, "Brooded upon the face of the waters," and is the first emanation of the A or God; after R comes the sound of H (*hay*) the sound for "heat," the five elements in one aspect. Next comes L (*el*) the spiritual value of which is "light." The other aspect of the fire emanation Y (*yea*) the sound succeeding L, means "compression" or "the drawing together of things;" the next sound of this peculiar class is W (*way*) the sound for "water"; marking the two limits of the circular space enclosed by the pronunciation of this sound are the two sounds of Jā and Kā representing the quality of material solidity of the next emanation; the earth, which thus issues from the centre of the water element.

“Let the waters be gathered together
And let the dry land appear,”

says the cosmogony in Genesis. The ethereal or semi-vowel carry us down the earth element, which is, as we have seen, the turning point of evolution. These ethereal sounds represent the objective and supersensual planes, whose peculiar types of being have been called the fire, air and water elementals. When we reach the earth and the objective kingdoms, we come again to hard sounds. Proceeding outwards from the earth we get the sound of *Ith* which means “growth,” or “expansion”: with this sound came the emanation or evolution of vegetable life—to use the words of Genesis.

“The earth brought forth herbs.”

After *Ith* comes the sound of F and B, representing the kingdom of birds, fishes and animals and the crowning evolution of man.

Close on the heels of life, follows death, represented by the sound of M.

Let us compare this with the Upanishad.

“From that self (Brahmam) sprang ether, (or spirit.)

From ether sprang air; (expansion and heat.)

From air sprang fire; (light or colour.)

From fire water; from water, earth;

From earth, herbs; from herbs, food; from food, man.”

Here we have exactly the order we have arrived at by taking the spiritual values of the sounds, as they occur in the human throat and mouth, A—god; R—spirit; H—heat; L—light; W—water; K—hardness; J—earth; Ith—growth; B—life; M—death.

A few more sounds may be added. S, formed by a rapid series of sibilations, means “number.” D means “descent” or “falling;” T “ascent.”

We will now try how far we may be enabled with the key obtained to comprehend the intellectual and spiritual life of our ancestors. Nothing remains in writing which tells of their Wisdom; but no historian could have taken the measure of it so exactly as it is recorded in the bare roots which have come down to us. The

traditions about these men might be untrustworthy and enlarged upon by the imagination of those who related them; but their words contain a history which cannot be otherwise than true, because they were intuitive.

It will be found that the examples given are of word of the very simplest class, referring to actions, thoughts and things, the most likely to be first expressed in this newly developed faculty of intuitive speech. We think that almost all the roots which do not seem to be intuitive were formed by a conventional agreement to regard one of these early words as applicable to several different things, for example, K, hardness or sharpness, was used in forming the intuitive word "Ak," "to pierce into," "Ak," "to see," was evidently a result of this primary meaning.

It is easy to see what God meant to the old Assyrians, El, the light; Bel, their sun-god, seems to mean "he who lives in light," life and light are joined to express this idea. Aer, God of the atmosphere, was another Assyrian god, he was also called Vul, which is equivalent to Jupiter Tonans. Vul probably means "light of the sky," here being used to represent the indefinite air. Ahiah, "I am that I am," the name which was uttered from the burning bush, is intuitive, being formed by a double pronunciation of the word for the self or God. Pal, the Assyrian word for "time" or "year," would mean division of light; Pu, month, should mean a division. Mul, star, means "high light," M being used here to express something extreme. To the Aryan race death had the meaning, the "end of movement" or of the "breath." Mar, containing the sounds for end and movement. Ur, sky, would mean "wide air," as "Oo" means "width" and R, air. The root An, endless, is intuitive, also Pu, threshed or purified, P being used here to express division. Ku, to sharpen, is a word of the same class as Ak, to pierce. In Kar, to make, there are combined the sounds for hardness and movement; in Taks, to hew, the sounds for, to raise, hardness and number, the S, referring to what is hewn away or divided. In Mak, to pound, to macerate, there is the suggestion of ending with something hard. The united sounds of hardness and falling are in Kad, to fall; and of division and hardness in Pak, to come, and Pik, to cut. The letters which form Skap, to chop, mean to cut and divide things. Other words of the same class are Sak and Skar. In Sa, to sow, the prevailing idea seems to have been number. Swid, to sweat, has the sounds for

number, water and rolling down. Possibly the idea of Swa, to toss, was taken from seeing things tossed about upon the waves as Fath, to spread out, may have been from observation of the aerial growth of tree branches. Swal, to boil up, is clearly intuitive, as well as Wam, to spit out. Other intuitive words are Yu, to bind, and Yas, to gird. Wa, meant to bind, either because it was observed that water acted as a girdle to all things or through some confusion of meaning between it and Y. It may be observed here that sometimes there is an interchange of meanings between a sound and the one preceding or following it; sometimes L has the meaning of R, or H of L, or Y of W, or G of K.

S and W are joined into one word in Siw, to bind, the idea expressed being the binding together of things. It has been used with the intuitive value attached to it in Flu, to fly, swim, or float. The Sanskrit Rasu, origin intuitively considered, would mean the movement of things, and the Assyrian, Ris, beginning, seems to have the same idea embodied in it. The root Al, to burn, is intuitive, but the light seems to have suggested the word rather than the heat. Knowledge is the reflection in the mind of what is passing in the world, Gnu, to know, is a combination of the sounds for reflection and combination. Than, thinness, would seem to be the result of long continued growth. Gol, a very common word for ate, means "reflection of light," and the glistening appearance of ice probably suggested a word, to freeze, Gal; a word of the same class is Gea, to glow. Tar, to pass over, has sounds of which the intuitive value seems to be "ascent through air." Thu, to swell, to be strong, and Fath, to fly, are examples of the use of Ith.

As it would only be tedious to go on giving examples, after the theory and the method of applying it for the purpose of elucidating the meaning and origin of the roots has been made sufficiently clear we will add a few more only; they are; Su, to generate, to produce Cuk, to shine, Mu, to shut up, to enclose; Mi, to go; Bu, to be, to grow; Bars to carry; Kant, to cut; An, to breathe; Spark, to scatter; Da, to distribute; and Greek, Ge, the earth. A little thought will show at once what idea was intended to be embodied in these words.

Reflecting on the extreme sensibility to sound which his intuitive race possessed, a sensibility which enabled them to find words exactly

suited to express the spreading of tree branches and the boiling of water, we cannot help wondering, were they similarly affected by sounds external to themselves, and whether the call of birds or the hoarser cries of animals conveyed any meaning to their ear. The words which they employed to express colour, though, naturally enough, lesser evidence remains of this, show that, for every hue they could find a note of corresponding value on the plane of sound, R and M answering respectively to red and violet, and each letter between to some shade of colour ranging from one to the other of the two mentioned. A study of the forms used in the primeval alphabets, and as symbols, would show that they recognized something more in nature than mere matter, that the tracing of flower and leaf, and the starry arch of heaven, and all beautiful things, were full to them of deep spiritual significance, which the more intellectual scientists of our time cannot see, though they weigh and analyse and examine ever so much. If this essay could persuade even one of them to develop the most god-like faculty man possesses—intuition—its purpose would be fulfilled.

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Sanskrit Study in the West

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I.

No event in the intellectual history of the nineteenth century is, perhaps, of so great importance, and likely to produce such fruitful results, as the arrival in the West of the sacred monuments of Indian thought, and the birth in Europe of that knowledge of Oriental thought and language which will ultimately render accessible to all who think and read the venerable philosophies of India, teeming with lofty conceptions of spiritual things, and unfailingly presenting to man the highest ideals of his nature and of his latent divinity. Coming as it did, at a critical period in Europe's intellectual history, when the ecclesiastical fabric which had been laboriously constructed during centuries was already beginning to crumble and break to pieces, and when the tide of thought was inevitably driven to make a new advance, the lofty transcendental literature of India has already had, and will continue to have on the thought of Europe a beneficent, sanative, and elevating influence.

Before we try to analyse the causes and character of this influence, it will be a matter of no small interest to trace its beginnings, to watch the first moving of the spirit on the waters, to recognise the foundation stone on which is being built the revival of ancient Indian wisdom in the West.

The study of Sanskrit is so young that to trace its beginnings is a task of no great difficulty, and demanding no great erudition; and when our researches at last disclose to us the foundation stone, the first of the monuments of Indian wisdom to be given to the West, we find the selection made by destiny to be prophetic of the whole influence of Sanskrit literature on the West, for the first book to be translated from Sanskrit was the Bhagavad Gita, which is now daily increasing the number of its Western devotees.

The Bhagavad Gita was the first work which left the sacred precincts of the Indian temple to take its place in the literature of Europe; for though another Indian book had several centuries before been represented in the West, its European version appeared as a translation from the Arabic, and with the traces of its sojourn among the poets of Arabia still fresh on it; and in its ultimate form it can hardly be called an Indian work at all.

This work, when in its Indian dress, was the well known Hitopadesh, the "Book of Friendly Instruction;" nearly a thousand years ago Arabic and Hebrew versions of it already existed, which, however, were rather imitations than translations; from one of these Arabic versions, which is still in existence, a Latin translation was made in 1262 (by Giovanni da Capua) under the title of *Directorium Vitæ: Parabolæ Antiquorum Sapientium*:

"A Rule of Life: in Fables of the Ancient Sages."

From Latin, this book was translated into almost all the languages of Europe; and Lafontaine, the greatest fabulist since Æsop, made frequent use of it in his works; eighteen at least of his fables being directly drawn from it.

Leaving out this version of the Hitopadesh which came to Europe more as an Arabian than as an Indian work, we find that the birth of Sanskrit study in the West is primarily due to the presence in India of three Englishmen whose Asiatic researches stand in the same relation to Sanskrit study that the proceedings of the Royal Society hold to the whole development of modern science: these three Englishmen were Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, and Thomas Colebrooke.

Born in 1749, Sir Charles Wilkins came to India in his twenty-first year, and entered the Office of the East India Company at

Calcutta in 1770.

Like his two most illustrious co-workers in the Asiatic Society, he applied himself to the study of the ancient languages and literature of India, making himself acquainted not only with Sanskrit, but also with Arabic and Persian.

In 1784, fourteen years after his arrival in India, he joined with Sir William Jones and others in founding the Asiatic Society.

During the next year, he completed and published the first translation of the Bhagavad Gita which ever appeared in the West. This year, 1785, marks an epoch in the intellectual history of the world. Here began that westward flow of the wisdom of India which is making itself more and more felt in the religion and philosophy of the world.

Sir Charles Wilkins' translation of the Bhagavad Gita is more widely known than any other, and, in a recent reprint, is becoming daily more popular in Europe and America.

This work it is which will insure the lasting renown of Sir Charles Wilkins—that he was the pioneer in the new Renaissance of Sanskrit learning, the earliest Western devotee at the shrine of the wisdom of India.

Sir Charles Wilkins had nearly completed an English translation of Manu also, when he learned that a translation had already been finished and was ready for publication.

This translation was the work of Sir William Jones; who, even before his arrival in India, had a European celebrity for Oriental studies. He had published in 1770 a translation of the Odes of Hafiz, and other Persian works, at the request of the Danish King, Christian VII. Several eloquent and musical versions of Arabic poems were his next contribution to Oriental study.

But his really important work, the work by which his name will live, began on his arrival in Calcutta in 1783, to fill the post of Judge of the High Court.

Next year he was chosen first President of the Asiatic Society, and his celebrated version of Shakuntala appeared soon after.

It was this translation which called forth from Goethe his celebrated panegyric verse.

Willst du die Blüthe des frühen,
 Die Früchte des späteren Jahres,
 Willst du was reizt und entzückt.
 Willst du was sätright und nährt.
 Willst du den Himmel, die Erde
 Mit einem Namen begreifen?
 Nenn'ich *Shakuntala* dich
 Und so ist alles gesagt!

Well translated into English thus:

Wouldst thou the young year's
 Blossom and the fruits of its decline,
 All things by which the heart is
 Charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed;
 Wouldst thou the earth, and
 Heaven itself in one solo word combine
 I name thee oh *Shakuntala*, and
 All at once is said.

This was the first tribute of the poetry of Europe to the poetry of India: and it is to the honour of Germany that she produced the philosopher who was first to perceive and acknowledge the greatness of the philosophy of India.

Before coming to this story, however, let us complete our survey of the work of Sir William Jones.

After translating *Shakuntala*, he turned his studies into the field of Indian law, and, in 1794, the year he died, he completed and published that translation of the *Manara Dharma Shastra*, which forestalled Sir Charles Wilkins' almost completed work.

After his death, a complete edition of his works was published, containing, in addition to *Shakuntala*, and the *Laws of Manu*, translations from the *Vedas*, and the *Ramayana*. What these two men did to make known the literature of India, Colebrooke did for the Sanskrit language, and with his grammatical researches was laid the first firm foundation of Sanskrit scholarship in Europe.

He was deeply read in the Mathematics of the ancient Brahmins;

and his work in the field of Indian Law was not less noteworthy. But Colebrooke's chief fame will always be that of the founder of sound European scholarship in Sanskrit grammar.

The next episode in the history of Oriental studies in the West is one of great interest, and perhaps, the most romantic incident connected with the Orientalism in the West.

Dara Shukoh, the liberal and spiritual son of Shah Jehan, anxious to carry out the work his illustrious ancestor Akbar had begun, that of establishing harmony and toleration between the different faiths of India, and recognising that this could only be done by seeking in their scriptures the true and universal principles common to every faith, invited to Delhi some of the best Pundits of Benares to undertake a translation into Persian of some of the most authoritative of the Upanishads.

This Persian translation was finished in 1657: and though Dara Shukoh's noble work was not carried out, and ultimately cost him his throne and his life; this translation of the Upanishads was not fruitless, but left its mark in the annals of Orientalism and Philosophy.

Sent to Europe in 1775, this Persian version was translated into Latin by the renowned translator of the Zend-Avesta, the French Orientalist, Anquetil Duperron. This Latin translation was published in the first year of our century, and it was with this version that the German philosopher Schopenhauer was acquainted.

Schopenhauer was ever ready to acknowledge the debt which his own works owed to the Upanishads, which he studied for years profoundly and enthusiastically. Writing in his celebrated work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, "The World as will and representation," he says:

"If the reader has also received the benefit of the Vedas, the access to which, through the Upanishads, is in my eyes the greatest privilege which this still young century may claim before all previous centuries, (for I anticipate that the influence of Sanskrit literature will not be less profound than the revival of Greek in the fourteenth century) if the reader, I say, has received his initiation in the primeval Indian wisdom, and received it with an open heart, he will be prepared in the very best way for

hearing what I have to tell him. It will not sound to him strange, much less disagreeable, for I might contend that every one of the detached statements which constitute the Upanishads may be adduced from the fundamental thoughts I enunciate, though these deductions be not found there.”

Again, elsewhere, he writes:

“How entirely does the Upanishad breathe throughout the holy spirit of the Vedas. How is every one, who by a diligent study has become familiar with that incomparable book, stirred by that spirit to the very depth of his soul! How does every line display its firm, definite and harmonious meaning!

“From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. Indian air surrounds us, and the original thoughts of kindred spirits. In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads!

“It has been the solace of my life:—it will be the solace of my death,”

To make this part of our subject complete, it only remains to add that in the year 1820 the Ramayana was edited with a translation by Lassen and Schlegel, a complete edition of the Mahabharata being brought out a few years later; it may be added also that the Vishnu Purana, and the Magha Duta and Shakuntala of Kalidasa were translated and published between 1850 and 1860 by Prof. Wilson.

This brings us to the end of the first generation of European Sanskrit scholars: and we have seen how the soil was broken during the generation, the seed sown, and the fruit reaped: so that before this first period came to an end many of the choicest gems of Sanskrit literature had been made accessible, however faultily, to all capable of profiting by them.

To follow out this historical sketch to the later developments, would be to comment on the achievements of still living men, whose work has not yet been weighed in the balance of time.

But the boat has been launched on the waves: the foundation of the temple of destiny has been laid: the leaven is already at work, and what

the future will bring forth, let the future show.

Though full conviction of the wealth of treasure hidden in the mines of Sanskrit lore is spreading wider every day, it cannot be hoped that, for a long while at least, any great majority of students in the West will gain access to these treasures through the medium of the Sanskrit language.

Though much of the charm of any true literary work is undoubtedly lost in translation, we cannot, on weighing the question, consider the barrier of the language as a fatal one to the potent influence for good which the Sanskrit literature is destined to have in the West.

It appears probable that the study of the Sanskrit tongue will be confined to those for whom its study has a special fascination, or, what is the same thing, for those who possess a special aptitude for this study, and that these scholars will, through translations, be the intermediaries between the shrine of Sanskrit knowledge and the worshippers without the temple.

Of the millions for whom the Christian Bible has been the guiding star to upright lives, how many have had access to the original Hebrew and Greek? Of the millions of Buddhists who, placing their faith in Buddha, the doctrine, and the congregation, bear the burden of life nobly and well, how many can read the scriptures in Pali and Sanskrit? How many of the 180 millions of Hindus have read the Vedas? How many Parsis the Zend Avesta? And yet the inspiring thought, the lofty teaching, the holy example, have won their way to the hearts of men, potent for good and pregnant with immortal truth.

But besides distributing through translations, the bread of wisdom to the hungry souls, the knowledge of Sanskrit has another and very different result: to which we cannot give more than a few words, and yet which cannot be omitted without danger to the completeness of our view of Western study of Sanskrit.

This is the influence. of Sanskrit on philology, and its almost creative power in the science of language.

To marshal an array of philological evidence would be out of place: but a glance at the field of study, and at the fruit gleaned from it will suffice for our object.

When Sanskrit came to be known in Europe, its form, its inflexions, its words and terminations were not altogether foreign and strange; like a language from another planet. Something similar to them was found in many of the languages known in Europe. Its participles were something like the Greek; its perfects like the Latin; its duals like the Gothic; and many of its words like the Lithuanian and old Keltic. The story of how each one of these languages became known to the modern world is full of interest, the history of them all a veritable romance.

Latin of course had never been unknown; had descended direct through an unbroken line of scholars. Of the knowledge of Greek we will speak later on. The old Keltic is laboriously deciphered from ancient manuscripts and parchments, hid away in old monasteries, and libraries in Ireland. Of the Gothic, only a single work remains.

This is the translation of parts of the Bible by Bishop Alfilas; in the 4th century; made by him when the German hordes were still lingering on the frontier of the Caesars before sweeping on to the plunder of Byzantium and Rome. Only one copy of the old Bishop's translation exists, the beautiful "Silver Codex," splendidly printed on purple parchment in letters of silver and gold. To read it, is to hear a quaint, old-world German, or English, something that is our language, and yet is not; like a memory of a half forgotten dream, where familiar words and sounds greet us, but veiled under forms that make them strange and unintelligible.

The old Slavonic tongue still lingers in the ritual of the Russian text and enshrines the Russian Scripture.

In all these old tongues was found much that resembled the Sanskrit, and when the Zend-Avesta, the old Zoroastrian tongue, was brought to light, by the indefatigable Anquetil Duperron, the entire body of these languages, like the separate pieces of a Mosaic, when once brought into union, fell into one consistent picture, and disclosed an intimate relation and common kinship. The full results of their comparison, the minute details of their relations, have been carefully elaborated and the great comparative grammar of Frances Bopp; the founder of the modern school of philology, marks a new epoch in the history of thought.

For it is not merely to pedants, to curious scholars, that the results of this study are of value: for when the barriers between the languages melt away; and the different tongues fall into place one by one as part of a common life, those hostilities which rise from difference of language must melt away with them and when the English, the Germans, the Russians; and the Indians recognise and learn that the mother tongue of each is not isolated; but that all spring from a common source, this knowledge cannot fail to bring them closer together, and to remove one more of the obstacles which prevent the realisation on earth of the ideal of universal brotherhood.

The study of Sanskrit in the West, whose birth is nearly simultaneous with the birth of our century, and whose early steps we have already traced, is rapidly spreading and becoming more popular. Every university of note in every country of Europe and in America has its Sanskrit professor, who is very often a professor of comparative philology as well. So that students of the Sanskrit language do not learn it as an isolated tongue, but with the language they learn its relations to their own and other tongues, and above all to the classical Latin and Greek, with which so much of their work at the universities is concerned.

The method of teaching in Europe is not identical with the Oriental method: and produces much more rapid, though generally much less sound and certain, results.

The grammar is generally taught according to the method stereotyped by Latin Grammar, from various grammars written by Europeans.

The letters are learnt, and students begin to read some simply written Sanskrit work after a month or so. The work generally selected first is the story of Nala; and when this is finished, in three months or so, the Hitopadesh is generally studied.

By this time a fair acquaintance with the regular declensions and conjugations may be expected; the irregularities being gradually filled in.

After Hitopadesh, Kumara Sambhavam, Shakuntala, and Manava-dharma Shastra are generally read, and then perhaps the Bhagavad Gita.

This course usually takes two years, and after this the student is generally able to walk alone: to continue his studies without a teacher.

It very seldom happens in the case of Western-taught students, that any acquaintance with Panini, or such works as the Siddhanta Kanmudi supplement the grammars compiled by Europeans: and any knowledge of the works on Rhetoric or the Art of Poetry is still rarer.

Whatever deficiencies there may be however, will be gradually corrected with the more thorough training and erudition of the teachers of Sanskrit. So that there is little doubt that in the course of the next century or so, the whole of the Sanskrit literature which is accessible, will be opened up to Europe, and its treasures brought within the reach of all who can benefit by them.

The effect on India of Western orientalism is great already, and will be much greater.

Sanskrit study, instead of resting entirely in the hands of Pandits, will become more widely spread and more popular. A general, national interest in their old literature, a keen desire to know exactly what it contains, and wherein lies its value, an intelligent valuation of its diverse and dissimilar constituents—these we anticipate, as the result in India of the European study of Sanskrit.

And this effect will not cease till the whole of the ancient literature is lighted up and the love for it kindled anew in the hearts of the people; when a return to the purer ideals of that earlier time will give fresh health to the life of India, and hasten the coming once more of the golden age which ever succeeds the age of Iron.

But it is more with the effect of Indian literature on Europe than the effect of its revival in India, that we have to deal, and to calculate that effect, and shed light on it, a comparison with that great analogous phenomenon, the Renaissance, in the fifteenth century, may greatly aid us.

II.

The Renaissance, or the Revival of Learning, in the fifteenth century in Europe, was a breaking away from the established order of things, an upheaval and departure from the ideas and ideal of that long epoch of Roman supremacy which is broadly described as the Middle Ages; that is, the period between the Roman and the modern world.

Three distinct causes united to produce this effect.

First, the concentration of the religious forces which had long struggled against the domination of the Papacy.

Secondly, the spread of Greek scholars and Greek learning through Europe, consequent on the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, and the resulting dispersion of the Greek culture from that ancient capital of the Eastern Empire.

The spread of Greek learning, and the power to read the Greek MSS. of the Bible, and thus to return to the well-spring of the Christian Church, and to distinguish its pure ideal from the actual realisation of the Church of Rome, gave direction, illumination, and concentration to the already growing struggle against Rome.

The third cause of the breaking away from the old order, was the discovery of America in 1492, and the new world thus opening up, and strongly modifying old world ideas.

What was the effect on the modern literature of Europe that the knowledge of the ancient Greeks produced?

The answer to this question cannot but shed much light on that other question—What will be the effect on the modern world of the opening up of the intellectual treasures of ancient India.

Before the wisdom, the artistic and literary treasures of Greece could produce their effect on the mind of the modern world, before their value could be rightly estimated, they had to become familiar, to work themselves into the life and thought of the moderns; and only after a long period during which their influence was active did it become possible to rightly weigh that influence and to determine wherein its power consisted. As was to be expected, the first result was a profusion of translations; in England the greatest poets of the age thought that they could best honour themselves and their art by translating the poetry of the Greeks.

Chapman translated the *Iliad* and the *Odessey* of Homer.

Plato was translated into Latin in 1483; and the other poets and philosophers of Greece soon found their way into the vernacular tongues of Europe. Admiring imitation of Greek art was for a long time the preponderating tendency. Not a page of Shakespeare's plays but is enriched with Grecian gems.

But before long a reaction came, and the life of modern Europe

broke out in a spontaneous art and a native poetry, whose tendency is indicated by its name, the Romantic School.

This school, though owing much to Greece, was not Greek, but modern; was not imitative, but thoroughly spontaneous and native, the outcome and fruition of the life-forces of the modern world.

To Greek art it owed its sense of harmony, of elegance, of perfect form and finished style; but to the modern world it owed more, its infusing power, and vivifying force, its very life.

And if we weigh well and carefully the influence which the old Indian world and its wisdom will have on the world of the future, we cannot doubt that its nature will be the same.

No circumstance can be imagined more propitious to the new era which begins to dawn, than the introduction to the old Indian world, with its splendid religions and philosophic culture, a culture which must have been the outcome of centuries of effort, of ages of devotion to spiritual ideals. But the era which is to come, though entering into the spirit of Indian thought and valuing at its true worth its spiritual culture, will not—and it is vital to the development of the human race that this should be so—merely seek to realise again on earth that early golden age, to imitate once more the lives and thoughts of the early Aryans.

In the Hindu scriptures it is taught that though the Golden Ages ever return after the darkness of Kali Yuga, yet each Golden Age is better than the one before it, and instead of marking the returned to a point left ages ago, each marks a step in the triumph and onward march of the human race.

In Europe, and throughout all the world, the forces of a spiritual renewal are already at work; the long latent vitality begins to stir and move; the pent-up forces are already breaking out; the first signs of an irresistible onward wave already appearing—a wave which will ultimately lift the race to a never yet realised perfection.

And the hand of destiny is conspicuous in the fact that just at this hour, the new era receives as a gift from the primeval world the flower and fruition of former period of spiritual wealth, the treasure of the earlier Golden Age.

Just as the child, the heir of all the ages, and the latest born of time,

receives as his inheritance all that is best of the thought and acts of former ages, of the whole life-work of the human race; and beginning from what man has already done, is ready to be the pioneer of the future; so the new era of spirituality which has dawned will enrich itself from the wealth of the old Aryan world and make the Indian wisdom a part of its own growth, and a force working towards the perfection of its own spontaneous life.

The new era must remember that its first duty is to be true to itself; that it is destined to incarnate a spiritual truth never yet born on earth; that the work meted out to it by destiny is unique, yet one which has never been fulfilled before, and which it is the peculiar privilege of this age to fulfil and perfect. The new era must be true to its own life, if it is to be true to its duty.

But the fact most propitious to the new age will be that it will have at its command the ripe knowledge and experience of a great spiritual epoch before its eyes; and begin its independent life with the wide spiritual culture of the Aryan age to lend it equilibrium, and to shorten the period of its initial groping after truth.

Already the proof that this is so—that the influence of Sanskrit culture in the West, and its relation to the independent spiritual impulses of the new era are what we have described—can be found in two citations from two of the most original western thinkers.

One of these, concludes thus an eloquent sermon on individual integrity by a fable from the sacred writings of the East.

“There was,” he says, “in the city of Kuru an artist who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, it shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life.

“He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment.

“His singleness of purpose and resolution, his exalted piety,

endowed him, without his knowledge, with perpetual youth. As he made no compromise with time, time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him.

“Before he had found a stick in all respects suitable, the city of Kuru was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work.

“By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff, Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule, and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times.

“But why do stay to mention such things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions, in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that for him and his work the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain.

“The material was pure, and his art was pure, and how could the result be other than wonderful.”

Another great Western writer found no better conclusion when writing on immortality, than a passage from one of the Upanishads of India.

He writes as follows:

“How ill agrees this majestic immortality of our religion with the frivolous population. ‘Will you build magnificently for mice?’ Will you offer empires to such as cannot set a house of private affairs in order? There are people who cannot dispose of a day; an hour hangs heavily on their hands; and will you offer

them rolling ages without end? But this is the way we rise/ within every man's thought is a higher thought—within the character he exhibits today a higher character. The youth puts off the illusions of the child, the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of youth; proceeding thence, puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater heights, but also rising to realities; the other relations and circumstances dying out, he entering deeper into God, God into him, until the last garment of egotism falls, and he is with God—shares the will and the immensity of the first house.

“It is curious to find the selfsame feeling, that it is not immortality, but eternity—not duration, but a state of abandonment to the highest, and so the sharing of his perfection—appearing in the farthest East and West. The human mind takes no account of geography, language, or legends, but in all utters the same instinct. Yama, the Lord of Death, promised Nachiketas, the son of Gautama, to grant him three boons at his own choice. Nachiketas knowing that his father Gautama was offered with him, said, ‘O Death, let Gautama be appeased in mind, and forget his anger against me; this I choose for the first boon.’ Yama said, ‘Through my favour, Gautama will remember thee with love as before.’ For the second boon, Nachiketas asks that the fire by which heaven is gained be made known to him, which also Yama allows, and says, ‘Choose the third boon O Nachiketas.’ Nachiketas said, ‘Here is this inquiry. Some say the soul exists after the death of man, others say it does not exist. This I should like to know, instructed by thee. Such is the third of the boons.’ Yama said, ‘For this question it was inquired of old, even by the gods, for it is not easy to understand it. Subtle is its nature. Choose another boon, O Nachiketas. Do not compel me to this.’ Nachiketas said, ‘Even by the gods was it inquired. And as to what thou sayest, O Death! that it is not easy to understand it, there is no other, speaker to be found like thee, there is no other boon like this.’ Yama said, ‘One thing is good, another is pleasant. Blessed is he who takes the good, but he who chooses the pleasant loses the

object of man. But thou, considering the objects of desire, hast abandoned them. These two, ignorance—whose object. is what is pleasant—and knowledge—whose object is what is good—are known to be far asunder, and to lead to different goals. Believing this world exists, and not the other, the careless youth is subject to my sway. That knowledge for which thou asked is not to be obtained by arrangement. I know worldly happiness is transient, for that firm one is not to be obtained by what is not firm. The wise, by means of the union of the intellect with the soul, thinking of him whom it is hard to behold, leaves both grief and joy. Thee, O Nachiketas I believe a house whose door is open to Brahma. Brahma the supreme, whoever. knows him, obtains whatever he wishes. The soul is not born, it does not die, it was not produced from any one. Nor was any produced from it. Unborn, eternal, it is not slain though the body is slain, subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great—sitting, it goes far, sleeping, it goes everywhere. Thinking the soul is unbodily among bodies, firm among fleeting things, the wise man casts off all grief. The soul cannot be gained by knowledge, not by understanding, not by manifold science. It can be obtained by the soul by which it is desired. It reveals its own truths.”

These two examples of Eastern gems in Western settings lead us to understand the illustrating, beautifying, equilibrating power which the ripe spiritual culture of old Arya Varta will have on the strong fresh tide of spiritual force which is advancing in the hearts of the strongest and purest and truest today. Only by finding that inward spring, that lovely light in the heart can truth be learned, can religion be understood, can the scripture interpreted, but great and beneficent is the influence on the individual growth of the world's truth that is to be recognised, of the religions that are to be felt, of the scriptures that are to be understood. For to the persevering mortal the blessed Immortals are swift.

The Antiquity of Indian Writing

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If the negative argument as to the newness of Indian writing is entirely worthless, can we build up any positive argument in its place? Let us recall for a moment the history of this negative argument. While examining the Homeric poems, Wolf remarked that, they nowhere mention writing, alphabets, or written letters. From this observation he not unnaturally drew the conclusion that in the days of the Homeric poems writing was unknown to the Greeks. It was believed that the Homeric poems belonged to a period some eight or nine centuries before our era; and from this major and minor premise the conclusion was drawn that some eight or nine centuries before our era the Greeks were ignorant of writing. This argument, fairly sound as it seems, at first sight, was applied to India. It was found that in the writings of the Vedic age no particular stress was laid upon writing; no specific mention was made of written letters; while great stress was laid on the importance of learning the Vedic hymns by heart, and handing them down by memory. It was further believed, on very slender evidence, that all Sanskrit literature not of the Vedic age, belonged to period later than the rise of Buddhism, some six centuries before our era. And from this major or minor premise, just as in the case of the Homeric poems, the conclusion was drawn that writing was not known or commonly used in India until this later period of Sanskrit literature which was supposed to take its rise somewhere just outside the threshold of our era; and that consequently the Vedic Indians were

illiterate. Then the whirligig of time brought in its revenges. The hard facts of inscriptions in rock, the names of Greek mercenaries carved on the statue of Aba Simbel, proved quite conclusively that the Greeks were familiar with writing in the eighth or ninth century before our era, at the very time when Wolf's argument had shown them, satisfactorily enough, to be illiterate. From this quite incontestable and uncontested fact two conclusions can be drawn. These two conclusions are either that the Greeks were perfectly familiar with writing in the days of the Homeric poems—supposing the Homeric poems to belong to the eighth or ninth century before our era;—and that, consequently, the negative argument from the silence of the Homeric poems on the subject of writing utterly worthless; or, that the Homeric poems, if really belonging to an illiterate age, were immensely older than had been supposed; were immensely older than the eighth or ninth century before our era. The first of these conclusions—that the Greeks were quite familiar with writing in the days of the Homeric poems, has been excellently discussed by Mr. Andrew Lang; the second conclusion has not yet been sufficiently examined. Then comes the application of the facts to India. If the first conclusion be right, if the silence of the Homeric poems on the subject of writing is perfectly consistent with their origin in an age when writing was quite familiar to the Greeks; then the silence of the Vedic literature on the subject of writing is perfectly consistent with its origin in an age when writing was quite familiar to the India. As far as the negative argument is concerned, the peoples of India may have been familiar with writing from the very beginning.

Can we build up any positive argument to take its place? The student of the antiquity of Indian writing may be divided into two schools: those who believe that the Indian alphabets, of which the Nagari alphabet is the type, came from a Semitic source; and those who believe that the Indian alphabets arose independently of the Semitic alphabets, and most probably in India itself. Of the first school, who believe that the Indian alphabets have been derived from Semitic models, Dr. Isaac Taylor is certainly the most eminent, sound, and scholarly. His arguments are stated at great length, with wonderful lucidity, and abundant illustration in his monumental work, *The Alphabet*. To discuss the whole argument would demand a volume.

But we may roughly trace its outline. Beginning with the hieroglyphics of Egypt, Dr. Taylor shows the various stages which the hieroglyphic signs passed through; at first pictures they ultimately came to represent sounds. Then Dr. Taylor shows how a selection of these sound signs was made by a "Semitic people"; and that from this selection the well-known type of western alphabet was derived; taking its name from *aleph betti*, that is ox and house, the first signs in the earliest Semitic alphabet. This typical alphabet found its way to all western countries, chiefly of the Phoenicians; and our European alphabets are all derived from it. In the first Semitic alphabet there are no vowels, properly so called; only consonants and breathings. The western alphabets gradually developed vowels, according to their needs, by a process which we may illustrate thus. Since Sanskrit words have begun to be represented in western letters the western type-founders have had to devise a wider vowel system. Hence have arisen a series of accented vowels, especially circumflexed vowels, which did not formerly exist, in English for example. Much in this way, the western nations developed vowel signs from the not purely vowel signs of the first Semitic alphabet. In this development of vowels, and in the length it has gone in various alphabets, we have a criterion of their closeness to the Semitic original, and therefore of their antiquity. For instance, if we believe that the first Semitic alphabet dates some fifteen centuries before our era, and if we find that five centuries later, another alphabet has developed five true vowel signs, we may roughly generalise and say that it takes five centuries to develop five vowels. If then, we find another alphabet which has developed only two vowels, we shall be justified in placing it nearer the Semitic original; and in saying, roughly, that it represents two centuries of growth, and therefore dates from two centuries after the Semitic Original; dates, that is, some thirteen centuries before our era. This is only an illustration, it must be remembered; but it fair represents the form of argument which may safely be used to establish the antiquity of an alphabet, and the number of centuries' growth which it represents. So much for this question from the Western side. Let us approach it from the Eastern. The oldest known and certainly dateable writing in India is the famous series of inscription of the Buddhist King Asoka. These inscriptions, beginning with the words, *Devanam Piya Piyadasi*, "Priyadarshin, the

beloved of the Gods," are in Pali, the second language of Buddhism; and are in what is best called the Morya alphabet. The forms of this alphabet are chiefly squares and circles; the simplest of all signs that could be used to represent sounds. In only one notable particular does this Morya alphabet differ from the typical Nagari alphabet of India, and that is in having only one sibilant instead of three. This peculiarity is due to the fact that there is only one sibilant in Pali. But for this, we may say that the Morya alphabet, the oldest we know in India, is the same alphabet as the Nagari; which, masked under superficial differences, is the model of all Indian alphabets, from Hindi and Bengali to Tamil and Telugu. So that, in the days of the Morya alphabet, Indian letters were in practically perfect form, and had reached the last and highest stage of development. Now this last and highest stage of development, with its wonderfully perfect system of vowels, represent many centuries of growth from the Semitic model, supposing the Indian alphabet was derived from a Semitic source. There must, therefore, have been a long period of growth between the adoption of a Semitic model by the Indians, supposing such a model to have been adopted, and the days of the Morya alphabet. Now the days of the Morya alphabet can be fixed with great certainty and precision. We have, on the one hand, mention of certain Western rulers in the Asoka inscriptions, and, on the other, we have the chronology Buddhism. We can therefore say that, in the days of the Buddhist monarch, Asoka, and the Morya alphabet, several centuries of development must be credited to Indian writing. Following up this argument, Dr. Taylor concludes, on perfectly sound and intelligible ground that we must date the antiquity of Indian writing some time, probably several centuries, before the rise of Buddhism, in order to allow time for the high development which we know was practically complete in the days of the Buddhist monarch Asoka. Turning again to the Western side of the question, Dr. Isaac Taylor, who believes that the Indian alphabet is derived from the Semitic source, is led to seek for a Semitic alphabet which might have served as the Indian model. This Semitic alphabet must furnish certain characteristics. It must be old enough to allow for several centuries of growth between its adoption and the days of King Asoka and the Morya alphabet. It must represent a fair likeness to the Morya alphabet in the form and

shape of the letters. It must further be shown that its adoption by the peoples of India could naturally and easily have taken place. These three characteristics are furnished by a Semitic alphabet of Arabia Felix, which Dr. Taylor places about a thousand years before our era; and which is therefore old enough to allow of a fairly high development before the days of Asoka. In form it fairly resembles the Morya alphabet, being, like the latter, chiefly formed of squares and circles. It is also fairly accessible to India, as we know that about that time—three thousand years ago—Arabia Felix was the inter-port between India and the West. One evidence for this is the use of Indian names for “ivory, apes, and peacocks, and almuq or alqum trees,” in the Hebrew story of King Solomon, whose date is supposed to be about thousand years before our era.

Dr. Taylor supposes that the Indian alphabet was actually derived from this Arabian original, some thousand years before our era; or, roughly, three thousand years ago; and that, consequently, the Indians were acquainted with writing some four or five centuries *before* Buddha. This is an enormous advance on the Indo-Germanic theory, which placed the beginning of Indian writing some centuries *after* Buddha; and this advance is made by sure and reliable methods; and not by unreliable negative evidence, as in the case of the Indo-Germanic school. Dr. Taylor's conclusion is, therefore, this: if Indian writing was derived from, Semitic model, the facts of the case demand that this derivation must have taken place about a thousand years before our era; that is, about three thousand years ago. This is a remarkable instance of the tendency which we have more than once noted recently; the tendency of Indian dates to move back slowly through the ages; the tendency of Indian antiquity to expand and open out into wide and wider spaces. And it is certain that this expansion of India's past, or rather of our understanding of it, has only just begun and will go far further before it ceases; how far, we as yet only dimly guess.

Sanskrit's Nearest Neighbour

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There is a charming story in one of the Upanishads, a story full of the most delicate humour, which tells how the manifested forces of things set themselves up as the rivals of the one lasting reality, of which the manifested forces are but the moods and humours:

“The Eternal, won victory for the bright ones, the Devas; in the victory of the Eternal, the bright ones magnified themselves; ‘this victory is ours’, they declared, ‘this might is ours.’

The Eternal, knowing this, became manifest to them. But they could not discern what the power was.

They said to the Fire-lord:—‘Thou knower, discern for us what power this is.’

‘Be it so,’ said he.

He ran to it; it addressed him:—‘Who are thou.’

‘I am the Fire-lord,’ said he, ‘I am the knower.’

‘Then what valour is in thee?’

‘I could burn up the whole world,’ said he, ‘whatever there is on earth.’

Then the Eternal laid down a grass before him, saying:—‘Burn up this’; and the Fire-lord came up to it with all his might, but could not burn it up. Therefore he returned again; ‘I could not discern what power this is,’ said he.

“So they addressed the Wind-lord:—‘Oh Wind-lord, discern what power this is’, said they.

‘Be it so’, said he.

He ran to it; it addressed him:—‘Who are thou?’

‘I am the Wind-lord,’ said he; ‘I sleep in mother-space.’

‘Then what valour is in thee?’

‘I could take p the whole world,’ said he, ‘whatever there is on earth.’

Then the Eternal laid down a grass before him, saying:—‘Take up this.’ And the Wind-lord came up to it with all his might, but could not take it up. Therefore he returned again:—‘I could not discern what power this is,’ said he.

“So they addressed the Sky-lord:—‘Mighty one, discern what power this is,’ said they.

‘Be it so,’ said he.

He ran to it; but it vanished before him.

But there, in the shining ether, he met a woman resplendent, Uma Haimavati. He addressed her:—‘What power is this?’ said he. And she replied:—‘This is the Eternal; and in the victory of the Eternal ye magnified yourselves.’ and thus he knew that it was the Eternal.

“Therefore these bright ones are above the other bright ones, as it were—Fire-lord, Wind-lord, Sky-lord—because they approached the Eternal most nearly. And because the first knew that it was the Eternal, the Sky-lord is above the other bright ones, for he touched it most nearly, and he first knew that it was the Eternal.”

So ends the story of the one Life and the manifest lives. A study of many of the Upanishads would lead us to see in the three bright ones symbols of physical life, emotional life, and transcendental life—the three living vestures of the one eternal Self that wears them as garments. In the Self’s victory over chaos and void, the lives magnified themselves till they were humiliated and learned wisdom from Uma Haimavati, the woman resplendent, whom the Sky-lord met in the shining ether.

Who then is this Uma Haimavati, who is depicted here as the bringer of wisdom, the initiator of the gods? To summarize all that has been written of this wonderful personage would be a long story; it is enough to say that the general tendency is to identify her with Amma or Ambika the wife of the sectarian god Siva, who enjoys the worship of the Sivaite sects. And there is a further tendency to see in this Amma, the mother-goddess of the dark Dravidians—the old personified Earth-mother of Southern India. But it always seemed to me that there was a far better and simpler derivation of Uma; and one, moreover, far more in harmony with her position in this story, and the interpretation of it by the most famous Indian sages. The word Uma is a very familiar one, in constant every day use in a great group of languages which every one recognizes as being Sanskrit's closest kin. These languages as the Slavonic tongues in their two groups, one of which is dominated by Russian, the other by Polish. In all these Slavonic tongues, spoken today by at least a hundred million people, the name of Uma, with a perfectly clear and admirable meaning, is of familiar and incessant occurrence. It may be heard any day in Great Russia, in White Russia, in Little Russia; in Poland, whether within the Czar's dominions or in the Austrian province of Galicia; all round the Austrian Empire, in Moravia and Bohemia on the North; in Bukovina and Slavonia; in the Slavonish Provinces round about Görz and Laybach; in the Austrian Provinces, Bosnia, Herzegovina; then again the name of Uma echoes down the coasts of Dalmatia to Montenegro, and across the Turkish border to Servia and Bulgaria. And in every one of these kindred tongues the name of Uma bears the same meaning. Everywhere it signifies wisdom, understanding, insight, knowledge. Its compounds—verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns—are practically unlimited; so that there is no Slavonic word more definite, more uniform, more universal, than this word Uma, meaning wisdom. And that in Sanskrit also Uma meant wisdom it testified to by the sage Sankaracharya and the prodigiously learned Sayana, the commentator and interpreter of the Vedas; so that there is no difficulty at all in supposing that the initiator of the gods in the Upanishads story is the same wisdom, personified in Indra, that is so universally recognized, though in an impersonal form, wherever Slavonic languages are spoken.

That this is very likely—a simple name among the Slavs personified by the speakers of Sanskrit—one may very easily prove without going beyond the Vedic Pantheon. There is, for instance, the god agni, to whom, in eight out of the ten circles of hymns in the Rig Vega, the opening praises are addressed. That Agni became fully personified in the later Vedic age is not a matter of doubt; while it is equally beyond doubt that his name, not personified, is the common name for fire among the Slavs. If *ognya*, which the Slavs pronounce *agnya*, the commonest word for fire, has become personified in India as Agni the Fire-lord, what is more natural than to suppose that Uma, the ordinary name for wisdom, became likewise personified as the “woman resplendent: whom Indra met in the ether—personified Wisdom, the revealer of the Eternal. Then take another Vedic god, Vayu or Vata, the god of the wind; in the Slavonic tongues both names are found, in *veter*, the wind, and *veyet*, to blow. Here again, common Slavonic words appear personified in Sanskrit, and if so, then why not also Uma, the Goddess, Wisdom. Exactly the opposite has taken place with the Sanskrit word *jivana*, life or living; in India it has hardly a trace of personal colour, but among the old Slavs, and chiefly the Bohemians, Jivana or Dziwanna is the Goddess, Life.

Then again, two gods are common to the Vedic and Slavonic Pantheons; first, the god Bhaga, who has the gift of wealth or fortune in India, and whose name appears in words like Bhgavan and Bhgavat; in Slavonic this god becomes Bog, and the changes of sound are perfectly regular and harmonious. The initial aspirate in Sanskrit is lost, just as in the words *bhavamas*, *bhavatas*, which become in Slavonic *byvaiem*, *byvaiete*, “we be, you be.” The Sanskrit neutral vowel becomes short *o* in Slavonic, as was the case also with the initial of the Fire-god Agni. The Rain-god of the Vedas, also Parjanya the Thunderer, became in Slavonic the Rain-god Perun; and it is not a thousand years ago since Perun’s great image stood on the hill outside Kieff. These phonetic relations are so close that one may say that the Sanskrit words re-appear in Slavonic with no marked and radical phonetic difference; no such difference as, for example separate Sanskrit, phonetically, from Greek. And since this is so, we are justified in supposing that another Vedic god, Varuna, who represents the wide firmament, and more especially the firmament at night, is

closely connected with the Slavonic adjective *voron* or *vorondi* meaning, blue-black, dark blue, of black. In Russia, the word is often appropriated to the blue-black raven. Exactly the same word may very well have appeared in Sanskrit to pain the blue-black wings of night, the firmament of raven hue. It is possible, though not at once so evident or certain, that Indra, the Vedic Rain-god, who releases the treasures of the clouds and conquers drought, may be connected with the Slavonic word *indevit*, to be covered with hoar-frost, rime, or sleet. But the unity between Slavonic and Sanskrit in the case of the Vedic gods Agni, Vata, Bhaga, Parjanya, and the Slav goddess Jivana, is quite incontestable and uncontested. And in the case of the word Veda, the connection between Slavonic and Sanskrit is equally undoubted. From this root *ved* come Slavonic word like *vedat*, to know; *vedatel*, an adept; *vedun*, a wizard; *vedunya* or *vedma*, a witch. Here the same root occurs in English also; while from the kindred root *vid*, to see, come the Slavonic words *videt* or *vidat*, to see; *vidok*, seer; *vid*, sight; and a host of others.

One may multiply Sanskrit and Slavonic affinities to any extent. We may take as an appropriate illustration the Upanishad containing the story quoted at the beginning of this study, the Kena Upanishad. Here the title even declares its affinity with Slavonic, for in Slavonic, *kena*, viz., "by whom," would be written *kem*, with the same meaning. Then the word *pat*, in Sanskrit to fall, or fly, is in Slavonic *pad*, to fall; *praiti*, i.e., goes forth, in Sanskrit, is close enough to the Slavonic, *proitti* to go forth; the Sanskrit *shra*, to hear, is almost the Slavonic *shu*, the two liquids being constantly interchanged. Then again, the famous Sanskrit word *Deva*, a god, which in old Vedic times was rather an adjective, meaning shining, or glorious, is closely repeated on the Slavonic *div-ni* wonderful, glorious; and, as we have already said, *bhavamah* becomes in Slavonic *byvaiem*. So that in the first Sanskrit passage that comes to hand, six or seven close resemblances between the Slavonic and ancient Indian idiom may easily be found in the first two or three lines, and this closeness holds out through the whole of the two languages. With this fact of widely extended and very close resemblances, phonetically almost complete, and the very striking illustration of the Vedic gods, we may readily grant the unity of the Slavonic and Sanskrit *Uma*, wisdom; and passing from this peculiar

case to a universal statement we may say without hesitation, the Slavonic is Sanskrit's nearest neighbour. For though many of these relations may be traced here and there in other Indo-European tongues, all of them will be found nowhere but in Slavonic.

The Culture-Language of the Future

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It has often seemed to me that even the best Sanskrit scholars in Europe and America alike have no very clear insight into the purpose and tendency of their work; and I know more than one, among those who hold high rank as unquestioned authorities, who candidly admits an entire ignorance of the use of Sanskrit studies—supposing them to have any use. And there is, I think, a very obvious reason for this dim and uncertain attitude; for, even though it may sound somewhat venturesome to say, so, it seems that, for the most part, our Sanskrit scholars study the wrong things, or, if they find themselves, by accident, among the right things, they study them in the wrong way. If we look at the history of Sanskrit studies during the past century, we shall probably be able to find the reason of this. To begin with, the first generation of Orientalists, setting to work in Lower Bengal, naturally came to study the works most familiar to the Bengal pundits—the artificial, or at least too ornate, poetry of Kalidasa; and the law-books, with Manu’s Code at their head. Now, no one who has read Kalidasa’s best verse can deny its possession of a very perfect and delicate beauty, gorgeously vivid colouring, great subtlety and refinement of fancy, and rich and ever varying music, which makes up in skilful modulation what it lacks in spontaneous freshness. Of our European poets, Kalidasa comes closest, perhaps, to Theocritus and Petrach; and much that is characteristic of his style is very marked in the verse of Rossetti and Swinburne. Yet we need no prophet to tell us

that the treasure of the East is not with Kalidasa—for all his enamelled beauty; and as little would we expect to find the justification of our studies in the wonderfully elaborate polity of Manu's Code. If that were all India had to offer, it is doubtful whether Sanskrit could claim an intellectual position much higher than that of Syrian or Ethiopian—both of which contain much to interest specialists; something of more general interest, but almost nothing of universal value.

When the Calcutta school gradually waned, its place, in the van of Sanskrit studies, was taken by the German grammarians, and Bopp's comparative grammar marked the high water mark of their work. And, to anyone who has anything at all of the linguist's instinct, it is easy enough to understand how so many minds, finding their way into the wonderful labyrinths of Sanskrit vocables and forms, have been content to stay there, and progress no further. But, even though Sanskrit has no rival, nor can have, as a key to all the languages we are most directly interested in—the languages of the European nations—still, that alone would not insure it that wide and universal acceptance as an instrument of spiritual education which, I am absolutely convinced, it is destined to gain. There are other tongues which shed very great light on European speech, notably old Luthuanian, Mesogothic, and the Slavonic of the ninth century, preserved in the liturgy of the Eastern Church, and of the utmost value, as standing close to the headwaters of Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Ruthnian, Slavonian, Servian, Bulgarian, and a host of dialects, which are known by name only to specialists, spoken by communities as far West as Trieste and Rügen—the extremes of the line bounding the Slavonic area, which, therefore, embraces far the larger part of the continent of Europe. Yet it needs, again, no prophet to tell us that we shall never see these tongues universally studied, nor find the village schoolmaster repeating Slavonic and Luthuanian paradigms with their Mesogothic equivalents.

The next Sanskrit epoch was the period of the Rig-Veda, at the head of which, undoubtedly, stands Max Müller; and there are very few students of Eastern things who have not felt the charm and fascination with which the Oxford authority has invested the subject of the old Indian hymns. Here, we were told, was the most wonderful storehouse of truths, which was destined to illuminate not only the old

Aryan religions—with the familiar pantheons of Greece and Rome at their head—but even to reveal the very genesis of religion itself, showing how fear and wonder at the elemental forces had gradually ripened into a true worship of the Divine. But for all the charm that Max Muller wove into his researches, I think it is very generally felt that the hymns of the Rig-Veda are less, very much less than was claimed for them, and that they will never again hold the eyes of the intellectual world, as they did while Max Müller was accomplishing his best work. No one any longer looks to find the secret of the heart of faith in the hymns to Agni and Indra, the invocations to Mitra and Varuna. During the last generation, no part of Indian literature has been more amply studied, thought over, and commented on; but, now that the Rig-Veda hymns have given up their contribution to the history of the Sanskrit language, it is doubtful if anything remains in them to hold the minds of scholars in the future. And it is the unconscious perception of this that is the true cause of the perplexity I have spoken of, which leads so many Sanskritists to say that they do not see or understand the true end and purpose of their studies. None the less, I am absolutely convinced that Sanskrit is the culture-language of the future; that it is destined to supersede Greek as the instrument of the highest spiritual education, as Greek superseded Latin at the Renaissance, and thus put an end to the Middle Ages and ushered in the modern world. And Sanskrit will conquer, not because of its wonderfully transparent character as a language; not in virtue of Kalidasa's enamelled verse and the ecclesiastical polity of Manu; not because the Rig-Veda hymns lay bare the foundations of the world's belief; but because there are other sides to Sanskrit literature, and other works, hardly studied at all, hitherto, which bring more than pretty verse and curious knowledge; which, indeed, give us a new insight into life itself, and bring a new outpouring of that mysterious light, every new ray of which marks a step in the development of the soul. And this last word sums up the gift we are to receive from the Sanskrit tongue and what is recorded in it—philosophic thought of the utmost logical excellence, and, more than this, a conception of life, radiant with inspiration, a true revelation of the soul. That it is—not pretty poetry, or curious incantations—which will give Sanskrit the position it is destined to hold, as the culture-language of the coming era.

To begin to speak of the spiritual insight these words are destined to bring as their contribution to the wisdom of the world at the conclusion of an essay, would be to do them a grave injustice; yet I should like to give a sample of what the Upanishads have to offer in such rich abundance:

“This self is, then, verily, of all beings the over-lord, of all beings the king; as in the nave and felloe all the spokes are held firm, so, verily, in this self, are held firm all gods, all worlds, all lives, all selves.

“As an eagle of falcon, soaring in the sky, folds his wings and sinks to his nest, so the spirit returns to the divine world, where, finding peace, he desires no desire, and dreams no dream.

“This is his true nature, when all desires are fulfilled, when desire is only for the self; when there is no longing any more, nor any sorrow.

“There the father is father no more, nor the mother mother, not the worlds worlds, not the gods gods; there the Vedas are no Vedas, nor the thief a thief, nor the murderer a murderer, nor the outcast an outcast, nor the saint a saint; this is the highest aim, the highest home, the highest wealth, the highest bliss.

“When all desires that dwell in the heart are let go, the mortal becomes immortal, and reaches the eternal.”