

Chapter 3

Religions in Historic Times

OUR knowledge of the beliefs of the early Nordic (light-white) people of Scandinavia and the Germanic tribes is largely derived from the so-called Norse Mythology as presented in the Edda. The principle of polarity is everywhere evident; for spirit and matter are considered eternal, fire and water are the two chief elements, and heat and cold the two chief conditions. There are two kinds of gods, the Vanir and Aesir, and two kinds of evil powers, the Thursar and the Jotnar. The Jotnar were giants. The first born of the gods was Wodan, who became the father of the other gods.

These Nordics believed in elves, dwarfs, and other spirits; the swarthy dwarfs being skillful workers in metal, and often friendly to man. The gods increased in number until there were twelve, and of course, following the principle of polarity there were also twelve goddesses. Wodan, who in astrology corresponds to Mercury and after whom Wednesday was named, as father of the gods implies that Mind is back of all orderly manifestation. Wodan desired to drink from the spring of wisdom, guarded by Miner, and to accomplish this was compelled to sacrifice one of his eyes. He was married three times.

His first wife was Jorth, the Earth, who became the mother of his eldest son, Thor, the strongest inhabitant of Asgarth, the middle region of the earth, which was the abode of the Scandinavian gods. Thor, after whom Thursday was named, and who corresponds astrologically to Jupiter, was famed for his hammer, essentially a phallic symbol. He was continually engaged in a struggle with the giants, and his hammer, which was used as an unerring missile, was the cause of lightning and thunder. He was thus, as was Jupiter always, the god of storm, to whom tillers of the soil prayed for rain.

The second wife of Wodan was Frigg, after whom Friday was named, corresponding astrologically to Venus. She was the goddess of mother love, the guardian of women and domestic life, and the protector of marriage. In one aspect, even as astrologically Venus rules Taurus, the sign of fertility, Frigg seems to represent the earth in a state of fertility.

Rindr, the third wife of Wodan, seems to represent earth in a frozen and barren condition.

Another son of Wodan was Tyr, after whom Tuesday was named, corresponding astrologically to the planet Mars. He was the god of war, the personification of courage and bravery.

To the gods, and also to other spirits, it was customary to offer sacrifices. On official occasions horses were offered, and in times of great stress there

The Religion of Classical Greece

were even human sacrifices. Temples were built, images of the gods constructed, and in time a well-defined priesthood came into being to look after them. Magic and sorcery were practiced, and in their mythology their gods also employed such means. The earliest conception of the life after death was in Helheim, a cold, misty region, much like the early Sumerians believed in. At a later date a more cheerful abode for the dead came into recognition. This region, Valhall, was a most gorgeous hall where Wodan received his heroes who had lived noble lives and fallen bravely in battle. Here they lived a life of great happiness, every morning marching out to battle, yet at meal time those who had been slain rose in perfect health to partake of the wonderful feast, where they were served the beer, Saehrimmir, and copious draughts of mead.

Although the Nordic peoples had three annual festivals that correspond to well-defined astrological positions, and although their mythology is most successfully interpreted in astrological terms, there seems to be no record of their possessing astronomical or astrological information of much importance.

Between Greece and Asia Minor is the Aegean Sea. On the islands of this sea, and on the adjacent mainland were the dark-white Iberians. Their religious beliefs developed from a simple heliolithic culture. Among their deities was a mother-goddess, with whom was associated a less important male deity, Velchanos.

When the fair-skinned Hellenes, those heroes of whom Homer sings, invaded the region, this Velchanos was identified by them as their Zeus, and certain myths about the former were thus attached to Zeus. The early Aegeans, however, followed the general practice of heliolithic peoples. They believed in spirits, nymphs, dryads, satyrs, fauns, spirits of the wood and mountain, and looked with reverence upon the sun, moon, stars, sky and earth. There were sacred stones and pillars, symbols of the creative principle, and the eternal belief in magic and in a life after death.

When the Nordic robber kings from Central Europe invaded the region, they brought with them the big turbulent northern gods, given to excess and violence, who later became the Olympians. The religion of Homer's time then, about the ninth century B.C., was a blend of the old Aegean beliefs—considerably modified through commerce with Egypt and the Orient—with ideas brought in by successive waves of big, rangy, fair-haired, blue-eyed Nordics.

Greece is divided by mountains and other topographical features into numerous sections, and each section, city, and valley had its own patron deity. The Olympian System of deities, with whose mythology nearly everyone is familiar, seems to have been a reformation brought about through the efforts of the Homeric poems to replace the aboriginal devotion to the mother principle and the sanction of polygamy, which were Aegean features, as well as those of the Hittites to the east, with devotion to the paternal principle and the endorsement of monogamy.

The old robber gods were gathered on Mount Olympus. These were pictured merely as supermen, who instead of looking after government or agriculture, spent their time feasting, fighting, and in love-making and intrigue. While immortal, Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Hermes, Athena, and all the rest were very human in that they required food, drink, and sleep. In fact, their devotees sought to gain their favor by offerings of meat and wine. To these gods altars and temples were erected, images were made, and there was even the beginning of a priesthood.

These mighty Olympian gods did not entirely displace the local deities

and those of earlier times. Some of the older gods, such as those of the wind, the nymphs and fauns, Hesta, Helios the Sun, Selene the Moon, and Gaea the Earth, found their way into the Olympian System. Others did not, but continued to receive homage locally; for there was the utmost freedom in regard to religious beliefs and practices at all times in Greece. The only restriction, even in later times, in regard to religion, was that no one should be allowed to ridicule the gods in public. This, however, was rather to preserve the state than to preserve the religion; for at that time it was thought that a common religion, with its pomp and pageants and artistic displays, was a strong bond for political unity.

With the development of scientific methods of thought, and commerce with the Babylonians, the Greeks became interested in astrology. After about 600 B.C. their influence toward greater scientific precision is noticeable in the astronomy of Babylon, and from that time on the astrological knowledge of the Babylonians began to percolate into Greece. And as this Chaldean astrology came to be understood in Greece, more and more it came to have an influence on Greek religion. Even though the Olympian gods were described by the bards before there is record of astrology getting a foothold in the country, yet the characteristic actions of the deities leave no doubt in the mind of one conversant with astrology that the chief deities each acted in strict conformity to the characteristics of the astrological orb which later came to be associated with it.

The official Greek religion, in early times, concerned itself very little with death and after death life. These things, however, were fully revealed in the Mysteries. The greatest gods of the Mystery cult, Dionysus and Demeter, were not even given a seat among the Olympians. These Mystery cults were secret societies where initiations took place. There were mysteries in honor of Gaea, Aglaurus, the Graces, Hecate, Themis, and more important still, Orphic mysteries and Elusinian mysteries, and later those of Samothrace. In these mysteries, which had large memberships and which markedly influenced the later trend of religious thought, were taught the Ancient Hermetic Doctrines.

In reference to classical Greece, although he founded no religion, but because he refused to believe the orthodox doctrines of his times, and opened a new era of philosophy which called on men to seek self-knowledge, and thus started a movement which, instead of the prevalent blind belief, depended upon intellect, some mention of Socrates should be made. Born in 469 B.C., near the end of his life those upholding the orthodoxy of his day charged him with not believing in the gods which the state worshiped, with introducing new divinities, and with corrupting the youth.

As a result of these charges he was sentenced to death. Between the imposition and the execution of this sentence thirty days elapsed, during which his friends were permitted to visit the old philosopher and carry on conversation as usual. His last conversation with them was about the immortality of the soul. His friends offered to devise means for his escape, but he refused. Obeying the command of the state, in 399 B.C., with perfect composure he drank the poison hemlock and died.

He had a phase of extrasensory perception in remarkable degree. He was sensitive to what he considered a divine voice, his Daemon, even as many at the present day receive information thus from their unconscious minds. But instead of admonishing what to do, whenever he, or some of his friends, were about to make a wrong decision, or to do something that was unwise, the voice warned him against it. By experience he found it invariably right. He

was one of the great teachers of the world, and his influence produced first Platonism, then the Aristotelian logic, and following this various system of philosophy which had much influence during a thousand years after his death.

Not, however, until after the founding of the Alexandrian School in Egypt, 332 B.C., and the conquest of the world by Alexander, did Chaldean astrology play its important part in Greek religion. The wisdom of Babylonia then moved to Alexandria and to Greece. About 280 B.C., Berosus, a priest from Babylon, established himself in the island of Cos. He taught astrology, and made known the contents of cuneiform writings which he had collected. Soudines, another Chaldean, about the year 238 B.C., was invited to the court of Attalus I, king of Pergamus, to practice the methods of divination of his native country. In due time many Greek savants of high repute, including Epigenes of Byzantium, Appolonius of Mydnus, Artemidorus of Parium, and Hipparchus, boasted of having been instructed by the Chaldeans.

Gradually thus the knowledge of magic, astrology, divination, mathematics and religion held by the Chaldeans came to have a dominant influence over the religious life of Greece. Babylon, sacked and burned in 125 B.C. never recovered. The last astronomical tablet in cuneiform characters, so far as is known, is dated 8 B.C. Babylon and her written language disappeared; but whatever of knowledge was hers became the property of the Greeks, and by them was perpetuated.

The Religion of Early Rome

The old Iberian peoples who in Greece were overrun by certain Nordics, in Italy met a similar fate at the hands of other fair-skinned Nordics migrating from the Danube Valley and from North Italy. This northern people were at the time in the animistic stage of belief in which objects were venerated, magic was prominent, and the world was filled by various orders of spirits. By 1,000 B.C. the northern people had become well established, mingling their beliefs with those of the primitive Iberians, and with those of the more civilized Iberians of the old Aegean Culture who had also settled in certain parts. These, by the Latins, were called Etruscans. Although the founding of Rome dates 753 B.C., beneath the Roman Forum are Etruscan tombs of a much earlier date. Not until the founding of Rome and the work of pious King Numa toward unifying religion was there any unity of religious belief.

Somewhat later Rome fell into the hands of the Etruscans, who built the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill. Although the Etruscan kings were expelled from Rome in the sixth century B.C., the statues of their gods, and the elaborate rituals which they inaugurated became a permanent fixture of the Roman religion.

The chief religion of the more primitive inhabitants was the veneration for the spirits that lived in the trees, fields, stones, springs and other objects. These were called numina, and some of them came to be recognized as guardian deities. Propitiation of these numina existed down to the Christian period. And the gods received from the Etruscans, such as Jupiter and Mars, were conceived to be very powerful numina, each ruling over certain things.

Thus Jupiter's province was to govern rain and sunshine, his aid being sought for success with the field and vineyard. For the purpose of obtaining the good will and favors of these deified spiritual powers, the state built elaborate and precise rituals presided over by a priesthood. This state worship was conducted in sacred groves and holy places and at altars, by the Arvan brotherhood, the Salii, the Luperci, pontiffs, vestals, flamens, augurs, Fetal priests, and others. Rome has been the stronghold of Western orthodoxy's priesthood

since 700 B.C., even as Lhasa has been the stronghold of Eastern orthodoxy's priesthood since the fifteenth century A.D.

Between the years 500 B.C. and 200 B.C. there were many national crises. Confidence was shaken in the power of the older gods, and to afford national religious support gods were imported from Egypt, from Babylon, and more particularly from Greece. The whole Olympian System thus found its way to Rome, and even previous to this period the worship of Castor came from Tusculum, the Hercules cult from Tibur, the goddess Minerva from Falorii, and Diana from Africa. In 399 B.C., at the direction of the Sibylline Books, for the purpose of ending a pestilence, Greek ceremonies for the first time were conducted at Rome. Then these famous books of Divination, after Rome despaired of driving an enemy from her midst, directed in 204 B.C. that the Phrygian goddess, the Great Mother, should receive worship. The result was as predicted, Hannibal and his Carthaginian hosts were expelled; but the worship of the Great Mother, as well as that of a host of other gods from Greece, Egypt, and Babylonia remained.

Yet even before this time, imported with the various deities from Babylon and Egypt, the astrological religion began to gain a foothold. No doubt, from the founding of Alexandria, 332 B.C., its impetus increased. After 200 B.C. the state religion of Rome was rich in ritual and sacrificial offerings, in pomp and show, and in variety of gods worshiped, but sadly lacking in the emotional element that popularizes a religion. The result was that various cults gained sway, chief among them being the Mysteries of Mithra, in which the old Hermetic Teachings were perpetuated. That these mysteries were largely based on astrology is shown by the bas-reliefs, mosaics, and paintings of their subterranean temples, on which the emblems of the elements, the signs of the zodiac, and the symbols of the planets commonly appear.

Astrology had become so popular, and so widely accepted, by the time of the emperors that it was adopted by them as a matter of course. Official astrologers were quite the thing in the time of Augustus and Tiberius, and Nero's teacher, Chaeremon, a priest of Alexandria, brought to his attention the religion of the stars as taught and practiced in Egypt. The sun came to be looked upon as the symbol of the Universal Creator, and in the temples three times daily—at dawn, at noon, and at dusk—a prayer was offered to the source of Life, Light and Love; a custom which survived in the early Christian Church as three daily services. Then, when it became expedient for political reasons, the priests, with whom Rome seems always to have been well stocked, suggested that the Emperor was the representative of the sun on earth. Thus in later days—even as in Japan until after World War II—it came about that men were deified and emperors worshiped as gods.

Through all these importations of deities the Roman people still held tenaciously to their belief in sympathetic magic, and to their belief in the worship of ancestral, household, tutelary, nature, and other spirits. Although Christianity was adopted as the state religion in 325 under Constantine, nevertheless the venerable temple of Vesta, where these various spirits were worshiped, remained open until 394 A.D., when it was closed by Theodorus, and all such worship forbidden.

The state religion of Rome gave to the world an impressive ritual that in a modified form persists in the Roman Catholic religion of today. It also gave to Europe the idea of the divine right of kings.

Certain customs of the common people also have come down to European peasants even from the old Aegean beliefs. Such is the custom of swing-

ing magically to help the growth of the grain. The higher one swings the higher the grain will grow. Likewise the custom of hoop-rolling before the shortest day of the year to help the sun make this hard part of his annual circle. After the winter solstice this is no longer tolerated and there is then the commencement of top whipping for the purpose of helping the sun to come back to his former heat and power. (The Hopi Indians of America, as set forth in the reference book, *Astrological Lore of All Ages*, at this time also have a ceremony for calling back the sun.) After Good Friday, of course, the top whipping must cease, otherwise the heat of the sun might be too intense. And as a further instance of the tenacity of old customs it may be noted that the temple of Vesta, above mentioned, which endured in Rome some twelve hundred years, retained its ancient Aegean architecture, being covered with the primitive thatch and wattle to the last.

Religion of Early Britain

In the British Isles and on the west coast of Europe, during the development of the religions of Greece and Rome, was another religion very similar to that of the old Aegeans. This was Druidism. The Druids had an aphorism, God can not be matter and what is not matter must be God."

They worshiped one Supreme Spirit, whose symbol is the sun. Like the Greeks and Romans, they believed in unseen spirits, and that objects were the vehicles of other spirits, or subordinate deities, to whom they must render homage. They believed in the evolution of the soul through the various lower forms of life before becoming man, and were confident man, after death, lived in a spiritual realm very similar to this world. So strong was this belief that money was borrowed in this world to be paid back in the next, and except for animals inimical to man and those used in sacrifices, they refrained from killing.

In writing, the Druids used two methods, one common and one sacred, the characters being very similar to those used by the Etruscans. Their religious ceremonies and other events of importance were commenced at definite astronomical configurations. Midday and midnight were two important times, and New Moon and Full Moon were observed for some purposes. They venerated the sun, moon and stars, and gave astronomical dances in their honor on religious occasions. Many such services began and ended with the ceremony of going around thrice in the direction of the sun, commencing in the East. This signified a willingness to obey the will of Deity. To go around in the opposite direction at such a ceremony signified rebellion against deific law, therefore devotion to witchcraft and black magic, which was severely punished. Human sacrifices were offered in times of national crisis, and at five-year intervals, criminals being used for this purpose. One day out of every seven was held sacred.

As in nearly all countries at that time, information of value was imparted during the process of initiation. The chief method among the Druids was by means of oral verse. Before a candidate could enroll for the priesthood his moral qualities and intellectual powers were thoroughly investigated. When he was admitted as a candidate he was called Anewydd. After a time, if successful in passing the degree, he became a Bard, and later on might become an Ovate.

The final degree was that of Druid. It usually took about 20 years, largely spent in the forest, to become a Druid. In this initiation, in addition to religious and astrological matters, he was fully instructed in magic. He became skilled in the use of the magic wand, which is still known as the Rod of Dru-

idism. He became a proficient healer, developed clairvoyance and prophecy, and practiced various forms of divination. Tradition relates that the Druids competed with the early saints in working miracles. The old Celtic Laws, revised 449 A.D. by St. Patrick, were the work of the Druids. In their social relations they believed in and practiced a high moral code. (For further information, refer to, *Druidism, the Ancient Faith of Britain*, by Dudley.)

This doctrine derived from the teachings of a Persian of the third century A.D., called Mani, Manes or Manichaeus, who taught a dualism derived from Zoroastrianism. Manes, born 216 A.D., either claimed to be, or was regarded by his followers as the Paraclete promised by Jesus (John 14:16-17). Following Zoroaster, he postulated two beings, Light (God) and Darkness. From the latter Satan and his angels were born. Adam owed his being to Satan. Continued conflict exists between the two kingdoms, and when the Kingdom of Light becomes victorious the world will be destroyed by fire and God will thenceforth reign.

This sect, in its time considered a Christian heresy, endeavored to reconcile Christianity, Buddhism and Mazdaism into a world religion much as present-day Bahaim (see chapter 4), which is a Mohammedan heresy, now seeks to reconcile Mohammedanism, Buddhism and Christianity.

The Old Testament was rejected and only so much of the New Testament was accepted as served their purpose. They had a kind of hierarchy, fasting was practiced, and among the later Manichaeans rites existed analogous to baptism and the Eucharist. The ethics of the sect were severely ascetic. Their members were divided into two classes, the "elect" and the "hearers."

The "elect" were bound to observe three seals: (1) of the mouth, forbidding animal food, the use of wine and milk, and impure speech; (2) of the hands, forbidding the destruction of life, whether animal or vegetable; and (3) of the bosom, forbidding marriage and offspring, since woman was supposed to have been the gift of demons. The "hearers" were less severely bound.

This sect rapidly spread in the East and to North Africa. But it was drastically persecuted, and in the fifth century was completely stamped out, although some of its tenets reappeared later in the doctrines of the Paulicians and later on in those of the Albigenese.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople from 428 to 431, taught that there were two persons as well as two natures in Jesus Christ, and that the Virgin Mary was in no sense Mother of God; she was the mother of Jesus, but not the mother of the Word. Cyril of Alexandria, at the Council of Ephesus in 431, procured the condemnation of the Nestorian doctrines, and the deposition of Nestorius. The latter was banished to the deserts of Egypt, where he underwent much suffering, and died in 440.

Nestorianism made rapid strides in the East, and together with the Monophysites, also called Jacobites—who believed there was only one nature in Christ, namely that of the Word, who became incarnate, and that the divine and human elements in that one nature were blended as the body and soul in man—in the eleventh century outnumbered those of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches together. After 1553 some of the Nestorians were in communion with Rome, and were known as Chaldeans.

Another sect, this time arising in Syria where it has its strongest hold today—about 100,000 followers endeavored to unite Christians, Moslems, Jews, Bud-

Manichaeism

Nestorianism

Druses

dhists and Mazdeans. According to their religion, dating from the beginning of the eleventh century, Hakim, the sixth of the Fatimite caliphs was the tenth and last incarnation of God. Hakim, who thus proclaimed himself, when walking in the vicinity of Cairo, his capital, disappeared. His followers believe he will return to earth to reign over it and propagate their faith.

Two Persians spread this doctrine with great zeal Hamzeh and Mohammed ben Ismailed or Durzi. The latter became known so widely that instead of calling its followers Hakimites they came to be known as Druses.

They believe in the unity of God, who they think was manifest in the persons of several individuals, the last being Hakim. They believe in the constant existence of five superior spiritual ministers, the greatest being Hamzeh and Jesus. They firmly believe in the transmigration of souls. Their day of worship is Thursday. They adhere to seven commandments given by Hamzeh, who succeeded the original founder of the sect. These are: (1) Truthful speech among themselves; (2) care of their brethren; (3) renunciation of all other religions; (4) separation from heretics; (5) confession of the unity of God in all ages; (6) resignation to His will, and (7) obedience to His commands. They believe also that to profess belief in another religion for the purpose of gaining the confidence of others whom they hope to proselyte is meritorious.

The Mormons

Space does not permit me even to list all the Christian sects, let alone explaining their tenets. But they have sprung up, one after another since the dawn of Christianity. In addition to the few previously mentioned, for instance, in the first century there were the Ebionites, who held that Jesus was only a man, upon whom the spirit of God descended at His Baptism, and whom the spirit of God deserted at the time of the crucifixion.

Then there were the Adamites, an early Christian sect who held, as did another sect, the Nikolartans, that wives, like everything else should be held in common by true Christians. They celebrated certain rites in caves where all assembled naked and gave themselves up to promiscuous indulgences.

Of quite opposite character were the Christian Gnostics of the third century. These, for the most part, were learned philosophers who sought to reconcile Christianity and Greek philosophy.

Space does not permit discussing even the outstanding present-day Christian sects, but as throwing some light upon the manner in which a religion gets a foothold, and may at least temporarily be sidetracked, I believe I should speak of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, often spoken of as the Mormon religion, which has among its members many intelligent, capable, and conscientious people.

On September 23, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith thrice and commanded him to find in the forest a supplement to the Bible. Smith claimed later that an angel gave him the book, consisting of gold leaves in a stone box. This book was in the Reformed Egyptian" writing, in size octave, 8x7 inches, and 6 inches thick, fastened with three gold rings. With it were a pair of spectacles with crystal lenses by means of which Smith could understand the writing. The contents of this book he dictated from behind a curtain to Oliver Cowdry; and Cowdry and Farmer Harris were induced to pay for its publication as the Book of Mormon. On this book The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints was founded.

This early book of Mormon forbade polygamy. But later Joseph Smith became enamoured with a woman other than his wife, and about that time, July 1843, the prophet received a new revelation on the subject, and estab-

lished "Sealed Wives" in addition to the legitimate wife. Then the religion became subject to relentless persecution, and its followers, after making several moves, finally went to the desert region of the Great Basin and made their headquarters at Salt Lake City, Utah, which is the present stronghold of the faith.

The doctrine of polygamy, however, gave them a great amount of trouble, being particularly used against them politically. Some in the church, even from the first, were opposed to it. This resulted finally in the establishment of the "Reorganized Latter Day Saints." This organization holds plurality of wives to be an abomination. They hold that the Book of Mormon is an authentic history of America between 2,000 B.C. and 400 A.D. They are convinced that Jesus Christ is the Savior, that Mohammed is the second great prophet, and that Joseph Smith came to crown and complete the work of these other two, being the third and last great prophet. In their acceptance of the Bible and the Book of Mormon on faith, regardless of logical contradictions, they greatly resemble the Christian Fundamentalists.

Instead of viewing religion as teaching how the ordinary life should be modeled, some in each of the more important religions viewed it as an end in itself. They became religious devotees to the exclusion of all other matters. Thus did monastic life spring into being.

Among the Hindus the fakir with his begging bowl, and perhaps his bag of tricks, is a common sight. The Buddhists have great monasteries where those who have turned from the world and adopted religion as their sole interest dwell. Among the Mohammedans there are dervishes. These correspond to the monks of Christianity, there being numerous orders of them. Some are on the plane of the low Hindu fakir, living by begging and a few tricks of legerdemain. Many of the orders of dervishes have no settled abode, but wander from place to place. Some are of a rather high order and possess pronounced occult powers. Among these are accomplished magicians and healers.

Of the Christians, there are several hundred orders of monks that have come into existence since the religion was founded. All have heard of the Wandering Friars, of the Franciscan monks, and of the Jesuits. Some of the orders that once had a membership, however, no longer are in existence. And if we were to take the pains to examine the requirements of membership of these monastic orders of different religions, and if we were to inquire the objective which they hope to attain, and if we were to learn how they live, and who supports them, we should find in essential matters all are remarkably the same.

Monastic life, however, is not the only by-product of the great religions of the world. Among all the great religions there have been groups of mystics, groups of those who believe they reach Deity by retiring within themselves.

I presume no one need be told that the Yogis of Hinduism, through meditation, breathing, fasting, posture, etc., enter into higher states of consciousness in which they claim to receive illumination. There are likewise mystics among the Buddhists, and among the Taoists. Mazdaism, which was a modified form of Zoroastrianism, once had many notable mystics. Among the Mohammedans the mystics are called Sufi, and the Sufi movement is alive today, and in the past profoundly influenced literature. Christian mysticism also produced a very extensive literature. I need but mention Jacob Boehme, Emanuel Swedenborg, Von Eckartshausen and Louis Claude de St. Martin to bring to mind a few of the later Christian mystics and their writings.

Mystics and Monastic Life

Modern Fetishism

Egypt and the region bordering the Mediterranean are Mohammedan. But the balance of Africa is the present-day stronghold of Animism, Totemism and Fetishism. These beliefs and the practices arising from them vary with districts, and somewhat with different peoples, but almost everywhere in Africa these three forms are apparent. The native African, North, South, East and West, in spite of any later modifying influence, is a firm believer in various orders of spirits, that the dead have the ability to return, and that they have an influence over the lives of those yet living. He is also a firm believer in magic, and ardently seeks to have it used for his personal gain. Oje men (witch doctors) of various kinds are sought upon all unusual occasions, and their offices are secured in attempts to gain whatever is desired. Among many tribes almost every ill is thought to be the result of sorcery. Totem restrictions are scrupulously observed, and fetishes are secured to assist its possessor, and also for the purpose of injuring his enemy.

In chapter 1, under the heading, Fetishism, a quotation was given from Robert H. Milligan's, *The Jungle Folk of Africa*, among whom he lived as a Christian missionary. It was about the skull of the father which the son kept in a box. Later he says, "They believe that the skull of the father or other ancestor when it has been properly prepared becomes the resident of the ancestor, who, however, is not confined to it, but wanders about returning to it as to his home."

Here we see not merely a high development of fetishism, but also the origin and significance of ancestor worship. The skull fetish is never abused, for it is believed abuse would cause it to become angry and bring evil upon its possessor. Being the home of the spirit of the ancestor, the skull is kept comfortable, warm and dry, rubbed occasionally with oil and red-wood powder, and well fed. Before going hunting the box in which the skull is kept is opened and the son addresses the skull as he might if it were still alive, asking his father to help him, and promising he will share the game killed with him. On returning from the hunt the son opens the box and places a portion of the game before the skull, himself leaving the house and locking it against intrusion while his father eats. The father is supposed to eat only the invisible double of the food. After giving the father ample time to do this, the son returns to the house and himself eats the food that was before the skull.

Before turning from these tribes of West Coast Africa, another quotation from Mr. Milligan may prove interesting. It reports the case of a native who believed in just such hauntings as the numerous instances cited in *Haunted Houses*, by Camile Flammarion. He says:

On Corsica Island there lives a man who had been in contact with civilization all his lifetime and is fairly educated though he is not a Christian. His wife died, and shortly afterward she began playing pranks in his town and even in his house. She broke nearly all his dishes. Then, one night she struck him in the neck, and he instantly recognized her. His neck was stiff in the morning. That proved it! Not being able to strike back in the unequal warfare and preferring an enemy whom he could kick (for this individual wore shoes and scarcely anything else) he lost spirit and finally pulled down the entire town and built in another place.

The more common fetishes are not treated with the great respect accorded to the ancestor's skull. More often they are talked to and treated as if hu-

man. If a fetish fails to obtain the desired end it is either placated or punished. In Africa fetishes are sometimes sprinkled with oil, rum, or blood to gain their favor, and they are maligned, beaten and abused when they fail in their performance.

A large number of fetish practices are to be found among those above savages, such as the general belief of the American trapper that if he sells all his fur he will have difficulty in catching more. He therefore keeps one piece of fur, even though the poorest pelt, that it may draw other fur to him when he starts trapping the next season. The relic of some saint, a piece of the cross, or a portion of the Koran, when believed to possess supernatural power is a fetish. Nor is the abusing of fetishes confined to savages. I quote from Professor Hopkin's *History of Religion*:

It is exactly the attitude taken by the Egyptians and Greeks toward their gods. Even later Romans destroyed the temples to punish the gods on the death of Germanicus. So also in the seventeenth century a crew of becalmed Portuguese sailors tied their patron, St. Anthony, to the bowsprit till he sent a breeze. A Spanish captain once tied the Virgin to the mast with the same intent. There is, however, another element to be considered, which looks somewhat like simple abuse, but is not. Thus St. Peter's image was once immersed, in the sixteenth century, to cure a drought in France. This may have been a case of sympathetic magic, wetting the saint to cause him to wet the earth. But there are cases enough to show that abuse is reckoned a proper way to control a spiritual power. Russian peasants beat their holy pictures with no other idea.

Fetishism may very easily lead to idolatry. The reverence for a fetish may lead to its worship. The desire to propitiate and gain the help of ancestors may lead to the worship of the images of such ancestors. In China pictures of ancestors are preferred to images. In India and New Zealand images of stone or wood are preferred. The Hindu Rajput occasionally wears an amulet to keep away evil spirits.

It will be seen that to the indiscriminating mind the image of the Virgin Mary, or of Jesus on the cross, or even the cross, from being a symbol of spiritual power to be venerated might easily by gradual steps degenerate into an idol to be worshiped.

Among the more notable philosophic religions of India are the Sankhya and the Vedanta. The Sankhya is essentially dualistic, emphasizing the difference between spirit and matter. There is, however, a theistic form of Sankhya, which in its other forms is commonly atheistic, called the Puranic Sankhya; and Patanjali's Yoga is thoroughly theistic. Cankara was a great Vedanta leader in the ninth century, but in the twelfth century Ramanuja arose to dispute his interpretations.

The sectarian pantheism of the present time arose from Ramanuja's doctrines. The religion split into two sects, one numerically stronger, holding that the All-spirit, Vishnu, incarnated through Krishna, and the other that Vishnu incarnated through Rama. Thus we have the Krishnaites and the Ramaites. Then the Krishnaites split into numerous sects, and these into sub-sects; and the Ramaites split into numerous sects and sub-sects, these smaller

Sankhya and Vedanta

sub-sects mutually hating each other even more than they do their common adversaries of the larger division.

Panthia

One of the most distinguished Vedantists of the fifteenth century was Kabir, who founded the sect known as Kabir Panthia. Their belief is an unsectarian unitarianism. That is, they have no rites, renounce idolatry, ridicule the scriptures, and broke with both the Mohammedans and the orthodox Hindus There are twelve divisions of these Panthia, mostly in the South, near Benares in the East, and near Bombay in the West.

Sikhs

In the fifteenth century was born Nanak, who about the year 1500 in the Punjab region started a religious reform movement. He claimed to be a follower of Kabir. The sect has a sacred work, the Granth, compiled by pontiff Arjun and others. The Sikh pontiff was Guru Govind, and under his rule in the eighteenth century the church became aggressive and developed into a powerful military organization.

Its followers believe in one god, prohibit idolatry, pilgrimages, the use of charms, belief in witchcraft, and in the caste system, and they refuse to recognize Brahmanical supremacy. They are renowned fighters, and take a vow to hate both Hindus and Mohammedans. Their early leader's orders were, "If you meet a Mohammedan, kill him; if you meet a Hindu beat and plunder him." Their chief stronghold still is in the Punjab region. There are seven well-defined sub-sects at present.

Jainism

About the sixth century B.C. Mahavira Jnatriputra founded a religion in the Southern and Western provinces of Hindustan which attempted to reconcile Hinduism and Buddhism, embracing features of both. It is the religion of the Jains, with about a million and a half followers in India.

Its chief difference from Hinduism is that (1) it denies that the Veda is of divine origin, (2) it worships certain holy mortals who, by living exemplary lives here and by self-mortification had raised themselves above humanity to the station of gods, (3) it teaches extreme tenderness toward all animal life. In all of these three points it tends toward Buddhism.

Its moral code, or "great duties" consists of (1) refraining from injury to life, (2) truth, (3) honesty, (4) chastity, and (5) freedom from worldly desires.

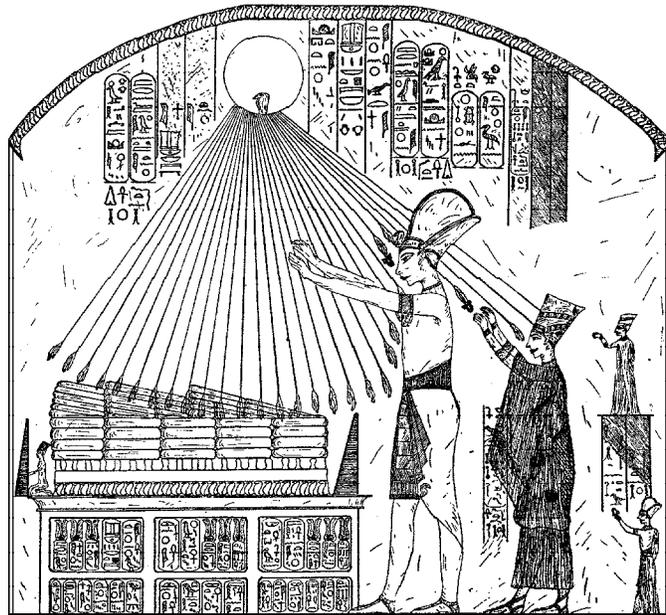
Its four other teachings, or "merits" are, (1) liberality, (2) gentleness, (3) piety, and (4) penances.

Zenism

In Japan, a sect revolted against the idolatry of the Buddhism as there practiced, and hold that book knowledge is in vain and that one must look within. Not long after the Zen sect came into existence in the twelfth century, two other popular sects arose sometimes called the Happy Land sects, because they teach that salvation may be attained not through knowledge of illumination, but through faith. The Jodo sect, one of the Happy Land sects, later branched and one section is called the Jodo-Shin-shu. At present this sect has ten sub-sects and not less than 20 thousand temples in Japan. The Zen sect is almost as strong.



Drawing by Mildred Schuler



Stellar Healing of Akhenaten

