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ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN INDIAN AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY.*

BEFORE I enter upon the discussion of the questions for which I have the honor of asking your kind attention, I think it necessary to sketch briefly the two philosophical doctrines of Ancient India which principally come into consideration for my purpose.

In the earliest philosophical works of India, in the oldest Upanishads, we meet with an idealistic monism which later acquires the name of Vedânta. It is true, those works abound in reflexions on theological, ritualistic, and other matters, but all these reflexions are utterly eclipsed by the doctrine of the *Eternal-One*, the *Âtman* or *Brahman*. The word *Âtman* originally meant "breathing," then "the vital principle," "the Self"; but soon it was used to signify the Intransient ONE which is without any attribute or quality—the All-Soul, the Soul of the World, the Thing-in-Itself, or whatever you like to translate it. *Brahman* on the other hand, originally "the prayer," became a term for the power which is inherent in every prayer and holy action, and at last for the eternal, boundless power which is the basis of everything existing. Having attained this stage of development, the word *Brahman* became completely synonymous with *Âtman*. The objective *Brahman* and the subjective *Âtman* amalgamated into one, the highest metaphysical idea; and this amalgamation comprises the doctrine of the unity of the subject and the object. In numerous parables the Upanishads try to describe

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the nature of Brahman, but all their reflexions culminate in one point : the inmost Self of the individual being is one with that all-pervading power (*tat tvam asi*, "thou art That").

This spiritual monism challenged the contradiction of Kapila, the founder of the Sâmkhya philosophy, who, in a rationalistic way, saw only the diversity, but not the unity of the universe. The Sâmkhya doctrine—the oldest real system of Indian philosophy—is entirely dualistic. Two things are admitted, both eternal and everlasting, but in their innermost character totally different ; namely, matter and soul, or better a boundless plurality of individual souls. The existence of the creator and ruler of the universe is denied. The world develops according to certain laws out of primitive matter, which first produces those subtile substances of which the internal organs of all creatures are formed, and after that brings forth the gross matter. At the end of a period of the universe the products dissolve by retrogradation into primitive matter ; and this continual cycle of evolution, existence, and dissolution has neither beginning nor end. The psychology of this interesting system is of special importance. All the functions which ordinarily we denote as psychic, i. e., perception, sensation, thinking, willing, etc., according to the Sâmkhya doctrine, are merely mechanical processes of the internal organs, that is, of matter. These would remain unconscious, if it were not for the soul which "illuminates" them, i. e., makes them conscious. No other object is accomplished by soul. Soul is perfectly indifferent and, therefore, also, not the vehicle of moral responsibility. This office is assumed by the subtile or internal body, which is chiefly formed of the inner organs and the senses, and which surrounds the soul. This internal body accompanies soul from one existence into another, and is, therefore, the real principle of metempsychosis. It is the object of the Sâmkhya philosophy to teach people to know the absolute distinction between soul and matter in its most subtile modifications, as it appears in the inner organs. A man has attained the highest aim of human exertion, if this distinction is perfectly clear to him : discriminative knowledge delivers soul from the misery of the endless flow of existence and abolishes the necessity of being born again. The Sâmkhya philosophy is al-

ready saturated with that pessimism which has put its stamp on Buddhism, the outcome of this system.

For the following reflexions it is necessary to bear in mind that the Vedânta of the Upanishads and the Sâmkhya philosophy had both spread through Northern India before the middle of the sixth century before Christ.

The coincidences between Indian and Greek philosophy are so numerous that some of them were noticed immediately after the Indian systems became known to Europeans.

The most striking resemblance—I am almost tempted to say sameness—is that between the doctrine of the All-One in the Upanishads and the philosophy of the Eleatics. Xenophanes teaches that God and the Universe are one, eternal, and unchangeable; and Parmenides holds that reality is due alone to this universal being, neither created nor to be destroyed, and omnipresent; further, that everything which exists in multiplicity and is subject to mutability is not real; that thinking and being are identical. All these doctrines are congruent with the chief contents of the Upanishads and of the Vedânta system, founded upon the latter. It is true, the ideas about the illusive character of the empirical world and about the identity between existence and thought are not yet framed into doctrines in the older Upanishads; we only find them in works which doubtlessly are later than the time of Xenophanes and Parmenides. But ideas from which those doctrines must ultimately have developed, are met with in the oldest Upanishads; for it is there that we find particular stress laid upon the singleness and immutability of Brahman and upon the identity of thought (*vijñāna*) and Brahman. I therefore do not consider it an anachronism to trace the philosophy of the Eleatics to India.

But even earlier than this can analogies between the Greek and Indian Worlds of thought be traced. Thales, the father of the Grecian philosophy, imagines everything to have sprung from water. This certainly reminds us of a mythological idea which was very familiar to the Indians of the Vedic time; namely, the idea of the primeval water out of which the universe was evolved. Even in the oldest works of the Vedic literature there are numerous passages

in which this primeval water is mentioned, either producing itself all things or being the matter out of which the Creator produces them.

Fundamental ideas of the Sâmkhya philosophy, too, are found among the Greek physiologers. Anaximander assumes, as the foundation (*ἀρχή*) of all things, a primitive matter, eternal, unfathomable and indefinite, the *ἄπειρον*, from which the definite substances arise and into which they return again. If you now advert to the Sâmkhya doctrine, that the material world is produced by Prakṛiti, the primitive matter, and, when the time has come, sinks back into it, the analogy is evident. Let us proceed to another example. There is Heraclitus, the "dark Ephesian," whose doctrine, it is true, touches Iranian ideas in its main points. Nevertheless it offers several parallels with the views of the Sâmkhya philosophy. The *πάντα ῥεῖ* of Heraclitus is a suitable expression for the incessant change of the empirical world, set down by the Sâmkhya, and his doctrine of the innumerable annihilations and re-formations of the Universe is one of the best known theories of the Sâmkhya system.*

But let us turn to the physiologers of later times. The first with whom we have to deal is Empedocles, whose theories of metempsychosis and evolution may well be compared with the corresponding ideas of the Sâmkhya philosophy. But most striking is the agreement between the following doctrine of his, "Nothing can arise which has not existed before, and nothing existing can be annihilated," and that most characteristic one of the Sâmkhya system about the beginningless and endless reality of all products (*sat-kdrya-rddā*), or—as we should put it—about the eternity and indestructibility of matter.

In a similar way, a connexion may be traced between the dualism of Anaxagoras and that of the Sâmkhya philosophy. And notwithstanding his atomism, which is certainly not derived from India,†

* Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, second edition, Vol. I, p. 437, discovers other analogies between the philosophy of Heraclitus and the Sâmkhya doctrine.

† For it is beyond doubt that the Indian atomistical systems, Vaiçeshika and Nyâya, were conceived a long time after Leucippus and Democritus.

even Democritus in the principles of his metaphysics, which probably are rooted in the doctrines of Empedocles, reminds us of a Sâmkhya tenet, which is in almost literal agreement with the following: "Nothing can rise from nothing." * The same is true of his conception of the gods. To Democritus they are not immortal, but only happier than men and longer-lived; and this is in perfect harmony with the position the gods occupy not only in the Sâmkhya but in all Indian systems. According to Indian ideas, the gods are subject to metempsychosis like human beings, and they also must step down, when their store of merit, formerly acquired, is exhausted. Says Çamkara, the renowned Vedântist, in his commentary on the Brahmasûtra (I. 3. 28): "Words like 'Indra' mean only the holding of a certain office, as the word 'general' for instance; he who at the time occupies this post is called 'Indra.'"

The same ideas are met with in Epicurus, whose dependency upon Democritus must needs have brought about a resemblance. But also on matters of other kinds Epicurus has laid down principles which in themselves as well as in their arguments bear a remarkable resemblance to Sâmkhya doctrines. Epicurus, in denying that the world is ruled by God, because this hypothesis would necessitate our investing the deity with attributes and functions that are incongruous with the idea of the divine nature, gives voice to a doctrine that is repeated by the Sâmkhya teachers with unfatiguing impressiveness. We also occasionally meet, in the systematic works of the Sâmkhya philosophy, a favorite argumentative formula of Epicurus, "Everything could rise from everything then."

It is a question requiring the most careful treatment to determine, whether the doctrines of the Greek philosophers, both those here mentioned and others, were really first derived from the Indian world of thought, or whether they were constructed independently of each other in both India and Greece, their resemblance being caused by the natural sameness of human thought. For my part, I confess I am inclined towards the first opinion, without intending to pass an apodictic decision. The book of Ed. Rôth ("Geschichte

* Comp. *Sâmkhyasûtra*, I. 78.

unsrer abendländischen Philosophie," first edition 1846, second edition 1862), the numerous works of Aug. Gladisch, and the tract of C. B. Schlüter ("Aristoteles' Metaphysik eine Tochter der Sâmkhya-Lehre des Kapila," 1874)—all go too far in their estimation of Oriental influence and in the presentment of fantastical combinations; moreover, they are all founded upon a totally insufficient knowledge of the Oriental sources.* Nevertheless, I consider them to contain a kernel of truth, although it can hardly be hoped that this kernel will ever be laid bare with scientific accuracy. The *historical possibility* of the Grecian world of thought being influenced by India through the medium of Persia, must unquestionably be granted, and with it the possibility of the above-mentioned ideas being transferred from India to Greece. The connexions between the Ionic inhabitants of Asia Minor and those of the countries to the east of it were so various and numerous during the time in question, that abundant occasion must have offered itself for the exchange of ideas between the Greeks and the Indians, then living in Persia.†

* Compare also the treatise of Baron v. Eckstein "Ueber die Grundlagen der Indischen Philosophie und deren Zusammenhang mit den Philosophemen der westlichen Völker," *Indische Studien*, II. 369-388. Even earlier than this, such questions were treated with astounding boldness. With a facility of conception peculiar to him, Sir William Jones (Works, quarto ed., 1799, I. 360, 361) perceived the following analogies: "Of the philosophical schools it will be sufficient, here, to remark that the first Nyâya seems analogous to the Peripatetic; the second, sometimes called Vaiçeshika, to the Ionic; the two Mîmânsâs, of which the second is often distinguished by the name of Vedânta, to the Platonic; the first Sâmkhya, to the Italic; and the second or Pâtanjali, to the Stoic philosophy: so that Gautama corresponds with Aristotle; Kanâda, with Thales; Jaimini, with Socrates; Vyâsa, with Plato; Kapila, with Pythagoras; and Patanjali, with Zeno. But an accurate comparison between the Grecian and Indian schools would require a considerable volume."

† In Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, revised and edited by Heinze, sixth edition, I. 36. I am happy to find the following passage: "With much better reason we could suppose a considerable Oriental influence in the form of a direct communication of the older Grecian philosophers with Oriental nations." But I am sorry to say, I cannot concur with the opinion of the author, expressed on the same page, that a perfect and decisive solution of this problem might be expected from the progress of Oriental studies. For even the closest acquaintance with the Oriental systems and religions cannot do away with the alternative, before mentioned on page 180; and, with one single exception, which I shall presently consider, the means for fixing the limits of these foreign influences upon the older Grecian philosophy are utterly wanting.

Add to this the Greek tradition that the greater part of the philosophers with whom we have dealt, Thales, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and others, undertook journeys, sometimes of considerable duration, into Oriental countries for the sake of making philosophical studies, and the probability of our supposition that these Grecian philosophers acquired Indian ideas on Persian ground will be increased. But it cannot be denied that, if they really did borrow foreign ideas, they well understood the art of impressing on them the stamp of the Grecian intellect.

Hitherto, I have purposely omitted a name which is much more intimately connected with this question, than the others I have mentioned. While, for the derivation of Indian ideas in the case of the Grecian physiologers, the Eleatics and Epicurus, I could only assume a *certain probability* in favor of my hypothesis, there seems to be no doubt about the dependence of Pythagoras upon Indian philosophy and science; and all the more so, as the Greeks themselves considered *his* doctrines as foreign. It was Sir William Jones (Works, 8vo ed., III, 236)* who first pointed out the analogies between the Sâmkhya system and the Pythagorean philosophy, starting from the name of the Indian system, which is derived from the word *samkhyā* "number," and from the fundamental importance attached to number by Pythagoras. After Jones, Colebrooke (Misc. Ess., 2d ed., I. 436, 437) expressed with even more emphasis the idea that the doctrines of Pythagoras might be rooted in India. He says: "... Adverting to what has come to us of the history of Pythagoras, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge an inclination to consider the Grecian to have been . . . indebted to Indian instructors." Colebrooke gives the reasons for his opinion (l. c., 441 et seq.) in the following passage, which seems to me to be sufficiently important to quote in full:

"It may be here remarked by the way, that the Pythagoreans, and Ocellus in particular, distinguish as parts of the world, the heaven, the earth, and the interval between them, which they term lofty and ærial. . . . Here we have precisely the heaven, earth, and (transpicuous) intermediate region of the Hindus.

* See Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, second edition, I. 241.

"Pythagoras, as after him Ocellus, peoples the middle or aërial region with demons, as heaven with gods, and the earth with men. Here again they agree precisely with the Hindus, who place the gods above, man beneath, and spiritual creatures, flitting unseen, in the intermediate region.

"Nobody needs to be reminded, that Pythagoras and his successors held the doctrine of metempsychosis, as the Hindus universally do the same tenet of transmigration of souls.

"They agree likewise generally in distinguishing the sensitive, material organ (*manas*), from the rational and conscious living soul (*jīvatman*): *θευός* and *φρίν* of Pythagoras; one perishing with the body, the other immortal.

"Like the Hindus, Pythagoras, with other Greek philosophers, assigned a subtle ethereal clothing to the soul apart from the corporeal part, and a grosser clothing to it when united with body; the *sūkshma* (or *linga*) *śarīra* and *sthūla śarīra* of the Sāṅkhyas and the rest. . . . I should be disposed to conclude that the Indians were in this instance teachers rather than learners."

Wilson (*Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, IV, 11, 12, and *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, p. XI) only incidentally touches on the analogies pointed out by Jones and Colebrooke.

Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire goes a little more into detail regarding one point. He treats, in his "Premier Mémoire sur le Sāṅkhya" (Paris, 1852, pp. 512, 513, 521, 522), of Pythagoras's theory of metempsychosis, and he is right in observing that the greater probability is on the side of its Indian origin, and not on its Egyptian one. Further, Barthélemy finds Sāṅkhya ideas in Plato, in the "Phædon," "Phædrus," "Timæus," and in the "Republic": "Les analogies sont assez nombreuses et assez profondes pour qu'il soit impossible de les regarder comme accidentelles" (p. 514). He points out that the ideas of redemption and bondage are doctrines both of Plato and of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, inasmuch as they denote the liberation of soul from matter and the confinement of soul by matter; and that the idea of metempsychosis is common to both, together with that of the beginningless and endless existence of the soul. On p. 521 Barthélemy then says that Plato, the great admirer of the Pythagorean school, took these doctrines from Pythagoras; but if we ask where Pythagoras obtained them, all the appearances are, in his opinion, in favor of India.

The supposition that Pythagoras derived his theory of transmi-

gration from India, was several times broached in older works besides.*

In a much more exhaustive and comprehensive manner, but evidently without knowledge of his predecessors, Leopold von Schroeder has also treated this subject in an essay "Pythagoras und die Inder" (Leipsic, 1884), which, notwithstanding the contrary opinion of Professor Weber,† seems to me to be perfectly correct in its main points. From Schroeder's theories it follows, that almost all the doctrines ascribed to Pythagoras, both religio-philosophical and mathematical, were current in India as early as the sixth century before Christ, and even previously. As the most important of these doctrines appear in Pythagoras without connexion or explanatory background, whilst in India they are rendered comprehensible by the intellectual life of the times, Schroeder conclusively pronounces India to be the birthplace of the Pythagorean ideas. Of course, no power of conviction would rest in *single* traits of agreement;—and for that reason I did not venture to give any definite opinion with regard to the dependence of the other philosophers mentioned on India;—but with Pythagoras, it is the *quantity* of coincidences that enforces conviction; and the more so, as the concordance is also to be noticed in insignificant and arbitrary matters which cannot well be expected to appear independently in two different places. Here I must refer to Schroeder's detailed argumentation and can only indicate the chief features which Pythagoras and the ancient Indians have in common: the theory of the transmigration of souls, in which there is harmony here and there even in noticeable details, and which Pythagoras cannot have taken from Egypt for the simple reason that modern Egyptology teaches us, that—in spite of the well-known passage in Herodotus—the ancient Egyptians were not familiar with the doctrine of metempsychosis; further, the curious prohibition of eating beans, the *πρὸς ἥλιον τετραμμένον μὴ ὀμχεῖν*;

* See Lucian Scherman, *Materialien zur Geschichte der Indischen Visionsliteratur*, p. 26, note 1.

† *Literarisches Centralblatt*, 1884, p. 1563–1565. Compare also "Die Griechen in Indien," *Sitzungsberichte der Kgl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, XXXVII, pp. 923–926.

the doctrine of the *five* elements, i. e. the assumption of ether as the fifth element, which obtains in the Pythagorean school as well as everywhere in India; above all the so-called Pythagorean theorem, developed in the Çulvasûtras*; the irrational number $\sqrt{2}$; then the whole character of the religio-philosophical fraternity, founded by Pythagoras, which is analogous to the Indian orders of the time; and at last the mystical speculation, peculiar to the Pythagorean school, which bears a striking resemblance to the fantastical notions greatly in favor with the so-called Brâhmaṇa literature.

Schroeder proceeds with a few more analogies of lesser value and of doubtful nature, and finally he is certainly mistaken in the two following points. Namely, he holds that Pythagoras acquired his knowledge in India itself,—an idea excluded at once by reference to the history of ancient traffic.† The only country in which Pythagoras could possibly have met his Indian teachers, is Persia, to which place I above found myself obliged to ascribe the eventual mediation between Indian ideas and the Greek physiologists and Eleatics. The other point is that of the connexion between the Pythagorean doctrine and the Sâmkhya philosophy, supposed by Schroeder. It may be that Pythagoras acquired his knowledge of the theories of metempsychosis and of the five elements from adherents of the Sâmkhya system; but *further* relations are not to be discovered. Schroeder‡ tries, on pp. 72–76, to bring the fundamental idea of the Pythagorean philosophy, that number is the essence of all things, into connexion with a *fictitious*, older form of the Sâmkhya philosophy. He says p. 74: “To me it appears to be evident from the name Sâmkhya, that number (*samkhyā*) originally had a deciding,

* Weber's polemic against Schroeder's treatise is chiefly based on the fact that he underestimates the age of the Çulvasûtras which describe the mensurations of the sacrificial compound that led to the discovery of the renowned tenet. The Çulvasûtras are not appendages to the Çrautasûtras, but integrant parts of the great ritual complexes, each of which has been composed by *one* author. The material, offered to us in the Çulvasûtras, is of course still much older than these compendiums themselves.

† The Grecian tradition of Pythagoras having visited India did not arise before the Alexandrine time.

‡ As before him Sir William Jones; comp. p. 182 above.

fundamental importance in this system, although the later system, the books of which appeared more than a thousand years after the pre-Buddhistic Sâṃkhya doctrine of Kapila, has effaced this characteristic trait and entirely lost it." In stating this, Schroeder has overlooked the fact that those Upanishads which are full of Sâṃkhya doctrines and which must be dated only a few hundred years later than Buddha, are, in the passages in question, also wanting in what he calls the "original" characteristic trait, and that they are in harmony with that system which he calls the "later one." He himself declares this theory to be a very bold one, but in reality it is perfectly baseless. There is not the smallest particle of evidence for the hypothesis that there ever existed a Sâṃkhya system different from that of our sources, which acquired its name from the mania for enumeration peculiar to it. On the contrary, weighty reasons speak against the supposition that our system has undergone noticeable changes in the course of time. If ever we should try to fabricate some historical link between the Sâṃkhya system and the Pythagorean numeral philosophy, the following idea only could occur to us. The doctrines of Pythagoras: Number is the essence of things, the elements of numbers are to be considered as the elements of everything existing, the whole universe is harmony and number—these doctrines are unique in the history of human thought, and, if their meaning should be something else than "everything existing is ruled by the mathematical law," they might be regarded as unphilosophical. It therefore does not appear to me as a thing utterly beyond possibility, that those ideas took root in a misunderstanding of Pythagoras. It is possible that he misinterpreted the words of his Indian teacher: "The Sâṃkhya philosophy is named after the enumeration of the material principles" into: "Number is considered the essence of the material principles in the Sâṃkhya system." But this surely is nothing but a supposition.

It is Lassen who in his "Indische Alterthumskunde" denies every Indian influence upon Grecian philosophy in ante-Christian times, but adopts it (III. p. 379 et seq.) for the Christian Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. As lively relations between Alexandria and India are sufficiently attested for this time, it is indeed impos-

sible to doubt Indian influence upon the doctrines of the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists.

Let us first dwell upon Gnosticism. Lassen holds that the Indian elements in the Gnostic systems were derived from Buddhism which (in the secondary, modified form it had assumed at that time) undoubtedly exercised a considerable influence upon the intellectual life of Alexandria. This influence is most clearly perceptible in the ideas formed by the Gnostics about the many spiritual worlds and the numerous heavens. These ideas are certainly derived from the fantastical cosmogony of later Buddhism. But I do not admit the great importance which Lassen attributes to Buddhism in the formation of the Gnostic systems. It is my opinion that, in Lassen's expositions the Sâmkhya philosophy does not get all that is due to it. If we keep it in mind that the centuries in which Gnosticism was developed—that is, the second and third century after Christ—are coincident with the period during which the Sâmkhya philosophy flourished in India, many things will appear in a different light to us, than was the case with Lassen.* On p. 385 he establishes a connexion between the doctrines of Buddhism and the Gnostic contrast of soul and matter. But is it not more natural to remember here the ideas which form the foundation of the Sâmkhya philosophy? Another point with which we have to deal is the identification of soul and light, met with among almost all Gnostics. Lassen has brought forward some remote and singular speculations from the misty and imaginative realm of later Buddhism, to make plausible the Buddhistic influence upon this Gnostic doctrine. I cannot say that this endeavor has been a successful one. How very simple and natural the idea appears with which a mere glance at the Sâmkhya philosophy furnishes us! For there we are taught something which was evidently not known to Lassen, viz., that *the soul is light (prakāśa)*,† which

* On the other hand, I must confess that I am unable to trace that resemblance between the Sâmkhya philosophy and the doctrine of the Valentinians on the origin of matter, which is stated by Lassen on pp. 400, 401. The agreements of the Sâmkhya system with that of the Ophites, collected by Lassen in the following pages, likewise appear to me open to doubt.

† Comp. *Sâmkhyasûtra*, I. 145: "[Soul is] light, because the non-intellectual and light do not belong together," and VI, 50: "Being distinct from the non-intel-

means, that the mechanical processes of the internal organs are illuminated or made conscious by the soul. This idea of the Sâmkhyas, that soul and light are the same, or—to put it otherwise—that the soul consists of light, we undoubtedly have to regard as the source of the similar idea of the Gnostics.

In regard to another point, Lassen (on pp. 384, 398 et seq.) has rightly acknowledged the influence of the Sâmkhya philosophy upon Gnosticism. It was Ferd. Chr. Baur who even before him (in his work, “Die christliche Gnosis,” pp. 54, 158 et seq.) had noticed the remarkable agreement of the classification of men into the three classes of *πνευματικοί*, *ψυχικοί* and *ὕλικοί*, peculiar to several Gnostics, with the Sâmkhya doctrine of the three *Guṇas*. As I have entered in detail upon this theory in my forthcoming book on the Sâmkhya philosophy, I only wish to state here that in this system every individual is considered as appertaining to the sphere of one of the three powers, according as the luminous, serene, and joyful, or the passionate, fickle, and painful, or again the dark, motionless, and dull character predominates. There is also another interesting parallel to be found.* It is that between the Sâmkhya doctrine according to which the Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra, and Manas, i. e., the substrata of the psychic processes, have an independent existence during the first stages of the evolution of the universe, and the Gnostic tenet which allots personal existence to intellect, will, and so on. I am sure that those who are better acquainted with the Gnostic systems than I am, would be successful in finding some more points of contact, upon studying the doctrines of the Sâmkhya philosophy in detail.

In passing to Neo-Platonism, we find that here also Lassen has valued the influence of the Sâmkhya doctrines to its full extent. The views of Plotinus (204–269 A. D.), the chief of the Neo-Platon-

lectual, [soul] which has the nature of thought illuminates the non-intellectual.” The commentator Vijñānabhikṣu makes the following remark on the first passage: “The soul is in its essence light like the sun,” etc.

* Mentioned by Fitz-Edward Hall in his translation of Nehemiah Nīlakantha S’āstrī Gore’s *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems*, Calcutta, 1862, p. 84.

ists, are in part in perfect agreement with those of the Sâmkhya system. The following sentences must be placed here: the soul is free from sorrows and passions, untouched by all affections; for the sufferings of the world belong to matter. By his philosophy Plotinus promises to deliver the world from misery, and this is the same purpose as that of the Sâmkhya system which strives to lead men to discriminative knowledge and with it to redemption, that is to say, to absolute painlessness. Though all Brahman systems have made it their task to liberate mankind from the miseries of mundane existence by means of some special knowledge, yet none of them have so much emphasised the principle of this life being a life full of misery, as the Sâmkhya system; none of them have defined the word "redemption" with the same precision as "the absolute cessation of pain."

On page 428 Lassen establishes a connexion between a Vedântic notion and the sentence of Plotinus, that one may also be happy when sleeping, because the soul does not sleep. But there is no necessity for it. The same doctrine appertains to the Sâmkhya system.* Deep dreamless sleep is there, too, stated to be homogeneous with redemption, insomuch as in these two states the affections and functions of the inner organs have stopped, and pain with them. Considering the many cases in which the dependence of Plotinus upon the Sâmkhya system is established, we need not hesitate to derive this idea from the Sâmkhya system as well. These numerous agreements must, however, make us doubly careful not to expand too much the limits of this dependence; and for that reason I am bound to say that the parallels which Lassen has drawn (p. 418 et seq.) between the theory of emanation, set up by Plotinus, and the doctrine of development in the Sâmkhya system appear to me out of place in the series of coincidences here treated.

Though there is a good evidence of harmony between the *pure* Sâmkhya doctrine and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus, there exists even a closer connexion between the latter one and *that* branch of the Sâmkhya philosophy which has assumed a theistical and asceti-

* See *Sâmkhyasûtra*, V, 116.

cal character, and has, under the name of the Yoga philosophy, acquired an independent place among the Brahman systems. The morality of Plotinus is altogether of an ascetic nature. This feature might be explained, it is true, by an inclination towards Stoicism; but on account of its agreement with the Yoga system in the following points, this ascetic coloring has, most probably, its foundation in the influence of this system. Plotinus pronounces all *worldly* things to be vain and void of value, and he therefore calls upon us to throw off the influence of the phenomenal world. If we keep off all external impressions and by way of concentration of thinking overcome the multiplicity of ideas, resulting from these impressions, the highest knowledge will fill our mind, in the form of a sudden ecstatic perception of God. There is not the slightest difference between this theory and the doctrines of the Yoga philosophy. The *ἔνστασις* of Plotinus or the *ἄπλωσις* ("the union with the deity") is the *pratibhā* or the *prātibham jñānam* of the Yoga system ("the immediate, universal knowledge of truth, which, after methodically exercising the ascetic Yoga-praxis, comes upon us unexpectedly").*

Besides Plotinus, we principally have to consider his most distinguished disciple Porphyry (from 232–304),† who, even more than his master, has followed the Sāṃkhya philosophy. With him the Indian influence can be proved *directly*; for he has made use of the treatise of Bardesanes, from which he copied an important passage about the Brahmins. And Bardesanes had acquired authentic information about India from the Indian ambassadors who were sent to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. In all principal points, Porphyry agrees with Plotinus, as, for instance, in his demand to give up the external world and to seek truth by contemplation; but Porphyry records in a purer way than his master the Sāṃkhya doctrine of the contrast between the spiritual and the material world. His dependency upon the Sāṃkhya philosophy is also to be noticed in his doctrines of the reign of the spiritual over the material, of the omnipresence of the soul when liberated from matter, and of the

* See *Yogasūtra*, III, 33.

† Comp. Lassen, p. 430 et seq.

beginninglessness of the world.* Here we must also note the interdiction to kill animals, made by Porphyry, and his rejection of sacrifices. To be sure, Lassen says, on page 432, that Porphyry here followed the Buddhistic law; but as we are dealing with things which Buddha adopted from the Sâṃkhya system,† there is no reason why we should not derive them from the primary, instead of the secondary, source.

I think we need not enter upon the resemblances which Lassen discovers (p. 434 et seq.) between Indian ideas and the later Neo-Platonist Abammon (about 300); for this fantastical and superstitious teacher, and the ideas peculiar to him, do not offer any but doubtful points of contact with Indian models. Only one opinion of Abammon comes into consideration, and that even was already suggested by his predecessors. It is the idea, that people who are filled with a holy enthusiasm attain miraculous powers.‡ Here we clearly perceive the coincidence with the conviction, universal in India, that miraculous powers are to be acquired by the methodical exercise of the Yoga-praxis. The Yoga philosophy promises, as the fruit of such exercise, the acquisition of the faculty of making one's self invisible, infinitely large, or infinitely light, of assuming other bodies, of changing the course of nature, and the attainment of other supernatural powers.

I cannot take leave of Neo-Platonism without mentioning a highly important point of agreement with the Indian world of thought, which, it is true, neither concerns the Sâṃkhya philosophy nor Buddhism, but which nevertheless impressively supports our arguments, as it is a most significant link in the series of Grecian loans from India. In a little essay by Professor Weber, "*Vâch und λόγος*, Indische Studien," Vol. IX, the author, with great caution—"without intending in the least to settle this question"—has put forward the supposition that the Indian conception of the *vdch* (a feminine noun, meaning voice, speech, word) may have had some influence upon the

* This last point is not mentioned by Lassen.

† Compare the preface to my translation of Aniruddha's Commentary on the Sâṃkhyasûtras, etc., Calcutta, 1892.

‡ See Lassen, p. 438.

idea of the *λογος* which appears in Neo-Platonism and passed from there into the Gospel of St. John. Weber starts from the hymn Rig-veda X, 125, in which the Vâch already appears as an active power, and he refers to the personification of the "divine Vâch" or language, as the vehicle of priestly eloquence and wisdom. He then traces the development of this idea through the Brâhmaṇa literature, where the Vâch becomes more and more similar to the *λόγος* in the beginning of the Gospel of St. John. In the numerous passages quoted by Weber, the Vâch appears as the consort of Prajâpati, the creator, "in union with whom and by whom he accomplishes his creation ; yea, the Vâch is even ultimately the most spiritual begetter, and now and then she is placed absolutely at the beginning of all things, even above the personal bearer of her own self." Weber concludes this pithy article with the following words : "There are certainly no difficulties in understanding the cosmogonical position of the Vâch which is simply to be conceived as the culmination of glorifying priestly meditation and knowledge, while the same position of the *λόγος*, on the other hand, appears without any suggestion as to its origin or development." This idea of Weber's I hold to be an exceedingly happy one, and, in my opinion, it deserves another name than that of a mere supposition. Only I may be allowed, in this connexion, to set one point aright. It is not Neo-Platonism in which the idea of the *λόγος* first appears, but it is derived there from the doctrines of Philo, which to a great extent are the basis of Neo-Platonism. Philo again adopted the *λόγος* doctrine from the Stoics, and they took it from Heraclitus, to whom the *λόγος* already was the eternal law of the course of the world.* My opinion, mentioned above, of Heraclitus being influenced by Indian thought, meets, accordingly, with a welcome confirmation. If the whole theory is right—and I think it is—the derivation of the *λόγος* theory from India must be put more than five hundred years earlier than would appear from Weber's statement.

Among the Indian doctrines which we believed we could trace in

* Compare Max Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie*, Oldenburg, 1872.

Greek philosophy, those of the Sâmkhya system occupy the first place; agreeably to their character, they presented the smallest difficulties, when transplanted to a foreign ground and embodied into a new world of thought. This influence of the Sâmkhya and Indian philosophy in general upon Occidental philosophy does not extend beyond Neo-Platonism. And—except the Buddhistic coloring of Schopenhauer's and Hartmann's philosophy—even in our modern time we cannot notice any real influence exercised by Indian ideas. Even in the compendiums of the general history of philosophy the Indian systems are usually entirely omitted. It now need not be proved, that this is a mistake. An explanation of this indifference may be found in the fact that the Indian systems became known in Europe and America only in their roughest outlines in this century, and that—with the exception of Deussen's excellent description of the Vedânta philosophy (Leipsic, 1883)—they have not been laid open to study by detailed works. I hope to contribute a little to fill up this gap in our knowledge of Indian philosophy, by my exposition of the Sâmkhya system which will appear in a few months.

I have confined myself here to seeking out, and so far as possible, to proving the *historical* connexion between Indian and Greek philosophy. But to follow up the *internal* relations of the Indian doctrines to the whole Occidental philosophy and to trace the *occasional* agreements in detail, that would have been a task, the performance of which surpasses the limits of this paper.

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