

*Madame Blavatsky on the veiled
phraseology of the Puranas, well
over 20,000 years old.*



Contents and abstract¹

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The Puranic Asuras are “Fallen Egos” incarnated in human forms.

They are the ever-present Spark of Divinity in Man, now recast as “Fallen Angels” in the exuberance of Christian fancy. 3

The serpent is the most ancient symbol because the reptile preceded the bird, and the bird the mammal.

It was honoured by the Gnostic Ophites because he taught primeval men the Mysteries of Cosmos and Man. 4

Serpent and Dragon were some of the names given to the “Wise Ones,” the initiated Adepts of olden times. On the lowest plane of materiality, the Serpent was adopted as a type of feminine pubescence, on account of its sloughing and self-renewal. 4

The cow is the daughter of the first desires, she whom sages named Vach-Viraj, and who was milked by Rishi Brihaspati (Jupiter). Her milk is the Milk of Wisdom; her tail, the thread of Wisdom that unites us to our Higher Self. 5

Suggested reading for students.

From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. 7



¹ Frontispiece, by Tassy.

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First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. VIII (No. 44), April 1891, pp. 99-104, and No. 45, May 1891, pp. 193-200.
Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “THE PURANAS”) XIII pp. 158-60.

[Professor Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi, F.T.S., on receiving an invitation to the Oriental Congress at Stockholm, in 1889, wrote a scholarly essay dealing with Philology versus Symbology in the *Purānas*. He sent it in, together with copies of his books, to the General Secretary of the Congress. Much later, he was told that his essay had been “mislaid.” H.P. Blavatsky rejoices in being able to present its text to the readers of *Lucifer*, “in the service of fair play.” She appends a number of footnotes to various passages in this essay. — *Dara Eklund*.]

[Concerning Trivikrama and the demon Bali]

As the Purānic myths may be unfamiliar to many of our readers, we have thought it advisable to add one or two notes of explanation.

The story of Vishnu and his *Trivikrama* or “three strides” and the “demon” Bali runs as follows. The “demon” Bali, curiously enough, is said to have been an exceedingly good and virtuous Daitya King, who defeated Indra, humbled the Gods and extended his sovereignty over the three worlds, by his *devotion and penance*. In fact he was a pious and holy ascetic, like many other “demons” in the *Purānas*, for the Asuras, as *The Secret Doctrine* has already explained at length, are divine Egos, *fallen* into matter or incarnated in human forms, the Christian myth of the “Fallen Angels” having the same significance.

Accordingly the Gods appealed to Vishnu for protection, and the Deity manifested himself in the Dwarf Avatāra in order to restrain Bali. Thus he approached Bali and craved the boon of three steps of ground. Bali at once granted his request, and the God stepped over heaven and the upper [159] earth (air) in two strides; but in consideration of Bali’s goodness, he stopped short and left to him Pātāla, esoterically the earth.

¹ [Consult “Higher Self and Higher Ego,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consult “The Zend Avesta is to Zoroastrianism what the Veda is to Brahmanism,” in our Atlantean Realities Series. — ED. PHIL.]

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[. . . the serpent is a very significant symbol, as will appear from the names *Shesha* and *Ananta* given to it]

Shesha is represented as a serpent¹ with a thousand heads, which is said to be the couch and canopy of Vishnu, when he sleeps during his intervals of creation. Sometimes Shesha is shown as the supporter of the world and sometimes as the upholder of the seven Pātālas (hells, earths, etc.). Whenever he yawns, there are earthquakes. At the end of the Kalpa he vomits forth fire and so destroys all the creation. At the Churning of the Ocean (of Space),² Shesha was twisted round the Mountain Mandara, and used as a great rope to cause it to revolve. The Gods were at the one end of the rope and the Demons at the other. The hood of Shesha, the thousand-headed cobra, is called the “Island of Jewels,” and his palace is said to be “jewelled walled.” But these gems are not of earth, as the merest tyro in symbology will at once perceive; they are the Jewels of Wisdom and Self-knowledge.

[concerning the Purānic list of the Dhruvas, Saptarshis, Indras and Manus for every Manvantara]

These have reference to the Pole stars, constellations, heavens and humanities of every cycle.

[in connection with the after-death peregrinations of the entity, known as “the passage to the Sun” and “the passage to the Moon,” H.P. Blavatsky refers the student to *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 86.]

[Sampradāyas]

Commentators.



¹ [Consult “When the serpent sloughs off his skin,” in our Constitution of Man Series, and “Who can read the riddle of the Serpent?” in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consult “Churning the Ocean of Milk,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

The cow is the daughter of the first desires, she whom sages named Vach-Viraj, and who was milked by Rishi Brihaspati (Jupiter).¹ Her milk is the Milk of Wisdom; her tail, the thread of Wisdom that unites us to our Higher Self.

[The way to *Goloka* (the region of rays), the sun, is the *Vaitarani* of the *Garuda-Purāna*, which indicates that the being only swims (*vitri*) through space, and passes to the sun with the help of his rays (*go*), in other words, by and through the help of the currents of cosmic *Prāna* proceeding from him . . . But the dead-letter explanation makes of *Vaitarani* an objective river, which the being crosses with the help of the tail of a cow (*go*).] [160]

Vaitarani — “the river that is to be crossed.” Supposed to be the river of hell, which must be crossed before the infernal regions, or subjective world, can be entered. The river is described as being filled with blood and all sorts of filth, and to run with great impetuosity. This is to be crossed in a solitary rickety boat, the steersman of which is Vishnu (the Higher Ego). Few people can pass, for they have to pay for the passage; those who cannot pay are turned back. According to the popular superstition, persons before death, are made to give in charity milch cows, in the belief that after death they may be able to catch hold of their tails and so be carried across the dreadful river Vaitarani, safe to the other side. The interpretation is easy for a Theosophist, for it is the cow that gives the milk of wisdom that is meant; the cow that produces the jewels: and the tail of the cow is the ray of that knowledge, the thread of Wisdom, or Vāch, that unites us to our Higher Self.

[Garuda]

Garuda is represented with the head, wings, talons, and beak of an eagle, and the body and limbs of a man. His face is white, his wings golden, and his body red.

[Ratnas]

Jewels.

[Kailāsa]

Said to be the home of Śiva: the highest peak of Meru, the mountain used for the churning of the Ocean, where Śiva alone resorts, and where he alone can be seen.

[Tāntrika]

Magical.

[Gajānana]

Elephant-face.

[Skanda or Kārtikeya]

Corresponds to Mars.

¹ [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FACTS UNDERLYING ADEPT BIOGRAPHIES) XIV p. 156 *fn.*]

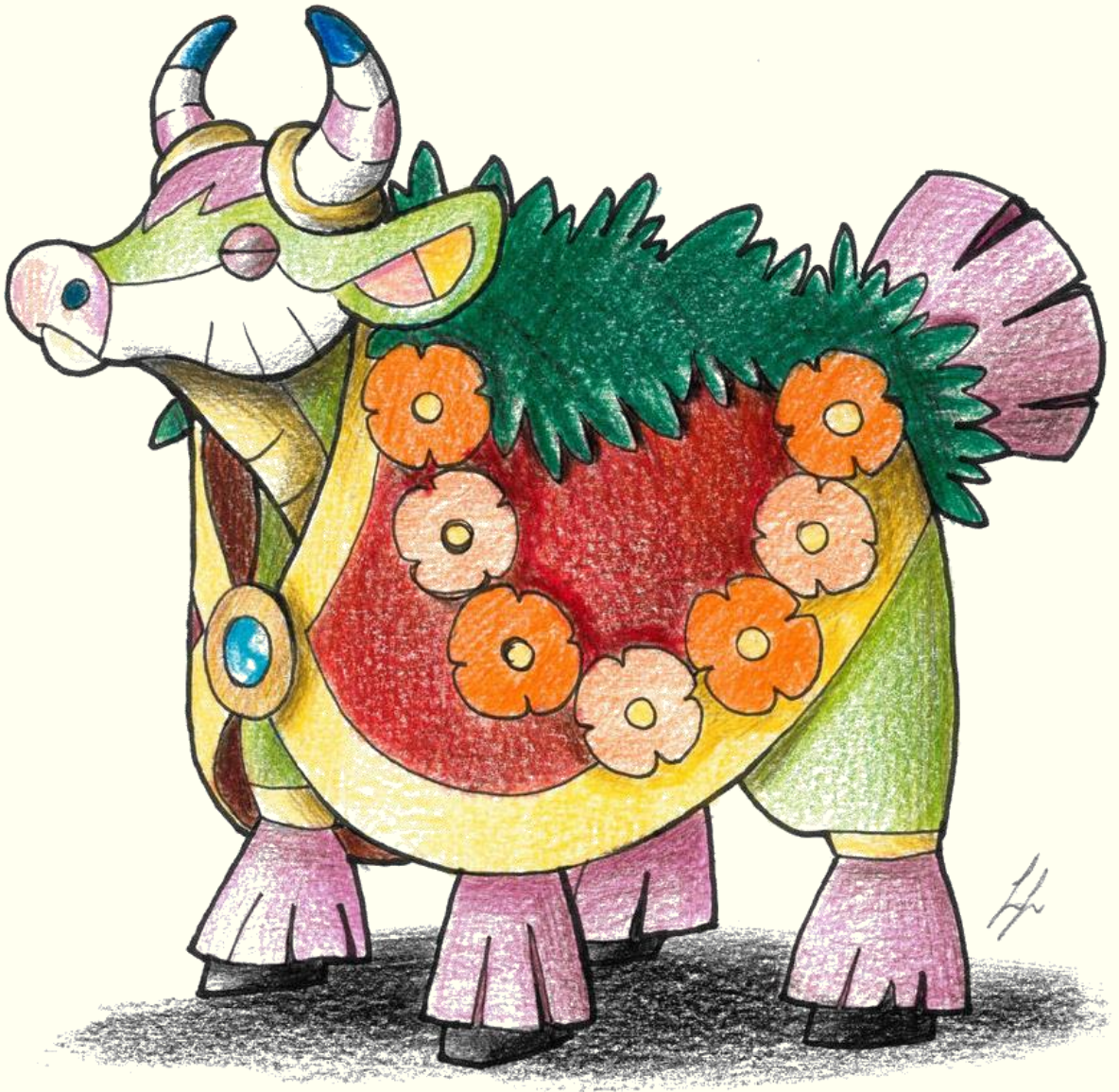
[the Vedic text: *Ekam sat vipra bahudā vadanti*]

i.e., The Brahmins in many ways declare one thing as being; or one thing to be *sat*,
i.e., “being” and therefore “good” (or reality).

[Purānic text: *sarva deva namaskārah Keśavam prati gachchhati*]

Every god goes towards (approaches) Krishna with reverence.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



Suggested reading for students.



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- ANCIENT ETHICAL WORSHIPS
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- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE DREAM THAT NEVER DIES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THREE EMINENT THEOSOPHISTS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN
- DE ZIRKOFF RECALLS HIS FORMATIVE YEARS IN RUSSIA
- EARLY THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES EXPOUNDED BY H.P. BLAVATSKY
- EASTERN LIGHT SHINES ON WESTERN MINDS
- EASTERN THEOSOPHY IS NEITHER A CREED, NOR A RELIGIOUS BODY
- ESOTERIC BUDDHISM HAS RENDERED PRECIOUS SERVICE BY POPULARIZING, IN EXOTERIC FORM, ESOTERIC TRUTHS.
- ESSENTIAL THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES
- GLIMPSES OF THE FATHOMLESS MYSTERIES OF ZOROASTER
- HARTMANN ON HOW TO ENTER THE PATH TO INFINITE LIFE
- HARTMANN ON THE HARMONICAL SOCIETY
- HOW THEOSOPHY REKINDLED TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN INDIA
- HUMANITY SEEMS TO PROGRESS BY INVENTING ONE DISCOVERY AFTER THE OTHER
- IMPORT AND POTENCY OF NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS
- IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED
- JUDGE AND DE ZIRKOFF ON GEORGE MEAD
- JUDGE ON THE HEART DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- JUDGE ON THE TRUE THEOSOPHIST'S PATH
- JUDGE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND WORK
- KEYS TO THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE
- LET THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PERISH, THAN FORSAKE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH

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- MEDITATION ALONE WILL NOT LEAD TO THEOSOPHIC DEVELOPMENT
- MYSTERY IS NOT UNREVEALED KNOWLEDGE
- NO THEOSOPHICAL JOURNAL CAN SATISFY ALL CREEDS AND BELIEFS
- OCCULT TRUTH IS NATURE WITHOUT THE ILLUSORY VEIL OF THE SENSES
- OUR GOD IS HUMANITY AND OUR CULT THE LOVE OF OUR FELLOW-MAN
- OUR ONLY DELIVERER AND SAVIOUR
- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
- PREREQUISITES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
- PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITARIANISM IS AN AFFRONT TO BROTHERHOOD
- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
- STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO PATHS
- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
- THE ADYAR THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY BELITTLED THE MASTERS
- THE AIMS AND MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY FULFILLED
- THE BRETHERN OF THE ROSY CROSS NO LONGER EXIST
- THE CROWN JEWELS OF THEOSOPHY (PHOTO ALBUM)
- THE EMPYREAN PHILOSOPHICAL EXHORTATIONS OF ZOROASTER
- THE POWER OF THE TRINITY OF KOSMOS MANIFESTS THROUGH THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAN
- THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY
- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES
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- THEOSOPHIA: INNER WISDOM
- THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, THE GREAT MORAL BUT SILENT FORCE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - ESOTERIC SECTION (LETTERHEAD)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MISSION AND FUTURE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OBJECTS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 1 (LOGOTYPE)

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- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 2 (LOGOTYPE)
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- THEOSOPHIST IS WHO THEOSOPHY DOES
- THEOSOPHISTS DEFINED ATTITUDINALLY, ETHICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
- THEOSOPHY IS DEEPER MONISM THAN SECULARISM, AND MORE PHILOSOPHICAL
- THEOSOPHY IS RELIGION ITSELF AND SUBLIME CODE OF ETHICS
- THEOSOPHY IS THE PRECIOUS PEARL WITHIN THE SHELL OF EVERY RELIGION
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE
- TRIBUTES TO DE ROBIGNE MORTIMER BENNETT
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE
- TRUTH IS ALWAYS MIXED WITH ERROR AND HINDERED BY TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- TWO JOURNALS DEVOTED TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- VERNAL BLOOMS BY WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- VISTAS OF VIRTUE AND TRUTH
- WADIA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE TS
- WHAT SORT OF MAN THE REAL PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE?
- WHEN PURE LOVE IS PERVERTED, HUMANITY QUIVERS
- WHO CAN MEND THE BROKEN SOCIETY?
- WHO CAN READ THE RIDDLE OF THE SERPENT?
- WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS?
- WHY A BRAHMIN ABANDONED HIS CASTE
- WHY PAGAN SYMBOLISM IS INDESTRUCTIBLE?

