

## *God's Arrival in India*

Ancient India is considered to be the spiritual motherland of our planet. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, it was the home of the once universal Wisdom Tradition. From ancient India, called Āryāvarta, the wisdom teachings went forth into all the religions and philosophies of the world. H. P. Blavatsky writes:

For Āryāvarta, the bright focus into which had been poured in the beginning of time the flames of Divine Wisdom, had become the center from which radiated the “tongues of fire” into every portion of the globe.<sup>1</sup>

The one Wisdom Tradition thus took various forms for various peoples. In time these varying forms became religious dogma. But all had their origin in the sacred land of Āryāvarta.

But all such dogma grew out of the one root, the root of wisdom, which grows and thrives on the Indian soil. There is not an Archangel that could not be traced back to its prototype in the sacred land of Āryāvarta.<sup>2</sup>

It is to ancient India, home of the Wisdom Tradition, that we must turn to find the one truth behind the various religions of the world, and the key to the great mysteries of humanity.

. . . we affirm that, if Egypt furnished Greece with her civilization, and the latter bequeathed hers to Rome, Egypt herself had, in those unknown ages when Menes reigned, received her laws, her social institutions, her arts and her sciences, from pre-Vedic India; and that, therefore, it is in that old initiatrix of the priests—the adepts of all the other countries—we must seek for the key to the great mysteries of humanity.<sup>3</sup>

The most central truth behind the various religions of the world is generally thought to be that of the existence of God. Finding the key to the great mysteries of humanity, then, would depend on knowing that the various names for God found in the various religions of the world all refer to the same reality. But is God a reality? Although the Theosophical movement, in its efforts to promote the universal brotherhood of humanity, has had to act as if the answer to this question is yes, the teachers behind the Theosophical movement have answered it with an unequivocal no.

Belief in God is so central to modern ideas of spirituality, that it is hardly possible to conceive of a true spiritual tradition without God. A. O. Hume could not imagine that the Wisdom Tradition lacked God; so in his exposition of it written on the basis of correspondence with the Theosophical Mahatmas, he drafted a chapter on God. The Mahatma K.H. responded with one of the clearest and most unmistakable statements we have of their doctrine, saying:

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God. . . . Our philosophy . . . is preeminently the science of effects by their causes and of causes by their effects. . . . Our doctrine knows no compromises. It either affirms or denies, for it never teaches but that which it knows to be the truth. Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists. We know there are planetary and other spiritual lives, and we know there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal. . . . The word "God" was invented to designate the unknown cause of those effects which man has either admired or dreaded without understanding them, and since we claim and that we are able to prove what we claim—i.e., the knowledge of that cause and causes—we are in a position to maintain there is no God or Gods behind them.<sup>4</sup>

In another letter, K.H. said that if Hume publishes his account,

I will have H.P.B. or Djual Khool deny the whole thing; as I cannot permit our sacred philosophy to be so disfigured.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, this position ceased to be upheld, so that at present the vast majority of members of the Theosophical Society are believers in God. Similarly, other teachings with roots in Theosophy that arose later, such as the Djual Khool/Alice Bailey books, utilized the God idea.<sup>6</sup>

The sincere and intelligent modern student of the ancient and Ageless Wisdom Tradition, then, often takes for granted that the idea of God in some form or other is necessarily found in all religions. Now that Buddhism has become more widely known, its noble teachings of compassion have impressed many such students. Like Hume in regard to Theosophy, they cannot imagine that a tradition so noble could be Godless. They then assume that the idea of God must be there under some other name or concept, since they know that this belief is universal. But is it? The Mahatma K.H. tells us that, "the idea of God is not an innate but an acquired notion."<sup>7</sup> If this is true, and the notion of God was in fact never part of the Wisdom Tradition, but was acquired as these truths went forth from their home in ancient India, history should show this.

There are three religions of ancient India, those now called Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism have ever taught the existence of God. They are non-theistic. Hinduism presently teaches the existence of God. It is now theistic. However, there is considerable evidence that none of the various schools of Hinduism originally taught the existence of God. In other words, all of ancient India, home of the Wisdom Tradition, was once non-theistic. To show this, we will here attempt to trace God's arrival in India.

### **Jainism and Buddhism—Religions without God**

Jainism is the religion of the Jinas, the Conquerors, those who have conquered their passions and thus achieved liberation. They have done this without the help of God; for indeed, God is not to be found in their worldview. The worldview taught by the Jinas is described in the authoritative *Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra*.<sup>8</sup> This text is a compendium of the teachings of the 24th and last Jina of our time-cycle, called Vardhamāna Mahāvira,

who in turn only re-established the teachings of the previous Jinas, going back in time without beginning.

In the Jaina worldview, karma takes the place of God. No one punishes us but ourselves, through our own former actions; and no one rewards us but ourselves, again through our own actions. The working of karma requires no intelligence to guide it nor power to implement it. It is simply the way things are, an inherent part of the eternal fabric of our universe. The universe has not been created, nor will it end. Matter is eternal and souls are eternal. Souls must through asceticism free themselves from the karmic bondage of matter. In this universe there is no place for God, nor any function for such a being to perform.

The religion of the Jinas is the religion of harmlessness, *ahiṃsā*. Its first principle is to not harm any living thing. This also means no retaliation. The karmic cycle of violence will not stop until it stops with us. For ages, Jainas made harmlessness the guiding principle of their lives. With no help from God, Jainism shares with Buddhism the distinction of having the best record on nonviolence of all religions known to history.

Buddhism is the religion of the Buddhas, the Awakened Ones, those who have awakened to truth or reality and thereby achieved liberation. They, too, have done this without the help of God; for God is not to be found in their worldview either. The basic worldview taught by the Buddhas is described in the authoritative *Abhidharma-kośa*.<sup>9</sup> This text is a compendium of the teachings of the last Buddha, called Gautama or Śākyamuni. While modern writers recognize only this Buddha, the Buddhist texts speak of many previous Buddhas, extending back into the night of time.

In the Buddhist worldview, as in the Jaina, karma takes the place of God. How karma works is understood differently in Buddhism than it is in Jainism, but the results are the same. We make our own destiny through our own actions. The universe and everything in it operates by its own laws, in the sense that science gives to the law of gravity. These require no lawgiver, and function without the need of God. As the present Dalai Lama of Tibet once said to a priest at an ecumenical meeting, “your business is God, my business is karma.”

The religion of the Buddhas is the religion of compassion, *karuṇā*. In Tibet, Buddhist monks begin their meditations by generating compassion toward all living beings. This includes especially those who have wronged or harmed them. Thus after the brutal Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet, the Buddhist response was one of nonviolence. This was recognized worldwide when in 1989 the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize for his thirty years of efforts to regain his homeland, during which violence was never considered an option. What country that calls upon God to bless it can boast such an example?

Both Jainism and Buddhism teach that each one of us can become perfected, through our own efforts, and be liberated from the compulsory round of rebirth. To do this requires the will power to follow the path taught by the Jinās or the Buddhas in face of all obstacles, as did Mahāvīra and Śākyamuni. This way of self-reliance is in direct contrast with the way of surrender to God taught in theistic religions.

Some modern writers have attempted to find in Buddhism an equivalent for God, or Godhead, and have found this in the Buddhist idea of *nirvāṇa*. Thus, Huston Smith in his deservedly popular book, *The World's Religions*, writes:

We may conclude with Conze that *nirvana* is not God defined as personal creator, but that it stands sufficiently close to the concept of God as Godhead to warrant the name in that sense.<sup>10</sup>

This refers to Edward Conze's 1951 book, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, which in turn refers to Aldous Huxley's 1944 classic, *The Perennial Philosophy*, on the difference between God and Godhead. According to Huxley, the Perennial Philosophy has at all times and in all places taught a divine Ground of all existence, a spiritual Absolute, or Godhead. This has a personal aspect, who has form, activity, and attributes such as mercy; and this is God. In this philosophy, the two go together; you cannot have one without the other. In order to fit Buddhism into this scheme, Huxley had to make Godhead and God correspond to two of the three bodies of a Buddha. Thus he made the second body of a Buddha, the Sambhoga-kāya, correspond "to Isvara

or the personal God of Judaism, Christianity and Islam,"<sup>11</sup> an equation that few Buddhists would accept. God is simply not found in Buddhism.

In making the *nirvāṇa* comparison, Smith distinguished God as Godhead from the personal creator God. The idea of an impersonal Godhead, "the God-without-form of Hindu and Christian mystical phraseology,"<sup>12</sup> is, however, invariably linked with the idea of a personal God. Godhead must be able to think and act, even if through God. Were it possible to conceive of Godhead without God, that is, without any of the qualities that normally define God—those of being all-knowing, all-powerful, ruler of all, or even of merely being conscious—then why call it Godhead, or God as Godhead?

When A. O. Hume wished to describe the One Life taught in the Wisdom Tradition as God, the Mahatma K.H. replied:

If people are willing to accept and to regard as God our ONE LIFE immutable and unconscious in its eternity they may do so and thus keep to one more gigantic misnomer. But then they will have to say with Spinoza that there is not and that we cannot conceive any other substance than God; . . . —and thus become Pantheists. . . . If we ask the theist is your God vacuum, space or matter, they will reply no. And yet they hold that their God penetrates matter though he is not himself matter. When we speak of our One Life we also say that it penetrates, nay is the essence of every atom of matter; and that therefore it not only has correspondence with matter but has all its properties likewise, etc.—hence *is* material, is *matter itself*. . . . We deny the existence of a thinking conscious God, on the grounds that such a God must either be conditioned, limited and subject to change, therefore *not* infinite, or if he is represented to us as an eternal unchangeable and independent being, with not a particle of matter in him, then we answer that it is no being but an immutable blind principle, a law. . . . The existence of matter then is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact, their self existence and eternity or indestructibility is a third fact. And the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence—give it whatever name you will—is a chimera, a gigantic absurdity.<sup>13</sup>

*Nirvāṇa* is described in the Buddhist texts as the extinction of thirst (i.e., desire), or the cessation of suffering. It is also called the ultimate truth. It is what the Buddhas attain when liberated. It is the one thing taught by all Buddhist schools as unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). Helmuth von Glasenapp says about *nirvāṇa* in his major study, *Buddhism—A Non-Theistic Religion*:

It does not belong to the world, has no relationship with it, nor does it affect it. It might best be called the 'totally other'; this is, indeed, a much more suitable expression for *Nirvāṇa* than it is for the Christian God who, though being above the world, yet governs it and is thus in constant touch with it. If God were the 'totally other', he could never be the 'good friend' of the soul, and neither could the soul establish a relationship with him.<sup>14</sup>

As something "totally other," *nirvāṇa* has no relationship with the world, and plays no role in the life of an individual. It does not think or act. This is not God in any normal sense of the word. Certain epithets used to describe *nirvāṇa*, such as "peace," caused it to be equated with God as Godhead by those who sought to find the idea of God in all religions. This was based on the conception of Godhead and God, explained as the twofold *brahman* found in the Vedānta system of Hinduism: the absolute *brahman* without attributes (*nirguṇa*), and the conditioned *brahman* with attributes (*saguṇa*), now also called God-without-form and God-with-form in modern Hinduism. God-with-form includes the ideas of Īśvara, the ruler of all, and Brahmā, the creator. Buddhism has always refuted these ideas of God. The Buddha is depicted as refuting the idea of Brahmā the creator in the *Brahma-jāla Sutta*;<sup>15</sup> Nāgārjuna is credited with a treatise refuting the idea of Īśvara;<sup>16</sup> and so on throughout Buddhist history. The Buddhist attitude toward the idea of God is pointedly summed up in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*:

The Buddha and his followers borrowed the name [Brahmā = God] from their Brahmanical counterparts in order to refute, not only their theology but the basis of all theologies: the idea of God.<sup>17</sup>

Religion had been defined in terms of God. When scholars began to study Buddhism seriously, they first suggested that it cannot be a religion, because it does not have a God. It instead could only be a philosophy. But since Buddhism obviously is a religion, with temples, a priesthood, scriptures, etc., scholars had to re-define religion, allowing that there could be religion without God. This, of course, applies equally to Jainism. Now that religions without God are recognized, scholars prefer to refer to them as non-theistic, rather than atheistic, since the term atheistic has other connotations in our society.

The above serves to illustrate just how difficult it is for us in the West to even conceive of a Godless religion. Conversely, it was likewise difficult for the Mahatma K.H. to conceive of the theistic ideas prevalent in the West, as they were so illogical to him. Some passages from his letters to A. O. Hume illustrate the difficulties faced by teachers when trying to communicate the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition to a theistic audience.

Then for a man endowed with so subtle a logic, and such a fine comprehension of the value of ideas in general and that of words especially—for a man so accurate as you generally are to make tirades upon an “all wise, powerful and love-ful God” seems to say at least strange. I do not protest at all as you seem to think against your theism, or a belief in an abstract ideal of some kind, but I cannot help asking you, how do you or how can you know that your God is all wise, omnipotent and love-ful, when everything in nature, physical and moral, proves such a being, if he does exist, to be quite the reverse of all you say of him? Strange delusion and one which seems to overpower your very intellect.<sup>18</sup>

And now to your extraordinary hypothesis that Evil with its attendant train of sin and suffering is not the result of matter, but may be perchance the wise scheme of the moral Governor of the Universe. Conceivable as the idea may seem to you, trained in the pernicious fallacy of the Christian,—“the ways of the Lord are inscrutable”—it is utterly inconceivable for me. Must I repeat again that the best Adepts have searched the Universe during millenniums and found nowhere the slightest trace of such a



Machiavellian schemer—but throughout, the same immutable, inexorable law. You must excuse me therefore if I positively decline to lose my time over such childish speculations. It is not “the ways of the Lord” but rather those of some extremely intelligent men in everything but some particular hobby, that are to me incomprehensible.<sup>19</sup>

You say it matters nothing whether these laws are the expression of the will of an intelligent conscious God, as you think, or constitute the inevitable attributes of an unintelligent, unconscious “God,” as I hold. I say, it matters everything, and since you earnestly believe that these fundamental questions (of spirit and matter—of God or no God) “are admittedly beyond both of us”—in other words that neither I nor yet our greatest adepts can know any more than you do, then what is there on earth that I could teach you?<sup>20</sup>

Theism, of course, is not limited to the West. It is now the norm in India as well. Buddhism had been driven out of India a thousand years ago, and Jainism at present makes up less than one percent of its population. Today, virtually all of Hinduism is theistic. But it was not always this way.

### **Hinduism and God—Earlier and Later**

The Vedas are the oldest religious compositions of India, and indeed are thought to be the oldest religious texts in the world having a continuous tradition of use up to the present. They will not provide us with the help we might expect from them in our attempt to trace God’s presence in ancient India, however, for the simple reason that we do not know for certain how they were understood in ancient India. They require the help of a commentary to be properly understood, and the only commentaries now extant are comparatively modern. The age of the Vedas is not known, but they are estimated by modern scholarship to date from circa 1500-1000 B.C.E., while Indian tradition makes them considerably older than that. Yet for long, the only commentaries known were those of Sāyaṇa, dating

from the 14th century C.E.<sup>21</sup> This is well within what we may call the theistic period of Indian history, and at least two thousand years removed from the Vedas themselves. The strange fact that we have only late commentaries on India's oldest texts provides weighty evidence for the Wisdom Tradition's assertion that the genuine commentaries have all been withdrawn.<sup>22</sup>

The Vedas are to all appearances polytheistic, since they are made up of hymns addressed to a number of different "gods," or "deities." But as everyone knows, appearances can be deceiving. When Western scholars approached the Vedas, they of course did so presupposing their own worldview, wherein what is ancient is necessarily primitive, and primitive religion is polytheistic, arising through the deification of various natural phenomena such as the sun and rain. Seeing in the Vedas the personified sacrificial fire (Agni), sky (Indra), sun (Sūrya), etc., they took the Vedas at face value, that is, as being polytheistic. India was at that time under British rule, and institutions of higher learning in India followed a European model. So Indian scholars also took up the view that the Vedas are polytheistic. Thus today, most books by both Western and Indian scholars present this view.

The traditional Indian worldview differs from the modern Western one, holding sometimes opposite presuppositions. In this worldview, whatever is ancient is not of necessity primitive, but on the contrary comes down to us from a spiritually more advanced Age of Truth, or Golden Age as it is called in other traditions around the world. The seers (*ṛṣi*) of the Vedic hymns were not rustics wondering at the awe-inspiring forces of nature they saw around them, but rather were highly advanced sages whose insight far surpasses our own. This is why the Vedas are so revered in Hinduism. The Vedic revelation (*śruti*) includes two parts. The hymns addressed to various deities are found in the first part, on works (*karma-kāṇḍa*). The last part, on knowledge (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*) comprises the Upaniṣads. It is to these texts that Hinduism has traditionally turned for the philosophy of the Vedas, rather than to the hymns themselves. This is because the hymns, consisting of mantras, are liturgical formulae that are considered to be of limited use in determining philosophical

issues, such as the question of Vedic polytheism. As pointed out by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy:

It is precisely the fact that the Vedic incantations are liturgical that makes it unreasonable to expect from them a systematic exposition of the philosophy they take for granted; if we consider the *mantras* by themselves, it is as if we had to deduce the Scholastic philosophy only from the libretto of the Mass.<sup>23</sup>

Thus we find that Hinduism in general adopted the view taught in the Upaniṣads of the one universal *brahman*, and found no contradiction between this and the fact that the Vedas spoke of the many gods. This characteristic Indian attitude is explained by Shrimat Anirvan in his chapter, "Vedic Exegesis," from *The Cultural Heritage of India*:

. . . in the spiritual idiom of the Vedic seers, gods are *born* as One and Many and All. The same phenomenon of expanding consciousness (*brahma*) is described objectively in a symbolic language by the Vedas, and subjectively in an intellectual language by the Upaniṣads. They speak of a metaphysical realism in which One and Many do not clash either in form or in substance; and their theory of gods cannot be exclusively labelled as monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism, because it is an integrated vision in which all these isms harmonize. Since this was the vision at the root of all forms of Ārya mysticism, a Buddhist nihilism or a Vedāntic monism (which are not to be confounded with a-theism or mono-theism) found nothing to quarrel with in a theory of many gods. This is a phenomenon which very naturally mystifies the western mind, which will see in it nothing but a condescension to an ineradicable superstition. From the Vedic age to the present times, the vision of One Existence and many gods have lived harmoniously in the spiritual realizations of India's greatest seers; . . .<sup>24</sup>

Early on, pioneer Vedic scholar F. Max Müller had noticed that the alleged Vedic polytheism was no ordinary polytheism, since each god may in turn be addressed as if the highest one. This is

unlike polytheism found elsewhere, as for example in Greece, where Zeus is always the highest. Thus he coined new terms for this, henotheism and kathenotheism. This observation fits in nicely with the idea from the Upaniṣads of the one and the many. Nonetheless, scholars did not apply this idea of the one and the many to the Vedas, because the Upaniṣads are regarded by them as being a later development. So Western scholars, and now Indian scholars following them, continue to regard the Vedas as being polytheistic, in spite of Hindu tradition on this. As far as can be traced, Hindu tradition has looked upon the Vedas in terms of the one and the many for a very long time.

Already in the Vedas proper, in hymn 1.164 of the *Ṛg-veda*, and repeated in hymn 9.10 of the *Atharva-veda*, we find a verse explicitly stating this idea. Here is this verse, numbered 46 or 28 respectively, translated by Vasudeva S. Agrawala:

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is the heavenly Winged Bird. The sages speak of the One by many names: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.<sup>25</sup>

Modern scholars do not deny the obvious meaning of this verse, but dismiss the hymns it is found in as being “late”; that is, as approaching the time of the Upaniṣads, where such an idea is stated repeatedly. Their presupposition of development from more primitive to less primitive is, however, the very criterion on which these hymns are judged to be late. None of the three religious traditions of ancient India accept this presupposition, and neither does the Wisdom Tradition. Hindu writers down through the ages have quoted this verse as the expression of what the Vedas have always taught.

Although no ancient Vedic commentaries are extant, we do have a very old and authoritative text that gives exegetical comments on selected Vedic passages. This is Yāska's *Nirukta*, estimated by scholars to date from circa 700-500 B.C.E. The *Nirukta* is the “limb” or auxiliary of the Vedas (Vedāṅga) that deals with etymology and related topics. In its section on deities, it quotes the above-cited verse to explain Agni, the first of the Vedic deities, who is said to be all the deities.<sup>26</sup> It had brought

up the idea of the one and the many earlier in this section. There Yāska explained that the one is the one *ātman*, the “self,” which the Upaniṣads had taught as being identical with the one universal *brahman*. We here cite this passage as introduced and translated by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, slightly adapting his translation in accordance with that of Lakshman Sarup:

Modern scholarship for the most part postulates only a gradual development in Indian metaphysics of a notion of a single principle, of which principle the several gods (*devāḥ*, *viśve devāḥ*, etc.) are, as it were, the powers, operative aspects, or personified attributes. But as Yāska expresses it, “It is because of the great divisibility (*mahā-bhāgyāt*) of the deity (*devatā*) that the One Spirit (*eka ātmā*) is praised in various ways. Other gods (*devāḥ*) come to be (*bhavanti*) submembers (*pratyaṅgāni*) of the One Spirit. . . . Their becoming is a birth from one another, they are of one another’s nature; they originate in function (*karma*); the Spirit is their origin. . . . Spirit (*ātman*) is the whole of what a god is” (*Nirukta* VII.4).<sup>27</sup>

Lakshman Sarup, who dedicated many years of his life to the editing and translating of Yāska’s *Nirukta*, notes here:

This is Yāska’s rejoinder to the objection that non-deities are praised like deities. The so-called non-deities, says Yāska, are but different manifestations of the same single soul [*ātman*]. In other words, Yāska here propounds the doctrine of pantheism.<sup>28</sup>

Yāska’s *Nirukta* is the oldest text we have giving exegetical comments on the Vedas, dating from at least 500 B.C.E. Yāska refers to many teachers before him, so he was quite familiar with the ancient schools of Vedic exegesis. He understands the Vedas as teaching the one and the many; and he understands the one as referring to the one universal *ātman*, or *brahman*. This is the earliest available interpretation.

The standard Vedic commentaries now known are those of Sāyaṇa, written in the 14th century C.E., nearly two millennia later than Yāska. In the preface to Sāyaṇa’s commentary on the *Rg-veda*, the same above-cited Vedic verse that was quoted by

Yāska is again quoted to explain the many Vedic gods. Here is Sāyaṇa's passage, translated by Peter Peterson:

Although Indra and the other gods are invoked in many texts there is no contradiction, inasmuch as these are only the Supreme God in the form of Indra and other such gods. And so it is said in another text, "They call Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and he is the strong-winged divine Garutman: He is one, but wise men call Him by many names, and call Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan." . . . In this way it is the Supreme God and no other who is invoked of all men.<sup>29</sup>

Thus Sāyaṇa, like Yāska nineteen centuries earlier, understands the Vedas as teaching the one and the many. Now, however, the one is no longer understood to refer to the one universal *ātman* or *brahman*, but instead to the Supreme God (Parama Īśvara). The Supreme God is considered by Sāyaṇa to be an anthropomorphic (*pauruṣeya*), corporeal being (*śarīra-dhāri-jīva*),<sup>30</sup> in other words, a personal God. So somewhere between 500 B.C.E. and 1400 C.E. the idea of the one as an impersonal principle was displaced by the idea of the one as a personal God.

The move to monotheism in Vedic exegesis continued up to modern times, reaching its culmination in the work of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj. Although Sāyaṇa believed in a Supreme God behind the many Vedic gods, his primary concern was with Vedic ritual, not with God. Further, his brother Mādhava was a leading exponent of the Advaita Vedānta system, which by then allowed the coexistence of the impersonal *brahman* and the personal God, Īśvara. For Dayananda, there was only the personal God, Īśvara, the one Lord and Ruler of all. The many Vedic gods were in name only; they were not forms of God, but were all simply names of the one God. Thus translations of the Vedas produced by the Arya Samaj replace the names Agni, Indra, etc., with the word God. Nor was there room in Dayananda's view for any impersonal principle such as the *brahman* taught in the Upaniṣads. Thus he demoted the Upaniṣads from their status as revelation (*śruti*), a status they had always held in Hindu tradition.<sup>31</sup>

Dayananda was a Hindu reformer and great champion of the Vedas. This is what led to a brief alliance between his Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. It was his monotheism that led to their parting of the ways. Blavatsky and Olcott, founders of the Theosophical Society, had understood from their teachers that an impersonal principle was taught in the Vedas. So they thought that when Dayananda was promoting the Vedas, he was promoting this idea. Dayananda thought that when Blavatsky and Olcott were extolling the Vedas, they were extolling his monotheistic view of them. Neither party could speak the other's language. When they parted ways, a letter was printed pertaining to this from "One of the Hindu Founders of the Parent Theosophical Society," Tiruvallam Hills, considered to be a Mahatma. It is important because it states clearly the position of the Wisdom Tradition in regard to Vedic theism.

It was in September, 1880,—more than 20 months ago—that the Pandit Dayanand Saraswati was told plainly the truth (as he had been told before, and even written to, from America, when the Society had at last learned what kind of God was the *Iswar* preached by him)—to wit: that the Founders neither then believed, nor ever had believed, in a *personal* God. The Swami . . . endows *his* "Iśwar" with all the finite attributes of the Jewish Jehovah.

The Founders maintain that they *do* believe in the very Divine PRINCIPLE taught in the Vedas; in that *Principle* which is described at the outset in the *Rigveda Sanhita* (Man. X., R. 129) as *nāsad āsīt na [no] sad āsīt*—which is "neither entity nor non-entity," but an ABSTRACT ENTITY, which is *no* entity, liable to be described by either words or attributes. And, as they entirely fail to recognize this eternal, All-Pervading Principle in the "Iśwar" of the Arya Samajists—they turn away from it.<sup>32</sup>

Although we cannot trace in the Vedic commentaries how the one impersonal principle came to be thought of as God, since we lack these, we can see very clearly from the *darśana* texts the arrival of the God idea in India. The *darśanas* are the

six systems of Hindu philosophy. According to Hindu tradition, they are based on the Vedas; that is, they have formulated the teachings of the Vedas into systems of philosophical thought. We have texts extant from these six systems that are much older than the extant Vedic commentaries. So they will provide us with considerable help in our attempt to trace God's presence in ancient India.

As is the norm with historical matters in India, we have no definite dates for these texts. The Sāṃkhya system, however, is regarded by Hindu tradition as the oldest *darśana*, taught by the first knower (*ādi-vidvān*), Kapila, so we will begin with it. The Sāṃkhya system, like Buddhism and Jainism, does not teach the existence of God. It instead explains the world and everything in it in terms of the interaction of two self-sufficient principles, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The world is explained as the evolution of eternal substance, *prakṛti*, when in contact with *puruṣa*, what we may call spirit, soul, or life. This latter is not God, since it is a purely passive principle, incapable of thinking or acting. The fact that there is no place for God in what Hindus themselves regard as their oldest *darśana* is a very telling piece of evidence on the question of God's presence in ancient India.

As we have seen before in regard to the Wisdom Tradition and to Buddhism, it is hard for those who have grown up within a theistic worldview to accept that there can be a true religious tradition having no place for God. This is also the case in regard to Sāṃkhya. The *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* is generally understood to refute God. Its verse 1.92, among others,<sup>33</sup> specifically says that God is not proved (*īśvara asiddeḥ*). But the 16th century commentator Vijñāna Bhikṣu, and some modern translators following him, understand this as only saying that God cannot be proved, not that God does not exist.<sup>34</sup> This is very much like the agnostic position, that we cannot know whether or not God exists. The attribution of the agnostic position to the Wisdom Tradition was forcefully refuted by the Mahatma K.H.<sup>35</sup> He points out that when a system fully and completely describes the operation of the cosmos on its own principles, without God, it is absurd to say there might still be room in it for a God it does not know about or cannot prove. Such a God would be a non-entity, something



that can and does do absolutely nothing.<sup>36</sup> The attribution of agnosticism to Buddhism, made by certain Buddhist scholars, may be refuted in a similar manner.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Sāṃkhya gives a full account of the origin and operation of the cosmos, that leaves no room for God in its worldview.<sup>38</sup>

The Yoga *darśana* presupposes the Sāṃkhya worldview. It provides a system of practice based on this worldview. The means of practice it teaches is meditation, which culminates in the state of *samādhi*. If the practitioner cannot attain *samādhi* by means of meditation, it offers an alternative: devotion to *īśvara*. Thus *īśvara* is found in this system, though in a peripheral role. Since the Yoga system accepts the Sāṃkhya worldview wherein God plays no part, there is little else for this *īśvara* to do. Just how *īśvara* is to be understood in the Yoga system is not fully explained in the extant texts. The word *īśvara* occurs only five times in the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali, the textbook of the system.<sup>39</sup> Its earliest commentary is that of Vyāsa. The first person to translate this difficult commentary, Ganganatha Jha, suggested the following to explain *īśvara*'s role in the Yoga system:

He is nowhere spoken of as the 'creator'; nor even as the 'Consciousness' permeating through all existence. He is spoken of only as an object of devotion, devotion to whom leads to highest results. In this respect the 'god' of the *Yogin* appears to hold the same position, as the 'devatā' of the *Mīmāṃsaka*, who posits the 'devatā' only as one to whom the prescribed sacrifices can be offered. He has no other function.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that *īśvara* is found in the Yoga system at all is seen by some scholars as a concession to growing theism. This only got stronger. The commentaries coming after Vyāsa's, such as those of Vācaspati Miśra (9th century C.E.), and especially of Vijñāna Bhiṣu (16th century C.E.), give increasing importance to *īśvara* as God.

There is a question as to whether *īśvara* means God in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*. M. D. Shastri's important study, "History of the Word 'Īśvara' and Its Idea,"<sup>41</sup> shows that *īśvara* did not mean God in any of India's oldest texts, including not only the

Vedic corpus, but also such works as Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and Patañjali's *Mahā-bhāṣya*. It instead only meant a ruler, master, administrative head (*rājā*) or king, and competent or capable of. If the same Patañjali wrote both the *Yoga-sūtra* and the *Mahā-bhāṣya*, as assumed by Hindu tradition, but doubted by Shastri, *īśvara* would refer to some sort of administrative head (*rājā*) rather than God in the *Yoga-sūtra*. This makes no sense in the context of Yoga (even though Patañjali's system is known as Rāja Yoga, apparently because in it one learns to rule one's mind), so no one has pursued this angle. At least, it made no sense before the Wisdom Tradition became known.

*The Secret Doctrine* brought out the teaching of the *mānasa-putras*, the "sons of mind," also called solar *pitṛs* ("fathers"), or solar angels. They are an advanced class of beings, the perfected humanity of a previous *manvantara* or life-cycle, that endowed our present humanity with the spark of mind. In a specific sense they are our higher selves, and thus our rulers or administrative heads (*rājā*). The statements about *īśvara* made by Patañjali, that *īśvara* is a particular spirit (*puruṣa*), etc. (verses 1.24-26), and also those made by the ancient commentator Vyāsa, could apply to these. So could the statements from the *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* describing an *īśvara* of such kind (*īdṛśa*), which is different from the *īśvara* as God that it refutes. This *īśvara* is defined in verse 1.95 as a liberated self (*mukta ātman*), or perfected one (*siddha*), and described in verses 3.54-57 as one who after dissolution into primary substance (*prakṛti*) in a previous life-cycle has arisen in the present one with full knowledge and full action capacity. Devotion to this *īśvara* as a means to achieve *samādhi* would then make sense. The explanation of *īśvara* as a solar *pitṛ* rather than as God would make sense of *īśvara*'s role in the Yoga system.

In either case, *īśvara* as God plays at best a marginal role in the Yoga system, while he plays no role in the Sāṃkhya system. We will next take up the other avowedly non-theistic *darśana*, the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system.

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system is the most orthodox *darśana*, since it is the one that deals with the Vedas proper, the hymns addressed to the many gods. Yet it, like Sāṃkhya, has no place for God. This rather unexpected (at least in later Hinduism)

combination of ultra-orthodoxy and non-theism led T. M. P. Mahadevan, modern exponent of Advaita Vedānta, to remark:

It is rather strange that the most orthodox of systems should turn out to be atheistic.<sup>42</sup>

Not only does it not accept God, even the gods it deals with are not considered real. Its view of the Vedic deities is described by Ganganatha Jha, the foremost translator of Mīmāṃsā texts:

The deity to whom sacrifices are offered is, for the Mīmāṃsaka, a purely hypothetical entity, posited for the sake of the accomplishment of a Sacrifice. . . . this is very clearly brought out in Mīm[āṃsā] Sū[tra] IX—i—6-10; in which connection the *Bhāṣya* explains that the Deity has no body, it does not eat anything, it cannot be either pleased or displeased; nor can it award prizes or punishments, as results of sacrifices. . . .<sup>43</sup>

So the only *darśana* that deals with the Vedas proper regards the Vedic deities as purely hypothetical entities. This fact provides weighty evidence that the Vedas never were polytheistic. As to God, he finds no place in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system because the Vedas, the all in all of this system, are eternal.

The Vedas are *śruti*, that which is heard. Even though *śruti* is often translated as revelation, this does not mean, like in other religions, that it is the word of God. What the seers (*ṛṣi*) heard and recorded as the Vedas is something that has always existed: the eternal sound that is believed in Hindu tradition to uphold and order the cosmos. The Vedic hymns are these sound sequences, embodying the cosmic order (*ṛta*). If these sequences of sound were the word of God, there would be a time when they did not exist, before God spoke them. But they are eternal, so they cannot be the word of God. Nor does God play any part in running the cosmos.

It is by the principle of cosmic order (*ṛta*) rather than by the will of God that the cosmos operates. Hence this principle can be said to take the place of God in the Vedic worldview. The idea of *ṛta* or cosmic order when applied to the human sphere

became the idea of *dharma* or duty, what it is necessary for us to do simply because it is the eternal way of things. These are the actions (*karma*) enjoined in the Vedas; and this is the sphere of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. The results of these actions are brought about by an inherent unseen potency (*apūrva*), not by God. Thus in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system, God is not the author of the Vedas; God did not create the cosmos; God does not run the cosmos; God did not lay down human duty; God does not reward or punish; God does not bring about the results of actions. Here as in the Sāṃkhya system, God is left with no role to play in the cosmos. So the existence of God is denied in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the most orthodox Hindu *darśana*.

Just as Pūrva Mīmāṃsā deals with the Vedas proper, the former (*pūrva*) part of the *śruti*, so Uttara Mīmāṃsā deals with the latter (*uttara*) part of the *śruti*, namely, the Upaniṣads. Thus the one universal principle known as *brahman* or *ātman* taught in the Upaniṣads is the province of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā system, better known as Vedānta, the “end (*anta*) of the Vedas.” The *Brahma-sūtra* is the textbook of this system, obviously dealing with *brahman*. There is, however, no mention in this book of *saguṇa brahman*, the conditioned *brahman* with attributes, also called *īśvara*, God; nor is this phrase found in the ten principal Upaniṣads. Neither is the word *īśvara* found in the *Brahma-sūtra*, nor is it found in eight of the ten principal Upaniṣads. *Īśvara* is found in three places in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.<sup>44</sup> In two of these, as noted in M. D. Shastri’s above-cited study of the word *īśvara*, “it is unambiguously used only in the sense of ‘capable of.’”<sup>45</sup> In the third place it is found in the compound *sarveśvara*, “ruler of all,” used as an adjective describing *ātman*. It is also found once in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, in the same compound, used as an adjective describing the third quarter of *brahman* or *ātman*. The related word *īś* is found in the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, where according to Shastri, “it becomes clear that the word *Īś* has been used here more in the sense of Paramātman, the supreme self (or Brahman), than in the sense of Parameśvara or supreme God.”<sup>46</sup> The word *īś* is also found in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, in the same sense, reports Shastri.<sup>47</sup> So the God idea is not found in the primary sources of the Vedānta system, the ten principal

Upaniṣads, nor in its textbook, the *Brahma-sūtra*. Someone had to bring it in, and do so in a decisive and convincing manner. That someone was Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkarācārya is the founder of the Advaita or “non-dual” school, the oldest school of Vedānta. He wrote very influential commentaries on the Upaniṣads and on the *Brahma-sūtra*. In these he repeatedly brought in the idea of *īśvara*, God, usually making no distinction between *īśvara* and the one universal *brahman* or *ātman*.<sup>48</sup> In his emphasis on *īśvara*, he differed from even his own disciples, who very seldom use the word *īśvara* in their writings.<sup>49</sup> The disciples he differed from, however, may not in fact be his. Substantial evidence that the author of the extant commentaries was not the original Śaṅkarācārya from the 5th century B.C.E., but was a later Śaṅkarācārya from the 8th century C.E., has been provided elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> From what we can deduce, the teachings of the original Śaṅkarācārya must differ significantly from the teachings of the later Śaṅkarācārya. The Mahatma K.H. writes in a letter replying to A. O. Hume:

In the first [letter] you notify me of your intention of studying Advaita Philosophy with a “good old Swami”. The man, no doubt, is very good; but from what I gather in your letter, if he teaches you anything you say to me, *i.e.*, anything save an impersonal, *non*-thinking and *non*-intelligent Principle they call Parabrahm, then he will not be teaching you the *true spirit* of that philosophy, not from its esoteric aspect, at any rate.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to this, the main theme of the extant *Brahma-sūtra* commentary of Śaṅkarācārya is to prove that *param brahman* is conscious, is a thinking, intelligent entity. This is as opposed to the non-conscious primary substance (*pradhāna*) taught in the Sāṃkhya system, then apparently equivalent to *brahman*.<sup>52</sup> This Śaṅkarācārya made *brahman* equivalent to *īśvara*.

The idea of *īśvara*, the God idea, is universally accepted in Advaita Vedānta today. It exists alongside the ancient idea from the Upaniṣads of the one impersonal principle, *brahman*. In this way it is not the same as the God idea in monotheistic religions. Nonetheless, *īśvara* has many of the characteristics of the God

of monotheism. As described by T. M. P. Mahadevan, the God of Advaita Vedānta is omniscient, omnipotent, the intelligent controller of the operation of the law of karma, the dispenser of justice, the moral governor, both the Law-Giver and the Law, the bestower of grace on his devotees, the object of adoration, the giver of prosperity, the grantor of liberation, etc.<sup>53</sup>

In the major Vedānta schools that arose after the Advaita school, such as the Viśiṣṭādvaita or “qualified non-dual” school of Rāmānuja, 11th century C.E., and the Dvaita or “dual” school of Madhva, 13th century C.E., the once impersonal *brahman* was progressively transformed into a full-blown personal God. Since the 8th century C.E., the time of the later Śāṅkarācārya, Vedānta in all its schools has been a major force in promoting the God idea in India.

We now take up the *darśana* that has been for more than a millennium the great defender of the God idea in India. This is the Nyāya system. Nyāya is usually translated as logic.<sup>54</sup> All three religions of ancient India, Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, utilize reasoning to explain their tenets, in contradistinction to the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In each of the three Indian religions, separate schools of logic developed, even though reasoning is used in all their systems. The schools of logic found in Jainism and Buddhism, of course, use logic to refute the idea of God. But the Nyāya system found in Hinduism uses logic to prove the existence of God. Indeed, the use of logic to prove God reached its culmination in a work of this system, the *Nyāya-kusumāñjali*, written in the 11th century C.E. by the great champion of the God idea, Udayana. About this highly influential work Karl Potter writes in his *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*:

This work contains by general acclaim the definitive treatment of the question of how to prove God's existence.<sup>55</sup>

Ironically, this turns out to be a reversal of the position of the system's founder, Gautama. The original textbook of the system is Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra*. The oldest extant commentary on it is the *bhāṣya* by Vātsyāyana. The next oldest commentary

on it is the *vārttika* by Uddyotakara. These three highly complex texts were first translated into English by Ganganatha Jha and published serially from 1912-1919. In November of 1919 Jha presented at the All-India Oriental Conference a paper titled, "The Theism of Gautama, the Founder of 'Nyāya,'" in which he brought out the fact that Gautama's position on God had been reversed by the commentators. The one and only place in Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra* that *īśvara* is found, 4.1.19, is in a section giving the views of others, not those of Gautama, that Gautama cites and then refutes. It took all the ingenuity of the theistic commentators to turn this around. Ganganatha Jha writes:

A study of the commentators however sheds a lurid light upon this device of the Vārtikakāra; and shows how hopelessly confused is the entire attempt to fasten this doctrine on Gautama.<sup>56</sup>

A few decades later, Harvard professor Daniel Ingalls took up this same topic in his paper titled, "Human Effort Versus God's Effort in the Early Nyāya (NS. 4. 1. 19-21)," apparently independently of Jha, since Jha's paper is not cited. Here Ingalls observes, as had Jha earlier:

The general movement of Nyāya opinion throughout this period may be judged from one observation: the later the commentator the greater the importance which he assigns to God . . .<sup>57</sup>

Ingalls shows the progressive stages this theism went through at the hands of the commentators, beginning with Vātsyāyana, who started it all with what is characterized by Ingalls as a "bold aboutface (volte face)."

Since then, other studies have further clarified the non-theistic position of early Nyāya.<sup>58</sup> From the various available sources we get the following picture.

The Nyāya system as described by its founder, Gautama, in his 528-verse *Nyāya-sūtra*, has no place for God. Gautama did, however, bring up the hypothesis of God, in order to reject it in favor of human effort or action (*karma*). Some centuries later, Vātsyāyana, the author of the oldest commentary now extant,

although acknowledging that Gautama's verse on *īśvara* is the view of another, inexplicably treated it as if it were Gautama's own view.<sup>59</sup> Vātsyāyana thereby put God's foot in the door of the Nyāya system by allowing God to play a role in the working of karma. A few centuries after that, Uddyotakara, the author of the next oldest commentary, opened the door wide for God, by making God stand above the law of karma, and by giving the first Nyāya proof of God's existence. The next commentator, Vācaspati Miśra, seeing that Gautama's verse on *īśvara* was in fact the view of another, so that the position of the previous two commentators who treated it as Gautama's own view could not be maintained, took a new leap for God. Rather than accepting the fact that Gautama here rejects the view that God is the cause of the world, Vācaspati Miśra has Gautama only rejecting the view that God is the material cause (*upādāna*) of the world, and thereby proving that God is the efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*) of the world. The proof that Vācaspati Miśra put forth on behalf of Gautama became the standard Nyāya proof for the existence of God. This proof was taken up in a fourth commentary, and the proof of God was made eloquent in the *Nyāya-kusumāñjali*, both by God's great champion, Udayana, which put God firmly in control in the Nyāya system.

We have now come full circle from where we started. From all the available evidence, it would seem that the original Nyāya system of Gautama, like Jainism and like Buddhism, believed in karma alone as the sole regulator of the cosmos. God was not yet involved.

Just as the Sāṃkhya system is paired with the Yoga system, with Sāṃkhya providing the basic worldview for both, so the Nyāya system is paired with the Vaiśeṣika system, with Vaiśeṣika providing the basic worldview for both. The basic worldview provided by the Vaiśeṣika system is one of eternal atoms. Like in Nyāya, where God has taken over the operation of karma, so in Vaiśeṣika, God has taken control of the eternal atoms. Thus the joint Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system is seen in India as the staunchest upholder of the idea of God. This is despite the fact that the original Vaiśeṣika textbook, Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, does not even mention *īśvara*. How, then, did God get there?



Again, as in Nyāya, God found his way into the Vaiśeṣika system only gradually. None of the ancient commentaries on the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, such as the *bhāṣya* by Rāvaṇa, are extant.<sup>60</sup> From what we know of the commentary by Rāvaṇa, it, like the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* itself, did not refer to God.<sup>61</sup> The basic worldview of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* as explained in an ancient commentary, probably Rāvaṇa's, was summarized by Śaṅkarācārya in the 8th century C.E., when this was still available.<sup>62</sup> The eternal atoms come together under the impetus of *adr̥ṣṭa*, unseen potency, to form the visible cosmos. *Adr̥ṣṭa* is the unseen potency arising from human actions (*karma*) that brings about their fruition, even if in another lifetime, or even in the next periodic cosmos. *Adr̥ṣṭa* explains how karma works. Thus in early Vaiśeṣika, as was practically universal in ancient India, it is karma that operates the cosmos rather than God. Only later was God brought in to take over *adr̥ṣṭa* as the efficient cause of the world, that impels the eternal atoms, the material cause.

The oldest available Vaiśeṣika text after the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* is the *Daśa-padārtha-sāstra*, which was translated into Chinese about the 5th century C.E.<sup>63</sup> It, too, nowhere mentions *īśvara*. God first appears in the Vaiśeṣika system in the *Padārtha-dharma-saṅgraha* of Praśasta-pāda, about the 6th century C.E. In this text, *īśvara*, who impels *adr̥ṣṭa*, is responsible for the creation of the world.<sup>64</sup> The teaching of God was attributed to the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* from this time onward. A commentary by Candrānanda from perhaps the 7th century C.E. explains a pronoun in verse 3 of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* as referring to *īśvara*.<sup>65</sup> The commentary by Śaṅkara Mīśra from the 15th century C.E., for long the only one known, also explains this pronoun as referring to *īśvara*, but adds that it could refer to the more obvious *dharma*, the subject of the preceding two verses.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, in a commentary by Bhaṭṭa Vādindra from the 13th century C.E., although theistic, this pronoun is explained entirely differently, as referring to heaven and liberation (*svargāpavargayoh*).<sup>67</sup> This diversity of interpretation is made possible by the terse *sūtra* style. Taking advantage of this terseness, *īśvara* is brought in at several other places in the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* by the commentators, who made sure that God was here to stay in the Vaiśeṣika system.

The history of the development of the God idea in the Vaiśeṣika system has formed the subject of extensive research conducted over many years by George Chemparathy. In 1965 he published an article in which he brought out a statement from an early commentator specifically saying that God had been imported into the Vaiśeṣika system. The *Yukti-dīpikā*, an early Sāṃkhya commentary that was only lately discovered and first published in 1938, describes in its discussion of the *īśvara* doctrine two systems: the Pāśupata and the Vaiśeṣika. It says that the original Vaiśeṣika system did not admit the existence of *īśvara*, but that the later Vaiśeṣikas accepted this doctrine from the Pāśupatas. It calls this an innovation or invention. Here is this statement from the *Yukti-dīpikā*, concluding its discussion of the *īśvara* doctrine, translated by Chemparathy:

This (doctrine of *Īśvara*) is wrongly attributed to the Ācārya [Kaṇāda, author of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*] in order to put a share of your fault on him, but (in truth) it is not his view. Thus (the doctrine) of the followers of Kaṇāda, that there exists an *Īśvara*, is an invention (*upajñam*) of the Pāśupatas.<sup>68</sup>

The Pāśupatas may be thought of as Śaivas, those who worship Śiva or some form of Śiva such as Paśupati. There is no doubt that popular movements such as this, not only Śaivism but also Vaiṣṇavism, contributed greatly to God's arrival in India.

In summary, of the six philosophical systems of Hinduism, the oldest, Sāṃkhya, and the most orthodox, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, are avowedly non-theistic; they do not teach the existence of God. The Yoga system includes *īśvara*, but in a peripheral role, and this *īśvara* may not be God. Vedānta originally taught only the impersonal principle called *brahman*; the idea of a personal God, *īśvara*, was brought in later. Nyāya originally denied God, but this was later turned around and made into the definitive proof of God. Vaiśeṣika originally lacked God, but God was later imported from the Pāśupatas. So philosophical Hinduism did not originally accept God. Nor can a single, all-powerful God be found in the Vedas. All this shows beyond reasonable doubt that early Hinduism, like Jainism and Buddhism, was non-theistic.

Therefore, all of ancient India, home of the Wisdom Tradition, was once non-theistic. God was not a part of the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition.

### **The Problem with God**

The Mahā-Chohan, who is regarded as the teacher of the teachers behind the Theosophical movement, and therefore as the foremost authority of our time on the Wisdom Tradition, is recorded as making this remarkable statement:

The world in general and Christendom especially, left for two thousand years to the regime of a personal God as well as its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps a big failure. The Mahatma K.H. said that their own philosophy “is preeminently the science of effects by their causes and of causes by their effects.”<sup>70</sup> He asked Hume to work out the causes of evil in the world. After enumerating the human vices that one would expect as the causes of evil, K.H. continued:

Think well over these few words; work out every cause of evil you can think of and trace it to its origin and you will have solved one-third of the problem of evil. And now, after making due allowance for evils that are natural and cannot be avoided,—and so few are they that I challenge the whole host of Western metaphysicians to call them evils or to trace them directly to an independent cause—I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is

priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his God or Gods demand the crime?; voluntary victim of an illusionary God, the abject slave of his crafty ministers. The Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope. For two thousand years India groaned under the weight of caste, Brahmins alone feeding on the fat of the land, and to-day the followers of Christ and those of Mahomet are cutting each other's throats in the names of and for the greater glory of their respective myths. Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.<sup>71</sup>

The custodians of the Wisdom Tradition, being committed to the upliftment of humanity, have traced the cause of two thirds of humanity's suffering. This cause, theistic religion and the God idea, is something they aim to deliver humanity from.

The God of the Theologians is simply an imaginary power. . . . Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery.<sup>72</sup>

To deliver humanity from the God idea, their chief aim, is no small task. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, theism has been around for many ages.

Thus the first Atlantean races, born on the Lemurian Continent, separated from their earliest tribes into the righteous and the unrighteous; into those who worshipped the one unseen

Spirit of Nature, the ray of which man feels within himself—or the Pantheists, and those who offered fanatical worship to the Spirits of the Earth, the dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance. . . .

Such was the secret and mysterious origin of all the subsequent and modern religions, especially of the worship of the later Hebrews for their tribal god.<sup>73</sup>

This explains the Mahatma K.H.'s statement cited earlier that “the idea of God is not an innate but an acquired notion.” In our own age, the God idea was acquired by the Hebrews as the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition went forth from their home in ancient India, and acquired from the Hebrews by the Christians and Muslims. Abraham is the patriarch of the three monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity through his son Isaac, and Islam through his son Ishmael. Thus Abraham is hailed as the father of monotheism. *The Secret Doctrine* explains Abram, Abraham's original name before God changed it (see Genesis 17.5), as “A-bram,” meaning a non-Brahman (the prefix “a” is a negative in Sanskrit). The Brahmans are India's priestly caste, originally the keepers of the wisdom teachings.

The Semites, especially the Arabs, are later Āryans—degenerate in spirituality and perfected in materiality. To these belong all the Jews and the Arabs. The former are a tribe descended from the Chaṇḍālas of India, the outcasts, many of them ex-Brahmans, who sought refuge in Chaldea, in Sind, and Āria (Iran), and were truly born from their A-bram (no-Brahman) some 8000 years B.C.<sup>74</sup>

Abraham is the symbolic non-Brahman who does not keep the wisdom teachings in their purity, and thus he becomes the first monotheist. For this he is celebrated in the world. Through the three Abrahamic religions, monotheism now has become the faith of half the population of the world. From the standpoint of the Wisdom Tradition, what Abraham did with its teachings outside of India, in bringing in the God idea, brought about a major world problem. If India is the spiritual motherland of the

world, it is to her that the world must turn to solve this problem. But the God idea has now infiltrated India, too. Even karma, which had once taken the place of God, has now been taken over by God. God's arrival in India, it would seem, has brought about an even more serious problem for the world than did the acquisition of the God idea outside of India.

The Mahā-Chohan, whose statement opened this section, also made another statement at the same time, in 1881:

Oh, for the noble and unselfish man to help us *effectually* in India in that divine task. All our knowledge past and present would not be sufficient to repay him.<sup>75</sup>

I had long wondered about the meaning of this statement. The divine task he refers to is that of propagating the idea of the brotherhood of humanity. This is, of course, the first object of the Theosophical Society. Were there not already noble and unselfish people to help in this? What was so important about doing this *effectually* in India?

What the Mahā-Chohan here alludes to, I now think, is the problem of theism in India. By the end of the first millennium C.E., Hinduism had acquired the God idea, Buddhism had left India for other lands, and India had fallen under foreign rule, which was to last until 1947. India under God is not in a position to fulfill its dharma as the source of the wisdom teachings, the teachings that alone can solve the world's greatest problem, the problem of God. To deliver India from the God idea, and thereby ultimately deliver humanity from the God idea, the only realistic course then available was to promote the idea of the brotherhood of humanity. Attempting to directly promote non-theism would only have fostered the very thing the God idea was responsible for in the first place: intolerance of the beliefs of others and hatred of everyone outside one's own sect; in brief, religious persecution. This was not an option.

The Theosophical movement was successful, I believe, in establishing the idea of brotherhood in the consciousness of humanity. It also spread the idea of karma around the world, which must someday take the place of God, as it did in ancient

India. "Replace the word 'God' by that of *Karma* and it will become an Eastern axiom," says *The Secret Doctrine*.<sup>76</sup> Knowledge of the ways of karma, affirms *The Secret Doctrine*, would eliminate the cause of two thirds of the world's evil, i.e., the God idea.

Nor would the ways of Karma be inscrutable were men to work in union and harmony, instead of disunion and strife. For our ignorance of those ways—which one portion of mankind calls the ways of Providence, dark and intricate, while another sees in them the action of blind Fatalism, and a third, simple chance, with neither gods nor devils to guide them—would surely disappear, if we would but attribute all these to their correct cause. With right knowledge . . . the two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air.<sup>77</sup>

It is not the Theosophical movement, however, that is likely to bring this about; for as most observers recognize, it is no longer a force in the world. Perhaps this is because it, like Hinduism, acquired the God idea, and thus ceased to truly represent the Wisdom Tradition.

#### NOTES

1. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, [ed. by Boris de Zirkoff,] vol. 14, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985, p. 310; from "The Post-Christian Successors to the Mysteries," section 34 of *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 3, 1897; or vol. 5 of the 6-volume Adyar ed., 1938.

2. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 2 vols., 1st ed., 1888; many reprints since; I use the definitive edition prepared by Boris de Zirkoff (pagination unchanged), Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978, vol. 2, p. 584.

3. *Isis Unveiled*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 2 vols., 1st ed., 1877; reprint, [ed. by Boris de Zirkoff] (pagination unchanged), Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972, vol. 1, p. 589.

4. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, transcribed and compiled by A. T. Barker, 1st ed., 1923; 2nd (corrected) ed., London: Rider & Co., 1926; facsimile reprint, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1975; 3rd rev. ed., Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House,

1962, letter #10, p. 52; chronological ed., Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993, pp. 269-270.

5. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #54, 3rd ed. p. 300. See also letter #23B, 3rd ed. p. 152: “. . . Mr. Hume's MSS., 'On God'—that he kindly adds to our Philosophy, something the latter had never contemplated before— . . .”

6. Some have regarded this utilization of the term “God” in the Djwhal Khul/Alice Bailey writings as “skillful means”; that is, the use of teachings that are not ultimately true in order to benefit a spiritually immature audience, one that is presently incapable of assimilating the actual truth. To move a largely Christian audience from an anthropomorphic conception of God to a much more abstract conception of God as the Solar Logos, rather than causing them to reject the Ageless Wisdom teachings altogether as being Godless, would be considered in Buddhism as skillful means.

Others have considered the Mahatma letters to be of questionable authenticity, and have therefore doubted whether their denial of God accurately represents the position of the Ageless Wisdom Tradition. This is based on the statement in Alice Bailey's *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 342: “The Master K.H., in one of the few (the very few) paragraphs in *The Mahatma Letters* which are genuine and not simply the work of H.P.B. . . .” H. P. Blavatsky said the same thing in an 1886 letter, published by C. Jinarajadasa in the Introduction to *The Early Teachings of the Masters*: “It is very rarely that Mahatma K.H. *dictated verbatim*; and when he did there remained the few sublime passages found in Mr. Sinnett's letters from him.” Blavatsky points out here that “the Masters would not stoop for one moment to give a thought to *individual*, private matters relating but to one or even ten persons, their welfare, woes and blisses in this world of Maya, to nothing except questions of really universal importance.” The Mahatma letters in question, letters #10 and #22, on the topic of God, certainly pertain to questions of really universal importance. A study of the more than 100 Mahatma letters shows that these two are almost certainly among the few that are genuine (along with letter #2, which is apparently the one referred to in the Bailey passage cited above, and two other letters not found in *The Mahatma Letters*, namely, the first letter of K.H. to A. O. Hume, and the Mahā-Chohan's letter, besides parts of others).

There is a passage that deals directly with this question in Alice Bailey's *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. 2, pp. 229-230: “We have spoken here of God in terms of *Person*, and we have used therefore the pronouns, He and His. Must it therefore be inferred that we are dealing with



a stupendous Personality which we call God, and do we therefore belong to that school of thought which we call the anthropomorphic? The Buddhist teaching recognises no God or Person. Is it, therefore, wrong from our point of view and approach, or is it right?" The answer is: "Both schools of thought are right and in no way contradict each other." The author says further: "In form and when in manifestation, the only way in which the human mind and brain can express its recognition of the conditioning divine life is to speak in terms of Person, of Individuality. Hence we speak of God as a Person, of His will, His nature and His form." This statement holds true only for the Western Christian audience to whom it was addressed, since Buddhists and Jains have in fact developed spiritual systems that have functioned effectively for thousands of years without ever speaking in terms of Person. This answer is reminiscent of a famous editorial that appeared in *The New York Sun* at the end of the nineteenth century, which said in answer to the question of 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlan, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist." How else could a question like this be answered? Just as a professor of physics will answer the same question one way when speaking to a class of beginning physics students, and another way when speaking to another physics professor, we may assume that the Tibetan, D.K., would have dealt with this question very differently to an audience of Tibetan Buddhists.

7. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. p. 52.

8. The *Tattoārthādhigama-sūtra*, written by Umāsvāti or Umāsvāmi, has recently been published in the West in English as *That Which Is*, translated by Nathmal Tatia, Harper Collins Publishers, 1994. A previous translation by J. L. Jaini, *Tattvarthadhigama Sutra*, Sacred Books of the Jains, vol. 2, 1920, was reprinted by AMS Press, New York, in 1974. A translation with the early commentary of Pūjyapāda called *Sarvārthasiddhi* was published under the title, *Reality*, by S. A. Jain, Calcutta: Vira Sasana Sangha, 1960. A translation with a modern commentary was published as *Pt. Sukhlalji's Commentary on Tattvārtha Sūtra of Vācaka Umāsvāti*, Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1974.

When the *Tattoārthādhigama-sūtra* was written, approximately two millenniums ago, Jains made up a significant percentage of India's population. Today, Jains make up less than one percent of India's population. Jains today, living in a sea of Hindus who all believe in God, have sometimes adopted the word God for their *paramātman*, or *muktātman*, or *mukta-jīva*, or *siddha-parameṣṭhi*, which all refer to a liberated soul, perfectly pure, and completely freed from

karmic bondage; the goal held out for all souls. This, of course, is not God as understood in other religions. Thus, one may occasionally see references to God in modern Jaina writings, but Jainism has in fact never postulated the existence of God. This is because, as put by Subodh Kumar Pal in "A Note on Jaina Atheism": "—it is *karma* alone which fructuates and determines the course of an individual through different births. Because *the Jaina believes in the inexorable moral law of karma which no mercy can bend.*" (*Jain Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2, Oct. 1989, p. 52; italics his.)

9. The *Abhidharma-kośa*, written by Vasubandhu, has now been published in English with its auto-commentary, as *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, first translated into French by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, 1923-1931, then translated from French into English by Leo M. Pruden, 4 vols., Asian Humanities Press: Berkeley, 1988-1990.

10. *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*, by Huston Smith, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, p. 115. This is a revised and updated edition of his 1958 book, *The Religions of Man*.

11. *The Perennial Philosophy*, by Aldous Huxley, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 3rd ed., 1945 (1st ed., 1944), p. 22. This shows that Huxley did not conceive of Godhead without God, even though he popularized the use of the term Godhead as something that could be distinguished from God (contrary to standard dictionaries, which define Godhead as God). God is, for him, an inherent aspect of Godhead. He writes, for example, on pp. 23-24: "It would be a mistake, of course, to suppose that people who worship one aspect of God to the exclusion of all the rest must inevitably run into the different kinds of trouble described above. If they are not too stubborn in their ready-made beliefs, if they submit with docility to what happens to them in the process of worshipping, the God who is both immanent and transcendent, personal and more than personal, may reveal Himself to them in his fulness."

12. *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 21. The Hindu "God-without-form," or impersonal Godhead, is *nirguṇa brahman*. *Brahman* is equated with *ātman*, the self of all, in the Upaniṣads. Buddhism, with its cardinal doctrine of *anātman*, "no-self," denies the *ātman*. There have, however, been several attempts to show that original Buddhism did not deny *ātman* in the sense taught in the old Upaniṣads, where it is identified with the impersonal *brahman*. Only one of these attempts has been regarded seriously, that of Kamaleswar Bhattacharya in his book, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1973 (an English translation is forthcoming). This

book came about as a result of Bhattacharya's studies on Cambodia. While working on old Buddhist inscriptions found there, he was struck by one which read, "Let the Buddha give you enlightenment, by whom the doctrine of no-self was well-taught, as the means of attaining the highest self (*paramātman*), though [apparently] in contradiction." He attempts to show in this book, on the basis of the Pāli and Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures, that the Buddha does not deny the *ātman* taught in the Upaniṣads, but on the contrary indirectly affirms it, in denying that which is falsely believed to be the *ātman*.

The Cambodia connection is of particular interest to students of the Wisdom Tradition. H. P. Blavatsky had said about Angkor Wat, "After the Pyramids this is the most occult edifice in the whole world" (see her entry, "Nagkon Wat," the name used for Angkor Wat, in *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 223). Paul Brunton's posthumously published notebooks provided further information. See chapter 4, section 7, "The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers," in *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*, vol. 10, *The Orient: Its Legacy to the West*, Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1987, pp. 197-202. Brunton's informant, a Mongolian Lama, said that Dorjeff and Blavatsky were co-disciples of the same guru. On Dorjeff's life, see: *Buddhism in Russia, The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa's Emissary to the Tsar*, by John Snelling, Element, 1993.

Cambodia was described by Brunton's informant as one of three centers of the secret doctrine, along with south India and Tibet. The headquarters of this tradition shift locations every seven hundred years. This tradition was centered in Cambodia from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries C.E. Before that it was centered in south India. After Cambodia it was centered in Tibet, up till 1939. In Cambodia, it thrived during most of the Khmer Empire, which lasted from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries C.E., and which was centered at Angkor. However, little is known about religion in the Khmer Empire, other than that it included both Hinduism and Mahāyāna Buddhism (which latter apparently included the Ādi-Buddha teaching, found in Kālacakra). This is because, as noted in a recent *National Geographic* article, "The Temples of Angkor," by Douglas Preston, Aug. 2000, p. 86: "Its extensive libraries of writings on palm leaves or animal skins vanished without a trace centuries ago, leaving us only a scattering of puzzling stone inscriptions."

13. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. pp. 53-56.

14. *Buddhism—A Non-Theistic Religion*, by Helmuth von Glasenapp, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970, p. 107. This is an English translation of the original German book, *Buddhismus und Gottesidee*,

Wiesbaden, 1954. See also p. 119: "Thus Nirvāna cannot be equated with the Christian God for it lacks most of the distinguishing marks of God: it is not a personality; it does not think, feel, or will; it did not create the world, nor does it rule it, etc."

15. The *Brahma-jāla Sutta* is the first Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, so can be found in the Pali Text Society's edition and translation of the latter. A recent English translation is *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995 (published as *Thus Have I Heard* in 1987). The idea of Brahmā as the creator is refuted in 2.3-6.

16. This treatise, titled *Īśvara-kartṛtva-nirākṛtir Viṣṇor-eka-kartṛtva-nirākaraṇam*, "Refutation of Īśvara as Creator; refutation of Viṣṇu as Sole Creator," is attributed to Nāgārjuna in the Tibetan Tanjur. It was first published, in Sanskrit and Tibetan, by F. W. Thomas in his "Notes from the Tanjur," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1903, pp. 345-349. An English translation of it is included in: "Two Early Buddhist Refutations of the Existence of Īśvara as the Creator of the Universe," by George Chemparathy, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 12-13, 1968/1969, p. 85-100. The other refutation he includes is from the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*, by Asaṅga.

17. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, published by the Government of Sri Lanka, vol. 5, fasc. 2, 1991, p. 346; entry "God," by Gunapala Dharmasiri and Jonathan S. Walters.

18. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #22, 3rd ed. pp. 137-138.

19. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #22, 3rd ed. p. 139.

20. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #22, 3rd ed. pp. 139-140.

21. Incomplete manuscripts of a few other commentaries on the Vedas were discovered in the early 1900s, those of Skanda-svāmin, Udgātha, and Veṅkata Mādhava, all pre-Sāyaṇa. Skanda-svāmin's, the oldest, may possibly date to the 7th century C.E. This is still far removed from the time of the Vedas. Their approach does not differ substantially from Sāyaṇa's.

Sāyaṇa employs a ritualistic interpretation of the Vedas, having reference to sacrifice, and this line of interpretation has by default conditioned modern understanding of the Vedas. But from references found in a much older text, the *Nirukta*, we see that this is only one of three lines of Vedic interpretation. While explaining certain Vedic passages, the *Nirukta* occasionally refers to these three kinds of interpretation (see: *Nirukta* 3.12, 10.26, 11.4, 12.37, 12.38): *adhiyajña*, having reference to sacrifice (the one used by Sāyaṇa); *adhidaivata*, having reference to the deity; and *adhyātma*, having reference to the self or spirit, i.e., the inner. This last kind of interpretation had been

almost entirely lost, but in the twentieth century attempts were made by writers such as Vasudeva S. Agrawala to revive it.

Vasudeva S. Agrawala (1904-1966) was the main writer in English on the *adhyātma* tradition of Vedic interpretation. His teacher was Pandit Motilal Sastri, a disciple of Madhusudan Ojha, Raja Pandit of Jaipur. These two wrote many books, but not in English. Agrawala first called attention to this line of interpretation in his 1939 article, "The Vedas and Adhyātma Tradition," *Indian Culture*, vol. 5, pp. 285-292. I am aware of only one other publication in English preceding this that advocated the *adhyātma* approach: "Indra—The Ṛg-Vedic Ātman," by O. K. Anantalakshmi, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. 1, 1927, pp. 27-44. Agrawala went on to publish several books utilizing this approach. His magnum opus is *The Thousand-Syllabled Speech, I. Vision in Long Darkness*, Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1963, an annotated translation of *Ṛg-veda* hymn 1.164.

22. See: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, pp. xxiii-xxx. For a list of the "real, original" Sanskrit works once found in India, see "The Strange Story of a Hidden Book," in *The Science of the Sacred Word, Being a Summarized Translation of The Pranava-vada of Gargyayana*, by Bhagavan Das, vol. 1, Adyar, Madras: The Theosophist Office, 1910, pp. i-lxxxii, especially pp. xii-xiv, xl-xlvi. This describes "a special literature which existed and was extant and matter of public knowledge and study in India, some thousands of years ago, and which still exists, but now inextant and hidden, and to be rediscovered by single-minded and laborious search only" (p. lx). The *Pranava-vāda* is one of these works, whose summarized English translation by Bhagavan Das was published in three volumes, 1910-1913. Two volumes of its original Sanskrit were published: *Pranava Vada of Maharshi Gargyayana and Pranava Vadartha Deepika of Swami Yogananda*, ed. by K. T. Sreenivasachariar, vol. I, Madras: The Brahmavadin Press, 1915; vol. II, Madras: The Modern Printing Works, 1919, Suddha Dharma Mandala Series no. 5 (a-1). The Suddha Dharma Mandala also brought out other of these hidden Sanskrit works, most notably what they call the original *Bhagavad-gītā*, having 745 verses rather than 700 as in the now extant version.

23. *Coomaraswamy, 2: Selected Papers, Metaphysics*, edited by Roger Lipsey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977; Bollingen Series, 89; p. 175; from his 1936 article, "Vedic 'Monotheism.'"

24. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. 1, Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2nd ed., 1958, pp. 327-328.

25. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *The Thousand-Syllabled Speech, I. Vision in Long Darkness*, Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1963, p. 180.

26. *Nirukta*, 7.14 (Agni as the first deity), 7.17 (Agni as all the deities; this is found in the *Brāhmaṇas*), and 7.18 (quotation of Vedic verse). See: *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, ed. and trans. by Lakshman Sarup, 1st ed. 1920-1927; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967.

27. *Nirukta*, 7.4; *Coomaraswamy, 2: Selected Papers, Metaphysics*, p. 166; Sarup, *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, English p. 115, Sanskrit p. 134; also cited by Agrawala, "Yāska and Pāṇini," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., p. 300.

28. Sarup, *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, p. 115, fn. 10.

29. *Sāyaṇa's Preface to the R̥gvedabhāṣya*, trans. Peter Peterson, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1974, p. 2 (first published in *Handbook to the Study of the R̥gveda*, Bombay Sanskrit Series, 41, 1890).

30. *R̥g-Veda-Samhitā . . . with the Commentary of Sāyanākārya*, vol. I, ed. F. Max Müller, 2nd ed., London: Henry Frowde, 1890, p. 2, lines 27-29; for English, see: Peterson, *Sāyaṇa's Preface*, p. 6.

31. See: George Chemparathy, "Some Observations on Dayānanda Sarasvati's Conception of the Veda," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, vol. 38, 1994, p. 235-236. On p. 236, he writes: "The reason for the strikingly subordinate position accorded to the Upaniṣads may be sought in the very nature of their central teachings, which could not at all be brought into harmony with Dayānanda's own conception of God, man, and the external world. The Upaniṣads view the Ultimate Reality as absolutistic and monistic. . . . By contrast, Dayānanda accepts a single personal supreme God as the creator of the universe. . . . A strict monotheistic belief . . . could not be constructed on the monistic and idealistic underpinnings of the Upaniṣadic thought." Earlier, on p. 232, he wrote: ". . . Dayānanda set about his work of reform by re-interpreting the Vedic texts in such a way as to present Hinduism as a monotheistic religion, purged of all forms of polytheism and idolatry. In order to achieve this end he had to repudiate certain traditional conceptions on the nature of the Veda and to interpret the Vedic texts in such a way as to make them suit his own ideas."

Others agree that a single, all-powerful God cannot be found in the Vedas. Leading Vedic scholar R. N. Dandekar in his article, "God in Hindu Thought," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vols. 48 & 49, 1968, p. 440, writes: "In spite of all such indications, it must be clearly stated that monotheism in the sense of a single ethical god who, while being intimately involved in the world-process, is yet transcendental in character had not developed in the Vedic period." Similarly, leading Western Vedic scholar Jan Gonda in his study, "The Concept of a Personal God in Ancient Indian Religious Thought,"

*Selected Studies*, vol. 4: *History of Ancient Indian Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975, pp. 1-26, was unable to find this kind of God in the Vedas.

32. "A Mental Puzzle," *The Theosophist*, vol. 3, no. 9, June 1882, Supplement, p. 7. "Man. X., R. 129" is Maṇḍala 10, Sūkta 129. The "R" is apparently a misprint for "S." The line quoted from this Sūkta or hymn is the first line of Ṛk 1, or verse 1.

33. See also: *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* 5.2-10, 6.64. I cite this and like titles as *sūtra* rather than *sūtras*, although both are correct, the Sanskrit being either *sūtram* (singular) or *sūtrāṇi* (plural). For an English translation of the *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* along with the commentaries of Aniruddha and Vijñāna Bhikṣu, see: *The Samkhya Philosophy*, trans. Nandalal Sinha, Sacred Books of the Hindus, vol. 11, Allahabad: 1915; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1974; reprint, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1979. The *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* is supposed to be the textbook of the Sāṃkhya system, but the extant *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* is clearly a later compilation. It does, however, include undeniably ancient Sāṃkhya teachings. The *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* serves in its place as the textbook of the Sāṃkhya system. The *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* does not mention *īśvara*.

34. Besides Vijñāna Bhikṣu's commentary on *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* 1.92, see his introduction to his commentary (in the Sinha translation cited in note 33, pp. 6-8). His view is followed by Jag Mohan Lawl in his translation of the *Sāṃkhya-sūtra*, titled *The Sankhaya Philosophy of Kapila*, Edinburgh: Orpheus Publishing House, 1921. Lawl says in his explanatory notes on verse 1.92, p. 57: "Some translators make a mistake here by thinking that Sankhaya Philosophy is atheistic, but they are mistaken: he simply means that the inability of the worldly mind to prove the existence of God does not prove there is no God, for Yogis with higher consciousness can see and prove for themselves." In a similar vein, K. P. Bahadur in his translation of the *Sāṃkhya-sūtra*, titled *The Wisdom of Saankhya*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978, notes on verse 1.92, p. 75: "It should be noted that it is not said that God does not exist, only that the evidence of His existence is not there."

35. See: *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. p. 52: "Nevertheless we deny most emphatically the position of agnosticism . . ."; p. 53: "Pantheistic we may be called—agnostic NEVER."; letter #54, p. 300: "He makes of us *Agnostics!* . . ."

36. Summarized from *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #22.

37. Buddhist scholars such as Edward Conze have written that Buddhism is agnostic. See his *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, 1951, p. 39: ". . . the Buddhists adopt an attitude of agnosticism to the

question of a personal creator. . . .” This is a general assumption based on the Buddhist teaching of the fourteen undefined points (*avyākṛta-vastu*), that the Buddha refused to discuss. However, it does not take account of the fact that the Buddha is shown in the *Brahma-jāla Sutta* specifically denying that the world was created by God, Brahmā, and in the *Aggañña Sutta* stating how it in fact came about. This is hardly an agnostic position.

Some Buddhist scholars have also attributed something akin to monotheism to one phase of Buddhism, the Tantric phase involving the concept of an Ādi-Buddha (e.g., Conze, op. cit., pp. 43, 191). This attribution was made before these teachings became available in their context (which happened after 1959 when Tibetan refugees brought these teachings with them to India), and before many of the original sources had been published, such as the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its *Vimalaprabhā* commentary, or the *Pradīpoddyotana* commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. It is now clear that they are non-theistic like the rest of Buddhism.

38. For more on the Sāṃkhya worldview, particularly in its relation to the Wisdom Tradition, see my article, “Sāṃkhya and the Wisdom-Religion,” *Fohat*, vol. 4, no. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 84-86, 92-94.

Some have claimed that Sāṃkhya was originally theistic, and later became non-theistic. The main evidence for this is found in the *Mahābhārata*, where God is included in passages that give distinctly Sāṃkhya teachings. But as shown by Pulinbihari Chakravarti in his *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, pp. 54-58, the *Mahābhārata* presupposes the existence of earlier Sāṃkhya writings. Thus it could easily have incorporated these Sāṃkhya ideas into its own theistic setting.

Others have noted references in early writings such as the Jaina *Ṣaḍ-darśana-samuccaya* and the Buddhist *Tattva-saṃgraha* to both a Sāṃkhya without God (*nirīśvara*), and a Sāṃkhya with God (*seśvara*). However, the latter almost certainly refers to the Yoga system, since the Yoga system was not described separately in these writings.

Johannes Bronkhorst, “God in Sāṃkhya,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasien*, vol. 27, 1983, pp. 149-164, attempts to show that the earlier commentators on the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* accepted the existence of God, *īśvara*. These references appear to me to refer to the *īśvara* of the Yoga system rather than *īśvara* as God. See below.

39. *Yoga-sūtra* 1.23, 1.24, 2.1, 2.32, 2.45.

40. Gangānātha Jhā, *The Yoga-Darshana*, 2nd ed., Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1934, p. xiv. Nagin Shah has tried to



show that *īśvara* in the *Yoga-sūtra* refers to an “extra-ordinary person” who has achieved the goal of yoga, for as long as he remains in the body. See his article, “An Alternative Interpretation of Patañjali’s Three Sūtras on *Īśvara*,” *Sambodhi*, vol. 4, no. 1, April 1975, pp. 1-6. He provides a useful analysis of *sūtra* 1.25 on omniscience.

41. M. D. Shastri, “History of the Word ‘*Īśvara*’ and Its Idea,” *Proceedings and Transactions of the Seventh All-India Oriental Conference, Baroda, December 1933*, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1935, pp. 487-503; reprinted with a few additions in *The Princess of Wales Sarasvati Bhavana Studies*, vol. 10, ed. M. D. Shastri, Benares: Government Sanskrit Library, 1938, pp. 35-63.

42. T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism*, Bombay: Chetana, (1st ed. 1956, 2nd ed. 1960,) reprint 1966, p. 138. Mahadevan here echoes M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932, pp. 323-324: “Whatever stimulus is required for such change to take place comes from the past karma of the selves that are on life’s pilgrimage at the time. This means the abolition of the idea of God from the system, which is indeed a strange tenet to be held by a school claiming to be orthodox *par excellence*.”

For the views of the early Pūrva Mīmāṃsā authors on God, and their denial of his existence, see: Ganganatha Jha, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā in Its Sources*, Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1942, chap. 5, “God,” pp. 43-52.

43. Gaṅgānātha Jhā, *The Prābhākara School of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, 1st ed., 1911; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978, pp. 249-250. Even outside of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system, there is a question of what the Vedic deities really are. The word that is translated as “god” or “deity” is *deva* or *devatā*. As noted by several scholars, the word *deva* does not really mean a “god.” Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya writes: “Its literal sense is ‘a shining one’ and it is used to denote anything that shines in any way, or that which has some sort of glory or power” (*The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1943; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989, p. 22). He then gives references to the Upaniṣads where the following things are called *devas*: ether, air, fire, earth, speech, mind, eye, ear, breath, etc.

Some scholars have felt that “angel” is a better translation of *deva* than “god” or “deity.” See, for example, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Angel and Titan: An Essay in Vedic Ontology,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 55, no. 4, Dec. 1935, pp. 373-419.

Sri Aurobindo saw the Vedic “gods” as outer symbols of inner psychological experience. The various gods represent various aspects

of the psyche and what pertains to it. Thus, translations of the Vedas produced by his school may use will-force, divine mind, intuition, etc., in place of Agni, Indra, Saramā, etc.

44. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.8, 4.4.22, 6.4.14-18. The other nine principal Upaniṣads are *Īśā*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Munḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, and *Chāndogya*. This is the traditional list, having ten only. Many modern translations include other Upaniṣads, and sometimes also call these other ones principal.

45. Shastri, "History of the Word 'Īśvara' and Its Idea," 1938, p. 47. Shastri does not give the Upaniṣad references, but refers instead to "Concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads," which as all readers know, is by G. A. Jacob. Jacob lists under the entry "*īśvara*" only the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* among the ten principal Upaniṣads, and gives for it only 1.4.8 and 6.4.14-18. These are what Shastri refers to here. His conclusion that *īśvara* is found in only one of the ten older Upaniṣads and only in this sense is incorrect. Two more *īśvara* references in the principal Upaniṣads may be found in Jacob's *Concordance* under the compound form, "*sarveśvara*." These are to *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22, and *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, paragraph 6.

46. Shastri, "History of the Word 'Īśvara' and Its Idea," 1938, p. 38.

47. Shastri, "History of the Word 'Īśvara' and Its Idea," 1938, p. 47.

48. See: Paul Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 9, 1965, p. 147; reprinted in *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, ed. Wilhelm Halbfass, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 33.

49. See: Paul Hacker, "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and Terminology of Śaṅkara: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara," in *Philology and Confrontation*, ed. Wilhelm Halbfass, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 94. This is an English translation of his "Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Śaṅkaras: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 100, 1950, pp. 246-286.

50. See: David Reigle, "The Original Śaṅkarācārya," *Fohat*, vol. 5, no. 3, Fall 2001, pp. 57-60, 70-71.

51. This letter was first published in "Echoes from the Past," *The Theosophist*, vol. 28, June 1907, quotation from p. 702 (this printing has "impressional" for "impersonal"); reprinted in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, compiled by C. Jinarajadasa, [First Series.] Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919, no. XXX, p. 79; 5th ed., 1964, p. 66. Corrections were made in the third edition, where this letter was

now "transcribed from the original at Adyar." In the 1907 printing it is dated 1881. Jinarajadasa says its date is probably 1882.

52. Śaṅkarācārya, in attempting to show that *brahman* is conscious, takes as his primary opponent the Sāṃkhya teaching of non-conscious primary substance (*pradhāna*). It would seem that some people at that time equated *brahman* with *pradhāna*. Gauḍapāda, in his commentary on *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* 22, gives *brahman* as a synonym of *pradhāna*, also called *prakṛti*. In the list of Sāṃkhya topics from the lost *Ṣaṣṭi-tantra* found in the *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā*, *brahman* is given first, where one would expect *pradhāna* or *prakṛti*, and this is followed by *puruṣa*. Several other early sources attribute the teaching of *brahman* to Sāṃkhya, including the recently discovered *Yukti-dīpikā* Sāṃkhya commentary. For a listing of these, with references, see: Pulinbihari Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing and Publishing House, 1951; reprint, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1975; pp. 26-28.

53. Summarized from: T. M. P. Mahadevan, "The Idea of God in Advaita," *The Vedanta Kesari*, vol. 53, no. 1, May 1966, pp. 35-38.

54. Although Nyāya means logic, it is somewhat misleading to think of the Nyāya system as only concerned with logic. Ingalls opens his article cited in note 57 below as follows: "It has often seemed to me that the teachings of the early Nyāya might better be called a philosophy of man than an exposition of logic. Certainly the greater part of the *Nyāyasūtra* deals with human problems rather than logical ones: with man's senses, mind and soul; with the means of knowledge he may use and how he may best use them. Again, the method of dealing with these subjects, as the Naiyāyikas themselves admit, is prevalingly that of perception and experience (*pratyakṣa*) rather than that of logic (*anumāna*)."

55. Karl H. Potter, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, vol. 2, *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 7.

56. Ganganath Jha, "The Theism of Gautama, the Founder of 'Nyāya,'" *Proceedings & Transactions of the First Oriental Conference, Poona, Held on the 5th, 6th and 7th of November 1919*, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, vol. II, 1922, p. 283. Jha in his translation of these three Nyāya texts does not bring out the fact that Gautama's position has here been reversed by the commentators. This translation was published serially in *Indian Thought*, vols. 4-11, 1912-1919, and then reprinted in book form in 3 vols.; this was reprinted in 1984 by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, and again in 4 vols. by the same publisher

in 1999, as *The Nyāya-Sūtras of Gautama, with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana and the Vārtika of Uddyotakara*. In a footnote on p. 1456, Jha tells us that: “In regard to this Section there is a difference among Commentators. According to the *Bhāṣya*, the *Vārtika* and Vishvanātha, it is meant to propound the Naiyāyika *Siddhānta* that the Universe has been created by God. . . . It is this interpretation that we have adopted in the translation.” So a reader of Jha’s English translation will never know that the commentators have here reversed Gautama’s position.

Another translation, that of Mrinalkanti Gangopadhyaya titled *Nyāya: Gautama’s Nyāya-sūtra with Vātsyāyana’s Commentary*, Calcutta: Indian Studies, 1982, follows the interpretation of Phaṇibhūṣaṇa Tarkavāgīśa, a modern translator of this text into Bengali. He regards these verses as refuting the view that God alone—as independent of the actions of living beings—is the cause of the world. He gives this section a Sanskrit title stating this, *kevala-īśvara-kāraṇatā-nirākaraṇa prakaraṇa*, as if this is part of Vātsyāyana’s text, but it is not. Vātsyāyana titles this section, *īśvara-upādānatā-prakaraṇa*, which Jha fills out as “Examination of the Theory that God is the Cause of the Universe.” It appears that Phaṇibhūṣaṇa here offers yet another interpretation of these verses, unlike those of the classical commentators. Unlike Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara, but like Vācaspati Miśra and Udayana, he regards verse 4.1.19 as the view of another that is to be refuted. But unlike Vācaspati Miśra and Udayana, he does this by saying that God alone as the cause (independent of human effort) is to be refuted, rather than that God as material cause is to be refuted while God as efficient cause is to be accepted. So a reader of Gangopadhyaya’s translation, who assumes that this is Vātsyāyana’s interpretation, is in fact getting Phaṇibhūṣaṇa’s interpretation. This is to say nothing of the original position of the author, Gautama.

57. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, “Human Effort Versus God’s Effort in the Early Nyāya (NS. 4. 1. 19-21),” *Felicitations Volume Presented to Professor Sripad Krishna Belvalkar*, ed. S. Radhakrishnan, et al., Banaras: Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1957, p. 229.

58. See, for example, the clarification of meaning of *Nyāya-sūtra* 4.1.21 in Chandra Sodha, “A Fresh Approach to *Īśvaropādānatā* in *Nyāya Sūtra*,” *Glory of Knowledge (Professor Ram Murti Sharma Felicitations Volume)*, ed. S. G. Kantawala, et al., Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1990, pp. 211-216. Ingalls had noted that this verse is extremely ambiguous because one must fill in an understood subject and pronoun. Ingalls understood it as saying that God is caused to act by human effort, thus reflecting the Nyāya primacy of human effort, but still not denying the

existence of God. Sodha provides a more natural understanding of it, as saying that the fruit is caused by the actions of man; it does not refer to God (p. 216). This is stated more clearly by Francis X. Clooney, S.J., in "The Existence of God, Reason, and Revelation in Two Classical Hindu Theologies," *Faith and Philosophy, Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*, vol. 16, no. 4, Oct. 1999, pp. 523-543. He translates:

"4.1.19. The Lord is the cause, since we see that human action is fruitless.

"4.1.20. This is not so since, as a matter of fact, no fruit is accomplished without human action.

"4.1.21. Since that [action] is efficacious [only due to human effort], the reason [put forth in 4.1.19, regarding the need to posit a Lord] lacks force" (p. 527; bracketed material is his).

C. Bulcke, S.J., says in his 1947 monograph, *The Theism of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika: Its Origin and Early Development* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), p. 26: ". . . we intend to show, that whatever may have been the position of Gautama, theism was not an original tenet of Nyāya. The doctrine of karma as exposed in the *Nyāya-Sūtras* leaves little room for Īśvara and all Naiyāyikas will be faced with the problem of a Supreme Lord and a mechanical and inevitable law of retribution."

Gopikamohan Bhattacharyya in his 1961 book, *Studies in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theism* (Calcutta: Sanskrit College), focuses on Udayana's *Nyāya-kusumāñjali*, expounding the proofs for the existence of God. Bhattacharyya therefore does not really deal with early Nyāya. He opens his book with, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosopher is an uncompromising theist. . . ." He concludes his book with, "Monotheism is the cream of Indian thought." For a criticism of Bhattacharyya's book, see George Chemparathy, "Theism and Early Vaiśeṣika System," *Kavirāj Abhinandana Grantha*, 1967, pp. 120-121, note 16.

John Vattanky, S.J., in his 1993 book, *Development of Nyāya Theism* (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications), deals somewhat with early Nyāya, but surprisingly, he seems to be unaware of the researches of his predecessors in this area. Ingalls, for example, is neither referred to nor cited in the bibliography. Vattanky can therefore naively say on pp. 22-23: "The intuition of Gautama that God is to be considered the cause of the world has remained the cornerstone of Nyāya theism and for this reason alone Gautama deserves to be called the father of Nyāya theism."

59. Vātsyāyana twice acknowledges that Gautama's verse on *īśvara* is the view of another. First, he introduces this section at 4.1.14 with the words, *ataḥ paraṃ prāvādukānāṃ dṛṣṭayaḥ pradarśyante*, which Jha

translates as, “We now proceed to show up the doctrines of philosophers (of several schools)—” (p. 1449). Second, he introduces verse 4.1.19, Gautama’s verse on *īśvara*, with the words, *athāpara āha*, which Jha translates as, “Another philosopher says—” (p. 1457). Yet in his commentary Vātsyāyana treats this as Gautama’s own view.

60. See: S. Kuppaswami Sastri, “Rāvaṇa-Bhāṣya,” *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. 3, 1929, p. 5: “Such considerations may lend support to the conjecture that the earlier Rāvaṇa-Bhāṣya was perhaps dominated by atheistic and pro-Buddhist proclivities, such as might have been quite in keeping with the text of the Vaiśeṣika sūtras, and with the spirit of the tradition characterising the Vaiśeṣikas as *ardha-vaināśikas*, while the work of Praśastapāda gave the Vaiśeṣika system a theistic turn and presented its doctrines in an anti-Buddhist Āstika setting.”

61. See: Johannes Bronkhorst, “God’s Arrival in the Vaiśeṣika System,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 24, 1996, p. 283: “We can conclude that the Kaṇḍī [the commentary by Rāvaṇa] did not yet refer to God in its account of the destruction and creation of the world.” See also p. 285.

The title of the present article is adapted from the title of this one by Johannes Bronkhorst, which I acknowledge with appreciation.

62. See: Śāṅkarācārya, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 2.2.11-12. The relevant passages were translated and discussed by George Chemparathy in his, “Theism and Early Vaiśeṣika System,” *Kavirāj Abhinandana Grantha*, Lucknow: Akhila Bhāratīya Saṃskṛta Pariṣad, 1967, on pp. 113-114. Johannes Bronkhorst provides evidence that Śāṅkarācārya’s summary was probably based on the commentary by Rāvaṇa, in his article, “God’s Arrival in the Vaiśeṣika System,” pp. 282-284.

63. The *Daśa-padārtha-śāstra* is one of two Hindu texts, the other being the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, found in the Chinese Buddhist canon. Its Sanskrit original is lost. An English translation was made from the Chinese by H. Ui, and published in *The Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, according to the Daśapadārtha-śāstra*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1917; reprint, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962. Another English translation was made by Keiichi Miyamoto, along with a re-translation from Chinese back into Sanskrit, and a critical edition of the Chinese text. This was published in *The Metaphysics and Epistemology of the Early Vaiśeṣikas*, Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1996. Two other re-translations of this book into Sanskrit have been published: *Daśa-Padarthi*, trans. Uma Ramana Jha, Jammu: Shri Ranbir Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, 1977; and “Daśapadārthaśāstra,” by Karunesha

Shukla, in *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, vol. 19, 1962-1963, pp. 147-158; vol. 20-21, 1963-1965, pp. 111-130. These were both made from H. Ui's English translation, not from the Chinese text.

64. *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda, with the Nyāyakandalī of Śrīdhara*, trans. Gaṅgānātha Jhā, originally published in *The Pandit*, vols. 25-37, 1903-1915; reprint, Benares: E. J. Lazarus and Co., 1916; reprint, Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 1982. On this see also George Chemparathy's article, "The Īśvara Doctrine of Praśastapāda," *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, vol. 6, 1968, pp. 65-87. This should be supplemented by George Chemparathy's study of two fragments from a lost text or texts of Praśastapāda and/or his followers that were quoted in Kamalaśīla's *Tattva-saṅgraha-pañjikā*, "Two Little-Known Fragments from Early Vaiśeṣika Literature on the Omniscience of Īśvara," *Adyar Library Bulletin*, vol. 33, 1969, pp. 117-134.

65. *Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda, with the Commentary of Candrānanda*, ed. Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1961, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 136, p. 2. On this recently discovered commentary and its views on God, see also George Chemparathy's article, "The Īśvara Doctrine of the Vaiśeṣika Commentator Candrānanda," *Ītam, Journal of the Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad*, vol. 1, no. 2, Jan. 1970, pp. 47-52.

66. *The Vaiśeṣika Darśana, with the Commentaries of Śankara Miśra and Jayanārāyana Tarka Panchānana*, ed. Jayanārāyana Tarka Panchānana, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1861, Bibliotheca Indica 34, p. 8; *The Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda, with the Commentary of Śankara Miśra*, trans. Nandalal Sinha, Allahabad: Pāṇini Office, 1911, Sacred Books of the Hindus, 6; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1974; reprint, Delhi: S. N. Publications, 1986; p. 7; 2nd ed., revised and enlarged, Allahabad: Pāṇini Office, 1923, p. 7.

67. *Vaiśeṣikadarśana of Kaṇāda, with an Anonymous Commentary*, ed. Anantalal Thakur, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1957, p. 2. Although this commentary was published as being anonymous, Anantalal Thakur later identified the author of it as Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra. See his article, "Bhaṭṭavādīndra—The Vaiśeṣika," *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, vol. 10, no. 1, Sep. 1960, pp. 22-31.

68. George Chemparathy, "The Testimony of the Yuktidīpikā Concerning the Īśvara Doctrine of the Pāśūpatas and Vaiśeṣikas," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 9, 1965, p. 146.

69. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, [First Series,] letter #1, 1st ed. p. 9; 5th ed. p. 7; *Combined Chronology*, by Margaret Conger,

Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973, p. 46; *The Mahatma Letters*, chron. ed. p. 479.

70. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. p. 52.

71. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. pp. 57-58; this letter then continues: "If it is objected that we too have temples, we too have priests and that our lamas also live on charity . . . let them know that the objects above named have in common with their Western equivalents, but the name. Thus in our temples there is neither a god nor gods worshipped, only the thrice sacred memory of the greatest as the holiest man that ever lived. If our lamas to honour the fraternity of the *Bhikkhus* established by our blessed master himself, go out to be fed by the laity, the latter often to the number of 5 to 25,000 is fed and taken care of by the *Sangha* (the fraternity of lamaic monks), the lamassery providing for the wants of the poor, the sick, the afflicted. Our lamas accept food, never money, and it is in those temples that the origin of evil is preached and impressed upon the people. There they are taught the four noble truths—*ariya sacca*, and the chain of causation, (the 12 *nidānas*) gives them a solution of the problem of the origin and destruction of suffering."

72. *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #10, 3rd ed. p. 53.

73. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, pp. 273-274. For the problem that this hitherto unknown fact regarding belief in God makes for students of the Wisdom Tradition, see: *The Mahatma Letters*, letter #134, 3rd ed. pp. 454-456.

74. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 200; see also vol. 2, p. 139 fn. The other two monotheistic faiths now make up the bulk of the sons of Abraham. In reference to these, an article titled, "The Akhund of Swat," *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 1, 1966, pp. 369-375, is of considerable interest. It gives an account of a Sikh adept who in 1858 foretold the death of the Akhund twenty years later, saying further (p. 374): "Then, the first hour will strike of the downfall of those twin foes of truth—Christianity and Islam. The first, as the more powerful, will survive the second, but both will soon crumble into fragmentary sects, which will mutually exterminate each other's faith."

75. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, [First Series,] letter #1, 1st ed. p. 11; 5th ed. p. 9; *Combined Chronology*, p. 47; *The Mahatma Letters*, chron. ed. p. 480.

76. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 653.

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