

PATRIARCH OF THE VEDAS

26th Degree.

OPENING.

As given in the preceding degree.

RECEPTION.

Expert introduces Neophyte in the West and strikes www—www—ww.

SUBLIME DAI.—What stranger seeks admission to this peaceful academy of the Eastern Theologies, where the Sacred Vedas and the laws of Manu, the divine epics of the Ramayana and the Brahmins, the laws and treatises of Buddha, and the Zend Avesta of Zoroaster, are all studied with equal zeal, and impartially compared and judged according to their merits?

GRAND EXPERT.—It is a Patriarch who is desirous to learn the precepts of the Eastern faith, professed and believed in by millions of his fellow-beings. He wishes to become a member of this Council of Wisdom, so that he may participate in its grave deliberations.

S. D.—His wishes shall be complied with. Prepare the Sacred Vedas, the Rules of Buddha, and the Zend Avesta of Zoroaster. Let the most learned students of each faith be prepared to explain its tenets, answer all enquiries, and as far as possible, meet all objections.

Illustrious Brother Orator, you will expound the doctrines of Brahma; you Illustrious Brother First Mystagogue, those of Buddha; and you Illustrious Brother Second Mystagogue, will explain the teachings of Zoroaster.

Music. The brothers rise. Neophyte is brought forward by the Expert and Accompanier. He is led round seven times; in allusion to the seven Caverns in which Mahadeva bewailed the loss of Sita.

S. D.—Let the Neophyte be led seven times around the Temple, copying the benevolent example of the sun in its course, and in allusion to the seven caverns of ancient initiation.

PRAYER.

O, mighty Being, greater than Brahma, we bow down before Thee as the prime creator, eternal God of Gods; the world's Temple. Thou art the incorruptible Being, distinct from all things transient. Thou art before all gods, the ancient Essence, and the supreme supporter of the universe. Thou art the Supreme Temple, and by Thee, O Infinite Form, the universe was spread abroad.

ALL.—Glory to Thee, O Lord. Glory to Thy works.

Glory to Thy infinite goodness.

S. D.—You are welcome, Illustrious Brother, to these halls of study and reflection. Your reception here has been open and unostentatious; and you have no mystic ceremonies, no fearful ordeals to encounter. We are rather an academy where the religions of the world are studied, compared, and analytically examined. We only exact an obligation of secrecy as to our proceedings, such as you have taken hitherto in your progress; and if you are willing to take it, you will advance to our common altar and repeat after me.

(Strikes WWW. All rise and form the Triangle.)

To the glory of the Sublime Architect of the Universe. In the name of the Sovereign Sanctuary of

Antient and Primitive Masonry, in and for Great Britain and Ireland. Salutation on all points of the Triangle. Respect to the Order.

I, A.B., hereby renew all my previous bonds, to which I promise faithful allegiance, under penalty of being held in scorn and disgust as a false Mason and perjured man. Amen.

S. D.—We now acknowledge you as a member of this Sublime Council of Patriarchs of the Sacred Vedas. I congratulate you upon your admission, and will proceed to instruct you in the Sign, Token and Word thereof. (*This is done.*)

We are satisfied, from the circumstance of your having sought admission amongst us, that you are of a liberal, enquiring, and unprejudiced nature. Why should we fear discussion? Truth cannot be overthrown, and it is but right that falsehood should be. Why should we condemn unheard, doctrines which millions accept as true? Is it not our duty to investigate them, and form an impartial judgment? We will now proceed to do so.

Illustrious Brother Orator, on you devolves the task of explaining the doctrines of Brahmanism, and the origin of the Sacred Vedas.

ORATOR.—Long millions of ages back, when earth, sun and stars were not, or at best were cometary matter, there existed and had existed during all eternity, one great, uncreated, Supreme Being, invisible and incomprehensible; without form and yet Himself pervading and filling all space; the Universal Soul and germ of all that has since been developed; a womb in which exists

the type of all things; so that all which now exists is but an archetypal emanation and reflection of this incomprehensible and unknowable God. By one exertion of His will, the earth, the sun, the stars, the elements, and all the powers of nature sprang into existence. This First of Beings whose glory is so great, that no description can be made of Him, is named *Sat* or Being, *Swayambhu* or self-existent, *Nervikalpa* or uncreated, *Avyaka* or invisible; *Ashariri*, or bodiless, and *Brahm*, or infinite space, determining the form of things, but not the form itself, or spirit as opposed to matter.

From his brain, or will, sprang Brahma, called also *Pitamaha*, or all-father, *Prajapati*, or Lord of beings; *Dhatra*, or generator, the male principle; *Lokaharta*, or world-former; *Lokapurwayas*, or firstborn of beings; *Surasvara*, or Lord of divinities, and to him Para-Brahma, or Brahm, the first cause delegated all his powers and returned to his original condition of eternal rest and beatitude. The Book of Manu, says— “After having produced the universe, He, whose power is incomprehensible, vanished again, absorbed in the Supreme Soul. Having retired into the primitive darkness, the Great Soul remains within the unknowable, and is void of all form. It is thus by alternate waking and rest, that the immutable Being causes all existing creatures to revive and die, alternately becoming active and inert.”

Q.—What is understood by the Trimurti?

A.—The Being existing through himself is One, and emanates the creative faculty, or Perusha, the divine male, when the one becomes Two, male and female,

and out of this union of the intellectual principle with that of first matter, evolves a Third, which is *Viradj*, the phenomenal world. From this invisible trinity, a second triad is evolved, which represents the creative, conservative and transforming faculties, typified as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Unity, *Tridandi*, is the God triply manifested, which gave rise to the symbolical A.U.M. or abbreviated Trimurti—A, *agni*, fire, V, *varuna*, water, M, *meruts*, air, gods. It is under this trinity, ever active and tangible to all our senses that the invisible and unknown Monas, can manifest itself to the world of mortals. When he becomes *Sarira*, or He that puts on a visible form, He typifies all the principles of matter and germs of life; He is the God of the three visages, or triple power, the essence of the Vedaic triad. Numerically, 1 is God; 2 matter; 3, the union, or phenomenal world; 4, expresses the emptiness of all;=10, the entire cosmos. The symbol of Brahma is earth; Vishnu, water, which is condensed air; Siva, fire.

Q.—What is said to have been the mission of Brahma?

A.—He, by one thought, created the Prajapatis, or Lords of creation. and from these proceeded all living creatures; and, numberless spirits of lower rank which swarm through all nature.

Q.—What is Vishnu's mission upon earth?

A.—To protect mankind from evil, punish vice, reward virtue, and to maintain order and justice, by coming upon earth in a manifest form.

Q.—What is the nature of Siva's mission?

A.—He was sent to destroy by fire, all that was evil, all that was superfluous, and needed to be remodelled in other conditions; but as death is only a transition to a new form of life, he is regarded as the representative of ever decaying and reviving nature. Siva is mythically said to cut off the head of Brahma each year, and form of the heads a necklace which he wears as Time; Brahma as the sun dies every year and is born again; hence we identify him with Osiris.

Q.—How is the account of the Creation of mankind, mythically rendered?

A.—Brahma, by his wife Sarbutie, brought forth a hundred sons, of whom the oldest, Datch, begat an equal number; but these generations of spiritual demigods, daints, giants, and the denizens of the lower world, could not be employed to people Mirtlock, or the earth. Therefore Brahma from his mouth engendered the Brahman or priest, to whom he gave the four Vedas, or the four words or books of his four mouths. From his right arm proceeded Ractius, the warrior, and from his left arm Shaterany, his wife. From his right thigh proceeded his third son Bais, destined to cultivate the soil, and to prosecute commerce and the mechanical arts; from his left thigh, his wife Basany. Then from his right foot proceeded his fourth son, Suder, who was intended to perform all kinds of servile labour; from his left foot his wife Suderany. These four sons typify the four Hindu castes, who received the four Vedas as the law of human life. The firstborn son, Brahman, also demanded a consort; but the Eternal

who wished him to devote his life to the study of the Vedas, to prayer and contemplation refused, but Brahman, still persisting in his desire, received, in anger, to wife, a daughter of the Daints or giants; and thus the entire Hindu priesthood, it is fabled, descend from a superior spirit and a female demon.

Q.—What are the Avatars or incarnations of Vishnu?

A.—There are nine of these which symbolize the nine geological periods, or more properly, the nine manifestations of the Eternal Spirit in the development of all created beings; advancing from the lowest reptile to the birth of mankind.

In the mythical account of the Avatars, it is related that a demon named Hayagriva, having stolen the sacred Vedas, swallowed them and took up his abode in the sea. The sacred books being lost, mankind soon fell into vice and wickedness, and becoming universally corrupt, a flood of water destroyed all of them with the exception of a pious monarch and his family of seven persons, who were saved in a vessel constructed by Vishnu. When the waters had attained their greatest elevation, this god plunged into the ocean, attacked and slew the giant and recovered three of the books, the fourth having been digested. Then emerging from the earth, half man and fish, he restored the Vedas to Brahma; the earth returned to its former condition, and was repeopled by the descendants of the eight persons so miraculously preserved. In the second he assumed the form of an enormous turtle, bearing a mountain on his back. In the third he penetrated through the earth in

the form of a wild boar, in pursuit of the monster Hiranyakshana, who had taken refuge in the lowest of the seven inferior worlds ; he found and slew the monster. In the fourth Avater, he appeared as an animal, half man and lion, and slew the brother of Hiranyakshana. In the fifth, as a diminutive Brahmin, he appeared before the giant Bali, and demanded as much ground for a sacrifice as he could cover with his feet. On the giant acceding to the proposition, Vishnu assumed an enormous stature, one foot covering the entire earth, the other filling the entire space between earth and heaven; while a third foot, which sprang from his belly, crushed the giant's head, and hurled him down to the infernal regions. In the sixth, in the human form, he encountered and slew armies of giants. In the seventh, under the name of Rama, he met with the most marvellous adventures, so many that it would fill volumes to recount them. In the eighth, armed only with a huge serpent, he slew hundreds of giants. In the ninth Avater, he transformed himself into a tree. The Brahmins confidently look forward for his tenth incarnation, when he will appear as a warrior, mounted on a white steed, and bearing a flaming cymetar, with which he will exterminate all sinners and unbelievers.

Q.—Explain the doctrine of Metempsychosis. A.—

The souls of unpurified men migrate, after death, into beings of higher or lower nature, according to the degree of moral impurity into which they have sunk in passing through existence. The Bhagavat Ghita says—
“As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on

new, even so the soul having quitted its old mortal frame, entereth into others which are new. Wise men who have abandoned all thoughts of the fruit which is produced from their actions, are freed from the claims of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happiness.” At cycles, of immense duration, things recommence anew their developments; the elements will combat and everything return to its primitive state of sublimated matter; again to solidify, bring forth and produce as formerly.

Q.—How often is the earth supposed to receive an Avatar?

A.—A portion of the Divine Being is supposed to be incarnated every cycle, or great year of 600 ordinary years, corrected to 608 years; the former is typified by the Osirian monogram XP, and the latter by the Greek, I.H.S.

Q.—You have well described the creative deity of the Hindus—Para-Brahma, the deity with the thousand heads which are one, and his manifestations: was there not also a principle of evil?

A.—There was; it is related that Moisasur, one of the earliest creation of superior spirits, envious of the glory and power of the Trimurti, raised a host of other malevolent and rebellious evil spirits, and waged war against heaven itself. The struggle was a brief but fierce one. Siva, the third person of the Hindu trinity, conquered Moisasur, and hurled him and his adherents down from heaven into Onderah, the place of darkness. Yet even for these fallen spirits, there is a chance of regeneration. By the intercession

of the Trimurti with Para-Brahma, or Brahm, instead of an eternity of punishment, they were condemned to pass through fifteen transmigrations: the first seven in the bodies of the lower animals, and the other eight in the human form. Moisasur, and a few of his adherents still remain obdurate; but even for them there will be mercy, for, when the Zodiac has accomplished one entire revolution, the souls of all men and spirits alike will re-ascend to heaven.

Q.—Are the Sacred Vedas still in existence and used by the Brahmins?

A.—They are; they were preserved orally for many centuries; but a Brahmin named Vyasa collected them and arranged them in a proper systematic order, thus:—prayers, hymns, invocations, religious rules, and philosophical doctrines. The Laws of Manu is also an important work, and contains laws for the government of all political, religious, and social relations of life.

Q.—One more question, Illustrious Patriarch, and we have done. What are the duties of the Brahmin priesthood, and what was, and is, their influence in political and national affairs?

A.—The duties of a Brahmin, are to lead a pure and holy life, to pass his time in prayer, contemplation, and teaching the people the doctrine of the four Vedas and the Laws of Manu. He must not take life, nor eat animal food, unless it has first been used for sacrificial purposes. As regards their influence, political and social, it is all powerful. The princes and potentates of Hindostan are invariably of the military

caste; but the priests or Brahmins, being the most highly educated and intellectual class, are the advisers and real directors of things, from the important affairs of government to the minutest details of social life.

S. D.—We thank you, Illustrious Patriarch, for your exposition of the Brahminical faith. We would now, Illustrious Brother First Mystagogue, hear from you, an exposition of the doctrines of Buddha, as briefly as you will, how and in what manner they differ from the teachings of the Brahmins.

FIRST MYSTAGOGUE.—The founder of this widely spread system of religion, which numbers two hundred millions of devotees, was one Sakyamuni. He was a prince of royal descent, and possessed of every advantage of person and fortune. From the moment of his birth, which was attended by many miraculous events, he was under the guardian ship and tuition of angelic spirits. Disgusted at a very early age with the vain pleasures of the world and the depravity of man, he retired from the court, and seeking the wilderness, he devoted six years of his life to prayer, mortification, and seclusion from his fellow-men. By this ascetic life, he was so purified from all human passions, that he became a Buddha or immortal. Leaving this retreat, he resolved to purify religion, and teach mankind that faith alone was not sufficient, unless accompanied by good-works. He taught the transmigration of souls, but considered that the highest state of felicity was that of Nirwana, in which the immortal spirit loses all bodily state and becomes at one with deity, but individually and eternally happy.

This condition of bliss was only to be attained by alms-giving, morality, energy, and good-will to all men. His doctrines were rapidly spread throughout the entire East, not only in India, but China, Thibet, Ceylon, and the Japanese Islands. In China he is worshipped under the name of Fo, and in Japan as Fohi. His followers believe that he is to rule the world for 5000 years, and that when he is received into Nirwana another Buddha will be inaugurated.

S. D.—Illustrious Brother Second Mystagogue, what are the Zend Avesta and their leading doctrines?

SECOND MYSTAGOGUE.—The Zend Avesta are the sacred books of the ancient Persians and modern Parsees. They teach that Zervane Akerene, or uncreated time, gave birth to two divine beings named Ormuzd and Ahriman, of entirely different natures, one being the offspring of faith and the other of doubt. Ormuzd is the God of light and goodness, dwelling in the region of brightness, and creator of holy angels, and all things necessary for the benefit and happiness of man; whilst Ahriman is the spirit of darkness and evil, and the creator of evil angels, and everything that can plague and destroy humanity and thwart the designs of Ormuzd. Thus, between these contending principles of light and darkness there is a constant struggle for the supremacy; but which in the end will terminate in the dominion of Ormuzd, when even Ahriman and his legions will be pardoned, and all obtain eternal happiness. Man having fallen by the sin of his firstparents, was exposed to the temptation of Ahriman, and the Devs, his spirits of evil; but Ormuzd and his angelic

hosts were constantly on the alert to save them from his malign power; the mediator for this purpose being Mithras, who was born in a cave hewn out of a rock. The following Persian allegory may not be out of place on this occasion. Ormuzd was formed from the purest light, and Ahriman on the contrary from the thickest darkness.—Ormuzd created six good deities like himself and Ahriman created six evil ones. Ormuzd then made twenty-four others, which he placed in an egg; but Ahriman made an equal number who broke open the egg; and in this way was produced in the world the mixture of good and evil. The twenty-four good deities are the twelve months divided into fortnights, to represent the waning and waxing moons; as was the custom amongst the Indians and Romans. The Avesta impressed upon believers the necessity of prayer, charity, resistance of temptation, obedience to authority, and industry in the cultivation of the earth.

Zoroaster was not the author of the Zend Ayesta, nor was he the founder of the religion, but he was its greatest expounder, reformer, and prophet. He was also the founder of the Persian Mysteries, which in many respects were identical with those of Memphis, of which Zoroaster was a member.

SUBLIME DAI.—Illustrious Brother Orator, what relation do the Khamitic or Egyptian dogmas bear to the Aryan and Semitic?

Ora.—The Egyptians derived their religious dogmas from the same primitive source as the Aryan Indians, but were an earlier branch than the Vedaic followers;

at a later time the Zoroastrians became masters of Babylon, and more or less influenced Egyptianism. Communion between the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Indians was maintained at all times; and moreover the books of Hermes, like the Indian Vedas, were four, divided into 42 sections, and carried by both priests in the same order. The Brahminical system differed from the Egyptian only as a Rite. The Semitic race were younger, and had a faith of Babylonian design, modified by Egypt. The faith of the Chinese, and other of the Turanian races, is of primitive antiquity, but all teach the dogma of a sole living God, and the immortality of the human soul, the grand basis on which our Rite is founded.

Q.—What relation do these races bear to the Western Teutons?

A.—They are of the same blood, and their religious mysteries have the same origin. But the Western Teutons, when we first hear of them, were a warlike race, like the Vishnuites, whose mission was to make themselves a home in Europe, against the Celtic and other tribes, of the same stock as themselves, and hence the Aryan creed and mythology developed into a warlike doctrine in which Odin their Chief and All-Father would reward, in Valhalla, the valour of his race. These Teuts believed it impious to make any representation of the Omniscient God, but placed in their Temples, like the Egyptians at Memphis, seven statues which are now identified in the seven days of the week. The image of Odin was situated in the Holy Place upon a raised dais, behind him the Sun, and

Moon, Tuesco, Thor, the Scandinavian war-god, Friga, their Isis, and Seater. They had an ark, with a fire continually burning upon an altar before it, and a vase for the sacrificial blood, which was sprinkled upon the worshippers. Twelve priests and a Supreme Pontiff, who were clothed with Zodiacal emblems, officiated in a single national temple, though they had also grove-worship. Their mysteries represented the God, Balder, as slain by Hodr.

CHARGE.

You have now heard from the lips of our Illustrious Patriarchs, the principal doctrines of the three great religions of the East; they have been given to you in a plain impartial manner, without any prejudice for or against. This is the only way in which such a subject can be investigated. The aim of this degree is not the studious advocacy of any of these creeds, but to shew our brethren how religion, like history, continually repeats itself.

There is not, and there never has been, a single faith, that has not borrowed some portion of its tenets from an older one; of course we accept the earliest Patriarchs, who worshipped God in the most primitive manner, but ever since forms of worship and priestcraft commenced, the same ideas, the same dogmas, the same prejudices, and, more or less modified, the same forms can be traced and identified down to the latest concoction of the last impostor, or the last prophet.

The idea of one Supreme Being is common to all religions, even if they run into polytheism and idol worship. The Para-Brahma of the Hindus, Eternal

Spirit of the Buddhists, the Zeruane Akerene of the ancient Persians, the Supreme Essence floating on the surface of the dark waters of the ancient Scandinavian mythology, the Belus of the Chaldeans; the Ulômos, or, El-om-os, eternal, rational, conscious God, of the Phœnicians, the Kneph of the Egyptians, the Virococha of the Mexicans, are all identical and represent the God of the Jews, Christians and Mohammedans. Every faith has its two opposing influences of good and evil—God and Satan, Brahma and Moisasur, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Belus and Moloch, Osiris and Typhon, Vitzliputzli and Tezcatlipoca. All have their heavens and hells, and prominently three have purgatories, namely—Roman Catholics, Egyptians and Parsees. The Brahmins have their trinity in unity as we Christians have. These three are represented by gold, silver and iron, or the three peaks of the holy Mount Meru. In the Brahminical mysteries, the Mystagogues represented Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, or the Sun in the East, South and West.

The number four is common to all—the four elements, the four seasons, the four cardinal points, North, South, East and West, but it is almost useless to multiply instances of this; the cavern of Elephanta is supported by four massive pillars. The number seven occurs so frequently in all religions and ceremonies, that it almost conclusively proves a connecting link between them. Let us commence with the seven days of the week, and the seven planets of the ancients. The Jewish Rabbis describe seven hells and give their names. The Mohammedans believe in seven hells and seven heavens. Zoroaster says that there are seven classes of demons;

there were seven Gothic deities; the seven Pleiades; the seven Hyades; the seven Titans and Titanides; the seven Heliades of the Greeks; the seven Cabiri of the Phœnicians; the seven sons of Ptah at Memphis, and the seven great and seven lesser Gods; the seven Amschaspands of the Parsees; the seven Manus; the seven Pitris, Rishis, or Sages of the Aryan race; the body of Bacchus was cut into seven pieces by the Bacchantes; there were seven holy temples in Arabia; seven lamps in the temple of Bactria. The name of the wife of Thoth is Sfkh, Hebrew Sebah, or seven; her symbol is seven rays, or five rays and two horns, in allusion to the five planets and sun and moon, by which the festivals and seasons were regulated, and which Philo Herennius of Byblus qualifies as “creations without consciousness through which rational creatures are generated; called Zuphasemin, or, Heaven watchers.” I might cite a thousand instances of its universality. To readers of the Bible I need not mention its continual recurrence in connection with all its most important events. The number twelve is similarly met with in all religious rites; the Egyptians had twelve Zodiacal gods; the Scandinavians had twelve priests, and Jesus had twelve disciples.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that many of the institutions and ceremonies of the Buddhists and the Roman Catholic Church so closely resemble each other that the two appear almost identical; now, as the sect of Buddha is eight or nine hundred years older than the latter church, how can we possibly account for this mysterious coincidence? The greater portion of the Buddhists believe that their prophet was born of a virgin, and the Parsees claim that Zoroaster was born in a state of

innocence, without sin, that he spoke as soon as he came into the world, and was guarded by angels in the cradle. In the temples of Fo, or Buddha, in China, there is always placed upon the altar a picture of Shin-mo, the holy mother, with a child in her arms; the woman's head is surrounded by a ray of glory, and lamps are kept continually burning before it. To say that all these wonderful coincidences are the result of chance alone, is an insult to the human understanding.

I might point out many other startling resemblances among religions, for instance the use of consecrated water, of fire in their ceremonies, from the time when Cain and Abel offered up sacrifices to the Lord, down to the wax tapers and swinging Censers of the Catholic church; but your own attention being aroused will render that trouble needless.

Illustrious Brother, may all the combined blessings of the religions which we have been discussing, be showered upon your head and be yours now and forever. Remember this, never condemn unheard. Examine, reflect, and tolerate.

You are now sufficiently enlightened by the instruction of the last three degrees to comprehend the application and relationship of the various religious mysteries of the East and West, and you will now be led to understand the great value of Masonry as a cosmopolitan system. Our next Rites will instruct you in those magnificent ceremonials which were called the Lesser and Greater Mysteries of the Egyptian priests, devoted to the worship of Isis and Hseri or Osiris.

CLOSING SAME AS LAST DEGREE.

