

The Purusha Sukta—Part I

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Abstract

The Purusha Sukta is an ancient Hindu hymn that celebrates the sacrifice of a God-like entity called “Purusha,” and it is still regularly chanted during Hindu worship. Modern scholars, however, find this hymn to be obscure. This article gives a theosophical interpretation, showing that Purusha corresponds to the concept of the Planetary Logos. Part I of this article covers verses 1 through 10, and Part II covers verses 11 through 16.

Background

The Rig Veda, the oldest text in Hinduism, is a collection of 1,028 Sanskrit hymns and is often dated between 1700–1100 BCE. The earliest version of the Purusha Sukta is in the Rig Veda, but subsequent versions of this hymn appear elsewhere with some modifications and redactions. It is one of the few hymns in the Rig Veda still being used in contemporary Hinduism, as reported by the President of the Ramakrishna Mission at Chennai, India: “This Sukta finds a place even today in the worship of a deity, in a temple or at home, in the daily *parayana* [chanting], in establishing the sacred fire for a Vedic ritual, in various rituals, and even in the cremation of a dead body.”¹

According to the Hindu tradition, the Purusha Sukta was written down by an ancient scribe known as Narayana. Swami Krishnananda, the General Secretary of The Divine Life Society, reports on this somewhat mythical origin: “The Seer (Rishi) of the Sukta is Narayana, the greatest of sages ever known, who is rightly proclaimed in the Bhagavata [Purana] as the only person whose mind cannot be disturbed by desire and, as the Mahabharata says, whose power not even all the gods can ever imagine. Such is the Rishi to whom the Sukta was re-

vealed and who gave expression to it as the hymn on the Supreme Purusha.”²

The Purusha Sukta is a small hymn, with only sixteen verses, and is written in the oldest form of Sanskrit that has been preserved. Some of its words have multiple meanings, and some may have had meanings that were lost during the intervening years. Its language is ritualistic and may seem archaic. Moreover, this hymn may have a hidden, or esoteric, significance that was concealed behind its ritualistic language.

For these reasons, modern scholars generally find the Purusha Sukta to be obscure. For example, John Muir refers to it as, “Another important, but in many places obscure, hymn of the Rig Veda.”³ Zenaide Ragozin writes, “The hymn, as a whole, is exceedingly obscure and of entirely mystical import.”⁴ One verse, which characterizes something as both the parent and progeny of something else, is called “a cryptogram” by Rein Fernhout.⁵ Another verse seems to describe a paradoxical situation in which a sacrifice has the same subject and object, so Steven Rosen asks, “Was the confusion that naturally bursts forth from this paradox meant to be like a *Zen koan*, a mystical riddle, or is it a product of the Vedas’ incomprehensibility?”⁶

On the other hand, Helena Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, states that this hymn has a coherent esoteric mean-

About the Author

Zachary F. Lansdowne, Ph.D., who served as President of the Theosophical Society in Boston, has been a frequent contributor to *The Esoteric Quarterly*. His book *The Revelation of Saint John*, which provides a verse-by-verse analysis of the entire *Revelation*, was reviewed in the Fall 2006 issue. He can be reached at zackl@sprynet.com.

ing: “It is those scholars only who will master the secret meaning of the Purushasukta, who may hope to understand how harmonious are its teachings and how corroborative of the Esoteric Doctrines. One must study in all the abstruseness of their metaphysical meaning the relations therein between the (Heavenly) Man ‘Purusha,’ *sacrificed* for the production of the Universe and all in it, and the terrestrial mortal man.”⁷

Blavatsky continues: “Hence in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, the mother fount and source of all subsequent religions, it is stated allegorically that ‘the thousand-headed Purusha’ was slaughtered at the foundation of the World, that from his remains the Universe might arise. This is nothing more nor less than the foundation—the seed, truly—of the later many-formed symbol in various religions, including Christianity, of the sacrificial lamb. For it is a play upon the words. ‘Aja’ (Purusha), ‘the unborn’ or eternal Spirit, means also ‘lamb’ in Sanskrit. Spirit disappears—dies, metaphorically—the more it gets involved in matter, and hence the sacrifice of the ‘unborn,’ or the ‘lamb.’”⁸

Blavatsky never published a detailed commentary on the Purusha Sukta. In fact, to our knowledge, the two paragraphs given above constitute most of her published comments on this hymn. Alice Bailey, a later theosophical author, wrote a great deal on subjects related to the Purusha Sukta but did not write anything explicitly about this hymn.

In what follows, the English translation of each verse of the Purusha Sukta (as found in the Rig Veda) by Michael Myers, a Professor of the Philosophy of Religion,⁹ is given in bold, followed by an interpretation of that verse in italics showing that Purusha corresponds to the concept of the Planetary Logos. The subsequent theosophical commentary, including a detailed analysis of the symbols in the verse, is based primarily on the writings of Blavatsky and Bailey.

Purusha

The first five verses provide us with a detailed description of the relationship be-

tween Purusha, or the Planetary Logos, and human beings.

- 1. Thousand-headed is Purusha, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed. Having covered the earth on all sides, he stood above it the width of ten fingers.**

The Planetary Logos, whose body incorporates all human beings, expresses Himself through the planet Earth but transcends it.

Sri V. Sundar provides a slightly different translation for the last phrase in the verse: “He stands beyond the count of ten fingers.” The ten fingers in this phrase are the fingers of human hands. Sundar explains this symbol: “They are the basis of count, of all mathematics, of all the logic and science built on mathematics. However, they are all limited when it comes to analyzing Purusha. He is transcendent, and beyond such limited understanding.”¹⁰

Who or what is Purusha (or Purusa) in this hymn? The Sanskrit word *Purusha* can be translated as man, soul, or spirit. The Purusha Sukta in its earliest version, which appears in the Rig Veda, does not call Purusha by any name other than Purusha and so it is not clear what this word actually denotes. Blavatsky, however, offers this clue: “In these Hymns, the ‘Heavenly Man’ is called *purusha*.”¹¹ So, who or what is the Heavenly Man?

Bailey uses the terms “Heavenly Man” and “Planetary Logos,”¹² and also the plural forms “Heavenly Men” and “Planetary Logoi,” as synonyms. She says, “Human beings are the cells in the body of a Heavenly Man.”¹³ She also speaks of “the planet Earth, through which our Planetary Logos expresses Himself,”¹⁴ and goes on to say, “A Heavenly Man has His source outside the solar system.”¹⁵ Thus, Bailey’s descriptions of the Planetary Logos are consistent with how the first verse describes Purusha. The commentary that follows shows that interpreting Purusha as the Planetary Logos also yields a coherent treatment for the subsequent verses.

- 2. Only Purusha is all this, that which has been and that which is to be. He is the**

lord of the immortals, who grow by means of [ritual] food.

The Planetary Logos is the prototype for human beings, the model for their past development and future attainment. He is the lord of the spiritual kingdom and achieves as human beings sacrifice their own limited ideals and pride.

A *prototype* can be defined as an original model after which similar things are patterned. This definition allows the model and similar things to have different dimensions. We interpret the first sentence to mean that the Planetary Logos is the prototype for each human being even though they have vastly different dimensions. Genesis 1:27 states: “So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him.”¹⁶ This quotation supports our interpretation because the Planetary Logos could be regarded as the personal God of our planet.¹⁷ Bailey says, “Man is gradually achieving that conscious control over matter in the three worlds that his divine Prototypes, the Heavenly Men, have already achieved.”¹⁸ In other words, human beings are essentially similar to the Planetary Logos, but gradually become in practical manifestation what they truly are and what the Planetary Logos has already achieved. If we accept the premise that the Planetary Logos is the prototype for human beings, we can make inferences about the Planetary Logos based on analogies with human beings.

The above verse mentions the “immortals,” but who are they? In Hinduism, human beings are said to have attained *moksha*—a Sanskrit word that means salvation or liberation—when their

cycle of rebirth comes to an end. We take these liberated human beings to be the “immortals” because they are no longer born into mortal physical bodies. Theosophy uses the terms “spiritual kingdom” and “Hierarchy” to denote them.

The verse designates the Planetary Logos as “the lord of the immortals.” The Planetary Logos could be regarded in such a way because the spiritual kingdom endeavors to carry out the will of the Planetary Logos, as Bailey explains: “The Chohans of the Hierarchy now on Earth ... work consciously carrying out the Will of the Planetary Logos in the planet, but

even They are as yet far from appreciating fully the Will and purpose of the Logos as He works through the system. Glimpses They may get and an idea of the general plan, but the details are as yet unrecognizable.”¹⁹ Here, the “Chohans” denote the presiding officers of the spiritual kingdom.

Sacrifice in Hinduism can be outer or inner.²⁰ In the above verse, “ritual food” is taken as bits of the lower self that are surrendered as part of inner sacrifice, but what are those bits? Bailey encourages “the spontaneous relinquish-

ing of long-held ideals when a greater and more inclusive presents itself” and “the sacrifice of pride and the sacrifice of personality when the vastness of the work and the urgency of the need are realized.”²¹ Thus, ritual food includes surrendered ideals and pride.

Sacrifice, however, does not imply pain and suffering, as Bailey points out: “Students should also bear in mind that they need to rid themselves of the usual idea of sacrifice as a process of giving-up, or renunciation of all that makes life worth living. Sacrifice is, technically speaking, the achievement of a state of

Approximately eighteen million years ago occurred a great event that signified, among other things, the following developments: The Planetary Logos of our Earth scheme, one of the Seven Spirits before the throne, took physical incarnation ... [With Him] came a group of other highly evolved Entities ... to form focal points of planetary force for the helping of the great plan for the self-conscious unfoldment of all life.

bliss and of ecstasy because it is the realization of another divine aspect.”²²

Myers’s translation of the verse, given above, suggests that the entire spiritual kingdom grows by means of ritual food. Rosen, however, translates the last part of the verse as, “He is the lord of eternal life, and grows by virtue of [ritual] food,”²³ which suggests only that the Planetary Logos grows by means of such food. Bailey writes, “When man achieves, then the Heavenly Men likewise achieve.”²⁴ Thus, when human beings sacrifice their limited ideals and pride, the Planetary Logos also advances.

3. Such is his greatness, yet more than this is Purusa. One-quarter of him is all beings; three-quarters of him is the immortal in heaven.

Such is the greatness of the Planetary Logos, and yet He is more than even this. The Planetary Logos is also the “All-Seeing Eye” that sees into His body, including every human being, because He can be focused within His higher life.

Theosophy considers a human being to consist of the following four parts: the Monad, or divine Self; the Triad, consisting of spiritual will, intuition, and higher mind; the causal body, which is the storehouse for the wisdom gained from experience; and the personality, consisting of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies.²⁵ Accordingly, the personality is only one-quarter of these parts; the remaining three-quarters are in higher, or more abstract, realms. Human beings can be self-observant because they can be focused within their higher life and from there observe the personality. Indeed, Bailey says, “The task of the disciple is to become consciously aware—like a detached onlooking Observer—of these energies and their expressing qualities as they function within himself.”²⁶

As indicated by the above verse, the body of the Planetary Logos is only one-quarter of Him because He mainly consists of higher parts that are in “heaven.” By analogy, the Planetary Logos can also be self-observant, which means that He can be focused within His higher life

and from there observe His body. The verse states that His body is formed by “all beings,” so the Planetary Logos is able to observe those beings.

Bailey explains the last point in more detail: “Let me now expand the concept further, reminding you of the phrase so oft employed, ‘the All-Seeing Eye.’ This refers to the power of the Planetary Logos to see into all parts, aspects, and phases (in time and space) of His planetary vehicle, which is His physical body, and to identify Himself with all the reactions and sensitivities of His created world and to participate with full knowledge in all events and happenings.”²⁷ Proverbs 15:3 has a similar notion: “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

4. Three-quarters of Purusa went upward, one-quarter of him remained here. From this [one-quarter] he spread in all directions into what eats and what does not eat.

The will, love-wisdom, and intelligence of the Planetary Logos flow through His vital body, which includes the human kingdom of nature, and then through His dense physical body, which includes the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

The physical body of a human being has both dense and subtle portions. The dense physical body contains the muscles, organs, and bones. The subtle physical body is called the vital or etheric body in theosophy; *pranamayakosha*, a Sanskrit name, in Hinduism; meridians in Chinese medicine; and biofield in alternative western medicine.

According to theosophy, the manifested universe consists of seven worlds that are often called “planes.” These planes are arranged metaphorically in a tiered sequence. The mental, emotional, and physical planes are the three lowest planes; and they constitute the three worlds of human endeavor. The physical plane is the lowest plane, and it is said to have seven subplanes. The three lowest physical subplanes (called the gaseous, liquid, and dense subplanes) provide the substance for the dense physical bodies of human beings. The

four highest physical subplanes (called the etheric subplanes) provide the substance for the vital bodies of human beings.²⁸

An analogous situation holds for the Planetary Logos. Bailey writes, “Our seven planes are only the seven subplanes of the cosmic physical plane,”²⁹ and speaks of “the appropriation of a dense physical body by the Planetary Logos; this body is composed of matter of our three lower planes.”³⁰ The point is that our mental, emotional, and physical planes, which are the three lowest cosmic physical subplanes, provide the substance for the dense physical body of the Planetary Logos. Similarly, our four highest planes, which are the four highest cosmic physical subplanes, provide the substance for the vital body of the Planetary Logos. The physical body of the Planetary Logos is the combination of His dense physical and vital bodies.

Human beings have inner streams of energy that flow through their vital body and then through their dense physical body.³¹ The above verse depicts the analogous flow of energy for the Planetary Logos. “Three-quarters of Purusa went upward” is taken as His streams of energy that originate within higher cosmic planes; “one-quarter of him remained here” as His vital body, which remains within the cosmic physical plane; and “he spread in all directions” as the streaming of these energies into His dense physical body.

What is the meaning of the fractions that appear in the verse? Three-quarters are associated with streams of energy, one-quarter with the vital body, and zero-quarters with the dense physical body. These fractions are based upon the total number of principles that the Planetary Logos manifests, as Bailey explains: “Only four principles in the Heavenly Men are as yet manifesting to any extent.”³² She goes on to point out that “a Heavenly Man contains within Himself three major principles—will, love-wisdom, intelligence,”³³ and that “the dense physical body is not a principle for a Heavenly Man”³⁴ though “the etheric body ... is the principle of coherence in every form.”³⁵ Thus, will, love-wisdom, and intelligence are three-quarters of the principles manifested by the Planetary Logos, and His vital, or etheric,

body is the remaining one-quarter. Subsequent verses provide examples of how these four principles are applied. His dense physical body is not counted as a principle because its activity is simply an effect, or outcome, of the four manifested principles.

The third verse associates “one-quarter of him” with “all beings,” while the above verse associates “he spread in all directions” with “what eats and what does not eat.” Thus, these symbols are interpreted as meaning that the vital body of the Planetary Logos includes all human beings, while His dense physical body includes the subhuman kingdoms of nature—namely, the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

This interpretation is supported by Bailey’s descriptions of the planetary bodies: “It must be remembered that the sumtotal of human and deva units upon a planet make the *body vital* of a Planetary Logos, whilst the sumtotal of lesser lives upon a planet (from the material bodies of men or devas down to the other kingdoms of nature) form His *body corporeal*.”³⁶ Here, Bailey uses *deva*, which is the Sanskrit word for deity, to denote an angelic builder of the form aspect of a planet.³⁷

5. From him the shining one was born, from the shining one was born Purusa. When born he extended beyond the earth, behind as well as in front.

The Planetary Logos brings about illumination in human beings, and this illumination brings about an awareness of the Planetary Logos. When the Planetary Logos for our planet began His work, His influence extended beyond the Earth because He affected the other Planetary Logoi within our solar system.

The above verse describes the paradoxical situation in which “the shining one” is born from Purusha and then Purusha is born from “the shining one.” Here, “the shining one” is a translation of the Sanskrit word *viraj*, which could also be translated as “splendor, radiance, or light.” Modern scholars have attempted to resolve this paradox by offering differing conceptions about what *viraj* denotes. In this

commentary, “the shining one” is taken to represent psychological illumination because the latter shines forth like an inner light within the personality.

Bailey speaks of “the great experiment that has been inaugurated on Earth by our Planetary Logos in connection with the process of initiation”³⁸ and says, “The objective of the experiment might be stated as follows: It is the intent of the Planetary Logos to bring about a psychological condition that can best be described as one of ‘divine lucidity.’”³⁹ In other words, the Planetary Logos brings about illumination in human beings through the process of initiation. This illumination is a manifestation of the principle of love-wisdom mentioned in the fourth verse. Bailey also writes, “At initiation, man becomes aware consciously of the Presence of the Planetary Logos through self-induced contact with his own divine Spirit.”⁴⁰ Thus, this illumination, which is brought about by the Planetary Logos, in turn brings about an awareness of the Planetary Logos. That outcome is also suggested by Psalm 36:9: “In thy light shall we see light.” Just as the light from a lamp enables us to see the lamp itself, the illumination brought about by the Planetary Logos enables us to perceive the cause of that illumination.

The final phrase, “he extended beyond the earth, behind as well as in front,” means that the Planetary Logos for our planet affects the Planetary Logoi for the other planets in our solar system. Bailey describes how the Planetary Logoi may affect each other: “Each of the Heavenly Men pours forth His radiation, or influence, and stimulates in some way some other center or globe. To word it otherwise, His magnetism is felt by His Brothers in a greater or less degree according to the work being undertaken at any one time.”⁴¹

The Sacrifice of Purusha

Verses six through ten depict for us the effects of divine sacrifice on the various forms of life on our planet.

6. When the gods performed a sacrifice with the offering Purusha, spring was its

clarified butter, summer the kindling, autumn the oblation.

When the divinity hidden within the forms of life in the planet sought added life and illumination, the Planetary Logos sacrificed Himself by entering into those forms, thereby transforming their life cycles into evolutionary cycles.

The above verse may seem complex because it depicts how the process of invocation and evocation affected the process of evolution.

Invocation is the act of petitioning for help or support from a greater entity; evocation is the subsequent response of help. The earlier verses describe the evocation of added life and illumination from the Planetary Logos. The forms of life in our planet, however, must have invoked such help before the corresponding evocation could have occurred.

Bailey describes this process of invocation and evocation as follows:

The basic sacrifice that the Planetary Logos made was when He decided to incarnate or enter into the form of this planet ... This sacrifice was imperative in the fullest sense, owing to the ability of the Planetary Logos to identify Himself in full consciousness with the Soul in all forms of life, latent within the planetary substance. When He “took over” this task, He, esoterically, had no choice because the decision was inherent in His own nature. Because of this identification, He could not refuse the invocative appeal of the “seeds of life, striving within the substance of the form, and seeking added life and light,” as the *Old Commentary* puts it. This striving and reaching forth evoked His response and the going out of His divinity, as expressed in will, activated by “fixed determination” to meet the deeply hidden divinity within these seeds.⁴²

The last part of the verse is concerned with evolution. The three seasons—spring, summer, and autumn—represent the life-cycle of annual plants: their birth, life, and death. The verse mentions three elements of a sacrificial ritual: clarified butter, which brightens the sacrificial

fire; kindling, which enables the fire to burn; and oblation, which is burned in the fire. Clarified butter, which is called “ghee” in India, is butter that has had the milk solids and water removed. The verse states that the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos transformed the three seasons into these elements. If the implicit fire in the verse is interpreted as symbolizing the evolutionary process, then the transformed seasons may be interpreted in the following way: spring represents the birth of a new form, which—like ghee—reveals the glory of the evolutionary process; summer represents the discovery of the form’s limitations, which—like kindling—support the continuation of the evolutionary process; and autumn represents the death of the form, which—like an oblation—invokes a new and better form to take its place.

Consequently, the interpretation of the verse is as follows: “The gods” represent the divinity hidden within the forms of life in the planet. “The gods performed a sacrifice with the offering Purusa” means that the hidden divinity performed an invocation that evoked the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos. “Spring was its clarified butter, summer the kindling, autumn the oblation” means that the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos transformed the life cycles of the forms into evolutionary cycles.

This interpretation is supported by Bailey’s discussion of cyclic evolution: “Cyclic evolution is entirely the result of the activity of matter, and of the Will or Spirit. It is produced by the interaction of active matter and molding Spirit ... The active will, intelligently applied, of an Entity ... affects all lesser lives in cyclic evolution within the Body of that particular actively willing Existence ... No form is as yet perfect, and it is this fact that necessitates cyclic evolution and the continual production of forms until they approximate reality in fact and in deed.”⁴³ Here the molding “Will or Spirit” is the will of the Planetary Logos, which the fourth verse depicts as flowing into the human and subhuman kingdoms.

7. It was Purusa, born in the beginning, which they sprinkled on the sacred grass

as a sacrifice. With him the gods sacrificed, the demi-gods, and the seers.

At the beginning of the current Manvantara, the Planetary Logos for our planet became a center within the vital body of the Solar Logos, transmitting streams of energy from the other Planetary Logoi to the forms of life within the dense physical body of the Solar Logos.

In Hinduism, a *Manvantara* is a very long duration of time. According to Blavatsky, “The full period of one *Manvantara* is ... 308,448,000 years.”⁴⁴ Bailey uses the term “*Manvantara*” to denote the “cycle of physical incarnation” of a Planetary Logos.⁴⁵ So, in the above verse, “the beginning” refers to the beginning of the current *Manvantara*.

In theosophy, the “Solar Logos” is the entity who expresses Himself through our solar system, just the Planetary Logos expresses Himself through our planet. The term “Grand Man of the Heavens” is a synonym for the Solar Logos, just as “Heavenly Man” is a synonym for the Planetary Logos. Moreover, the Solar Logos is the prototype for the Planetary Logos, just as the Planetary Logos is the prototype for human beings. Bailey says, “What is true of him [a human being] is true of his great prototype, the Heavenly Man, the Planetary Logos, and true again of the prototype of his prototype, the Grand Man of the Heavens, the Solar Logos.”⁴⁶ Thus, we can make statements about the Solar Logos based on analogies with human beings.

The Solar Logos has both a vital body and a dense physical body, just as a human being has both. According to the Hindu Upanishads, human beings have seven major centers, called *chakras* in Sanskrit, within their vital body.⁴⁷ By analogy, the Solar Logos also has seven major centers within His vital body. In the above verse, three clues indicate that the Planetary Logos has become one of those centers.

First, the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos takes place on “sacred grass.” Grass also appears as a symbol in Revelation 8:7, for which it has been interpreted as the human vital body be-

cause it resembles that body in the following way.⁴⁸ According to the Upanishads, the human vital body consists of an extensive and intricate network of energy channels, which are called *nadis* in Sanskrit. A single *nadi* is a thin channel of force, so its form is similar to that of a blade of grass. The Upanishads consider this vital body to consist of many *nadis* but do not agree on the exact number of them; the number most often mentioned is 72,000.⁴⁹ Similarly, a field of grass consists of many blades of grass. By analogy, a field of grass also resembles the vital body of the Solar Logos, so “sacred grass” in the verse is taken as symbolizing that body.

Second, “they sprinkled” the Planetary Logos. Sundar expands Myers’s translation, given above, with the sentence, “Those achievers sprinkled him with holy water.”⁵⁰ In either translation, “sprinkled” is taken as depicting the transmission of streams of energy, which is a key function of a center within the vital body.

Third, “with him the gods sacrificed, the demi-gods, and the seers.” Thus, the other participants in the sacrifice are as follows: “gods,” which could signify macrocosms, or large worlds, are taken as the vital and dense physical bodies of the Solar Logos; “demi-gods,” which could signify lesser macrocosms, are taken as the other Planetary Logoi; and “seers,” which could signify beings with insight, are taken as the forms of life that invoked added life and illumination, as mentioned in the sixth verse.

Consequently, we interpret the verse as saying that the Planetary Logos for our planet became a center within the vital body of the Solar Logos. This interpretation is supported by Bailey’s statement, “The bodies of the seven Heavenly Men are the etheric centers for a So-

lar Logos,”⁵¹ where etheric is synonymous with vital.

8. From that sacrifice completely offered, the clotted butter was brought together. It made the beasts of the air, the forest and the village.

As a result from the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos, the evolutionary changes occurred much more rapidly. This speedup enabled certain lives to pass relatively quickly through the three stages in the evolutionary process for animals and become human beings.

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The term “clotted butter” is a translation of the Sanskrit word *prasadajya*, which is “curdled or clotted butter, [or] ghee mixed with coagulated milk.”⁵² As in the sixth verse, ghee symbolizes the birth of a new evolutionary form. According to this association, ghee is spread out over the timeline, appearing whenever evolutionary change occurs. Thus, “the clotted butter was brought together” means that the evolutionary changes, which would have been spread out over a comparatively long timeline, were brought together over a relatively short timeline. In other words, those changes occurred much more rapidly.

Bailey describes three stages in the evolutionary process for the animal kingdom: “First, the higher animals and the domestic animals, such as the dog, the horse and the elephant. Secondly, the so-called wild animals, such as the lion, the tiger, and the other carnivorous and dangerous wild animals. Thirdly, the mass of lesser animals.”⁵³ In the above verse, we take the animals of the air, forest, and village as representing Bailey’s three stages of animal evolution, but in their correct temporal se-

quence. By mentioning all three stages and indicating that the duration of those stages had been significantly compressed, the verse suggests that some lives completed their evolution as animals and so became human beings.

This interpretation is supported by Bailey's historical account: "Left to himself for long eons, animal man would have eventually progressed out of the animal kingdom into the human and would have become a self-conscious, functioning, rational entity, but how slow the process would have been ... The decision of the Planetary Logos to take a physical vehicle produced an extraordinary stimulation in the evolutionary process; and, by His incarnation and the methods of force distribution He employed, He brought about in a brief cycle of time what would otherwise have been inconceivably slow. The germ of mind in animal man was stimulated ... The fourth, or human kingdom, came thus into being; and the self-conscious or rational unit, man, began his career."⁵⁴

The above quotation refers to the human kingdom as the "fourth" kingdom of nature. In this enumeration, the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms are counted as the first, second, and third kingdoms, respectively, and the spiritual kingdom as the fifth kingdom.

9. From that sacrifice completely offered, the mantras [Rig Veda] and the songs [Samaveda] were born. The meters were born from it. The sacrificial formulae [Yajurveda] were born from it.

As another result from the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos, the spiritual kingdom appeared and inspired human beings to write sacred scriptures containing mantras, songs, rhythmic patterns, and transformational techniques.

According to Bailey, the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos led to the founding of the spiritual kingdom for our planet: "Approximately eighteen million years ago occurred a great event that signified, among other things, the following developments: The Planetary Logos of our Earth scheme, one of the Seven Spirits before the throne, took physical incarnation ... [With

Him] came a group of other highly evolved Entities ... to form focal points of planetary force for the helping of the great plan for the self-conscious unfoldment of all life. Their places have gradually been filled by the sons of men as they qualify, though this includes very few, until lately, from our immediate Earth humanity."⁵⁵

Bailey also says, "The main technique of the Hierarchy is that of conveying inspiration."⁵⁶ Thus, after being founded by the Planetary Logos, the spiritual kingdom, or Hierarchy, inspired human beings to write sacred scriptures, such as the Rig Veda.

The Sanskrit word *mantra*, mentioned in the above verse, denotes a word or phrase of spiritual significance and power. Each verse in the Rig Veda is said to be a mantra, because it is thought to carry the truth and creative power that can lead to spiritual realization. A *meter*, also mentioned in the verse, is the rhythmic pattern of a stanza in a poem. The earliest known metrical texts are the hymns in the Rig Veda, which are written in a variety of meters. In the Purusha Sukta, the first fifteen verses are composed in the same meter and the final verse in another meter.

10. From it the horses were born and all that have cutting teeth in both jaws. The cows were born from it, also. From it were born goats and sheep.

As yet another result from the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos, human beings produced farm animals through the training and selective breeding of wild animals.

Selective breeding of animals is the process by which a breeder develops a cultivated breed over time, while selecting qualities within individuals of the breed that are passed on to the next generation. Scientific evidence shows that selective breeding, rather than mutation or natural selection, best explains how domestication of animals typically proceeded. Livestock or farm animals are animals that have been domesticated for food or work.

In the above verse, "it" refers to the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos, *all* of the mentioned animals are farm animals, and the word "born"

is a translation of the Sanskrit word that could also mean “made” or “produced.” Consequently, this verse is taken as saying that the sacrifice of the Planetary Logos led to the production of farm animals through the training and selective breeding of wild animals.

Bailey makes a similar statement: “The true and intelligent training of the wild animals and their adaptation to the conditions of ordered living are part of the divine process of integrating the Plan and of producing an ordered and harmonious expression of the divine intent.”⁵⁷ Here, “adaptation” is taken as selective breeding, “the Plan” as a manifestation of the intelligence of the Planetary Logos (mentioned in the fourth verse), and “the divine intent” as the will of the Planetary Logos (also mentioned in the fourth verse).

As shown by earlier verses, the Purusha Sukta emphasizes the role of inner design; but this inner design does not imply a single Designer, such as a personal God who creates the design. Blavatsky explains the last point: “The Universe is worked and *guided* from *within outwards* ... The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who ... are ‘messengers’ in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws.”⁵⁸ So, for example, the Planetary Logos is guided by the Solar Logos (seventh verse); the spiritual kingdom is guided by the Planetary Logos (second verse); the human kingdom is guided by the spiritual kingdom (ninth verse); and the animal kingdom is guided by the human kingdom (tenth verse).

[Part II covers verses 11 through 16]

¹Swami Amritananda, *Sri Rudram and Purushasuk-tam* (Chennai, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1997), vii.

²Swami Krishnananda, *Daily Invocations* (Rishikesh, India: Sivananda Ashram, 2008), 6, http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/invoc_0.html (accessed Dec. 20, 2008).

³John Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V (London: Trubner and Company, 1872), 367.

⁴Zenaide A. Ragozin, *Vedic India as Embodied Principally in the Rig-Veda* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1902), 280.

⁵Rein Fernhout, *Canonical Texts, Bearers of Absolute Authority: Bible, Koran, Veda, Tipitaka* (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994), 35.

⁶Steven J. Rosen, *Essential Hinduism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 55.

⁷Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II (1888; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1977), 606.

⁸Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, Vol. XIV (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), 397.

⁹Paul Briens, et al., *Reading About the World*, Vol. 1 (3rd ed., Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishing, 2006), 128, http://www.wsu.edu/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_1/rig_veda.html (accessed Dec. 20, 2008).

¹⁰Sri V. Sundar, *Purusha Sukta*, February 17, 1995, <http://www.ramanuja.org/purusha/sukta-1.html> (accessed Dec. 20, 2008).

¹¹Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, 606.

¹²Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1927), 387.

¹³Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1925), 353.

¹⁴Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 433.

¹⁵Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 271.

¹⁶All Biblical verses are taken from the King James Version.

¹⁷Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1922), 357.

¹⁸Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 410.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 732.

²⁰Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, *Dancing with Siva: Hinduism’s Contemporary Catechism* (Kapaa, HI: Himalayan Academy Publications, 2004), 849.

²¹Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 109.

²²Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 492.

²³Rosen, *Essential Hinduism*, 55.

²⁴Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 244.

²⁵Annie Besant, *A Study in Consciousness* (Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1904), 189-191; Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 260-261.

²⁶Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 414.

²⁷Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 291.

²⁸Arthur E. Powell, *The Etheric Double* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 1; Al-

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- ice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1922), 218.
- ²⁹ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 357.
- ³⁰ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 690.
- ³¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 34.
- ³² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 253.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 252.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.
- ³⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 54.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.
- ³⁷ Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 36.
- ³⁸ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1174.
- ³⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1*, 252-253.
- ⁴⁰ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 752.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 359.
- ⁴² Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 286-287.
- ⁴³ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 275, 393, 925.
- ⁴⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, 69.
- ⁴⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 670.
- ⁴⁶ Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 387.
- ⁴⁷ Hiroshi Motoyama, *Theories of the Chakras* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1984), 130-133.
- ⁴⁸ Zachary F. Lansdowne, *The Revelation of St. John* (York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2006), 72.
- ⁴⁹ Motoyama, *Theories of the Chakras*, 135.
- ⁵⁰ Sundar, *Purusha Sukta*, <http://www.ramanuja.org/purusha/sukta-3.html> (accessed Dec. 20, 2008).
- ⁵¹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 352.
- ⁵² Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, <http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil/> (accessed Dec. 20, 2008).
- ⁵³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1*, 224, 253.
- ⁵⁴ Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 31-32.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 28-29.
- ⁵⁶ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 230.
- ⁵⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1*, 255.
- ⁵⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, 274.

