

Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Summary

The teachings on the seven rays are associated with the Theosophical Society, because they were presented by a series of theosophical writers during the close of the Nineteenth Century and during the first half of the Twentieth Century. This article shows, however, that these teachings are part of the *Rig Veda*, which is the oldest known Hindu sacred text. In the Vedic account, the seven rays are “the seven mares” that convey divine consciousness; they form “the seven rivers,” or sequences of ideals, in the mental plane or world, are invoked by “the god of fire,” or one’s spiritual motive, and divide humanity into “the seven communities” in the physical plane.

Rig Veda

Helena Blavatsky, Charles Leadbeater, Ernest Wood, Alice Bailey, and Geoffrey Hodson, roughly in that chronological order, disseminated the teachings on the seven rays in a series of books that were published between 1888 and 1952. All of these writers were, at least at one time in their lives, members of the Theosophical Society. Blavatsky and Leadbeater made only a few brief references to the seven rays in their books, while Wood, Bailey, and Hodson wrote entire books on the subject. How did these writers get their information? The Theosophical Society proclaimed the existence of a group of perfected human beings, called the “Masters of the Wisdom” or the “Hierarchy.” All of these writers claimed, in their own books, to have received at least some of their information on the seven rays from the Masters of the Wisdom through inspiration, direct dictation, or visitations.¹

Can the teachings on the seven rays be found in earlier sources? If the notion of the seven rays is both true and useful, one would expect that earlier generations of people would have known something about it. Blavatsky states, “Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.”² The teachings on the seven rays are certainly part of modern Theosophy, so Blavatsky’s statement implies that these teachings were also known in the ancient world. The purpose of this article is to show that these teachings can be found in the very ancient *Rig Veda*.

The Sanskrit word *Veda* means knowledge or wisdom. In English, the word *Veda* denotes any of the four collections of the oldest and most authoritative Hindu sacred texts: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*. According to the Hindu tradition, these four Vedas are characterized by the Sanskrit word *Apauruseya*, which means “not of human agency,” because they were supposed to have been directly revealed to various human scribes. The *Rig Veda* is the oldest Veda, from which the other Vedas sometimes borrow, and it is a collection of 1,028 Sanskrit hymns organized into ten books. Philological and linguistic evidence

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.

indicate that it was composed in the Indian subcontinent roughly between 1700–1100 BCE.

Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950), a Hindu philosopher and teacher, is perhaps the foremost modern expert on the *Rig Veda*. The scholar Eric Weiss states:

Sri Aurobindo, the great Twentieth Century philosopher-mystic, took the work of the Theosophists to an entirely new level. Sri Aurobindo brought to his cosmological work three major assets: he was an accomplished yogi who seems to have had personal experience of the subtle worlds; he was well versed in both the Vedic *and* the Western philosophical and scientific traditions; and he wrote in English.³

This article builds upon Aurobindo’s analysis of the *Rig Veda*. Many contemporary scholars consider the *Rig Veda* to be the unsophisticated expression of the religious feeling of a primitive people. On the other hand, Aurobindo states, “The Veda is a book of esoteric symbols, almost of spiritual formulae, which masks itself as a collection of ritual poems.”⁴ Aurobindo’s writings show that the *Rig Veda* can be interpreted psychologically, with the various Vedic deities representing psychological powers of human beings.

We made a computer search through several English translations of the *Rig Veda* that are available on the Internet, looking for stanzas that include the phrase “seven rays.” Next, we performed a second search, looking for additional stanzas that include symbols appearing in the first set of stanzas. In this way, stanzas were assembled that appear to be concerned with the seven rays and that are scattered throughout most of the ten books of the *Rig Veda*. These stanzas, however, were composed by various scribes writing at different times, perhaps centuries apart. Could such scattered passages be consistent with each other and form a coherent doctrine? Aurobindo states that the *Rig Veda* is internally consistent:

Always the hymns of the Veda confirm each other by this reproduction of the same terms and ideas and the same relation of ideas. This would not be possible unless they were based on a coherent doctrine with a precise significance for standing terms ... The internal evidence of the Riks [stanzas] themselves establishes that this significance is psychological, as otherwise the terms lose their fixed value, their precise sense, their necessary connection, and their constant recurrence in relation to each other has to be regarded as fortuitous and void of reason or purpose.⁵

Thus, Aurobindo takes the internal consistency of the *Rig Veda* as evidence of an underlying psychological significance.

The remainder of this article examines the assembled stanzas to learn how the seven rays were comprehended in ancient times, drawing upon Aurobindo’s insights to understand the psychological meaning of the symbols and deities that are mentioned. Aurobindo’s own English translation is used wherever possible; also employed are other authoritative translations that are available for computer searches on the Internet. The assembled stanzas are arranged in four sections based on four symbolic themes: the seven mares, the seven rivers, the god of fire, and the seven communities.

The Seven Mares

The most common numbering scheme for the *Rig Veda* is by book, hymn, and stanza. For example, RV(IV, 13, 3-4) refers to book IV, hymn 13, and stanzas 3 and 4. These two stanzas incorporate the notion of the “seven rays” because they state:

Him whom, firm in their foundation,
never ceasing from their aim they have
made for the removing of the darkness,
this Sun seven mighty brilliant mares
bear as the scouts of the whole world. O
God, thou goest with steeds most strong
to bear separating the weft woven, un-
weaving the black garment; the stream-

ing rays of the Sun cast the darkness like a covering skin down within the waters.⁶

Throughout this article, we apply Aurobindo's interpretive approach, which construes the various symbols and deities of the *Rig Veda* in a psychological way. The above passage depicts conflict between light and darkness. Aurobindo takes these polarities as "the light of knowledge" and "the darkness of our ignorance."⁷ The passage mentions "waters." Aurobindo refers to "the waters of inspiration,"⁸ indicating that "waters" is a symbol of inspiration. This meaning is justified by these parallel phrases from another hymn: "O Fire, opulently shine in the human being, in the river of rocks, in the stream of flowing waters, in the stream of inspiration."⁹

Surya is the chief solar deity in Vedic mythology, visible as the sun in the sky, and said to drive daily across the sky in his triumphal chariot harnessed by seven horses. The above passage indicates, however, that *Surya*'s "seven mighty brilliant mares," which ordinarily denote adult female horses, are metaphors for the "rays of the Sun." Aurobindo gives this explanation:

But who, then, is *Surya*, the Sun, from whom these rays proceed? He is the Master of Truth, *Surya* the Illuminator ... His rays in their own nature are supramental activities of revelation, inspiration, intuition, luminous discernment, and they constitute the action of that transcendent principle which the Vedanta calls *Vijnana*, the perfect knowledge, the *Veda Ritam*, the Truth. But these rays descend also into the human mentality and form at its summit the world of luminous intelligence.¹⁰

Thus, in the passage, the Sun symbolizes divine consciousness, which is conveyed by the seven mares, or rays.

With these interpretations of its symbols, RV(IV, 13, 3-4) has the following psychological meaning: *Firm in their foundation of divine, or universal, consciousness and never ceasing from their aim of removing ignorance, seven mighty illumined rays convey*

divine consciousness as guides of the whole world. Divine consciousness goes with these strong rays that separate the strands of truth from the surrounding patterns of ignorant thought. These streaming rays cast off the ignorance that blocks the flow of inspiration in human beings.

Bailey gives a similar account of the seven rays:

The seven rays are the sum total of the divine Consciousness, of the universal Mind ... There is one Life, which expresses Itself primarily through seven basic qualities or aspects, and secondarily through the myriad diversity of forms. These seven radiant qualities are the seven Rays, the seven Lives, who give Their life to the forms, and give the form world its meaning, its laws, and its urge to evolution.¹¹

Thus, both RV(IV, 13, 3-4) and Bailey characterize the seven rays as living entities: RV(IV, 13, 3-4) describes their motivation, and Bailey refers to them as "the seven Lives."

RV(I, 105, 9) states: "In the Divine Planes exist the Seven Rays; In the Rays of those Realms, my base is spread out (or secure)."¹²

The above stanza refers to a person's "base," but what is that? A base denotes a support or foundation. The "base" in the stanza might be the soul, because the latter is an inner part of a person that supports the more outward parts. Although the term *soul* has many meanings, in this context it refers to the super-conscious self. For example, Bailey speaks of "the superconscious self, the soul,"¹³ and Aurobindo speaks of "our inmost soul or superconscient self."¹⁴ Moreover, the stanza says that the "base" is "in the Rays of those Realms." Bailey makes a similar statement: "The soul is a unit of energy, vibrating in unison with one of the seven ray Lives, and coloured by a particular ray light."¹⁵ Finally, the stanza indicates that the "base" can be "spread out." Bailey speaks of "soul-infused persons,"¹⁶ which are persons who have soul qualities spread out through their more outward parts. Thus, the "base" in the

stanza has characteristics similar to what modern writers attribute to the soul.

If a human being's "base" is taken as the soul, the stanza has the following meaning: *The seven rays exist in the divine plane, or world; every human being's soul is in those rays and spreads out through his or her outward nature.*

RV(IX, 70, 3) states: "May those his brilliant rays be ever free from death, inviolate, for both classes of created things,—Rays wherewith powers of men and Gods are purified."¹⁷

The meaning of this stanza seems clear and has two implications. First, the seven rays can have a purificatory effect on human beings. Second, every human being needs additional purification, even though he or she may have already eliminated many impurities, because even the "Gods" need additional purification.

Who are the "Gods" and do they really need additional purification? Blavatsky considers them to be the creators of our world and cites evidence that they do have such a need:

The millions upon millions of imperfect works found in Nature testify loudly that they are the products of finite, conditioned beings—though the latter were and are Dhyani-Chohans, Archangels, or whatever else they may be named. In short, these imperfect works are the unfinished production of evolution, under the guidance of the imperfect Gods.¹⁸

RV(VIII, 11, 4) states: "Dropping oil, sweet with Soma, pouring forth their stream, are the Seven Sisters in the seat of sacrifice."¹⁹ This stanza combines concepts from the preceding stanzas, and it is elaborated on by all of the subsequent stanzas.

Soma is highly praised by many hymns in the *Rig Veda*. For example, one hymn states: "We have drunk Soma and become immortal; we have attained the light, the Gods discovered."²⁰ Aurobindo gives this explanation:

This wine of Soma represents, as we have abundant proof in the Veda and es-

pecially in the ninth book, ... the divine delight of being, inflowing upon the mind from the supramental consciousness through the Ritam or Truth.²¹

In particular, we take Soma as symbolizing a divine idea.

What are the "Seven Sisters"? Another hymn states: "The Seven sister Bays bear Surya on his car, to bring us wealth and happiness."²² A bay is a reddish-brown animal, especially a horse having a black mane and tail. In this quotation, the seven bays are horses, because they refer to the seven mares that bear Surya in RV(IV, 13, 3-4), considered above. As already discussed, the seven mares of Surya are metaphors for the seven rays. Thus, the Seven Sisters, being Surya's mares, denote the seven rays.

Sacrifice is the forfeiture of something that is valued to gain something that has greater value. Sacrifice in Hinduism can be outer or inner.²³ Outer sacrifice is the act of offering something to a deity in propitiation or homage. Inner sacrifice is the elimination of an impurity to achieve a higher state of consciousness. RV(IX, 70, 3), considered above, states that the seven rays can have a purificatory effect on a human being, which means that they can bring about his or her inner sacrifice.

What is the "seat of sacrifice"? In this context, a *seat* is a place where something is located or based. The seat of an inner sacrifice is the place where an inner impurity is eliminated. For example, this seat would be the mental body if an illusion is eliminated, the emotional body if pride or resentment is eliminated, or the physical body if a compulsion is eliminated.

What is the "stream" poured forth by the Seven Sisters? As described in the stanza, this stream carries Soma from the Seven Sisters to the seat of an inner sacrifice. In other words, this stream depicts the sequential process of stepping down, or transforming, a divine idea so that the idea leaves the seven rays in the rarefied divine plane, passes through planes that are progressively more dense, and then reaches the mental, emo-

tional, or physical body of a human being. In particular, this process of descent includes transforming the divine idea into the following sequence of denser forms: abstract understanding, an ideal, and then a discipline imposed upon the outer self.

With these interpretations of its symbols, RV(VIII, 11, 4) has the following meaning: *By conveying a divine idea that undergoes a sequential process of stepping down, or of descent, the seven rays purify some part of a human being.*

The Seven Rivers

Two stanzas associate the seven rays with both the deity Indra and the seven rivers. RV(II, 12, 12) states:

Who with his seven bright rays, the Bull, the mighty, set free the seven great floods to flow at pleasure; Who, thunder-armed, rent Rauhina in pieces when scaling heaven, He, O ye men, is Indra.²⁴

RV(VII, 47, 4) states:

May the rivers which the sun has formed by his rays, from whom Indra clove out a moving wave, establish for us the supreme good.²⁵

These two stanzas relate the seven rays to the spiritual journey, because this journey involves “scaling heaven,” or becoming integrated with one’s higher aspects, and leads to “the supreme good,” which is a state of consciousness that is extremely beneficial. Bailey also relates the rays to this journey:

Every human being is swept into manifestation on the impulse of some ray, and is coloured by that particular ray quality, which determines the form aspect, indicates the way he should go, and enables him (by the time the third initiation is reached) to have sensed and then to have cooperated with his ray purpose.²⁶

In Theosophy, an “initiation” is said to be a milestone on the spiritual journey.

Indra is the King of Heaven in Vedic mythology. Several hymns in the *Rig Veda* de-

scribe the battle between Indra and ignorant forces. This timeless battle between good and evil, however, has a psychological interpretation, because it could be thought of as taking place between the good and evil aspects within every human being. Aurobindo gives the meaning of Indra within this psychological context:

The principle which Indra represents is Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness. It is this enlightened Intelligence which fashions right or perfect forms of thought or of action not deformed by the nervous impulses, not hampered by the falsehoods of sense.²⁷

Accordingly, Indra symbolizes the enlightened intelligence, which is the faculty of thought and reason when it is illumined by an intuitive perception.

Aurobindo mentions two ways of interpreting the various Vedic deities: his psychological approach in which “in man himself the gods are conscious psychological powers,” and the cosmic approach in which the deities are “creators of the worlds and guardians of the divine Law.”²⁸ In the case of Indra, the preceding paragraph gives Aurobindo’s psychological interpretation, which is “enlightened Intelligence.” Bailey, however, speaks of “Indra, Lord of the buddhic or intuitional level,”²⁹ which is a cosmic interpretation. These two interpretations are closely related: we awaken our power of “enlightened Intelligence” by gaining access to the “intuitional level.”

Rauhina is depicted by RV(II, 12, 12) as an obstacle on the spiritual journey. Bailey describes the spiritual journey as achieving “liberation from maya or illusion,”³⁰ indicating that illusion is an obstacle that must be overcome. Ralph Griffith, a Sanskrit scholar, reports, “*Rauhina* is said to be the name of a demon.”³¹ A demon could denote an evil spirit or a source of evil, harm, or distress. Thus, *Rauhina* is taken as illusion, because the latter is an obstacle on the spiritual journey and a source of evil, harm, or distress for human beings.

What do the seven rivers, or floods, symbolize? Three clues can help identify the appropriate referent. First, the rivers are “formed” by the rays but are not the same as the rays. Second, “Indra clove out a moving wave” and “set free the seven great floods,” which suggests that the enlightened intelligence, symbolized by Indra, can gain access to the rivers. Third, the rivers can establish the “supreme good.”

Bailey associates rays with ideals: “It must be remembered that each ray embodies an idea which can be sensed as an ideal.”³² An idea is revealed through intuitive perception. An ideal is a mental formulation of an idea, and so can be appreciated and applied by the mind and brain of a human being. Bailey speaks of the “seven groups of ideas and their resultant ideals,”³³ indicating that each of the seven rays embodies multiple ideas that are transformed into multiple ideals. Bailey also speaks of the progress that occurs when “your ideals have been superseded by greater and more spiritual ones.”³⁴ If Bailey’s account is valid, each ray forms a *sequence* of ideals, in which every ideal is more evolved—or higher or more perfected—than the preceding one. Thus, the seven rivers are taken as the seven sequences of ideals, because these sequences satisfy the three clues listed above.

With the psychological interpretations of its symbols, the two stanzas, RV(II, 12, 12) and RV(VII, 47, 4), have the following meaning: *The seven rays form seven sequences of ideals, of which every aspirant accesses a part when his or her intelligence formulates an ideal based on an intuitive perception; these seven sequences can overcome illusion and lead to the goal of the spiritual journey.*

Many contemporary scholars consider the *Rig Veda* to be the unsophisticated expression of the religious feeling of a primitive people. On the other hand, Aurobindo states, “The Veda is a book of esoteric symbols, almost of spiritual formulae, which masks itself as a collection of ritual poems.”

According to this meaning, each ideal has an important but temporary role: it helps bring about additional attainment, but afterwards a more advanced ideal is needed to bring about further attainment. Bailey makes a similar point:

I would not have you think for a moment that the embodied idea, which we call an ideal, is in itself an illusion. It only becomes so when it is regarded as an end in itself instead of being what it essentially is, a means to an end. An ideal, rightly grasped and used, provides a temporary aid towards the attainment of immediate and imminent reality which it is the goal

of the man or the race, at any particular time, to reach.³⁵

If ideals are only temporary aids, we need to avoid being fixated with any particular ideal but instead have the readiness to progress to a more advanced one. Aurobindo suggests the following practice: “On our past and present ideals we have to turn the searchlight of the spirit and see whether they have not to be surpassed or enlarged or brought into consonance with new wider ideals.”³⁶

Every aspirant on the spiritual journey is preceded by many forerunners but is ahead of many others. The implication is that all seven sequences of ideals already exist in the mental plane, as Bailey explains:

The lower or concrete levels of the mental plane will have acquired or accumulated—down the ages—a vast number of ideas, which have been formulated as ideals, clothed in mental matter, nourished by the vitality of those who have recognised as much of the truth of the idea as they are capable of expressing and who have given to these ideals the emphasis of their thoughtform-making faculty and their directed attention.³⁷

Consequently, aspirants are able to find outer support and confirmation—perhaps through sacred texts, religious traditions, or study groups—for whatever ideals that they have adopted.

RV(VIII, 58, 12) depicts the destination of the seven rivers: “Thou, Varuna, to whom belong Seven Rivers, art a glorious God. The waters flow into thy throat as ‘twere a pipe with ample mouth.”³⁸

Varuna, often regarded as the supreme Vedic deity, is described in another hymn:

He is the hidden ocean and he climbs passing beyond heaven; when he has set the sacrificial word in these dawns, then with his luminous foot he tramples asunder illusions and ascends to Paradise.³⁹

Here, “hidden” indicates that the referenced ocean is non-material, because it cannot be perceived by the physical senses. “Ocean” indicates that this non-material existence is unlimited, because that is an oceanic characteristic. Aurobindo also comments on the preceding description: “Varuna, we see, is the oceanic surge of the hidden Divine as he rises, progressively manifested, to his own infinite wideness and ecstasy in the soul of the god-liberated seer.”⁴⁰ Hence, Varuna represents the realization of being the unlimited non-material existence.

As discussed earlier, there are two ways of interpreting the various Vedic deities. In the case of Varuna, Aurobindo writes, “Varuna is ... realisation of infinite existence,”⁴¹ which is the foregoing psychological interpretation; but Bailey writes, “The great deva Varuna ... is the central Life of the substance of the astral plane of our planetary scheme,” which is a cosmic interpretation.⁴² Here, *deva* is the Sanskrit word for deity, and *astral* is synonymous with emotional. These two interpretations of Varuna may be related: perhaps we attain the “realisation of infinite existence” when we share in the consciousness of “the central Life of the substance of the astral plane.”

With the psychological interpretation of Varuna, RV(VIII, 58, 12) has the following meaning: *The realization of being the unlimited non-material existence, to which go all seven sequences of ideals, is a glorious attainment. Progressively applying the ideals of any sequence culminates in that realization.*

Bailey gives a similar description of the common attainment:

The mode or method of development for humanity is self-expression and self-realisation. When this process is consummated the self expressed is the One Self or the ray Life, and the realisation achieved is the revelation of God as the quality of the manifested world and as the Life behind appearance and quality. The seven ray Lives, or the seven soul types, are seen as the expression of one Life, and diversity is lost in the vision of the One and in identification with the One.⁴³

RV(II, 12, 12) and RV(VII, 47, 4) indicate that the seven sequences of ideals are different from each other. On the other hand, RV(VIII, 58, 12) depicts the seven sequences as going to the same attainment. Thus, the seven sequences appear in the mental plane, or world, like the rays of the sun, in that they have diverse ends connecting to a common point. Indeed, the seven sequences of ideals, which are formed by the seven rays, could be thought of as reflections of the seven rays in the mental plane.

RV(I, 72, 8) states:

The seven right-thinking mighty Rivers of Heaven that know the Truth knew the doors of the felicitous treasure: Sarama discovered the strong fortified place, the largeness, the herded mass of the rays, and now the human creature enjoys by that wideness of the light.⁴⁴

The first phrase, “The seven right-thinking mighty Rivers,” indicates that the seven rivers are mental in nature, which corroborates our earlier identification of them as sequences of ideals. This stanza also refers to

the rivers as being in “Heaven.” Aurobindo states, “Heaven is the symbol of the pure mental consciousness in the Veda,”⁴⁵ which provides further evidence that the rivers are mental in nature.

Sarama, according to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English dictionary, means “the fleet one” and is the name of “a female dog belonging to Indra.”⁴⁶ Aurobindo describes the role of this dog in the *Rig Veda*:

Sarama who leads in the search for the radiant herds and discovers both the path and the secret hold in the mountain must be a forerunner of the dawn of Truth in the human mind. And if we ask ourselves what power among the truth-finding faculties it is that thus discovers out of the darkness of the unknown in our being the truth that is hidden in it, we at once think of the intuition.⁴⁷

Thus, Aurobindo takes *Sarama* to be a symbol of the intuition.

With this interpretation of *Sarama*, RV(I, 72, 8) has the following meaning: *The seven sequences of ideals lead to a happy reward; the intuition contacts the ideas in the seven rays, enabling aspirants to progress from one ideal to another.*

Bailey makes a related statement: “We are told that there is an archetype, a pattern, a ray, a goal and a *light* which shines from the Path.”⁴⁸ In other words, the light of the intuition reveals a ray’s archetypal pattern, or idea, which is sensed as a goal, or ideal.

RV(I, 46, 4-8) depicts the illumination that drives us to take the journey over the rivers:

O Lords of the Voyage, who mentalise the word, this is the dissolver of your thinkings,—drink ye of the Soma violently; give to us that impulsion, O Ashwins which, luminous, carries us through beyond the darkness. Travel for us in your ship to reach the other shore beyond the thoughts of the mind. Yoke, O Ashwins, your car,—your car that becomes the vast oared ship in Heaven, in the crossing of its rivers.⁴⁹

The *Ashwins* are described by the Monier-Williams dictionary as “two divinities who appear in the sky before dawn in a golden carriage drawn by horses or birds; they bring treasures to men and avert misfortune and sickness; they are considered as the physicians of heaven.”⁵⁰ Aurobindo gives this psychological interpretation:

The Ashwins are twin divine powers ... of Truth, of intelligent action, of right enjoyment. They are powers that appear with the Dawn, effective powers of action born out of the ocean of being who, because they are divine, are able to mentalise securely the felicities of the higher existence by a thought-faculty which finds or comes to know that true substance and true wealth.⁵¹

In particular, we take the two Ashwins to be the causal and mental bodies, because they have the power to transform a divine idea into an ideal. I. K. Taimni, a theosophical writer, says, “The first function of the Causal body is that it serves as the organ of abstract thought,” and refers to the mental body as “the vehicle of concrete thoughts.”⁵² The concept of the causal body is not in contemporary Western psychology, but Aurobindo shows that it can be found in several places in the *Rig Veda*,⁵³ although he does not explicitly associate this concept with the Ashwins.

What does the phrase “drink ye of the Soma violently” mean? Soma has already been interpreted as a divine idea. *Violence* can be defined as force exerted for the purpose of damaging or abusing the form of the recipient. Thus, calling for the two Ashwins to drink the Soma violently means calling for each of the causal and mental bodies to take in a divine idea in such a way that the form of the idea changes. In particular, the causal body can transform an idea into abstract understanding, and then the mental body can transform it into an ideal.

“Shore” is used in the *Rig Veda* to symbolize the goal of the spiritual journey. For example, another hymn triumphantly declares: “Devoted to the gods, and hymning their

praise, we have crossed to the opposite shore of this (state of) darkness.”⁵⁴

The “car” that becomes a “ship” symbolizes a vehicle of some kind. Bailey characterizes the personality as “that vehicle of physical, astral and mental matter that provides the means of contact in the three worlds.”⁵⁵ Here, the three worlds are the physical, emotional, and mental worlds. According to this characterization, the personality includes the physical body, which is said to have both dense and vital portions. The dense physical body contains the muscles, organs, and bones; the vital, or etheric, body underlies and sustains the dense physical body. Thus, the car, or ship, is interpreted as the personality, and the movement of its oars as the effort of the personality to conform to an ideal.

The phrase “Yoke, O Ashwins, your car” indicates that the Ashwins can be yoked to, or integrated with, the car. In other words, the causal and mental bodies can be integrated with the rest of the personality. Bailey describes this type of integration, using Ego and Higher Self as synonyms for soul:

It is in the aligning of the three vehicles, the physical, the emotional, and the lower mind body, within the causal periphery, and their stabilising there by an effort of the will, that the real work of the Ego or Higher Self in any particular incarnation can be accomplished. The great thinkers of the race, the true exponents of lower mind, are fundamentally those whose three lower bodies are aligned; that is to say those whose mental body holds the other two in circumspect alignment ... When the alignment is fourfold and when the three above-mentioned bodies are aligned with the body of the Higher Self, the causal or egoic body, and held steady within its circumference, then the great leaders of the race,—those who emotionally and intellectually sway mankind, can be seen working.⁵⁶

With these interpretations of its symbols, RV(I, 46, 4-8) has the following meaning: *O Lords of the spiritual journey, who bring di-*

vine words down to the mental plane, here is inspiration for your thoughts: by transforming this contacted idea into abstract understanding and then into an ideal, O causal and mental bodies, illuminate the next immediate step in my journey that carries me beyond ignorance. Let your illumination propel my entire personality to take that step towards my goal. Become aligned with each other and my emotional and physical bodies, so that my personality can readily conform to that more advanced ideal along the sequence that I am following.

Bailey summarizes the three factors that are needed for transforming an idea into an ideal:

Ideas, when intuitively contacted by the disciple or initiate, ... must be brought consciously down to abstract levels of thinking where (expressing it symbolically) they form the blueprints, prior to the institution of the creative process which will give them phenomenal existence and being. I would have you, therefore, remember the three factors: 1. *The Intuition* which contacts and reveals new ideas. 2. *The Abstract World* in which they are given form and substance and which is to the thoughtform eventually created what the etheric body is to the dense physical vehicle. 3. *Concrete Thought* producing the concretising of the thoughtform and thus making the idea available to mankind.⁵⁷

In the Vedic account, Sarama symbolizes the first factor, and the two Ashwins symbolize the second and third factors.

The God of Fire

RV(VIII, 61, 16) states: “The pious one milked out rich food, sustenance dealt in portions seven, Together with the Sun’s seven rays.”⁵⁸

Agni is the god of fire in Vedic mythology. The above stanza is part of a hymn dedicated to *Agni*, indicating that “the pious one” denotes *Agni*. This deity is characterized by the Sanskrit word *kavikratuh*, which means “will of the seer.” For example, another hymn states: “May *Agni*, priest of the offer-

ing whose will towards action is that of the seer, who is true, most rich in varied inspiration, come, a god with the gods.”⁵⁹ Because of this characterization, Aurobindo gives the following definition:

Agni, the divine Will, is that which stands behind the human will in its works ... Agni manifests divine potentialities in a death-besieged body; Agni brings them to effective actuality and perfection. He creates in us the luminous forms of the Immortals. This work he does as a cosmic Power labouring upon the rebellious human material even when in our ignorance we resist the heavenward impulse and, accustomed to offer our actions to the egoistic life, cannot yet or as yet will not make the divine surrender.⁶⁰

Bailey gives a similar definition: “All potentiality lies in the vitalising, energising power of Agni, and in His ability to stimulate. He is life itself, and the driving force of evolution, of psychic development and of consciousness.”⁶¹ Both of these definitions are cosmic interpretations, because Agni is equated with the cosmic motivating power that brings about evolutionary development.

Agni also has a psychological interpretation. Bailey writes,

The development of right motive is a progressive effort, and constantly one shifts the focus of one’s incentive when one discovers himself, as the Light shines ever more steadily upon one’s way, and constantly a newer and higher motive emerges.⁶²

Thus, Agni, which brings about evolutionary development, enables our motive to evolve from the purely selfish will of the separated self to the collective will of our group, whose definition becomes increasingly inclusive, and then to the unselfish will of the soul, and then even higher to the divine, or universal, will. Our evolving motive, however, plays the role of Agni within our personality and progressively becomes a reflection of Agni. Aurobindo makes a similar point:

But it is in proportion as we learn to subjugate the ego and compel it to bow down in every act to the universal Being and to serve consciously in its least movements the supreme Will, that Agni himself takes form in us.⁶³

Thus, for a given aspirant at a particular time, Agni can be interpreted psychologically as the spiritual motive that is right, or appropriate, for that person’s spiritual attainment.

The stanza depicts Agni as having “milked out,” or drawn out, a substance—called “rich food”—that can be used as nourishment. Another hymn dedicated to Agni states: “He among mortals is fed on inspiration, the illumined who gives his word to the Fire.”⁶⁴ Here, “the Fire” denotes Agni, the god of fire, and “inspiration” is characterized as a special food that confers illumination, so “rich food” is taken as divine ideas that can inspire us. Not all divine ideas, however, can inspire us. Some ideas may be too advanced; perhaps they contradict too many of our assumptions that we are not yet ready to question, or they entail a mode of living that seems too otherworldly or impractical. Other ideas may be too elementary; perhaps we have already worked with them in our past. Thus, “rich food” is taken as divine ideas that can inspire us because they represent our next immediate step in our spiritual journey.

With the psychological interpretations of Agni and rich food, RV(VIII, 61, 16) has the following meaning: *The spiritual motive that is right for us draws out the ideas that can inspire our thoughts; those ideas are divided into seven major groups because they are conveyed by the seven rays.*

Why is inspiration related to spiritual motive? Bailey speaks of “the divine ideas—implementing the divine purpose.”⁶⁵ In particular, the ideas that we find to be inspiring are the ones that enable us to implement the spiritual motive that is right for us. Moreover, according to the above stanza, that spiritual motive draws out those inspiring ideas for us. In Bailey’s words, “Carry the self-will of the personality up into the region of the divine will and the result is inspira-

tion.”⁶⁶ Inspiration is also related to the seven rays, because, again in Bailey’s words, “All ideas stream into the planetary consciousness along the channel of the seven rays.”⁶⁷

RV(X, 5, 5) states: “He, calling loudly to the Seven red Sisters, hath, skilled in sweet drink, brought them to be looked on.”⁶⁸

The hymn, in which this stanza occurs, is also dedicated to Agni, so “He” denotes Agni, who has just been interpreted as the right spiritual motive. The “Seven Sisters” have previously been shown to be equivalent to the seven rays. “Sweet drink” appears equivalent to “rich food,” considered above, so it is taken as inspiring ideas. Thus, RV(X, 5, 5) has a meaning similar to that of the preceding stanza: *The spiritual motive that is right for us calls upon the seven rays and brings forth their ideas that are inspiring to us, so that we can intuitively see them.*

As we make progress on the spiritual journey, our process of appropriating a more advanced ideal changes. At the beginning, we find that we have ideals but are typically unaware of where they came from. Later we become aware that we have been constructing our ideals but without making a deliberate effort to do so. Still later we make the construction process a deliberate part of our meditation practice. What would be the steps in such a practice? The preceding stanzas associate four Vedic deities with the conversion of rays into ideals: Agni, Sarama, and the two Ashwins, who represent corresponding steps of meditation:

First, establish and maintain the right spiritual motive—symbolized by Agni—to bring forth inspiring ideas. Regarding this step, Bailey writes:

The attitude of the initiate-in-training should be one of right spiritual motive—the motive being the intelligent fulfillment of the will aspect of divinity, or of the Monad. This involves the merging of his personality self-will into that of the sacrificial will of the soul; and this, when accomplished, will lead to the revelation of the divine Will.⁶⁹

Second, be sensitive to the intuition—symbolized by Sarama—which can contact ideas. Bailey describes an aspirant performing this step, saying:

Little by little, he learns the way into the world of the intuition; day by day, and year by year, he becomes more sensitive to divine Ideas and more apt in appropriating them wisely for the use of his fellowmen.⁷⁰

Third, use the causal and mental bodies—symbolized by the two Ashwins—to construct an ideal that reflects a contacted idea. An idea is vague and formless, but a constructed ideal consists of well-defined concrete words. Bailey also describes an aspirant performing this step, saying, “He creates a pattern in his mind which hews as true as he can make it to the prototype, and which serves to model the lower man and force conformity to the ideal.”⁷¹

RV(IV, 50, 4) states: “Brihaspati, when first he had his being from mighty splendour in supremest heaven, Strong, with his sevenfold mouth, with noise of thunder, with his seven rays, blew and dispersed the darkness.”⁷²

Brihaspati, according to the Monier-Williams dictionary, means “lord of prayer and devotion” and denotes the Vedic deity who is “the chief offerer of prayers and sacrifices.”⁷³ Thus, Brihaspati could be taken as symbolizing prayer, of which there are many types. The type of prayer depicted in the above stanza is a breathing exercise, because it states that Brihaspati “blew,” or exhaled. Breathing exercises, known as *pranayama* in Sanskrit, are part of hatha yoga. The Sanskrit word *hatha* means forceful, suggesting that hatha yoga is a forceful practice done for self-purification.

The breathing exercise depicted in the stanza attempts to impose an ideal upon the personality. The phrase “sevenfold mouth” appears to suggest that this ideal is spoken, audibly or inaudibly, seven times during the exercise. The number “seven” in the phrase, however, is not a literal prescription but instead is a symbol of completion, as noted by Jan Gorda, a Dutch Indologist, in his book

on Vedic rituals: “seven—a symbol of completion or perfection.”⁷⁴ The *New Bible Dictionary* states that this number has a similar symbolic role in the Bible: “Seven has an eminent place among sacred numbers in the Scriptures, and is associated with completion, fulfillment and perfection.”⁷⁵

This repetition occurs “with noise of thunder.” Such noise is generated by the deity Agni according to another hymn: “Now may we serve thee, singing, with these lauds, this day, O Agni: Loud as Heaven’s thunder sound forth thy roarings.”⁷⁶ As

discussed previously, Agni symbolizes the right spiritual motive, so the noise of thunder represents a power belonging to that motive.

What could that power be? An ideal is a thought-form because it consists of mental matter formed by an idea. Bailey writes,

Anent the primary function of a thought-form (the power to respond to vibration) I would emphasise the necessity of remembering that that response must be made by the inner embodied Idea, and that it will then through a complex reflex action, bring about response from the material sheath which veils it.⁷⁷

In other words, “the power to respond to vibration” enables repetition of the ideal to restore contact with the associated idea, which then is experienced as a recognition or realization of the truth expressed by the ideal.

The noise of thunder consists of vibrations that move through the surrounding medium, so it is taken as symbolizing “the power to respond to vibration.” This noise is generated by Agni, so “the power to respond to vibration” belongs to the right spiritual motive. RV(VIII, 61, 16) and RV(X, 5, 5), considered previously, show that the right spiritual motive also has a closely related

power, namely, the ability to bring forth inspiring ideas during meditation.

The repetition of the ideal also occurs “with his seven rays,” which indicates that contact is restored with the inspiring idea in the seven rays. Thus, this phrase corroborates our identification of the noise of thunder with “the power to respond to vibration,” because that power is able to bring the inspiring idea back into consciousness.

With these interpretations of its symbols, RV(IV, 50, 4) has the following meaning: *A breathing exercise, when inspired by the divine plane, is*

effective; if an ideal, or formulated idea, is spoken a sufficient number of times during an exercise, and if the right spiritual motive is maintained so that contact is restored with the inspiring idea in the seven rays, then the outgoing breath disperses the effects of ignorance.

Bailey lists the requirements for an effective breathing exercise:

Breathing exercises, my brother, have a purely physiological effect when not impelled or motivated by directed thought and when they are not the result of the aspirant attaining and adhering to a point of tension. Steadily, whilst the process of inhalation and exhalation is being carried forward, a clear line of active thinking must be preserved so that the breath (as it is sent out) is qualified and conditioned by some idea.⁷⁸

The breathing exercise depicted in the stanza has both required factors: “directed thought” about the ideal being imposed upon the personality; and “attaining and adhering to a point of tension,” which refers to establishing and maintaining the right spiritual motive. Thus, in the depicted discipline, “the breath (as it is sent out) is qualified and conditioned

by some idea,” namely, the particular idea that formed the ideal being contemplated.

The *Laws of Manu*, one of the standard books in the Hindu canon, is believed by many scholars to have been composed between 200 BCE and 200 CE, but Blavatsky provides evidence that it dates back to more than 1000 BCE.⁷⁹ This ancient text characterizes the activities found in the Vedas:

There are two kinds of Vedic activity: the one that brings about engagement (in worldly action) and the rise of happiness, and the one that brings about disengagement (from worldly action) and the supreme good. The activity of engagement is said to be driven by desire in this world and the world beyond; but the activity of disengagement is said to be free of desire and motivated by knowledge.⁸⁰

The breathing exercise depicted in RV(IV, 50, 4) exemplifies what the *Laws of Manu* calls the “activity of disengagement,” because it does not seek the fulfillment of worldly desire but instead is motivated by an ideal, which is a type of knowledge. The depicted discipline involves, in Bailey’s words, the “practical ability to relate the idea to the ideal and to take those steps which will create the form of that ideal upon the physical plane.”⁸¹

The Seven Communities

RV(VIII, 81, 20) states: “We summon Indra to the draught, in whom all glories rest, in whom The seven communities rejoice.”⁸²

A draught is a serving of drink. The draught in the above stanza is Soma, because an earlier stanza in the same hymn states, “Call Indra loudly with your songs of praise to drink the Soma juice.”⁸³ Thus, the draught symbolizes a divine idea, because that is what Soma previously has been interpreted to be.

What are “all glories”? The *Rig Veda* speaks of “seven surpassing glories”⁸⁴ and mentions “the seven efficient (rays) from heaven ... being glorified.”⁸⁵ Thus, “all glories” consist

of seven elements and could be taken as the seven rays.

When the deity Indra drinks the Soma juice, he is infused with the seven rays, because RV(VIII, 11, 4), considered earlier, indicates that Soma is conveyed by the seven rays. Indra has previously been interpreted as the enlightened intelligence. In this context, the enlightened intelligence is the combination of the causal and mental bodies, symbolized by the two Ashwins, when guided by the intuition, symbolized by Sarama.

With these interpretations of its symbols, RV(VIII, 81, 20) has the following meaning: *When aspirants infuse their intelligence with divine ideas and thereby the seven rays, they are divided into seven distinct communities—one for each ray—and rejoice because of their enlightenment.*

RV(X, 5, 6) makes a similar point: “Seven are the pathways which the wise have fashioned; to one of these may come the troubled mortal.”⁸⁶

In the first independent clause, “the wise” denote the seven rays, and “the pathways which the wise have fashioned” denote the seven sequences of ideals formed by the seven rays. The second independent clause is taken to mean that any given aspirant may travel on only one of these pathways. Thus, the stanza has this interpretation: *Seven sequences of ideals have been formed by the seven rays; aspirants are divided into seven distinct communities, in which everyone in the same community advances along the sequence of ideals formed by the same ray.*

Modern theosophical writers emphasize the same notion, namely, that the seven rays divide human beings into seven distinct communities. For example, Blavatsky states, “Humanity, occultism teaches us, is divided into seven distinct groups.”⁸⁷ Wood states, “The rays appear as types or classes, so that it is quite appropriate to speak of the seven types of men.”⁸⁸ Bailey states, “Every unit of the human race is on some one of the seven rays.”⁸⁹ Hodson also states, “There are seven main types of human beings, each with its outstanding natural attributes and qualities.”⁹⁰

Conclusions

The “seven rays” are characterized by Bailey as “an ancient septenate, but little comprehended.”⁹¹ This article investigated how the seven rays were comprehended in ancient times. A set of stanzas, concerned with the seven rays, were assembled through computer searches of several translations of the *Rig Veda*. Aurobindo’s psychological interpretive approach was applied to these stanzas and showed that they depict the seven rays as affecting three different planes, or worlds. First, the seven rays exist in the divine plane as conveyors of divine, or universal, consciousness. Next, they mold the seven sequences of ideals in the mental plane, in which each ideal is formed by a divine idea in one of the rays. Third, they divide humanity into the seven communities in the physical plane, in which each community consists of human beings who are guided by the same ray.

The Vedic teachings on the seven rays were shown to be consistent with the modern theosophical teachings on the subject. This demonstration was made by comparing the assembled stanzas from the *Rig Veda* with passages from modern writers. The teachings found so far in the *Rig Veda*, however, are not as extensive as the modern teachings. In particular, the stanzas from the *Rig Veda* tell us that there are seven pathways of spiritual development, and there are seven communities of human beings, but these stanzas do not say how to distinguish among those pathways and communities. In contrast, the modern teachings provide a way of distinguishing whether a given ideal or discipline belongs to the pathway of one ray or another. For example, Bailey’s “Techniques of Integration” depict symbolically each ray’s ideas for various stages of the spiritual journey,⁹² and Leadbeater⁹³ and Wood⁹⁴ associate specific ideals with each of the seven rays. Moreover, the modern teachings provide a way of distinguishing whether a given aspirant belongs to the community of one ray or another. For example, Wood, Bailey, and Hodson, in their books, describe the psycho-

logical characteristics of the seven types of human beings.⁹⁵

Are the teachings on the seven rays valid? The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 13:1, states: “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”⁹⁶ The ancient Vedic teachings and the modern theosophical teachings are two independent witnesses of the seven rays that corroborate each other. Thus, we can have much greater confidence in their common propositions than if we had just a single witness.

Relatively little is known about the psychological significance of the *Rig Veda*, because the vast majority of its symbols and hymns have not been addressed by either Aurobindo or this article. Additional material about the seven rays might be concealed somewhere within that ancient veiled text. Perhaps there is a Vedic deity who personifies each ray, or a hymn that depicts symbolically the nature of each ray.

-
- ¹ John Nash, “The Seven Rays: A Case Study in the Dissemination of Esoteric Knowledge,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Winter 2007.
 - ² Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. II (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), 89.
 - ³ Eric Weiss, *Doctrine Of the Subtle Worlds and the Cosmology of Sri Aurobindo*, <http://ericweiss.com/doctrine-of-the-subtle-worlds-2-and-the-cosmology-of-sri-aurobindo> (accessed Jan. 22, 2010).
 - ⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda* (1914-1920; reprint; vol. 15 in *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1998), 363.
 - ⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.
 - ⁶ RV(IV, 13, 3-4); Sri Aurobindo, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* (1946; reprint; Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1996), 193-194.
 - ⁷ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 158, 166.
 - ⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.
 - ⁹ RV(III, 23, 4); Aurobindo, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, 147.
 - ¹⁰ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 287.
 - ¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 59, 141.

- ¹² RV(I, 105, 9); Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, http://www.vedah.com/org2/literature/rig_veda/word_meaning/all_gods/hymn105.html (accessed Oct. 17, 2009).
- ¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 439.
- ¹⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (1914-1920; reprint; Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2000), 574.
- ¹⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 42.
- ¹⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 407-408.
- ¹⁷ RV(IX, 70, 3); Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition; Benares, India: Lazarus, 1897), 326.
- ¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, 217.
- ¹⁹ RV(VIII, 11, 4); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 268.
- ²⁰ RV(VIII, 48, 3); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 198.
- ²¹ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 74.
- ²² RV(VII, 66, 15); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 66.
- ²³ Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, *Dancing with Siva: Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism* (Kapaa, HI: Himalayan Academy Publications, 2004), 849.
- ²⁴ RV(II, 12, 12); Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. I (Benares, India: Lazarus, 1889), 351.
- ²⁵ RV(VII, 47, 4); Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 112.
- ²⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 61.
- ²⁷ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 262.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 493.
- ²⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (1934; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 390.
- ³⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (1927; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 398.
- ³¹ Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. I, 351.
- ³² Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 391.
- ³³ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 130.
- ³⁴ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 532.
- ³⁵ Bailey, *Glamour*, 133-134.
- ³⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India* (1947-1951; reprint; vol. 20 in *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1998), 90.
- ³⁷ Bailey, *Glamour*, 133.
- ³⁸ RV(VIII, 58, 12); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 214.
- ³⁹ RV(VIII, 41, 8); Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 504.
- ⁴⁰ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 504.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 498.
- ⁴² Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 676.
- ⁴³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 142-143.
- ⁴⁴ RV(I, 72, 8); Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 588.
- ⁴⁵ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 85.
- ⁴⁶ Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1872; reprint; Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005), 1182.
- ⁴⁷ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 211.
- ⁴⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 199.
- ⁴⁹ RV(I, 46, 4-8); Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 129.
- ⁵⁰ Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 116.
- ⁵¹ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 83.
- ⁵² I. K. Taimni, *Self-Culture* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1976), 83, 110.
- ⁵³ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 288, 341.
- ⁵⁴ RV(VII, 73, 1); Horace H. Wilson, *Rig-Veda Sanhita: A Collection of Ancient Hindu Hymns Constituting the Fifth Ashtaka, or Book, of the Rig-Veda* (London: Trubner, 1866), 155.
- ⁵⁵ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 262.
- ⁵⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 1.
- ⁵⁷ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 281.
- ⁵⁸ RV(VIII, 61, 16); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 220.
- ⁵⁹ RV(I, 1, 5); Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 63.
- ⁶⁰ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 281.
- ⁶¹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 606.
- ⁶² Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 203.
- ⁶³ Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, 81.
- ⁶⁴ RV(VI, 10, 3); Aurobindo, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, 265.
- ⁶⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 711.

-
- ⁶⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (1951; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 205.
- ⁶⁷ Bailey, *Glamour*, 130.
- ⁶⁸ RV(X, 5, 5); Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rig-Veda*, vol. II (second edition), 387.
- ⁶⁹ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 33.
- ⁷⁰ Bailey, *Glamour*, 184.
- ⁷¹ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 252.
- ⁷² RV(IV, 50, 4); Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (Benares, India: Lazarus, 1890), 172.
- ⁷³ Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 737.
- ⁷⁴ Jan Gonda, *Rice and Barley Offerings in the Veda* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1987), 94.
- ⁷⁵ *New Bible Dictionary* (third edition; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 834.
- ⁷⁶ RV(IV, 10, 4); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II, 109.
- ⁷⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 555.
- ⁷⁸ Bailey, *Glamour*, 257.
- ⁷⁹ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. I (1877; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1976), 587-588.
- ⁸⁰ *Manu*: book XII, slokas 88-89; Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty and Brian K. Smith, *The Laws of Manu* (London: Penguin Books, 1991),
- ⁸¹ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II, 162.
- ⁸² RV(VIII, 81, 20); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 238.
- ⁸³ RV(VIII, 81, 5); Griffith, *The Hymns of the RigVeda*, vol. II (second edition), 237.
- ⁸⁴ RV(VIII, 28, 5); Horace H. Wilson, *Rig-Veda Sanhita: A Collection of Ancient Hindu Hymns Constituting the Sixth and Part of the Seventh Ashtaka of the Rig-Veda* (London: Trubner, 1888), 32.
- ⁸⁵ RV(IV, 16, 3); Horace H. Wilson, *Rig-Veda Sanhita: A Collection of Ancient Hindu Hymns Constituting the Third and Fourth Ashtakas, or Books, of the Rig-Veda* (London: Allen, 1857), 146.
- ⁸⁶ RV(X, 5, 6); Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rig-Veda*, vol. II (second edition), 387.
- ⁸⁷ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I (1888; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1977), 573.
- ⁸⁸ Ernest E. Wood, *The Seven Rays* (1925; reprint; Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1984), x.
- ⁸⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 126-127.
- ⁹⁰ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Seven Human Temperaments* (1952; reprint; Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1981), 1.
- ⁹¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 111.
- ⁹² Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 345-378.
- ⁹³ Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Science of the Sacraments* (Los Angeles: St. Alban Press, 1920), 92-93.
- ⁹⁴ Wood, *The Seven Rays*, 168.
- ⁹⁵ Wood, *The Seven Rays*; Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vols. I and II; and Hodson, *The Seven Human Temperaments*.
- ⁹⁶ King James Version of the Bible.