

THE COSMIC HANDS.

BY LAWRENCE PARMLY BROWN.

THE mythic concept of the sun on or near the horizon as one of the hands of the solar or cosmic god is of great antiquity and wide distribution, having been naturally suggested by the resemblance of wide-spread human fingers to the fan-shaped or finger-like radiations of the solar flabellum (fan) often observable in the clouds at sunrise and sunset, and also when the sun is erroneously said to be "drawing water." Other types or symbols of this flabellum were anciently recognized in such objects as the cock's comb; the fan-shaped palm-tree (Lat. *palma*, also the "palm" of the hand); the scallop or cockle shell worn by the medieval palmer pilgrim, and the stag's horns—as in the myth of the golden-horned stag of Keryneia captured by Herakles, and in the legends of the white stag seen by St. Hubert and by St. Eustace. The flabellum also appears in ancient art in many and various conventional forms, sometimes in connection with the head of a god, as in the case of the enthroned Buddha given by Moor (*Hindu Panth.*, Plate 75, fig. 3).

In the solar hand the wide-spread fingers and thumb properly represent the rays or shafts of light in the flabellum; but the rays themselves are sometimes figured or described as distinct from, but in connection with, the hand. Thus in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* the deceased says of a solar god that "his hand had darted (rays) upon me in the earth" (LVIII, Theban Recension); in Habakkuk iii. 4, Jehovah has "rays of light (or 'horns,' as in the A. V.) coming out of his hand," and in early Christian art, down to the twelfth century, the presence of God is never indicated except by the solar hand—sometimes entirely open with rays from the fingers and thumb, again with only the thumb and first two fingers extended to typify the Trinity, or in one or another of the several benediction postures (Didron, *Christ. Iconog.*, I, p. 205, figs. 52, 54, etc.). This hand of God is often thrust from the clouds, with the rays descending from it as from the sun when "drawing water"; and water is fabled to have gushed from Mohammed's fingers (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, I, p. 493, ed. 1887)—the solar hand thus apparently being assimilated to a cloud hand

such as that in the Hebrew of 1 Kings xviii. 44, "a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."

The Egyptian worshippers of the solar disk (of the Aten cult) frequently depicted it with descending rays (as if for arms) having open hands at their ends, as was sometimes done by the Persians (Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten*, III, Plates 91-103; Budge, *Gods*, II, pp. 70, 77; Wilkinson, *Anc. Egyptians*, I, Plate 3; III, Plate 23). The cosmic Krishna has many arms, which are immeasurable, according to the *Bhagavadgita* (XI); and in the Inscription of Darius at El-Khargeh it is said of the sun: "We adore him in the form of hands" (*Records of the Past*, VIII, p. 137). A great number of symbolic hands have been found at Pompeii and elsewhere in Europe, many of which are illustrated in Elworthy's *Horns of Honour* (see also Bayley, *Lost Language of Symbolism*, II, pp. 335-341). Similar hands, generally imprinted in red by the human hand, were anciently common throughout Yucatan (Stevens, *Travels in Yuc.*, I, p. 177); the Mexican sun-god Quetzalcoatl was said to have left an impression of his hand on a rock (Squeir, *Serpent Symbol*, p. 190), while the Maya deity Zamma was represented in the form of a hand called Kab-ul = the Working-hand, probably for that of the creator (Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 188).

The Egyptian Ra, the sun-god by name, is "he who raises his hand" at dawn, and in his cosmic character his body is conceived as invisible—"his body is so large that it hides its shape"—"his form is that of the invisible"—"his form is that of the god with the hidden body"—he is "the hidden one" ("Litany of Ra," I, 1, 13, 30, 39, 52, in *Records of the Past*, VIII, pp. 105-108). His two hands are said to be the god Secheni or Skheni (as the upholder of the heaven—*loc. cit.*, IV, 8, in *Records of the Past*, VIII, p. 123). Skheni is a personification of *skhen* = a "brace" or "prop," with the hieroglyphic determinative Y, and he has a Hindu counterpart Shamba, "who with a prop (*shamba*) held the two (upper and lower) worlds apart" (*Rigveda*, X, 72, 2 et seq., ed. Wilson). Again, the Hebrew of Deuteronomy xxiii. 27 reads: "The ancient God (Elohim) is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the age-lasting arms"—the upper hemisphere or the earth here apparently being identified with Elohim as a sort of *pantheos*. It was the whole celestial sphere, not the earth, that was anciently upheld by the Phœnicio-Greek Atlas; while in the Saïte Recension of the *Book of the Dead* it is Shu (Light or Space) who holds up the heaven or sky with his two hands (XVII, 21; CIX, 3, XVI, vig-

nette). A door of the hall of the double Maati in the underworld is named "Arm of Shu offering himself for the protection of Osiris" (*ibid.*, CXXV, 58).

In the *Book of the Dead* we read of the sun-god: "May the god of light open to me his arms" (CXXIV, Theban Recension; the Saïte parallel referring to "the god who raises his arm"), and again in the Theban Recension it is probably the sun-god who is "the lord of the two hands and arms" (LXXXV). Thus Proclus, in the sixth book of his *Theology of Plato*, says that those who are skilled in divine concerns attribute two hands to the sun, the right and the left; while in an Orphic "Hymn to the Sun" we find that luminary addressed as a god with two hands:

"With thy right hand the source of morning light,
And with thy left, the father of the night."

(Hymn VIII, Taylor's trans.)

In the "History of Abdal Motallab," among the *Oriental Tales* of Comte de Caylus, the Angel of Day and Night, Noukhail, is represented as saying: "The day and night are trusted to my care. I hold the day in my right hand and the night in my left; and I maintain a just equilibrium between them"—the dawn being here expanded to include the whole day while the evening includes the night. In an old Hebrew text quoted by Goldziher (*Mythol. Heb.*, p. 134), we read that "the shining one stretches forth his hand toward him who covers up," i. e., toward the night. The open left hand was an emblem of justice in Egypt, which Apuleius supposes was because of its inactivity and lack of skill and cunning (*Met.*, 11); but in all probability the true reason is found in the assignment of the cosmic left hand to the west and thence to the underworld where the Egyptian Judgment of the Dead was held. The huge hand over the gate of Justice in the Alhambra is well known. In the cosmic man of the Kabbalists the right arm is assigned to Mercy, a male emanation; while Justice, a female emanation, belongs to the left arm; and they are "the two arms of the Lord, the first distributing life, and the second, death" (Ginsburgh, *Kabbal.*, p. 16). Good fortune, righteousness and life are associated with the right or dexter hand, while death, wickedness, and ill fortune belong to the sinister or left hand—the right and left hands also being recognized as masculine and feminine respectively.

The dawn that grows into the day is often called "the golden," while the evening is sometimes "the red," although the latter color is equally applicable to the dawn. Thus the solar flabellum of the

east becomes the mythical golden hand (the right), the western flabellum sometimes being the red hand (the left). In the *Book of the Dead*, Chap. XV, the sun is the great light-giver who rises "like unto gold" (Theban), or has "risen out of the Golden" (Saïte); and he is thus addressed: "Thou illuminatest the earth by offering thyself with thine own hands under the shape of Ra at thy rising" (XV, 12, Saïte). Amen (the Hidden) or Amen-Ra is sometimes a mere variant of the soli-cosmic Ra, and to him it is said:

"O Amen, thou ledest night unto day,

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Thy hand is adorned with gold,
As moulded of an ingot of gold."

("Hymn to the Nile," I, 4; X, 7, 8; in *Records of the Past*, IV, pp. 107-114).

The sun-god Savitri or Savitar of India is called "the vast-handed" and "the golden-handed" in the *Rigveda* (I, 22, 5), and the Hindu scholiast Sayana (on V, 81, 4) explains Savitri as the sun before (otherwise at) its rising, Surya as the sun from rising until setting. The Arabian deity Hobal was represented by an idol of red agate with a hand of gold (Sale's *Koran*, Pref. Dis., I, p. 14).

In the *Book of the Dead* we read of "the arm resting on the waters" (CLXIII, 2, Saïte). In the legend of King Arthur a hand belonging to an arm "clothed in white samite" appears from the (eastern) lake with the miraculous sword Excalibar, which the King obtains through the good offices of the Lady of the Lake (apparently a lunar figure). At the close of his career he has the sword thrown into the (western) sea, whereupon the arm reappears and the hand catches the sword, taking it beneath the waters. Then the King sails away to Avilion (or Avalon) as the land of the dead (Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*, I, 22; XXI, 5). It seems that the arm was clothed in red at its second appearance, for it is found in another vision of the *Morte d'Arthur* "covered with red samite" (XVI, 2).

An open red hand is found on the escutcheon of Ulster in Ireland, and is fabled to commemorate the daring of a certain O'Neile; the story being that after he had vowed to be the first to touch the shore of Ireland, he found himself beaten in the race over the sea, so cut off one of his hands and flung it to the shore, thus touching it before any of the others in the race could land. As Ireland belongs to the extreme west of Europe there can be little doubt that this red hand was originally the western and left

hand of the sun; and the same solar hand probably reappears as the red hand on numerous armorial bearings and elsewhere in England. This is indicated by the belief that the red hand could be expunged from the coat-of-arms only after the bearer had done penance by passing seven years in a cave, alone and in silence—doubtless suggested by some myth of the sun in the underworld. But the English red hands are now generally connected with traditional tales of blood (see Brewer, *Dict. Phrase and Fable*, s. v. "Hand"). In the legend of Dietrich von Bern (Theoderic the Great), the dwarf-king, Laurin (Alberich), who has a "cap of darkness," cuts off the right hand and left foot of any one venturing to enter his wonderful rose garden (that of sunrise and sunset); and in the legend of Walter of Aquitaine there is a god who has lost one hand, "the sword-god Zio"—doubtless a variant of the solar Zeus or Jupiter (Thorpe, *North. Mythol.*, I, p. 217).

The concept of the loss of the western solar hand is found in a highly developed form in the Norse myth of Tyr. As given in the *Younger Edda* (I, 25, 34, 51) it is too long and involved to be more than outlined here. Fenrir (or Fenris), the monster wolf of the underworld and night, three times permits the gods to bind him in as many chains. He is confident that he can break the first two, which he does, but has some fear of the last. The gods, however, craftily promise to release him if the third chain proves unbreakable, and although he mistrusts them he finally consents to be bound in it if permitted to hold a hand of one of the gods between his jaws by way of guarantee. So Tyr places his right hand in the mouth of Fenrir, who bites it off when he finds the chain unbreakable and the gods resolved not to release him. With the chain fastened to a rock, the great wolf is sunk deep in (or under) the earth, where he must remain till the end of the present world, when he will break loose—the natural day during which the night monster is bound in the underworld thus being assimilated to the cyclic day of the current world period. That the left rather than the right hand of Tyr was bitten off in the original myth is indicated by the fact that the hand of the rising sun is designated as the right hand in the *Elder Edda* (Voluspa, 5); and it may be assumed that Fenrir originally swallowed the (left) hand of Tyr.

In the Egyptian *Book of Hades* a monkey is figured driving a pig, "the devourer of the arm" (*Records of the Past*, X, p. 112), while a black pig is a symbol of Set or Typhon, who swallowed the (lunar) eye of Horus, but "afterward gave it back to the sun" (Plutarch, *De Iside*, 55); and it must have been generally conceived

that the cosmic hand or arm was vomited up or otherwise evacuated by the monster that swallowed it. In a variant view the solar (or lunar) personification is swallowed entire by the monster of the underworld and night (e. g., the whale swallowing Jonah). In a story from the lost history of Xanthus the Lydian, preserved by Athenæus (*Deipnos.*, X, 8), a certain king Cambles, while asleep one night, ate his wife after cutting her up into joints, and in the morning found nothing left of her but a hand, protruding from his mouth; whereupon he slew himself. The cutting into joints appears to have been suggested by the waning of the moon, which indicates a lunar character for the wife, although her hand seems to be that of the sun, as it protrudes in the morning from the mouth of the underworld figure.

The soli-cosmic god was sometimes conceived as losing both his hands, one at sunrise and the other at sunset. We saw above that Surya is the sun of the daytime; the rising sun being Savitri or Savitar "the golden-handed," which epithet is explained as follows in a Brahmanic legend. "At a sacrifice performed by the gods, Surya undertook the office of Ritwij, but placed himself in the station of the Brahma. The Aahwarya priests, seeing him in that position, gave him the oblation termed Prasitra, which, as soon as received by Surya, cut off the hand that had improperly accepted it. The priests who had given the oblation bestowed upon Surya a hand of gold. The legend is related in the *Kanshitaki Brahmana*, it is said; but there Surya loses both his hands" (Wilson's note, *Rigveda*, I, p. 50). In the *Book of the Dead* we read of a golden dog-headed ape without arms or legs (XLII, both Recensions).

The sun and moon were doubtless recognized by some as the two hands of the invisible cosmic god, the right and left respectively; while others identified the moon (primarily when rising and setting) as the hand of the lunar deity—although there is actually no lunar flabellum. Thus the lunar hand naturally came to be conceived as cut off, swallowed or otherwise lost or injured when the moon wanes into invisibility, while its recovery or restoration begins shortly after, when the new moon first becomes visible. In the *Book of the Dead* the arm of some great god "is rescued on the night of the festival of the fifteenth" of the month (CLIII, 8, Saïte). In the Norse myth of the descent of Frey (the evening and autumn sun) and Gerd (the moon) into the underworld, when the latter lifted the latch of the door "so great a radiance was thrown from her hand that the air and waters and all the world were illumined by it" (*Younger Edda*, 1, 37). As the sun is the golden

hand of Savitar and Amen-Ra, so the moon is a silver hand in the story of Nuadath (or Nuad) of the Silver Hand among the ancient legends of Ireland. According to the story, Nuadath invaded Ireland under cover of a mist, which he raised by enchantment (sorcery often being associated with the moon). He lost a hand in battle, but had it replaced with one of silver, made by Cred the goldsmith—apparently a solar figure (O'Flaherty, *Ogygia*, III, 10; Moore, *History of Ireland*, I, p. 103). The Egyptian Thoth (Tehuti), who was largely lunar in character, is said by Plutarch to have had one arm shorter than the other (*De Iside*, 22); which appears to indicate that he was assimilated at times to the cosmic god, his shorter arm being that of the moon as nearer to the earth and weaker than the sun.

White leprosy is associated with the moon in mythology because the latter was often considered white, being called "the white," in some languages (e. g., *Iebanah* in Hebrew); whence the "leprous moon" of the poets. Jehovah caused the hand of Moses to become "leprous as snow" and shortly to be restored as before, as a proof of his divine mission (Exodus iv. 6, 7). This was effected as the Lawgiver took his hand in and out of his bosom, as if to symbolize the rising and setting of the moon; while the infliction and cure of the leprosy appears to correspond to the waxing and waning of that luminary, the new moon being entirely dark. In a Rabbinical tradition, the leprous hand of Moses "was white and shining like the moon" (Baring-Gould, *Legends of the Patriarchs*, XXXII, 4). His sister Miriam, as a lunar personification, became entirely leprous, "white as snow," as a punishment; but was cured after seven days—a lunar period (Num. xii. 10-15).

The solar hand was connected with that extensive class of mythic concepts in which the sun-god becomes old, weak, sick, impotent, crippled, paralyzed or bound in the evening and night, and even more appropriately in the fall and winter seasons; his escape, restoration or cure of course belonging to the morning or the spring and summer. In one view Osiris is the old sun of the west, underworld, and winter, while his son Horus is the young or restored sun. Thus in a "Hymn to Osiris" we read: "The arm (of Horus) has become strong in the great dwelling of Seb" (the earth—*Records of the Past*, IV, p. 112); and in the *Book of the Dead* (I, 7, Saïte), Thoth says: "I am with Horus in the act of supporting this left arm of the Osiris who is in Sekhem" (localized on earth as the city of Letopolis). Again, "the arm of Horus in Sekhem" is identified with the Tat in Tattu (*ibid.*, XVIII, both Recensions), while the

hands or arms of the deceased are assigned to the Lord of Tattu (apparently Osiris—XLII, both Recensions). And as *tat* is one of the Egyptian words for “hand,” it is not improbable that the well-known *tat*-sign was identified by some as a symbol of the human hand, or arm and hand; the celestial Tattu being the region of the horizon circle as divided into the “two horizons,” primarily of the east and west.¹ In a Pyramid text (Pepi I), where the several parts of the body of the deceased are identified with gods, the shoulders and arms (and hands) are said to be Set—as a figure of the underworld (Budge, *Gods*, I, p. 110).

The Egyptian Khem, Min, or Amsu, often figured in connection with the restoration of the deceased in the underworld, is a mummified god with one arm (generally the right) raised above his head, while the other is possibly wanting, but probably only concealed and bound in the mummy envelope (Budge, *Gods*, I, p. 97; *ibid.*, II, Plate, p. 8; Bonwick, *Eg. Belief*, p. 75; etc.). His weak or paralyzed condition appears to be indicated by his chief distinguishing mark, a supporting bar that extends from the ground to the back of his head. As a mummified god he belongs to the underworld, probably being assimilated to Amen-Ra as the soli-cosmic deity who raises his hand at dawn of day. He is called “the lifter of the hand” (*Records of the Past*, VIII, p. 142) and “the god lifting up his



THE EGYPTIAN
KHEM, MIN,
OR AMSU.

¹ The *tat* or *tet*, which finally became the sign of stability, is an upright with three, four, or five cross-bars, near the top. In all probability it originally represented a tree and had something of the flabellum form—the oblique branches finally becoming the horizontal bars of the extant examples. And as the props of heaven (otherwise the solar hands of Ra or Shu) were also originally tree trunks (with forked branches), it was natural enough for the *tat* to become identified as a symbol of the hand or arm and hand; from all of which we can understand how the *tat* became the sign of stability. It was sometimes mystically recognized as the backbone of Osiris, perhaps because some took it for a symbol of the great cosmic tree as identified with the pole of the universe supporting the longitudinal divisions of the celestial sphere. This appears to be indicated by the fact that the cross-bars of the *tat* sometimes become circular disks. Moreover, the *tat* is occasionally dressed in a man's clothes and given a human head, while again, it has human arms and hands below the cross-bars (Budge, *Book of the Dead*, II, p. 46; Guigniaut, *Rel. de l'antiqu.*, p. 43, fig. 176a; etc.); in both of which forms it perhaps represents the cosmic god.—Tattu was an Egyptian name of the city of Mendes or Busiris; but there can be no doubt that every nome and city of Egypt (like Sekhem = Letopolis, etc.) was believed to be a terrestrial counterpart of some portion of the heaven. As Hermes Trismegistus has it in his *Asclepius*, “Egypt is the image of heaven, or rather, it is the projection below of the order of things above” (see also Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt*, I, p. 21).

arm," who has "the hidden skin" and "the mysterious shape" (*Book of the Dead*, CLXV, 11, 14, Saïte—where Khem is identified with Amen). In all probability he is also "the god with his arm tied" (*ibid.*, XCIX, 20); for in the Saïte Recension the deceased opens the gates of Seb (from the lower to the upper world) and "frees himself from the god with his arm tied. . . whose beaming is for the earth" (LXVIII, 1, 2—where the Theban has: "His hand had tied cords around me (the deceased) and his hand had darted (rays) upon me in the earth"). In Chapter CXXIV of the Theban Recension, Papyrus of Nu (as rendered by Budge), the deceased says: "My palm-tree is like Amsu"—doubtless because of the resemblance of that tree to the open hand and the solar flabellum. Khem or Amsu, like Osiris, holds a winnowing-flail (or flagellum) in his lifted hand, and Jesus Christ is to come with his fan (Gr. *πτύον* = winnowing-shovel) in his hand (Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17).

Two of the commonest images of Krishna are companion pieces, in one of which his arms are bound close to his body by the folds of a serpent that bites his left heel, while in the other he dances or tramples on the head of a similar serpent, with his arms free, holding the serpent's tail over his own head (Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, Plates 46, 47). The former doubtless represents the solar or soli-cosmic god bound by the serpent of winter (and night), while the latter shows him free and victorious over the same enemy in spring and summer (as in the daytime).

In the *Book of the Dead* the deified deceased says that he delivers Ra from the sickness of his body, arm, and leg; binding up the arm, etc. (CII, Theban). In the Egyptian belief the hands and arms, and other parts of the body are restored to the deceased in the underworld—after which he apparently ascends into the celestial regions (*ibid.*, XXVI, etc.). Among the cures attributed to the agency of Æsculapius, as recorded on votive tablets at Epidaurus, is one of a man whose hand was paralyzed with the exception of one finger. He dreamed that the god seized his hand and straightened out the closed fingers: and when he awoke in the morning he went forth cured (Frazer's *Pausanias*, note to II, 27, 3).

Just as the Hindu Savitri lost one or both of his hands when impiously accepting a sacrifice, so in 1 Kings xiii. 4, 6, the hand (or rather, the hand and arm—Hebr. *yad*) of Jeroboam withered (or "dried up," as in the A. V.), so he could not draw it back when he impiously stretched it forth from the altar on which he was offering a sacrifice. This was in the act of pointing to a certain prophet whom he ordered seized, and the hand was shortly restored

as before through the intercession of the same prophet with God—the basic suggestion for this miraculous withering and cure probably being found in the waxing and waning of the moon. An actual cure of a hand was doubtless one of the miracles expected of the Messiah; for the Emperor Vespasian, who was recognized by some as the promised one of Jewish prophecy (Tacitus, *Hist.*, V, 12; Suetonius, *Vesp.*, 4; Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, VI. 5, 4), was said to have cured a man with a maimed hand by placing his foot upon



KRISHNA BOUND BY THE
SERPENT OF WINTER.



KRISHNA VICTORIOUS OVER
THE SERPENT OF WINTER.

(From Sonnerat, in McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, s. v. Krishna.)

it (Tacit., *Hist.*, IV, 81—Suetonius says it was a lame leg that was thus cured—*Vesp.*, 7).

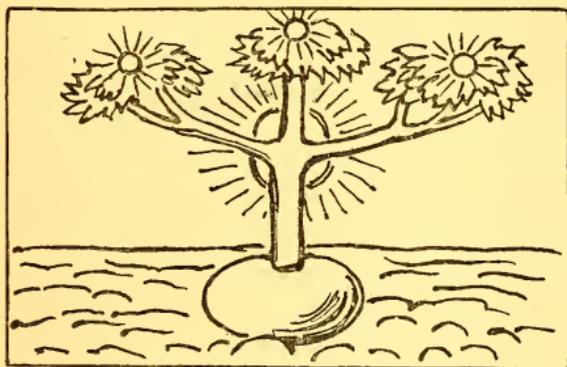
In connection with the one great Old Testament prophecy of miraculous cures in the Messianic kingdom, we read in Isaiah xxxv. 3: "Strengthen ye the weak hands. . . ." (Heb. and A. V.), or "Be strong, ye relaxed hands. . . ." (Sept.); and Zechariah (xi. 17) says of some "worthless shepherd" that "his arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened"—

probably on a suggestion from the cosmic mythos. But in the story of Jeroboam we doubtless have the direct Old Testament type of the Gospel cure of the withered hand (or hand and arm—Greek *χείρ*). The Christian miracle is given by all three Synoptists (Matt. xii. 9-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke xi. 6-11); the original account presumably being that of Mark, who is followed closely by Luke with the added statement that the restored hand was the right—just as Josephus says that the restored hand of Jeroboam was the right (*Antiq.*, VIII, 8, 5). Jeroboam was afflicted and cured in the holy place of Beth-el, where he acted impiously; the Gospel cure occurred in a synagogue, where Jesus was accused of an impious act, that of working such a cure on the Sabbath. Jeroboam's hand remained stretched forth until it was restored or "became as it was before": that of the man in the Gospel story was stretched forth at the time it was "restored sound as the other" (in the same words in Mark and Luke). Before Jesus commanded the man to stretch forth his hand, He told him to arise and come into the midst of the congregation (Mark), to which Luke adds: "And he, having risen, stood up"—perhaps on a suggestion from the solar mythos. In the Gospel story the infirmity is evidently conceived as the result of paralysis; and according to the *Diatessaron* of Tatian (VII, 51) the restored hand "became straight"—implying that the fingers had been closed but were forthwith fully extended, like those of the solar flabellum at dawn, and those of the man cured through the agency of Æsculapius. St. Jerome, in his *Commentary on Matthew*, tells us that the man whose hand was restored was said to be a mason in the Gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites (i. e., in the lost *Gospel of the Hebrews*); and as the usual Hebrew word for a mason is *goder* = wall-builder, it is not improbable that this idea was suggested by some myth of the solar creator as the builder of the horizon wall. The hieroglyphic determinative of the Egyptian *sapi* = to make, create, is a man building a wall, or sometimes simply a wall (Birch, *Dict. Hiero.*, s. v.); while Jehovah is described standing "upon a wall, with a plumb-line in his hand" (Amos vii. 7). Horapollon tells us that among the Egyptians a man's hand represented "one who is fond of building" (*Hieroglyph.*, II, 119).

In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the right hand of Simeon "was withered for seven days" because he sought to slay Joseph (II, 2); a lunar character being here indicated for Simeon's hand by the fact that seven days comprise half the waning period of the moon. In *Pseudo-Matthew*, the hand of the midwife Salome (a lunar figure) withered when she doubted that a virgin could

have brought forth, but was cured by touching the garments of the new-born Jesus (13)—as probably suggested by the fact that the moon receives her light from the sun, while in the parallel story in the *Protevangelium*, Salome's hand "was dropping off as if by fire" (20). In the *Infancy of the Saviour*, the hand of the schoolmaster who flogged Jesus withered immediately, and he died (49). In the *Passing of Mary*, when the high priest raised his hands to throw down the bier of the Holy Virgin they were withered to the elbow, and part of them stuck to the couch; but he repented and was healed through the intercession of the Apostles (11-13).

Just as the eastern and western flabella are the hands of the soli-cosmic god whose body is invisible, so the full-orbed sun is sometimes conceived as his head; these three phases of the sun in a conventional view belonging to sunrise, noon, and sunset. In an

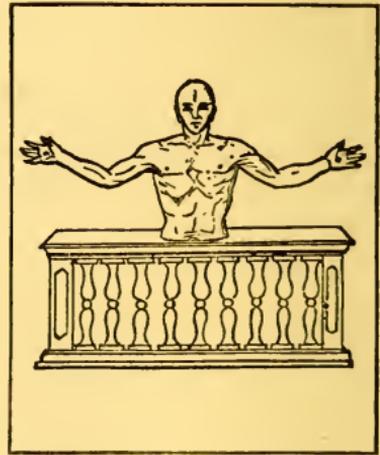
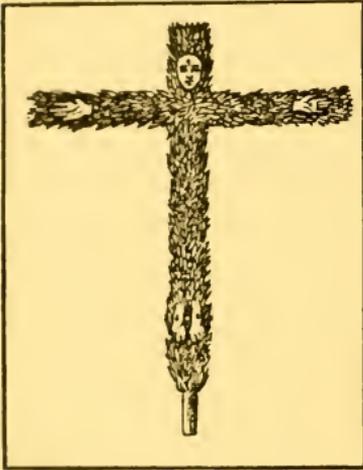


THE HINDU COSMIC TREE.

(From Creuzer's *Symbolik*, ed. Guigniant, I, Pl. 2, No. 16.)

Egyptian text the sun-god says: "I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Atum in the evening" (*Trans. Soc. Bibl. Archeol.*, IV, Part II, p. 288); while the Hindus identified the three phases of the sun respectively with Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who thus were recognized as one god (*Asiatic Researches*, I, p. 267; V, p. 254). In the story of the Phœnician solar man-fish Dagon in 1 Samuel v. 4, his image falls during the night, breaking off the head and both hands. The three phases of the sun appear as three suns in a cruciform example of the great cosmic tree of the Hindus (Creuzer, *Symbolik*, ed. Guigniant, I, Plate 2, fig. 16; Lundy, *Monum. Christ.*, p. 272, fig. 119). Of this it was taught that "the universe is the eternal tree Brahma, which sprang from an imperceptible seed" (Ward, *Hindoos*, IV, Int. 24). The cosmic tree is found in another highly developed form in the Yggdrasil

ash of Norse mythology, on which Odin hanged or crucified himself (*Elder Edda*, "Havamal," 140-146). The monk Georgius, author of the *Alphabetum Tibetanum*, in that work (p. 206) gives two illustrations of the crucified Indra as figured in Nepal. One appears to suggest that the lower half of the god belongs to the underworld, for only the upper half of his body is visible, with his head and hands in exactly the same positions as the three suns on the Hindu cosmic tree; and Jesus as the Man of Sorrows is figured in the same way in a representation given by Jameson and Eastlake (*Our Lord in Art*, p. 364, fig. 263). In the other illustration in Georgius we find only the head, hands, and feet of the god nailed to a Latin cross, his body apparently being considered invisible;

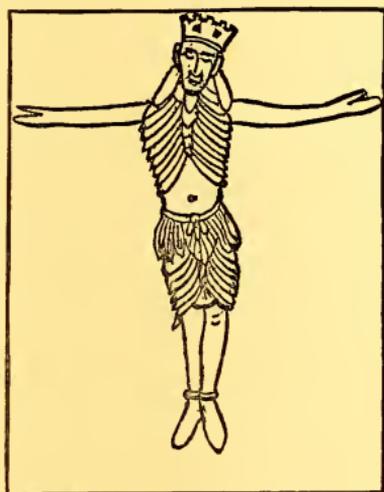


TWO ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CRUCIFIED INDRA AS REPRESENTED IN NEPAL.

(From Georgius, *Alphabetum Tibetanum*, p. 206.)

while the cross itself is covered with foliage ("wreathed with abrotono," according to Georgius), which serves to identify it with the cosmic tree. A somewhat similar representation, illustrating the Procession of the Logos (Christ), is given from Robertus de Fluctibus (Robert Flood) in Jennings's *Rosicrucians* (p. 329). In this the left-hand half of the cross is depicted dark (doubtless originally for the night and the west), while the right-hand half is light (for the east and the daytime); but nevertheless the branch of the cross holding the detached head is assigned to the east; that holding the right hand, to the north, etc.—the soli-cosmic figure with invisible body thus apparently being conceived by some as proceeding first from east to west.

In the *Sibylline Oracles* (VIII, 301) it is prophesied of Christ on the cross that "He will spread his hands and measure all the universe (cosmos)"; and further on reference is made to the nail marks on His hands and feet, after His resurrection, as "denoting east and west, and south and north" (VIII, 322). In a medieval representation given by Didron, God appears in gigantic human form behind a crucifix, grasping the ends of its arms with His hands (*Christ. Iconog.*, p. 505, fig. 130). In a medieval legend the three suns are said to have appeared simultaneously in the heavens during the infancy of Jesus, to symbolize the Trinity (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theolog.*, III, 36, 3). Again, the three phases of the sun appear to be indicated on an antique Christian tau-



KRISHNA CRUCIFIED IN SPACE. CHRIST CRUCIFIED IN SPACE.
(From Lundy, *Monumental Christianity*, pp. 157, 174.)

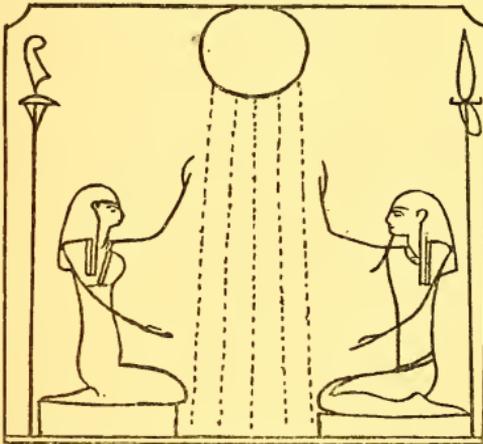
crucifix found in the Thames, England; for the nude man on the cross, with outstretched arms on a line with his head, has his feet turned to the right—as if to represent a solar figure proceeding from east to west while facing the south (Jewett, "The Tau Cross," in *Art Journal*, XXVII, p. 303, fig. 15). In all the earlier representations of the Crucifixion of Christ, as in some antique crucifixes, the cross is the tau, T. Surmounted by an ovoid, it becomes the *crux ansata*, the sacred *ankh* (life) symbol of Egypt, ☩; and some appear to have taken this for a hieroglyphic man with out-stretched arms, for a man's head sometimes replaces the ovoid—as in a Roman example from Pompeii given by Jewett (*loc. cit.*, p. 300, fig. 9), on a Gnostic gem in King's *Gnostics* (Plate 7, fig. 4), and in two

hermæ in Montfaucon (*L'antiq. expl.*, I, Plate 77, figs. 4 and 8). Indeed the so-called Crucifixion in Space (without the cross) of the Hindu Krishna (?) as well as of Christ (Lundy, *Monum. Christ.*, pp. 157, 174) may have been considered a mere variant of a soli-cosmic tau or crux ansata; thus illustrating perfectly what Justin Martyr says of the erect human figure with arms extended having the shape of a cross (*I Apôl.*, 55). As we know from the Roman historians, the head and hands of Cicero were nailed up on the Rostra at Rome—the head between the hands—, as it was impracticable to send the whole corpse from his Tusculan villa where he was slain; an exhibition of this kind probably being considered equivalent to a crucifixion without either the body or the cross.

In Exodus xvii. 11-13, Moses as the soli-cosmic figure stands with his two hands held up by Aaron and Hur, one on either side, from early morning “until the going down of the sun”; thus insuring victory for the Israelites—as representing the forces of light. In the *Book of the Dead*, Chapter XVI, which is composed of pictures without text, the noon-day sun is shown above and between two human figures; the one on the right having its right hand raised (for the eastern flabellum), while the one on the left raises its left hand (for the western flabellum): and five rays (for the solar fingers) are represented descending from the sun (as when “drawing water”). In the Turin papyrus (Saïte Recension), the right-hand figure is a man with a conventionalized beard, while the opposite figure is a woman (in Lepsius, *Todtenbuch*, Plate VI); and they are mystically connected with the eastern and western *utchats* = solar eyes in Chapter CLXIII (both Recensions), where “a figure of the god-of-the-lifted-hand with the face of the divine soul” is assigned to the pupil of one of the *utchats*, while to the other is assigned “a figure of the god-of-the-lifted-hand with the face of (the goddess) Neith.” Both figures are women in the Louvre Papyrus (Saïte, Chap. XVI; in De Rougé, *Rituel funéraire*, Pl. IV), thus probably being identified as the divine sisters Isis and Nephthys, who were perhaps represented by two women in the original account of the Crucifixion of Christ, in connection with which we now find three. Again, in one of the Assyrian emblems of Asshur we find two human heads on the outspread wings of that solar god, one on either side of his own head (Lajard, *Culte de Mithra*, Pl. 2, fig. 31; Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, I, Chap. 131, p. 256, ed. 1880); the additional heads probably representing the eastern and western phases of the sun. But in another view the sun and

moon have the eastern and western positions; sometimes appearing respectively on the right and left side of the crucified Christ, as in what is said to be the earliest known crucifix with the human figure of Christ (Martigny, *Dict. des antiq. chrét.*, Plate, p. 190; others in Jameson and Eastlake, *Our Lord in Art*, 2d ed., pp. 131, 151, 153, 167, 328, 329, etc.).

In the Gospel stories of the Crucifixion and its mythic variant, the Transfiguration of Christ, the two additional figures in each scene appear to represent the morning and evening phases of the sun. Of the two men crucified with Christ, one on either side, Luke says that one was repentant and therefore had the promise of paradise, while the other, unrepentant, was obviously destined



EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATION OF THE NOON-DAY SUN.

(From the Turin Papyrus, Saïte Recension of the *Book of the Dead*, Chap. XVI, fig. 3.)

for hades (xxiii. 39-43). The former was on the right and the latter on the left of Jesus, according to the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (i. 10) and the *Narrative of Joseph of Arimathæa* (3). They also belong to the east and west respectively, and it is from the east that the risen Christ and his penitent companion should properly be conceived as ascending to heaven. In Matthew and Mark the two men crucified with Christ are robbers (as in the Rev. Vers., Greek *λησταιί*); who were not necessarily so designated only because the Romans crucified robbers (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, II, 13, 2, etc.), for it is not improbable that this character was attributed to such mythic variants of the solar hands because the hands of robbers, as the offending members, were cut off as a punishment among some peoples (e. g., in India—*Laws of Manu*, IX, 276). Thus,

too, the hand of a dead man was sometimes employed by robbers as a protective talisman. Holding a lighted candle, it is the medieval "hand of glory," which was believed to make the bearer invisible, reveal hidden treasures, burst locks, produce sleep, and even restore the dead to life (Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp. 406-410). All of these powers are also attributed to solar or cosmic personifications.

Moses and Elijah are the additional figures in the Transfiguration scene of the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew (xvii. 2) says that the face of Jesus "shone as the sun" when He was transfigured; at which time His head had reached to the heavens, according to the *Acts of John* (4). In the *Gospel of Peter*, two others came with Jesus in the Resurrection scene, supporting him on either side—"And of the two the head (i. e., their heads) reached unto the heavens, but the head of Him who was led by them overpassed the heavens" (10).

There are reasons for believing that some of the ancient astrologers assigned the morning and evening hands of the soli-cosmic figure respectively to Aries and Libra as the eastern and western signs of the zodiac in the precessional period of about 2000 to 1 B. C., when the former of these signs belonged to the spring equinox, and the latter to the autumn equinox. It was in the house of Aries, and above the Ram, that the Arabs figured a huge hand, their constellation of Kaff al H'adib = the Hand stained with henna (i. e., of reddish orange hue), which became the low Greek *Χείρ βεβαμένη* of Chrysococca the Græco-Persian astronomer, and sometimes the Hand of the Pleiades (Allen, *Star Names*, pp. 143-4). It was probably at the spring equinox in Aries that the Egyptians held a festival of the celestial arm or hand as connected with the resurrection, for on a libation vase of Oser-Ur it is said to the deceased: "Thou shalt not be repulsed by Osiris on the day of his great festival of the arm of the gods" (*Records of the Past*, XII, p. 80). This was perhaps the birthday of Osiris, in connection with which we read of the rescue of "the arm of the Great God. . . on the night of the festival of the fifteenth" of the month (*Book of the Dead*, CLIII, 8, 9, Saïte); which appears to put this festival at the time of the appearance of the first new moon after the spring equinox. A ram's head is one of the symbols frequently found on the palm and fingers of the Isiac hand (Montfaucon, *L'antiq. expl.*, II, Plate 137), which suggests that some in later times substituted the lunar for the solar hand in Aries.

Libra, the Scales, is the sign directly opposite Aries; and we saw above that the lunar hand, as the left, was associated with justice in Egypt and elsewhere; while the Greek Themis, like our Justice, is often represented holding the scales in her left hand. Egyptian pictures of the Judgment of the Dead, in the *Book of the Dead* and elsewhere, show a monkey seated on the beam of the scales, while another (figured in duplicate) appears in the frieze, poising the scales with his hands—in all probability because the monkey was the typical hand animal (with a hand like a man's), whence it probably received its Egyptian name *kaf*, which also signifies a hand. And thus perhaps the two arms of the deceased came to be identified with Hapi (the ape-headed) and Tuamutef (the jackal-headed), two of the Egyptian group of four funeral gods (Budge, *Gods*, p. 492). In place of the zodiac Scales, which doubtless originated in Egypt, the Babylonians and early Greeks figured the Claws (in other words, the hands) of the Scorpion (R. Brown, *Primitive Constellations*, I, pp. 66-71); but as this reduces the original twelve signs to eleven, it is quite probable that the Claws replaced an earlier Hand, perhaps because the latter in the course of time had been assigned to the god of the lower world as the sign of the sun at nightfall—just as Scorpio, as the Akkadian Girtab = Seizer-and-Stinger, was sometimes figured with the solar or lunar circle in its claws (Brown, *loc. cit.*, I, p. 72; II, p. 232, fig. 9). Libra is represented by a man holding the Scales in various Egyptian, Egypto-Roman, Persian, and Mithraic zodiacs, too numerous for individual references here (for an Egypto-Roman example, see *The Open Court* XX, p. 471).

In close connection with Libra (but now in the house of Virgo) is the constellation of the Centaur, which some of the Greeks, at least as early as the time of Eratosthenes, knew as Cheiron = the Hand-one—for the Greek *Χείρων* is simply *Χείρ* = the Hand, or rather, the Hand-and-arm with the nominative masculine singular suffix *-ων*; there being no sufficient justification for the usual rendering, Handy-one. The Greeks followed the Babylonians in figuring the constellation of the Centaur as a composite man-horse; but we know from Homer and Hesiod that neither Cheiron nor the other centaurs (= bull-slayers) had anything of the horse form originally, while no equivalent of the name Cheiron for the constellation has been found outside of Greece (see Brown, *loc. cit.*, p. 110). Therefore we may reasonably assume that Libra was represented in some lost sphere by a human hand, which later held the Egyptian Scales, and still later was attached to a human figure; this older celestial

Centaur, who thus obtained the name Cheiron, being finally identified with the Babylonian man-horse. Furthermore, it is not improbable that this older Centaur or Cheiron is the last in the group of forty-two Assessors in the Egyptian Hall of Maati; for these assessors probably represent the forty-two constellations recognized by some of the ancient astronomers (e. g., Eratosthenes and Hyginus), while the last of the Egyptian group is he "who brings in his own arm, who comes out of Aukert" (the underworld—*Book of the Dead*, CXXVb, both Recensions). In the Babylonio-Greek sphere that has come down to us, the Wild Beast (the modern Wolf) is in the house of Libra and below the claws of the Scorpion. It is primarily a figure of the night, and mythically identical with Fenrir, the wolf that bit off the hand of the solar Tyr.

In the *Book of the Dead*, the name of the oars or paddles of the solar boat is declared to be "the fingers of Horus" (XCIX, both Recensions). The human fingers gave their name to the Idæan Dactyli (= Fingers) of Greek mythology, who were connected with the worship of Rhea in Phrygia. They were five males, according to some; or ten in all, five males and five females, according to others—evidently for the right and left hand respectively (Pollux, II, 4; Strabo, X, p. 473; Diod., V, 64). They probably received their name Dactyli from the human fingers as employed in offering sacrifices: the fingers thus employed being referred to in the Vedas as "the ten sisters" or "twice five sisters"—who engender Agni (= Fire)—"awaking him at dawn"—"feeding him on oblation," etc. (*Rigveda*, IV, 6, 8, etc.). These twice five sisters reappear in the Parable of the Ten Virgins to whom the kingdom of heaven is likened in Matthew xxv. 1-11; in all probability having been assimilated originally to the fingers of the solar hands. Thus when they go forth in the night to meet the bridegroom (originally the day or the sun), the five wise virgins take oil in their lamps, while the five foolish ones take none in theirs. The latter go away to buy oil, so when the bridegroom comes, only the former meet him and are admitted to the marriage. The original connection of the two groups with the east and the west is well illustrated in the *Speculum Salvationis*, where the wise virgins, with their lamps burning, ascend a flight of steps on the right hand of Jesus; while their foolish sisters, with empty lamps reversed, descend another flight, or His left hand, going directly into the jaws of a monster symbolizing hell (Jameson and Eastlake, *Our Lord in Art*, 2d ed., I, p. 392, fig. 137).