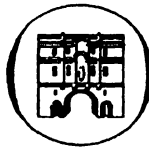


HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM
AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY
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CHAPTER LVII

PERSIAN INFLUENCE IN INDIA

OUR geographical and political phraseology about India and Persia obscures the fact that in many periods the frontier between the two countries was uncertain or not drawn as now. North-western India and eastern Persia must not be regarded as water-tight or even merely leaky compartments. Even now there are more Zoroastrians in India than in Persia and the Persian sect of Shiite Mohammedans is powerful and conspicuous there. In former times it is probable that there was often not more difference between Indian and Iranian religion than between different Indian sects.

Yet the religious temperaments of India and Iran are not the same. Zoroastrianism has little sympathy for pantheism or asceticism: it does not teach metempsychosis or the sinfulness of taking life. Images are not used in worship¹, God and his angels being thought of as pure and shining spirits. The foundation of the system is an uncompromising dualism of good and evil, purity and impurity, light and darkness. Good and evil are different in origin and duality will be abolished only by the ultimate and complete victory of the good. In the next world the distinction between heaven and hell is equally sharp but hell is not eternal².

The pantheon and even the ritual of the early Iranians resembled those of the Veda and we can only suppose that the two peoples once lived and worshipped together. Subsequently came the reform of Zoroaster which substituted theism and dualism for this nature worship. For about two centuries, from 530 B.C. onwards, Gandhara and other parts of north-western India were a Persian province. Between the time of Zoroaster (whatever that may be) and this period we cannot say what

¹ They are forbidden by strict theology, but in practice there are exceptions, for instance, the winged figure believed to represent Ahura Mazda, found on Achæmenian reliefs.

² Though the principles of Zoroastrianism sound excellent to Europeans, I cannot discover that ancient Persia was socially or politically superior to India.

were the relations of Indian and Iranian religions, but after the seventh century they must have flourished in the same region. Aristobulus¹, speaking of Taxila in the time of Alexander the Great, describes a marriage market and how the dead were devoured by vultures. These are Babylonian and Persian customs, and doubtless were accompanied by many others less striking to a foreign tourist. Some hold that the Zoroastrian scriptures allude to disputes with Buddhists².

Experts on the whole agree that the most ancient Indian architecture which has been preserved—that of the Maurya dynasty—has no known antecedents in India, but both in structure (especially the pillars) and in decoration is reminiscent of Persepolis, just as Asoka's habit of lecturing his subjects in stone sermons and the very turns of his phrases recall the inscriptions of Darius³. And though the king's creed is in some respects—such as his tenderness for animal life—thoroughly Indian, yet this cannot be said of his style and choice of themes as a whole. His marked avoidance of theology and philosophy, his insistence on ethical principles such as truth, and his frank argument that men should do good in order that they may fare happily in the next world, suggest that he may have become familiar with the simple and practical Zoroastrian outlook⁴, perhaps when he was viceroy of Taxila in his youth. But still he shows no trace of theism or dualism: morality is his one concern, but it means for him doing good rather than suppressing evil.

¹ See Strabo, xv. 62. So, too, the Pitakas seem to regard cemeteries as places where ordinary corpses are thrown away rather than buried or burnt. In Dig. Nik. III. the Buddha says that the ancient Sakyas married their sisters. Such marriages are said to have been permitted in Persia.

² "He who returns victorious from discussions with Gaotama the heretic," Farvadin Yasht in *S.B.E.* XXXIII. p. 184. The reference of this passage to Buddhism has been much disputed and I am quite incompetent to express any opinion about it. But who is Gaotama if not the Buddha? It is true that there were many other Gautamas of moderate eminence in India, but would any of them have been known in Persia?

³ The inscriptions near the tomb of Darius at Nakshi-Rustam appear to be hortatory like those of Asoka. See Williams Jackson, *Persia*, p. 298 and references. The use of the Kharoshtri script and of the word *dipi* has also been noted as indicating connection with Persia.

⁴ Perhaps the marked absence of figures representing the Buddha in the oldest Indian sculptures, which seems to imply that the holiest things must not be represented, is due to Persian sentiment.

After the death of Asoka his Empire broke up and races who were Iranian in culture, if not always in blood, advanced at its expense. Dependencies of the Persian or Parthian empire extended into India or like the Satrapies of Mathurâ and Saurâshtra lay wholly within it. The mixed civilization which the Kushans brought with them included Zoroastrianism, as is shown by the coins of Kanishka, and late Kushan coins indicate that Sassanian influence had become very strong in northern India when the dynasty collapsed in the third century A.D.

I see no reason to suppose that Gotama himself was influenced by Iranian thought. His fundamental ideas, his view of life and his scheme of salvation are truly Hindu and not Iranian. But if the childhood of Buddhism was Indian, it grew to adolescence in a motley bazaar where Persians and their ways were familiar. Though the Buddhism exported to Ceylon escaped this phase, not merely Mahayanism but schools like the Sarvâstivadins must have passed through it. The share of Zoroastrianism must not be exaggerated. The metaphysical and ritualistic tendencies of Indian Buddhism are purely Hindu, and if its free use of images was due to any foreign stimulus, that stimulus was perhaps Hellenistic. But the altruistic morality of Mahayanism, though not borrowed from Zoroastrianism, marks a change and this change may well have occurred among races accustomed to the preaching of active charity and dissatisfied with the ideals of self-training and lonely perfection. And Zoroastrian influence is I think indubitable in the figures of the great Bodhisattvas, even Maitreya¹, and above all in Amitâbha and his paradise. These personalities have been adroitly fitted into Indian theology but they have no Indian lineage and, in spite of all explanations, Amitâbha and the salvation which he offers remain in strange contradiction with the teaching of Gotama. I have shown elsewhere² what close parallels may be found in the Avesta to these radiant and benevolent genii and to the heaven of boundless light which is entered by those who repeat the name of its master. Also there is good evidence to connect the early worship of Amitâbha with

¹ Strictly speaking there is nothing final about Maitreya who is merely the next in an infinite series of Buddhas, but practically his figure has many analogies to Soshyos or Saosyant, the Parsi saviour and renovator of the world.

² See chap. XXX p. 220.

Central Asia. Later Iranian influence may have meant Mithraism and Manichæism as well as Zoroastrianism and the school of Asanga perhaps owes something to these systems¹. They may have brought with them fragments of Christianity or doctrines similar to Christianity but I think that all attempts to derive Amitâbhist teaching from Christianity are fanciful. The only point which the two have in common is salvation by faith, and that doctrine is certainly older than Christianity. Otherwise the efforts of Amitâbha to save humanity have no resemblance to the Christian atonement. Nor do the relations between the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas recall the Trinity but rather the Persian Fravashis.

Persian influences worked more strongly on Buddhism than on Hinduism, for Buddhism not only flourished in the frontier districts but penetrated into the Tarim basin and the region of the Oxus which lay outside the Indian and within the Iranian sphere. But they affected Hinduism also, especially in the matter of sun-worship. This of course is part of the oldest Vedic religion, but a special form of it, introduced about the beginning of our era, was a new importation and not a descendant of the ancient Indian cult².

The Brihatsamhita³ says that the Magas, that is Magi, are the priests of the sun and the proper persons to superintend the consecration of temples and images dedicated to that deity, but the clearest statements about this foreign cult are to be found in the Bhavishya Purana⁴ which contains a legend as to its introduction obviously based upon history. Sâmba, the son of Krishna, desiring to be cured of leprosy from which he suffered owing to his father's curse, dedicated a temple to the sun on the river Candrabhâgâ, but could find no Brahmans willing to officiate in it. By the advice of Gauramukha, priest of King Ugrasena, confirmed by the sun himself, he imported some Magas from Śâkadvîpa⁵, whither he flew on the bird

¹ See chap. on Mahâyâna, vi.

² A convenient statement of what is known about this cult will be found in Bhandarkar, *Vaishnavism and Saivism*, part II. chap. xvi.

³ Chap. 60. 19. The work probably dates from about 650 A.D.

⁴ Chap. 139. See, for extracts from the text, Aufrecht. Cat. Cod. Sansc. p. 30.

⁵ For Śâkadvîpa see Vishnu, p. II. iv. where it is said that Brahmans are called there Mṛiga or Maga and Kshattriyas Mâgadha. The name clearly means the country of the Śâkas who were regarded as Zoroastrians, whether they were Iranian by

Garuḍa¹. That this refers to the importation of Zoroastrian priests from the country of the Śākas (Persia or the Oxus regions) is made clear by the account of their customs—such as the wearing of a girdle called Avyaṅga²—given by the Purana. It also says that they were descended from a child of the sun called Jaraśabda or Jaraśasta, which no doubt represents Zarathustra.

The river Candrabhâgâ is the modern Chenab and the town founded by Sâmba is Mûlasthanâ or Multan, called Mu-la-san-pu-lu by the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan Chuang. The Bhavishya Purana calls the place Sâmbapuri and the Chinese name is an attempt to represent Mûlasâmba-puri. Hsüan Chuang speaks enthusiastically of the magnificent temple³, which was also seen by Alberuni but was destroyed by Aurungzeb. Târanâtha⁴ relates how in earlier times a king called Śrî Harsha burnt alive near Multan 12,000 adherents of the Mleccha sect with their books and thereby greatly weakened the religion of Persians and Sakas for a century. This legend offers difficulties but it shows that Multan was regarded as a centre of Zoroastrianism.

Multan is in the extreme west of India, but sun temples are found in many other parts, such as Gujarat, Gwalior and the district of Gaya, where an inscription has been discovered at Govindapur referring to the legend of Sâmba. This same legend is also related in the Kapila Samhitâ, a religious guide-book for Orissa, in connection with the great Sun temple of Konarak⁵.

In these temples the sun was represented by images, Hindu convention thus getting the better of Zoroastrian prejudices, but the costume of the images shows their origin, for the Brihat-samhitâ⁶ directs that Sûrya is to be represented in the dress of

race or not. But the topography is imaginary, for in this fanciful geography India is the central continent and Śakadvîpa the sixth, whereas if it means Persia or the countries of the Oxus it ought to be near India.

¹ The Garuḍa may itself be of Persian provenance, for birds play a considerable part in Persian mythology.

² The Aivyânghen of the Avesta.

³ Watters, vol. II. 254, and *Life*, chap. IV.

⁴ Târanâtha, tr. Schiefner, p. 128, and Vincent Smith's remarks in *Early History*, p. 347, note 2.

⁵ See Râjendralâla Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, vol. II. p. 145. He also quotes the Sâmba Purâṇa. The temple is said to have been built between 1240 and 1280 but the beauty of its architecture suggests an earlier date.

⁶ 58. 47.

the northerners, covered from the feet upwards and wearing the girdle called *avyaṅga* or *viyaṅga*. In Rajputana I have seen several statues of him in high boots and they are probably to be found elsewhere.

Fortuitously or otherwise, the cult of the sun was often associated with Buddhism, as is indicated by these temples in Gaya and Orissa and by the fact that the Emperor Harsha styles his father, grandfather and great-grandfather *paramāditya-bhakta*, great devotees of the sun¹. He himself, though a devout Buddhist, also showed honour to the image of Sūrya, as we hear from Hsiang Chuang.

¹ See Epig. Ind. 72-73.

CHAPTER LVIII

MOHAMMEDANISM IN INDIA

LET us now turn to Mohammedanism. This is different from the cases which we have been considering and we need not trouble ourselves with any enquiry into opportunities and possibilities. The presence and strength of the Prophet's religion in India are patent facts and it is surprising that the result has not been greater.

The chief and most obvious method by which Islam influenced India was the series of invasions, culminating in the Mughal conquest, which poured through the mountain passes of the north-west frontier. But there was also long established communication and to some extent intermigration between the west coast and Mohammedan countries such as Arabia and Persia. Compared with the enormous political and social changes wrought by the land invasions, the results of this maritime intercourse may seem unworthy of mention. Yet for the interchange of ideas it was not without importance, the more so as it was unaccompanied by violence and hostility. Thus the Mappilas or Moplahs of Malabar appear to be the descendants of Arab immigrants who arrived by sea about 900 A.D., and the sects known as Khojas and Bohras owe their conversion to the zeal of Arab and Persian missionaries who preached in the eleventh century. Apart from Mohammedan conquests there must have been at this time in Gujarat, Bombay, and on the west coast generally some knowledge of the teaching of Islam.

In the annals of invasions and conquests several stages can be distinguished. First we have the Arab conquest of Sind in 712, which had little effect. In 1021 Mahmud of Ghazni annexed the Panjab. He conducted three campaigns against other kingdoms of India but, though he sacked Muttra, Somnath and other religious centres, he did not attempt to conquer these regions, still less to convert them to Islam. The period of conquests as distinguished from raids did not begin until the end of the twelfth century when Muhammad Ghori began his

campaigns and succeeded in making himself master of northern India, which from 1193 to 1526 was ruled by Mohammedan dynasties, mostly of Afghan or Turki descent. In the south the frontiers of Vijayanagar marked the limits of Islam. To the north of them Rajputana and Orissa still remained Hindu states, but with these exceptions the Government was Mohammedan. In 1526 came the Mughal invasion, after which all northern India was united under one Mohammedan Emperor for about two centuries. Aurungzeb (1659–1707) was a fanatical Mohammedan: his intolerant reign marked the beginning of disintegration in the Empire and aroused the opposition of the Mahrattas and Sikhs. But until this period Mohammedan rule was not marked by special bigotry or by any persistent attempt to proselytize. A woeful chronicle of selected outrages can indeed be drawn up. In the great towns of the north hardly a temple remained unsacked and most were utterly destroyed. At different periods individuals, such as Sikander Lodi of Delhi and Jelaluddin (1414–1430) in Bengal, raged against Hinduism and made converts by force. But such acts are scattered over a long period and a great area; they are not characteristic of Islam in India. Neither the earlier Mughal Emperors nor the preceding Sultans were of irreproachable orthodoxy. Two of them at least, Ala-ud-Din and Akbar, contemplated founding new religions of their own. Many of them were connected with Hindu sovereigns by marriage or political alliances.

The works of Alberuni and Mohsin Fani show that educated Mohammedans felt an interest not only in Indian science but in Indian religion. In the Panjab and Hindustan Islam was strengthened by immigrations of Mohammedan tribes from the north-west extending over many centuries. Mohammedan sultans and governors held their court in the chief cities, which thus tended to become Mohammedan not only by natural attraction but because high caste Hindus preferred to live in the country and would not frequent the company of those whom they considered as outcasts. Still, Hindus were often employed as accountants and revenue officers. All non-Moslims had to pay the *jiziya* or poll tax, and the remission of this impost accorded to converts was naturally a powerful incentive to change of faith. Yet Mohammedanism cannot record any wholesale triumph in India such as it has won in Persia, Egypt

and Java. At the present day about one-fifth of the population are Moslim. The strength of Islam in the Panjab is due to immigration as well as conversion¹, but it was embraced by large numbers in Kashmir and made rapid progress in Oudh and Eastern Bengal. The number of Mohammedans in Bengal (twenty-five millions out of a total of sixty-two in all India) is striking, seeing that the province is out of touch with the chief Mohammedan centres, but is explicable by the fact that Islam had to deal here not with an educated and organized Hindu community but with imperfectly hinduized aboriginal races, who welcomed a creed with no caste distinctions. Yet, apart from the districts named, which lie on the natural line of march from the Panjab down the Ganges to the sea, it made little progress. It has not even conquered the slopes of the Himalayas or the country south of the Jumna. If we deduct from the Mohammedan population the descendants of Mohammedan immigrants and of those who, like the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal, were not Hindus when they embraced the faith, the impression produced by Islam on the religious thought of India is not great, considering that for at least five centuries its temporal supremacy was hardly contested.

It is not until the time of Kabir that we meet with a sect in which Hindu and Mohammedan ideas are clearly blended, but it may be that the theology of Râmânuja and Madhva, of the Lingayats and Sivaite sects of the south, owes something to Islam. Its insistence on the unity and personality of God may have vivified similar ideas existing within Hinduism, but the expression which they found for themselves is not Moslim in tone, just as nowadays the Arya Samaj is not European in tone. Yet I think that the Arya Samaj would never have come into being had not Hindus become conscious of certain strong points in European religion. In the north it is natural that Moslim influence should not have made itself felt at once. Islam came first as an enemy and a raider and was no more sympathetic to the Brahmans than it was to the Greek Church in Europe. Though Indian theism may sometimes seem practically equivalent to Islam, yet it has a different and gentler tone, and it often rests on the idea that God, the soul and matter are all separate and eternal, an idea foreign to Mohammed's doctrine of creation.

¹ But see on this point *Census of India*, 1911, vol. 1. part 1. p. 128.

But from the fifteenth century onwards we find a series of sects which are obviously compromises and blends. Advances are made from both sides. Thoughtful Mohammedans see the profundity of Hindu theology: liberal Hindus declare that no caste or condition, including birth in a Moslim family, disqualifies man for access to God.

The fusion of Islam with Hinduism exhibited in these sects has for its basis the unity and omnipresence of God in the light of which minor differences have no existence. But fusion also arises from an opposite tendency, namely the toleration by Indian Moslims of Hindu ideas and practices, especially respect for religious teachers and their deification after death. While known by some such title as saint, which does not shock unitarian susceptibility, they are in practice honoured as godlings. The bare simplicity of the Arabian faith has not proved satisfying to other nations, and Turks, Persians and Indians, even when professing orthodoxy, have allowed embellishments and accretions. Such supplementary beliefs thrive with special luxuriance in India, where a considerable portion of the Moslim population are descended from persons who accepted the new faith unwillingly or from interested motives. They brought with them a plentiful baggage of superstitions and did not attempt to sever the ties which bound them to their Hindu neighbours. In the last century the efforts of the Wahabis and other reformers are said to have been partly successful in purifying Islam from Hindu observances, but even now the mixture is noticeable, especially in the lower classes. Brahmans are employed to cast horoscopes, Hindu ceremonies are observed in connection with marriages and funerals, and the idea of pollution by eating with unbelievers is derived from caste rules, for Mohammedans in other countries have no objection to eating with Christians. Numerous sacred sites, such as the shrine of Sheikh Chisti at Ajmere and of Bhairav Nath at Muttra¹, are frequented by both Moslims and Hindus, and it is an interesting parallel to find that the chief Moslim shrines of Turkestan are erected on spots which were once Buddhist sanctuaries. Sometimes the opposite happens: even Brahmans are known to adopt the observances

¹ Another instance is the shrine of Saiyad Salar Masud at Bahraich. He was a nephew of Mahmud of Ghazni and was slain by Hindus, but is now worshipped by them. See Grierson, *J.R.A.S.* 1911, p. 195.

of Shiahs¹. But on the whole it is chiefly the Mohammedans who borrow, not the main doctrines of Hinduism, but popular magic and demonology. Ignorant Mohammedans in Bengal worship Sitalâ, Kâli, Dharmarâj, Baidyanath and other Hindu deities and also respect certain mythical beings who seem to have a Moslim origin, but to have acquired strange characters in the course of time. Such are Khwaja Khizr who lives in rivers, Zindah Ghazi who rides on a tiger in the Sandarbans, and Sultan Shahid who is said to be the bodyguard and lover of Devi. But it is in the adoration of Pirs that this fusion of the two religions is most apparent. A Pir is the Moslim equivalent of a Guru and distinct from the Mollahs or official hierarchy. Just as Hindus receive initiation from their Guru so most Moslims, except the Wahabis and other purists, make a profession of faith before their Pir, accept his guidance and promise him obedience. When an eminent Pir dies his tomb becomes a place of prayer and pilgrimage. Even educated Mohammedans admit that Pirs can intercede with the Almighty and the uneducated offer to them not only direct supplications but even sacrifices. The Shrine of an important Pir, such as Hazrat Moin-ud-Din Chisti at Ajmere, is an edifice dedicated to a superhuman being as much as any Hindu temple.

This veneration of saints attains its strangest development in the sect of the Panchpiriyas or worshippers of the five Pirs. They are treated by the last census of India as "Hindus whose religion has a strong Mohammedan flavour²." There is no agreement as to who the five saints or deities are, but though the names vary from place to place they usually comprise five of the best known semi-mythical Pirs³. Whoever they may be, they are worshipped under the form of a small tomb with five domes or of a simple mound of clay set in the corner of a room. Every Wednesday the mound is washed and offerings of flowers and incense are made. A somewhat similar sect are the Mâlkânas of the Panjab. These appear to be Hindus formerly converted to Islam and now in process of reverting to Hinduism.

¹ See for examples, *Census of India*, 1901, Panjab, p. 151, e.g. the Brahmans of a village near Rawal Pindi are said to be Murids of Abdul-Kadir-Jilani.

² *Census of India*, 1911, vol. I. part I. p. 195. The Mâlkânas are described on the same page.

³ Such as Ghazi Miyan, Pir Badar, Zindah Ghazi, Sheikh Farid, Sheikh Sadu and Khwaja Khizr.

The influence of Hinduism on Indian Mohammedanism is thus obvious. It is responsible for the addition to the Prophet's creed of much superstition but also for rendering it less arid and more human. It is harder to say how far Moslim mysticism and Sufism are due to the same influence. History and geography raise no difficulties to such an origin. Arabia was in touch with the western coast of India for centuries before the time of Mohammed: the same is true of the Persian Gulf and Bagdad, and of Balkh and other districts near the frontiers of India. But recent writers on Sufism¹ have shown a disposition to seek its origin in Neoplatonism rather than in the east. This hypothesis, like the other, presents no geographical difficulties. Many Arab authors, such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) were influenced by Greek Philosophy: Neoplatonists are said to have taken refuge in Persia at the Court of Nushirwan (c. A.D. 532): the Fihrist (c. 988) mentions Porphyry and Plotinus. If, therefore, Sufism, early or late, presents distinct resemblances to Neoplatonism, we need not hesitate to ascribe them to direct borrowing, remembering that Neoplatonism itself contains echoes of India. But, admitting that much in the doctrine of the Sufis can be found to the west as well as to the east of the countries where they flourished, can it be said that their general tone is Neoplatonic? Amongst their characteristics are pantheism; the institution of religious orders and monasteries; the conception of the religious life as a path or journey; a bold use of language in which metaphors drawn from love, wine and music are freely used in speaking of divine things and, although the doctrine of metempsychosis may be repudiated as too obviously repugnant to Islam, a tendency to believe in successive existences or states of the soul. Some of these features, such as the use of erotic language, may be paralleled in other ancient religions as well as Hinduism but the pantheism which, not content with speaking of the soul's union with God, boldly identifies the soul with the divinity and says I am God, does not seem traceable in Neoplatonism. And though a distinction may justly be drawn between early and later Sufism and Indian influence be admitted as stronger in the later developments, still an early Sufi, Al-Hallaj, was executed in 922 A.D. for saying

¹ E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*: R. A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Divan of Shems-i-Tabriz*.

Ana 'l-Haqq, I am the Truth or God, and we are expressly told that he visited India to study magic. Many important Sufis made the same journey or at least came within the geographical sphere of Indian influence. Faridu-'d-Din Attar travelled in India and Turkestan; Jalalu-'d-Din er-Rumi was born at Balkh, once a centre of Buddhism: Sa'di visited Balkh, Ghazna, the Panjab, and Gujarat, and investigated Hindu temples¹. Hafiz was invited to the Deccan by Sultan Muhammad Bahmani and, though shipwreck prevented the completion of the visit, he was probably in touch with Indian ideas. These journeys indicate that there was a prevalent notion that wisdom was to be found in India and those who could not go there must have had open ears for such Indian doctrines as might reach them by oral teaching or in books. After the establishment of the Caliphate at Bagdad in the eighth century translations of Indian authors became accessible. Arabic versions were made of many works on astronomy, mathematics and medicine and the example of Alberuni shows how easily such treatises might be flavoured with a relish of theology. His book and still more the Fihrist testify to the existence among Moslems, especially in Bagdad and Persia, of an interest in all forms of thought very different from the self-satisfied bigotry which too often characterizes them. The Caliph Ma'mun was so fond of religious speculation and discussion that he was suspected of being a Manichee and nicknamed Amiru-'l-Kafirin, Commander of the Unbelievers. Everything warrants the supposition that in the centuries preceding Mohammed, Indian ideas were widely disseminated in western Asia, partly as a direct overflow from India, for instance in Turkestan and Afghanistan, and partly as entering, together with much other matter, into the doctrines of Neoplatonists and Manichæans. Amid the intolerant victories of early Islam such ideas would naturally retreat, but they soon recovered and effected an entrance into the later phases of the faith and were strengthened by the visits of Sufi pilgrims to Turkestan and India.

The form of Jewish mysticism known as Kabbala, which in Indian terminology might be described as Jewish Tantrism, has a historical connection with Sufiism and a real analogy to it,

¹ He describes how he discovered the mechanism by which the priests made miraculous images move. See Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, II. 529.

for both arise from the desire to temper an austere and regal deism with concessions to the common human craving for the interesting and picturesque, such as mysticism and magic. If the accent of India can sometimes be heard in the poems of the Sufis we may also admit that the Kabbala is its last echo.

Experts do not assign any one region as the origin of the Kabbala but it grew on parallel lines in both Egypt and Babylonia, in both of which it was naturally in touch with the various oriental influences which we have been discussing. It is said to have been introduced to Europe about 900 A.D. but received important additions and modifications at the hands of Isaac Luria (1534-72) who lived in Palestine, although his disciples soon spread his doctrines among the European Jews.

Many features of the Kabbala, such as the marvellous powers assigned to letters, the use of charms and amulets, the emanations or phases of the deity and the theory of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, are amazingly like Indian Tantrism but no doubt are more justly regarded as belonging to the religious ideas common to most of Asia¹. But in two points we seem able to discern definite Hindu influence. These are metempsychosis and pantheism, which we have so often found to have some connection with India when they exist in an extreme form. Their presence here is specially remarkable because they are alien to the spirit of orthodox Judaism. Yet the pre-existence and repeated embodiment of the soul is taught in the Zohar and even more systematically by Luria, in whose school were composed works called *Gilgûlim*, or lists of transmigrations. The ultimate Godhead is called *En soph* or the infinite and is declared to be unknowable, not to be described by positive epithets, and therefore in a sense non-existent, since nothing which is predicated of existing beings can be truly predicated of it. These are crumbs from the table of Plotinus and the Upanishads.

¹ But there is something very Indian in the reluctance of the Kabbalists to accept creation *ex nihilo* and to explain it away by emanations, or by the doctrine of limitation, that is God's self-withdrawal in order that the world might be created, or even by the eternity of matter.