

THE MYSTERY OF THE SWORDED WARRIOR

IN HINDU APOCALYPSE:

WAS KALKI VISNUYASAS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH?

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"The Mystery of the Sworded Warrior in Hindu
Apocalypse: Was Kalki Viṣṇuyasas Bahā'u'llāh?"
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This paper probes the validity of the claim that Bahā'u'llāh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahā'ī Faith, fulfills messianic expectations associated with the Hindu eschatological figure, Kalki Viṣṇuyasas, the tenth Avatar or incarnation of Viṣṇu, who shall appear as a sworded warrior astride a winged white steed, to end the dark era by slaying the wicked, thus inaugurating the golden age.

Kalki first appears in the Mahābhārata, then in later epics, such as the Viṣṇu Purāna. But the Kalki Purāna is the most developed apocalypse. The Kalki prophecies are often related in past tense, and seem more reflective of a medieval crisis rather than a future vision. In fact, Kalki is arguably an eschatologically-heroized form of the warlord Viṣṇu-varḍana Yaso-dharman (compressed into Viṣṇuyasas), who in the sixth century A.D. vanquished Mihirakula and the White Huns, thus establishing a Brahmanical renaissance. If so, then past events have become transformed into last events in the Kalki Purāna.

Bahā'īs in Malwa, the same province in India over which Yasodharman (called in Jaina sources "Kalki-rāja") had ruled, have proclaimed in song Bahā'u'llāh as Kalki. Bahā'ī books have been published in Hindi and English, adducing proof-texts from the Kalki Purāna in support of this claim. Upon examination, however, the proof-texts used fail to conform to the latest critical edition of the Kalki Purāna. Related efforts to prove that the Buddhist messiah Maitreya is Bahā'u'llāh are also demonstrably uncritical.

Kalki is an avenger who not only repulses Huns, but who persecutes Jains, Buddhists and even Muslims as well. Most of the prophecies are vaticinia ex eventu (predictions from past events), are late in final form, are not unified, and are more predicative than predictive in nature. Cycles of time vary in Hindu systems, so that Kalki's advent will also vary. For Bahā'u'llāh to be Kalki, the prophecies themselves must be radically spiritualized from their pronounced ethnocentrism.

There is, however, an interesting equivalence of titles, insofar as Viṣṇuyasas and Bahā'u'llāh both signify "the Glory of God" in the literal translation of their respective Sanskrit and Persian names. Furthermore, parallels between Bahā'u'llāh's doctrine of Manifestation (Theophany) and the Hindu theory of Prādurbhāva ("Manifestation") are striking, both doctrinally and historically. For the doctrine of Prādurbhāva (a term predating the use of the word Avatāra) provided the ideology which brought about the federation of disparate cults, to produce a religious and social synthesis--unifying different groups of people into a single communion of Vaisnavic Hinduism.

In much the same way, the federal ideology of Bahā'u'llāh is presently effecting a synthesis of its own, uniting the followers of diverse and often competing religious backgrounds into a single, universal Faith. This process improves upon the utopia of Kalki, whose holy war can only achieve peace through forced conversion, in order to restore a Brahmanical orthodoxy. Moreover, there is sociological truth to the identification of Bahā'u'llāh as Kalki, since several million Bahā'īs the world over have reached this eschatological recognition. One may say that in the process of advancing an apocalyptic claim, Bahā'u'llāh has redefined as well as revalorized Kalki.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SWORDED WARRIOR IN HINDU APOCALYPSE:

WAS KALKI VISNUYASAS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH?

In the gaze of America, amongst the foremost symbols of India are her Avatars, or God-Men. If a person knows little else about India, apart from cartoons of cobra-pipers in diapers, chances are that her holy men are first pictured, along with hunger and mystery.

Of these mystics, one is struck by the legendary power of the supreme God-Men, known as Avatars. Avatars tower in India's cultural heritage with a presence that dwarfs Paul Bunyan, an American heroic counterpart. For millions of Hindus over multiple centuries, Avatars as mediators between the Divine and the mundane proved inspirational. These supermen represented a Deity Who was not passive, existing merely as spectator.

Through the Avatar, the Supreme Being became deeply involved in the spiritual evolution of the human race. On an individual level, the Avatar becomes a kind of process mandala on which to contemplate, and, ultimately, to pattern one's life after. Through devotion, meditation, and action, the religiously sincere could model his or her own life after a favorite Avatar, and serve as an arm of God in a small way.

In India, various revitalization movements took root over the past century. Of such, the Bahá'í Faith is one. Recently, the government there has agreed to include the Bahá'í Faith as one of the major religions in its moral course books for all grades up to high school. This program will be the first of its kind in India.

In relating the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, the Persian prophet Bahá'u'lláh, to cultural tradition, Indian Bahá'ís of Hindu antecedence have chosen to identify Bahá'u'lláh with Kalki Visnuyasas, the tenth and final major Avatar, whose future advent to save the world from evil had long flourished in Hindu thought as both a promise as well as a hope. The purpose of this enquiry is

to determine the extent to which such an identification is either warranted or artificial, from a scholarly perspective.

The Most Powerful Theological Concept Of India

The growth of Avatar-legends throughout the sacred epics of India, and the devotionism surrounding those Avatars on the folk level--through places of pilgrimage, veneration of icons, and celebration in festivals--makes the doctrine of Avatars probably the most powerful theological concept in India ever to arise since that of the Absolute or Brahman. Not only is the Avatar of the Absolute the most powerful metaphysical preamble in the spiritual constitution of India, but the most successful as well.¹

The most famous expression of the Avatar-concept comes from the lips of Krsna as found in the Bhagavad Gita (IV:7-8): "For whenever the law of righteousness withers away and lawlessness arises, then do I generate myself (on earth) For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the setting up of the law of righteousness I come into being age after age."²

For the history of the Avatar doctrine, it is wise to start with the origins of the term first, to arrive at an insight into the roots of the idea. Upon investigation, we find a constellation of related terms.

Avatāra And Other Terms Current In Earlier Times

Avatar is the Anglicization of the Sanskrit Avatāra. Fortunately, the English-speaking world is not so cavalier as were the Greeks in the naturalization of foreign terms. However, Avatar is most often thought of in the Occident as a Hindu synonym for Incarnation.

Since the chrysalis of our culture is Christian, we are naturalized to the God-embodying concept. Incarnation is a part of our theological frame of reference. And to a great extent, the two ideas are related.

Yet it is significant that both Avatar and Incarnation were crystallized at dates comparatively late with respect the origins of those notions, as will be shown below.

That the term Avatāra is of late currency is well-known in scholarly circles.³ Avatāra derives from the root avatr which means "to come down" or "to descend."

Now the Bhagavad Gita uses other terms to convey this unique and fullest appearance of God to man. The words janman (birth), sambhava (come into being), and srjana (creation) are employed.⁴ The Mahabharata, the great Hindu saga in which the Bhagavad Gita is embedded, most often prefers the word Prādurbhāva (manifestation or appearance) to Avatāra.

The Prādurbhāva Or Manifestation Of God

The most thorough treatment of the term Prādurbhāva was accomplished by Paul Hacker in a contribution entitled, Zur Entwicklung Der Avataralehre, appearing in the Vienna journal: Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Süd-Und Ostasiens Und Archiv Für Indische Philosophie: Vol. IV (1960): pp. 47-70, of which a summary in English is provided on pages 68-70.

When the mythology of Visnu's manifestations began to take shape, those terms first used were rupa (form),⁵ vapus (embodiment),⁶ and tanu (appearance in certain specific aspects).⁷ Whereupon, Prādurbhāva (Manifestation) was chosen as the most precise or rather approximate expression from which one could choose.

Why? The crucial significance of Prādurbhāva is that "God manifests Himself while remaining transcendent."⁸ Or: "The term prādubhāva probably implies that the God continues to exist in His true unmanifest presence, although He manifests Himself at the same time in definite forms (rupani) for particular

purposes, presumably through His yuga powers. But the idea involved in the term avatāra seems to be that either the whole (purnavatara) or a part (amsavatara) of the Divine essence is imagined to descend from heaven, taking a particular form (murti) or birth (janma)."⁹

In other words, God is transcendent. The term Prādurbhāva ensures and preserves that transcendence in one's awareness. The term Avatāra threatens the purity of the God-concept by ascribing to the Divinity motion (descent) and substance (incarnation). The idea of Avatar or Incarnation as such puts flesh on the spirit, and then confuses the two at the moment of the union of both universes. For this reason, Prādurbhāva is preferred to Avatāra in the earlier literature. The resonance between Bahá'u'lláh's doctrine of Manifestation and Prādurbhāva, from the phenomenology of religion perspective, is significant. (See Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet Of The Manifestation at the end of this paper.

The Unific Force Of The Avatar Theory In Indian History

The Avatar-doctrine emerges as the most powerful notion in the history of Hinduism due to the fact that the concept propelled into motion a unifying religious synthesis.

Originally, different divinities like Rama, Krsna, Parasurama, and so forth, appear to have flourished as the gods of independent religious cults. These cults had founded, developed or preserved different and often competing traditions, composed of historical or mythological legends or both. Those legends were heritages which could not be denied or forgotten. But eventually such diverse heritages had to be brought into some sort of unity in order to stave off conflict. Which meant in most cases a patchwork heritage had to somehow be evolved. The patchwork or synthesis took shape in a mythological chronology of stories along with a universalization of local events.

Over the course of time such arrangements brought about or made far more possible federation of those cults to form what came to be known as Hinduism. By representing diverse gods as successive manifestations of one single Lord (Visnu), a more comprehensive unity of Godhood was sought.¹⁰ The process had extraordinary consequences, owing to its unific force.

Who is Kalki Visnuyasas?

A further significance of the Avatar doctrine goes beyond the marriage of heritages into a single, sacred past. There was, moreover, the assurance that moral and social order would be restored during mankind's darkest hardships.

So a future Avatar of Visnu appears in the sacred sagas of India to reinforce and to augment hope in the hearts of her people. A Messiah is promised. Or is one? Even the great philosopher Sri Aurobindo struggled with this very uncertainty. How much reliance can be placed on the prophetic accounts, variant as they are, and what do those accounts signify? This is Sri Aurobindo's approach to the problem, in the form of a warning:

The Hindu procession of the ten Avatars is itself, as it were, a parable of evolution. First the Fish Avatar, then the amphibious animal between land and water, then the land animal, then the Man-Lion Avatar, bridging man and animal, then man as dwarf, small and undeveloped and physical but containing in himself the godhead and taking possession of existence, then the Rajasic, sattwic, nirguna Avatars, leading the human development from the vital Rajasic to the sattwic mental man and again the overmental superman. Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki depict the last three stages, the stages of the spiritual development--Krishna opens the possibility of overmind, Buddha tries to shoot beyond to the supreme liberation but that liberation is still negative, not returning upon earth to complete positively the evolution; Kalki is to correct this by bringing the Kingdom of the Divine upon earth, destroying the opposing Asura forces. The progression is striking and unmistakable.

As for the lives in between the Avatar lives, it must be remembered that Krishna speaks of many lives in the past, not only a few supreme ones, and secondly that while he speaks of himself as the Divine, in one passage he describes himself as a Vibhuti, vrsnīnam vāsudevah. We may therefore fairly assume that in many lives he manifested as the

Vibhuti veiling the fuller Divine Consciousness. If we admit that the object of Avatarhood is to lead the evolution, this is quite reasonable, the Divine appearing as Avatar in the great transitional stages and as Vibhutis to aid the lesser transitions.

Too much importance need not be attached to the details about Kalki--they are rather symbolic than an attempt to prophesy details of future history. What is expressed is something that has to come, but it is symbolically indicated, no more.

So too, too much weight need not be put on the exact figures about the Yugas in the Purana. Here again the Kala and the Yugas indicate successive periods in the cyclic wheel of evolution,--the perfect state, decline and disintegration of successive ages of humanity followed by a new birth--the mathematical calculations are not the important element. The argument of the end of the Kali Yuga already come or coming and a new Satya Yuga coming is a very familiar one and there have been many who have upheld it.

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (1970): Vol. 2, pp. 402-403.)

Aurobindo provides here a native insight sharp in its focus on Kalki: One should look to the prophecies as having little literal value. The apocalyptic details and age-computations embellish basic symbols of cycles in evolution. These symbols are charged with much more deep meanings than are the specifics and figures. Aurobindo comes close to suggesting that what must come to just as important as who is to come. And that the prophecies offer us a sense of the dynamics of social change in civilization. This line of reasoning was pursued by another great Indian philosopher, Radhakrishnan, in a small volume entitled, Kalki: Future Of Civilization.

PART II: THE KALKI APOCALYPSE

Visnu's future advent as Kalki is for the first time foretold in the Mahabharata (3:190:94). The hero appears, so as to vanquish the godless. Through purging the world of its mlecchas, Kalki brings forth the Truth Age once more. The barbarians conquered, orthodoxy is restored.

This late hero is born into a priest's family. The child's full name is given as Kalkin Visnuyasas, according to not only Mahabharata 3:190¹¹, but 2:50 as well.¹² Other sources relate Visnyasas as an alias of Kalki, those sources being, most notably, Harivamsa I:41, Vayu Purana 104,¹³ and Brahmanda Purana 2:III:73:104-124, where Kalki is known as Visnuyasas, son of Parasara. Elsewhere, however, Kalki comes as Son of Visnuyasas. Either confusion reigns in the epic texts over who Visnuyasas is--(father or son?)--or perhaps both bear Visnuyasas as a family cognomen. Visnuyasas translates as "Glory of Visnu."

Interestingly enough, Kalki Visnuyasas emerges as a warrior out of priest's clothing--an exceptional instance of caste mobility. And yet, the original caste-classes are to be restored when Kalki establishes order once more, according to the Mahabharata. The priests (Brahmanas) will wield sacral power again. Clearly, such is a Hindu "Kingdom of God" on earth. So should we expect, since visions of Kalki's victory is the kind of monarchy under which priests could flourish. And those who took to composing the Kalki cycle of tradition in its final forms were priests whose influence had waxed and waned, as the sacerdotal order slowly fell prey to encroaching secularism and was threatened by rival religions.

So pro-orthodox is Kalki Visnuyasas that this terrible warrior takes a flashing sword to both Buddhists and Jains alike. And, in later texts, Kalki wars

upon Moslems! The earth is to be dyed with the blood of daring heretics--by Kalki's enormous military force! Furthermore, Kalki's resemblance to the warrior on the white steed, whose cloak is soaked in blood and whose orders are to put pagans to the sword as foretold in the Apocalypse Of Saint John The Divine (19:11-15), is astonishing. O'Flaherty is convinced there is almost assuredly a historical relationship between the two images.¹⁴

Kalki's near massacre of Buddhists and Jains is pictured in the Kalki Purana thus:

At the end of the Age, Brahma created from his back an evil one known as Adharma. From him Kali was descended, foul-smelling and lustful, with gaping mouth and lolling tongue. He begat Fear and a daughter named Death; thus were born the many descendants of Kali, revilers of dharma. Men then became lustful, hypocritical, and evil, intent upon penis and stomach, adulterers, drunkards, evil-doers. Ascetics took to houses, and householders were devoid of discrimination. The earth yielded few crops. Men abandoned the study of the Vedas and sacrifices, and they ceased to offer oblations. The gods were all without sustenance, and they sought refuge with Brahma.

Then Visnu was born as Kalki. He amassed a great army to chastise the Buddha; he fought the Buddhists, who were led by the Jina, and he killed the Jina and defeated the Buddhists and the barbarians who assisted them. The wives of the Buddhists and barbarians had also taken up arms, but Kalki taught them bhaki-yoga, karma-yoga and jnana-yoga (the three paths of the Bhagavad Gita). Kalki then continued his march and met Dharma, who had been driven out by Kali.¹⁵ Kalki defeated Kali and his allies, but Kali escaped to another age.

The earliest episodal account of Kalki is found in th Mahabharata, as reported before. The motif of persecution of heretics--and Buddhists and Jains qualify all too well--is pronounced from the very start:

At the beginning of the Kali Age, Visnu will become the Buddha, son of Suddhodana, and he will be a bald preacher who will speak in the Magadha dialect and delude men. All men will become bald and take the ocre robe, and priests will cease to offer oblations or recite the Vedas....Then, at the end of the Kali Age, a Brahmin named Kalkin, the son of Visnuyasas, will be born to uproot the barbarians and heretics, and the final dissolution will take place.¹⁶

If to qualify as Kalki Visnuyaśas, Baha'u'llah must have led campaign against Buddhists and Jains, such identification is clearly impossible. Yet a more profound relationship might exist, as will be shown below.

The Jains were certainly sensitive to Kalki's threat. In one sloka of a Jain work known as the Harivamsa, after the founder Mahavira attains Nirvana, a Kalki will appear every thousand years in order to preach a dharma quite contrary to Jainism.¹⁷

In fact, it is felt by some that Kalki was an actual king in history who was one of the most, if not the most devastating arch-fiends of the Jains. K. P. Jayaswal marshalled the argument that Kalki was to be identified with Yasodharman.¹⁸

A Closer Look At Kalki Visnuyaśas

The title Kalki derives from Kalka, and would signify "the destroyer of what is foul."¹⁹ Kalki, therefore, is first regarded as a destroyer of all that is sinful, heterodox, or foreign--a view of Kalki Hindu descriptions justify.

Visnuyaśas is a Sanskrit compound most often rendered "the Glory of Visnu"²⁰ or "The Glory of God." The striking similarity of names--Visnuyaśas and Bahá'u'lláh, both of which signify "the Glory of God"--has profoundly impressed Indian Bahá'ís, who number several millions. This phenomenon is interesting and will deserve space later in this paper.

Corresponding with the advent of Kalki Visnuyaśas is the dawn of the Krta Yuga or Golden Age. Rather than being a particular, predestined juncture in time, the twilight of the Kali or Dark Age starts to occur with the work of the king mighty in righteousness. Thus, Sukra states that "the king is the maker of the age as the promulgator of duties and sins. He is the cause of the setting on foot of the customs and usages and hence is the cause or

maker of the times." Nevertheless, predicative though Hindu prophecy is, there does emerge an interesting specific prediction as to time:

*yadā candrās ca sūryas ca tathā tiṣyabr̥haspatī/
ekarā śau sameṣ yanti prapatsyati tadā kṛtam//*

*kalkir viṣṇuyaśā nāma dvijah kālāpracoditaḥ/
utpatsyate mahāvīryo mahābuddhiparākramaḥ//*

*utthito brāhmano dīptah ksayāntakṛd udāradhīh/
sa samkṣepo hi sarvasya yugasya parivartakah//*

When the moon and the sun, and Tisya and Brhaspati, move together into the same Rasi, then will the Kṛta approach.... Kalki, called Visnuyaśas, a Twice-born, impelled by Time, will be born--of great energy, and of great intellect and power... Born a brilliant and highly intelligent Brahmin, creating the end through destruction, he will cause the destruction of the whole Yuga, bringing it to an end.

Next to the Mahabharata passage shown above, the Harivamsa preserves the oldest epic prophecy regarding Kalki Visnuyaśas. Although various translators such as O'Flaherty and D. N. Bose render Kalki Visnuyaśas as "Kalki, son of Visnuyasas," such does little justice to the earliest Kalki prophecies. For instance:

*kalki visnuyasa nama sambhale namake dvijah/
sarvaloka-hitarthaya bhuyas cotpasyate prabhuh//
dasamo bhavya-sampanno yajnavalkya-purahsarah/
ksapayitva ca tan sarvan bhavinarthena coditan//
ganga-yammunayor madhye nistham prapsyati sanugah//
IIv I, 41, 164-166a)*

These verses and more are rather freely translated by Bose so:

O king! I have narrated to you the past incarnations of Narayana for the good of humanity. Now I will tell you His future incarnations; please listen to me. At the end of His tenth incarnation, the Lord Narayana will again descend on earth for the good of the world and be born as the son of Visnuyasa in the village called Samvala. He will be known in this incarnation as Kalki. In this incarnation Kalki as a companion of Yajnavalkya will first defeat the Buddhas of the Kshanika school in argument and then destroy them; He will then rest in the region between the Ganges and the Jamuna.

Afterwards nobody will be satisfied with his own wife, and each will try to snatch the wife of the other; a general fight will start and kings and subjects with ministers and men will be annihilated; anarchy will reign, and as there will be no king, the strong will rob the weak. All these will happen in the evening of the Kali yuga; there will be intense distress and desolation; but with the close of the Kali yuga all these will also end. At the end of the Kali yuga, the Satya yuga will again come. The people of their own accord will only

do what is right. The Vrahmavadins speak of these and other incarnations of Narayana in the Purangs. Even the gods are overwhelmed (with awe and excitement) while describing the incarnations of Narayana. I only narrate very briefly His incarnations. The narration of the incarnations of Narayana pleases the pitris. Those who reverentially listen to the mystic and mysterious life-histories of the Lord of all the yugas, are freed from all sins. Through the grace of Narayana, they enjoy plenty and prosperity.

This is a development of the legend of Kalki Visnuyaśas which finds place in the Aranyaka Parva of the Mahabharata (III:188:89f.).²² In the passage above where the word "incarnation(s)" is given, the actual term in the text itself is Pradurbhava or "Manifestation."²³ Perhaps we overstress this point, but it is so often overlooked.

Later Kalki prophecies will be modelled on these prior texts. For example, the Brahma Purana states:

*kalki visnuyasa nama sambhala-grama-sambhavah/
sarvaloka-hitarthaya bluyo devo mahayasah//*

This verse nearly reproduced Harivamsa I:41:164 quoted already.²⁴ We discover a trait of Hindu texts which actually is rather universal: prophecies become more and more elaborate as speculations find nourishment over the years and centuries in the ripe minds of priests. The Kalki Purana gives us a most ornate and romantic document of this process. The extent to which Hindu prophecies and especially the Kalki Purana serve as a literary crystal ball will be treated later in this paper.

So far, we have shown that the Avatar theory was a powerful dynamic in Hindu thought. Originally the doctrine was one of "Manifestation" rather than "Incarnation," the term Pradubhava having been current earlier. Historically, the Avatar concept was significant since it was instrumental in bringing about a confederation of independent cults. The progression of Avatars is for Aurobindo "a parable of evolution." The prophecies on Kalki are symbolic also. Some confusion persists over the name Visnuyasas, associated with Kalki. Kalki

prophecies become more and more fanciful in the Hindu tradition down the centuries.

Representative References To Kalki Visnuayasas
In Indian Epical Literature²⁵

1. Agni Purana 16:5-10.
2. Ahimbudhnya Samhita (in Schrader's version: p. 42).
3. Bhagavata Mahapurana 12:2:16-23; 1:3:25; 6:8:19; 10:40:22.
4. Bhavisya 3:1:2-7; 3:3:4; 3:4:25-26.
5. Bhavisyotarra 4:63:23
6. Brahma 213.
7. Brahmanda 2:3:73:104-125.
8. Brahmavaivarta 2:7.
9. Brhaddharma 3:19.
10. Devi 6:6-7.
11. Devi-Bhagavata 10:4-7.
12. Garuda 1:202.
13. Harivamsa 1:41:164-166.
14. Kalki Upapurana 1:1-4; 2:6-7; 3:1-2, 14-19.
15. Kriyayogasara 19
16. Linga 1:40
17. Mahabharata 12:app.1:No. 31: lines 1-22; Kumbhakona 12:348.
18. Matsya 47:248-263.
19. Narada 1:119:19.
20. Narasimha 54.
21. Saura 4.
22. Siva 16:12.
23. Skanda 7:4:1
24. Varaha 15; 39-48
25. Vayu 2:37:390-411, 424-429.
26. Visnu 5:7; 6:1-2.
27. Visnudharma 104.
28. Visnudharmottara 1:74

The Dark Age Prior To The Sworded Warrior's Advent

The following selections afford a most lurid picture of the Dark Age or Kali Yuga which Kalki comes to close. These descriptions document an alarmingly keen insight to the outcome of moral decay, which appear surprisingly enough, to apply to our own times. However, scholars have observed that the descriptions almost certainly lament conditions already prevalent at the time of the composition. Representative prophecies follow below:

In the age of Kali men will become slaves of women and miserable. Sexual pleasure being the (only) ground of their affection....Those who have no knowledge of religion will occupy high seats and preach religion. Oppressed with famine and (heavy) taxation,--land being divested of foodgrains,--and stricken with fear of droughts, people in the Kali age will ever remain perturbed of mind.
(Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana 12:3:37,38,39)

In the Kali age wealth alone will be the criterion of pedigree, morality and merit...Capability of affording sexual delight will be the (only) criterion of masculine or feminine excellence....Justice will have every chance of being vitiated because of one's inability to gratify those administering it, and voluble speech will be the (only) criterion of scholarship. Want of riches will be the sole test of impiety and hypocrisy the only touchstone of goodness. (Mutual) consent will be the sole determining factor in marriage....
(Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana 12:2:2,3,4,5)

Filling one's belly will be the (only) end of human pursuit and audacity of speech will be the only criterion of veracity...When religion is replaced by heresy to a large extent and rulers mostly turn out to be thieves,...annual plants get stunted in growth and trees are mostly reduced to the size of a sami (a small tree);...and dwellings will mostly look desolate (for want of hospitality to strangers); in this way the Kali age, whose career is so severe to the people, is well-nigh past, the Lord will appear in His divine form for the protection of virtue.
(Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana 12:2:6,12-16)

The Lord will appear under the name Kalki in the house of the high-souled Vishnuyasas (Glory of God)--the foremost Brahman of the village of Sambhala. Riding a fleet horse named Devadutta and capable of subduing the wicked, the Lord of the universe, wielding eight divine powers and possessed of (endless) virtues and matchless splendour, will traverse the globe on that swift horse and exterminate with His sword in tens of millions robbers wearing the insignia of royalty....When the moon, the sun and the Jupiter rise together in one zodiacal house and the Pusya constellation is in the ascendant, then it will be Satyayuga.
(Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana 12:2:18-20,24.)

The Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana is the greatest of all the Puranas in terms of the vast popularity and reverence it enjoys in India. This Mahapurana devotes an entire Canto (X) to the life and legends of Krsna. Canto XI comprises Krsna's last teachings ever given, according to the story, and are confided to a disciple known as Uddhava. Hence, the Uddhava Gita, which is sometimes published separately. Canto XII, from which excerpts were just shown, is prophetic outwardly but evidently embeds a wealth of historical matter, especially old dynasty lists, periods of reign, and geneologies as well. The above extracts were selected from the popular Gita Press version.

Proceeding now to another very popular epic, the Visnu Purana, we encounter descriptions of a kindred nature:

These will all be contemporary monarchs reigning over the earth; kings of churlish spirit, violent temper, and ever addicted to falsehood and unrighteousness. They will inflict death on women, children and cows; they will seize upon the property of others; they will be of limited power, and will, for the most part, rapidly rise and fall; their lives will be short, their desires insatiable; and they will display but little Dharma. The people of various countries will intermingle with them and follow their example; and the barbarians, being powerful under the patronage of princes, and the purer tribes, acting in a contrary manner (viparyayena vartamanah), will destroy the people. Wealth and piety will decrease day by day, until the world will be wholly depraved. Then property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of Dharma; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sexual gratification. The Earth will be venerated but for her mineral treasures; the Brahmanical thread will constitute a Brahman; external types will be the only distinctions of the several orders of life; dishonesty will be the (universal) means of subsistence; weakness will be the cause of dependence; menace and presumption will be substituted for learning; liberality will constitute Dharma; simple ablution will be purification; mutual assent will be marriage; fine clothes will be dignity; and water or a temple afar off will be esteemed as a holy place (tirtha). Amidst all castes, he who is the strongest will reign over a principality.

thus vitiated by many faults. The people, unable to bear the heavy burdens imposed upon them by their avaricious sovereigns, will take refuge amongst the valleys of the mountains, and will be glad to feed upon (wild) honey, herbs, roots, fruits, leaves and flowers; their only covering will be the bark of trees; and they will be exposed to cold, and wind, and sun, and rain. No man's life will exceed three and twenty years. Thus, in the Kali age, shall decay constantly proceed, until the human race approaches its annihilation.²⁶

When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that Divine Being who exists of His own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and Who is the Beginning and the End, and Who comprehends all things, shall descend upon the earth: He will be born in the family of Vishuyashas, an eminent Brahman of Sambhala village, as Kalki, endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. By His irresistible might He will destroy all the Mlecchas and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened, and shall be as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita age, or age of purity. As it is said: "When the sun and moon, and the lunar asterism Tishya, and the planet Jupiter are in one mansion, the Krita age shall return."²⁷

The Iconography Of Kalki Visnuyasas

A further source of our knowledge of Kalki Visnuyasas comes from icons.

Emil Abegg in his masterful work, Der Messiasglaube In Indien Und Iran (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1928), reproduces three distinct representations of Kalki.

One of the Kalki icons presented in Der Messiasglaube (which continues to be the major monograph on Kalki to date) is that of a sworded warrior--but with a horse's head! Two lines of tradition find distinction here. The first is of a popular nature, where Visnu manifests as a white stallion, rippling with power and blazing sheen. The other is of course the warrior astride a military steed.²⁸ The warrior's association with the charger evidently relates back to the old folk notions of power embodied in the horse.²⁹

Banerjea, in his treatise on the iconography of incarnations, relates that in the Matsya Purana, the final Avatar will enter the world as:

Kalkin, the son of Viṣṇuśāh, and the great sage Yājñavalkya will be his priest. Then again the Varṇāśramadharmā, good works and piety will be re-established and Hari after fulfilling his mission of restoration of 'dharma' will ascend to Heaven. This idea about the future incarnation of Visnu is directly associated with the 'Bhagavadgita' conception of the descent of the lord in various forms for restoring virtue and destroying vice. The same Purana describes two varieties of Kalki images, in one of which, evidently two-armed, he is endowed with a bow and a quiver full of arrows, in the other, a four-armed variety, he is depicted riding on horseback and holding a sword, a conchshell, a wheel and an arrow (ch. 49, 9: 'Dhanustūnān-vitāḥ Kalkī mlecchotsādakaro dvijah/ Athavāśvasthitah khaḍgi saṅkha-cakraśārānvitah'). The 'Hayaśīrsa Pañcarātra' also speaks of these two varieties, two-armed and four-armed, the objects held in the hands of the same being almost identical ('Kalkinaṃ tu caturbāhuṃ vaddhatūnam dhanurddharam/ Śaṅkha-cakra-dharam kuryāttathā khaḍgadharāṃ prabhum// Dvibhujāṃ vā hayārūdhāṃ khaḍgapāṇiṃ suresvaram/ Kalkinaṃ sthāpayitvaivam Śakra-sthānam labhennaraḥ'). The 'Visnudharmottara' describes Kalkī as two-armed with a sword in his raised hand, riding on horseback, and should be depicted in an angry mood ('Khaḍgodya-takaraḥ kruddho hayārūdhō mahābalaḥ/ Mlecchocchedakaraḥ Kalkī dvibhujah parikīrttitah'). But the 'Vaikhānasāgama' description of Kalkin is interesting on account of the fact that of the two varieties of his images, one should be horse-faced and the other with the face of man; his four hands should carry 'cakra,' 'śaṅkha,' 'khaḍga' and 'khetaka' and he should be fierce-looking; his 'kautukabera' should be like an ordinary four-armed Visnu image. These different descriptions of Kalkin are not all illustrated in plastic or pictorial form, the only variety almost invariably represented there is the two-armed one shown on horseback with a sword in raised right hand, the left holding the reins of the prancing horse. Separate figures of this Avatara are unknown to me.

Mostly, Kalki images have been found in the aureole or encircling radiance of Visnu representations in company with the other incarnations. Although rare, occasionally small images were depicted separately and sometimes one or two vassals are shown holding a Chattra over Kalki. In the image with two servants a sceptre is shown, pendent on Kalki's side from the belt girding his waist, while the Garuda (or huge eagle on which Visnu rides) is shown soaring directly above Kalki.³⁰

Furthermore, Kalki's steed is shown with right hoof raised, poised in anticipation. This poised foreleg is held in suspense until the time for Kalki's advent arrives. The hoof will then paw the ground with apocalyptic potency.³¹

As Erwin R. Goodenough³² points out, symbols become like heraldry, a kind of identification. Deeper knowledge of iconographic symbols promises to open up a new frontier for the historian. Religious symbols embody the heart of an otherwise silent populace. For history most often gives us an elite presentation of events dominated by the powerful. Rarely are we shown what the common villager felt and thought, hoped for and spoke. But into their symbols these silent villagers have projected their hearts and beings. Those symbols have not lost this. We have only to recapture what symbols have for centuries treasured. Therefore, religious symbols survive as the greatest unexplored territory of historical data. For this reason, Kalki icons must be explored far more deeply.

The Major Hindu Apocalypse: The Kalki Purana

Although little known in the west, the Kalki Purana emerges as the major Apocalypse (or prophetic revelation of the future) within Hindu tradition. The Kalki Purana comes down to us as India's most fully developed Apocalypse, notwithstanding the fact that it is actually one of the Upapuranas or lesser epics. Even so, the work is also known as Anubhagavata, showing it to be a sequel to the Twelfth Canto of the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana. The Kalki Purana at its end tells its audience that 6,100 slokas or verses compose the total work. But addition only yields 1,318. Possibly the surviving version has been cut down from a larger work.³³

Perhaps the most outspoken appraisal of the Kalki Purana was given in controlled candor by H. C. Norman, in the abstract of a fuller version which, so far as I know, never appeared in print--a lamentable fact. In "The Kalki Avatāra Of Visnu" abstracted in Transactions Of The Third International Congress For the History Of Religions (Oxford, 1908): pp. 85-89, Norman relates:

The Purana is a strange jumble of featureless character, conventional battles, allegorical ideas, and hymns in praise of Visnu, Siva and the Ganga. The hero has nothing but his divinity to distinguish him from the typical prince of a Kavya. His performance is nothing more than the Digvijaya of a Cakravartiraja. As regards the horse, which has been frequently compared with the white horse in Rev. XIX.11, very little is said about it. We find it once furiously kicking the two demons Koka and Vikoka without slaying them, and it also carried Kalki over to Ceylon to win his bride. Like Kanthaka, the Buddha's horse, it is only one of the appendages of the Cakravarti, and seems to have most in common with the Horse-Treasure of the Mahasudassana-Sutta (Sacred Books Of The East, xi, p. 255).

The Kalki-Purana is apparently not very well known in India, and seems to be an expansion of the short account of Kalki at the end of the Bhagavata Purana, which is the authority generally acknowledged. The romantic details of his career do not represent any real tradition. The work is instructive as showing how a pious Bhagavata might envisage the coming of the liberator of humanity. Western writers seem to have jumped to the conclusion that Kalki must be the same as the conqueror of the Revelation; but at any rate the Indian account gives us a developed idea of a totally different kind, whatever the germ may be.

Most religions, if not all, place hope within both present and future. The past, as heritage, serves to range the believer within a sacred process of events. The future is the treasury of potential destiny. The present is where history and destiny are wed through will power and deed. Knowledge and wisdom refine one's will to a skill. One strives, through spiritual discipline, to master destiny, rather than to suffer as its victim.

Yet there are times so black and ruinous that little hope is possible for the present. Such circumstances offer little consolation, except through the future. When hopelessness becomes a collective phenomenon, experienced by a people, a form of crisis literature often develops. We might broadly call this crisis literature apocalyptic. Apocalyptic literature telescopes one's awareness into how present conditions will eventuate, to give insight farsightedness.

Yet the Kalki Purana is complex, as apocalypses are. It seems to defy the traditional position--that the Kalki apocalypse is a kind of divine

time machine. For historians now, this may well be. But not into the future; rather, we are transported into the past. The projected "future" is by the scholar inverted into itself. Here both motives as well as leitmotiv come into view. The Kalki apocalypse turns out to be a very telling document, in a surprising way.

The Story And Exploits Of Kalki

As has been told before, the Kalki Purana has defied complete translation into English, for whatever reasons. Yet we are given two nearly complete accounts of the major episodes by R. C. Hazra (Studies In The Upapuranas: Vol. I, pp. 303-308) and by H. C. Norman in the abstract cited above.

Kalki is every bit as royal, warring, and championing of Hindu India as is the royal Messiah for the struggling sovereignty of Israel.

The Kalki Purana, curiously, relates future events in past tense. Essentially a war story, Kalki's mission is to conquer Earth. Kalki's purpose is also to restore the old form of religion. For the world has swerved from the old ways, and so occurs the reverse; too, since the priests end up following after suspect and inert, if not hurtful doctrines. Kalki is principally a restorer, rather than revealer.

The very evils pictured in both the Bhagavata and Visnu Puranas populate the world of the Kalki Purana. Into this riot of lust Kalki is born. Kalki's father, Visnuyasas, is a priest in the village of Sambhala. Much to the father's astonishment, Kalki is born with four arms. Visnuyasas reduced them to two. Otherwise, Kalki's youth follows the precious invisibility of the usual. Kalki is brought up, however, under a most unusual teacher, who is Parasurama, who had come from an earlier age, followed by various sages, to honor Kalki as a newborn, in a Christ-like nativity.

Parasurama, himself a military Avatar, at last tells Kalki that he is an Avatara of Visnu, and foretells Kalki's conquest of the earth. Whereupon Kalki praises Siva, who bestows upon the youth rewards of "a winged horse going whither it listeth and multiform and a parrot all-knowing," also "a terrible sword with jewelled handle and of great lustre." Moreover, Siva reveals to Kalki the ultimately open secret that mankind will honor Kalki as master of all weapons, as consummate in knowledge of the fourfold Vedas, and as a vanquisher of all beings.

Kalki rides away with his gifts and, after proclaiming to his own countrymen what had just taken place, goes off and enlists under his banner King Viśākhayūpa of the city of Māhiṣmatī. The parrot thereupon artfully praises Ceylon, its king and especially the king's daughter, Padma, who is really Lakṣmī, magically preserved for Kalki, who marries her and reverses the curse which had fallen upon her misfortunate suitors, who had been turned into women. After saving these doomed woers from the wretched destiny of being female, Kalki returns to commence his conquest of Earth.

The first campaign is against the Buddhists of Kikata. Yet it is the Jains who are first vanquished in battle. The terrified Buddhists supplicate Maya, who ends up uniting with Kalki, much to everyone's surprise. Whereupon the wives of the "Bauddhas" sally forth to fight, only to find their very own weapons cautioning against such ill use of arms! So the wives seek refuge in Visnu, to find true spiritual lives.

More blood spills wherever Kalki marches to fight. Kalki slays terrible demons, as well as terrible men. Kalki conquers the world of India, then divides the sovereignties of her various kingdoms amongst his companions and relatives. Visnuyaśas retires as a holy man and dies. The golden age arrives.

Kalki enjoys a life of unbridled pleasure and feasting. Yet, since the gods beg him to return, Kalki gives up the luxury of spoils of war and bequeaths the kingdom to all four sons, and departs from this earthly world. So ends the major Hindu Apocalypse.

The Kalki Purana draws from myths composed during a time of crisis, for otherwise, the hope for religious vengeance would not be the most profound wish of the whole document. The progressive universality of the apocalypse's vision is somewhat neutralized by its very transparent prejudice against other religions. Conversion through force is a rather oppressive sentiment, which must have been generated from a position of weakness which Hinduism was then experiencing during the time of writing.

One must not fear honesty of approach to a religious document. The Kalki apocalypse is very human. There is no doubt that the future-tense story is a wish-image of the priestly class. As such, the apocalypse functions both as a protest, an outcry, as well as a prayer. The purpose of the Kalki Purana is also to bring hope to the reader, to steel him or her in resolve to persevere through times of oppression. Such hope is indeed a kind of escape from time.

In chapter-colophons of various manuscripts of the Kalki Purana, the statement is made: "--iti Śrī-kalki-purāne anubhāgavate bhaviṣye...." In claiming to be a continuation of the Bhagavata Mahapurana, the Kalki apocalypse is shown to be of late date, being composed after the major epics were in circulation. Furthermore, that it is a late work is known from the fact that, as Hazra points out, it is never referred to or drawn upon by any of the numerous Smṛti-writers. Textually speaking, the claim to reveal the future is much like the medicine man in the Wizard of Oz whose crystal ball augur is augmented by a furtive photograph.

PART THREE: THE HISTORICITY OF KALKI VISNUYASAS

The Historicity Of Gods And Demons In General

Various conjectures have been ventured as to the origins of the Vedic, Epic and Puranic pantheon of gods. Those speculations mostly fall within natural, symbolic, psychological, fabulous or ancestral provinces of possibility.

If we look to the Hindu scriptures themselves, we shall find that it is not always true that "dead men tell no tales."

According to the most ancient scripture of India, the Rig Veda (10:63:7), all the gods have sprung from the loins of Manu, son of Vivasvant. If Manu is accepted as being a human lawgiver, which is how India regards him, there would be potent force to the thesis that all gods were once men.

The later priestly commentaries on the Vedas accord with the view: "A hundred times greater is the happiness of the saints who through ritual observances have become gods" (Taittiriya Upanishad II Valli, "8 Anuvaka, 3). Sir Charles Eliot observed:

"But though in one way the gods seem vague and impersonal, in another the distinction between gods and men is slight. The Brahmanas tell us that the gods were originally mortal and obtained immortality by offering sacrifices: the man who sacrifices like them makes for himself an immortal body in the abode of the gods and practically becomes a Deva and the bliss of great sages is declared equal to the bliss of the gods."³⁴

"Strange to say that these (gods) seem to be the names of distinguished personages in the Sattvata or Vrishni clan. Mere deification

occurs in many countries but the transformation of heroes into meta-physical or psychological terms could hardly have happened outside India."³⁵

This concept of forefathers as those who won godship through deeds of merit and sacrifice excited the aspirations of those to whom those tales were told. The transformation of past ancestors from clods of clay into beings of luminous immortality is found throughout the Rig Veda.³⁶

Conversely, it is also true that men could draw the curse of becoming demons. As early as the Satapatha Brahmana (3:2:1:24), barbarians are called demons. O'Flaherty says "this confusion persists in later texts."³⁷

Is Kalki Visnuyaśas An Historical Personage?

This is a touchy subject. So far, dealing with Avatars of the past posed little threat to existing theological constructs. But now, in subjecting to scrutiny the Messianic figure of Kalki Visnuyaśas, we cruise close to the isle of hope. Although America would largely be in total darkness as to who Kalki is, were it not for Gore Vidal's best seller novel, Kalki, there are spiritual communities as well as individuals in India who place great faith in the coming of Kalki. To tell them that Kalki must be appreciated in a careful way, if we are to preserve our scientific integrity, might sound like doubting hope out of existence through that invincible and inexorable sword known as analysis. This is a risk which must be taken.

Kosambi, the famous Indian mathematician, arose with a mighty important observation, spelled out in a contribution entitled, "The Avatara Syncretism And Possible Sources Of The Bhagavad-Gita."

"But there does appear a Brahmin avenger Kalki-Visnuyasas just after the kali age, too late this time as Krsna was too early, who slaughters the heathen (in later accounts Jains and Buddhists) to make the world safe for Brahminism..."

"The Kalki episode has all the earmarks of a historical event disguised as a prophecy. We do know of a Krta or Kalki era which coincides approximately with the Vikrama era; there is very good reason to believe in the occurrence of several local conflicts against invaders, from what remains to us of historical records, including such stories as the Jain acarya Kalaka. If the event had not been local, it would have been better recorded; but it was important enough to give some groups of Brahmins cause for gratitude, sufficient to preserve and exalt the name of the hero..."

"The Kalki (=Anu-Bhagavata 3:8:1 ff.) Purana shows this hero promoted to a full incarnation...That Kalki still remains a future messianic avenger is due to his comparative obscurity; originally it was necessary to put the whole account as a prophecy in order to keep the main narrative at the time of the great war, while adding to the authority of the Mahabharata by inclusion of an episode well-known to the diaskeuasts. Closer identification of Kalki would lead to information about the time of the redaction and perhaps the place; the fact of a Brahmanical renaissance is clear."

Kalki's vengeance thunderstorms three principal religious communities in Hindu apocalypse, those being: (1) Jains, (2) Buddhists, (3) Moslems. Let us now focus on Kalki's conquest of these rival religions.

Kalki's Campaign Against The Jains

According to several scholars, Kalki Visnuyaśas was an historical personage. In order to have determined this, a natural point of departure was, of course, Kalki's name itself. "Prophecies" are found to have very telling memories.

Visnuyaśas is generally recognized as the king whose Messianic title would be Kalki. Visnuyaśas would be the given name by which Kalki would first be known.

The authoritative Purana Index (University of Madras, 1955), enters Visnuyaśas (Vol. III: p. 288) as "another name of Kalki to be born to a Brahman of Sambhalagrama" (Bhagavata I:3:25; XII:2:18; Visnu IV:24:98; Brahmanda III:73:104; Vayu 98:104).

K. P. Jayaswal observes that earlier Puranas give Visnuyaśas as the earthly appellation of Kalki. The Vayu Purana states that Visnu-Yaśas was born of the family of Parāśara.³⁸ The Matsya Purana slips a little on the spelling, referring to Kalkin as Visnu-Yaśasa, the leader of the Parāśaras, as against Visnu-Yaśa of the Brahmanda Purana.³⁹ The Bhagavata Purana, moreover, "improves" on this mistake of the Matsya and makes Kalki a son of Visnu-Yasas!⁴⁰

Now the name Visnu-Yaśas proves to be a major clue to who the Kalki of Jaina tradition should be. There survive several stinging stories surrounding a certain sovereign surnamed King Kalki, who was most cruel to the Jains.

Perhaps the foremost Jaina record of King Kalki (Kalki-rāja) is embodied in the Hari-Vaṃśa Purana, the author of which is Jinaseni-Sūri, who belonged to the Digambara sect of the Jaina Faith. Jinaseni-Sūri's Hari Vamsa Purana is a work which dates from the year 705 of the Śaka

era. The mention of well-known contemporary kings secures our confidence in the correctness of this date. Therefore, the work was without doubt composed during the year 783-784 A.D.⁴¹

Jinasena gives a chronology of events since the death of Mahā-Vīra, the founder of Jainism. In an explicit passage (Hari-Vamśa 60:552-553), Jinasena records that a King Kalki flourished 1000 years after the Mahā-Vīra and that Kalki-Raja was a terrible persecutor of the Jains.⁴²

Another Jaina chronicler, known as Guṇabhadra, in his Uttara Purana, provides further details regarding Kalki-Raja. This king appeared in the year 1000 after Vīra-Nirvāṇa, in Pāṭaliputra, as the son of King Śiśupāla. Kalki-Raja was also known as Caturmukha, who ruled over the whole earth for forty years, until death took him at the age of 70 (Uttara Purana Parva 76: Stanzas 397-401 and 428). Kalki-Raja is pictured by Gunabhadra as oppressive. Yet the only instance given is that King Kalki was stubborn in his refusal to exempt Jaina monks from taxes.⁴³

But the Kalki-Raja of Jaina tradition remains a rather nebulous monarch until linked to a known historical personage. This is where Kalki's alias -- Visnu-Yaśas forges the missing link. According to Jayaswal, Visnu-Yaśas represents a compression of the fuller title: Visnu-(Vardhana) Yaśas (Dharman) of Malva. King Yaśo-Dharman is known, from the year 589 of the Mālava era column of victory, also as Visnu-Vardhana.⁴⁴

Who Was Yaśo-Dharman, Known as Kalki-Raja?

Yasodharman was a Central Indian Raja or King who dealt defeat to a white hun tyrant known as Mihirakula. This invader was probably the king of a Himalayan country, "a small kingdom in the north" as Line 6 of the Mandasor Stone Pillar inscription suggests.⁴⁵

Evidently, Yasodharman forged a confederacy of neighboring independent Indian states for the purpose of thwarting the Hunnish menace, to throw off the foreign yoke. This was a supreme feat since Mihirakula was the most formidable Hūṇa monarch of India.⁴⁶

Waves of Central Asian invading swarms led to a fifteen year reign (circa 515-530 A.D.) of Mihirakula, give or take several years.⁴⁷ Mihirakula had a vast empire, including possibly the whole of India, according to Hsüan-Tsang, a Chinese pilgrim.⁴⁸

So it appears to be clear that Yasodharman and Visnuvardhana, the identity and equivalence of which have been conclusively proved,⁴⁹ are two names which, when compressed, yield Visnu-Yaśas, who is Kalki.

This explains why the Puranas treat Kalki little differently than any other historical king. But just as Kalki is put into future tense, so also is he placed in past tense. For instance, the Vayu Purana records that Visnu-Yaśas "although an ordinary man was born of a portion of the Deity." "He flourished in Kaliyuga."⁵⁰ Moreover, the Matsya Purana, after relating Kalki's conquests, tells us: "Time having past that king disappeared."⁵¹ Thus there is evidence that an historical Kalki did usher in a Golden Age for Hinduism, an age which was to last for nearly five centuries, wherein India enjoyed almost total immunity from foreign invasion, until Islamic armies darkened the horizon.⁵²

Kalki's Persecution Of The Buddhists

Not only did Kalki oust Jainism from Northern India, but Buddhism as well. The principal advocate for this historical position was D. R. Mankad, whose contribution, "Kalki--The Earliest Check To Buddhism," appeared in the New Indian Antiquary (Vol. 4, No. 10 (January, 1942): pp. 337-343).

The Kalki Purana has been, for the most part, overlooked for its historical value.⁵³ The Kalki Purana, along with other Puranas, declares that, in a village called Shambhala, a son was born to the Brahman chief Visnuyaśas. The boy was called Kalki, probably because, later on, he disguised himself as a warrior.

Kalki was born during the reign of King Viśakhayūpa. The Kalki Purana states that Viśakhayūpa came to pay homage to Kalki at birth.⁵⁴ Kalki, when grown, forms a confederacy of kings, one which begins with Viśakhayūpa (King of Magadha), the next to join being Sumitra⁵⁵ (King of Kosala) and Ksemaka (King of Kausambi), then an obscure king, Rucirāśva. This confederacy of four or five kings, under the able generalship of Kalki, waged a campaign against the Buddhists and others. Kalki appears to have been a resourceful statesman as well as an accomplished warrior. Mankad concludes: "Thus Buddhism met with its first check within about 10 to 15 years of Buddha's death...as a result of which Buddhism or Jainism could never take the place of paramount religion in India. Herein lies the triumph of Kalki...a link of our religio-political history which is so well preserved for us in the Kalki Purana."⁵⁶

Kalki's Conquest Of The Muhammadans

Jayaswal places Kalki around 453 A.D. to 543 A.D. This dating is at variance with that of Mankad, who proposes a date one thousand years earlier. Now if Kalki is also to conquer the Arabian invaders, this creates a further historical dissonance.

What is the evidence that Kalki is to destroy the supremacy of Islamic sovereignty in India? This is more a popular, grassroots wish which took shape as a form of religious resistance than anything else.

This folk apocalyptic lietmotiv was recorded in the Dabistān, or School of Manners, written in India by Mohsan Fani in the seventeenth century.

The Dabistān relates of Kalki:

The tenth Avatar is to occur at the expiration of the Kali-jug, for the purpose of destroying the Mlechas, or "enemies of the Hindoos." The Kalki Avatar is to take place on the third of Bhadun, in the Shaki Pachah, in the city of Sumbul, in the house of a Brahman named Jasa. Kalki is also to be of the Brahman caste. He will destroy the corruptions of the world, and all the Mlechas, that is, Muhammedans, Christians, Jews, and such like, are to be entirely extirpated; after which the Satyog, or "golden age," is to return.⁵⁷

Note that Christians and Jews are also included as "enemies of the Hindoos," which appears to include the votaries of every rival religious tradition. In this context, Kalki could hardly be thought of as the return of Christ per se.

Most of the Puranas are medieval in final redaction. This accounts for the transparent reference to Muhammadans, after the fact. In Puranic Records, Hazra shows that by the word "mleccha" the Agni Purana (ch. 49) means those barbarian dynasties which established kingdoms in India after the death of the Kushan king Vasudeva. This is the general tenor of the term. But in a specific sense it is directed at the Muhammadans who invaded India around the ninth century A.D. Kalki is often described as "the exterminator of the Mlecchas" (mlecchot sadakara). It is clear that the Kashmirian polymath Kṣemendra, who flourished in the eleventh century A.D., used mlecchato refer especially to Moslem hordes who violated the peace of India through attacks and massacres (Daśāvātara-Cārīta).

"Vengeance Is Mine"

The principal mission of Kalki is vengeance. Repeating Kosambi's observati
"But there does appear a Brahmin avenger Kalki-Visnuyasas just after the

Kali age, too late this time as Krsna was too early, who slaughters the heathen (in later accounts Jains and Buddhists) to make the world safe for Brahminism...The Kalki episode has all the earmarks of a historical event disguised as a prophecy." Kalki is always associated with the final stages of the dark and ruinous age, Kali Yuga. Corroborating in a more general way what Kosambi and others had to say of the historicity of Kalki, L. M. Toshi recently wrote:

"The theory of kaliyuga thus does not refer to a mythical world-epoch; it refers to a real but complex phenomenon in the religious history of India...The real content of the doctrine of kaliyuga corresponds to an historical situation full of ideological tensions. It mirrors the reactions of Brahmanical theologians towards powerful spiritual ideologies which were outside of and ran counter to Vedic ideology.

"This is, properly speaking, an interesting phenomenon in the religious history of a country the people of which espouse a plurality of faiths. ..In our opinion the theory of four yugas in general and of Kaliyuga in particular is of post-Buddhist origin; perhaps it originated after the diffusion of Jainism, Buddhism and Ajivikism in most parts of India."

(L.M. Joshi: "A Seventeenth Century Perspective On Kaliyuga": in: Punjab University Journal Of Medieval Indian Literature: Vol. 2 (1978): pp. 67-75 (esp. pp. 73 and 68).

Multiple Appearances Of Kalki Visnuyasas

A mysterious birthdate for Kalki appears in the Chhinnamasta Khanda of the Śaktisaṅgamatantra. In the sixth Pantala, is found the following curious passage:

10. In the year called the Durmukha and in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, on the 2nd day of the bright fortnight when the Moon will occupy the constellation of Pūrvāsāḍha and when the Vṛddhi Yoga will be on, and when the night will advance by three Ghaṭikās, the Lord will manifest himself as Kalki with the sole object of destroying the Bhaḷlāsura. 58

Another specimen of a precise date for Kalki occurs in the Mahāvīracharīyam of Nemichandra, the oldest Śvetāmbara (Jain) work which refers to Kalkiraja:

There will arise the Śaka king 605 years and 5 months after my Nirvāna. After the expiry of 1309 years of the Saka era there will arise at Kusumapura the wicked-souled Kalki in the prant-race."⁵⁹

Bhide, in his study, "Is Kalkiraja An Historical Personage?" (in: Indian Antiquary: Vol. 48 (July, 1919): pp. 123-130), establishes the fact that the Jain traditions regarding Kalkiraja are conflicting and therefore possess no historical importance. In fact, according to Digambara (Jain) tradition, Kalki would appear 1000 years after Mahivira, the founder of the Jain faith, while the Śvetāmbara (rival Jain sect) places Kalki 2000 years after Mahavira.⁶⁰

And there is yet a further Jaina prognostication which gives us the year 1857 A.D. for the birth of Kalkiraja, which is approximately 2400 years after Mahavira.⁶¹

The Trilokya-Prajñapati (a Digambara work authored around 1200 A.D.) ultimately tells us that every 1000 years a new Kalki arises and every 500 years a new Upakalki ("Lesser Kalki") arises.⁶² The Jaina records, exclusive of the general one of 500-year cycles for periodic Kalki advents, can be summarized as follows:

- (1) According to Titthogoli Kalki was born in Pāṭaliputra in 1928 M.E. or in Saka Era 1323.
- (2) According to Kālasaptatikā 1912 M.E. is the date of Kalki's birth. This source gives three names of Kalki--1. Kalki, 2. Rudra and 3. Caturmukha.
- (3) Dīpamālākalpa of Jinasundarasuri gives 1914 M.E. as the date of Kalki's birth. It is said in this source that Kalki was the son of Yaśa and Yaśodā.
- (4) Dīpamālākalpa of Upādhyaya Kṣamākalyāna gives 475 M.E. as the date of Vikrama and puts Kalki's birth 124 years after Vikrama.
- (5) Tiloyasāra says that Śaka king flourished in 605 M.E. and Kalki was born 394 years after that.
- (6) Dīpālikākalpa of Jinasundara gives 2000 M.E. as the date of Kalki's death at the age of 86.
- (7) One other source also gives 2000 M.E. as the date of Kalki's death.

Thus we get the following dates for Kalki.

Birth in 599, 1000, 1912, 1914, 1928 M.E.

Death in 2000 M.E. at the age of 86.⁶³

Kalki In Buddhist Traditions

A Buddhist apocalypse, the Mahasammipata Chandra-garbha Sutra, may contain an oblique reference to Kalki. This apocalypse is preserved in the Chinese Tripitaka, but is rendered from a Sanskrit original, of which only one page survives.⁶⁴

First of all, in a general sense, this Buddhist text refers to five-hundred-year cycles as being of signal-significance to the history of a religion.⁶⁵ But in particular, the apocalypse speaks of the invasion of the Huns (=Hūnas = yanuas of Puranas = yavanas (of the sutra), corrupt spelling for yanuas).⁶⁶ But the present writer will need to consult a working translation (none has, as yet, found print) to determine if the Kalki of the Puranas -- Yasodharman -- figures in the defeat of the white Huns in the Buddhist narrative. If so, we should have a direct Buddhist memory of Kalki.

Appearance Of Kalki Every Five Hundred Years

Why, in both Jaina and Buddhist traditions, and later in Confucian thought, are 500-year cycles of such apocalyptic importance, and what has this to do with Kalki? Our historical enterprise cannot proceed until this chronological knot is untied.

The peoples of the Indian subcontinent were prone to think in correspondences. This is a very crucial thing to keep in mind with respect to Hindu thought. For example, one can easily see how the notion of rebirth or reincarnation arose, originally, as a correspondence between

the human soul and the sun.⁶⁷ At one time the doctrine of reincarnation was unknown in India. In the Vedas, given their innocent optimism, no such idea is found. Furthermore, according to A. B. Keith, the Brahmanas do not know transmigration, for these texts "have no conception of pessimism, and therefore seek no release from the toils of life."⁶⁸

The very number of the major Avataras of Visnu, viz. 10, is itself symbolic, "--the ten being, as elsewhere, the number of development, that is, $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$. The upward trend of the figures doubtless accounts for this symbolism."⁶⁹

This is a clue to Kalki's recurrent returns, and, indeed, a key factor to the celebrated Bhagavad Gita verse (IV:8):

Paritrāṇāya sādḥunām vināśāya cha dushkritām 70
Dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavami yuge yuge.

The Rhythm Of Avataric Appearances

In the above verse we find the term sambhavāmi, which is a first-person present tense conjugation of the verb sambhava, which means "to come into being." The time factor, "yuge yuge," is simply "age after age." Thus, if Kalki is really Kṛṣṇa, the verse would imply that Kalki reappears, strategically, every several age.

The doctrine of ages in Hinduism is neither uniform nor primitive. Simply put, the idea took time to develop. Now the literature of Hinduism represents an enormous corpus usually grouped into two great categories: Śruti and Smṛti.

Śruti ("Revelation") literature is coextensive with the Vedas, and the fourfold Vedas are composed of three tiers or strata of tradition: 1) the Samhitas, (2) the Brāhmanas, (3) the Āranyakas, and (4) Upanishads.

Throughout this earliest of Hindu scriptures, there appears to be no unequivocal reference to a cyclic notion of time, at least in a well-defined sense.⁷¹

The other comprehensive category of Hindu holy writ is Smṛti, which encompasses a vast mass of scriptures. Prominent in this division are the two Hindi epics--the Ramayana and Mahābhārata, the eighteen Mahapuranas (not to mention the all-too-often overlooked Upapuranas) and the Laws of Manu. In contrast to Sruti, Smṛti literature is rife with references to cyclical time. In the Mahabharata we find, for instance, an interesting picture of time painted in vivid colors:

*śvetāḥ kṛtayuge varṇaḥ pītas tretāyuge mama/
rakto dvāparam āsādyā kṛṣṇaḥ kaliyuge tathā//*

*trayo bhāgā hy adharmasya tasmin kāle bhavanty uta/
antakāle ca samprāpte kālo bhūtvātidāruṇaḥ/
trailokyam nāsāyamy ekaḥ kṛtsnaḥ sthāvarajangamam//*

*yāvad yugānāḥ viprarṣe sahasrapivartanam/
tāvat svapimi viśvātmā sarvalokapitāmahaḥ//*

"My colour is white in the Kṛta Yuga, yellow in the Treta Yuga: having reached the Dvāpara Yuga it is red, and black in the Kali Yuga. In that time (i.e. Kali Yuga) there are three portions of Adharma: and when the time of the end has been reached, I alone having become very terrible Time shall destroy the three worlds entirely, both stationary and mobile. As long as are 1,000 revolutions of the Yugas, O Viprarsi, for so long do I sleep, the soul of the universe, the grandsire of all the worlds."⁷²

The Hindu blueprint of Yugas at first glance appears to be a stylistic unity. But upon closer scrutiny, the doctrine is found to embody several disparate elements skillfully woven together. These elements, so adroitly edited into a single framework, are reducible to four:

1. Time-divisions (from the wink of an eye to vast aeons)
2. Historically-oriented ages of semi-divine Rulers (viz.
Manvantaras of Manus)

3. Myth of Brahma's creation, dissolution, and reemanation of the worlds
4. Evaluation of the relative Dharma or virtue of each successive age.⁷³

These four principal elements of content (Time-divisions, Manvantaras, Brahma-myth, and Dharma) were developed into a single story over a long period of time, stretching from roughly 1000 B.C. to 400 A.D.⁷⁴ During this time the cyclic scheme of time was harmonized, intentionally, by an editor, with the reigns of kings. This led to an artificial construct which has fooled many, including certain Bahá'í apologists, into believing that the scheme was fixed and reliance could be placed on that theme to speculate, with accuracy, when the last Avatar was to appear.

However, one must also notice a great advance in the Hindu idea of time, that of progress. This appears to first have found force in the advent of Zoroaster, who taught the Indo-Iranian peoples this then-subtle differentiation, an abstraction difficult to comprehend for an ancient mind. One might say that, in geometric language, Zoroaster shifted time-consciousness from circle to spiral.

Huntington, although ignoring Zoroaster, makes the following observation:

"The prominent tendency in modern Western thought is to regard Prometheus as a heroic figure, and to minimize the 'original sin' involved in the rebellion of Adam in the primordial Garden. The underlying assumption in this interpretation--that human evolution is the standard of value--must not be ignored. While the puranic writers are cognizant of man's growth in individuality and do not belittle it, they steadfastly refuse to set it up as the exclusive measure of good...

"Progress may be given a limited meaning from the foregoing considerations....But what about the assertion that Kalki comes to reinstitute Krta yuga? Does this not weigh the balance against the idea of progress in the manifested universe by implying a ceaseless repetitive cycle? The answer is not inevitably in the affirmative....The possibility of interpreting the cycle three dimensionally as a spiral is never ruled out."⁷⁵

But the notion of successive, and to some extent, progressive Ages and Revelations in later Hindu thought proved to be unific in function. Again, as Soifer points out:

"The formulation of the doctrine of avataras or descents of Visnu in Hindu mythology and its popularization through iconography, pilgrimage sites, and festivals is probably the most powerful Indian theological concept since the Upanisadic absolute of Brahman and, eminently, the most successful."⁷⁶

The Unifying Influence Of The Avatar-Yuga Blueprint

What is suggested earlier in this paper is worth repeating here. The Avatar concept, although somewhat artificial with the later wooden wheels of age-associations, had a very positive influence on Indian culture. As Dandekar observes:

"From the point of view of history of Hinduism the avatāra theory may be regarded as a major factor in the religious synthesis brought about by that religion. Originally, the different divinities like Rama, Rrsna, Parasurama, etc., seem to have been the gods of different religious cults. When, in the course of the religious history of India, these cults federated themselves to form what came to be known as Hinduism, some kind of unity of godhead was sought to be achieved by those gods being represented as the incarnations of one single god Visnu....It may further be noted that the avatāra-theory generally tended to supersede the philosophical pantheism and to promote some kind of theology approaching monotheism....Among other concepts, which are in some way related to the concept of avatāra but which must needs be essentially differentiated from it, may be mentioned...pradurbhāva wherein God manifests Himself while remaining transcendent in His true form."⁷⁷

It is remarkable that the doctrine of a Supreme Being appearing in Manifestation (pradurbhāva) to mankind in successive, progressive ages should have had so unific an influence in Hindu history. The theory has phenomenological correspondences in the theologies of Maní and Bahá'u'lláh. The meta-historical view of "progressive revelation" is not without enormous appeal, just as the theory of evolution to the scientific mind.

PART FOUR:

WAS KALKI VISNUYASAS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH?

BAHÁ'Í SCHOLARSHIP AND HINDU APOCALYPSE

The fact that Bahá'ís in India are proclaiming that Bahá'u'lláh (Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith) is Kalki Visnuyasas has recently attracted the attention of one particular historian of religion: Dr. Daniel Bassuk, of the University of South Florida. At the joint session of the American Academy Of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in the Fall of 1978, Dr. Bassuk presented a paper, entitled, "Kalki: Apocalyptic Avatar Appears Among Bahá'í Faith And Again In New Orleans." This study is given summary in: Abstracts: The American Academy Of Religion Annual Meeting: New Orleans, Louisiana 18-21 November, 1978: compiled by John F. Priest (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978): p. 141.

Dr. Bassuk's presentation represents two chapters from his work-in-progress, The Divine Descent which focuses on those Masters, both East and West, who claim to be the Kalki Avatar. Also included are those savants who were silent on this identity, but whose votaries would later assert of their respective masters the station of Kalki.

Jamshed K. Fozdar's Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha Has Appeared (New Delhi, India; Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) links Bahá'u'lláh to the Buddhist future Messiah, through prophecy. Fozdar's effort was reviewed by Jane Nishi Goldstone before the Third Annual Conference of Scholars representing The Canadian Association For Studies On The Bahá'í Faith. Her review, presented on December 30, 1977, performed the uncomfortable

task of subjecting to scientific critique the labor of love undertaken by a fellow Bahá'í scholar. Fozdar was treated with great respect, and questioned with humility. Nevertheless, Jane Nishi Goldstone was forced to cast serious doubt over Fozdar's grasp of Buddhist apocalyptic literature as well as the method by which prophetic proof-texts are marshalled forth to persuade Buddhists especially of the truth of Bahá'u'lláh.

Goldstone chose not to venture specific criticism of Chapter Nine in Fozdar's book, for she did not feel prepared to wrestle with Hindu and Buddhist chronologies of future events. The purpose of this section is to complement Goldstone's just review by offering observations by a non-Bahá'í specialist as well as those of my own. It is strongly hoped that these remarks might contribute to the advancement of the Bahá'í academic community.

Jamshed Fozdar's presentation of Bahá'u'lláh's fulfillment of Hindu prophecy is drawn from the work of a Bahá'í scholar in India, Prakash Narayan Mishra, whose book, entitled Kalki Avatar Ki Khoj ("The Quest For The Kalki Avatar") was published in Hindi back in 1972 (Buddha-Maitrya: p. 273 n. 1). So since Fozdar depends on Mishra almost entirely, let us turn our gaze to the work of this very dedicated gentleman who emerges as one of the most outstanding professors of the Bahá'í Faith in India.

The present author had the good fortune of correspondence with Prakash Narayan Mishra, thanks to Jamshed Fozdar's furnishing of the address. In a letter dated Riqvân, 1975, Prakash Narayan Mishra, after extending to me permission to draw from his work, states: "Mr. Jamshed Fozdar was here in Kota and he is writing a book on the same subject. He had also come

for permission to use the above matter." Mishra had prepared an English abstract of his research, bearing "Prophecies In Hindu Scriptures" as title, which he gave to Mr. Fozdar, who kindly circulated it to me. It is from Mishra's English version that Fozdar evidently draws.

The most important proof-texts which to both Mishra and Fozdar represent the surest evidence found in Hindu scriptures that Baha'u'llah is the Hindu future Messiah, Kalki Visṇuyaśas or the Tenth Avatar, were drawn from the principal Hindu Apocalypse -- the Kalki Purana. The Kalki Purana is one of the minor works of Epic Indian literature. An English summary of the Kalki Upapurana is given by R. C. Hazra in Studies In The Upapuranas (Calcutta, 1958): Vol. I, pp. 303-308.

The latest critical edition of the Kalki (Upa-)Purana appeared as Vol. 103 of the Sarasvati Bhavana Granthamala Series, published in 1972 by the Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya in India. To the critical editor himself I submitted the five most crucial proof-texts adduced by Mishra and (later) Fozdar. Since Mishra's transliteration was unconventional and his translations sometimes imprecise, Dr. Asoke Chatterjee Sastri of the Department of Sanskrit at Calcutta University kindly provided proper transliterations and exact translations of the five proof-texts under question. (Now the Kalki Purana has not been translated into English save for passages in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's The Origins Of Evil In Hindu Mythology (University of California, 1976). Here below is presented Dr. Sastri's letter, after which follows a discussion. #1 corresponds to p. 276, #2 to p. 274, #3 to p. 271, #4 to p. 273, #5 to p. 227 of Fozdar's book:

Calcutta

1.1.1976

My dear Buck,

I received your reply in time. I put below my humble observations in connection with your different queries.

1. Location--page 8 (of my edition), chapter 2, verse 8.

Proper transliteration:

*sumatyām viṣṇuyaśasā garbham ādhatta vaiṣṇavam/
graha nakṣatra rāśyādi sevita sri padambujam//*

English rendering:

By Viṣṇuyaśas, Sumatī bore the womb devoted to Viṣṇu and served by the planets, stars, zodiacal signs and lotus like feet of the goddess Lakṣmī.

Comments:

If the additional reading noted in the footnotes of my edition is taken into consideration, then the adjectives "devoted to Viṣṇu" etc. are related to the new baby born from the womb of Sumatī and not related to the embryo in the womb. I think "the lotus like feet is served by the planets, stars, zodiacal signs as well as by the goddess Lakṣmī" should be the correct translation. But this does not follow the text, strictly speaking.

2. Location--page 9 (of my edition), chapter 2, Verse 15 (first hemistich)

Proper transliteration:

dvādaśyām suklapakṣasya mādhave māsi madhavah/

English rendering:

Viṣṇu (was born) in the month of Vaiśakha (14/15th April--14/15th May) on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight.

Comments:

Counting of modern Bengali year begins from the month of Vaiśākhā associated with the constellation of Viśākhā and ends with Caitra connected with the constellation of Citrā.

3. Location--page 60 (of my edition), chapter 11, verse 33.

Proper transliteration:

*evam vṛtte dvādaśabde dvādaśyām paranadine/
snātu kāmah samudreham bandhubiḥ sahito gataḥ//*

English rendering:

When these happened, in the twelfth year and in the twelfth lunar day of breaking the fast I, with a view to bathing went to the sea with my friends.

Comments:

It is a sacred duty of the twice-born people to observe complete fast on every eleventh lunar day (known as "ekādaśī") that fast by taking some food and water on the following day (known as "dvādaśī").

4. Location--page 103 (of my edition), chapter 18, verse 5 (misprint as 2)

Proper transliteration:

*Kalāpagrāmam āsādyā viddhi sattapassi sthitam/
tavavatāram viditvā vyāsāt satyavatī sutāt/
pratīkṣya kalam laksabdam kaleḥ prāptastavāntikam//*

English rendering:

I remain firm in the path of penance. Coming to know from Vyāsa--the son of Satyavatī--that you are an incarnation of Godhead, I have come to the place named Kalāpagrāma. I have waited for hundred thousand years of Kali age and then approached you.

Comments:

We need not literally accept the value of this verse in determining the duration of the Kali age. There are numerous verses contradictory to one another in different puranas in this context. Better, we can translate it "I have waited O! Kalki for hundred thousand years and then approached you" amending the reading 'Kalke' for 'Kaleh'.

5. Location--page 109 (of my edition) chapter 19, verse 12.

Proper transliteration:

*dvādaśābda sahasrena devānām ca caturyugam/
catvāri trīni dve caikam sahasra ganitam tathā//*

English rendering:

The four ages of the gods are of following calculated duration: First--12,000 solar years x 4 (=48,000), second 12,000 x 3 (=36,000), third 12,000 x 2 (=24,000), and the fourth 12,000 x 1 (=12,000).

Comments:

Your reference "Independent figures are written from reverse side" does not hold good here; because here not a whole independent is intended (say like 1975, 1976 etc.) but a sense of "respectively" is obvious here. Whenever the figures are written from reverse side the individual number comprising the whole is represented not directly by a number clearly stated (like one, two, etc.) but always by some indirect objects whose number (and not the thing or object itself) is taken into consideration (say moon for "one" and so on).

This I have completed. Now for your information.

The entire English rendering of the Kalki purana may cost about 100 U.S. dollars.

If you give 100% guarantee (that too from a publisher or research centre) of its publication in U.S.A. it could be translated free of cost and the manuscript would be sent to you.

Asoke Chatterjee Sastri
A/3, Labony Estate
Calcutta-64, India

(Personal communication to Christopher Buck, January 1, 1976.)

Discussion:

1. Fozdar (p. 276) does not refer to the event of Sīyāh-Chāl which Mishra believes took place on either the 30th or 31st of August,

1852, to which this prophecy refers, he feels. Mishra assigns numerical values to the Sanskrit words and applies them to a future time scheme. Such cabbalistic acrobatics were probably not intended by this verse, nor does the context warrant a speculation on the time of the advent of Kalki Visnuyaśas or Bahá'u'lláh.

2. Fozdar (p. 274) reproduces Mishra's computations but not his conviction that this verse refers to the 1863 declaration of Bahá'u'lláh.

3. Fozdar (p. 271) on the authority of Mishra applies this verse to Bahá'u'lláh's birth. The trouble is, both Bahá'í scholars accept without question the traditional date for Kṛṣṇa, a date which is, on the strength of archaeological evidence for the Mahabharata war, over 1,500 years too early.

4. Fozdar (p. 273) fails to explain the quantum leap from "100,000 years" to "100,000 solar days." Mishra states: "Suraya Abda means human days of 24 hours." However, the verse here does not contain "Suraya Abda" or "solar days" in its text!

5. Fozdar (p. 227) trusts Mishra implicitly, who reverses the traditional yuga or epochal blueprint of time most often found in Hindu scriptures. Kali Yuga is made to last 4,800 years in duration rather than the customary 1,200 years. If Mishra only knew that the original yuga system quite likely had equal ages of 1,000 years in length, such could have accorded with Bahá'u'lláh's own pronouncement on the approximate frequency of the appearance of Prophets or Manifestations of God.

Mishra's response to Sastri is as follows:

In Sanskrit Arithmetic there is a rule for writing figures or numbers in verses: (a) Whenever a number is written like 1975, the figures are written like 1975 in the same order; (b) Whenever independent figures are given for valuation, the order of the figures is changed, as 5791. Similarly, the

figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 are written as 4, 3, 2, and 1 in Shloka (verse) for clear differentiation of figures from number. This rule is known to Sanskrit scholars very well. The authority is not traceable as yet.

"ANKANAM VAMTO GATIḤ, SANKHYANAM DAXINO GATIḤ."

It means that the figures are written from reverse while a number is written directly. I have asked several scholars but nobody was able to give the source of this rule.

(From a communication dated January 22, 1976.)

The best I can say on this debate is that, judging from Prof. Asoke Chatterjee Sastri's interest in and request for advanced treatises on mathematics (elsewhere in the letter), it is more probable that Sastri's ground is every bit as firm as Prakash Narayan Mishra's, if not more, severe as such judgement is.

In fact, I decided to suppress this information for over four years, since I did not wish to neutralize Mishra's tremendous efforts as well as those of Fozdar, whose treatment of Buddhist apocalypse is also selective and unscientific.

THE PROBLEM OF VATICINIA EX EVENTU:

IS HINDU PROPHECY PROPHETIC?

Does Hindu prophecy presage future events? From the foregoing pages, evidence shows that Hindu apocalypses are modelled on past events. For this reason, the prospecting historian can mine apocalypses for historical ore. If the past does yield clues to the future, then in this sense Hindu prophecy does have a forward orientation.

This idea of prophecy as document of historical pattern is really the only way in which an apocalypse such as the Kalki Upapurana can be vaticination. P. V. Sharma, in his article, "Kalki Purana," states that this well-known work is not mentioned in any of the early, standard lists of Upapuranas⁷⁸, nor is any verse of it found quoted in Dharma-Śāstra-Nibandhas. This tells us that the text is relatively late in origin. Nevertheless, the Kalki ranks as the most important of all other Upapuranas.

The work, which consists of 1,318 verses, was most likely composed between 1200-1800 A.D. in Uttar Pradesh. This Vaisnava scripture, Sharma holds, appears to be an extension or natural development of the earlier story of Kalki narrated briefly in a number of other Puranas.

In our opinion, an account so late in its final redaction, with such obvious development and so evidently modelled on past hero-kings, could hardly be considered a divine revelation of the future.

If this is so, a death-blow is dealt to the whole modality of Mishra's and Fozdar's approach. This negative conclusion cannot be avoided. In studying Hindu doctrines of ages, we will show below that the various systems of time in Hindu tradition cannot be harmonized. Thus it is simply impossible to yield a firm time for Kalki's advent.

THE PUZZLE OF RIVAL CHRONOLOGIES OF GOD:

WHICH IS THE TRUE YUGA?

But suppose the Kalki Purana were true in its mantic vision, its prophetic spectacle of future events? Is the problem of time any easier to solve when there are several yuga-systems from which to choose? Although the four-fold age scheme is ancient, that scheme has complex variations. And it all was based on a gamble, on the throw of dice.

It is well-known that in the Vedas different rolls of dice, probably counted 1, 2, 3, and 4, were called Kali, Dvapara, Treta and Krita. In later tradition, the waning strength and stability of dharma is represented as a majestic bull who stood firm on all four legs during the Golden Age of the world (Krta Yuga), but who loses one of each of his legs in succeeding ages (Treta and Dvapara) to totter on a single limb during the Dark Age (Kali Yuga). The bull does not throw dice, but the ratio stays the same.

So far the progression is consistent. But names start to vary slightly. The later yet still ancient Sadvimsa Brāhmana (V:8) classes yugas as: Pusya, Dvapara, Kharya, Krita. In some of the medieval Puranas Kali is in some places Tisya. And, of course, Satya Yuga is a well-known synonym for Krita Yuga.

Now for age valuations. The most authoritative enumeration is set forth in Manu Smriti (I:68ff.) in the following table of years:

<u>Krita</u>	4800
<u>Treta</u>	3600
<u>Dvāpara</u>	2400
<u>Kali</u>	1200

The Mahabharata (Vana Parva 188:V:12-18) repeats the figures from Manu's code of laws. Yet so solid and creditworthy a witness as Alberuni (I,p.373) relates a divergent, perhaps earlier tradition: "Brahmagupta says that Āryabhata considers the four yugas as the four equal parts of a chatur yuga."

The swollen period of 4,320,000 which constitutes a Mahayuga, that is, a set of Four Ages, would seem utterly fantastic. Yet this and other bewilderingly long durations make sense when traced to the newly acquired knowledge of the precession of equinoxes which entered India from cultural exchange with Mesopotamia. Berossus, a celebrated Babylonian priest of antiquity, gives us a king-list of antediluvian reigns which span 120 sars (120 x 3600 years) which yields 432,000 years! As Langdon observes:

This long mythical period was received and revised by Indian and Chinese mythologists. The Chinese period or age of the thirteen kings of Heaven and eleven kings of earth, was also 432,000 years, and so was the Indian Kali-yuga...The Hindu tradition is apparently developed from the Sumerian-Indian-Chinese system by fanciful theological thinkers."⁷⁹

Further evidence of cultural exchange between Mesopotamia and India has sparked charged discussions. R. C. Hazra, in "Did Vyasa Owe His Origin To Berossus?," concedes: "We do not deny the possibility of the spread of the name and fame of Berossus into Gujurat through merchants who carried on maritime commerce between Babylon and the mouth of the Indus."⁸⁰

In conclusion, as far as Bahá'í scholars endeavoring to "prove" that Bahá'u'lláh is Kalki Visnuyaśas on the basis of chronological prophecies, the process is doomed to confusion, if one wishes to represent Hindu tradition with intellectual honesty. The Hindu tradition is simply not unified on the question of ages and cycles. To select one

system from among several is simply artificial. Moreover, evidence exists to suggest that Hindu time-speculation is multiply derivative in nature. And, lastly, there is the problem that this sort of prophecy is simply not important in tradition nor is it popular. On this issue, Sir Charles Eliot points out:

"It is remarkable that Indian thought, restless and speculative as it is, hardly ever concerns itself with the design, object, or end of the world...Legends about the end of the world and the establishment of a better order are rare. Hindu chronology revels in periods, whose enormous length, though expressed in figures, leave no real impression on the mind, days and nights of Brahma, Kalpas, Manvantaras and Yugas, in which gods and worlds are absorbed into the supreme essence and born again. But there is no finality about these catastrophes: the destruction of the universe is as certain as the death of a mouse and to the philosopher not more important...The Buddhists look forward to the advent of Maitreya, the future Buddha, and the Hindus to the reappearance of Visnu as Kalki, who, sword in hand and mounted on a white horse, will purge India of barbarians, but these future apparitions excite only a feeble interest in the popular conscience and cannot be compared in intensity with such ideas as the Jewish Messiah."⁸¹

Furthermore, Eliot observes: "Any attempt to describe Hinduism as a whole leads to startling contrasts. The same religion enjoins self-mortification and orgies: commands human sacrifices and yet counts it a sin to eat meat or crush an insect."⁸²

Bahá'í Scholarship And Buddhist Apocalypse

Related to our enquiry is the parallel effort to establish Bahá'u'lláh as Maitreya, the future Buddha. Here we shall only touch on the major attempt to date by a Bahá'í apologist, viz. Jamshed K. Fozdar, whose Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha Has Appeared (1976) enjoys a wide circulation among Bahá'ís of both India and America.

In chapter nine, "The Time," Fozdar focuses chiefly on the most famous Buddhist apocalypse, the Anāgata Vamsa, an English translation

of which appears in Warren's Buddhism In Translations⁸³--a source which Fozdar fails to acknowledge.

The Anāgata-Vamsa forecasts a series of five disappearances: of Attainments, of Method, of Learning, of Symbols, of Relics. These successive deteriorations of the Buddha's religion span a time of one thousand years each. Thereupon, the Anāgata-Vamsa concludes:

"Thereupon, the Dispensation of the Supreme Buddha being now five thousand years old,....Metteyya (Maitreya) will be born."

Were this Buddhist apocalypse to be true in its projected time frame, it could hardly be marshalled forth as a proof that the nineteenth century was to have been the period for Maitreya's, and thus for Bahá'u'lláh's appearance. But Fozdar argues:

"And yet surely it is not 5000 years? No, it is just exactly half that time. And this too Siddharta foresaw only too well--the halving of the time of the Dharma's duration....His Dharma, which was to have 'endured a thousand years,' will now, because of His permission for women to enter the samgha, 'endure for only five hundred years'--just half the time. Half also of 5000--2500 years. And that time has come and passed...Hence, where is Maitrya?"⁸⁴

The passage in question is from Cullavagga 10:1 of Vinaya-Pitaka (Vol. II, pp. 253ff of Oldenberg's edition). In the fifth year after the Enlightenment, Buddha's father Suddhodana died and consequently the Buddha went to Kapilavatthu to pay his respects. There his aunt, Mahā-Prajāpatī, beseeched the Buddha, saying:

"It would be well, Lord, if women should be allowed to renounce their homes and enter the homeless state under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata."

The Buddha refused, but Ananda interceded on her behalf, whereupon the Buddha assented and granted the supplications of Mahā-Prajāpatī. The Buddha, however, warned:

"If women had not received the going forth in the doctrine and discipline, the religious system would have lasted long, the good doctrine would have endured for a thousand years; but as women have gone forth, now the religious system will not last long; now, Ananda, the good doctrine will last only 500 years."

Now, this prediction has historical significance, being an important point of reference for both Therāvādin and Sarvāstivādin Buddhists of Ceylon and Northern India, respectively. Eggermont traces the origin of the Śaka-Era (78 A.D.) to a fresh epoch started by Sarvāstivādin-Buddhism when it determined that the first five centuries of the turning of the Wheel of Law were over and a new cycle was to come.⁸⁶ In fact, the prophecy did not come true, for Sarvāstivādin Buddhism. As Eggermont observes:

"However, in the year A.D. 78 Kaniska grasped power, a king who acquired for Sarvāstivādin Buddhism an importance which equalled that of king Āsoka for the ancient form of Buddhism. The prospects of the propagation of Buddhism seemed better than ever and instead of the predicted downfall of the Law there seemed to arrive for Buddhism an epoch of the highest prosperity. Apparently the tradition about the downfall of religion was not coming true."⁸⁷

This raises the question as to whether or not the Buddha uttered such a prophecy at all -- one which is so patently anti-feminine, a prejudice which creates a dissonance within the Buddha's all-embracing compassion. Moreover, it seems quite unlikely that so enlightened a being would voice a prophecy doomed to become an error.

Quite honestly, if we are to talk about any prophecies of the Buddha at all, we must again be selective after we ask, which one? For, as Lamotte has shown, Buddhist apocalypses range from 500 years to 12,000 years in predicting the disappearance of Dharma.⁸⁸

It can still be argued that the Buddha was a Prophet, in a sense not too removed from the truer conception of a Prophet more as forth-teller rather than foreteller. A very old Buddhist text, the Pāsādika-Suttanta ("The Delectable Discourse") of Dīgha Nikāya 3:135 represents the Buddha as declaring:

"And so, O Cunda, concerning things past, future and present the Tathagata is a Prophet of the hour, a Prophet of fact, a Prophet of good, a Prophet of the Norm, a Prophet of the Discipline. For this is the Tathagata."⁸⁹

The purpose here is not to disparage Fozdar, but to improve on the view of prophecy which is so very common and which he, naturally, would reflect. Since various kings such as Yasodharman, vanquisher of Huns, and Kaniska, champion of Sarvāstivādin Buddhism, inaugurated new eras or Golden Ages in Indian history, it appears that prophecies which envision such times of zenith in religion outline and describe those conditions which would favor such good fortune. Thus, prophecy is far more predicative than predictive. Buddhist ages, as well as Hindu, must be thought of more as symbolic chronologies rather than as inverse histories. We see this in China, where Mencius says:

"A sage is the teacher of a hundred generations. . . . It is a rule that a true imperial sovereign should arise the course of (every) five hundred years, and that during that time there should be men illustrious."

(Mencius 7b:15; 2b:13)

And Taoist apocalypse, which participates in this general Oriental orientation, also appears to be more conditional than predestinational in its perspective:

The Tao says: Listen to me attentively, I will speak to you now about the era to come and the period of the end. Lao-Tzu transforms himself following the (junctures of) time; All (his) manifestations correspond to the Great Circuits time. I have manifested myself many times in order to save (mankind). (Following) the junctures of time I have transformed myself. Few are those who understand me. Numerous those who disapprove.

The manifestation of the Perfect Lord will not be noticed among men. At the time that I shall manifest myself, (I shall do so) in order to effect the transformation of Heaven and Earth. The old doctrines of all books and codes will have to perish. A reformed orthodoxy will again be manifest. The empire will be abolished, but Heaven and Earth will be reestablished; then

the Perfect Lord will manifest himself. When he has come, all saints, sages, and immortals, as well as those who have received this sutra, will come to be his assistants to the right and to the left....You men of this age need only receive this sutra to be sure of getting to see the Perfect Lord.

I shall come forth riding in a chariot drawn by nine dragons. The dragons will be streaked in nine colours with scales like lined-up cash pieces; the chariot, under a nine-fold feather canopy will be of sandalwood, inlaid with gold, silver, pearls and jade, in varigated colours; impossible to perceive and describe it all! I shall summon all the perfect officials of the empire, all the wind gods, rainmasters and all the ten thousand subordinate demons of the sea and the mountain peaks....⁹¹

It is useful to make a comparative study of Oriental apocalypses, but all seem to reflect characteristic traits, and, moreover, some draw from each other during the course of development. For instance, in the Anāgata-Vamsa, which is so crucial a proof-text in Fozdar's argument, Visnu is referred to as one of ten Bodhisattvas!⁹²

A Bahá'í Perspective On Hindu And Buddhist
Traditions, And Thus Of Apocalypses

From Bahá'u'lláh, in Al-Kitáb Al-Aqdas (=The Most Holy Book), the following pronouncement on Hindu orthopraxis is made:

"Of them there is he who claims the Hidden and the Hidden of the Hidden.

"Say, O liar, by God, what thou hast is husks. We have left it for you as bones are left for the dogs. By God, the Truth, if one were to wash the feet of everybody in the world and worship God in thickets and in green valleys, on mountains, hill-tops, and summits, and at every stone, and tree, and clod, and yet the fragrance of My good pleasure be not diffused from him, he would never be accepted.

"This is what the Master of Mankind has ruled.

"How many a creature in the isles of India has withdrawn from the world and deprived himself of what God has made lawful for him and endured retreats and hardships; yet these things will not be remembered by God who sends down the verses.

"Do not make deeds a snare of hopes. Do not deprive yourselves of this end which was the hope of those who drew nigh (to God) in the eternity of past eternities."⁹³

Bahá'u'lláh here associates esoteric and ascetic pretensions with false notions of holiness, and singles out India as the paradigm of this startling spiritual paradox.

Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, 'Abdú'l-Bahá, enlarges upon Bahá'u'lláh's critique of Indian religion:

"Brahma, Krishna and Buddha never advocated polytheism. They were eminent teachers of monotheism as were all other Prophets of God; but succeeding generations misconstrued their words and in order to further their own selfish interests fabricated these false doctrines."⁹⁴

These two and other Bahá'í sources speak of corruption in Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This being so, from a Bahá'í viewpoint, apocalypses would doubtless be included. In fact, there is a statement in Bahá'í Scriptures where 'Abdú'l-Bahá refers to Buddhist apocalypses very cautiously, and warns those who approach them to do so carefully--to guard against literalistic interpretation and to appreciate how highly symbolic

Buddhist prophecies are. This is what Fozdar should have taken more to heart. A serious enquiry into Hindu and Buddhist origins will prove more fruitful to Bahá'í scholars than to continue to prove Bahá'u'lláh on the strength of weak traditions--a practice which Orientalist Edward Granville Browne observed with chaste distaste.⁹⁵

Is Kalki Visnuyaśas Bahá'u'lláh: Conclusions

In an ideal sense, yes. In a strict sense, no. The only place in Bahá'í sources (available to the present writer) where a central figure of the Faith approved of the identification of Kalki with Bahá'u'lláh is found in Star Of The West: Vol. 6, No. 15 (December 12, 1915): p. 114 (note) and p. 117, where 'Abdú'l-Bahá reviewed a manuscript, "The Call Of God" by George O. Latimer, and consented to publication the declaration:

"...and the Hindus await the appearance of the tenth incarnation of Truth, called Kalki..."

(followed later in the essay by statements such as:)

"The Bahá'í Revelation brings the fulfillment of all these hopes....Bahá'o'lláh...fulfilled the spiritual prophecies of all the former religions."

Once an apocalypse from an ancient tradition is taken for what it is--a document of pain and hope for an oppressed people and a vanquished religion--one will not find an infallible revelation telescoping through centuries like some kind of divine time machine. But another kind of truth will be unveiled to the reader's inner eye, of struggle, of suffering, of a will and determination to overcome dark forces and to bring about a world of peace and justice--words which centuries ago were not empty diplomatic clichés. Instead of a crystal ball, we will find a blueprint

for a new world order. Instead of futuristic binoculars scouring the horizon of time, we will peer through a microscope detailing social illnesses of the prevailing age. In sum, Bahá'u'lláh is Kalki Visnuyaśas, if and only if Bahá'u'lláh and the army of followers can wage love more effectively than war, can restore justice and the true spirit of religion with the sword of truth upon the steed of power, and plant the throne of spiritual sovereignty atop the white-maned waters of chaos.

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June 15, 1980
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Additional Note: How Do Bahá'í Sources Look Upon
Prophecy? An Instance Of Apparent Contradiction.

It is the present writer's conviction that Bahá'í sources support the dictum advanced and defended in this paper, viz, prophecy is far more predicative than predictive, and that most, if not all apocalypses, are modelled on past events.

Bahá'u'lláh shares this very same perspective:

"You have asked regarding the heavenly Books:

...Say, O thou possessor of sight! The past is the mirror of the future; look and perceive."

(Star Of The West: Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 21, 1910): p. 8.)

The idea of prophecy as document of historical patterns is reinforced by an apparent, though not real, contradiction found in Bahá'í Writings. Bahá'u'lláh is presented as the one the Qur'án foretells in the verse: "...therefore with a third (Messenger) We strengthened them" (Ya Sin: verse 13). This link is forged in God Passes By, p. 96. (The sura of Ya Sin is said to have been termed by Muhammad "the heart of the Qur'an.") The following text in Arabic corroborates this identification, with the first two Messengers being explained as the Báb and Quddús.

Yet 'Abdú'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son and successor by testament, reproduces the traditional Islamic exegesis of the verse as referring to the presence of Peter in Antioch:

"In order to spread and teach the Cause of God two of the Apostles went to the city of Antioch. No sooner had they arrived than they started to exhort and give counsel to the people. As the inhabitants of the city were totally uninformed of the divine principles, they started to censure and arraign them, which finally ended in their persecution and torture and imprisonment...

"But when Peter heard about it he started for that country without delay...For this reason it is revealed in the blessed verse: 'We have glorified them by the appearance of a third person.'"

(Star Of The West: Vol. 13, No. 7 (Oct., 1922): pp. 180-1)

That a Qur'anic figure could have dual or even multiple identities is confirmed by the verse:

"He who warneth you is one of the Warners of old."

(The Star: v. 57).

Prophecies are often appealed to in Bahá'í Writings as specific fulfillments. Yet, as the above example shows, there is a deeper-level appreciation of what prophecy is and is not: The symbolic is far more revealing than the literal, and the conditional has deeper insight than the predictive. Prophecy is more profound when seen as a document of why and how world change occurs, rather than of when and of what place.

Once again, 'Abdú'l-Bahá stresses that Buddhist prophecies are written in symbols, and are not to be taken literally (Bahá'í Scriptures: Section *856; also, Japan Will Turn Ablaze: p. 20). The text is as follows:

Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet Of The Manifestation

In accord with the original doctrine of Prādurbhāva in Hindu tradition, Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation revoices the ancient truth but on a remarkably higher octave. The power, majesty and authority of Bahá'u'lláh is a striking feature of both style and content. Not on prophecy but on Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation itself is the basis on which one should rest judgement as to whether or not the Bahá'í Faith represents the evolution or fulfillment of all that the genius of Hindu tradition stands for. Some one hundred volumes of Bahá'u'lláh's works survive. What follows below is but a taste before a feast:

Tablet of the Manifestation

by Bahá'u'lláh

373. In the name of God! The Most Holy, the All-Knowing!
The Mighty!

374. O thou who art gazing toward the direction of God and
submerged in His Nearness and Good-pleasure!

375. Know thou that, verily, the "Manifestation" is not composed of the four elements (earth, fire, air and water), nay, rather, He is the Mystery of Oneness, of the Ancient Identity, the Eternal Essence and the Unknowable Reality, and that, verily, He can never be known by any other save Himself. Therefore, one can never realize that He hath appeared from any of the four elements, or from any of the substances mentioned by the tongues of philosophers, or from any of the four expressions of nature, such as heat, cold, dry and wet, inasmuch as all these are created by His command and will, which has ever been and shall ever be separate and apart from all else; even as He is now, in truth, on the throne of excellence and in revealed verses unto thee, which are creative in kindling the fire of Love within thy heart.

376. Is there anything endowed with utterance in the world that may be able to speak with Him? Or any revealer to arise with Him in His Cause? Or any existing to claim the existence for himself? No, by thy Lord, the element! All are evanescent and as nothingness! Were one to be known by any beside Him, it would never be proven to have its essence sanctified from any similitude, its identity purified from likeness and its singleness from any created appearance.

377. He is a sea upon which no one can sail, inasmuch as all that thou mayest see in heaven and earth is created by His Word.

378. By Myself, the True One! Were His servants to know Him as He is to be known, they would all sever themselves from everything, and would make themselves subject to Him, their King, and the sultans would abandon their crowns and hasten toward His direction in the path of His good-pleasure; but since He has hidden from them, they have fixed their gaze upon others beside, and are flying with the wings of eagles, in the sky of their superstitions and imaginations.

379. Testify thou with thine essence, then with thyself, and then with thy tongue, that, verily, there is no God but He! No other save Himself can know Him, and no one can ever approach Him! Verily, He is not a Manifestation in Himself, but rather He is a Manifestation in His Identity, and this is what We have mentioned to thee in the Divine Mystery, and in the Eternal Essence.

380. As to the bodies, verily, they are as thrones for His Manifestation, of which no one is informed save Himself. These bodies, although they have appeared in the world of creation, in the temple in which ye have been informed of them (Moses, Jesus, etc.), yet were ye to gaze upon them with the eye of reality and innate consciousness, ye would testify that although they are created from the elements, yet they are sanctified from them to such an extent that there is no similitude between them.

381. Consider the diamond—can the stone be compared to it? Thus hath appeared in El-Beyan, from the presence of thy Lord, the mighty, the powerful, the potentate! Were they not to be their temples, the bodies of His servants would not have been created. Wert thou minutely to consider, thou wouldst find that, verily, all in heaven and earth are created from their outward temples, and that all of the worlds of thy Lord seek help from the appearance of the Manifestation of God, the protector, the self-subsistent!

382. In every world, He appears according to the capacity of that world. For example, in the world of spirits He manifests Himself to them and appears unto them with the signs of Spirit. So, likewise, in bodies, in the world of names and attributes; and in the worlds which are not known to any save God. All of these worlds have their position from this Manifestation. He appears unto them in His form, so that He, their Lord, may direct them, and draw them nearer to the seat of His Command, and cause them to attain to that which was ordained for them. As His Reality is not known, so likewise all that is related to Him is not known, except to a certain degree.

383. Think over thine own identity. Would it not consist in the expression and order of the five senses? Otherwise the limbs would become inactive; the eye would never see, the ear would never hear, the tongue would never speak, the hand would never grasp and the form would never move,—although He sways and rules over all, for God has made the use of all dependent upon Him. Yet He sees through the eye, hears through the ear, and speaks by the tongue. Wert thou to reflect upon this, thou wouldst find even this to be His Guidance in such manner that His dignity is not defective through these attachments and instruments.

384. Consider a goldsmith: verily, he makes a ring, and although he is its maker, yet he adorns his finger with it. Likewise God the Exalted, appears in the clothing of the creatures. This is through His favor, so that His servants may not flee from Him, but that they may approach Him and rest in His Presence, hear His wonderful melodies and be benefited by that which proceeds from His mouth, and by that which He reveals unto them from the heaven of His Will. There is wisdom in this. Wert thou to reflect upon it with the duration of God, thou wouldst discover at every moment that which thou hadst not found before.

385. Verily, were God the exalted to appear in His (proper) grade and form, and in a manner befitting His Station, no one could ever approach Him or endure to be near Him.

386. For example, consider the throne, the seat and the chair. All of these are made by certain of His creatures, through the confirmation which descends upon them from the heavens of His grace and the clouds of His bounty. He establishes Himself upon them. Before He is seated no one knows them, or considers them important, for they find them simply articles made by their own hands; but when He is established upon them every relation is cut from them and they become the Throne of the Merciful God, and the realities of all things that are created in heaven revolve around them. Then only the most discerning, the most perceiving of the perceiving, can realize their value.

387. Every one who is endowed with a clear insight will behold that They (the Manifestations) were created before the creation of heaven and earth, and that this has ever been the Throne of the Merciful, and will forever be as it was; that there is no relation, connection, similarity or reference between that Throne and all else save it, and that all things testify with their inmost tongue: "Verily, these (bodies) are the Thrones of the Merciful One." They have no like in creation nor any equal in the world of emanation. From their elements all have appeared in such wise that thou wilt find that, verily, from their Fire the fire hath appeared in the universe and hath spoken in the Blessed Branch of Unity, in the lofty Sinai of Moses the Interlocutor, and that from their Waters thou findest every soul living and immortal. So, likewise, after this manner, consider its other elements; but with manifest certainty. This was the mention of the place whereon He was established. How much above this, then will be the station of His Chair, and that upon which He stands? (The prophets.) All that which We have revealed and mentioned unto thee in this Tablet is according to the language of the people of creation; otherwise, by the One in the grasp of whose power are all things, verily, We have utterances concerning this station such as are not befitting to mention in these days, during which the people have differed, and have cast the Lord of Lords behind them, and have made an idol by the hands of lust, and have circled around it and become of those who are attached to it.

388. Blessed art thou for that which God hath desired for thee, because thou hast walked in the path of His good-pleasure until thou hast presented thyself before His Face, the shining, the radiant!

389. His Manifestation for His creatures has ever been through His creatures, just as He manifested Himself unto thee in truth, and delivered thee from the depths of the suggestions of those who have denied God and have striven with Himself, and at every moment have taken for themselves other gods than God, and are of the people of oppression and error in the Manifest Book of Might. Wert thou to be submerged in the sea of power and might thou wouldst surely know, verily, God, who is wonderful to make even one of these things made by Him, to be the maker of all that which He desires. There is no God but He, the Powerful, the Mighty! Every power is in this, wert thou to reflect! Every grace is in it, were thou of those who perceive! I beg of God to manifest His Cause in all countries, and that the servants may attain such a position that He may explain to them that which He desires, without veiling or concealment; that He may teach them the wonders of His knowledge and provide them with the fruits of the tree of His grace and beneficence, and that all may become affluent through His affluence, and that all may become powerful through His power, the impregnable, the high and inaccessible!

390. By the One, through whose command all are moved, had I found the people as We created them, I would have opened a door of doors of mercy and inner significances, so that they would behold all the mysteries with their eyes, and subdue all lands through the names of their Lord. But thou beholdest the creatures, and hearest that which proceeds from their mouths; therefore the bounty is restrained, except so many of its drops as thou hast discovered. Verily, thy Lord witnesseth and is well informed thereof. Were We to manifest Ourselves more than that which We have manifested, dogs and deniers would surround Us.

391. Thus hath the Cock of the Throne crowed and the Dove cooed. Beware, that thou mayest be of the thankful. Praise be unto God, the Lord of the creatures!

(Bahá'í Scriptures: pp. 204-208.)

- ¹ Soifer, Deborah A.: "Toward An Understanding Of Visnu's Avataras": in: Purana: Vol. 18, No. 2 (July, 1976): pp. 128-148 (p. 128).
- ² Soifer: p. 147. Chinmayananda and, later, Bolles (1979) render: "...I manifest Myself..." for verse 8.
- ³ Parrinder, Geoffrey: Avatar And Incarnation (London: Faber and Faber, 1970): pp. 19-20.
- ⁴ Dhavamony, Mariasusai: "Hindu 'Incarnations'": in: Rome. Pontificia Universita Gregoriana: Studia Missionalia: Vol. 21 (1972): pp. 127-169 (p. 144).
- ⁵ Parrinder: p. 21.
- ⁶ Hacker: pp. 48-49; Gonda, Jan: Aspects Of Early Visnuism (Motilal Banarsidass, 1969): p. 125n.
- ⁷ Dandekar, Ramachandra Narayan: "Hinduism": in: Historia Religionum: Editors: C. Jouco Bleeker and Geo. Widengren (Leiden: Brill, 1970): Vol. II, pp. 302-304 (on Avatara doctrine).
- ⁸ Dandekar, R.N.: "God In Hindu Thought": in: Annals Of The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute: Vols. 48 and 49 (1968): pp. 455-458 (for discussion of Avatara which is identical to the one above, except for the fact that the latter treats the term Prādurbhāva (p. 458) whereas the former does not).
- ⁹ Das Gupta, Mrinal: "Early Visnuism And Nārāyaniya Worship": in: Indian Historical Quarterly: Vol. 8 (1932): pp. 64-84 (p. 75).
- ¹⁰ Kosambi, Damodar Dharmananda: "The Avatara Syncretism And Possible Sources Of The Bhagavad-Gītā": in: Journal Of The Bombay Branch Of The Royal Asiatic Society: Vols. 24-25 (1948-1949): pp. 121-134 (p. 121).
- ¹¹ Gonda, Jan: Aspects Of Early Visnuism (India: Motilal Banarsidas, 1969): p. 149.
- ¹² Katre, S.L.: "Avatāras Of God": in: The Allahabad University Studies: Vol. 10, No. 10 (1933): pp. 37-130 (p. 102). On p. 37, Katre writes: "In the epics and the earlier purānas the word 'Avatāra' (as also its synonyms 'prādurbhāva', etc.) is in most cases used technically to designate a specified form of descent of God, etc., to the earth."
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger: The Origins Of Evil In Hindu Mythology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976): p. 38.

- ¹⁵ Opere citato: p. 39. Kalki Purāna 1.1.14-39; 2.6-7; 3.6-7.
- ¹⁶ Opere citato: p. 202. Mahābhārata 12, app. 1, no. 31, lines 1-22; Kumbhakona 12:348.
- ¹⁷ Jagadiswarananda, Swami (A Seer of Kalki the Godman): Kalki Comes In 1985: An Exhaustive Account Of Kalki's Advent Found In Sanskrit Scriptures And Predicted By Living Seers As Well As A Critical Review Of Modern Hinduism In Particular And Other Religions In General With A Spiritual Estimation Of Religious Teachers (Belur, Howrah, India: Sri Ramakrishna Dharmachakra, 1964): p. 61. Harivamsā 10:2:52.
- ¹⁸ Jayaswal, K.P.: "The Historical Position Of Kalki And His Identification With Yasodharman": in: The Indian Antiquary: Vol. 46 (July, 1917): pp. 145-153.
- ¹⁹ Norman, H.C.: "The Kalki Avatāra Of Visnu": in: Transactions Of The Third International Congress For The History Of Religions (Oxford, 1908): Vol. II, pp. 85-89 (p. 88).
- ²⁰ Gonda, Jan: Aspects Of Early Visnuism: p. 149.
- ²¹ The first passage is from Mahabharata 3:188:87-92. The transliteration and translation appear in: "The Evolution Of The Manvantara Theory": in: Purana: Vol. 20, No. 1 (1978): pp. 23-24. The Harivamsa passage is from: Hazra, Rajendra Chandra: Studies In The Puranic Records On Hindu Rites And Customs (University of Dacca, 1940): p. 85. Various translators vacillate between rendering Visnuvaśas as a patronym, or surname, or given name. The excerpt from Sukra is found in: Moore, Charles A.: The Indian Mind (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967): p. 250. Arvind Sharma perceptively relates: "It appears, thus, that the description of the Hindu notion of time as cyclical is so lop-sided as to be misleading. It overlooks the fact that Sruti is almost free of such a notion and it further overlooks the fact that Smriti literature provides striking exceptions and limitations to this cyclical notion of time. The Hindu notion of time is not a monochrome but a mosaic; it is too complex to be described as merely cyclical" ("The Notion Of Cyclical Time In Hinduism": in: Contributions To Asian Studies: Vol. 5 (1974): pp. 26-35 (p.33)). More on the Yuga theme will be discussed later in this paper.
- ²² Jaiswal, Suvira: The Origin And Development Of Vaisnavism (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharial, 1967): p. 129.
- ²³ Jaiswal: p. 120; also: Jacobi, Hermann: "Incarnation (Hindu)": in: Hastings' Encyclopaedia Of Religion and Ethics: Vol. 7, pp. 193 and 197.
- ²⁴ Hazra: Puranic Records: p. 86.

25 This bibliography represents a slight enlargement over O'Flaherty: Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook (Pelican Books, 1976): "Visnu Becomes Incarnate As Kalkin To End The Kali Age": Bibliographical Notes: p. 333.

26 Visnu Purana 4:24:18-25; in: Puranic Records: pp. 216-217.

27 Visnu Purana: H. H. Wilson's translation (1840): pp. 388-389. It should be noted that Hindu prophecies do not always culminate in a savior named Kalki Visnuyasas. For example:

"Due to defects in the activities of the brahmins fear arises in the subjects. The twice-born neglect the study of Vedas and do not sacrifice as prescribed.

Men perish. Ksatriyas and Vaisyas decline gradually. In Sudras claim kinship with brahmins through their learning through interdining and sharing seats and beds. Kings become mostly Sudras and they harass brahmins.

Killing of foetus and murder of heroes become prevalent. Sudras adopt the conduct of life prescribed for the brahmins and the brahmins adopt the ways of Sudras.

Thieves function as kings and kings function as thieves. The chaste ladies cease to exist and wanton sluts increase in number.

Stability and discipline of four castes and stages of life disappear from all places. At that time the earth yields very little fruit in one place and great fruits in another.

O Silasana, the kings confiscate and misappropriate public property. They cease to be protectors. Sudras acquire knowledge and are honoured by the brahmins.

Non-ksatriyas become rulers. Brahmins depend on Sudras. Sudras proud of their intellect remain sitting in their seats and do not stir on seeing Brahmins.

In Kali, even the excellent brahmins demean themselves by selling the fruits of their austerities and sacrifices.

It should be known that towards the close of yuga, the beasts of prey will be very violent. The selling of Vedas and other sacred literature will occur in cross streets; young women will sell even their honour.

Men will rob others of their wealth and violate the chastity of other men's wives. They will be lustful, wicked at heart, base and foolhardy. They will lose proper perspective of things. Suffering from colic they will have their hairs dishevelled.

When noble and befitting holy rites are no longer performed; when all the people become inactive and lethargic, germs, mice and serpents will torment men. Prosperity, welfare, health and efficiency will be difficult to attain.

When the yuga has come to a close and the period of junction too has arrived, the chastiser of the wicked people will rise up in order to kill all the bad living beings. He will be born in the family of the Moon. He will be called Pramiti by name.

(Sundry verses excerpted from the fortieth chapter of the Linga Purana.)

- ²⁸ Abegg, Emil: Der Messiasglaube In Indien Und Iran (Berlin, 1928): pp. 47 ff. and pp. 138 ff.
- ²⁹ Gonda: Aspects: pp. 149-150.
- ³⁰ Banerjea, J.N.: "Iconography Of Avataras Of Visnu": in: Journal Of The Indian Society Of Oriental Art: Vol. 14 (1946): pp. 1-34 (p.34); Agarwal, Urmila: "Worship Of Visnu: His Incarnations In India In The Medieval Period": in: Oriental Art: Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1970): pp. 252-258 (p. 257).
- ³¹ Norman, H.C.: "The Kalki Avatara Of Visnu": in: Transactions Of The Third International Congress For The History Of Religions (Oxford, 1980): Vol. II, pp. 85-89 (p.86).
- ³² Goodenough, Erwin R.: "Symbols As Historical Evidence": in:
- ³³ Norman: p. 86
- ³⁴ Eliot, Sir Charles: Hinduism And Buddhism: Vol. I, p. 48.
- ³⁵ Eliot: Vol. II, p. 196.
- ³⁶ Vide: Keith, A.B.: The Religion And Philosophy Of The Veda And Upanishads (Harvard, 1925): Vol. I, pp. 82-83.
- ³⁷ Origins Of Evil: p. 203
- ³⁸ Vayu Purana 2:36:104-111; Jayaswal: "Historical Position Of Kalki": p. 145
- ³⁹ Matsya Purana 47:247-8; Brahmanda Purana 73:100; Jayaswal: p. 145
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Jayaswal: p. 147; Sankar, K.G.: "The Hun Invasion Of Hindusthan": in: The New Indian Antiquary: Vol. 4, No. 1 (April, 1941): pp. 36-43 (p. 42).
- ⁴² Jayaswal: p. 147
- ⁴³ Sankar: p. 40
- ⁴⁴ Jayaswal: p. 150; Fleet, John Faithfull: "The Gupta Inscriptions": in: Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Vol. III, p. 146 (line 2 of the pillar inscription). Also: Banerjee, Manabendu: A Study Of Important Gupta Inscriptions: Historical, Social, Religious And Literary (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1976).

- ⁴⁵Raychaudhuri, Hemachandra: Political History Of India (University of Calcutta, 1923; reprint by AMS, 1973): p. 301.
- ⁴⁶Biswas, Atreyi: Political History Of The Hunas Of India (India, 1973): p. 68.
- ⁴⁷Biswas: p. 71
- ⁴⁸Biswas: p. 77
- ⁴⁹Biswas: p. 81
- ⁵⁰Vayu Purana 36:104-111; Jayaswal: p. 145.
- ⁵¹Matsya Purana 47:255; Jayaswal: p. 146.
- ⁵²Hazra: Puranic Records: p. 218
- ⁵³Mankad, D.R.: "Kalki--The Earliest Check To Buddhism": in: The New Indian Antiquary: Vol. 4, No. 10 (January, 1942): p. 337
- ⁵⁴Kalki Purana I:1
- ⁵⁵Kalki Purana III:4
- ⁵⁶Mankad: pp. 342-343. In his book Puranic Chronology (1951), Mankad states that the Kalki of the Puranas is not the Kalki of the Jains. This view is doubtless due to Mankad's fantastic date for Mahavira's death at 2051 B.C. (p. 203).
- ⁵⁷Shea, David: and: Troyer, Anthony: The Dabistan (Lahore: Khalil and Co., 1973; reprint of earlier abridgement): p. 183.
- ⁵⁸Bhattacharyya, B.: "The Ten Avataras And Their Birth-Dates": in: A Volume Of Eastern And Indian Studies Presented To F. W. Thomas: Editors: Katre, Sumitra: and: Gode, P.K. (Bombay: Karnatak Pub. House, 1939) pp. 31-33 (p.33). The quote from Kosambi comes from: "The Avatāra Syncretism And Possible Sources Of The Bhagavad-Gītā": in: Journal Of The Bombay Branch Of The Royal Asiatic Society: Vols. 24-25 (1948-49):pp.128-129.
- ⁵⁹Bhide, H.B.: "Is Kalkiraja An Historical Personage?": in: The Indian Antiquary: Vol. 48 (July, 1919): pp. 123-130 (p. 127).
- ⁶⁰Bhide: p. 127
- ⁶¹Ibid.

62 Bhide: p. 126. Bhide draws from the December, 1917 issue of Jaina-Hitarshi for Jaina sources, where several articles relate to Kalkiraja. The one by Muni Jinavijayaji is particularly important. See also: P.H.L.Eggermont: "The Saka Era And The Kaniska Era": in: Papers On The Date Of Kaniska: Editor: A.L. Basham (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968): pp.87-93 (p.89).

63 Mankad, D. R.: Puranic Chronology (Anandi, 1951): p. 201. As a further note, Mankad later relied upon Muni Kalyanavijaya's paper on Jain chronology which appeared in Nagari Pracāriṇi Patrikā (x:4)

64 The text has been identified by Dr. Watanabe, as from the sixth part, Candragarbha, of the Mahasammipata Sutra (Nanjio, No. 63). It was translated into Chinese by Narendrayasas, a native of Udyana, A.D. 566, under the Northern Tsi dynasty; see Professor S. Levi's Notes chinoises sur l'Inde, p. 9, also JA., 1913, II, p. 343. The passage corresponds to III, 4, foll. 7b²⁰-8b¹⁶ of the Tokyo edition of the Tripitaka. The work is not found in the Bhah-hgyur, which has, however, a short work entitled Candragarbha-prajna-paramita-mahayana-sutra (Ser. phyin 7, foll. 176-7). (The Bhah-hgyur is the same as the Kanjur.) In the Taisho Tripitaka, the Chinese text of the apocalypse may be found in Vol. 13, No. 397, pp. 298-381.

Only one folio of the Mohasannipata Candragarbha is known to survive in the Sanskrit original, and the text of this with English translation was published by A. F. Rudolf Hoernle in his book, Manuscript Remains Of Buddhist Literature Found In Eastern Turkestan: (Oxford, 1916, reprinted 1970): pp. 103-108. Hoernle's single folio corresponds to Vol. 13, No. 397, p. 306 passage in the Taisho Tripitaka.

65 "The Mahasannipata candragarbha sutra quotes the Buddha as saying that in the first five hundred years after his Nirvana his disciples would attain emancipation according to the right Law; in the second five hundred they would only be sure of attaining Samadhi; in the third five hundred, of reading and reciting the sutras; in the fourth five hundred, of building temples and pagodas; and in the fifth five hundred, of the destruction of the Law" (The Three Pillars Of Zen, Philip Kapleau (Beacon, 1965) p. 179).

66 Jayaswal, K.P.: The Imperial History Of India (1934): p. 34.

67 See: Alex Wayman: "Climactic Times In Indian Mythology And Religion": in: History Of Religion: Vol. 4, No. 2 (1965): pp. 295-318 (pp. 295 & 318).

68 Keith, A.B.: Religion And Philosophy Of The Veda And Upanishads (Harvard, 1925): pp. 585-586.

69 Gowen, Herbert H.: A History Of Indian Literature (New York: Greenwood, 1968): p. 458.

- 70 Raychaudhuri, Hemachandra: Materials For The Study Of The Vaishnava Sect (New Delhi, 1920; reprint, 1975): p. 64.
- 71 Sharma, Arvind: "The Notion Of Cyclical Time In Hinduism": in: Contributions To Asian Studies: Vol. 5 (1974): pp. 26-35 (p.29).
- 72 In: "The Evolution Of The Manvantara Theory": in: Purana:Vol. 20, no. 1 (1978): p. 24; Mahabharata 3:187:31-39.
- 73 Church, Cornelia D.: "The Puranic Myth Of The Four Yugas": in: Purana: Vol. 13, No. 2 (July, 1971): pp. 151-159 (p.153).
- 74 Church: p. 159.
- 75 Huntington, Ronald M.: "Avataras And Yugas: An Essay In Puranic Cosmology": in: Purana: Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1964): pp. 7-39 (pp.38-39).
- 76 Soifer, Deborah A.: "Toward An Understanding Of Visnu's Avatāras": in: Purana: Vol. 18, No. 2 (July, 1976): pp. 128-148 (p. 128).

- 77 Dandekar, R.N.: "God In Hindu Thought": in: Golden Jubilee Volume: of: Annals Of The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute: Vols. 48 and 49 (1968): p. 458. The Golden Jubilee Volume was edited by Dandekar and A. D. Pulsalker.

O'Flaherty is in accord with Dandekar historically with regard to the late inclusion of Buddha into the Avatar list, where the Buddha is subsumed, reluctantly and begrudgingly, into the system. Nevertheless, a kind of unific purpose is at work, even if at first no ethic other than a kind of mercenary tolerance is exercised.

"The Buddha incarnation, accomplishing the delusion of the demons, is said in many texts to be followed by the avatar of Kalkin, exterminating the heretics and barbarians of the Kali Age; these myths presuppose a political situation in the pre-Gupta period (precisely when the myth of the Buddha avatar first appears), when orthodox Brahmins were fighting a desperate battle on two fronts, against foreign invaders and a thriving Buddhist community at home.

"The Buddha avatar may well have been inspired by the Kalkin avatar. The Mahabharata and the Vayu Purana, which do not mention the Buddha avatar, say that Visnu will be born as Kalkin in order to destroy barbarians and heretics. These passages may represent a reaction against the invasion of India by Greeks, Scythians, Pahlavas, and Kusanas during the centuries immediately preceding and following the turn of the Christian Era. The Kalkin avatar may be connected in some way with the idea of the Millennium, as it was current in Europe and elsewhere from the fourth to the seventh centuries A.D., but the main inspiration was probably the Buddhist doctrine of Maitreya, the future Buddha, which may have been derived from Zoroastrian doctrines, perhaps brought into India by these same invaders. The fact that Kalkin appears as a warrior on horseback supports the possibility of some such political reference.

Only later, in the Gupta period, when Jainism and Buddhism posed a serious threat to the fast-burgeoning Hindu revival, does the Buddha appear in the list of avatars, immediately preceding Kalkin."

(The Origins Of Evil In Hindu Mythology (Berkeley, 1976): p. 200.)

78 Sharma, P.V.: "Kalki Purana": in: Purana: Vol. 10, No. 2 (July, 1968): pp. 179 ff. For details on Upapuranic lists, which do vary considerably, yet are exclusive of the Kalki Purana, see: R. C. Hazra: "The Upapuranas": in: Annals Of The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute: Vol. 21 (1939-1940): Editors: A. B. Gajendragadkar and R. N. Dandekar: Part I, Art. 2: pp. 38-62. (This contribution forms the introduction to Hazra's later two-volume work on the Upapuranas.) For a more accessible and relatively "standard" list of Upapuranas exclusive of the Kalki, see under "Puranas" in Hastings' Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics: Vol. 10 p. 455.

79 Langdon, Stephen Herbert: The Mythology Of All Races: Semitic (Boston: Archaeological Institute Of America, 1931): Vol. 5, p. 205. This is on the strength of F.E. Pargiter's ERE article on the Puranas.

80 Hazra, R.C.: "Did Vyasa Owe His Origin To Berossus?": in: Purana: Vol. II, No. 2 (July, 1960): pp. 17-22 (p. 22). In "Symbols And Myths Of Mahapuranas": in: Purana: Vol. 19, No. 2 (July, 1977): p. 271, the theory continues to be defended:

"But there is also another important meaning of the fish-symbol: that of the soul, since God is the supreme soul. This symbolic aspect of the fish is not expressly given in Puranic texts, but emerges from very old interpretations in ancient cultures, as for instance in Egypt, or in Mesopotamia, and reappears in commentaries to the Purana.

"It is also possible that there was a link between the fish avatara in India and the fish-god in Sumeric tradition: the god who brought men arts and sciences, and constitutes a parallel to the God Ea of 'Akkadic mythology. Now, Ea, whose name means "house of the waters", is also related to the waters on which float the earth and is, therefore, a sort of support; but, what is more important, is the fact that Oannes and Ea are masters of wisdom and founders of civilization."

Representations of Oannes and depictions in Puranic texts are found to match. Vide: Agarwal, Urmila: "Worship Of Visnu: His Incarnations In India In The Medieval Period": in: Oriental Art: Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1970): pp. 252-258 (p. 253).

81 Hinduism And Buddhism: An Historical Sketch (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968 (1921)): Vol. I, pp. 46-47.

82 Ibid.: p. xvii.

83 Warren, Henry Clarke: Buddhism In Translations (Harvard University Press, 1896; now Atheneum, 1970): pp. 481-486. The relatively late origin of this text is discussed in the article in the Encyclopaedia Of Buddhism (Sri Lanka).

- ⁸⁴Fozdar: pp. 249-250.
- ⁸⁵Thomas, E.J.: The Life Of Buddha (London, 1952): p. 109; Kern, H.: Manual Of Indian Buddhism (Strassburg, 1896): p. 31.
- ⁸⁶Eggermont, Pierre H.L.: "The Origin Of The Saka-Era: The Prediction Of The Duration Of The Law By The Buddha": in: Indo-Iranian Journal: Vol. II, No. 3 (1958): pp. 225-228.
- ⁸⁷Eggermont: "The Saka Era And The Kaniska Era": in: Papers On The Date Of Kaniska: Editor: A. L. Basham (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968): pp. 87-92 (p.90).
- ⁸⁸Lamotte, Etienne: Histoire Du Buddhisme Indien: Des Origines À L'ère Śaka (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1958): "Dates de la Disparition (de la Loi)": pp. 211-217. (Reprinted, 1967.)
- ⁸⁹T.W. and C.A.F. Thys Davids: Translators: Dialogues Of The Buddha (Oxford University Press, 1921; Pali Text Society, 1965): pp. 126-127.
- ⁹⁰Vide. Pokora, Timoteus: "The Concept Of Progress in Confucianism: Some Observations On The Utopia Of K'ang Yu-Wei And Its Historical Presuppositions": in: East And West: Vol. 17 (1967): pp. 302-305. Also: Fung Yu-Lan: A History Of Chinese Philosophy (Princeton University Press, 1953): Vol. II, p. 684, and pp. 699-701. There also exists a curious reference to "prophecies of Confucius" in Chinese literature: "When Confucius died, he left a book of prophecies, which came true." (Creel, Herrlee Glesner: Sinism (Hyperion, 1975): II, 114.
- ⁹¹Seidel, Anna K.: "The Image Of The Perfect Ruler In Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-Tzu And Li Hung": in: Symposium On Taoism: as: History Of Religion: Vol. 9, Nos. 2 and 3 (Nov. and Feb., 1969+1970): pp. 216-247.
- ⁹²O'Flaherty: Origins: p. 208.
- ⁹³Bahá'u'lláh: Al-Kitáb Al-Aqdas: Translator: E. E. Elder (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1961): p. 33.
- ⁹⁴'Abdú'l-Bahá In Egypt: p. 86.
- ⁹⁵Vide. Browne's article on the Faith in Hastings' Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics: Vol. II, p.306: "From what has been said above, the Western Reader may be tempted to think of the Bábf as embodying, to a certain extent, the modern Western rationalistic spirit. No mistake could be greater. The belief in the fulfillment of prophecies; the love of apocalyptic sayings culled from the Jewish, Christian, and Muhammadan Scriptures and traditions; the value attached to talismans (especially among the early Bábfis)."

This ends an enquiry which took over five years to research and complete. The present writer started out to "prove" through Hindu and Buddhist prophecy that Bahá'u'lláh was Kalki and Maitreya, and likewise Saoshyant or Shah Bahram Varjavand of Zoroastrian lore. While begun uncritically, the enquiry became a process of discovery, radically altering my views on the nature of apocalyptic literature. At this point I wish to express my deep appreciation for the one who so laboriously rendered sprawled mauve into clean type — Carol Lenhard, who has produced well over one thousand pages of manuscript for me over the past several years.

On The Original Hindu Term For Avatāra:

Prādurbhāva ("Manifestation")

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Prepared by Christopher Buck.

The Major Hindu Apocalypse:

The Kalki Upapurana

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