



New York College
Societas Rosicruciana
In Civitatibus Foederatis
Spring 2021



From the Chief Adept

R. Curtiss Montgomery IX^o et Philologus Zelator

Fratres, ego salutant vos,

As Monty Python says, “and now for something different.” That has certainly been the tenor of the past fifteen months as individuals and organizations adjusted their activities and plans in a wide spectrum of attempts to cope with the effects of COVID-19 on their lives. Responses seemed to be grouped into two categories: hibernate and wait or adapt and flourish.

New York College adopted the later strategy. This had two main components. First, we quickly embraced technology, particularly the now-ubiquitous Zoom, to keep our Fratres connected. Second, absent the ability to meet in person to socialize and confer Grades, we focused almost exclusively on content – scholarly esoteric presentations which contribute to the diffusion of light and the advancement of science. It was a great and successful endeavor. The College thanks all Fratres who made this possible, particularly JDSM Bruce Renner, Celebrant Rick Powell, and Secretary Myron Deputat. We reached the usual number of our fratres with our Zoom session, plus many more from across North America and the world, with one Convocation topping 70 attendees.

That said, our **May 29th** meeting will likely be the last Zoom session for 2021. At this writing, we plan to return to in-person meeting on **July 31st** to once again form the Mystic Circle and complete the Chain of Union. As we have six aspirants in waiting, we will confer two grades, catch up, and enjoy the usual banter around the lunch table. Our **October 30th** Convocation is also planned for our regular home at the Buffalo Scottish Rite Center.

Driving in the winter has always been an issue for a group as geographically dispersed as ours, so we will likely apply our new-found experience to conduct the **January 29, 2022**, Convocation via Zoom. This hybrid model incorporates the best of both modalities and will likely become our model going forward. Mark your calendars now with these dates!

The Celebrant has organized a varied and interesting program for **May 29th** that will well repay your attendance. I look forward to seeing each of you then.

LVX,

Curt



From the Celebrant

RW Richard Powell VIII° et Philologus Theoricus

It's been over a year since we last were able to meet in person. In that time, we have embraced Zoom as a viable online alternative for meetings and they have gone quite well. The New York College has hosted several guest presenters along with our own and visitors from near and far.

Our Study Group has worked its way through the first half of the "SRIA Study Guide" and Halevi's "The Kabbalistic Tree of Life." The meetings have been very interesting and each Frater that covered a segment for each meeting has done extremely well. We have covered the foundations of Kabbalah and its Tree of Life but there's a lifetime of study left to be had. Whether our group will continue on with the current books or seek other sources will be the subject of an email soon to be sent.

Despite the convenience of online meetings, I think some are beginning to experience burnout. I know that I have. The preparation and pressure of an online meeting, in some respects, is greater than when we meet in person. We are often in front of an audience beyond that of our local group and sometimes that can be intimidating. It's also an opportunity to grow and transform ourselves.

The art of transformation is Alchemy. Alchemy is more often thought of as the transforming of base metals into gold and there is certainly that aspect of experimentation. Alchemy is also a form of mental or spiritual transformation for the individual. It is often associated with the Rosicrucians, indeed the "Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz", the third of the original Rosicrucian manifestos is very much considered an Alchemical text.

During our year online, we have not kept to a specific theme. Prior to the pandemic, we worked with Tarot for about a year with presentations and exercises surrounding that topic being the primary focus. RW Frater Bruce Renner gave a great recurring theme of the Grail and Arthurian Myth in our newsletters over the past year so perhaps it's time to take up another theme for the year ahead. I propose that topic be Alchemy.

Fratres, I need your feedback. Would you like the beginning of a basic study of Alchemy to be our theme for the upcoming year for the New York College? Are any of you prepared to do presentations? Email me and let me know - rjpowell@arsmasonica.com

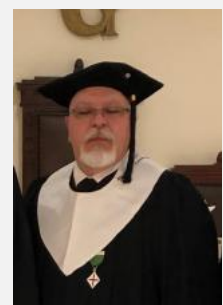
We are hoping to return for an in-person meeting on July 31st. This will greatly depend upon current regulations from NY State, Grand Lodge and the Valley of Buffalo, whose building we use. We have several candidates in waiting, so if we can meet in July, conferral of Grade(s) will be a primary goal for that meeting. Keep your fingers crossed...

The High Council is on for Louisville, KY for November 4-7th. Reservations for hotels and registration are now open. There will be several of us from the New York College attending and we would love to welcome more. It's a great weekend!

Summer is beginning, stay safe, get vaccinated & wear your mask.
Hope to see you in person soon.

Sapere Aude,

Rick



From the Secretary
RW Myron J. Deputat, VIII^o et Philologus Theoricus

Cari Fratres,

First, I would like to remind you about the SRICF Annual Convocation taking place November 5th & 6th in Louisville, KY at the Brown Hotel. This event is open to all of our fratres, and is filled with fellowship and light. The meal and registration package has been posted to the SRICF website. Please see the following link for details:

<https://www.sricf.org/110521.html>

In addition, room reservations for the Brown Hotel can be made at the following link:

<https://be.synxis.com/?adult=1&arrive=2021-11-04&chain=10237&child=0¤cy=USD&depart=2021-11-07&group=110421SCRIF&hotel=27195&level=hotel&locale=en-US&rooms=1>

In the past, some have also stayed at the Hilton Garden Inn which is within walking distance a few of blocks away from the Brown. The link for the Hilton Garden Inn is:

https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/sdfldgi-hilton-garden-inn-louisville-downtown/?SEO_id=GMB-GI-SDFLDGI&y_source=1_MjA4MzgwMC03MTUtG9jYXRpb24uZ29vZ2xIX3dlYnNpdGVfb3ZlcnJpZGU%3D

We have also received our copies of the SRICF Fama & Ad Lucem. I will be sending these to everyone along with the annual dues notice in June.

Finally, if anyone would like to propose a brother mason for membership to the New York College, please contact me, and I will send you the appropriate form which would then be sent to our Chief Adept. Hopefully, we will be able to meet in person soon and start conferring grades again. Please stay healthy and safe my fratres!

LVX,

Fr. Myron

New York College – Secretary
mdeputat@mac.com
(716)-983-2351



From the Junior Deputy Supreme Magus **RW W. Bruce Renner, IX^o, KGC et Philologus Adeptus Exemptus**

My message this time is more as editor of the Newsletter than JDSM. You should recall that in the Philosophus Grade we are admonished by the Exponent:

Being ourselves already familiar with the Christian Faith we should in this Grade consider the doctrines of the most famous philosophers and compare the tenets of the several great religions of the world, so that we may not appear ignorant of the faiths which have influenced the history of the world in past ages, or of the beliefs of foreign nations with which our Christian civilization must often come into conflict.

To which the Celebrant responds:

It is well, Frater Exponent, to make a study of the great thoughts which have tended to make men better. In all the great faiths of the world there is some truth enshrined. Let us consider all the doctrines which have guided mankind in the past, and then hold fast that which is good.

In our College, the exploration of other religions has never been done to my knowledge. In part, this is because the exploration of Western esoterism is close to my heart, and for my many years as Celebrant, that is the direction I lead the College. I must say that this is the general direction of the entire SRICF. Therefore, I'm not suggesting that we do an abrupt about face, but I think some newsletter articles that explore other faiths would be of value. Although I'm always willing to write for the newsletter, it's my hope that others might step forward and write or even present on this topic.

Religion is, of course, fraught with some difficulties. Like politics, many people are deeply passionate about their faith, and see other religions as wrong thinking. Traditionally, Freemasons are admonished to avoid these subjects, as they are a source of disharmony in the Lodge. For that reason, I think we need to be somewhat careful and avoid, for the most part, comparative religion, especially in the negative sense. Rather, I think, aside from a general understanding of a particular faith, we should look for commonalities and perennial truths that appear across all religions. In addition, just as our esoteric work is meant to augment our Christian faith, so should we look to the precepts of other faiths for a similar source of inspiration. These ideas may be articulated or emphasized a bit differently and can lead to an unexpected ah-ha moment that help us better understand and practice our own faith.

I've elected to begin with the Hindu religion in my own research, in part because it is one that I am least familiar with. Let me also fully disclose that the resulting article is more of a summation or overview of material of two courses available from the *Great Courses*; one call simply *Hinduism* (a part of a series on world religions) and the other, *Cultural Literacy for Religion*. I hope you approve of the resulting article!

Stay your Path, and, especially now, stay healthy!

Scire! Velle! Audere,! Tacere!
To Know, To Will, To Dare, To Remain Silent

LVX,

Bruce



College Happenings

January Virtual College Convocation

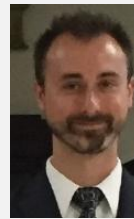
The College is alive and well!



Our January 30th Convocation offered an interesting program in keeping with our tradition over the years. First up was a practicum consisting of a Qabalistic Cross and LBRC.

This was followed by two outstanding presentations. First, was a presentation by Frater **Bruce Renner** in a sidebar presentation to his recent essay series on the Grail tradition entitled, "The Five Grail Knights." This was followed by **Frater Walter Cook's** presentation, "Archangels of the Quarters." Frater Cook will receive his Philologi Philosophus tassel for his excellent presentation.

One benefit of the Zoom format is that it allows Fraters from other Colleges to attend our Convocation, and thus we have had more fratres in attendance than at our normal in-person Convocations. We are hopeful that our summer convocation scheduled for July 31st will be in-person allowing us to catch up on grade conferrals and award presentations.



Our next virtual Convocation is May 30th. Don't miss out!

Long Island College Rosicrucian Zoom Salon

The Fratres of Long Island held an interesting Convocation on February 20th, 2021. It included some great presentations, as well as meditations and music and a virtual feast. In other news from our sister college, Chief Adept Frater **Edmund "Ted" Harrison**, well known to Western New York Masons will be stepping down. The new Chief Adept is Frater **Cliff Jacobs**.

High Council initiatives

During the pandemic the High Council officers have been busy. Our Secretary General, **Frater Michael Lake**, has taken several important steps to modernize the current administrative functions of his office, most important of which is the MMS system which provides a membership database system, and the automation of annual returns and membership cards. Our own Secretary, Frater **Myron Deputat**, has been a diligent supporter of this effort on behalf of our own College. Meanwhile, the SDSM, **Frater Craig McFarland** and Treasurer, **Frater Ken Hope**, has been working to simplify our banking procedures, and help resolve tax issues at all levels of the organization. JDSM, **Frater Bruce Renner**, has been sending monthly messages to the Chief Adepts on variety of topics aim to assist local Colleges, and planning the program for this year's High Council session which will hopefully be an in-person event in Louisville, Kentucky. The Supreme Magus, **Frater Jeff Nelson**, meanwhile, is involved in every aspect of the governance of the High Council, including the planning of the upcoming High Council session, our relationship with the other High Councils in England, Scotland, and Portugal, and the operation of our 65 subordinate Colleges.



<https://www.worldhistory.org/hinduism/>

The Hindu Religion

By RW W. Bruce Renner, IX^o, KGC

Introduction

It is unknown when man became spiritual and then became social and organized about it and then created religion. It seems that this impulse is hardwired into most people to varying degrees. Of course, family upbringing and the prevailing culture reinforce the impulse. Although there may have been many religions formed in pre-history that left no record, researchers believe that the Hindu faith, extending back as it does some 5000 years, to be the oldest organized religion.

The Hindu faith is presently the 3rd largest world religion with about a billion practitioners. The majority live in the country of India, making up about 85% of the total population of the region. However, India is also religiously diverse. This diversity is embraced by Hindus, in part, because the Hindu faith has so many variations. Culturally there are 16 major languages and over 850 dialects found in India.

It should be noted that the terms Hindu, India, and even the concept of religion come from other, largely Western, sources. The word Hindu comes from Persian, and originally meant *Indians* without reference to a religion. The term *sanātana dharma* meaning “eternal religion” would be how a native would refer to what we think of as Hinduism.

The concept of religion and certainly the term itself is also of Western origin and is imprecisely defined, especially when referencing non-Western religions.

All this being said, as this essay will be read by Western readers, we shall use the Western terms.

Origins

Archaeological finds suggest that the origins of Hinduism can be found in two ancient civilizations. The first and oldest in northern India (now Pakistan) was the Indus Valley civilization. Some 70 ancient cities have been found, and although the language used by these people is still undecipherable, the artifacts suggest a largely peaceful civilization. It appears there was a great emphasis on everyday hygiene, and additionally, on spiritual purity. Other artifacts

suggest a great deal of emphasis on fertility and seemed to treat males and female aspects of sexuality with equal respect. It is possible that there was a Mother Goddess religion in operation, and illustrations of seated figures suggest practices of meditation and yoga. It persisted for about 1500 years.

The second civilization is referred to as the *Āryans* and originated in Central Asia. There is no evidence that they conquered or even displaced the Indus Valley civilization, and many researchers believe that there was a time of peaceful co-existence before the Indus Valley civilization was naturally absorbed or



The *Āryan* civilization possessed bronze weapons and tools and chariots <http://megankianaanjaliayla.weebly.com/the-aryans.html>

died out. The *Āryans* in contrast to the Indus Valley civilization, were not organized, and somewhat nomadic. They did possess metallurgy, at least as it applied to bronze, and used horses and chariots. They were more militarily inclined than the Indus Valley civilization, but again, there is no evidence they conquered it.

Yoga is a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced for health and relaxation. Oxford Languages

Yoga is one of the 6 orthodox philosophical schools of Hinduism



The extent of the Indus river civilization Wikipedia

They made three major contributions to what would become the Hindu religion. The first is Sanskrit, a language with many connections to European languages. It has become the official language of the Hindu tradition.

The second is a stratified social structure, an early iteration of the caste system found throughout India's history.

The third is the earliest religious writings of Hinduism known as the *Veda*, a collection of liturgies, hymns to various *Āryan* deities, myths, incantations, and even philosophical



Statue of Shiva performing yogic meditation in Padmasana Wikipedia

speculation. Like the druids, the *Veda* was restricted to the priestly class which used special memory techniques to pass the contents orally to succeeding generations. Unlike the Druids, the *Veda* was eventually committed to paper, although not until relatively recent times. Westerners were exposed to parts of it from the late 18th century on. The *Veda* is believed to have been revealed to ancient seers (*rishis*) and has no claimed authorship.



The four Vedas(Wikipedia)

The Vedic Worldview

The written form of the *Veda* in use today is divided into four parts: the *Riga-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sama-veda*, and *Atharva-Veda*. Of these, the *Riga-veda* is the oldest (composed between 2300 and 1200 B.C.E) and most important. It contains songs and *mantras* (sacred words) used in ritual.

According to the *Veda*, the natural world is divided into three levels (*triloka*): earth, a mid-space, and *Svarga* which was the home of the gods and ancestors. The world was governed by a set of principles of harmony and order called the *Rita*. The *Veda* contains several alternate creation stories. Some are quite abstract and offer meditations on what forces came into play to create our reality. It provokes contemplative questions on unity vs. duality, and what preceded our concept of time and space.

In the *Veda* we are also introduced to a pantheon of gods. There about 20 words for god in Sanskrit. The most commonly one used in the *Veda* is *deva* (shiny and exalted). Monotheism appears to be an evolutionary idea of deity. With a religion as old as Hinduism a polytheistic pantheon would be expected. However, during the Vedic period one of these *devas* would assume a central role creating a monotheistic center. Thus, there was an early synthesis of polytheistic and monotheistic ideas termed by 19th century Vedic scholar Max Müller as henotheism.

The *devas* had various aspects and responsibilities in part summarized by the table below. The traditional number of *devas* was 33.

Although divine beings with supernatural powers, they weren't always portrayed as being omnipotent or omniscient. They were created after the world, dwelled in all three levels of reality, and were constrained to follow the laws as articulated in the *Rita*. They could be morally ambiguous.

The *Veda* also has a concept of people having souls which they associated with breath (*ātman*) and since breathing stopped at death, the soul was seen to depart. As with many questions raised in the *Veda*, where it had departed to had several versions of answers. Some believed that the soul went to the divine realm or to a realm like hell in Christianity. Others thought it dissolved like the body.

Deva	Description
Indra	God of war
Agni	“Divine Fire” dwells in all three levels of the world, mediator between the gods and humans, carrying sacrifices to the gods, transporting the dead
Varuna	Custodian of Rita, enforcer of order
Soma	Manifested as a particular plant used in rituals
Rufra (the Howler)	Bringer of sickness and misfortune, but also (oddly) a healer
Yama	God of death
Ushas	Goddess of dawn
Kubera	God of wealth and prosperity
Sūrya	God of the sun

The Scope and Limitations of the *Āryans' Veda*

Although the *Veda* contain elements that would persist and would eventually be incorporated into what has become Hinduism, it had a major limitation. The *Veda* was largely a book of ritual, not a fully developed theology. However, the practices of the *Veda* were all there was for the first three millennium of the history of Hinduism. It is worthwhile to review what it encompassed.

The *Āryans* practiced three types of ritual: domestic, shamanic, and *śrauta*. Little has been uncovered concerning domestic rituals, but they were probably simple forms performed around home fires to honor the gods and conducted by a family elder. Shamanic rituals are found in the *Atharva-veda* and were performed by a *Atharvan* (ritual specialist). They concerned crisis situations such as sickness, transitions such as birth and death, and significant dates, largely tied to nature such as new moons and harvests.

Sanskaras are, in one context, the diverse rites of passage of a human being from conception to cremation, signifying milestones in an individual's journey of life in Hinduism. Above is *annaprashan samskara* celebrating a baby's first taste of solid food.

Wikipedia



The *śrauta* rituals were performed exclusively by the priestly class (*Brahmins*) and focused on earthly rewards such as prosperity. The words used in the *Veda* were seen as sacred, magical and embodying the spirit. The creative power of sacrifice acquired the name *brahman*. As an example, the word AUM, was used as a mantra to create the universe in one creation myth.

The Axial Age and the emergence of Classical Hinduism

During the millennium just before the Western common era, an unusual tipping point simultaneously occurred in several contemporaneous civilizations, This includes Greece, China, Mesopotamia, Israel, and the subject of this essay, India. It was as if mankind, in general, reached some point of greater spiritual insight. Although perennial ideas emerged, each civilization also contributed a unique outlook.



The Om or AUM symbol
Wikipedia

In India, two ideas greatly affected the development of Hindu theology. One was the idea that humans possessed an immortal soul bound by action called *karma*. The other was the transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation. These two ideas are related. That there is a separate divine component of man that inhibited his physical body was an idea that became perennial in the Axial Age, but the exact mechanics of it varied greatly. Hindu thought postulated that when a person dies the soul is reborn into another physical body or transmigrated. However, which body is determined by *karma*, a kind of point system that judged how a person had developed in their previous life. If a person had led a good rather than an evil existence, he received a better opportunity in the next. If he accumulated negative or bad *karma*, he would have less opportunity and more challenges in his new life. Particularly bad behavior might result in a return as an animal, which explains the aversion to eating meat in Indian culture, and animals, in general, receiving better attention than other cultures. *Karma* was then a critique of the actions we take in life. In Vedic thought this was ritual action, but what is now known as classical Hinduism emerged, this became moral action.

This cycle of transmigrations governed by the laws of *karma* is called *samsara* (wandering). It is natural to ask, “Does it ever end?” Although opinion varies, of course, a predominate theory is that one can escape the wheel of *karma* at a certain level of enlightenment and join the realm of the gods. This concept of the persistence of the soul and individual identity may seem attractive. However, life was, and continues to be, difficult for many Hindus. Thus, many long to escape the wheel of karma.

Dharma and the evolution of Caste

As previously noted, the roots of the caste system employed to this day in Hindu society has its roots in Vedic society. It has been retained because it fit very well into the ideas of reincarnation and *karma*. The term caste is of Portuguese origin and has become the vague concept of the system commonly referred to by non-Hindus, particularly in the west. The Hindu words are *varna* (meaning color, but thought of as caste), and *jāti* (meaning birth, but thought of as sub-

cast). It will be recalled that everyone is somewhere on the wheel of karma, and the caste system is a perfect way to tell where one is at.

A third principle in addition to karma and reincarnation, was then added to classical Hindu to regulate social order. This principle is *dharma*, an abstract concept, and is what determined distinctions between good and bad karma. This is according to codified rules called the *dharma-śāstras* (Laws of Manu) which developed at the beginning of the common era. Each stratum of Hindu society was assigned different *dharmas* according of Laws of Manu. While the system is enforced by religious belief, it dramatically affects the social, economic, and political lives of Hindus. It does enforce a division of labor and spiritual purity but is not based on wealth.

The following table outlines the primary castes:

Caste	Members	Duties
Brahmin	Priests and intellectuals	Teaching, studying, sacrificing for oneself and others, making and receiving gifts
Kśatriyas	Warriors and administrators	Protection and order
Vaiśyas	Merchants, famers, artisans	Taking a wife, keeping cattle, knowing the worth of valuable materials, farming skills
Sūdras	Peasants and common folk	Serving with humility
Hari-jans or dalits	Untouchables or oppressed ones	Handlers of leather, body-burners, cleaners, scavengers

The first three are referred to as twice-borns because as children they undergo a second, ritual birth. The *Sūdras* are known as once born. Technically, the *Hari-jans* are outside the caste system, and the practice is now constitutionally banned, although it is still widespread in Hindu society.

Aside from a division of labor, the system is also considered an indicator of spiritual purity. The untouchables are considered impossible to purify.

This system governs many other facets of a Hindu's life other than his labors. Marrying across castes is very rare, and even casual associations have rules including even whom one may touch. Higher castes are vegetarians, while lower castes can eat meat. All of these rules are enforced within one's particular caste.

The *jātis* are a way of dividing castes more finely by birth groupings, Unlike the major castes, there is some possibility of upper mobility in *the jātis* structure.

The caste system has been remarkably durable, persisting for 2000 years. It is held in place by the belief that to abandon it would lead to chaos and diminish one's chances to do better in their next life or even never being able to escape the wheel of karma.

***Dharma* and gender**

Not surprisingly, the *dharma* of and between men and women is also governed by the Laws of Manu. Like the caste system, these rules are more defined for the upper-caste. They begin by assigning stages of life for men and women. The four stages for men and three for women are:

Stage	Activities
MEN	
Brahmacarya (student)	Twice-born ceremony, study with a teacher (guru)
Householder	Marriage, family, occupational pursuits, financial independence, contributor to society
Forest-dweller	Retirement with wife, move to more modest dwelling somewhat away from mainstream society, more devoted to spirituality. Only occurs if successful in householder stage
Sannyasa (renunciation)	Solitary ascetics that renounce all worldly possession and connections
WOMEN	
Girlhood	Limit education compared to men, largely domestic skills and ritualistic responsibilities. Restricted social access
Marriage	Often arranged marriages even in modern times, shares husband's karma and destiny, moved into husband's home and subservient to her mother-in-law, highly dependent on husband for her well being
Widowhood	Historically widows are treated very poorly, including being forbidden to remarry, expected to always wear a white sari (dress) as sign of mourning, shaving the head, forbidden to eat with family, and given odious domestic work

It becomes immediately apparent that women fared much worse than men regardless of class. While a couple might enter the forest-dweller phase together, a woman couldn't enter alone. Widowhood was so onerous that many chose *satī* (a form of ritual suicide) to join their deceased husband.

Women, could not expect to achieve the fourth stage of renunciation under any circumstance.

Not unexpectantly, bearing sons increase a woman's status, while daughters were considered a necessary burden.

The problem of *samsāra*

The religious practices that develop under classical Hinduism took three forms, and Hindus generally selected one according to disposition. All were designed to address the major challenged confronting believers - *samsara*; the cycles of continual transmigration of the soul based on the accumulation of *karma*. While this form of immortality might seem initially appealing, the play of *karma* can be positive or negative. In general, life for all humans has been difficult until quite recently and Indian culture has seen a large portion of their population experience suffering up to current times. The idea that one might return to a lesser state is therefore undesirable. Even remaining in a life of privilege and pleasure would become tedious and distasteful if endured forever.

Karma (in Hinduism and Buddhism) the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences

Reincarnation the rebirth of a soul in a new body

Dharma the eternal and inherent nature of reality, regarded in Hinduism as a cosmic law underlying right behavior and social order

definitions from Oxford Languages

Consequently, the ultimate goal is to obtain *mokṣa* (release) from the wheel of karma, and all the following practices require one to adopt a spiritual life. The three are *karma-mārga* (the way of action), *jñāna-mārga* (the way of wisdom), and *bhakti-karma* (the way of Devotion). Note that the term *yoga*, used in a broader sense than in the West, is often applied interchangeably with *mārga*.

The way of action

Hindus have a traditional view of life that consists of four actions or goals. There is first *dharma* or duty, second *artha* or wealth and material acquisitions, the third is *kāma* or pleasure and enjoyment, and finally there is *mokṣa* or the escape from *samsāra*.

To achieve this last goal, one must give up the others. Although they are viewed positively, they keep one bound to *samsāra*. However, few can escape the other actions necessary in life. However, one may receive some karmic credit, so to speak, by incorporating spiritual aspects into their day-to-day life as much as possible. Over many lifetimes, one gets progressively closer to *mokṣa*.

Such religious activities can include performing (relatively short) daily rituals such as prayers, fully participating in transitional rituals for oneself and others such as marriage, attending

religious festivals, and even engaging in a pilgrimage. This latter is believed to bring great spiritual benefit because nature itself is considered holy and various aspects of it are identified with the gods or important sacred events.

The *Veda* is the primary source of the way of action.



The way of wisdom

The way of action should be very familiar to readers as it is the way the vast majority of us practice our faith. It is also the *only* way that religion of any kind was practiced for most of human history. For primitive man, the world was a complex and often hostile place. Surely, such a place was created by some greater power which needed to be contacted, consulted, implored, and often appeased to make one's life a bit better.

Even in our more enlightened age, few know the finer points of their faith and its theology. Few think much about the nature of God or reality. Rather, we allow those who have devoted themselves to a religious life to guide us in our practice.

It took thousands of years for anyone to begin to address the *what* of religion, rather than just the *how*. As we have noted, this tipping point from blind faith to intellectual inquiry occurred about a thousand years before the birth of Jesus, in several different religions. This is now referred to as the Axial Age.



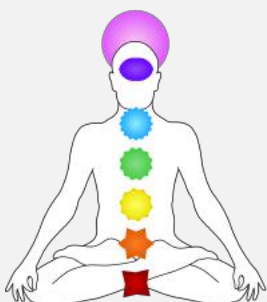
Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) argued that **the Axial Age** gave birth to philosophy as a discipline. It marked a tipping point for several world religions

In the Hindu faith this took the form of a collection of texts called the *Upaniṣads* (literally “to sit down beside” connotating knowledge transmitted from *guru* to student). Like the *Veda* these texts are considered revealed knowledge and its original authorship is, therefore, unknown. They often represent a perspective called the *vedānta*, or the completion and end of the *Veda*.

The *Upaniṣads* are philosophical in contrast to the practical *Veda* and addresses several ideas and issues. These include:

- What is the essence of the human self?
- What is the essence of the ultimate reality?
- Embracing the soul (*ātman*) as the human essence, but rejected the connection to the breath, and the mind. While affirming that the soul exists within our bodies, it is not subject to the experiences of the physical body such as birth and death. It is imperceptible, spiritual, and immortal.
- Seek to determine the human essence by turning inward
- Defines reality as the totality of everything by reworking a concept from the *Veda* – *brahman* (that which makes great). *Brahman* transcends all human categories and images. It is without qualities.
- Both *ātman* and *brahman* are both incomprehensible and unutterable. They ultimately express the idea of a veil over reality that causes us to see plurality where there is actually unity
- The true self is God, the ultimate reality
- The soul is in a restless state, seeking ever-new manifestations, until it find its rest in God. This is the concept of *māya*

The way of wisdom has a foundation in the concept of unity expressed in *ātman* and *brahman* and in living one’s life in a way that expresses this principle of unity. This means living as if there is no individual self separate from the rest of reality. It encourages looking within not without, and accepting this path results in a peacefulness and serenity that knows no fear. There is no rebirth, because there is no clinging to life.

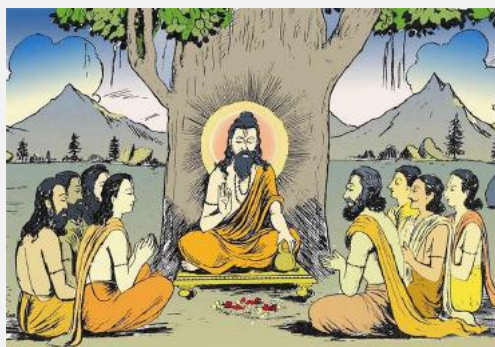


Chakra (Sanskrit “wheel” or “circle”) are focal points used in meditation practices known as *Tantra* an esoteric or inner tradition of *Hinduism* Wikipedia

The Hindu concept of God

To the outsider the Hindu religion is one of polytheism and iconography. However, there is much more beneath the surface. There are two general approaches to the nature of God in Hinduism. One is that the divine is beyond human conception. We can connect to it, but not define it or fully comprehend it. The other method suggests that we use language and images to help us frame the divine, but also exert caution so as not to confuse the symbolism with the thing it is intended to represent i.e. idolatry. The many *devas* are then viewed as different faces or characteristics of one God. Their various representations, which can be anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic, are often given to an extravagant and/or fantastical design to help the Hindu practitioner realize the true separation between the mundane and the divine. Further, it is impossible to fully embrace all the various *devas*, so individuals usually chose to worship a personal deity of choice (*ista-devatā*), often based on their social group's choice. They are devoted to their choice, but don't question the choice of others.

One should not infer that the images of the various *devas* are without a divine presence. When such images are created, there are rituals of consecration which link the image to the divine, and the particular god or goddess is invited to inhabit the image for a specific time. In some cases, the image is later destroyed to remind the devotee that the image is not the god. During the period of incarnation, the image is treated as if it were god in living form. The temple where it is located is made available to worshippers (*darśan*), as a time of seeing and being seen by god.



In the Hindu faith this took the form of a collection of texts called the *Upaniśads* (literally "to sit down beside" connotating knowledge transmitted from *guru* to student) Vedic Public Library



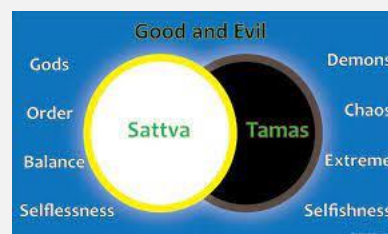
Ganesh, the elephant god, is one of the most important Hindu deities. He is the second son of Shiva and Parvati, and Kumar's younger brother. While performing any puja or ritual, he is the first god to be worshiped. Due to a misunderstanding where Shiva did not know that Ganesh was his son, he cut off Ganesh's head in anger. Later, an elephant's head was placed on Ganesh and he was revived, also being granted the power of the first god in order of importance. Mushak, the mouse, is his vehicle. Ganesh is often associated with Mangal or Mars, and good luck. (ancienthistorylist.com)

Visualizations of Hindu gods and goddesses often take fantastical form to remind us that they are representations, not to the actual divinity.

Although these practices walk a fine line especially to westerners, the Hindu religion is a careful blend of a monotheistic and polytheistic view of the divine and ultimate reality.

The Goddess and her Devotees

In most world cultures, women have only recently assumed an equitable role in society. India has been particularly slow in this evolution, and even with laws in place to prevent practices such as widow suicide, many parts of Hindu culture cling to the old ways. This is due to the incredible internalization of the cultural and religious principles of Hinduism, They have survived for thousands of years, and that have been successfully passed from generation to generation.



It is surprising then, that the goddesses fair so well. *Śaktism*, the worship of the Goddess is regarded as a major Hindu religion. Although there are many goddesses in the Hindu pantheon, in the curious juxtaposition of monotheism and polytheism we have discussed above, they are all considered manifestations of the Great Goddess, *Devī* or *Mahadevī*.

There are two broad types of goddesses. The first serve as wives or companions of the great gods. The second group is composed of independent goddesses. These two groups align somewhat to the cultural treatment of women in Hindu society. Married goddesses are seen as benevolent, gentle, and life-giving, while independent goddesses are viewed as malevolent, terrifying, and lustful.

However, regardless of a goddess's grouping they are all powerful and all have serious functionality. For example, *Devī Sarasvati* is responsible for education and music. While gods seldom appear without their female counterparts, goddesses, regardless of their marital status, often appear alone. They figure prominently in Hindu mythology and engage in battles to protect the cosmos alongside of the gods.



A gopuram (tower) of the Meenakshi Amman Temple, a Shakta temple at Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India, nominated in the "New Seven Wonders of the World" competition in 2004
Wikipedia

The soul and the Goddess

**My sacred syllable हीम् transcends,
the distinction of name and named,
beyond all dualities.**

**It is whole, infinite being,
consciousness and bliss.**

**One should meditate on that reality,
within the flaming light of
consciousness.**

**Fixing the mind upon me,
as the Goddess transcending all space
and time,**

**One quickly merges with me by
realizing,**

the oneness of the soul and Brahman.

**—Devi Gita, Transl: Lynn Foulston,
Stuart Abbott**

Devibhagavata Purana, Book 7

The way of devotion

The way of devotion (*bhakti*) emerged as a third way of Hindu religious practice toward the end of the Axial Age. As its name implies, it suggests that one should focus one's passionate nature on the love of a personal deity and make that paramount above all things. The basis of this practice include great epics in verse form, such as the *Mahābhārata* (*Bhagavad-gītā*, perhaps the most familiar Hindu sacred writing to Westerners is part of this work), the *Ramāyāna*, and the *Purānas*. Together they develop elaborate mythologies around the various gods and goddesses, often illustrating important moral or philosophical lessons.

Modern times

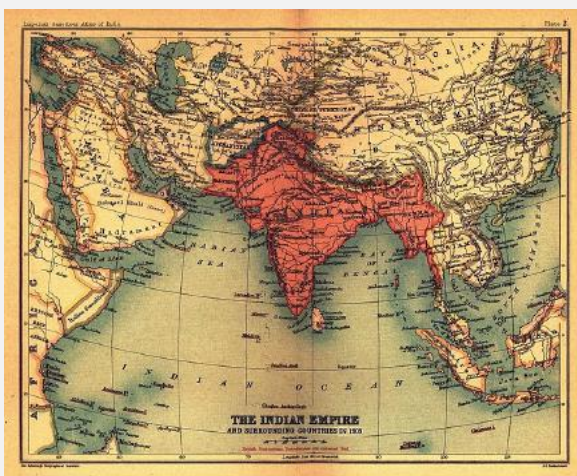
Not surprisingly, the Hindu faith has had many challenges over its long history, but three are of particular interest.

The first is the religious diversity seen in India, where most Hindus live. Despite the dominance of Hinduism, India has been home to several other religions. In general, Hindus are open to diversity, in part, because of the diverse nature of Hinduism itself. However, one religion has been continuedly hostile to Hinduism, and that is Islam. Westerners tend to think of Islam as centric to the Arab world, but most Muslims live in South Asia and eastward, and they had a strong presence in India from about the 8th century on.

In many ways Islam and Hinduism are opposites. Islam is rigidly monotheistic and vehemently opposed to idolatry. On the other hand, Hindus are vegetarians while Muslims have no issues with eating meat. Although Muslims are to be found throughout India, the majority lived in the north. So stressful did the relationship become in relatively recent times that a Muslim dominated country, Pakistan, was created in 1947. It is difficult to determine how effective this action was, as India and Pakistan continue to have at times a hostile relationship. Despite their animosity, neither religion was materially reduced by the other, and today Islam and Hinduism rank 2nd and 3rd respectively in terms of the number of followers among today's religions. However, Islam has been able to convert significant numbers of Hindus largely through its mystically oriented sect of Sufism, and there is no foreseeable end to their differences.

The British defeated the Muslims in the 18th century and placed India in its colonialism structure. This lasted 90 years, the so-called time of the British Raj. This was the second shock to the traditional lives of Hindus. The division of India into two countries was the last action of the British before they turned governance back to the native population. This period was Hinduism's first introduction to Western thought. The English are not without faults of course, but they did greatly contribute to the improvement of India's infrastructure, and introduced practices of western industrialization practices. For sometimes better or worse, they challenge basic components of Hindu culture.

When the British left, and India became independent again, it brought a new challenge: how to keep their traditional values and still take advantage of the benefits of a more global outlook. This is a non-trivial and ongoing process, but one in which obvious progress has been made in recent years.



The British Indian Empire and surrounding countries in 1909

Wikipedia

Final thoughts

If we were to have one take away from this essay about Hinduism, what would it be? Hinduism has such a long history and so many concepts it is difficult to choose. There is no one central figure common to Hinduism as there is in most other religions. There is this complex monotheism and polytheism at play. So much of Hinduism is radically at odds with western concepts. For me, the one central theme is this: the wheel of *karma* and reincarnation through the transmigration of the soul. This is the central precept of Hinduism and the great challenge for true believers. One can't but think that escaping the wheel of *karma* which has always been thought of as away to escape the burden of our earthly life will be tested as a new age brings more of life's comforts to the average Hindu.

Further study

It bears repeating that this is in no way an original essay. My knowledge of Hinduism is too minor for me to make any original contribution to the subject, and I am writing this as an introduction for people with limited knowledge of Hinduism. Although I have, on occasion, inserted some of my own commentary, this was really a brief summary of a 6-hour course in Hinduism offered by the Great Courses. Think of it as my class notes! If you are interested in more details, you can begin there. They offer additional courses in comparative religion and religious history.

All of the Hindu foundation works mentioned in this essay are available in English translation. Additionally, there are hundreds of books available about Hinduism, and a wealth of information on the internet.

Don't miss our virtual Convocation on Saturday, May 29th.

10:00 AM Welcome/Intros

10:10 AM Frater Richard Powell Presentation "Sound in Magic/Mysticism"

10:20 AM Qabalistic Cross, LBRC, Alternative Middle Pillar exercise but using vowel sound in place of the God names (Rabbi David Cooper)

10:45 AM Frater Bruce Kenner Presentation "Angels and Atoms: The Rosicrucian Ideal"

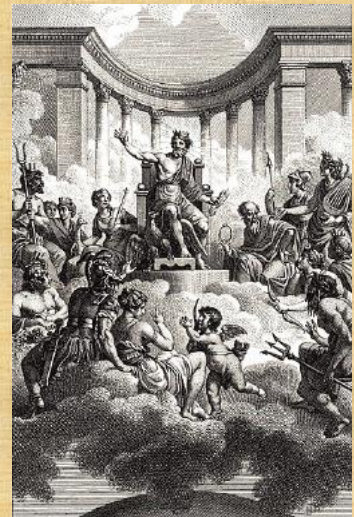
11:30 AM Messages from Secretary, Chief Adept & Junior Deputy Supreme Magus and Wrap Up

12:00 PM Depart

The Secretary will provide a Zoom link as the date approaches

In bibliothecam

Hesiod's Theogony



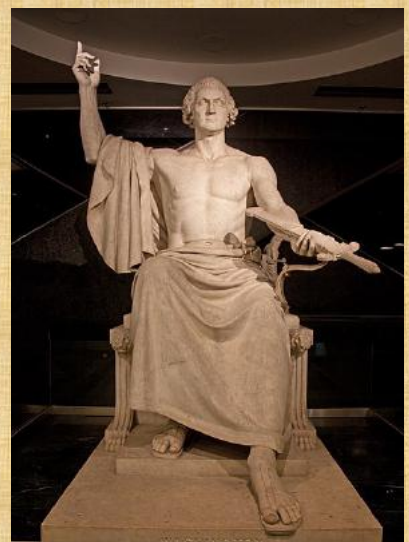
Continuing our tour through the spiritual lineages that produced the Western World, we next come to Ancient Greece via Hesiod's Theogony. Hesiod himself was a poet from Ancient Greece in the same vein of Homer, and wrote poems detailing Ancient Grecian life. It is clear from his writings how intermingled the practical daily life was with the noumenal vitality of the divine essence. This is something that I've commented on in previous papers and does predictably begin with an invocation to the muses, just as we first invoke Deity.

We can compare this work against *The Book of Coming Forth by Day* commonly called the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. In both do we see that their worldview was enchanted in that they lacked the sharp dividing line between practical outer life and the inner life of spirits and magic.

Theogony itself means something like "genealogy of the gods." This is an apt descriptor for a foundational document detailing the creation of the Ancient Greek world, or at least world-view. There is little difference between the anthropomorphic form of the gods and the physical representation of the powers in their domain. This will be commented on more later - how it describes to the audience the nature of the world and how mankind fits within it.

The worldview of Ancient Greece is perhaps more important to us as modern Rosicrucians than *The Book of Coming Forth by Day*. After all, our current cultural identity has deep roots in classical antiquity. From Ancient Greece, comes ideas foundational to our current life such as the Socratic method, Democracy, and Aristotelian Forms.

The impact of Ancient Greece cannot be denied even in our experiences in the mundane world outside of the mystic circle or Masonic lodge. George Washington has been immortalized in the fashion of Jupiter by Horatio Greenough, in the Mercury dime in U.S. currency from 1916 to 1945, in the statue of Atlas in Rockefeller Plaza, and the Rod of Asclepius in our medical community to name a few. Though perhaps that which hits closest to home is the "laurel wreath of victory" mentioned in the Masonic first degree, which comes to us from the myth of Apollo and Daphne.



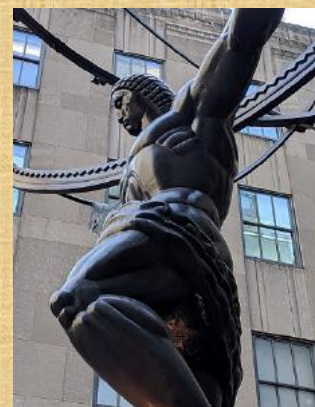
The Theogony itself does present the same sort of experience as *The Book of Coming Forth by Day*. Both pieces are rather short, but the use of language can become a real impediment to understanding the intent. More than once I needed to pause and look closely at the text in order to understand what the subject of a given sentence might be. This may be due to the syntax of Ancient Greek preserved in the translation, or perhaps differences as to what would constitute a new paragraph or its equivalent. For example, in describing the birth of Hecate it is not made clear who her parents are, unless the reader has prior knowledge from elsewhere.

It is quite possible that Hesiod assumed that the reader has an extensive knowledge of the myths of Ancient Greece. The labors of Heracles are mentioned several times but aren't included in the body of Theogony. To a modern audience this would seem lazy, or poorly thought through. I will remind the reader that the intended audience of Hesiod was likely other poets or aristocrats, since literacy was not to be assumed in his day. If the audience was reading this as we are, they were likely educated and fluent in their culture.



The spelling of names is something that should also have some small attention paid to it. The gods do not have surnames, and so close spellings often refer to completely different beings. Pluto is the familiar god lording over the afterlife and underworld. Plutus is not an alternate spelling of Pluto (whose other name was Aidoneus) but rather a god "...who goes everywhere over land and the sea's wide back, and him who finds him and into whose hands he comes he makes rich, bestowing great wealth upon him."

One criticism that cannot be dismissed is that there were sometimes issues of self-contradiction. The issue that most comes to mind is the birth of the three Fates; Clotho, Atropos, and Lachesis. This is described twice in two different epochs of time. I would normally dismiss this criticism by assuming that there was a subtle but important difference between those brought forward in different times. However, the Fates are named at both instances and are identical.



It is not unusual in the setting of myth for things like causality and linear time to be less distinct than we are accustomed to. However Ancient Greece is the birthplace for good or ill of our empirical world view. A higher standard in this case is warranted. This being the case, a further exploration into the divine world view of Ancient Greece to get to the bottom of this type of query is to be recommended. This is beneficial not only for a more thorough understanding of this work but is valuable of itself. The stories of the deathless gods,

heroes, and monsters of the Ancient Greeks are among the richest and most vivid tales throughout the ages. For example, due to the process of creating the world there are interactions of the deities that seem to spring up at times as a byproduct of the extreme vitality of the earlier generations of deities before the Olympians. The famous castration of Cronos by his son Uranus produced the Erinyes, Giants, Nymphs, and Aphrodite from the fluids that fell into the Ocean, not through the usual method.

The body of Theogony begins with the aforementioned invocation to the muses, describing them in some detail. Hesiod then dives straight into the creation of the world from Chaos. Chaos is both a god, and a cosmic emptiness akin to empty space. After Chaos, “wide-bosomed” Earth (a goddess, and the physical ground) appears and they get straight to the business of creating and populating the rest of creation. Eventually, Heaven (Uranus) rules overall.



Cronos castrates his father Uranus at the behest of Earth. She does this because Uranus commanded that the ugly Cyclopes (younger brothers of Cronos) be hidden underneath her, which one assumes was rather uncomfortable.

An interesting detail is explained here, that the term “Titan” refers specifically to the gods who conspired against Uranus. The term means “strainers” as in “those who strained against Uranus’ rule.” Let this be the factoid you may use in passing conversation next time the topic of conversation turns to Greek mythology over dinner. You will appear very well read indeed!

After this event, Hesiod details the generation of the offspring of Night (goddess), the Sea (god), and many the monsters and beasts famous in Greek myth such as the Gorgons, Pegasus, and Echidna. Hesiod then doubles back in time and explains the generation of the Titan gods.

Following this, Hesiod writes a section on Hecate, the famous three-faced goddess often revered by modern day practitioners of Wicca. It is clear here as to why she is so popular as “Zeus the son of Cronos honoured above all.” She has within her domain the judgement of kings, outcome of battle, the outcome of games, and the numbers of food animals. If one were to have a patron goddess, one who seems to have her thumb on the outcomes of many circumstances for gain she is surely not a bad one to choose.

Then are explained the family relation and generation of the children of Cronos. Here is briefly described that Uranus cursed Cronos to suffer the same fate as he, being dethroned by his children. Cronos famously then consumes each of his children as they are born, until his wife Rhea had enough of this and substituted a rock for Zeus. Zeus fulfills the curse of Uranus by dethroning Cronos and then has many issues to content with, not the least of which is circumventing that same curse.

He does this eventually by consuming his first wife Metis under the counsel of Heaven (Uranus) and Earth before Metis can give birth to Athene. In the fullness of time Zeus himself gives birth to Athene from his head. It is not clear as to why this allows Zeus to stay in power, but the crisis seemed to have been averted.

Zeus did have to contend with rebel gods who had made a habit of continually fighting amongst themselves. After freeing three of his sons who he had imprisoned as “he was jealous of their exceeding manhood and comeliness and great size,” Zeus convinced them to fight on his side to end the continued strife the other gods cause in their warring. Then Zeus conquered all those who opposed him and imprisoned them far away, not under the earth but more distant even than Chaos. Zeus achieved final victory over all opposers upon the defeating of Typhoeus (Typhon), who was born from Earth and Tartarus.

Prior to the war between the Olympians and those banished beyond Chaos, the tale of Prometheus was told. In brief, Prometheus was bound and tortured by the Eagle merely for being too clever. It was not until after he was freed by Heracles that he stole fire from Olympus and gave it to man. This seems strange, as in the stories of Heracles Mankind has already developed the technology to create and control fire. But again, myth is not always so linear as our daily lives.

Prometheus’ character from Zeus’ standpoint is like that of Loki in the popular Marvel movies today – too clever for his own good. In popular culture we, however, have a soft-spot for Prometheus, which is due to his particular kindness towards us. Prometheus stole fire of his own accord and provided for the meat of sacrificial animals to be given to man, rather than burned in sacrifice to Zeus.

If it seems that at a certain point, the poem of the creation of the world became essentially a chronicle of the great deeds of Zeus then you have noticed the same thematic shift that I did. Hesiod makes it clear how powerful and wise Zeus is, and since Zeus continues his rule to this day, it seems expedient to flatter the prime deity.

Lastly, Theogony describes the gods and goddesses born after Zeus’ victory, and the great heroes seen elsewhere in Greek mythology. Hesiod ends with a final mention of the Muses.

As mentioned above, Theogony is not an encyclopedia of all Greek myth. It is however a convenient quotation of the culture of Ancient Greece. Specific virtues may be expanded upon in stories of Perseus, Heracles, or Jason, but none of them are as expansive or detailed as Theogony. This poem containing its lists of divine beings and cycle of usurpation from the beginning of time to “present”. The link cited below brings you to the exact translation used in writing this review. It is the same translation found in sacred-texts.org, which is also free of charge.

Often, the content of Theogony reminded me of reading the Bible. Frequently Hesiod stops describing how things happened to give long lists of what coupling produced what list of offspring. I will refer the reader to the book of Genesis in the bible. While it is one of the books studied intensely by mystical scholars of many stripes, it does periodically stop the telling of its story to give detailed descriptions of who begat who. Apparently, the process of creating a world requires strange pacing choices on the part of the Architect of that world.

As we continue forward in our steps through time to better understand our own world-view, keep in mind what was covered in Theogony. As we digest the Iliad and Odyssey in the months to come, allow Theogony to be the stage upon which the actors sit and we will be best able to appreciate the contributions the Ancient Grecians gave to us today.

Citations

Bigheart, Brandon. *1943D Mercury Dime Obverse-Cutout.png*. File:1943D Mercury Dime Obverse-Cutout.png. WikimediaCommons, August 4, 2013.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1943D_Mercury_Dime_obverse-cutout.png.
Bluedenim, Bluedenim. *Rod of Asclepius.jpg*. February 12, 2008. *WikimediaCommons*.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rod_of_asclepius.jpg.
Evelyn-White, Hugh. "HESIOD, THEOGONY." HESIOD, THEOGONY - Theoi Classical Texts Library. Theoi Texts Library, 2017. <https://www.theoi.com/Text/HesiodTheogony.html>.
Monsiau, Nicolas-Andre. *Olympians.jpg*. August 24, 2005. *WikimediaCommons*.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Olympians.jpg>.
PortableNYCTours, PortableNYCTours. *Rockefeller Center Atlas 01.Jpg*. December 26, 2019. *WikimediaCommons*.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rockefeller_Center_Atlas_01.jpg.
Wknight94, Wknight94. *File:George Washington Greenough Statue.jpg*. WikimediaCommons, May 23, 2011.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_Washington_Greenough_statue.jpg.

Amor libertatis lucem vitae,

Walt

VW Frater Walter E. Cook, IV, VII° et Philologus Practicus
Assistant Editor



A funny thing about writing, you may think you know a subject well, but until you need to write about or teach it, you really don't. The editors of your newsletter are always looking for contributions, and if you find writing difficult, we are here to help. Read a good book on an esoteric subject? Write a book review! Have an interest in an esoteric subject? Share it with others! Have an obstacle on your spiritual path? Writing about it often clears the way to resolution...

A fictional read for fun...and perhaps a few insights

War In Heaven

by Charles Williams (September 20, 1886 – May 15, 1945)

Reviewed by RW W. Bruce Renner, IX^o, KGC et Philologus
Adeptus Exemptus



Today, it is likely that most readers that have heard the name Charles Williams know him chiefly through his association with the Inklings, an Oxford literary society whose best-known members were J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Of what I know of the Inklings, the one characteristic of its members that stands out is they were all original thinkers. Tolkien, for example, is the creator of the type of world building fantasy literature we take for granted today. In his writing there is not only an engaging story (Tolkien is very accessible), but a highly detailed motif that includes its own languages, history, and, culture so detailed that often supplemental books are published just to address these subjects. Frank Herbert's *Dune* and more recently George R.R. Martins, *Game of Thrones*, are modern inheritors of this Tradition.

For all of the magic of Tolkien's writing however, it is not esoteric, in the sense that his is a world completely separate from ours where different rules apply. Such writing belongs to the category of fantasy. On the other hand, I would argue that Charles Williams' writing is esoteric, which in his day was referred to as occult or supernatural literature. This was very much of our world, albeit an enchanted one. As C.S. Lewis put it, "He is writing that sort of book in which we begin by saying, let us *suppose* that this everyday world were at some one point invaded by the marvelous."

Williams is also of interest to us as Rosicrucians. He was also practitioner of esoteric arts primarily through Arthur Waite's Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, a version of the Golden Dawn with a mystic rather than magical premise. Williams and Waite were quite close, and Williams' treatments of the perennial questions that arise in esoteric studies were surely influenced by the same issues that preoccupied Waite throughout his life.

As a writer, Williams was greatly admired by his contemporaries including T.S. Elliott, W. H. Auden, and Dorothy L. Sayers. His work was also eclectic and encompassed poetry, theatre, history, biography, and criticisms, in addition to his nine novels. However, once one begins reading Williams it becomes clear why he is not as well known among the general public as Tolkien or Lewis. His writing style lacks the lyrical easy flow of prose, and large-scale world building of Tolkien, and to a lesser extent Lewis. His writing also feels a bit odd and off putting, somewhat like Lovecraft if Lovecraft had been interested in more than just telling a good spooky story. It is, in fact, a style that perfectly expresses his intent, but that intent is not necessarily to make it highly accessible to a casual reader.

Having given the briefest of introduction to Williams in the biographical sense let me now introduce you to one of his nine novels. I started my exploration of Williams' with *War in Heaven*. This was not so much because it was his first published novel (1930), but because the story involved the Holy Grail, a subject I was researching heavily at the time.

The story is an inversion of the traditional Grail Quest. A rumor that a chalice in a local English church is in fact the Holy Grail attracts evildoers rather than noble knights. Their intent is to recover the Grail and by dark magic destroy its beneficence influence and channel its energy to dark purposes. The local archdeacon unwittingly becomes the Grail keeper/protector while a local duke assumes the role of Arthur. The evildoers use elaborate magical ceremonies to

further their quest, while the good guys use simple prayer and faith in opposition. This opposition between the magical and the religious (mystical) reflects an evolution in thinking that Waite traversed, and Williams most certainly inherited during his time in the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross.

While the major theme of the story is resolved, many of the supporting stories and characters receive less satisfactory “after the fact” treatment. The murder mystery that begins the story get scant attention, for example. It is clear that Williams’ attention is on the perennial themes (and even these ideas are underdeveloped) to the detriment of the storytelling. It is maddening at times that other avenues for exploring a new look at the Grail Tradition are opened up only to left largely on the table. For example, there is no explanation of why the Grail appears when it does. In conflict with the original perception of the Grail, as an object unapproachable by all but the purest of intention, Williams’ Grail is passed around freely and easily approached by evil. Why? The appearance of an actual Arthurian character toward the end of the story and the Grails final disposition are also not explained or developed.

Nevertheless, it is possible that Williams was creating this novel to leave all these question for the reader to ponder, a not entire invalid approach for the spiritual seeker. On the whole, *War in Heaven* left me with the sense that there is a lot more to explore. I plan to read some of his other works, and also delve into his life a bit more, which as of this writing, seems to be at least as interesting as his stories.



Fratres don't miss out. Visit the High Council website at www.sricf.org to make reservations. If the Brown fills up there are alternative hotels within walking distance.

Questions? Contact the Chief Adept, Celebrant, or Secretary

In addition to the regular meal package, consider attending the just-for-fun RSKO dinner on Friday evening!

Philologi Societas (in order of initial induction)

VW Frater Joseph F. Oelgoetz, VII° et
Philologus Theoricus**
VW Frater Philip G. Beith, VII° et Philologus
Theoricus **
RW Frater Gerald T. Coleman, VIII° et
Philologus Theoricus
RW Frater W. Bruce Renner, IX°, KGC et
Philologus Adeptus Exemptus
VW Frater Marlon Gayadeen, VII° et
Philologus Zelator
VW Frater John Comstock, VII°
et Philologus Zelator *
VW Frater Charles Hancock, VII°
et Philologus Theoricus
RW Frater Robert S. Finley, IX°, KGC et
Philologus Adeptus Exemptus *
RW Frater Richard J. Powell, VIII° et
Philologus Theoricus
RW Frater Paul Barrera VIII° et Philologus
Zelator
VW Frater Clyde Card, VII° et Philologus
Philosophus
RW Frater R. Curtiss Montgomery, IX° et
Philologus Zelator
VW Frater James N. Stoll, VII° et Philologus
Zelator
VW Frater Richard Simpson, VII° et
Philologus Zelator
MW Frater William Howard Koon II, IX, KGC
et Philologus Magus (Honorary)
VW Frater Walter E. Cook, IV, VII° et
Philologus Practicus
VW Frater Caleb Haines, VII° et Philologus
Zelator
VW Frater William M. Hodwitz, VII° et
Philologus Zelator
RW Frater Myron J. Deputat, VIII° et
Philologus Zelator

IN WAITING

RW Frater Myron J. Deputat, VIII° (to
Theoricus, Practicus)
VW Frater Clint Lewey, VII° (to Zelator)
VW Frater Frank Rice, VII° (to Zelator)
VW Walter Cook, VII° (to Philosophus)

* deceased

** Not now a member

Have a need to communicate?

Junior Deputy Supreme Magus

Right Worthy W. Bruce Renner, IX°, KGC
716-824-1629
k2b.renner@verizon.net

Chief Adept

Right Worthy R. Curtiss Montgomery, IX°
716-200-8550
curtiss.montgomery@gmail.com

Celebrant

Right Worthy Richard J. Powell, VIII°
(315) 439-2386
rjpowell@arsmasonica.com

Secretary

Right Worthy Myron J. Deputat, VIII°
(716) 983-2351
mdeputat@mac.com

Treasurer

Right Worthy Paul Barrera, VIII°
716) 627-5148
Barrpjr@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Right Worthy W. Bruce Renner, IX°, KGC
716-824-1629
k2b.renner@verizon.net

Assistant Editor

Very Worthy VW Frater Walter E. Cook, IV, VII°
walter.cook.iv@gmail.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! 2020 CONVOCATIONS

May 30th

**Virtual Convocation of New
York College**

**See you on the radio (or
nowadays on the computer)!**