

Important information from

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All articles, except the last one, have been translated from Swedish originals, having appeared in the Swedish issues of "*The Free Thinker*" nos. 41-48.

As usual, Mr John Westerberg represents the most interesting arguments, but also Mr John Bede (Northern Ireland) participates.

"The Free Thinker" is published at the lowest possible cost with no lay-out, although it now gradually gets computerized, and is spread all over the world in a very limited number of issues, but to the right people.

This year, we have embarked upon some publishing business, and this is now already the 9th publication of The Letnany Publishers.

Unfortunately, our Tibetan voyage plans have failed again this year, although we have never been closer to success after three years' efforts, but instead we hope to come to India and Nepal, Garwhal and Sikkim, again after the monsoons.

We beg to forward a humble apology for the crowdedness of the texts in this issue,
but we hope to improve during the years.

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Shakespeare's Identity Revealed ?

The man who made the issue was really professor Abel Lefranc (1863-1952), one of the leading scientists of literature in France, who after a lifetime of serious research in a book called "Behind Shakespeare's Mask" launched a new theory of the real man behind the name. The name was indeed William, but the surname was very different from that in those days very common name Shakespeare (also spelt 'Shakspere', 'Shagsbeard', 'Shaxpier' among other variations). After all, one must admit, that the common actor William Shakespeare from Stratford, who had to marry his eight year older wife because he had made her pregnant, who escaped from her to London to start his theatrical career guarding horses of the visitors to the theatre, who never left England and who retired early to die at only 51 after having left only his second best bed to his old shrew of a widow, is difficult to recognize as the author of 37 very highbrow plays which all reveal intimacy with the ways and manners of high nobility, kings and dukes, expert knowledge of conditions at sea, at war and of such distant places as Turkey (the Bosphorus), Denmark (the Kronborg castle), Italy, Greece and the Orient. By his quest 1918 professor Abel Lefranc started an avalanche of new speculations of who the real William Shakespeare might have been, but most of these speculations ended up in the conclusion, that since Shakespeare could not have been Edmund Spenser, nor Francis Bacon, nor Christopher Marlowe, nor Thomas Kyd nor a whole lot of other prominent Elizabethan candidates, it remained the least doubtful that William Shakespeare simply had been William Shakespeare. Very few thereby chose to walk through the door that professor Abel Lefranc had opened, but some dared the challenge. They were above all A.W.Titherley 1952 in "Shakespeare's Identity" and Carl O. Nordling in "Hamlet's Secret" from 1995.

These have followed the track of professor Abel Lefranc's theories and confirmed them. These theories point to, that the man who wrote under Shakespeare's name was no one less than William Stanley, the sixth earl of Derby, a grandchild of Henry VIII:s romantic little sister Mary Tudor and a cousin with both Anne Boleyn, Queen Elizabeth, Mary Stuart and king James I in different lines. He was in other words very closely related with the royal family and could have become king himself after Queen Elizabeth had he wanted to. But instead he wrote "Hamlet" to explain why he declined.

Carl O. Nordling from Borgå (Finland) confirm these theories with an overwhelmingly convincing chain of circumstantial evidence. One of the most pregnant arguments is the idiomatic idiosyncrasies of Shakespeare, which in their dialectical ingredients are dominantly northernish from the parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, the homelands of William Stanley, which Shakespeare never came in the vicinity of. Numerous plays betray expertise knowledge abroad, which William Stanley must have acquired on his extensive journeys, while the actor from Stratford never came outside the doorstep of his country. Scenes of "Hamlet" betray intimate knowledge of proceedings at the court of Frederick II of Denmark in the Kronborg Castle of Elsinore

(inaugurated 1585) where William Stanley was a guest, since he probably wrote the German first version of "Hamlet" which was given there at the inauguration probably with himself in one of the leading parts, that amateurish play in bad school-German out of which the later English versions were developed. These are only a few examples of argument.

This thesis opens up an entire world of new interesting queries, of which all must turn around the question who this remarkable excentric high nobleman really was, who rather wrote plays than vied for the British crown. The mystery of William Shakespeare thereby becomes greater and more unfathomable than ever.

Our only light along this dark and blind alley are a very few known facts of William Stanley's life and the 37 completed plays under the name of William Shakespeare. Of these two sources of light, the second provides more material.

With relatively reliable certainty you can nowadays establish the chronological order of the Shakespeare plays. Among the first are the impassioned chronicles of English medieval history - the Lancaster tetralogies - which betray an emotionally extreme historical interest and a profound engagement in the very house of Lancaster, to which William Stanley himself belonged. An equally ardent interest in Italian mentality and affairs appear in the early Italian comedies and above all in the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet". The affluent production of dramas until 1600 yells out loud in every play how much the author enjoyed writing them, almost wallowing in constantly surpassing himself in developing higher dramatic standards in every new play. Then suddenly comes the Hamlet crisis as a definite climax. Suddenly politics interfere on stage with devastating realism. "Hamlet" is nothing but a profound expression of a personal political crisis - Hamlet, who might have become the ideal king, is the author himself, whose conscience compels him to refrain from politics with all its power temptations since it is all so rotten. Carl O. Nordling poignantly exposes how the play "Hamlet" was psychologically used by its author against the kings James I (whose mother herself married her husband's murderer) and Frederick II of Denmark, who is king Claudius in the play, who fires cannons to his revelries, which is exactly what the Danish king did. The highest point of the ingenuities of "Hamlet" is when the leading actor uses a play to stir the conscience of the king - which is exactly what William Stanley did.

Gradually the plays then become more solemn and resigned - the great tragedies follow with the letting loose of king Lear's utter despair and terrible bitterness, and the criminal established power position of Macbeth, which forces him to ever more atrocious crimes. Resignation finally culminates in the last melancholy fairy plays, where Prospero in "The Tempest" in the end disrobes himself of his magical mantle and throws his books into the sea.

Here we are faced with the greatest issue - if William Stanley really was the man who wrote all this superb body of work, why then did he stop so suddenly and so early? He was born in January 1561 and only somewhat over 50 when he stopped writing. He lived for another 30 years, and no one knows anything about these 30 years. Did he fall out of favour with his royal cousin? Was he prohibited to write any more controversial and critical plays against the establishment?

The full picture thereby becomes a rather melancholy one. We see a young brilliant talent of royal blood brush society, blood and ancestry aside to instead devote himself passionately to the theatre under a rigorously observed pseudonym - if his real name had come out it would have been a most unacceptable scandal - royal persons were not supposed to write plays like "Titus Andronicus" and "Richard III". As a perfect actor he kept to his silent part - and could thereby continue to write plays. But after "Hamlet" age begins to make itself felt with disastrous consequences. It is too clearly felt that it

becomes less and less fun to write plays, and more and more of them are never finished, like "Timon of Athens", "Pericles" and "Henry VIII", which are completed by others.

Finally only one thing remains to the author - to maintain his part by sticking to his anonymity - it is never revealed.

And is it a coincidence that all theatrical scenes in England are closed in September 1642, the same month that William Stanley, the 6th earl of Derby, expires? The British theatre thereby finds its grave to be replaced by the joyless wet blankets of the Puritans and their bloody civil war against monarchy - the staged political reality outmanoeuvres and closes the theatre.

What most of all convinces me that earl William Stanley is the author of Shakespeare's works is the consistent noble quality in all of Shakespeare's works - there has never been a writer more noble. I have often wondered: "If Shakespeare wrote all these works and was so successful - why then was he never knighted?" There is nothing more royalistic than Shakespeare's plays, no matter how bitter they may be about the use of power. Shakespeare's chronicle plays are the very heart of the matter of British monarchy. Therefore it is not more than self-evident that they should have been written by a person inside the royal family. All this is really rather incompatible with an ordinary middle class commoner of Stratford, a small place in the country, which he fled to make his fortune in London mainly by speculating in house-property. It doesn't fit with the internationalistic connoisseur of all Europe with such a heavy partiality for British royalism and every drop of noble blood in England.

The most difficult party to win over to this "Derby theory" will then of course republican nations be with the United States at the front. Real republicans will never be able to tolerate that William Shakespeare was not an ordinary upstart from the country. And the possibility that he instead could have been of the very highest nobility would simply be unthinkable.

It would be very difficult for ordinary people to understand this royal self-negator, who in fact is such an extreme democrat, that he sacrifices his royal and political possibilities just to be able to present the truth about the establishment on stage instead - and to give all the honour and credit for the show to the actors.

However, important pieces in the jig-saw puzzle are missing, and the most important of all is: If William Stanley of Derby really was the writer behind William Shakespeare's name, why then did he stop writing at the same time as the actor William Shakespeare retired?

The most likely answer to that question is that William Stanley and William Shakespeare had some kind of agreement and perhaps even partnership. It was William Stanley who sponsored Shakespeare's theatre company and who practically paid everything for them. In return his terms might have been, that they were allowed to produce his plays on condition that he was allowed to hide himself under Shakespeare's name and thus was ensured of an incognito. When Shakespeare suddenly retired after the Globe having burnt down in 1612, perhaps William Stanley suddenly found himself without a writing partner and found it difficult if not impossible to find a new name to hide behind. Ben Jonson was an entirely different character. Consequently William Stanley might have found it impossible to avoid recognition if he continued to write for the theatre when Shakespeare was gone. This is the most probable explanation. A born aristocrat of the highest order, earl Derby was vain enough not to risk his reputation and good standing as a cousin of the royal house and therefore preferred allowing William Shakespeare to keep the honour of his writings for 300 years - as long as the British Empire lasted.

The next great problem to stumble across in this argument is the Shakespearean Sonnets. This is the most personal and intimate work of the poet and the one which shows some unambiguous self-expression. The only theme of the Sonnets, however, is

love, the love for a beautiful young man and a dark lady. The Sonnets were privately circulated during Shakespeare's career and were not published until 1610. They are dedicated, in the style of a most typical Shakespearean mystification, to a certain mr "W.H.", which abstruse dedication has puzzled scholars for 370 years and continues to do so. The most widely embraced theory has been that mr "W.H." was lord Henry Wriothesley of Southampton, one of the younger Shakespeare's foremost patrons, an extravagant young man with extremely long hair, who could be the male main figure of the Sonnets.

The whole Derby theory seems to totter on this precarious ground. However would anyone else than the author himself circulate these extremely intimate poems, which were known only among Shakespeare's closest friends? The language is that of the dramas but even more beautiful, elaborate, sensitive and even more ambitious.

What have the Derby followers to put against this? Simply that mr W.H. was William Shakespeare himself, whom the earl of Derby loved. William Stanley married not until 1595 at the age of 34 when probably most of the Shakespearean separate poems had been written. Further on even the tone of the Sonnets becomes more resigned as if it was slowly tiring, like in the tragedies, and the last two sonnets rather dryly express the death of love in a matter-of-fact sort of utter resignation, as apparently the whole unique Shakespearean inspiration is drying out after a period of 25 years' unequalled fruition.

William Stanley's marriage appears to have been stable and conventional with three sons. Stanley could have written the Sonnets to Shakespeare, as Shakespeare might have written them to Wriothesley. The initials "W.H." fit better with Henry Wriothesley than with William Shakespeare, but here the border lines of probability are extremely vague.

However, there are two poems preserved by William Stanley which no one else could have written. They are two poetical epitaphs from about 1632 on deceased family members, one of them being William Stanley's second son, who died 25 years old. One of the epitaphs has by tradition always been attributed to Shakespeare while the other must be written by the same hand. The churches are the Chelsea Old Church and the church in Tong outside Birmingham. These two epitaphs could be the earl's only *lapsus linguae*, the one instance when he lost his mask and unconsciously revealed himself as the man behind the art of William Shakespeare, who was himself dead since 16 years when these two epitaphs were engraved, which epitaphs could not have been written earlier, since the buried persons didn't die any earlier, which is why the motive for writing these burial poems neither could have existed any earlier.

Summary. It cannot be proved that Shakespeare was not the person who wrote the works of Shakespeare. Neither can it be proved that it was William Stanley who did it. Neither can it be proved that it was Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd nor any other Elizabethan who did it, although the least probable is that anyone of these could have done it. For arguments we can only use probabilities. It is as improbable that Shakespeare wrote all these works alone as that Stanley did it alone. We can't overlook the most probable possibility that they in a certain sense did it together, like later Alexandre Dumas - Auguste Picqart, the brothers Goncourt, Erckmann-Chatrion, Nordhoff and Hall and other famous co-operating writers. Then it is probable that the language is that of William Stanley while many scenical effects probably could be Shakespeare's own, since Shakespeare as an actor and director had more experience of practical details in stage work than Stanley as only a spectator and dreamer. What makes it very probable that Stanley was the writer and Shakespeare the technician is the fact, that Shakespeare (most probably) had to work all year round on stage while he almost only could have found time to write in summer;

while Stanley had all the time in the world as a free independant noble. What makes this partnership most probable is that it broke when Shakespeare left the stage and that neither could continue alone. Another strong argument for Stanley being the poet is his slightly superior age - it is almost impossible to imagine that Shakespeare could have written the Lancaster tetralogies, "Romeo and Juliet" and other early masterpieces in his early twenties, while Stanley, who had already had a high education and travelled a lot, more probably could have done so. Shakespeare's imagination and quick thought could have picked up Stanley's higher international knowledge and experience and used it for his own purposes, for instance to give "Othello" some local colour. But Shakespeare could never have written the first version of "Hamlet" in bad anglicized school German which was staged at the inauguration of the Kronborg Castle at Elsinore in 1585. Instead, this was probably the first in a long line of magnificent dramas without a published name produced by the theatrical maniac the earl of Derby, whose title and position excluded him from this work, which fact served him as a spur to perform it all the more but in secret, which motivation lasted only as long as he could continue to do it in secret.

So we neither exclude the Derby nor the Stratford theory but recommend a compromise that includes both as indispensable for the appearance of the plays, proposing, though, that the dominating hand and quill belonged to the earl of Derby.

This will naturally upset all faithful Shakespeare fans most terribly, who every year go to Stratford in tens of thousands on pilgrimage. But truth must not be moved by that. What we are most interested in here is to help the truth to come forth. William Shakespeare can not be proved to be the author. If William Stanley was the author, then let it be proved.

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Two Views on King Arthur

The oldest complete account of King Arthur is Sir Thomas Malory's immense work from the 15th century, which he almost completely wrote in prison. On this solid ground of Sir Thomas Malory, Terence Hanbury White has composed a very original and humorous paraphrase, which doesn't take the age of chivalry and its ceremonious ways and manners with an equal amount of utter seriousness. Who, then, was Terence Hanbury White, the man behind "The Once and Future King", the four novels about king Arthur of which the first, "The Sword in the Stone", was so much in the taste of Walt Disney, that he made it his last cartoon picture?

He was born in Bombay in 1906 as much an Anglo-Indian as Rudyard Kipling. His father was a police inspector, and his mother was the daughter of an Indian judge. As that of Kipling, White's childhood was extremely unhappy since his parents did not agree. The thirst for knowledge saved him, he educated himself at Cambridge and published "The Sword in the Stone" in 1938. Twenty years later all the four novels were ready, and he died in 1964 on board a ship outside the port of Piraeus.

No matter how funny and entertaining "The Once and Future King" is, it contains at the same time much of more doubtful worth, above all lots of nonsense. He ridicules the age of chivalry a little too much, and the dialogue is often base. Noble ingredients never appear except to be made fun of. What saves the novels, though, is the unforgettable characterization of Sir Lancelot.

The third and greatest of the novels, "The Ill-Made Knight", is all about him. No one ever has dared to picture Sir Lancelot as ugly and awkward, but White manages this with overwhelming consequence. Also Sir Mordred is depicted with greater nuance and understandability than in other Arthurian tales, and White undertakes the effort to rather convincingly explain the strange behaviour of this destructive villain. But Sir Lancelot is the only complete character in the lasting life-work of Terence Hanbury White.

In the same way, we find in Marion Bradley's immensely more weighty cobblestone of a novel, "The Mists of Avalon", the leading character in Morgan le Fay, the half-sister of king Arthur, the mother of his bastard son Sir Mordred. Marion Bradley is an American born in Albany, New York, in 1930, and her much more impressing and elaborated, psychologically poignant and deeply analyzing Arthurian romance is without equal in its penetration of the old Keltish religious life in prehistoric England. Historically her Arthur appears in the critical days when Christianity replaced the Roman realm in England. Queen Guinevere represents the Christian establishment of the brave new age while Morgan le Fay is the last representative of the old Keltish natural religion which is dying, while Arthur stands between them, is dependant on both and is hopelessly divided and destroyed like the whole kingdom when Christianity can not tolerate "heathendom". The tragedy of king Arthur in Marion Bradley's novel is then that his enlightenment and all his glorious court falls prey to Christian intolerance - a great, ambitious and extremely challenging theme, which gives a very convincing impression that that could really have been how it all happened. What you miss in Bradley's novel, though, is all the greatest advantages of White - the glorious good humour of the court life among the knights and the warmth of it.

We have asked John Bede of Northern Ireland to give his opinion about these two masterly tales of king Arthur with certain misgivings, though, that he might prefer "Prince Valiant". Our Irish colleague is if anything an Arthurian expert, and he has himself written an account of the fall of Camelot. We are happy to be able to include his answer to our queries right away:

King Arthur and Shakespeare - a Third View

by John Bede.

"Derry, July 1996.

My dear friend, without any hope of success I will try to make an effort to answer all your queries in your very own fine Swedish.

1. *King Arthur*. T.H.White's four novels are not serious. They are as entertaining as Wodehouse, but you can't turn an Arthurian chronicle into a joke. T.H.White is not without blessings, but he has completely misunderstood his subject and messed it all up.

Marion Bradley's novel is instead more serious, and of all the efforts that have been made to reach the truth, hers is perhaps the greatest. "Prince Valiant" is the most superficial of all Arthurian tales, but it is also the best drawn of all.

Marion Bradley's historical location of the Arthur saga in the 5th century could be correct. I have myself preferred to locate it outside the dimension of time, since to me the Arthur saga is an ageless manifestation of the eternal political problem of the impossibility to make a perfect ideal come true. Prosaically enough, the probable historical origin of the Arthurian political problem - the tragedy of the ideal regime - is the emperor Frederick II:s court in Palermo. This emperor of the 13th century had that in common with king Arthur that he according to the legend once would rise again from the grave and come back to fulfil his realm.

2. *Shakespeare*. The ground pillar of the interesting Derby theory is that Shakespeare and Derby had much in common. Earl Stanley might very well have been the model for Hamlet. One can find a vast amount of material in support of the Derby theory. The perhaps most interesting piece is the reason for Derby's silence after the death of Shakespeare. Derby did not agree well with James I and his court. To the dominions of the earl of Derby pertained the Isle of Man, which he almost ruled as a sovereign and which still today sustains unique privileges in Great Britain and stands outside the European Community. Sir Walter Scott has written a great novel which points out the perhaps gravest crisis during the reign of James I. It is not very well known and is called "Peveril of the Peak". It deals with an insurrection which was instigated by a certain Mr Christian, a chieftain of the Isle of Man and a forefather to Fletcher Christian, who made himself famous in the mutiny on the "Bounty" in 1789. This ancestor, I think his name was William Christian, was also unjustly bereft of life and honour and even decapitated by mistake. In this insurrection from the Isle of Man the earl of Derby must have shared some of the responsibility. This could have resulted in that king James I commanded him to silence and perhaps even threatened him with the horrors of the Star Chamber.

So much in support of your theory. I think, however, that your theory falls on the very corner-stone which according to you is its decisive support - the two epitaphs by Stanley. Shakespeare could never have written them. It is obvious that they are inspired by the style of Shakespeare, but they are rather imitating than convincing. In my view earl Stanley's poems confirm that earl Stanley is not Shakespeare the poet.

You allege that Shakespeare the man is difficult to combine with the 37 grand dramas. Could he then not have had some imagination? Jules Verne wrote fantastic travel stories and described conditions abroad in far off countries without ever leaving France. I am sorry, but your and Mr Nordling's and Professor Lefranc's theory does not hold, no matter how much material there is in support for it. As there will always be doubts about Shakespeare's identity, there will always be greater doubts about another's substituting Shakespeare's identity.

But here's another theory for you: have you never wondered why Shakespeare never wrote a play about King Arthur? Of course, the Queen deceiving her sovereign with one of his knights was a delicate theme to represent on stage, but all the same he succeeded in writing about it, and it became his most delicate drama: that's what his Sonnets are all about: King Arthur reflecting on Sir Lancelot and Lady Guinevere. The dark lady then is most probably Morgan le Fay. It's just a theory, but it fits."

Our friend John Bede thus maintains that Shakespeare could not produce a play showing how the King's Queen deceives him with his first knight - it would not have been proper. For the same reason the play "Henry VIII" does not say anything about the king's adultery. That Shakespeare should have found the theme of King Arthur so irresistible that he simply had to treat it in some way and found a method of doing so in the cryptical sonnets is a most enthralling theory.

We have objections, however, against John Bede's view on the epitaphs. They were written 20 years after the last writings of Shakespeare, and nothing implies that Earl Stanley wrote anything in between. During 20 years even a poet has time to rust. If the epitaphs are not on level with Shakespeare's finest sonnets, they are all the same sustained by an almost Shakespearean pathos and honesty and depth of feeling. Above all: the nature of these epitaphs bear witness that these were not the first poems that Earl Stanley ever wrote.

Here are the epitaphs in modernized spelling:

"To say a Stanley lies here, that alone
were epitaph enough; no brass, no stone,
no glorious tomb, no monumental hearse,
no gilded trophy or lamp-laboured verse
can dignify his grave or set it forth
like the immortal fame of his own worth.
Then, reader, fix not here, but quit this room
and fly to Abraham's bosom - there's his tomb.
There rests his soul, and for his other parts
they are embalmed and lodged in good men's hearts.
A braver monument of stone or lime,
no art can raise, for this shall outlast time."

(Chelsea Old Church, the monument on his son, Sir Robert Stanley,
and his children, 1633.)

"Ask who lies here, but do not weep.
He is not dead; he doth but sleep.
This stony register is for his bones.
His fame is more perpetual than these stones,
and his own goodness, with himself being gone
shall live when earthly monument is none.
Not monumental stone preserves our fame
nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name.
The memory for him for whom this stands
shall outlive marble and defacers' hands.
When all to time's consumption shall be given,
Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven."

(Tong Church, in the outskirts of Birmingham, the monument on his uncle
Sir Thomas Stanley with wife and son, 1632.)

The Mysterious Origin of Richard Wagner

When Goethe acquainted himself with the ancient German myths of the Nibelungen, he was overwhelmed by the enormous possibilities he saw of developing them literarily. At the same time he realized his own limits - he could never do it himself, since the subject was too theatrical and dangerously nationalistic - he was allergic to all forms of nationalism and exaggerations. But his vision of the subject as full of power and scenic possibilities was definite.

One of his friends was the very talented actor and painter, the writer and poet Ludwig Geyer (1779-1821). Friedrich Nietzsche later asserted that Ludwig Geyer had been a Jew, but he was the only one to make this assertion. There was no proof, but neither was professor Nietzsche refuted. It should be difficult to find any reason why the in those days still extremely wise and brilliant professor Nietzsche should have asserted this without reason.

Ludwig Geyer was a very close friend of Johanne Wagner's, the wife of Carl Friedrich Wagner (1770-1813), a police officer in the city of Leipzig. The ninth child of

this family was Richard Wagner, who was born in May 1813. Six months later the father died of a typhoid epidemic in the city. The mother (1774-1848) then remarried Ludwig Geyer, who took good care of the family.

If Richard Wagner did not look like Ludwig Geyer, he even less resembled his father. You can hardly imagine a pear falling farther away from the apple tree than this hypersensitive extravagant artist and rebel Richard Wagner as the son of a very correct police official. It doesn't make sense. All the more Richard had in common with his stepfather Ludwig Geyer, the fantasy man with great gestures, the colleague and friend of Goethe, the ardent actor and the warm-hearted bohemian. Richard always acknowledged his vast debts to Ludwig Geyer, although he lost his stepfather already at the age of eight.

Was Ludwig Geyer then the natural father? There is much in favour of it. He was a very close friend of the family, so close, that he often went in as soon as Friedrich Wagner went out, which was often enough, since the wife frequently complained of her husband's unreliability. In summer 1813, before Richard had been baptized and when the husband was still very much alive, the mother went on her own to Ludwig Geyer at Teplitz to be with him during his theatre season there. For this reason Richard Wagner was not baptized until much later. The motive for the mother's journey to Ludwig Geyer has never been explained. The husband was then 43, the wife 39 and Ludwig Geyer only 34 and a most attractive man. Unfortunately we have no portrait of the father, which is queer indeed, since there are portraits of his brother and the rest of the family, as if all possible portraits of Friedrich Wagner had been destroyed by Wagnerians to conceal the evident lack of kinship between Richard and his boring father - it could be a case of destroyed evidence. On the other hand, a blend between the complexions of the mother and Ludwig Geyer could very well result in a face like Richard Wagner's. Ludwig Geyer even presented his stepson in society at times as "Richard Geyer", and he seems to have taken a greater interest in this child than in Johanne Wagner's other children.

Richard Wagner could never be sure that Friedrich Wagner was his father, and when his own son grew up and got a face of his own, Richard had to confess that his son Siegfried looked like Ludwig Geyer.

So it seems probable that Richard was the natural son of Ludwig Geyer and that Ludwig Geyer at least to some extent was of Jewish origin. By chance Richard also happened to be born in the Jewish quarters of Leipzig. Another most influential Jewish person in Richard Wagner's life was the poet Heinrich Heine, who gave him the stories for both the Flying Dutchman and Tannhäuser.

The two most influential composers for the development of Wagner and his music were also both Jews: Giacomo Meyerbeer and Felix Mendelssohn. The Jewish complex in William Richard Wagner, which does not appear until he becomes famous and established, is easily explained logically and psychologically. He could never reach certainty about his origin. Since he probably wasn't his father's son, he was a bastard with doubtful Jewish ancestry. This psychologically fatal want of certainty had to result in a very peculiar relationship with things Jewish, which develops into open hostility when life later on offers him certainty in his career, since he had to regard everything Jewish as synonymous with all his previous lack of foothold in life.

To this liability was added his mother's reckless spoiling of him. He grew up as a perfect milksop, and his relationship with women were never normal. A psychologically upset and unstable boy is brought up in a motherly hothouse where he is allowed to cultivate all his grand airs - it is strange that he was not utterly ruined from the beginning or turned into a monster, which he in some ways definitely became.

It has been said by Jews about Jews that they are like ordinary human beings, only so much more. The same description would fit Richard Wagner perfectly but even more

multiplied. His entire life consists only of exaggerations. He wrote ingenious music, but it never became more ingenious than in his smallest masterpiece "*The Flying Dutchman*". Instead of developing his musical mastery he is carried away by the idea of the 'universal work of art' and claims to be as much of a poet and an authority as a musician. The result is his music gets drowned in ostentatious effects and is ruined by miserably drivelling and exasperating texts. Everything Wagner wrote in letters is more or less absurd. He has no sense of logic and no human psychology, and he lives and works only for his self-indulgence in emotional exaggerations. "*Tristan*" is the one exception among his operas which is more music than preposterous effects. Parts of the "*Ring*" cycle have glorious moments of beauty especially in "*Die Walküre*"; and "*Siegfried*" in all its primitiveness must needs have an acknowledgement for opening up the gateway to modern music. ("Siegfried" made Leo Tolstoj so furious in 1896 that he became allergic to all things German for the rest of his life.) Not until in "*Parsifal*" the theatrical overstatements finally calm down in order to instead bring forth an almost ecclesiastical purity and peace - with a profoundly moving solemnity of unequalled grandeur, though - as the final overwhelming Wagnerian exaggeration.

(The great barytone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau has written a most valuable book about the relationship between Wagner and professor Nietzsche. They were great friends until 1876 when the professor decided to disagree with Wagner for the rest of his life.)

Interesting Situation in Israel

That Benjamin Netanyahu won the elections surprised everyone. For many people this surprise was not pleasant, though. Many Israelis felt like immediately abandoning their country, and Jitzhak Rabin's widow mourned bitterly that the murder on her husband hadn't been better utilized as propaganda in the elections.

The result of the elections was surprising most of all since the policy of Shimon Peres had been successful. He had mastered all the greatest difficulties, and his peace policy seemed to the whole world to be the right one. Few bargained for his loss in the elections.

The results are symptomatic for Israel, however. During the most embarrassing years of the Intifadah, Israel was governed by a right wing coalition which only worsened the situation and which turned the world opinion against Israel. It took years before the message of the Intifadah went home with the government, which finally compelled Israel to enter on a different direction towards peace and reconciliation. The peace process started off and soon went too far, according to many Israelis: too much land was given away for nothing but empty words and promises that were not kept, and the critical voices against a government which without insurances and any self-criticism gave away lands that Israelis had sacrificed blood, sweat, tears and their lives for culminated with the murder on prime minister Rabin. All the same the government remained insensitive to this massive criticism.

At this moment the peace policy of Shimon Peres seemed to carry success. The world believed in him, and David Frost interviewed him in a universal broadcast to immense advantage for Shimon Peres, who inspired respect and confidence with warmth and humanity. The peace process had claimed its victims and martyrs but survived and proved morally superior to all alternatives. At this point Peres loses the elections.

Thereby the just criticism against the exaggerated liberalism of Rabin and Peres went home a few years too late. Such a radical turn in politics had been justified two years

ago but could hardly be said to be justified now, when Rabin had been martyred for peace and when Peres had gained the whole world's credit. The most radical reaction came from the Arabs. 21 Arab countries assembled in a top conference, which resulted in a unanimous ultimatum against Israel: "Return all occupied territories including the rest of the West Bank, the Golan heights and the east part of Jerusalem without conditions and at once, or else..." You could hardly believe your ears when this message from 21 Arab countries to Israel was broadcast on the radio. Such an ultimatum had not been heard in history since the very harsh ultimatum of Austria against Serbia in 1914 had launched the first world war.

Still there is hope for Israel. At least there is greater hope for Israel than for such countries that publicly can announce such a blatant proof of that they have no good will at all.

The Christmas Letter of John B. Westerberg

"In my Christmas letter I would like to refer to your most interesting article about Giordano Bruno. Your presentation of how he introduced a completely new theology inspires me with boldness enough to continue that theology.

The problem with established theology is that no one dares to touch what is established. Especially the Bible is impossible to question any letter of. (Already the early Talmudists battled with this problem.) All scholars agree that the Holy Writ is full of inconsistencies, but no one dares to sort them out. Most of them are also aware that it must contain innumerable misunderstandings, especially concerning the story of Christ, but no one dares to point them out with the authority of pure logic and exclaim: "This is wrong!"

Let's start from the beginning with Moses. According to modern research, there is actually much in the Bible which now can be proved to be true, while other material can be doubted on the ground that not a single piece of evidence has been found to support it, for instance the life and work of Moses, as the wanderings of the children of Israel through the desert for 40 years haven't left a single trace behind. Of course, this doesn't prove that Moses never existed, and I embrace the standpoint, that want of proof of what is written is true is no proof that it isn't true.

On the other hand, it is perfectly reasonable to doubt that the children of Israel actually wandered through the desert for exactly 40 years, since 40 years in the Old Testament generally is used to mark just a very long period, just as the figure 40 days frequently is used in the New Testament. This critical manner of thought is elementary in exegetic theology.

There is however no logical reason whatsoever to doubt that Moses grew up as a prince of Egypt and brought the people of Israel out from there down to the mountain of Horeb and up again to Mount Nebo and the Jordan river during a period long enough to have the entire older generation disposed of during the way. It is a fact that the ten plagues of Egypt could be explained by the Santorini catastrophe north of Crete. There is, however, reason to doubt that Moses himself compiled the entire Torah. This is to be doubted especially from a literary point of view, since the Torah with all its dry commandments and paragraphs are completely different in mentality and style from the previous epic accounts of Genesis and Exodus. Moses probably commenced the establishment of all these laws which then continued to have effect verbally and were amplified according to what was needed in the course of time until they reached their completion at the latest during the days of Samuel. I can myself easily believe, though, that Moses wrote the whole of Genesis himself, compiling what he had heard and learned from Egypt and Babylonia in his youth.

That Samuel was a far more important and more methodical legislator and editor than was ever recognized by history appears to me as credible. I hardly think that anything of importance was added to the Torah during the long decadence after king Solomon.

Swarming with inextricable misunderstandings, though, is without any doubt the New Testament. Its oldest writings are the letters of St. Paul, which even they did not come into existence until long after the crucifixion and without Paul ever having had any personal contact with Jesus. So he could not possibly be regarded as a reliable source and interpreter of the mission of Jesus. St. Paul's disciple was St. Luke, a professional doctor of medicine, who on the other hand made considerable research on the subject and must have known the mother of Jesus personally. His gospel is the only one of any detachment to the subject. Least detached of all is the gospel of St. Matthew, which gives an overwhelming impression of genuineness but which is hopelessly personal and biased. Most positive and matter-of-fact is St. Mark, whose gospel is probably the oldest and most original, written by the pupil of St. Peter, which therefore deserves to be regarded as perhaps the only reliable one. St. John's version is the most twisted of all, the last to have been written, all screwed up on personal interpretations of the man and his pretensions. His unreliability is confirmed by the Apocalypse, which is the most aggressive book in the whole Bible. Both John, Paul and Luke could be meted fair amounts of credit for their literary and philosophical values but are not to be trusted as witnesses. Only Mark and Matthew are of any worth as witnesses.

An unknown and suppressed apocryphical gospel of St. Jude dares to suggest that Judas Iscariot has totally been taken wrong and that the other apostles have perverted both the picture of him and of Jesus. According to this gospel, which is not very well known in the western hemisphere, Judas was the link between Jesus and the Essenes, who later on frightened the soldiers away from the grave, carried off the body of Jesus and resurrected him. When Jesus told Judas at the last supper: "That thou doest, do quickly," he meant that everything was ready and that Judas could start acting according to the plans. No one was better prepared for everything that followed than Jesus himself. He had planned everything to the minutest detail, and in sacrificing himself he intended to unite all the world's religions under the realm of that total divine love, which he felt and understood. But he did it too well, and Judas was not equally well prepared. When he experienced what the fantastic plans really involved practically, it became too much for him, he thought everything was his fault and that everything had gone wrong and therefore took his own life in despair instead of waiting with patience until the end. By the resurrection, which proved that Jesus had survived the ordeal and escaped, the precarious enterprise was crowned with perfect victory and success.

The Muslims came somewhat closer to the truth than the church when they advocated that the crucifixion never had occurred. The crucifixion did occur, but Jesus never died, which the phenomenon "blood and water" gushing forth after his so called death clearly indicates.

Most important of all to go to the bottom with in the Bible, though, is the whole notion of God. It is probable that Moses himself launched all unsound misapprehensions by manipulating the idea of God to better control the obstreperous Jews. All the rubbish about a God who "takes revenge", "regrets", "kills", "strikes with condemnation" and so forth, in brief, all the myths about a cruel and severe God have to be disposed of. In a certain sense, Christianity succeeded in this, but the cruel and unhuman, the belligerous and vengeful God of violence and hatred then made a comeback with the advent of Islam, which laid a curse on the whole world and history by announcing that Mahomet as the last and perfect prophet gave the world the definite version of God. Thereby atheism was given a justification for existence.

(In the same manner all the myths of Islam and the Catholic Church about hell and paradise have to be disposed of. There is no hell except the one which humankind themselves have created on earth, and no paradise except the one humankind once could have created on earth - and sometimes tried to create to almost succeed therewith.)

As an alternative to monotheistic intolerance, Hinduism and Buddhism appear as much more sensible and human. But Hinduism is primitive and confused while Buddhism goes to extremes in the way of common sense, so that it ends in sterility. The Sikhs united the best of Islam with the best of Hinduism but degenerated into a people of warriors: the necessity to constantly defend their interests made them hopelessly militant and unscrupulous. Jainism tried to unite the best of Hinduism with the best of Buddhism but never reached an acceptable synthesis or any dynamic identity, much because they never found a leader of a Buddha's qualifications. Other interesting efforts to form a constructive synthesis was that of the theosophers, who constantly split up in parties though, just like the Christians.

There are accounts of Jesus having been to India, not only after his youth in Banaras and Ladakh, but also that he should have died in Srinagar in Kashmir in the days of the emperor Trajan. There is no evidence however. But the mere existence of accounts of his activities in India indicates that they took place, just like the existence of Moses and the wanderings of the children of Israel, although there remains no evidence. It is not impossible that Jesus knew the formula for uniting all religions and that he tried to realize it, but that his surviving disciples got it all wrong.

(The theory of Jesus' death in Kashmir at an advanced age is also supported by Islam. The Ahmadiya branch of Islam in Pakistan positively asserts, that Jesus did not die on the cross but that he was in a state of coma as he was taken down and buried. Of this St. John and the women were very much aware, so they managed to prevent that his bones were crushed like on the two malefactors. After the resurrection, however, Jesus was obliged by security to resort to a life underground, which is why he rather avoided the apostles than associated freely with them. He was extremely careful about dispersing St. Thomas' doubts, though, who later followed him to India, where he could live more freely and openly. He had also completed his mission in Israel and didn't have much to do there any more. After the unexpected and most unwelcome death of St. Jude, he gave over the highest responsibility for his community to St. Peter, who had proved himself the most human of his remaining disciples. In India, Jesus is said to have reached the age of 120 years (the same age as Moses) in Kashmir, according to the Ahmadiya branch of Islam, a Pakistani equivalent to the Persian Bahai community.

So there are constantly more sources appearing as witnesses of Jesus' activities in India both before and after the crucifixion.)"

John B. Westerberg

Footnote. The most interesting part of John's presentation is the revaluation of Judas Iscariot. Already Anthony Burgess tried something of the kind. John goes further, however, and depicts Judas as the only initiate in the plans of Jesus. That Jesus himself was perfectly aware of everything expecting him including the crucifixion is evident from the gospels. This is the first time anyone claims that Judas alone also was familiar in advance with what was going to happen. It is also most evident from the gospels that none of the other apostles knew anything in advance. Experiencing the cruelty and the brutality which the realization of the plans conveyed, Judas should then according to this have panicked, jumped to the conclusion that Jesus had lost control and consequently lost his nerve. This would not have been more than human. The very first

thing that the first Christians evidently forgot and overlooked was, that Jesus and his apostles were only human beings.

The Judas theory is however also the weakest point in John's presentation. If Judas meant no harm, how do you explain the 30 pieces of silver? You could explain them by that they were part of the show: only by that could the high priests be convinced by Judas that he was serious about betraying Jesus. Without this transaction as a concrete evidence, the high priests would perhaps never have bothered to arrest Jesus and go through with the plotted trial.

John Bede had this surprising comment:

"At last someone who dares to question the credibility of the gospels! I give him my full support! Here is my contribution:

St. John 12:4-6 ending: "he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it." (of Judas Iscariot.)

Even if it might have been true, isn't it a strange remark of a holy apostle to make of another after his tragic death? Such an accusation demands proof, but since Judas had hanged himself he couldn't defend himself, and none of the other apostles did either. Is it then plausible that Jesus should have trusted and kept a disciple who stole from the common purse? It is more probable that the accusation is a lie than that Jesus should have kept him. According to me this one verse is enough to render the holy authority of the gospel of St. John questionable indeed.

And why does this verse exist? There is only one explanation: St. John must have envied Judas. But St. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, according to St. John. This leads us to believe, that St. Jude might very well have been as much loved by Jesus as St. John.

The gospel according to St. Luke is the most charming and beautiful, partly because it is so full of anecdotes and parables which the others didn't care to preserve. What makes St. Luke doubtful is his "Acts of the Apostles", which clearly are in favour of St. Paul at the cost of St. Peter in their silencing down the first christian division between these two, so that Peter is abandoned while Paul is given the entire stage for himself. Also, this book is unfinished. It is impossible to take St. Luke seriously after the "Acts".

Which means, that only Matthew and Mark remain as reliable evangelists, as our friend J. Westerberg so correctly has pointed out.

I also know that there is a grave of Jesus in India. Why would the Hindus find out to dig such a grave unless the body of Jesus was in it? Is Mr Westerberg able to answer that question?"

Another correspondent, a member of the church of Sweden, protested against these arguments and accused mr Westerberg of false motives. We answered thus:

The motivation behind John's reserach is hardly to establish new dogmas. The one thing which he is interested in, we can assure, having known him for 16 years, is to reach closer at the truth. Only in order to find out whether there was anything to the rumours of Jesus' activities in India, he went there to spend years of research on the subject. To the relief of the dogma authorities he found no evidence but many favourable indications. To this then is added these uninvited surprises to stumble on, like the Ahmadiya tradition that Jesus died of old age at Srinagar, Kashmir, and the Essene information of how Judas alone among the apostles was initiated in the mystery of Jesus' death beforehand but couldn't face standing up to it practically. We suggest that the kiss of Judas more than anything else proved the good intentions of Judas, that this was probably his farewell and wish of good luck on the master's difficult journey, and that Jesus' answer could be discussed indeed: this unexpected gesture of Judas might have alarmed him. His answer could for instance be interpreted thus: "Judas, don't go too far!" or, "Please, Judas, more discretion, if I may ask!" We return this debate to our John in India, the expert on such theological speculations.

But the perhaps most important argument of all is this: if it really turns out to be the case that Judas for 1960 years has been unjustly condemned and exiled to hell for ever under never ending curses of all Christian believers and churches in the world, isn't it then about time that he was given some kind of restitution? Since there is an evident risk that we are here faced by the worst example of mobbing, (and of a dead man even,) in history?

Apology for the Bible and Christianity

by John B. Westerberg.

"No one knows anything for certain about Jesus or his twelve (thirteen) apostles. His activities were from the start until the end a mystery intended only to give rise to mysteries. The first and greatest mistake of his church was therefore to try to concretize any results of his activities in order to establish dogmas. The first one to introduce this denounceable antichristian activity was the great religious founder St. Paul, who failing to understand the mystery as such was the first one to betray and completely debase christianity.

The second who partook in the same destructive activity was the apostle St. John, who by his gospel established Jesus as a cult figure of more divine than human nature. This also was a total corruption of the innermost nature of christianity.

For 1900 years ever since then, in all parts of the world but especially in the western part, you have devotedly continued to ruin christianity by inventing dogmas (the church), or by fashioning hypotheses founded on "science", which generally have sought to explain away the whole Bible as only fairy tales and lies, and which in modern days even cocksuredly have claimed that Jesus never existed and that his religion christendom is totally a merit of St. Paul's. This is how far the continued premeditated destruction of christianity so far has gone.

That's why I left the western world, and my exile from there is to be regarded as voluntary and permanent. A society that constricts imagination, maintains itself by limiting man's freedom of thought, regards idealism and altruism as dangerous and subversive, and which excludes and fights alternatives instead of furthering them, is unhuman and self-destructive. Then I find the most miserable colony of hippies much sounder.

Regarding the efforts to explain away the Bible and Jesus above all, the first and greatest mistake is to deny the possibility that what is written could actually have taken place. Why close the door, when you can't get out unless you open it? Extremely little of what is written in the Bible can be proved to have taken place. It is practically only the history of the state of Israel from the days of king David. What most of all convinces me that what is written in the Bible actually did take place is its psychological realism. The five books of Moses is the first literary realism in history. This emerges above all in the described human relationships. A story like that of the eternal feud between the brothers Esau and Jacob with all its different turns with deadly enmity alternating with moving reconciliation scenes, the shocking psychology in the described relationships between Joseph and his brothers, the relation of the holy wrath of Moses when he murders an Egyptian taskmaster and crushes the two stone tables with the ten commandments, totally disillusioned about that people's reliability which he has sacrificed everything for, the romantic episode about Ruth and Boas - all such intimate and personal affairs could impossibly be made up. They are too convincing and real to be dismissed as "scientifically untenable". They are too human to be able to be dismissed by an established unhumanity.

In the same way, everything that is written in the New Testament is theoretically possible. Judas could have been a base traitor who stole money out of the common purse of the apostles, but he could also have been Jesus' closest friend and the only initiate in the mystery. The one possibility doesn't even exclude the other. Episodes like when St. Thomas puts his finger through the holes in Jesus' hands, the widow at the well, Peter's fishing party when he gets himself into the water just because he sees the master on the beach, the prostitute who is about to be stoned when Jesus says: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her," whereupon the whole enterprise comes to nothing - it is all too humanly realistic, too much alive to be "lying nonsense", as some professors and academicians would term it, representatives of that society which I have for ever rejected, that mortally industrialized welfare society dominated by dry boring scientific sterility, the greatest effort of which since the second world war has been to fabricate Plutonium. Such a society can only be designated with one adequate label: Antichrist. I will never be able to fit into such a society, and neither will, I believe, any human person.

Your friend John Bede's question about the grave in India answers itself.

There are many indications that Jesus educated himself to be a master within Buddhism in India, and that after his completed mission in Jerusalem he returned to Buddhism in India."

Plutonic Problems

The Plutonium problem is, that humankind has been busy for 50 years in manufacturing this highly radioactive product, which is a perfectly artificial element, which never previously existed on earth. Man devoted himself to this production most liberally and effectively in order to bring forth nuclear weapons, about a number of 60,000, the overwhelming majority in the USA and in the former Soviet Union. Since the days of Michael Gorbachev, efforts have been made to dismantle all these superfluous and absurd nuclear weapons to a number of about 30,000. You have been able to dismantle everything in them except the Plutonium itself. Then, after 40 years' Plutonium manufacturing for 60,000 atomic bombs, scientists are for the first time forced to face the problem: Whatever shall we do with all that Plutonium? (The same problem rose within architecture when all the monsters of Le Corbusier and the American earthquake-proof skyscrapers had been built: "However do you take the darn thing down?") Since it is such an extremely artificial and unnatural element, it doesn't break down and dissolve except after a period of 250,000 years. One single atom of Plutonium then can't be broken up naturally during the whole lifetime of a human being but possibly during 3500 lifetimes.

This is the problem. In Japan they tried to whisk the problem away by insisting that the Plutonic danger was exaggerated, that Plutonium wasn't all that dangerous and that it even could pass through the digestion canal without causing any problem. To prove this, a famous Japanese scientist had a drink with the smallest thinkable touch of Plutonium in it, which was broadcast on television all over the country. He died. Then the Japanese had to reconsider the matter.

There are four possibilities to dispose of Plutonium. The first choice is the worst: to blow it off with the nuclear weapons which contain it. The second is to send it with rockets to the sun. If then a rocket explodes after take-off, like the "Challenger" space shuttle, a whole continent could be polluted by radioactive rains, which is not so good either. The third way is to store it. This is the most common way to keep the problem alive, and there are a number of vast Plutonium depots with the Plutonium in great

barrels of steel stored in bunkers, which are guarded day and night, just waiting for a terrorist or thief to break in and steal a barrel or two. In Russia the surveillance is unsatisfactory or doesn't exist. The fourth alternative is to re-use it in nuclear reactors, but this method is expensive, and it takes many reusing processes before it is neutralized.

What this fabrication of Plutonium has cost economically during 50 years you can get a vague idea of, when you learn, that it costs 300,000 dollars just to disarm and dismantle one single nuclear missile. It is a topic of discussion what is more expensive: to produce Plutonium and nuclear weapons or to dismantle them. It is probably more expensive to dismantle them.

And this production the leading political powers of humanity have been extremely busy with for 50 years and that unpunished, while they have ignored the world environment crisis, the world starvation and all human values. It speaks for itself, that the most pressing task in the world for scientists and scientific research would be to find a more efficient way of disposing of the world's most poisonous element. If man himself managed to find a way of producing it, then surely he must also be able to find out a harmless way of getting rid of it.

Concerning Hinduism

Its most remarkable characteristic is connected with its basic mystery. The problem and the mystery of Hinduism is that it is impossible to date. According to its own traditions, its origin goes back in time between 3000, 30,000 or 300,000 years. The first task the first European religious scientists tried to grapple with when they came to India was to find out how old it was. They have never succeeded.

A faint glimpse of hope started to appear as the ancient civilizations in the Indus valley around Harappa started to be unearthed by archaeologists. These ruins of a high ancient civilization have been dated to around 3000 years B.C. In vain, however, were any clues sought to the origin of the Indian literature. In this field no one got any wiser while many got more confused.

The Indian literature of the Vedas, which is completely religious and the basis for all Hinduism, has apparently then from the very beginning taken a position outside the dimension of time. It is impossible to date, it is without historical marks, it will have nothing to do with historical reality, it is a complete outsider to this world from beginning to end. This makes it unique. All other world religions are firmly tied to a historic reality and to exact dates. Hinduism is the great and brilliant exception.

The next great problem concerning Hinduism is whether it is monotheistic or polytheistic. This problem is also impossible to solve, because it is both. It beats all other polytheistic religious records by having no less than 33 million gods, but all these uncountable gods are at the same time just different manifestations of the one and only universal divinity.

In this matter you could at least try to bring some order into the welter. In the oldest Veda scriptures the different gods are rather like the divine personages of the ancient Greek and Nordic myths. It is here important to recall that the Hindus are as much an Indo-European people as the Greeks and the Northerners, and that there are direct links and grammatical relationships between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. But the oldest Indian mythology is constantly refashioned while it evolves. During the bringing into existence of the four parts of Vedic literature the divine personalities are transformed, so that for instance Indra and Rudya soon disappear to give place to something like a trinity consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma is then the creator, Vishnu the

maintainer and Shiva the destroyer. Shiva's wife is Kali, the goddess of death, who is often portrayed with a long bloody mouth hanging outside her mouth. The Suttees, the sacrificing of widows, with or without their permission, were performed to the honour of Kali, and also the sect of the Thugs, (a society of stranglers who probably murdered some one million people just for the sake of killing, until the English put an end to it around 1830,) were in the service of Kali. She is the chief divinity of Calcutta and the general stumbling-block in Hinduism, although her husband Shiva should share her responsibility. These two divinities represent that element of open and demonstrative eroticism, which is so alien and repulsive to all other religions.

Typically enough, the great organizer in Indian mythology is a poet of prehistoric times, quite impossible to date, even more obscure than Homer, who performs some kind of gigantic editing of the whole Vedic literature and in addition to this writes the entire "Mahabharata", the longest epic poem in the world, which consists of more than 100,000 verses. (For comparison, the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" contain together only 27,781 verses.) Now you may consider, that the "Mahabharata" is not altogether up to Homeric standards, but then you also have to confess, that the "Bhagavad-Ghita", which is a chapter in "Mahabharata", must be considered one of the highest quality masterpieces in world literature. Gandhi found greater solace in the "Bhagavad-Ghita" than in the whole New Testament, and he is not the only person educated in the west who came to that conclusion. Many, who were asked what book they would bring to a desert island if they only were allowed one, did without hesitation choose the "Bhagavad-Ghita".

This great editor of all the Vedic literature was called Vyasadeva, and although you don't even approximately know when he lived - (awkward western efforts have placed him somewhere before Alexander the Great and Chandragupta, but that age is long -) we do know exactly *where* he was busy. He moved around the parts north of Delhi approximately between the river Beas and the Nepalese border, where many of the geographical names in his epic are to be found even today. Kurukshetra, the battle scene of the "Bhagavad-Ghita", is half way from Delhi to Simla.

In the "Bhagavad-Ghita" a new divinity in Hinduism climbs up to the first rank and stays there to in some ways even replace all the earlier ones. This is Krishna. In a way he resembles Christ, since he is a god who incarnates himself in a human body and has many all too human traits to his character. The Brahmins, the highest caste and class in Indian society, affirm at the same time that Krishna is only another incarnation of Vishnu, which they later on also affirm that the Buddha is.

That brings us to make a closer investigation of this Vishnu. To many Hindus he is the same as Brahma while he is never confused with Shiva. Vishnu is a highly constructive divinity, both creator and supporter of all things created, an upholder of life; no evil or destructive tendencies are to be found here but only creative and positive forces. That both Krishna and Buddha are regarded as incarnations of Vishnu gives Vishnu an undeniable status in Hinduism as a kind of highest universal divinity and a perfectly good divine ideal.

We earlier touched Buddha's reformation, his radical annulment of all barriers between castes and races and how his new form of religion dominated India and Asia from Afghanistan to Indonesia and Japan for more than a thousand years. The great reviver of Hinduism was the reformist Shankara, who defeated Buddhism by reinstating Shiva. Hinduism in its prebuddhistic, populist and primitive forms had completely vanished from all India, and by appealing to those very emotions and instincts of the Hindus which were personified by the dubious, partly destructive and impertinently erotic Shiva, the young Shankara succeeded in urging an irresistible Hinduistic renaissance all over India. He died only 32 years old in the year 820.

Two remarkable revivals of Hinduism have occurred also in modern times and that by European initiatives. Madame Blavatsky was seized by such an interest in Hinduism towards the end of the 19th century that she founded her theosophical movement directly on Hinduism. The second great European discoverer of Hinduism was the author, the music expert and the Nobel prize winner Romain Rolland, who preached Hinduism to all Europe especially during the 20's and became a Hinduist himself.

Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore are other names which must be mentioned in the context of the modern dynamic life force of Hinduism together with Mahatma Gandhi.

The irresistible vitality and explosively constructive dynamic qualities of Hinduism have in our time, however, brought us into something of a theological crisis, which also comprises Buddhism. This problem has risen from the population explosion. Within these religions it has always been regarded as self-evident, that life consummation only can be accomplished by the human being. Today the human being appears suddenly like a monster worse than any animal, since he is devastating the planet by environment destruction and the annihilation of living species, whole races of plants and animals and all living things. Suddenly leading Hindus therefore start to regard certain animals as higher creatures than man, since these animals are being martyred by man. This is an increasing theological dilemma to all religions that embrace the reincarnation way of thinking, since man by his uncontrollable multiplication is losing his special standing and status by a sort of flooding homeopathic dilution, that imperils all life, whereby other life forms than man emerge as more important than man. To the Hindus this is the evil and self-destructive time of Kali.

Finally a clearance of the great Hindu mistake. The name is wrong from the beginning. The river Indus was originally called Sindus, as the desert Sind still maintains its correct original name. The Persians got the name wrong and called the river Indus and the people Indians from the river, while others instead of an "s" placed an "h" in front of the word, so that the people were called Hindus. Correcting it now seems to be difficult, although you can try, like mr Thackeray of Bombay tries to change the name of the city to "Mumbay", which some people claim was its original name. Well, a dear child gets called by many names.

The Rules of the Buddhistic Order

Here are the four rules about the offences that deserve expulsion. They should be recited every fortnight.

1. If a monk should have sexual intercourse with anyone, down to an animal, this monk has fallen into an offence which deserves expulsion, and he should no longer live in the community.

2. If a monk, whether he dwells in a village or in solitude, should take anything not given, he should no longer live in the community. This, however, only applies to thefts for which a king or his police would seize a thief and kill, imprison, banish, fine or reprove him.

3. If a monk should intentionally take the life of a human being or of one like a human being with his own hand or with a knife or by having him assassinated, then he has fallen into an offence which deserves expulsion. And this applies also to a monk who incites others to self-destruction and who speaks to them in praise of death with such words as, "O man, what is the use to you of this miserable life? It is better for you to die than to be alive!"

4. Unless a monk be actuated by excessive self-conceit, he commits an offence which deserves expulsion if, vainly and without basis in fact, he falsely claims to have realized and perceived superhuman states or the fullness of the insights of the saints.

Here are the thirteen offences which deserve suspension, and which should every fortnight be recited. These forbid a monk:

1. intentionally to emit his semen, except in a dream.

2. with a mind excited and perverted by passion to come into bodily contact with a woman; he must not hold her hand or arm, touch her hair or any other part of her body, above or below, or rub or caress it.

3. with a mind excited and perverted by passion to persuade a woman to sexual intercourse, speaking wicked, evil and vulgar words, as young men use to their girls.

4. with a mind excited and perverted by passion, in the presence of a woman to speak highly of the merit of the gift of her own body, saying: "That is the supreme service or gift, dear sister, to offer intercourse to monks like us, who have been observing strict morality, have abstained from intercourse and lived lovely lives!"

5. to act as a go-between between women and men, arranging marriage, adultery, or even a brief meeting.

6. to build for himself, without the help of a layman, a temporary hut on a site which involves the destruction of living beings and has no open space around it, and that without showing the site to other monks, and without limiting its size to the prescribed measurements.

7. to build for himself, with the help of a layman, a more permanent living place on a dangerous and inaccessible site, which involves the destruction of living beings and has no open space round it, and that without showing the site to other monks.

8. from anger, malice and dislike to accuse falsely a pure and faultless monk of an offence which deserves expulsion, intent on driving him out of the religious life. That becomes an offence which deserves suspension if on a later occasion he withdraws his accusation and admits to having spoken from hatred; and likewise if-

9. he tries to base his false accusation on some trifling matter or other which is really quite irrelevant.

10. to persist, in spite of repeated admonitions, in trying to cause divisions in a community which lives in harmony, and in emphasizing those points which are calculated to cause division.

11. to side with a monk who strives to split the community.

12. to refuse to move into another district when reproved by the other monks for habitually doing evil deeds in a city or village where he resides, deeds which are seen, heard and known, and which harm the families of the faithful.

13. to refuse to be admonished by others about the non-observance of the Rules.

These are the thirteen offences which deserve suspension. The first nine become offences at once, the remaining four only after the third admonition. The offending monk will be first put on probation, then for six days and nights he must do penance, and thereafter he must undergo a special ceremony before he can be rehabilitated. But he can be reinstated only by a community which number at least twenty monks, not one less.

The Ten Precepts

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from injury to living things.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking that which is not given.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from unchastity.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from falsehood.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from liquors which engender slothfulness.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from eating at wrong times (i.e. after noon).

I undertake the rule of training against (attending) dancing, singing, music and stage plays.

I undertake the rule of training against adorning the body with garlands, perfumes and cosmetics.

I undertake the rule of training against using a high or large bed.

I undertake the rule of training against the accepting of gold and silver.

These rules are perhaps the only testament of the Buddha. That's the closest we can get to him, and they are perhaps the oldest and only preserved original wordings by himself. They have been of inestimable significance to all Asia and remain so still, since this simple Rule, which concerns monks and nuns, could be said to have been the most civilizing factor of Asia. It was drawn in the fifth century B.C. and has never changed.

In those days the Greek drama and classical music had not yet been developed, and he would probably not have had anything against such advanced and disciplined forms of art, in spite of his seventh precept.

These articles have been selected from the Swedish issues of "The Free Thinker" numbers 41-48, December 1995-July 1996. All have been translated from Swedish, except the Rule of the Buddhist Order, which we owe to mr Christmas Humphreys and his excellently informative and concise book "The Wisdom of Buddhism", Harper & Row 1970.

Gothenburg, Sweden, July 1996.