

THE GREAT MYTH

of the

SUN-GODS

by

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Electronically typed and edited by Juan Schoch for educational research purposes. I can be contacted at pc93@bellsouth.net. I will be greatly indebted to the individual who can put me in touch with the Estate of Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn and/or any of the following works:

The Mighty Symbol of the Horizon, Nature as Symbol, The Tree of Knowledge, The Rebellion of the Angels, The Ark and the Deluge, The True Meaning of Genesis, The Law of the Two Truths, At Sixes and Sevens, Adam Old and New, The Real and the Actual, Immortality: Yes - But How?, The Mummy Speaks at Last, Symbolism of the Four Elements, Through Science to Religion, Creation in Six Days?, Rudolph Steiner's "Mystery of Golgotha", Krishnamurti and Theosophy, A. B. Kuhn's graduation address at Chambersburg Academy "The Lyre of Orpheus", A. B. Kuhn's unpublished autobiography, Great Pan Returns.

THE GREAT MYTH OF THE SUN-GODS

It may be that many of you have come to this lecture with the expectation of hearing about the superstitious beliefs of some ancient fire-worshippers or sun-worshippers. You may wonder why we should presume to waste an evening dilating upon the childish fancies of early peoples who could conceive of no more exalted form of deity in the universe than the physical body of our sun. Can there possibly be anything important in the study of such forms of crude fetishism?

Let me disabuse your minds of any such prepossession at once. We have not invited you to hear of infantile nonsense of early child-humanity. On the contrary, it is our opinion that there is not a theme within the entire range of religious interest of such sublimity and authentic grandeur as this subject of the Sun-gods. We have come to the persuasion that this is the most important lecture that we have given or shall ever give. In it there is to be found the central thesis of all religion. We have asked you to hear an exposition of the cardinal principle of all true religion. Instead of dealing with an erratic notion of primitive barbarism, we have to present to you this evening the long-lost supreme datum of all high religion. And it is our design to show that religion in the world has drifted so far away from its original base that it no longer recognizes the very first and fundamental conception about which it was in the beginning constructed. The myth of the Sun-gods is the very heart's core of religion at its best.

It is commonly supposed that religious honors were paid to the sun as a deity by a few isolated peoples or sects, such as the Parsees and the ancient Ghebers of Persia, and some African tribes. In correction of this view we are prepared to support the declaration that the worship of the Sun-god was quite universal in the ancient world. It ranged from China and India to Yucatan and Peru. The Emperor and the Mikado, as well as the Incas, and the Pharaohs were Sun-god figures. And is the belief only an empty myth? So far from being such, it is at once the highest embodiment of religious conception in the spiritual history of the race.

Since the word "myth" occurs in the title, it is necessary to define it so that we may the better glimpse the nature of the subject. To the modern mind the word carries with it a derogatory implication. To reduce any construction to the status of a myth is to put it out of court and render it valueless. We regard a myth as a

fiction and a falsity. To show that a theory or a belief is only a myth, is to relegate it to the world of non-reality, and dismiss it from further consideration as a thing of value.

1

Not so with the ancients. With them a myth was a valuable instrumentality of knowledge. It was an intellectual, even a spiritual, tool, by the aid of which truth and wisdom could at one and the same time both be concealed from the unworthy and expressed for the worthy. The ancients rightly regarded spiritual truth and experience as being incapable of expression or impartation by means of words simply. A myth or an allegory could be made the better means of conveying subtly and with a certain added force, the truth veiled under a set form of dramatic presentation. The myth would enhance spiritual truth as a drama reinforces moral situations. It was all the more powerful in its message precisely because it was known *not* to be outwardly a true story. No one was caught by the literal falsity of the construction. Attention could therefore be given wholly to the hidden import, which was not obscured by the outward occurrence. The myth was known to be a fiction; therefore it deceived nobody--until the third century. But at the same time it was most ingeniously designed to instruct in the deepest of spiritual truths. It was a literary device to embalm lofty wisdom in the amber of a tradition that could be easily remembered, in the guise of a human story. It was truth incarnated in a dramatic occurrence, which was known to be untrue. Outwardly fictitious, but inwardly the substance of a mighty truth, was the myth. And as such it was the universal dress in which ancient knowledge was clothed.

To indicate the universality of the Sun-god myth it is only necessary to enumerate some thirty of the chief figures known as Sun-gods amongst the nations about the Eastern Mediterranean, before the advent of Jesus. There were in Egypt, Osiris, Horus, Serapis, Hermes or Taht (Thoth), Khunsu, Atum (Aten, Adon, the Adonis or Phrygia), Iusa, Iu-sa, Iu-em-hetep; in Syria, Atis, Sabazius, Zagreus, Kybele (feminine); in Assyria Tammuz; in Babylonia, Marduk and Sargon; in Persia, Mithra, Ahura-Mazda and the Zoroasters; in Greece, Orpheus, Bacchus (Dionysus), Achilles, Hercules, Theseus, Perseus, Jason, Prometheus; in India, Vyasa, Krishna, Buddha; in Tibet the Boddhisattvas; besides many others elsewhere.

Likewise in the ancient Mystery dramas the central character was ever the Sun-god the role being enacted by the candidate for initiation in person. He went through the several initiations as himself the type and representative of the solar divinity in the field of human experience.

Moreover, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Priests and Kings of Biblical lore are no less Sun-god figures. For in their several characteristics they are seen to be typical of the Christos.

From the study of a mass of the ancient material the sincere and disingenuous student becomes ere long convinced of the fact that the

2

Jesus figure of the Gospels, whether he lived historically or not (and there is much question of it even among theologians), is just another in the long list of the solar gods. They were figured by ancient poetic genius as embodiments of divine solar glory living among men, if they were not purely the mythical constructions of the allegorists.

These Sun-god characters, of none of whom can it be said positively that they were living personages, were, it must be clearly noted, purely typical figures in the national epics of the several nations. They were symbols, one might say. But of what were they symbolical? That is the point of central importance. They were representative characters, summing and epitomizing in themselves the spiritual history of the human individual in his march across the field of evolving life on earth. They were the types and models of the divine potentiality pictured as coming to realization in their careers. They were the mirror held up to men, in which could be seen the possibilities locked up in man's own nature. They were type-figures, delineating the divine life that was an ever-possible realization for any devoted man. They were the symbols of an ever-coming deity, a deity that came not once historically in Judea, but that came to ever-fuller expression and

liberation in the inner heart of every son of man. The solar deities were the gods that ever came, that were described as coming not once upon a time, but continuously and regularly. Their radiant divinity might be consummated by any earnest person at any time or achieved piecemeal.

They were typed as ever-coming or coming regularly because they were symbolized by the sun in its annual course around the zodiac of twelve signs, and the regular periodicity of this natural symbol typified the ever-continuing character of their spiritual sunlight. The ancients, in a way and to a degree almost incomprehensible to the unstudied modern, had made of the sun's annual course round the heavens a faithful reproduction of the spiritual history of the divine spirit in man. The god in us was emblemized by the sun in its course, and the sun's varied experiences, as fabulously construed, were a reflection of our own incarnational history. The sun in its movements through the signs was made the mirror of our life in spirit. To follow the yearly round of the zodiac was to epitomize graphically the whole history of human experience. Thus the inner meaning of our mortal life was endlessly repeated in the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly cycle of the sun's passage, the seven or twelve divisions of which marked the seven- or twelvefold segmentation of our spiritual history or our initiations. (They were figured at first as seven, later as twelve, when the solar gods came upon the cosmic scene.)

The careers of these solar gods, then, were a type of what is occurring to every man who is dowered with the spark of divine soul within his

3

breast. Each one of us has had or will have his festival of conception in June, his birth into the world of fleshly life in the autumn, his spiritual awakening at Christmas, and his glorious resurrection from the dead body of this life at Easter.

The Christians say the Christos came once in a single character in history, Jesus of Judea, saying nothing about his coming to Everyman at all times. They present to the world the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, confusing in one historical figure two distinct characters of ancient philosophy, the Logos and the Christos, and making both historical in a human being born of woman. Suffice it to say that neither character was historical in the ancient systems. The Logos and the Christos were cosmic forces, and the erring Christians confounded these "personages" of ancient philosophy with the mundane career of the man Jesus, who was not other than one of the mythical Sun-god heroes, or national type-figures. What a travesty of truth the Christian representation has become! What a caricature the Gospels have made of the divine spiritual principle in man's life!

The ancients had no "only-begotten" son because the term used in their systems, miserably mistranslated "only-begotten," was something with quite a different connotation. It was in Greek "monogenes," and in Latin "unigenitus," and was far from meaning "only-begotten." It meant that which was begotten of one parent, the father, alone, not the offspring of the union of father and mother. By the term the ancients meant to designate him who was the projection into matter of the spirit forces of life, not the final product of the union of spirit and matter, or the male and female elements. Had the early Christian Fathers known of the inner meaning of the symbolism of the Egyptian Ptah, as Khepr-Ra, who was typed by the male beetle that incubated in the ground and without union with the female transformed and regenerated himself after twenty-eight days (exactly a moon cycle) in the form of the young scarab, symbol of the new-born sun in the moon, they would have been intelligent enough to have avoided the great schisms that divided the Church into Roman and Greek Catholic bodies over the abstrusities of this very origin of the persons of the Trinity. But Egypt was farther away from Rome of the third century than it is from us, who can now read the inscriptions that were sealed from them.

All this ancient scriptural data accentuates the fact that not the historical Jesus, but the spiritual Christ, or the god within the individual heart (as expounded in the lecture on Platonic Philosophy in the Bible) is the subject of the sacred writings of old, and the kernel of the whole religious ideology. Angelus Silesius has expressed this in a stanza which should be a perpetual reminder of the futility of clinging to the historical interpretation of Gospel literature.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,

But not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn;

The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain

Unless within thyself it be set up again.

And the Christian hymn, "O Jesus, thou art standing, outside the fast-closed door," gives expression to the kindred idea that while we look across the map to localize the Christos in Judea, we keep the spiritual mentor of our own lives standing without, seeking an entrance into our lives in vain.

By the aid of archaic sacred books we have been enabled to trace authentically the origin of the name Jesus. And it is of great importance to present this material, because it throws a flood of clear light upon the ancient conceptions of the Messiah and the coming Son, or Sun-god. In this light the name will be seen to be a type-designation and not the personal name of an historical being.

It is derived from the two letters (or numbers) which in the beginning of typology symbolized the two first elements, spirit and matter, into which the primal One Life bifurcated. They are the I (or 1) symboling the male or spirit, and the O (letter) or 0 (cipher) symboling the female or material universe. Together they represented the biune male-female deity. We have, then, the letters IO, or the number 10. As the vowels were freely interchanged, in ancient languages, the name was written either IO, IA, IE, or IU, and all these forms are found. Next the I transformed into consonantal value and became a J (as it is yet in Latin), so that we find the names JO, JA, JE and JU, from each of which many names have arisen. When the creation had combined the male and female and the two had given birth to the Son, or Logoc universe, the name was given the form of three letters, and we then find such forms as IAO, JAH, IEO, JEU, ZUE. When the universe became founded on the four cardinal points or the square of four dimensions, the name was spelled variously as IEOU, JOVE, ZEUS, JEVE, DIOS, T/HEOS, HUHI, IHUH and others. In its character as a sevenfold or seven-lettered name, it took the form of JEHOVAH, SABAOTH, DEBORAH, DELILAH, SEP/HIROT/H, MICHAEL, SOLOMON, and others of seven letters. The I permuted with l (el) or 1 (one), so that IE became LE or, inverted EL, the great Hebrew character of deity. The EL and the IAH (JAH), became the most frequent determinatives of divinity, as a host of names will testify. There are Bethel, Emanuel, Michael, Israel, Gabriel, Samuel, Abdiel, Uriel, Muriel Azazel, and many others, in which the EL is prefixed. The JAH is seen in such names as EliJAH, AbiJAH, while the IAH comes in a host of such names as Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Obediah, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Messiah, Alleluiah and more.

But whence comes the "s" in Jesus's name? This is of great importance. It is derived from an Egyptian suffix written either SA, SE, SI, SU, or SAF, SEF, SIF or SUF (SAPH, SEPH, SIPH or SUPH) and meaning "the son," "heir," "prince" or successor to the father. (The F is an Egyptian ending for the masculine singular.) When the original symbol of divinity, IO or IE, JO or JE, was combined with the Egyptian suffix for the succeeding heir, SU or SA, the resultant was the name IUSA, IUSE, IUSU, or IOSE; or IESU, JESU, IUSEF, IOSEF, JOSEF. One of the many forms was JESU and another was JOSEF. The final F became sibilant at times and gave us the eventual form of JESUS. The name then meant the "divine son," and combined in the Egyptian IU the idea of the coming one. Hence JESUS was the Messiah, the coming son of the divine life. There was in Egypt for ten thousand years B.C. the character of this functionary under the name of IUSA. Later he was the Iu-em-hetep, which means "the divine son who comes with peace (hetep). But most interestingly, this last word also means seven. Hence Jesus is he who comes as the seventh principle to complete the six elementary powers of natural evolution with the gift of divine intelligence, which supplants the elementary chaos with the rulership of love and intelligence and thus brings peace into a warring situation. Hence finally, Jesus is the seventh cosmic principle, announced in all religious lore as he

who comes to bring peace and good will to men. And as such he was announced in the Christian Gospels. But there was more than one Jesus or IUSA or IU before the coming of the alleged historical Jesus.

Startling as are the implications of this bit of etymology, a far more amazing denouement of Bible study is the revelation that not only were there over thirty Sun-god figures in the cults of the various nations of old, but there are immediately *in the Bible itself*, in the Old Testament, some twenty more Sun-god characters *under the very name of Jesus!* Are we speaking arrant nonsense or sober truth when we make a claim which seems at first sight so unsupportable? Twenty Jesus characters in the Old Testament! Let us see. We have noted the many variant forms of the Jesus name. There are still others in the Old Testament, never suspected as being related to the name of the Christian Redeemer. There are Isaac, Esau, Jesse, Jacob, Jeshu, Joachim, Joshua, Jonah and others. All these are variant forms of the one name, which has still other forms among the Hebrews in secular life, Yusuf, Yehoshua, Yeshu, etc. Joshua, Hosea and Jesse are from this name indisputably. A few might be the subject of controversy.

Furthermore, beside these that bear the original divine name, there are other Sun-god figures in the Old Testament under a wide variety of names. They are Samson (whose name means "solar"), David, Solomon, Saul

6

(equals soul, or sol, the sun--Latin.), Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Jephtha and the like. Their actions identify them as solar representatives.

Now let us see what the conception of our divinity as a Sun-god in reality meant to the sages of old, and what it should mean to us. It meant that the divinity within us, our divine soul or Self, was itself the Sun-god, or solar deity. And what does this signify in concrete terms for us? Just this; that the god within us is constituted of the imperishable essence of solar light and energy! In short, we ourselves, in our higher nature, are solar gods in potentiality! Our highest nature is an incorruptible body composed of the glorious essence of the sun's energy! The gods in the Bible were always symbolized by the light or fire of the sun. We are now enlightened to see it as a description of our nature as veritable truth and fact. *We are Sun-gods.* Our immortal spirits within us are composed of the radiant substance of solar energy.

At the very time we were first assembling the material for this lecture, there came an announcement in the daily press of a discovery by a modern physicist, Dr. George W. Crile, of the Cleveland Laboratories, which practically fixed the seal of truth upon every word we have uttered or shall utter in this lecture. It was most startlingly corroborative of our exegesis. He announced that he had discovered at the heart of every living organism a tiny nucleus of energy, all aglow, with temperatures ranging from 3000 to 6000 degrees of heat, which he called "radiogens" or "hot points." These, he said, were precisely akin to the radiant energy of solar matter. He affirmed, in short, that a tiny particle of the sun's power and radiance was lodged within the heart of every organic unit! The light and energy that has life. What would be Crile's surprise, however, if he were to be shown a sentence taken from Hargrave Jennings' old book on the Rosicrucians, written over sixty years ago: "Every man has a little spark (sun) in his own bosom?" For this was one item in the teaching of the Medieval Fire-Philosophers, and the reason they were styled such. They knew what Crile has discovered, as likewise did the ancient Bible-writers. They based their Sun-god religions upon it. Our souls are composed of the imperishable essence of solar light! We are immortal because we are Sun-gods.

But many will impatiently rise to expostulate with us, and ask why, if this was the universal fundamentum of the old religions, the Bible itself does not categorically carry this message and state this central fact. Wait a moment! Who that knows this primary datum has searched the Bible to see if it has nothing to say on the point? We, too, believed the Bible was remiss in expressing this conception, until we searched with a more watchful eye. And now let us hear what the

7

Bible says as to our solar constitution, and determine for ourselves whether it is silent on the groundwork of religion or not. Let us hear first the *Psalms*. "Our God is a living fire," say they; and "Our God is a consuming fire." "The Lord God is a sun," avers the same book. "I am come to send fire on earth," says Jesus, meaning he came to scatter the separated sparks of solar essence amongst mankind, a spark to each soul. In *Revelation* the angels scatter the fire and the incense of their seven censers over the earth, among the inhabitants. Then says John the Baptist: "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with *fire!*" Jesus says: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Satan was the descending Lucifer, or Light-bringer, before he was lifted up and divinized.) The fire that falls on Jeremiah's altar and many another in the Bible narrative types the deity coming to dwell with mortals. Says Jesus: "When I am in the world I am the light of the world." Again he said: "Ye are the light of the world," and "Let your light so shine that others may . . . glory your father which is in heaven." The Lord, say the *Psalms*, "made his angels messengers and his ministers a flame of fire." The New Testament Jesus, following the well-known Egyptian diagram of the Ankh, the solar disk with the spread wings, is described as "the sun of righteousness, risen with healing in his wings." John has Jesus saying that the condemnation of the world lay in that it rejected the light when it was sent into the world. Says *Job*: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle and his candle shall be put out with him." *Isaiah* writes: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that ye have kindled." We are adjured to "Rise, shine, for thy light is come." "The Lord is my light," reiterates the *Psalms*. And again: "In thy light shall we see light." "Light is sown for the righteous." "We wait for light," cry the souls in the darkness of incarnation, far from their original fount of light. John declares that the Christos "was the true light" which was to come Messianically for the redemption of our lower nature. And again he declares that with the Christos "light is come into the world." No cry echoes with more resounding intensity down to this age than Paul's exhortation to our souls buried in lethal darkness: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine upon thee!" And in *Revelation* there are those mighty pronouncements: in the spiritual resurrection "there shall be no more need of the sun to shine by day nor the moon by night, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it." And there is no more heartening assurance anywhere in the Bible than Jesus's statement: "Ye have light in yourselves."

And these are only a gleaning from the great score of similar passages

8

with which the Bible teems. And still folks will say they find no warrant for the Sun-god idea in the Bible!

In Rome the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta was guarded by seven Vestal Virgins, chosen for purity and for psychic vision. If they permitted the fire to die out (symbolic of the light of deity dying out in the heart) the penalty upon them was death. If they violated their sexual purity, they were buried alive in the city. And from the great old Egyptian *Book of the Dead* we take just one passage among scores: "Lo, I come from the Lake of Flame, from the Lake of Fire, and from the field of flame, and I live." And again, from an old *Book of Adam and Eve* we quote a great passage in which the Lord says: "I made thee of the light, and I wished to bring out children of the light from thee." If only we had been taught by our religious teachers that our spiritual natures are woven and fabricated of solar light, we should have had a clearer apprehension of our potentialities for divine education.

Supplementing all this material from the Bible and ancient scriptures, there is at hand for our supreme enlightenment one grand pronouncement from Greek Platonic philosophy which we conceive to be that lost ultimate link between science and religion. It is the truth before whose altar both science and religion can kneel at last and find themselves paying tribute to the same god,--the god of solar radiance. It is a sentence from the learned Proclus, last of the Great Platonists: "*The light of the sun is the pure energy of intellect.*" Are we big enough to catch the mighty significance of that statement? Is it not the essence of what the modern physicist means when he talks of "mind-stuff?" The fiery radiance of the sun is already the motivating genius of intellect! Matter *is* itself intelligent and intelligence! Here is the basic link between all naturalism and all spirituality. Matter enshrouds and contains the soul of mind and spirit. The light of the sun is the deific flash of intellect! And the very core of our conscious being is a spark of that infinite

indestructible energy of solar light. There is the "seminal soul of light" or the seed of fiery divinity (Prometheus's "fire" stolen from the gods) in each of us. It makes us a god.

Armed with this unquenchable fire which is intellect, we are sent on earth to inhabit a body which is described as a watery and miry swamp. The body is nearly eighty per cent. water! It is the duty of the fiery spark to enlighten the whole dark realm of mortal life, to transmute by its alchemical power the baser dross of animal propensity into the finer motivation of love and brotherhood. This life is a purgation--Purgatory--because it is a process of burning and tempering crude animal elements into the pure gold of spiritual light. In Egyptian scriptures the twelve sons of Ra (the twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel)

9

were called the "twelve saviors of the treasure of light." An Egyptian text reads: "This is the sun within us, the seminal source of light. Do not dim its luster or cause it to suffer eclipse." And another runs: "Give ye glory as to the sun; he is the chief, the only one coming from the body, the head of those who belong to the race of the sun."

With this force of fire we must uplift the lower man and transmute his nature into the spiritual glow of love and intelligence. With it we must turn the water of the lower nature into the wine of spiritual force. Around it we must aggregate the refined material which we shall build into that temple of the soul, that body of the resurrection, the great garment of solar light, in which we shall rise out of the tomb of the physical corpus and ascend with the angels. This is the radiant Augoeides of the Greeks, the Sahu of the Egyptians, in which the soul wings its flight aloft like the phoenix, after rending the veil of the temple of the body. It is our garment of immortality, the seamless robe of glory, in prospect of which we groan and travail, says St. Paul, as we earnestly desire to be clothed upon with the garment of incorruption. As flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of heaven, we must fashion for our tenancy there this body of solar glory, in whose self-generated light we may live eternally, having overcome the realms of darkness, or spiritualized the body. Jesus prays the Father to grant unto him that glory that he had with him before the world was, and his prayer is fulfilled in the formation of the spirit body out of the elements of the sun.

Who is this King of Glory?--says the Psalmist. And we are exhorted to lift up the aeonial gates, the age-lasting doors, to let the King of Glory enter into our realm. The King of Glory is the Sun-soul within us, raised in his final perfection in the fulness of Christly stature to the state of magnificent effulgence. The King of Glory is the immortal Sun-god, the deity in our hearts; and when at last he blazes forth in the heyday of his glory, and comes in majesty into our lives, then we behold his glory, as of the alone-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And when he appears to those still sitting in the shadow of darkness, they report that "they have seen a great light, and to those that sat in the valley of darkness did the light shine." And this light, seen ever and anon by some illuminated son of man, as he gropes in the murks of incarnation, is truly "that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

And when that light shineth clearer and brighter unto the perfect day, then, indeed, we know of a surety that we ourselves are nucleated of that same glorious essence of combined intellect and spirit. Then we know that we ourselves are the Sun-gods, and that the ancient allegory is not a "myth," but the very essence of our own Selfhood.