

# THE RELIGIOUS QUEST OF INDIA

EDITED BY

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE

THE writers of this series of volumes on the variant forms of religious life in India are governed in their work by two impelling motives.

I. They endeavour to work in the sincere and sympathetic spirit of science. They desire to understand the perplexingly involved developments of thought and life in India and dispassionately to estimate their value. They recognize the futility of any such attempt to understand and evaluate, unless it is grounded in a thorough historical study of the phenomena investigated. In recognizing this fact they do no more than share what is common ground among all modern students of religion of any repute. But they also believe that it is necessary to set the practical side of each system in living relation to the beliefs and the literature, and that, in this regard, the close and direct contact which they have each had with Indian religious life ought to prove a source of valuable light. For, until a clear understanding has been gained of the practical influence exerted by the habits of worship, by the practice of the ascetic, devotional, or occult discipline, by the social organization and by the family system, the real impact of the faith upon the life of the individual and the community cannot be estimated; and, without the advantage of extended personal intercourse, a trustworthy account of the religious experience of a community can scarcely be achieved by even the most careful student.

II. They seek to set each form of Indian religion by the side of Christianity in such a way that the relationship may stand out clear. Jesus Christ has become to them the light of

all their seeing, and they believe Him destined to be the light of the world. They are persuaded that sooner or later the age-long quest of the Indian spirit for religious truth and power will find in Him at once its goal and a new starting-point, and they will be content if the preparation of this series contributes in the smallest degree to hasten this consummation. If there be readers to whom this motive is unwelcome, they may be reminded that no man approaches the study of a religion without religious convictions, either positive or negative: for both reader and writer, therefore, it is better that these should be explicitly stated at the outset. Moreover, even a complete lack of sympathy with the motive here acknowledged need not diminish a reader's interest in following an honest and careful attempt to bring the religions of India into comparison with the religion which to-day is their only possible rival, and to which they largely owe their present noticeable and significant revival.

It is possible that to some minds there may seem to be a measure of incompatibility between these two motives. The writers, however, feel otherwise. For them the second motive reinforces the first: for they have found that he who would lead others into a new faith must first of all understand the faith that is theirs already—understand it, moreover, sympathetically, with a mind quick to note not its weaknesses alone but that in it which has enabled it to survive and has given it its power over the hearts of those who profess it.

The duty of the Editors of the series is limited to seeing that the volumes are in general harmony with the principles here described. Each writer is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in his volume, whether in regard to Indian religions or to Christianity.



JAMES HOPE MOULTON

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THE RELIGIOUS QUEST OF INDIA

THE TREASURE OF  
THE MAGI

A STUDY OF  
MODERN ZOROASTRIANISM

BY

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IN PROUD AND LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
WILLIAM RALPH OSBORN MOULTON,  
SECOND LIEUTENANT IN THE MANCHESTER REGIMENT;  
FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF KING'S COLLEGE,  
AND WHEWELL UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR  
IN INTERNATIONAL LAW.

HE GAVE HIS LIFE IN FRANCE  
FOR THE RESTORATION OF THAT BROKEN FABRIC  
THE PRINCIPLES OF WHICH HE WAS PLEDGED TO STUDY.

AUGUST 5, 1916

ϸΥΝ ΘΕΩ

## FOREWORD

IN the autumn of 1915, on the invitation of the Indian National Council of the Y.M.C.A., three scholars from England, Dr T. R. Glover of Cambridge, Dr James Hope Moulton of Manchester, and Professor George Hare Leonard of Bristol, went out to spend a year in India. The plan was that these men, who were distinguished alike for their writings and for their close contact with the student world, should spend this year in studying some of the problems of education and of religion in India, getting time for making friendships with Indians and at the same time doing some lecturing and writing. And whilst each was asked to travel for part of the time, in order to see something of India and to visit the Missions of his own communion, he was also invited to spend several months in a single community in order to have time for closer study and for the forming of closer friendships. It was hoped that books of considerable value might result from this close contact of English thinkers with the religious thought of India. All did excellent service by lecturing to mixed audiences in various centres, and by teaching groups of Christian students; and they were everywhere welcomed with the deep respect which scholarship meets in India, and with great cordiality. Even more significant than the interest which their lectures stirred up were the friendships which they made with Indians, and which they valued very greatly.

To Dr Moulton the invitation was full of attractiveness. He was always a Missionary enthusiast, and he was thrilled by the prospect of seeing the field for himself. For years he



had studied the religion of the Parsis, and now there opened out before him the opportunity of personal intercourse with them. Under ordinary conditions it would not have been possible to entertain the proposition, on account of other duties; but the war had so affected all theological colleges that a prolonged absence could be contemplated as not involving of necessity any serious interruption of his normal work. Moreover, coming as it did within a week after he had lost his wife, the invitation seemed to open out for him a course of service in a fresh field just at the time when service on the old field was bound to be so fraught with pain. When another heavy sorrow came to him while he was in India, in the death of his eldest son, who was killed at the front in France on the 4th of August, 1916, he continued to seek consolation in service and teaching, and he did not seek in vain. It is to his son that this volume is dedicated.

He had been invited to go to India largely that he might use his ripe Iranian scholarship in lecturing to the Parsis on Zoroastrianism, and he received from that community everywhere proofs of the warmest possible friendship and regard and of the keenest interest in his teaching. In Bombay they placed at his disposal a large theatre, and have since published his lectures in both English and Gujarati.

He remained some sixteen months in India and sailed from Karachi by the S.S. *City of Paris* for England. At Port Said he had the joy of meeting his friend Dr Rendel Harris, who had left England several months before in order to join Dr Moulton in India, but, having been torpedoed in the Mediterranean, had stayed on in Egypt instead of proceeding to India. The two friends sailed together and had a time of delightful intercourse until the steamer was sunk by a torpedo in the Gulf of Lions. Passengers and crew got into the boats. But the weather was very stormy, and the boat in which the

two scholars were was driven out of its course and did not reach the coast of Corsica until four days later. Of the twenty-five souls in the boat twelve had by that time died of exposure, and amongst them Dr Moulton.

The following paragraphs are from a letter written by Dr Harris to Dr Moulton's brother, the Rev. W. Fiddian Moulton of Derby, a few days after the tragic event :

I am not able to write a great deal, and much of what I would say must wait until I return, first of all because we were strongly advised not to communicate any details as to the passage of our unfortunate vessel, and second because it is too painful to recall in detail the horrors of the days of exposure and collapse. I think that what operated in his case to diminish his power of resistance was, first of all physical weakness, which had shown itself on the way home from India in a violent outbreak of boils on the face and neck causing him much pain and inconvenience, but on the other side he succumbed to superior spiritual attractions which he felt a long time before the ship was struck. He talked about his dear ones in Johannine language as going over to prepare places for one another, and the spiritual tension was evidently stronger than even the strong language expressed. Those on the other side stood to him Christ-wise, saying Christ's words and doing Christ's deeds to him as they had done to one another. Under these circumstances it is not strange that he should have collapsed, but he played a hero's part in the boat.

He toiled at the oar till sickness overcame him ; he assisted to bale out the boat and to bury (is that the right word?) the bodies of those who fell. He said words of prayer over poor Indian sailors, and never never complained or lost heart for a moment through the whole of the three days and more of his patience, though the waves were often breaking over him and the water must have often been up to his middle. He passed away very rapidly at the end and was gone before I could get to him. His body was lying on the edge of the boat, and I kissed him for you all and said some words of love which he was past hearing outwardly. There was no opportunity to take from his body anything except his gold watch, and one or two trifles which are in my keeping. I could not search him for papers, indeed I doubt if he had brought any with him from the ship.

During the whole of the voyage his mind was marvellously alert and active. He talked, and read and wrote incessantly, and preached on the Sundays. On the way home he had read the whole of the *Odyssey* in the small Pickering edition, and amongst his first remarks to me was his opinion as to the disparity of the 23rd book with the rest of the poem.

One strange and beautiful experience we shared together with Major — of the Abyssinian Embassy, who was returning to England. We developed literary sympathies, and one day the conversation turned on *Lycidas*. The Major knew it by heart—so did J. H. M., or almost by heart. I was a bad third in the recitation, and when we halted for a passage J. H. M. ran to his cabin and brought his pocket copy of Milton to verify doubtful words with. How little we suspected what was the meaning of our exercise! They laughed at my delight over the sounding sentences, and I had to explain that it made my blood tingle; but we did not know that the amber flow of that Elysian speech had become once more sacramental and that we were really reciting the liturgy of the dead, that 'Lycidas your sorrow is not dead, sunk though he be beneath the watery floor'. He had his own 'solemn troop' and his own 'sweet society' to make him welcome.

It is one of our Lord's sayings that one shall be taken and another shall be left, and the words lie dormant in meaning long spaces of time, then rise up and smite us in the face. Why was one taken and the other left? Why did 'that fatal', that 'perfidious bark' discriminate between the 'sacred dead' that it sunk low and the one which was so much whiter to the harvest? But for questions like these there is no answer yet. I would tell you more if I could, but this is all I can say at this present.

With deep sympathy,

Your friend and his,

RENDEL HARRIS.

In this book there is a passage, written by Dr Moulton only a few days before he left India, from which we may realize how he would wish us to think of his death:

If our earthly life is only a testing and a training, we need not wonder why there are so many 'premature' withdrawals of bright and promising lives. God does not need the time we need to test a character, nor does He take our view of the importance of a post to which He has set us. Only He can know whether service here or service yonder is better for any individual for the supreme interests of His Kingdom.

At the time when he decided to go to India Dr Moulton agreed to prepare the volume which is herewith published. His Iranian studies had already given him all the scientific preparation required, while the experience he was about to have among Parsis would give him that intercourse with those

who profess Zoroastrianism which is required in order to fulfil the condition laid down for the volumes of this series in the second paragraph of the Editorial Preface. He took up the work with great eagerness, and thoroughly enjoyed the labour of preparing the manuscript. Since it would be necessary, as soon as he arrived in England, to take up work on the Lexicon of New Testament Greek which he was preparing in collaboration with Professor Milligan, he saw that it would be wise to complete the manuscript of *The Treasure of the Magi* before leaving India. This he did, and had three type-written copies prepared, one of which he sent by post to his brother in England before leaving India. Through this circumstance the publication of the volume has been made possible; for the original autograph lies at the bottom of the Mediterranean. The manuscript has been printed precisely as it left Dr Moulton's hands, with the exception of a few sentences which have been slightly modified by the Editors. Dr Moulton, in a letter written before he left India, had expressed a wish that this should be done.

We owe very great gratitude to the Right Reverend Dr Casartelli, Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford, for his extreme kindness in revising the proofs as only one could do who possessed his profound learning in Iranian subjects. Those who knew Dr Moulton will realize how much he would appreciate this further expression of a friendship which he valued very highly from a scholar of such great distinction.

J. N. FARQUHAR.  
H. D. GRISWOLD.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
<b>BOOK I. ZOROASTRIANISM</b>	
CHAPTER 1. ZOROASTER AND THE PARSIS . . . . .	5
2. THE TEACHING OF ZARATHUSHTRA . . . . .	10
3. AFTER ZARATHUSHTRA . . . . .	52
4. ZARATHUSHTRA AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD . . . . .	68
5. THE RELIGION OF THE LATER AVESTA . . . . .	84
<b>BOOK II. THE PARSIS</b>	
CHAPTER 1. THE COMMUNITY . . . . .	119
2. THE PRIESTHOOD . . . . .	132
3. CEREMONIAL LIFE : FIRE-TEMPLES AND TOWERS OF SILENCE . . . . .	141
4. CEREMONIAL LIFE : OUTSIDE THE FIRE-TEMPLE	160
5. ORTHODOXY AND REFORM . . . . .	171
6. PARSİ PIETY . . . . .	194
7. THE PARSİS AND CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDA . . . . .	211
8. THE CROWN OF ZOROASTRIANISM . . . . .	224
INDEX OF PASSAGES TRANSLATED . . . . .	255
GENERAL INDEX . . . . .	256

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Ys.* *Yasna.*  
*Yl.* *Yasht.*  
*Vd., Vend.* *Vendidad.*  
*E. Z.* *Early Zoroastrianism*, J. H. Moulton, London, 1913.  
*E. R. P. P.* *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*, J. H. Moulton, Cambridge, 1911.  
*S. B. E.* *Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller, Oxford, 1880-1887.  
*E. R. E.* *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by Dr. Hastings, Edinburgh, 1908 ff.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

The vowels have the 'Italian' value: *ɔ* is the Sanskrit *a* (as in *sofa*). Spirant *χ* and *γ* are heard in German *doch*, *Tage* (dialectic); *θ* and *ʒ* in our *bath* and *bathe*; *ν* is our *ng*; *š*, *ž* as in *sure* and *azure*; *c*, *j* as in *church* and *judge*. For more exact definitions the student will go to the grammars.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE TREASURE OF THE MAGI

Then entered in those Wisemen three  
Full reverently on bended knee,  
And offered there in his presence  
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel.

*Old Carol.*

O Thou Wise Lord, who when Thy world was young  
Didst pierce the grim night of the eastern sky  
With gladsome rays of truth and purity,  
Forgive the error of the venturous song  
That strives to hymn Thy bounty. May my tongue  
Tell of Thy Seer, and how against the Lie  
Pure thoughts, pure words, pure actions' victory  
Rang from his herald trumpet loud and long :  
So from the blaze wherein Thy glories dwell  
Once more athwart the sunless gloom a star  
Shall flash its guiding message, and from far  
The Sage of Iran answer to the spell,  
And speed with trophies of a faith long dim  
To find his Lord and bow the knee to Him.

J. H. M.

NINETEEN hundred years ago, according to a story that is lovingly repeated all over the world every Christmastide, a company of Eastern priests found the goal of a long journey in the Holy City. Far away in Media, it may be, as they watched the skies for tokens of the future which they believed to be written therein, they had seen a star their practised eyes discerned to be new. It was the Angel of some Great One newly born. In visions of the night it was expounded to

them that they should seek a King in Jerusalem and offer treasure in worship. Directed thence by the interpreters of prophecy, they set forth on the south road when the night fell; and the Star rose as they started, and moved to its low culmination, so that as they drew near to the hill on which was the City of David they saw it hang like a golden lamp over the place where their Saoshyant, the 'Future Saviour', lay. And so they entered in and did reverence before the manger, over which their eyes seemed to see that Glory that was lost when the first man sinned. They gave Him gifts of their own country's treasure. But it was not material gold and frankincense and myrrh that the angels saw as the Magi opened their caskets. They saw pure gold of a great Prophet's unshakable faith in God—the fragrant incense of his powerful prayer—the myrrh of self-denial and upward striving, that sought to provide an anodyne for the woes of men. And in this, the purest offering that the Gentile world had to give, they recognized a Divine manifestation that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. So for those whose ears were open there burst forth afresh over those gifts the angels' song :

Glory to God, in the highest and on earth ;  
Peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nineteen hundred years ago—and still there are Magi ministering before the sacred fire, and chanting the same Hymns, that were hoary with antiquity even when their ancestors chanted them every sunrise as they travelled towards Bethlehem. But very few indeed, priests or people, have set foot on that pilgrim road. Like the Jews, though with more excuse, they missed their Saviour when He came, and languidly they look for another who may come some day. Forgetful of their Prophet, who longed to 'convert all living men' to his high views of God and of duty, they cling to caste privileges and a justifiable pride in their small, well-educated, generous and progressive community. But the gold



of pure faith is dim with incrustations of ceremonial, of Gnostic speculation and of materialist indifference to religion. The incense is stale, for the prayers of multitudes are in a tongue they cannot understand. The myrrh has only availed to dull the smart of sin. The Fire may burn, enthroned and crowned and venerated, in shrines that none but a born Parsi can enter ; but where it should kindle in men's hearts it flickers and burns low. Yet the Treasure is there still, and when they shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away. We hear Zarathushtra's own voice calling upon his forgetful people to learn a New Song :

See how from far upon the eastern road  
The Star-led wizards haste with odours sweet ;  
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,  
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet ;  
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,  
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,  
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.