

DEITIES AND THEIR NAMES.

BY SIGMUND FREY.

IN the February number of *The Open Court* the Hon. Mr. Brewer has a very interesting article on "Names of Deity." I think every one will gladly agree with the author that like *lucus a non lucendo*, philology, or rather etymology, is very misleading at times. Consonant syllables and similar sounds may prove nothing more than that the various nations followed one and the same idea and in their articulations coined the same word as the expression of the same thought. When we find identical words for the same idea in different languages we must study first the history of each nation—its birth, its growth, the itineraries of its tradesmen and statesmen, and the nations with whom they mostly came in contact.

The greatest scholars have given up their researches for the origin of language as vain and hopeless, and we therefore would have to look for the special nation of hoary antiquity that was the most speculative, had first developed ideas and had evolved its language. Perhaps the narrative of the confusion of languages in the Bible points to the period and country when and where the origin of language took place. This is naturally to be understood of one group of tongues, for just as we distinguish the various tribes and nations with regard to race we must discriminate with reference to language.

There are but two stocks of language to be considered, the Semitic and the Aryan, i. e., Sanskrit. Greek and Latin both point by construction of words and grammar to their kinship with Sanskrit. If we find words and thoughts expressed in Latin and Greek which seem to have grown on soil other than that occupied by Semitic or Aryan nations, there are but two possibilities: either they were borrowed or they sprang spontaneously from the same ideas. Two examples may serve to illustrate. The Hebrew word *barakh*¹

¹ בָּרַךְ

² עָרַוה

means to adore, to bless, and to curse, so does the Latin *sacrare*. The Hebrew *Erzah*² from the root *arah*,³ to make naked, to uncover, to overthrow, is the same as the Latin *arza*, private part. The Greek *ἀρόω*, to plough, is used by Sophokles (*Antigone*, 456) for coitus. Noteworthy it is that the rabbis use the word "plough" in the same sense; e. g., *Midrash Bereshit XLIV*, 3. Perhaps the Biblical use (*Judg. xiv. 18*) conveys the same meaning. If we find in Babylonian and Hebrew literature the same ideas and expressions, yea even the same words, Delitzsch and others may claim that the Jews borrowed, but how do we account for the fact that in Homer the same ideas appear as in the Bible, or that in Virgil the same utterances are found as in the Talmud? It can hardly be supposed that Homer or Virgil studied Bible or Talmud and were guilty of plagiarism or that the author or authors of Bible and Talmud read the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. There is but one inference to be deduced, namely that poets and philosophers of all nations, of all climes, having the same idea under consideration, come to the same conclusion, since the logical operations of the human mind work in the same lines.

All the tribes and nations had deities, spirits good and evil, and names for them ere they came in contact with each other. They may have added certain attributes, which they found ascribed to the gods of other nations and representing the same ideas as their home deities. Will we construe Zeus in Agamemnon's appeal (*Iliad II*, 412) and Jehovah in the similar invocation of Joshua (*x. 12*) as the *ilu Zur shamshu*, the Mar(u)duk of the Babylonians? Or will we claim that *Ex. xv. 3* has reference to Ares or Mars?

Lexicographers note that Pharaoh is a Phœnicio-Semitic word (see Gesenius *s. v.* "pharaoh," and some Hebrew commentators to *Deut. xxxii. 42*). We know that Pharaoh is derived from *Phra* or *Ra*, the sungod of Lower Egypt. We know also that the first kings of Egypt were not named Pharaoh until at a certain period the priests found it advantageous for some reasons to substitute Phra and to raise him to the dignity of the chief god. Then we must investigate whether the name Phra assigned to the sungod is not derived from some other language. Some scholars affirm that the Egyptians were a Semitic branch. Some words seem to point to a Semitic source, for instance *Anoki*, "I" the same in Babylonian, Hebrew and many more.

I agree with Mr. Browne concerning Herodotus. If Herodotus tells us that some Greek gods are identical in name or attribute with the Egyptian deities, some Greek writers claim that Egyptian gods

are the counterfeit of their own deities; for instance Ptah is said to be their Hephaistos, etc. If Pausanias relates that he found traces of Silenos among the Jews in Palestine, and some maintain that the Shiloh in Gen. xlx. 10 refers to Silenos because vine is mentioned there, we refuse to accept the conclusion for many reasons. Morgan in his *Ancient Society* proves conclusively that the Iroquois Indians had the same religious ceremonies and social institutions as the Greeks and other nations of antiquity of whom the aborigines of America never heard and with whom they never were in touch.

Therefore I do not agree with either Mr. Browne or the Hon. Mr. Brewer with regard to Mars. Mars and Mar(u)duk are as much related to each other in name as an apple to a pineapple. It seems to me that Mars is an evolution of *Mavors*, "war, deeds of arms." Aron Berith (not Barith), Ark of the Covenant, cannot be in any relation to the Egyptian *Bari* as it has been suggested that the Hebrew *Berith* means "banquet," and the Covenant was considered by the ancient Hebrews as something that is living and not something that is dead. *Le^ch-le^chi* does not anywhere in Hebrew appear as "shining" or "rays."

With regard to "Allah" the Hon. Mr. Brewer is decidedly mistaken. The word originally is *'ilah*. *Alif Lām Hā*, not *Chā*, is undoubtedly related to the Babylonian *ilu*, Hebrew *ail*, "power, strength, omnipotence." From *ilāhnu* when connected with the article the first sound is dropped and by that *Allāhu* is formed as the Aramaic *ha-elovah*. Not only among the Egyptians were the names of gods forbidden to be uttered but also among other nations. "As Jews are commanded not to utter the S^hem of Jeoah," is an inaccurate statement of the author of the article. There is no such Biblical commandment. The Rabbinical injunction is to pronounce *Shaim* in place of "Jehovah" in ordinary conversation or *Eloqim* instead of *Elohim*.

Mr. Brewer in his desire to make Egypt a source of architecture, language and religion overlooks some facts. "To give," is in Sanskrit *dā*, Assyrian *na-dā-nu*, Hebrew *na-tha-n*, Arabic *a-ta*, Slavonic *dā-zatī*, Sanskrit *div*, *dyaūh*, Greek *Zeus* (locative *diví*, neut. plu. *dívah*, *v* here transcribing a digamma), hence we have *dævas*, *divine*, *deus*, *dieu*, *dio*. It remains to be determined from what language the Egyptian *Dai* or *Daa* originated.