

Hair is the retainer of Prana



OCCULT PHILOSOPHY CONSIDERS THE HAIR (whether human or animal) as the natural receptacle and *retainer* of the vital essence which often escapes with other emanations from the body.¹ It is closely connected with many of the brain functions — for instance memory. With the ancient Israelites the cutting of the hair and beard was a sign of defilement, and “the Lord said unto Moses . . . they shall not make baldness upon their head, *etc.*”² “Baldness,” whether natural or artificial, was a sign of calamity, punishment, or grief, as when Isaiah³ enumerates, “instead of well-set hair baldness,” among the evils that are ready to befall the chosen people. And again, “on all their heads baldness and every beard cut.”⁴ The Nazarite was ordered to let his hair and beard grow, and never to permit a razor to touch them. With the Egyptians and Buddhists it was only the initiated priest or ascetic to whom life is a burden, who shaved. The Egyptian priest was supposed to have become master of his body, and hence shaved his head for cleanliness; yet the Hierophants wore their hair long. The Buddhist still shaves his head to this day — as sign of scorn for life and health. Yet Buddha, after shaving his hair when he first became a mendicant, let it grow again and is always represented with the top-knot of a Yogi.⁵ The Hindu priests and Brahmans, and almost all the castes, shave the rest of the

¹ [Cf. The hair is . . . but an “accumulator” of the energy of him who grew it.” *Mahatma Letter* 59 (111), p. 337; 3rd Combined ed.]

² *Leviticus* xxi, 1-5

³ iii, 24

⁴ *ibid.*, xv, 2

⁵ [Uchnīcha, also Buddhōchnīcha, is explained as “a protuberance on Buddha’s cranium, forming a hair-tuft.” This curious description is given by the Orientalists, varied by another which states that Uchnīcha was “originally a conical or flame-shaped hair tuft on the crown of a Buddha, in later ages represented as a fleshy excrecence on the skull itself.” This ought to read quite the reverse; for esoteric philosophy would say: Originally an orb with the *third eye* in it, which degenerated later in the human race into a fleshy protuberance, to disappear gradually, leaving in its place but an occasional flame-coloured aura, perceived only through clairvoyance, and when the exuberance of spiritual energy causes the (now concealed) “third eye” to radiate its superfluous magnetic power. At this period of our racial development, it is of course the “Buddhas” or Initiates alone who enjoy in full the faculty of the “third eye,” as it is more or less atrophied in everyone else. — Cf. *Theosophical Glossary*: Uchnīcha]

head but leave a long lock to grow from the centre of the crown. The ascetics of India wear their hair long, and so do the war-like Sikhs, and almost all the Mongolian peoples. At Byzantium and Rhodes the shaving of the beard was prohibited by law, and in Sparta the cutting of the beard was a mark of slavery and servitude. Among the Scandinavians, we are told, it was considered a disgrace, “a mark of infancy,” to cut off the hair. The whole population of the island of Ceylon (the Buddhist Singhalese) wear their hair long. So do the Russian, Greek and Armenian clergy, and monks. Jesus and the Apostles are always represented with their hair long, but *fashion* in Christendom proved stronger than Christianity, the old ecclesiastical rules¹ enjoining the clergy “to wear their hair and beards long.”² The Templars were commanded to wear their beards long. Samson wore his hair long, and the biblical allegory shows that health and strength and the very life are connected with the length of the hair. If a cat is shaved it will die in nine cases out of ten. A dog whose coat is not interfered with lives longer and is more intelligent than one whose coat is shaven. Many old people as they lose their hair lose much of their memory and become weaker. While the life of the Yogis is proverbially long, the Buddhist priests (of Ceylon and elsewhere) are not generally long-lived. Mussulmen shave their heads but wear their beards; and as their head is always covered, the danger is less.³



¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, lib. 1, c. 3; [Concerning the adornment of ourselves, and the sin which arises from thence.]

² See Riddle's *Christian Antiquities* [1839, p. 594 & fn.]

³ *Theosophical Glossary*: Hair