CHAPTER I

PHENOMENA OF OCCULTISM

Occultism is a term of modern invention, though in the earliest history of mankind, occult practices had been known to have existed at all levels of the society in almost all parts of the world.

Etymological meaning of the English word 'Occultism'

First, it would be relevant to recount the root-meaning of the word 'Occult.' According to 'Webster International,'(1) the word 'Occult' comes from the word 'Occultare', which means to conceal, to hide from sight, to eclipse or to extinguish the light by intervention. The Oxford Dictionary(2) also attributes the same meaning.

Both the sources denote occultism as the doctrines, practices and rites of things hidden and mysterious, not yet verifiable by scientific experimentation.

Scope of Occultism

Extended meaning of occultism covers mysteries, marvels and miracles of every kind which are not openly verifiable by direct experimentation; such as, Alchemy, Necromancy, Astronomy, Astrology, Telepathy, Onirromancy, Haruspexation, Scapulimancy, Chiromancy, Cartomancy, Rhabdomancy, Dactylo-mancy, palmistry, Clairvoyance, Clair-audience, predictions, visions, apparitions, monitions, pre-visions, Hypnotism, mediumship, telekinesis, witchcraft sorcery, demonology, theology, thaumaturgy, animism, divination, fetichism, idolatry, spiritism, psychometry, śatkarma consisting of Vaśikaraṇa, Stambhana, mārāṇa, Vidvēṣaṇa, Ucchātana, Śāntikarma and various other para-psychological phenomena.

Broadly speaking, occultism is the product of primitive psychological wanderings in the wonderland of vast and varied natural phenomena, dating from the earliest days of human civilization.
Some of the significant features of occultism, however, as traceable in the occult Śāstraic texts are that:

Occult practices are mainly permeated with the spirit of exercising compelling powers over the supernaturals by prayers & rites, to make them act according to the suppllicant's solicitations (3).

This spirit of compelling supernaturals is noticeable in almost all the mantras of the Atharva-Veda (AV) - the oldest anthology of Indian occult formulas - spells & incantations.

For example, AV mantra 1.30.2 clearly compels the gods to act according to the performer's desire. This is clearly evident from the assertive nature of the language of the mantra:

Whoso of you, O gods, are fathers and who sons, do ye accordant (Sacetas), hear this utterance of mine, to you all I commit this man, happily unto old age shall ye carry him (4).

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(4) Ye Vo devāḥ pitaro Ye ca putrāḥ Sacetāso me Śrūnutedamuttamam I Sarvebhīyo Vah pari dādāmyetam sastyenam Jarase Vahā-tha II

(There is also another reading 'uktam' for 'uttamam')
In AV 1.29.2, the god Brahmanaspati, is being directed to crush the rivals. "Rolling over our rivals, over them that are niggards to us, do thou trample on him who fights on whoever abuses us".

The mantra, 1.28.2 bids Agni, to burn the sorcerers and witches.

The mantra AV. III. 1.2 peremptorily asks the Maruts to go forward and kill the enemies.

The mantra AV. IV. 22.1 directs Indra to remove all rivals and bestow success and prosperity.

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(5) Abhivrt-a SapatnAnabhi Ya no arAtayah I
Abhi prAtanyantAm tišthābhi Yo no durasyati II
(6) Prati daha Yātudhānān prati deva kīmīdinaḥ I
Pratich Kṛṣṇaṇavartane śaṃ dāha Yātudhānyah II
(7) Yūyamugrā maruta Īdrśe Stābhi preta mṛñata Sahadhvam I
Abhimrnan Vasavo Nāthita āme agnihyesam dūtah prayetu Vidvān II
(8) Imamindra Vardhaya Kṣatriyam ma imam Viśamekavrśam KrnUtvaṃ I
Niramitrānāksnuhyasya Sarvāṃstān randhayasyaṃ ahamuttaresu II
Mantras of such compelling nature are found also in the RV, Purāṇa and Tantras. e.g. The RV mantra 1.42.1 asks Pūṣan to save from dangers and to reach the supplicants, the destination(9). RV.X.145.2. asks the supernatural spirits to subjugate the co-wife and bring her husband to control(10).

In Tantras also, we find similar notion. e.g. in the Kārṇa-piśācī—mantra, the deity Kārṇa-piśācī is asked to accept the fire-roasted fish as offerings and bestow success in exchange(11).

In Devī-purāṇa, we find mantras where devī is bidden to fulfil one’s desires(12).

(9) Sam Pūṣannadvanastira byamho Vimuco napāt I
Saksvā deva pra ṇaspurah II RV.1.42.1

(10) Uttānaparne subhage devajūte sāhaśvatī I
Sapatnīṁ me para dhama patim me kevalam kuru II RV.X.145.2.

(11) Om Karnapiśācī dagdhamīnabalīm grhṇa grhṇa mama sīdhim
kuru kuru svāheti dagdhamīnabalīm dadyāt I

( Brhat-Tantra-sārah, compiled by Krishnananda
Agamabagish, III, Karnapiśācī-mantra, 5)

(12) Om nama Bhagavati .... sarvabighnavināsīni idam karma
sādhaya sādhaya sīghram tvra tvra .... cala cala cālaya
cālaya .... chinda chinda māraya māraya.

( Devī-Purāṇa, 9th Adhyāya )
There are also various mantras praying for material benefits (13) in which the language is not always overtly compelling in nature. But, it must not be lost sight of, that in these cases also, there is an inherent endeavour to influence the supernatural deities by prayers and encomiums, leading them to act according to the performer's prayers which can be termed as a method of second degree compulsion. All these, therefore, come within the sphere of occultism.

This principal aspect of occultism has not escaped the attention of distinguished modern writers on the subject. For example, R.R. Marett, Alfred Lehmann and Sir James Frazer.

(13) Sam no devirabhistaye āpo bhavantu pitaye I
Sam Yorabhi Sravantu nah II
RV. X. 9.4

Saraswatiṃ Yām pitaro havante daksinā yajamabhirakṣamānāḥ I
Ṣāsravdhamido apa bhāgam rāyasposam yajamānāsu dhehi II
RV. X. 17.9

(Vide also - AV.i.6.3; i.1.1; i.5.1; i.24.3; i.14;
vi.79; vi.80.2; vi.90.3; vii.31.3; ix.4.2; xix.8.1-3,6,7)
consider this compelling nature as a distinctive feature of occult practices\(^{(14)}\)

\(^{(14)}\) "Magic has its origin in the belief that man is able by their exercise, to control the unseen powers and force them to act in accordance with his own will."


"Magisch sind diejeniger Handlungen, durch die man, wie man unnimmt, eine zwingende macht über die Götter ausüben kann, während Handlungen, durch welche man nur die Stimmung der Götter zu beeinflussen hofft, als eigentliche kultus Handlungen zu betrachten sind."

Alfred Lehmann, Aberglaube and Zauberei, p.12. Stuttgart, 1925

The magician does not doubt that the same cause will always produce the same effect, that the performance of the proper ceremony, accompanied by appropriate spell, will inevitably be attended by the desired result .......

he supplicates no higher power: he sues the favour of no fickle and wayward being; he abases before no awful deity'.


( It needs to be clarified here, that the above mentioned authors, for that matter, used the word magic identically in the sense of occultism. As a matter of fact, the two are
Such compulsive tendency or coercion of the supernatural, divine or semi-divine beings are executed through rituals, or mutterings or both.

Occult rites, therefore, are twofold in character and comprises two distinct elements - an oral rite and a manual rite. The oral part is usually accompanied by rituals, but there are cases where only spells are chanted without rites or only rites are performed without accompaniment of spells and incantations.

Occultism is generally secular in design. In almost all cases of occult practices, benefits craved for, are mundane in nature. For example, an abode in heaven or acquiring of unseen spiritual merit is normally not aspired or craved for in occult practices. The occultist shows a distinct tendency to utilize the synonymous. The word magic comes from the word Gr. *μαγεία* and the Lat. *magia*, which refers to religion, learning and occult practices of Persian Magi or the Zoroastrian sect of priests. (E.R.E. VIII, 'Magie', p.245, Edinburgh, 1915) Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol.XVI, pp.681, 1768, London University) also treats the two words as identical.

(15) cf. Zum Zauber gehört wort oder Handlung beide Können sich vereinen; aber es genügt auch allein, das Wort oder die von gedanken be-gleitete Handlung.


*Greek (Gr)  **Latin (Lat)*
Supernatural forces for the attainment of secular benefits, e.g., to cure disease (16), to remove a rival (17), to win over a certain person (18), to attain long life (19), wealth (20), etc.

As these occult rituals are highly technical and difficult, the practice of the same has been restricted to persons of special attainment & qualities.

The Tantras give in details the qualities of the disciple (21) who aspires to learn occultism as well as of the guru who undertakes to teach it (22).

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(16) AV. II.8.3; I.3.2, 22-25.
(17) AV. III.1,2; IV.19; VI.134, 135.
(18) AV. I.34; II.20; VI.130-132, 139; VII.38, 8,9.
(19) AV. I.35; II.3,28,29; III.11; V.30.
(20) AV. I.15; III.5,15; IV.22; VI.129.
(21) Šánto vinītah śuddhātma śraddhāvān dhāraṇākṣamah
Samartha śca kulīnascā prājaḥ saccarito yatih
Evamādigunāiyuktah śiṣyo bhavati nānyathā II

Vṛhattantrasārah 1.26 (Śiṣyalakṣanam)

(Vide also 1.27 - 33)

(22) Šánto dāntah kulīnascā vinītah śuddhāvesāvah I
Śuddhācārah supratiṣṭhah śucirdakṣah subuddhimān II
Asrāmī dhyānanīṣṭhasca tantraamantravisāradah I
Nigrahanugrahe śakto gurūrityabhidhiyate II

Ibid. 1.3.4 (Gurulakṣanām)

(Vide also - Suśruta-saṁhitā, kalpa-sthānam, V.5.)
These occult rituals are supposed to contain the potency of special extra-ordinary powers like travel-as-you-like in the space (23), to disappear from sight (24), to bring rains by spells & incantations etc. (25).

**Atharvan, Abhicära, Mäyä & Indrajäla**

In the Vedas, there is no exact word for occultism, but certain words like Atharvan, Abhicära, Mäyä and Indrajäla occurring therein, convey the meaning akin to occultism.

(23) Gomûtram badarîmûlam candanam pàmsûmeva ca
Ekîkrtvâstadhā japtvā tilakam dhārayet sada I

Varam prâpya ca tasmād vai viharettu yathā-sukham II

'Vṛhattantarasaṁāraḥ 3.18

(24) Ibid 3.51 ( Adarasana-prakārah )

(25) Samutpatantu (AV.IV.15) pra nabhasva (AV. VII.19 )
itvā varśakāmō dvādasā-rātram, ........
tripādesmānamavadhāyapsu nidadhāti (Kauś. 41. 127)
Vide also - Varśakāmeṣṭih Karīri. (Ā.S. 2.13.1)
tasyam ' Prati tyam ' cārumadhvaramīde (RV. 1.19.1)
Agnim svavasam namobhiriti dhāyye (Ā.S. 2.13.2 )
The word 'Atharvā' as found in the RV & AV: other Vedic texts

Yā Atharvānam pitaram devabandhum vṛhaspatim nāmasava ca
gacchat (26), Kah prṣṣiṁ dhenum varuṇena dattāmatharvaṇe (27).
Atharvāno bhṛgavaṃ somyāsah (28), Agnirjāto Atharvāṇa (29).
Atharvāno bhṛgavaṃ somyāsah (28), Agnirjāto Atharvāṇa (29).
Atharvāno bhṛgavaṃ somyāsah (28), Agnirjāto Atharvāṇa (29).

The word 'Abhicara' in the Vedas signifies maleficent occult practices causing injury to others, e.g. Pari eva
pātu samānebhyobhicārāt sabandhubhyah (34) mā tvā prāpayacchāpanāmābhisicārasyah (35), Abhisicārādatho bhayat (36).

The word 'Mayā' on the RV & AV denotes a kind of supernatural power capable of casting spell to create mental obsession or capable of assuming different forms by an individual e.g. Sa naḥ kṛtani sīṣatī prahāmapnotu māyaya (37), Rūpaṃ rūpam
mabhavā bobhaviti māyah kṛṇvānastavan pari svām (38).

(26) AV.IV.1.7 (27) AV.VII.109.1 (28) AV.XVIII.1.58
(29) RV.X.21.5 (30) RV.VI.16.13
(31) V.S. II.32; T.S. 4.1.3.2, 5.1.4.3; MS 2.7.3
(32) GB 1.5.24 (33) RV.X.II.1.2; SV 2.2 (34) AV.VII.2.26
(35) AV. XI. 1.22 (36) AV. X.3.7b
(37) AV.IV.38.3 (38) RV.XI. 53.8 ( Maya vyāmohakasaktih sāyanabhāṣya )
In the RV, the word 'Māyā' occurs a number of times. In the RV, it is said that Indra assumes form after form, working māyās about his body (39) and Indra assumes many forms by 'Māyā' or mysterious power (40). Besides these, there are many mentions about 'Māyā' of evil spirits (asuras) (41). In the AV a mention is made about Asura's Māyā (42).

In Mārkanḍeya Purāṇa we find that a demon changes his form completely with the help of Māyā (43).

Devi-Purāṇa defines Māyā as a strange phenomenon producing incomprehensible results whose cause and action cannot be correlated (44).

The early Vedic and Purānic usages of the word Māyā therefore signifies a kind of occult power. Ruth Reyna in her

(39) Rūpam rūpaṁ maghavā bhabhavī
Māyāḥ kṛṇvānanastvan pari svāṁ I
RV. iii.53.3

(40) Indro māyābhiḥ purūrūpa īyate.
RV. vi.47.18.

(41) Dharmaṇā Mitrāvaruṇaḥ vipāscitā vrata
Raktṛthe asurasya māyayā I
RV. v.64.7 (Vide also RV. vi.64.3)

(42) Vapūmsi kṛṇvānasastrasya māyayā. AV. vi.72.1

(43) Māyāvi dānavaḥ sōtha munirūpaṁ samāsthitaḥ I
Sa prāṇa rājaputram tam pūrvvairamanusmarat II
Mārkanḍeyapurāṇa. 22.7

(44) Vicitrakāryakaraṇaḥ acintiṣaphalapradā I
Swapnendrajālaballeko māyatena prakīrtitā II
Devi-Purāṇa. 37.58
The word Maya occurs in the early mantras and denotes a kind of magic.


The term Maya signifies occult power applicable in a good sense to gods or in a bad sense to demons. It has an almost exact parallel in the English word 'Craft', which in its old signification meant occult power .......... in the one hand and deceitful skill on the other.

Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p.24

(45) The word Maya occurs in the early mantras and denotes a kind of magic.

(46) Macdonell in his Vedic Mythology holds the same view.

This word, however in later stages, took a high philosophical meaning. For example:

Mayam tu prakritim vidyat mayinam tu Mahesvaram
Mayamitrnam tu karstyena anabhivyaktasvaruptat.

Of all the Vedas, the word 'Indrajala' occurs in a singular instance in the Atharvasveda only, where this word as in 'Tenahamindrajalenamumstamasabhi dadhami sarvam', when read in conjunction with 'Bhaddhi jalam bhatah sakrasya vajinivatah', conveys the meaning of an occult power by means of which, enemies can be conquered.

(47) Svet. Upa. 4.10 (48) Brahmasutra Vadarayana. 3.2.3
(49) AV. viii. 8.8 (50) AV. viii. 8.6
Difference between Indrajāla and Occultism.

The word Indrajāla however, as it is now understood, means an art of deception and misdirection, purely of entertainment value, based on illusion and trickery or sleight of hand.

Vācaspatya dictionary gives the meaning of Indrajāla as: 'Indrena kausālādyāśāryena jālam drasturnetarāvaranam yathāvaṣṭhitā-vastudarsaṇāksamatvasādhanāt, Indrasya paramesvarasya jālam māyeva vā. Mantrāṣadādārāṃ aṃyathāsthitasya vastuno'nyathātvena darśanasādhanhe (kuhaka) ....... Indrajālam ca dravyaviśeṣa-samyojena ādvutavastudarsakavyāpāraḥ ........... mantradhvavyaviśeṣena vastuno'nyathā-karaṇam ca.'

In other words, Indrajāla is used in the sense of 'art of deception and misdirection' i.e. magic in its popular sense.

During the period of Indrajāla performance, the people are aware that the whole thing is a shamshow and the man behind the show, i.e. the performer, is a deceiver.

Occultism, on the other hand, is entirely different. It employs no trickeries, accepts no deceitful practices and endeavours to produce actual results by proper incantations and rites. The occultist does not regard his performances as illusion or

shamshows but as the infallible medium to attain worldly prosperity. For example, the Indrajâla performance of sawing a person into two, is nothing but a fraud; the person actually is never sawn. The magician by adopting artful method of deception, makes it look like real. But when a true occult rite to kill an enemy is performed, genuine efforts are made to kill him. The occultist believes that the enemy will be actually killed, if the rite is correctly performed.

Vanishing trick is also a popular magical performance in which a person or an object is made to disappear publicly. Such disappearance is also an act of trickery by clever and artful use of coloured lights, screens and mechanical aids. But disappearance of an occult performer from a certain place and simultaneous appearance in more than one place (which many sadhus and yogis are authentically reported to have done) is not false or an act of deception but is actually considered to have been done by occult power.

That Indrajâla was a very popular entertainment as an art of deception and misdirection and won many royal favours, has ample illustrations in the old Sanskrit Kâvyas. In Ratnâvalî, the Aindrâjalika demonstrates by his Indrajâla that the royal palace is on fire. The illusion was so perfect that the king rushed out to save Sagarika and soon found that the palace was undamaged and things were as they were.
He then realised that it was an act of Indrajāla: 
'Svapne matirbhavati kim nātāṃ indrajālam!' (52)

Another interesting illustration of Indrajāla is found in Daśakumāracharitam (53). Indrajāla as an art of deception was so popular and captivating that the Aindrajālika, while showing the acts of Indrajāla took advantage of the situation and actually married away a prince with another princess in presence of the king who took it to be a demonstration of Indrajāla.

**Bhojavidyā and Bhānumatī-kā-khel**

We come across two more words of common Indian usages namely, Bhojavidyā and Bhānumatī-kā-khel.

To correctly understand the meaning of these two terms, it would be necessary to trace their origin. Bhavisyapurāṇa (54) and Barahapurāṇa (55) mention that the king Sāṃva, son of Kṛṣṇa and Jāmvavatī, brought the Maga Brāhmīns to India for worshiping the sun in order to be cured of leprosy. Since then, these

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(52) Ratnavali. Act. IV.
(53) Daśakumāracharitam. Ucchvāsa V (Avantisundarāparinaya)
(54) Bhavisyapurāṇa. 117 Adyāya, 139 - 140 Adhyāyas
(55) Barahapurāṇa. 77 Adhyāya.
Brahmins were engaged in worshiping the sun. Many of them were married to women of the Bhoja clan and their offspring came to be known as Bhojakas \(^{(56)}\). It is said that these Bhojaka Brahmins excelled in occult science and occult science was often termed as Bhojavidya after the name of Bhoja Brahmins. According to some, occult science was termed Bhojavidya after the name of Bhojarāja, the king of Bhoja, who is reputed to have excelled in occult practices \(^{(57)}\).

Some people, however, do not accept any of the two views and maintain that Bhojavidya is a mere degenerated form of Bhūja-vidyā (sleight-of-hand). Therefore, in their opinion Bhojavidya is merely an art of deception and does not relate to Bhojarāja, Bhojaka Brahmins or any kind of occult performances.

In the same manner, according to some, Bhānumatī-kā-khel indicates occult science. This opinion, arises out of the popular belief that Bhānumatī, daughter of the King Bhoja and wife of King Vikramāditya, was herself skilled in occult performances. Quite a few disapprove such a theory and suggest that Bhānumatī-kā-khel means bhān (deception) and mātī (mind) kā khel (art) i.e. a performance enacted by confusing or misdirecting the mind by deceptive measures \(^{(58)}\).

\(^{(56)}\) Bhavīṣya-purāṇa. 140 Adhyāya. 35 Sloka
\(^{(58)}\) Bhāratkosa, I, Indrajāla, p. 518, Bāngiya Sāhitya Parisad, Calcutta.
All these words do not reach upto the modern and comprehensive meaning of the word occultism, yet they convey an analogous or part meaning of the word.

**Origin of Occultism**

Sorcerers and Witches are found among the earliest and the lowest savage tribes almost in every part of the world. Occult performances of these primitive sorcerers are probably the first sign of human civilisation in the process of evolution. Hegel says: 'In some form or the other, magic has existed among all people and at every period.'

It must be admitted that a first psychological impression on the undeveloped primitive mind made by any strange natural phenomenon and calamities like flood, famine, storm, thunder, drought, epidemics etc., created an impression of awe and bewilderment on the mind of the primitive people. Its immediate reaction was that they took these to be acts of supernatural beings whom they wanted to propitiate. Such propitiation was in the form of prayers and rites, which apparently is the origin of Occultism.

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(59) Frazer, Magic Art, Chap. I, p.420

(60) Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion

These performances did not always produce the desired results which the simple primitive people believed they would actually produce. Their belief in potency of occult practices was shaken when they found that in spite of all these enchantments to bring rains at the time of severe drought, there were no signs of rain. Thus, they gradually realised that there is a stronger force which was beyond their power to control. This set the more thoughtful part of mankind to search for a truer theory of nature, which in its course gave rise to the concept of God and religion. In this way, many sociologists and anthropologists are also inclined to regard magic as older than belief in gods.

(61) Barrenness of magic set the more thoughtful part of mankind to cast about for a truer theory of nature and a more fruitful method of turning her resources to account. Frazer, Golden Bough, Chap. IV, p.57.

Religion and Occultism

According to the lexicographers religion is human recognition of super-human controlling powers, entitled to obedience and effect of such recognition on conduct and mind (63).

Occult science is also founded on the belief in controlling powers of the supernatural beings, but it has no necessary effect on human conduct and mind. That is why we find many black occult practices causing injury to others (64).

Secondly, religion in its developed form is the science of self-evolution. Religious practices of prayers and meditation are all calculated aids to self-development. But, occult practices, as found in Indian texts of occultism, are generally circumscribed by motives of worldly gain and are not directed to self-evolution or search of truth.

Occult practices and Religious rites

In occult rites, benefits sought for by the performers are generally immediate and worldly in nature, e.g. the marana, vasikaran or healing rites. We see, that the immediate results of these performances are to kill an enemy or to win over certain persons or to cure someone of diseases, and so on.

(64) Magic has no religious sanction or halo of sanctity like the sacrifice.

Jogiraj Basu, India of the Age of Brahmanas, Book IIIa, p.148
But in religious rites, the aim is to acquire unseen benefits like attainment of punya, svarga (heaven) or heavenly bliss etc. e.g. it is said that by performing Pitryajña Sacrifice one can attain heaven:

\[ \text{Pitryajña svargam lokam gamayati} \] (65)

Attainment of heaven is the remote reward which will be obtained by the performer when he will pass away from this world; but the occult rites are performed with the exclusive object of fulfilling immediate worldly desires (66).

There are however some religious rites where material gains are also prayed for e.g. the Rājasūya, the Vājapeya sacrifices. These are performed for attainment of kingship, Imperial power and sovereignty but in these cases also, there is a difference in spirit between religion and occultism.

(65) \( \text{TB. 1.6.8.1} \)

(66) The effect of magic is transitory whereas the result of the sacrifice is lasting and extends to the other world. "Magic has no jurisdiction over the other world, its effect being confined to this world."

In religious rites, prayers and devotion to gods and achievement of punya or unseen merit are the main objects and acquiring material benefits is secondary (67), whereas in occult rites, obtaining material benefits is the primary object, and prayers to gods are merely the means to win them for bestowing the favours.

It is also said that the underlying spirit of sacrificial rites is union with the gods through the performances.

Devatānām yajamānam sāyujyam
sarūpātām salokātām gāvyati (AB. 2.8.6)

Attainment of material benefit is only subordinate to

According to Frazer (67) difference between religious rites and occult performances is that in case of the former, the performer abases before the deities wholly in a spirit of submission soliciting his favours, whereas in occultism, attempts are made to compel the supernaturals to grant the favours asked for (68).

(67) In the sacrifice, the worldly gains are incidental, the real reward lies in the life hereafter in heaven.


(68) Magic constrains or coerces instead of conciliating or propitiating them as religion would do

Religion involves a belief in supernatural beings who rule the world and attempt to win their favour.

Hartland, Shende and Jogiraj Basu also hold nearly the same view (69).

(69) Occult science conveys the notion of power, by whatsoever means acquired, wielded by magician as his own, and not as that of higher beings whose co-operation is only obtained by supplication and self-abasement.


Religion, on the other hand is confined to cultural systems, to be approached with true worship and may or may not grant the prayers of their suppliants. It is treated with reverence & submission as something, transcending the man.

Ibid, p.88

Religion consists of a belief in the powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate them ....... It is the sweet will of the deity, thus pacified which confers such favours on the devotee.

The priest is confident of the fact that his performance ....... is bound to yield the exact result. In magic, thus the desired effect does not depend on the caprice or sweet will of the deity.

But occult and religious rites can hardly be discriminated on the above basis, because the spirit of submission often is an indirect form of compulsion. The submissive prayers are also attempts to indirectly compel the supernaturals by prayers and encomiums.

It is in fact very hard to clearly distinguish between religious rites & occultism. Many eminent scholars like Oldenberg(70) and Hillebrandt(71) clearly admit that occultism

In magic, there is force or co-ercion; in sacrifice there is no co-ercion; the sacrificer and the priests appeal to the gods to grant their prayer. The Magician tries to bend all corporal agents, to his will to produce the desired effect by black art or illusion, but it is not so in the case of sacrifice.


(70) Auf die drigsten Kultur Stufen ist begreiflicherweise der Kultus des Opfers und der Anbetung - Soweit er da vorhanden ist - mit dem Betrieb der Zauberer auf das engste verbunden; der Priester ist Zugleich Zauberer .......


(71) Die Scheidung von opfer und Zauber, schon nach modernen
and religion, are so closely interwoven that they cannot be clearly differentiated. Keith (72) also holds the same view.

Occultism and Science

The fundamental conception of occultism and science may be stated to be identical in certain aspects. Both occultism and science are based on a faith that in nature one event follows another necessarily and invariably, and both accept

mehr oder wenigen Künstlichen Begriffsbestimmungen schwer durchführbar, versagt gegenüber dem in Indien überlieferten Material und hat auch in der indischen Anschauung selbst keine Begründung.

Hillebrandt, Ritual Literatur, p.167

(Actually there is not much basic difference between occultism and religion of the RV)

(72) In many case the sacrifice itself is degraded to mere magic.

Keith, Religion of Veda & Upanishad,
Harvard Oriental Series, Vol.32,
The magic & sacrifice, p.396.

In other respects, the parallelism between sacrifice and magic is very close. ... The sacrifice might well have in it, all initio elements of magic and certainly the Vedic sacrifice known to us, have many.

ibid. p.398
the laws of causality - that the same cause will always produce the same effect (73) e.g. whenever there is drought, the occultist believes that the cause behind it is the gods' anger; if the gods are appeased the cause will be removed and rains will start. The scientist however asserts that the drought is caused by particular atmospheric conditions, which, if are controlled and purposefully conditioned by scientific methods, can be activated to produce the rains.

The Occultist believes that correct performance of occult rites invariably produces the desired result, as much as the scientist believes that correct application of scientific theories will produce the desired effects. Neither the occultist, nor the scientist seeks the favour of any deity as both have complete faith in their own systems. They endeavour to claim sovereignty over nature - the occultist, by rigidly following the rules of his art and the scientist, by application of his theories.

(73) Thus its fundamental conception is identical with that of occultism; underlying the whole system is a faith, implicit, but real and firm in the order and uniformity of native ........ The magician does not doubt that the same cause will always produce the same effect - that the performance of the proper ceremony, accompanied by the appropriate spell, will inevitably be attended by the desired result, unless his incantations should chance to be thwarted and foiled. Frazer, Golden Bough. Chap.IV, p.49
For this reason, occultism is sometimes termed as occult Science.

* It is fact that occult practices often do not bring desired results. Because of this, occult science is sometimes termed as false science or pseudo-science. But it must however be recognized that results of occult rites are wholly dependent on absolutely correct performance of rites and fitness of the performer himself. The performer must possess prescribed qualities which are severely austere and very difficult (Vide Chap.I, p.18). Slight departure from procedures and performer's qualities, is destined to failure. Few occultists can ever attain and retain qualities demanded of them. It is probably because of this particular reason, occult rites often fail to produce the desired results. It may not therefore be right to categorically denounce occultism as a pseudo-science.

It may also be observed that there might have been a period in ancient India, when this science was practised with definite success, otherwise one cannot reasonably account for vast and voluminous occult Sastras, composed in Sanskrit in a continuous line, covering a period of several centuries.
The difference between occultism and science is that the occultist believes in super-causation and that all calamities are caused by displeasure of the gods and spirits, abounding in the world; but science does not accept such supra-sensible sources, because these are not verifiable by direct experimentation.