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A REFLECTION ON *THE SECRET DOCTRINE*, No. 20

The cast of actors entering and exiting the pages of *The Secret Doctrine* includes some of the most elusive and mysterious characters you could imagine. Take, for instance, the Lipikas. Who are they? And what do they do? The reader is provided with precious little information—just enough to arouse curiosity. Scholars explain that the word *Lipika* comes from the Sanskrit verbal root *lip*, meaning to write, to inscribe, to engrave; which is why the Lipikas are sometimes called Recorders, Scribes, or Annalists—names not meant to be taken literally, but metaphorically. Theosophists commonly refer to them as the Lords of Karma.

According to the Author of *The Secret Doctrine*, “These Divine Beings are connected with Karma . . . [They keep] a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe. As said in *Isis*, this divine and unseen canvas is the BOOK OF LIFE.”

Commentators provide additional insights: “They hold the threads of destiny which each man has woven, and guide the reincarnating man to the environment determined by his past” (Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom*). “They are infinitely more impersonal and more automatic in their action than are the recorders in a court of law, setting down word by word, act by act, whatever takes place in the cosmic court-room; and their record is infinitely accurate and just. There is no personal equation at all” (Purucker, *The Dialogues of G. de Purucker*). “Each one may add to his own ‘Book of Life.’ In fact, everyone is doing so, whether a person is aware of it or not” (Barborka, *The Divine Plan*).

One more thing bears mention. No human word or deed goes unnoticed by these Cosmic Scribes. In human affairs, people sometimes manage to evade accountability for their actions in the court of public opinion, or in the realm of jurisprudence, but not so with Karma. For the Lipikas never take a vacation; they are on the job, so to speak, day and night. At the dawn of a new Manvantara, they are the first to appear; and as Universal Day yields to Universal Night, they are the last ones there to turn off the lights.

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