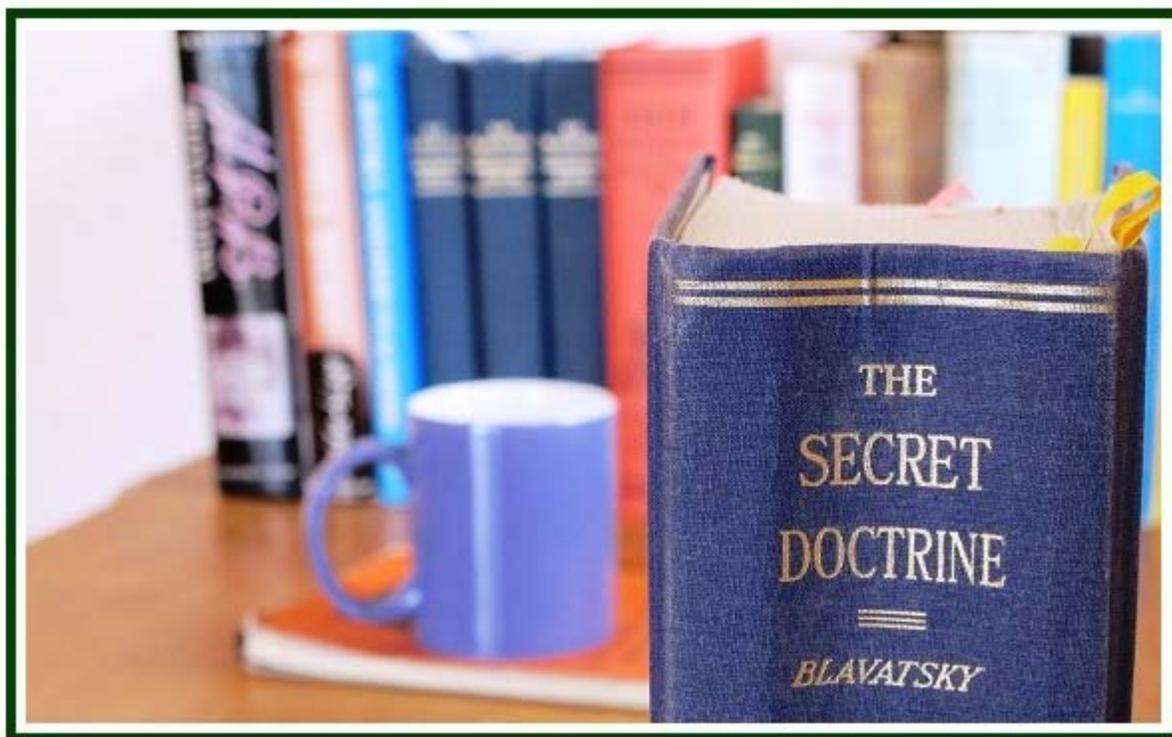




# On the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*

Esoteric Philosophy For the 21st Century

Steven H. Levy



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## PREFACE

This publication began as a series of weekly contributions to *E-Theosophy*. The organizers of *E-Theosophy* requested that these commentaries be gathered together in a book format for wider circulation and convenience of study. The original commentaries were submitted unsigned, although their author was not unknown, as the sole purpose of the writer was to facilitate mutual study, thought, and help in understanding and applying the eternal truths of the Esoteric Philosophy to the problems of the student of “The Secret Doctrine” in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The author is grateful for the replies as many of the responses by students were insightful, practical, and instructive for all who participated. With this aim and hope, this work is offered in the service of the cause of The Theosophical Movement and Humanity.

There have been many valuable commentaries written by students of Theosophy on “The Secret Doctrine.” Ultimately, each serious student will write their own meaningful and changing commentaries over many years, as their study continues, their insight deepens and experience expands. The approach taken by the author of these commentaries is threefold. First, to attempt to express the meaning of the words found in “The Secret Doctrine” in contemporary language to aid their promulgation and understanding. Second, to draw analogies and correspondences between the great cosmic processes described in the text and the workings of the human heart and mind in order to make “The Secret Doctrine” a more personal book. Third, to demonstrate how “The Proem” specifically was written to arouse the intuition and compassion of the student, for these two qualities are indispensable to the practical application of metaphysical doctrines.

As to the structure of the book, each chapter reproduces in part one of the weekly commentaries. Part I introduces the student to the study of “The Secret Doctrine” by consideration of the need to study the book, the purpose of the book, and the right attitude to be assumed in its study. The comments made are drawn directly from H. P. Blavatsky’s own words in the “Preface” and “Introduction” to the first volume of “The Secret Doctrine.”

Part II is concerned with the study of “The Proem.” Chapter 4 establishes the purpose of “The Proem” to arouse the intuition of the student. The three methods employed are the use of symbolism, a presentation of propositions in the form of universal, self-evident general conceptions, and an outline of the “Stanzas” on which “The Secret Doctrine” is based that provide a formula that can be applied in many directions by correspondence and analogy.

Chapters 5 through 22 are concerned with these methods. Each method appeals to and exercises a specific faculty of the mind of the student. Chapter 23 lays out before the student some of the hindrances and obstacles, within and without, that will have to be faced and overcome if these concepts are to be understood according to the true intent of the Teachers of these doctrines.

Steven H. Levy, M.D., in August 2014.

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# PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE

## CHAPTER 1

### The Need to Study “The Secret Doctrine”

“The Secret Doctrine”(SD) is written for those who are searching for the truths that unite all Beings and forms of life. It is important to realize that religion is the bond of unity and its purpose is to unite all and tie all back to one source. Truth and Religion are one in essence and purpose. William Q. Judge (WQJ) quotes from a letter of a Master of Wisdom who had a direct role in its production. The Master states that it is “an epitome of occult truths that will make it a source of information and instruction for long years to come.” [1]

#### **H.P.B. writes:**

“For the Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion.” (SD I, xx)

“The world of to-day, in its mad career towards the unknown—which it is too ready to confound with the unknowable, whenever the problem eludes the grasp of the physicist—is rapidly progressing on the reverse, material plane of spirituality. It has now become a vast arena—a true valley of discord and of eternal strife—a necropolis, wherein lie buried the highest and the most holy aspirations of our Spirit-Soul. That soul becomes with every new generation more paralyzed and atrophied.” (SD I, xxii)

#### **Commentary:**

The SD leads the student in the 21st Century out of the valley of discord and strife with oneself, with others, and with nature. It provides a key to direct knowledge of the ever-renewing One Life. For the human soul who feels the need to renew itself in the light of its divine source, its

study may be more relevant in the dawn of the 21st Century than at the time it was written. Each new generation of students needs to find the words to express the timeless truths of the Esoteric Philosophy and to weave its wisdom into the fabric of their lives. Finding a sustaining source of spiritual aspiration may have its peculiar challenges in our times, but some obstacles are always with us. Renunciation and liberation from the illusion of separateness, the attachment to things, and dogmatism in Science and Religion, can be found in soul satisfying doctrines that open the mind to a glimpse into the real and enduring dimension of our being and nature's being hidden to the physical senses.

## NOTE:

[1] "A Word On The Secret Doctrine", a text published in "Theosophical Articles", William Q. Judge, Volume II, pg. 62. The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1980.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Purpose of "The Secret Doctrine"

In order to appreciate the purpose of the SD, it is helpful to remember that its contents are a partial expression of an ancient body of knowledge. The soul-wisdom of the SD can never be completely expressed in words. One purpose of this book is to provide some keys that will initiate the student into soul-wisdom. Its larger purpose for Humanity is to restore the knowledge that the doctrines of the Esoteric Philosophy have always served as a stimulus to virtue.

#### **H.P.B. writes:**

"It is needless to explain that this book is not the Secret Doctrine in its entirety, but a select number of fragments of its fundamental tenets..." (SD 1, viii)

"The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world. Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records of its history, a complete chain of documents, showing its character and presence in every land, together with the teaching of all its great adepts, exist today in the secret crypts of Libraries belonging to the Occult Fraternity." (SD 1, xxxiv)

"The documents were concealed, it is true, but the knowledge itself and its actual existence had never been made a secret of by the Hierophants of the Temple, wherein Mysteries have ever been made a discipline and stimulus to virtue." (SD 1, xxxv)

"...the now Secret Wisdom was once the one fountainhead, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets - the later religions of all nations - from the first down to the last." (SD 1, xlv)

#### **Commentary:**

One meaning of the word “religion” is to bind all beings together. The purpose of religion and the search for truth is to find, express, and apply the ideas common to all philosophies and religious creeds. The doctrines of true religion relate to all people, at anytime, and in any place or condition. Its natural tendency would be universal diffusion in the minds and hearts of all human beings. The human faults and weaknesses that prevent its universal diffusion are the same obstacles that obscure the acquirement of soul wisdom – prejudice, superstition, materialism, and dogmatism. True religion is not only universal; it is self-evident because it is soul wisdom. Self-knowledge is the same as soul-wisdom when that knowledge embraces what is universal and enduring in all beings. Self-knowledge added to faith in the Self and unity of all beings is the basis of a universally diffused religion.

Besides the weaknesses of the human heart, the ignorance and delusion are obstacles to the universal diffusion of truth and the acquirement of soul-wisdom. Ignorance is in this sense not an absence of knowledge, but a failure to see the truth because of presence of incomplete or faulty knowledge. It is the fullness of the mind with false ideas, rather than its emptiness, that accounts for ignorance of truth and delusion that the false idea is the truth. The wisdom regarding the Self and the nature of Soul is buried within like a treasure beneath mounds of partial and distorted truths. For all intents and purposes, true Soul-knowledge is a secret hidden from the mind because of self-erected blinders. Those blinders have to be removed, but they can only be removed when the student is willing and ready. Initiation is the means by which the blinders are removed allowing the light of soul-wisdom to fall upon the mind in the flash of an instant, even though the right conditions for their removal may take years, or lifetimes. In other words, the truth could be placed right before us, but we would not see it; however, we might misinterpret it, misuse, or abuse it.

Therefore knowledge of the existence of Soul Wisdom and the knowledge of the laws of nature and being that accompany Self-knowledge have never been kept a secret as they have always been a stimulus to discipline of mind and heart and the practice of the virtues that make the student fit for initiation. Only true ideas regarding the Self can resonate with the Soul and eventually awaken it to a life of power, wisdom, and love of which virtue and discipline are the outward effects.

A second purpose of the SD is to give out to the world at this time from the Esoteric Philosophy more knowledge of the occult nature of the Cosmos and Humanity. H.P. Blavatsky (H.P.B.) is very specific and makes sure that the student understands which doctrines are being given out publically to the uninitiated for the first time. The SD reminds humanity that which it has forgotten. Such knowledge exists and has existed on earth for long ages. Yet there must be current conditions that make our time ripe for a disclosure of more knowledge about the Occult powers of nature and make the broad concepts of the Esoteric Philosophy especially relevant in the 21st Century.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“The public must be made acquainted with the efforts of many World-adepts, of initiated poets, writers, and classics of every age, to preserve in the records of Humanity the Knowledge of its existence, at least, of such a philosophy, if not actually of its tenets.” (SD 1, xlv)

“Thus only could be shown, on semi-traditional and semi-historical authority, that. Knowledge of the Occult and the powers it confers on man, are not altogether fictions, but that they are as old as the world itself.” (SD 1, xlv)

“The times are ripe for a more serious knowledge than hitherto permitted, though still very limited, so far.” (SD 1, xxxviii fn)

“...The SECRET DOCTRINE is not a treatise, or a series of vague theories, but contains all that can be given out to the world in this century.” (SD 1, xxxviii)

“In the present work detailed Cosmogony and the evolution of the four races that preceded our Fifth race Humanity are given...” (SD 1, xlii)

### **Commentary:**

The third purpose of the SD is to challenge the materialistic doctrines of science regarding the origin and nature of man and the cosmos. One third of the book compares the contrasting views of Science, at the time the SD was written, and the Esoteric Philosophy. There must be a good reason. The materialistic scientific theories not only deny soul and spirit to nature and man, they squash the development of natural intuition and spirituality. Reproduced below is H.P.B.’s statement on the threefold purpose of the SD, as well as statements that explain the need for the extensive addenda that contrast the materialistic theories of science with the doctrines of the occult sciences. Even with the remarkable advances in scientific understanding of nature and man in the 21st Century, the comparison between the views of science and those expressed in the SD, and their implications, is as relevant as ever.

### **H.P.B. writes:**

“The aim of this work may be thus stated: to show that Nature is not “ a fortuitous concurrence of atoms,” and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe; to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring; finally, to show that the occult side of Nature has never been approached by the Science of modern civilization.” (SD 1, pg. viii)

“Unless skepticism and our natural present ignorance are equilibrated by intuition and a natural spirituality, every being afflicted with such feelings will see in himself no better than a bundle of flesh, bones, and muscles, with an empty garret inside him which serves the purpose of storing his sensations and feelings.” (SD 1, pg. 480)

“There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact. It is only when its more ardent exponents, over-stepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcane of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its living Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter, that the Occultists claim the right to dispute and call in question their theories. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring

explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer this consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes.” (SD 1, pg. 477)

“The unity and mutual relations of all parts of Kosmos were known to the ancients, before they became evident to modern astronomers and philosophers. And if even the external and visible portions of the Universe and their mutual relations cannot be explained in an other terms than those used by the adherents of the mechanical theory of the Universe in physical science, it follows that no materialist, who denies that the Soul of Kosmos (which appertains too metaphysical philosophy) exists, has the right to trespass upon that metaphysical domain”. (SD 1, pg. 480)

## CHAPTER 3

### The Right Attitude to Study “The Secret Doctrine”

The vigilant study of the fundamental concepts in the SD, such as the unity of all, challenges the usual intellectual routine of the lower mind and its tendency towards passivity and laziness, the results of undeveloped concentration. An active and one-pointed frame of mind is necessary for study, but so is that calmness and determination that drives away all distracting influences. H.P.B. states; “To the mentally lazy and obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world each man must progress by his own efforts. The writer cannot do the reader’s thinking for him, nor would the latter be better off if such vicarious thought were possible.”[1] H.P.B. prepares the proper attitude for study through developing an appreciation in the student for the antiquity and significance of the documents and manuscripts in the book.

#### **H.P.B. writes:**

“The members of several esoteric schools—the seat of which is beyond the Himalayas, and whose ramifications may be found in China, Japan, India, Tibet, and even in Syria, besides South America—claim to have in their possession the sum total of sacred and philosophical works in MSS. and type: all the works, in fact, that have ever been written, in whatever language or characters, since the art of writing began; from the ideographic hieroglyphs down to the alphabet of Cadmus and the Devanagari.” (SD 1, xxiii)

“An immense, incalculable number of MSS., and even printed works known to have existed, are now to be found no more. They have disappeared without leaving the slightest trace behind them. Were they works of no importance they might, in the natural course of time, have been left to perish, and their very names would have been obliterated from human memory. But it is not so; for, as now ascertained, most of them contained the true keys to works still extant, and entirely incomprehensible, for the greater portion of their readers, without those additional volumes of Commentaries and explanations.” (SD 1, xxv)

“It would be worse than useless to publish in these pages even those portions of the esoteric teachings that have now escaped from confinement, unless the genuineness and authenticity—at any rate, the probability—of the existence of such teachings was first established... The writer will have to give historical and trustworthy names, and to cite well-known authors, ancient and modern, of recognized ability, good judgment, and truthfulness, as also to name some of the famous proficient in the secret arts and science, along with the mysteries of the latter, as they are divulged, or, rather, partially presented before the public in their strange archaic form.” (SD 1, xxxviii – xxxiv)

“Volume I of “Isis” begins with a reference to “an old book” - “So very old that our modern antiquarians might ponder over its pages an indefinite time, and still not quite agree as to the nature of the fabric upon which it is written. It is the only original copy now in existence. The most ancient Hebrew document on occult learning—the Siphrah Dzeniouta —was compiled from it, and that at a time when the former was already considered in the light of a literary relic.” (SD 1, xlii)

“The “very old Book” is the original work from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were compiled. Not only this latter and the Siphrah Dzeniouta but even the Sepher Jezirah, the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of Shu-king, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Purânas in India, and the Chaldean Book of Numbers and the Pentateuch itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. (SD 1, xliii)

Thus, the Past shall help to realise the PRESENT, and the latter to better appreciate the PAST. The errors of the day must be explained and swept away, yet it is more than probable—and in the present case it amounts to certitude—that once more the testimony of long ages and of history will fail to impress anyone but the very intuitional...”(SD 1, xlvi)

## NOTE:

[1] “The Key To Theosophy,” H. P. Blavatsky, pg. xi. The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1973.

# PART II: A STUDY OF THE PROEM

## CHAPTER 4

### Invoking the Power of the Muse

There are three introductions to “The Secret Doctrine.” There is the “Preface” in which H.P.B. states the purpose of the book. There is the “Introductory” which explains the need, intended purposes, and right attitude of study of the book. The third introduction: the “Proem.” A proem is a special kind of introduction that serves specific purposes. In classical literature, it sets the tone of epic narratives by invoking the muses or offering a prelude to a hymn. However, it was also used to reveal the main content of a work or speech. Regarding the use and effect of proems, Aristotle notes that they:

“...Produce the same kind of effect as the dramatic prologues and the epic exordia...they provide a sample of the speech, so that the hearers may know in advance what the speech is about...Other forms of the proem help to remove or create prejudice...to secure the hearer’s good will...(and) to engage the hearer’s attention or the opposite. (Rhetoric 1415a 5-7) [1]

There is symmetry and proportion to the SD such as characterizes the ancient temples of Rome. The “Proem” is also threefold in its content: symbolism, a “few fundamental conceptions,” and a “skeleton outline” of the STANZAS OF DZYAN.

Each in their own way align themselves with the purposes of the proem to set the tone, invoke the muse, introduce a hymn, reveal the main content of the work, engage the reader’s attention, and attempt to remove prejudice and secure the reader’s good will.

The “Proem” reminds the student that the SD is also a book of poetry, a devotional book that has the same effect as poetry to arouse the intuition and imagination in the reader or hearer. Introducing each of the volumes of the SD, as well as the thesis of each section, are stanzas from the “Book of Dzyan.” A stanza is a section of a poem containing a number of verses. The verse or sloka means “song” and comes from the Sanskrit root, *sru*, meaning “hear.” Even in the English translation the stanzas are clearly characterized by the symbolism, rhythm, and lyrical qualities of poetry. The Proem invokes the Muses. Hesiod refers to the Muses as the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who preside over and inspire the arts and sciences, especially poetry and philosophy. The Mother of the Muses, Mnemosyne, is the goddess of memory. The Proem speaks to and invokes the memory of the Soul, reminiscence or intuition, which will inspire the sincere reader in the study and comprehension of the SD.

The symbolism in the Proem is the language of the soul and the storehouse of the accumulated wisdom of the ages, the apprehension of the few fundamental conceptions offered in the Proem is necessary to the understanding of all that follows in the book, and the skeleton outline of the subject matter of the stanzas makes the task of grasping the grand scope of cosmic evolution easier for the student. Besides revealing the content of the book in this threefold way, the Proem introduces a very specific hymn. Immediately following the Proem and prior to the Stanzas is the “Hymn of Creation” from the Rig Veda that proclaims the identity and unity of the student with the One, Divine, Eternity. The SD offers a path to the realization of that unity, interdependence and oneness of all. The “Proem,” true to its derivation from the Greek word “*proimos*” (*pro*, before, and *oimos*, a path or way), introduces the student to that path of spiritual knowledge that is everywhere and nowhere.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs.” (SD 1, pg. 272)

“AN Archaic Manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process — is before the writer's eye. On the first page is an immaculate white disk within a dull black ground. On the following page, the same disk, but with a central point. The first, the student knows to represent Kosmos in Eternity, before the re-awakening of still slumbering Energy, the emanation of the Word in later systems. The point in the hitherto immaculate Disk, Space and Eternity in Pralaya, denotes the dawn of differentiation.” (SD 1, pg. 1)

“A moment's thought shows that such a state can only be symbolised; to describe it is impossible. Nor can it be symbolised except in negatives; for, since it is the state of Absoluteness per se, it can possess none of those specific attributes which serve us to describe objects in positive terms. Hence that state can only be suggested by the negatives of all those most abstract attributes which men feel rather than conceive, as the remotest limits attainable by their power of conception.” (SD 1, pg. 21)

“Hence it must be left to the intuition and the higher faculties of the reader to grasp, as far as he can, the meaning of the allegorical phrases used. Indeed it must be remembered that all these Stanzas appeal to the inner faculties rather than to the ordinary comprehension of the physical brain.” (SD 1, pg. 21)

“Before the reader proceeds to the consideration of the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan which form the basis of the present work, it is absolutely necessary that he should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought to which his attention is invited. These basic ideas are few in number, and on their clear apprehension depends the understanding of all that follows; therefore no apology is required for asking the reader to make himself familiar with them first, before entering on the perusal of the work itself.” (SD 1, pg. 13)

“It would not be in place here to enter upon any defence or proof of their inherent reasonableness; nor can I pause to show how they are, in fact, contained — though too often under a misleading guise — in every system of thought or philosophy worthy of the name.” (SD 1, pg. 20)

“Once that the reader has gained a clear comprehension of them and realised the light which they throw on every problem of life, they will need no further justification in his eyes, because their truth will be to him as evident as the sun in heaven.” (SD 1, pg. 20)

“I pass on, therefore, to the subject matter of the Stanzas as given in this volume, adding a skeleton outline of them, in the hope of thereby rendering the task of the student more easy, by placing before him in a few words the general conception therein explained.” (SD 1, pg. 20)

**NOTE:**

[1] For an online version of Aristotle's "Rhetoric", go to [www.classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html](http://www.classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html) . In this version the translation is as follows: "...Have the same value as the prologues of dramas and the introductions to epic poems; the dithyrambic prelude resembling the introduction to a speech of display... In prologues, and in epic poetry, a foretaste of the theme is given, intended to inform the hearers of it in advance instead of keeping their minds in suspense. Anything vague puzzles them: so give them a grasp of the beginning, and they can hold fast to it and follow the argument... The appeal to the hearer aims at securing his goodwill, or at arousing his resentment, or sometimes at gaining his serious attention to the case, or even at distracting it - for gaining it is not always an advantage..."

## CHAPTER 5

### The Scale of Life, Being and Consciousness

The Proem invokes the power of intuition. An invocation is a call for help. However, the higher faculties of mind are not completely aroused by petition. They must be developed by self-induced and self-devised effort. The pianist develops skill by practicing the musical scale up and down a register of notes until the fingers move instinctively. Intuition develops by practicing a different kind of scale which moves down from universals to particulars and up from particulars to universals until the mind performs the task immediately and naturally. With the former effort one learns to see all things within oneself, and with the latter one learns to see oneself in all things. The Proem introduces the student to this scale. Throughout the Proem metaphysical concepts are compared to objective physical experience and subjective psychological experience. Our experience, though limited, becomes the lens that provides a glimpse into higher transcendent realities.

The faculty of spiritual intuition that allows one to directly and immediately know the truth of individual Self-Conscious existence, "I am I", is the same faculty that allows one to faintly sense the boundless presence of the One Absolute Self of All, even though we cannot possibly comprehend it in its infinite unknowable essence. The direct knowledge of intuition transcends and is far superior to reasoning, as the absolute Wisdom of Universal Mind is unimaginably greater than the human mind as we know it. The former is the "Unconscious" which is consciousness on a plane so high that the human mind cannot readily grasp it. Yet Universal Mind and Human Mind are storehouses of wisdom and ideation that bring forth the objective material world and conditions. By examining how human will and thought manifests, there grows a realization of the manifestation of Divine Will and Thought.

The periodic awakening of unmanifested Universal Mind from its sleep within the boundless plane of Divine Unity is the beginning of differentiation, manifestation and the highest human knowledge. The awakening of self-conscious individuality, "I am I," within undifferentiated awareness is the beginning of awareness of the difference between the unmanifested observer and the manifested observed. Knowledge for the human mind and active ideation begins with awareness of this contrast. The human mind plans and wills to act in relation to what it perceives. The primordial manifestation of mind - universal or particular, Kosmic or Human - is symbolized by the point within the circle. The circumference of the circle is the imaginary, ever changing

boundary between what is known and knowable within the circle of our experience and what is unknown and unknowable beyond the reach of our faculties. We do not know what lies beyond, but we intuitively sense that there must be more. Human knowledge and the power to know cannot manifest until there is the manifestation of the knower, the individual Ego, the point within the circle.

As the slightest introspection and self-examination will show, even on the physical plane and within the confines of personality, we live in the mind. We live, move, and have our being within a world of sense impressions, passions, desires, memories, ideas, and fancies. Similarly, with the gradually awakening of the power of intuition, we begin to perceive and live consciously a higher life on spiritual planes, beyond the reach of sensations and passions, which transcends the limitations of time and space. Spiritual Knowledge and Spiritual Life are one. A few excerpts from the SD will illustrate these points.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“It is the Point in the Mundane Egg (see Part II., “The Mundane Egg”), the germ within the latter which will become the Universe, the ALL, the boundless, periodical Kosmos, this germ being latent and active, periodically and by turns. The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns. Its circumference - a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind - indicates the abstract, ever incognisable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one. Only the face of the Disk being white and the ground all around black, shows clearly that its plane is the only knowledge, dim and hazy though it still is, that is attainable by man. It is on this plane that the Manvantaric manifestations begin; for it is in this SOUL that slumbers, during the Pralaya, the Divine Thought, wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony.” (SD 1, pg. 1)

“It is hardly necessary to remind the reader once more that the term "Divine Thought," like that of "Universal Mind," must not be regarded as even vaguely shadowing forth an intellectual process akin to that exhibited by man. The "Unconscious," according to von Hartmann, arrived at the vast creative, or rather Evolutionary Plan, "by a clairvoyant wisdom superior to all consciousness," which in the Vedantic language would mean absolute Wisdom. Only those who realize how far Intuition soars above the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought can form the faintest conception of that absolute Wisdom which transcends the ideas of Time and Space. Mind, as we know it, is resolvable into states of consciousness, of varying duration, intensity, complexity, etc. — all, in the ultimate, resting on sensation, which is again Maya. Sensation, again, necessarily postulates limitation.” (SD 1, pg. 1)

“Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will, and Feeling. During deep sleep, ideation ceases on the physical plane, and memory is in abeyance; thus for the time-being "Mind is not," because the organ through which the Ego manifests ideation and memory on the material plane, has temporarily ceased to function. A noumenon can become a phenomenon on any plane of existence only by manifesting on that plane through an appropriate basis or vehicle; and during the long night of rest called Pralaya, when all the existences are dissolved, the "UNIVERSAL MIND" remains as a permanent possibility of mental action, or as that abstract absolute thought, of which mind is the concrete relative manifestation.” (SD 1, pg.38)

## CHAPTER 6

### The Mystery of Motion

Continuing to examine the symbolism in “The Proem,” the circle symbolizes those highest abstractions that represent to the mind that which is the unknowable one reality - Deity. The circle symbolizes divine unity, absolute space, the unmanifested universal Divine mind, and the One absolute Consciousness which is the “unconscious” as far as the human mind is concerned. The self-evident truth that we live in the mind is evidence that life and consciousness are one. Where there is life there is also consciousness. Space is not a void. Where there is space there is life, consciousness, and mind. As consciousness is equated to life, the circle also represents the eternal, invisible, omnipresent One Life. A symbol such as the circle does more than represent abstractions. Meditation on the significance of the abstract symbol of the circle, whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere, awakens the corresponding mental abstractions in the higher mind, as striking a glass of water establishes a vibration that will sympathetically resonate in other glasses. Universal unity, Universal mind, Universal life and Universal consciousness become self-evident realities.

The quality that pervades all degrees of life and consciousness is motion. The Cosmos lives, moves and breathes. “The Great Breath” symbolizes the universal, eternal, perpetual, ceaseless motion of the one Divine reality in its cycles of activity and rest or “The Days and Nights of Brahma.” “According to the Esoteric philosophy, this Deity is during its "nights" and its “days” (i.e., cycles of rest or activity) “the eternal perpetual motion”, “the EVER-BECOMING, as well as the ever universally present, and the ever Existing.” The latter is the root-abstraction, the former - the only possible conception in human mind, if it disconnects this deity from any shape or form. It is a perpetual, never-ceasing evolution, circling back in its incessant progress through æons of duration into its original status - ABSOLUTE UNITY.” (S.D. II, pg. 545) Motion - the act or process of moving - is a basic idea of the Proem. Motion is mystery. It eternally is and is ever-becoming. It is present everywhere in manifested nature and its source is nowhere in manifested nature. An important lesson to take from the Proem is that motion is a reality unto itself independent of the mover and the moved. Absolute Motion, as the abstract representation of the unknowable one reality, ever exists in eternal space and duration before and after the temporary and conditioned manifestation of agents that move and objects to be moved. Motion is not just a change of state, condition, or location in a certain period of time due to the influence of the forces of nature, as observed on the physical plane. It is the one cause of the forces of nature.

There is no need to fear what is self-evident and inevitable. Death need not be feared. The immortal trinity in Man is life, consciousness, and motion. Death has no absolute reality. It is a change of state from one plane of life, consciousness, and motion to another. Death is not an ending, but a beginning in a new condition of the never-ending process of ever-becoming. The passions and desires and passions need not be feared, but they must be understood. Their action is inevitable. The desires are killed out only in the sense that their action in the personality is

transformed to a higher condition appropriate to a spiritual state of consciousness. As explained by Krishna, "A man enjoyeth not freedom from action from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do; nor doth he obtain happiness from a total abandonment of action. No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by the qualities which spring from nature. He who remains inert, restraining the senses and organs, yet pondering with his heart upon objects of sense, is called a false pietist of bewildered soul. But he who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life, unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed. Do thou perform the proper actions: action is superior to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction. All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kuntī, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone." [1]

**H.P.B. writes:**

“It is the ONE LIFE, eternal, invisible, yet Omnipresent, without beginning or end, yet periodical in its regular manifestations, between which periods reigns the dark mystery of non-Being; unconscious, yet absolute Consciousness; unrealizable, yet the one self-existing reality; truly, "a chaos to the sense, a Kosmos to the reason." Its one absolute attribute, which is ITSELF, eternal, ceaseless Motion, is called in esoteric parlance the "Great Breath," \* which is the perpetual motion of the universe, in the sense of limitless, ever-present SPACE. That which is motionless cannot be Divine. But then there is nothing in fact and reality absolutely motionless within the universal soul.

Almost five centuries B.C. Leucippus, the instructor of Democritus, maintained that Space was filled eternally with atoms actuated by a ceaseless motion, the latter generating in due course of time, when those atoms aggregated, rotary motion, through mutual collisions producing lateral movements. Epicurus and Lucretius taught the same, only adding to the lateral motion of the atoms the idea of affinity — an occult teaching.

From the beginning of man's inheritance, from the first appearance of the architects of the globe he lives in, the unrevealed Deity was recognized and considered under its only philosophical aspect—universal motion, the thrill of the creative Breath in Nature.” (SD.1, pg. 2)

**NOTE:**

[1] “The Bhagavad Gita,” translated by William Q. Judge, pg 23, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles.

## CHAPTER 7

### The Ever-Present and the Ever-Evolving

Universal, eternal, ceaseless motion is as an ever-present aspect of the unknowable one reality. Considering the symbolism of the Proem, its recognizable manifestation as finite cycles of activity and rest is symbolized as “The Great Breath” or “The Days and Nights of Brahma.” During the “Day of Brahma,” when the eternal, infinite, and all-pervading essence of the unknowable reality is active, there is an “out-breathing” or “expansion” of the divine essence and the phenomenal universe gradually appears. During the “Night of Brahma,” when the all-pervading essence is passive, there is an “in-breathing” or “contraction” and the visible universe gradually disappears. This is eternal and immutable law.

The circle symbolizes the ideal eternal Kosmos, that has no beginning or ending, in the universal immutable Divine mind on the plane of the eternal, infinite and unknowable essence. The point in the circle symbolizes the dawn of differentiation and manifestation of a finite construction of the universe, a partial reflection of the ideal Kosmos, that does have a beginning and an ending and ever evolves on a higher plane in each succeeding “Day of Brahma.” In other words, there is one eternal unmanifesting ideal Universe and an infinite series of temporary “concrete” manifested universes. This is universal law manifesting in every department of nature.

All that can be perceived and known through the physical senses and intellect is the temporary, limited, and illusionary periodically manifesting aspect of a being. Its enduring, complete and real nature is not of this world. It lies beyond the reach of the senses and the grasp of the intellect. The former aspect is ever-evolving and the latter is ever-present. As the ideal Kosmos dwells in the Divine mind on the plane of the unknowable divine essence, by correspondence, the real Man (manas) dwells in spiritual soul (buddhi) on the plane of spirit (atma). It is the ever-present witness and perceiver.

The real Man is the enduring sufferer of the erring personality, and the immortal benefactor of the spiritual qualities of the personality. All that survives of the personality is that which is assimilated to the real Man because of its spiritual affinity. It becomes part of the immortal character of the real Man. In our real nature, we do not become immortal; we already are immortal. The goal is to become self-consciously immortal while dwelling in bodies that are temporary.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Intra-Cosmic motion is eternal and ceaseless; cosmic motion (the visible, or that which is subject to perception) is finite and periodical. As an eternal abstraction it is the EVER-PRESENT; as a manifestation, it is finite both in the coming direction and the opposite, the two being the alpha and omega of successive reconstructions. Kosmos - the NOUMENON - has nought to do with the causal relations of the phenomenal World. It is only with reference to the intra-cosmic soul, the ideal Kosmos in the immutable Divine Thought, that we may say: "It never had a beginning nor will it have an end." With regard to its body or Cosmic organization, though it cannot be said that it had a first, or will ever have a last construction, yet at each new Manvantara, its organization may be regarded as the first and the last of its kind, as it evolutes every time on a higher plane..... ”(SD 1, pg. 3)

“A few years ago only, it was stated that: — “The esoteric doctrine teaches, like Buddhism and Brahminism, and even the Kabala [1], that the one infinite and unknown Essence exists from all eternity, and in regular and harmonious successions is either passive or active. In the poetical phraseology of Manu [2] these conditions are called the "Days" and the "Nights" of Brahmâ. The latter is either "awake" or "asleep.” The Svabhâvikas, or philosophers of the oldest school of Buddhism (which still exists in Nepal), speculate only upon the active condition of this "Essence," which they call Svabhâvat [3], and deem it foolish to theorize upon the abstract and "unknowable" power in its passive condition...” (SD 1, pg. 3)

“Upon inaugurating an active period, says the Secret Doctrine, an expansion of this Divine essence from without inwardly and from within outwardly [4], occurs in obedience to eternal and immutable law, and the phenomenal or visible universe is the ultimate result of the long chain of cosmical forces thus progressively set in motion. In like manner, when the passive condition is resumed, a contraction of the Divine essence takes place, and the previous work of creation is gradually and progressively undone. The visible universe becomes disintegrated, its material dispersed; and 'darkness' solitary and alone, broods once more over the face of the 'deep.' To use a Metaphor from the Secret Books, which will convey the idea still more clearly, an out-breathing of the 'unknown essence' produces the world; and an inhalation causes it to disappear. This process has been going on from all eternity, and our present universe is but one of an infinite series, which had no beginning and will have no end.” — (See "Isis Unveiled "; also "The Days and Nights of Brahmâ" in Part II.)” [5] (SD. 1, pg. 4)

## NOTES:

[1] Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Kabala. **Buddhism**: “One nature, perfect and pervading, circulates in all natures; One reality, all comprehensive, contains within itself all realities” . . . — Yoka Daishi, “Song of Enlightenment”. **Brahmanism**: there are not many but only One. . . . “Behold then as One the infinite and eternal One who is in radiance beyond space, the everlasting Soul never born.” — Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad, IV.iv, 19-20. **Qabbālâh**: The Aged of the Aged, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a form, and yet no form. He has a form whereby the universe is preserved, and yet has no form, because he cannot be comprehended. — Zohar, 3:288a

[2]“Learn now summarily the measure of a day and a night of Brahmâ . . . At the end of His day and night, He, being asleep, awakes, and awaking creates mind, which is and is not . . .” — The Ordinances of Manu, tr. Arthur Burnell, 1884, chapter I., pg 10, verses 68, 74  
[www.archive.org/details/ordinancesofmanu00manu](http://www.archive.org/details/ordinancesofmanu00manu)

[3] Svābhāvat (Sanskrit, “self-existent”). Refers to “the eternal cause and effect, omnipresent yet abstract, the self-existent plastic Essence and the root of all things, viewed in the same dual light as the Vedantin views his Parabrahm and Mulaprakriti” (SD 1, pg. 46).

[4] Without inwardly and from within outwardly. At the dawn of a universal cycle of active manifestation from the one ultimate essence that is everywhere, expansion takes place from without inwardly. At the beginning of a local period of active formation of a planet or solar

system, the center, that is a focus for life energy or the creative energy of the divine breath, acts and expands from within outwardly. (refer to: SD 1, pg. 11 fn.)

[5] See “Isis Unveiled”. HPB has taken a long passage from Isis Unveiled (2:264-5) and is using it here in a slightly edited form. “The Days and Nights of Brahmā” in Part II. This chapter appears in Part II of Volume I of “The Secret Doctrine” , pp. 368-78.

## CHAPTER 8

### The Scope of Occult Symbolism

The presentation of occult symbolism in the “Proem” culminates in a demonstration of the use of symbols to summarize cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis. The first symbol, the circle, represents the ever-eternal and infinite abstract space called “THAT” in the Vedas. It is beyond description, definition, and comprehension. Co-eternal with abstract space is the cosmic matrix of every existing form and being.

The second stage of cosmic evolution is the periodical first manifestation in eternal abstract space. It is represented by the symbol of the point within the circle. The point on a page is a three dimensional symbol of that which is has neither form nor dimension, yet is the potential center from which all forms and beings will emanate. It is the potential space within which all will manifest.

One can begin to understand this process on the cosmic plane by observing its reflection in ones inner cosmos. Close your eyes so that the only space you are aware of is inner space. One can project their mind and consciousness in all directions of inner space. No matter how far one projects, there will be a limit beyond which one cannot imagine. This is the potential limit of ones conscious space. Yet, one intuitively knows there must be more space beyond. This potentially limited “ring pass not” of ones consciousness is represented by the point within the circle. The circle symbolizes the infinite conscious space beyond the “ring.”

In the third stage of cosmic evolution, within potential space manifests the highest substantial nature that can be known. Symbolically, the point being transformed into a diameter within the circle represents this process. Within limited conscious space the mind can sense a “tangible” matrix of all that manifests initially as ideation and eventually in objective form in gross physical matter. Ideas exist subjectively to us in something. They are impressed on something within the mind. When an idea is perceived and understood, we say we can see it.

The next stage of cosmic evolution is represented by the symbol of the cross within the circle. The vertical line represents invisible, indwelling creative spirit and the horizontal line represents the matter of the universe on the physical plane of objective perception. The symbol of the cross, in its many variations, is also used to represent the various stages in the gradual evolution of humanity. The cross within the circle designates when humanity reached its third root-race and human life begins. It is the symbol of the third root-race at the time of the separation of the sexes in accordance with natural evolution. The cross without the circumference of a circle is the symbol of the beginning of the fourth root-race when the “fall of man” into matter is complete.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“The first illustration being a plain disc ; the second one in the Archaic symbol shows?, a disc with a point in it — the first differentiation in the periodical manifestations of the ever-eternal nature, sexless and infinite "Aditi in THAT" (Rig Veda), the point in the disc, or potential Space within abstract Space. In its third stage the point is transformed into a diameter, thus y It now symbolises a divine immaculate Mother-Nature within the all-embracing absolute Infinitude.” (SD 1, pg. 4)

“When the diameter line is crossed by a vertical one Å, it becomes the mundane cross. Humanity has reached its third root-race; it is the sign for the origin of human life to begin. When the circumference disappears and leaves only the (Cross) it is a sign that the fall of man into matter is accomplished, and the FOURTH race begins. The Cross within a circle symbolises pure Pantheism; when the Cross was left unincised, it became phallic. It had the same and yet other meanings as a TAU inscribed within a circle...or as a "Thor's hammer," the Jaina cross, so-called, or simply Svastica within a circle. By the third symbol — the circle divided in two by the horizontal line of the diameter — the first manifestation of creative (still passive, because feminine) Nature was meant. The first shadowy perception of man connected with procreation is feminine, because man knows his mother more than his father. Hence female deities were more sacred than the male. Nature is therefore feminine, and, to a degree, objective and tangible, and the spirit Principle which fructifies it is concealed. By adding to the circle with the horizontal line in it, a perpendicular line, the tau was formed —T— the oldest form of the letter. It was the glyph of the third root-race to the day of its symbolical Fall — i.e., when the separation of sexes by natural evolution took place — when the figure became, the circle, or sexless life modified or separated — a double glyph or symbol. With the races of our Fifth Race it became in symbology the sacr', and in Hebrew n'cabvah, of the first-formed races; then it changed into the Egyptian... (emblem of life), and still later into the sign of Venus, ♀ Then comes the Svastica (Thor's hammer, or the "Hermetic Cross" now), entirely separated from its Circle, thus becoming purely phallic. The esoteric symbol of Kali Yuga is the five-pointed star reversed, thus — the sign of human sorcery, with its two points (horns) turned heavenward, a position every Occultist will recognize as one of the "left-hand," and used in ceremonial magic.” (SD 1, pgs. 5-6)

**CHAPTER 9****The Unity of Deity, Self, and Nature**

Having demonstrated how occult symbolism can be the storehouse of the accumulated wisdom of the ages, the content of the “Proem” shifts to the presentation of a few fundamental conceptions upon which the entire system of the esoteric philosophy rests. As Krishna declares: “ Know that the wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle, indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen, is of the sattva quality,” or the nature of truth. (Bhagavad-Gita, ch. 18) That one indivisible, incorruptible and universal principle is the Deific Principle. Theosophy literally means Divine Wisdom or Wisdom about Deity. “It is wisdom about God for those who believe that he is all things and in all, and wisdom about nature...” [1] (The Ocean of Theosophy, by W.Q. Judge, pg.1) The second portion of the “Proem” begins with a philosophical

explanation of the Deific Principle and a clarification of real doctrine of Pantheism. [2] The Greek word Pantheism comes from pan, all and theos, god. It is the doctrine that one divine principle pervades all of nature and is the innermost essence of every thing in nature. The earliest historical representation of this teaching can be seen in the Parabrahmam of the Hindus.

Parabrahm, as the ever invisible spirit and soul of nature, is the supreme cause of nature. In its absoluteness, it is changeless, eternal and can have no attributes. In the Pantheism of the Upanishads, it is understood that this supreme infinite cause cannot personally create nature or be connected with finite and conditioned nature. For Parabrahm is the supreme reality. It is Kosmos, or all-inclusive Nature, in its infinite, eternal, changeless, unmanifested reality. It is the one absolute existence, intelligence, and consciousness that has no object or subject of cognition outside itself. Therefore it is not a passively observing or actively creating God. It is the non-being that is all-being or the one Be-Ness. How can it be said to be the supreme cause if it does not create? Within this unchanging passive All lies unmanifested its coeternal emanation which periodically actively expands itself and becomes the manifested universe with its collectivity of creative intelligent forces and beings and periodically contracts and withdraws itself into its coeval source at the end of a grand cycle of evolution. In other words, it is the causeless cause within which periodically arises the potent cause of all that manifests in nature. The former is the Absolute Deific principle, and the latter is its manifesting aspect – the “God in Nature.”

Parabrahm may be said to be the ONE SELF of all. In seeking knowledge of the Deity we are simultaneously searching for a truer understanding of the Self. Knowledge of Self is knowledge of its enduring, unmanifested, real nature as well as its periodically manifesting aspect on every state and plane of human consciousness. The result of this search is a realization that Man and Deity are one and identical in their spiritual absoluteness and their manifesting creative spiritual essence. Man is a microcosm that mirrors the macrocosm – nature. All the creative forces of nature exist in Man potentially, and in the perfected human being as potent faculties and powers. Self is the enduring witness untouched and unaffected by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat. However, Self is also the actor, sufferer, enjoyer, and benefactor of experience; the eternal pilgrim forever becoming throughout endless cycles of activity and rest.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Indeed, if the Parabrahmam of the Hindus may be taken as a representative of the hidden and nameless deities of other nations, this absolute Principle will be found to be the prototype from which all the others were copied. Parabrahm is not "God," because It is not a God... Parabrahm is simply, as a "Secondless Reality," [3] the all-inclusive Kosmos — or, rather, the infinite Cosmic Space — in the highest spiritual sense, of course. Brahma (neuter) being the unchanging, pure, free, undecaying supreme Root, "the ONE true Existence, Paramarthika," and the absolute Chit and Chaitanya (intelligence, consciousness) cannot be a cognize, "for THAT can have no subject of cognition." (SD 1, pg. 6)

“Therefore, when the Pantheists echo the Upanishads, which state, as in the Secret Doctrine, that "this" cannot create, they do not deny a Creator, or rather a collective aggregate of creators, but only refuse, very logically, to attribute "creation" and especially formation, something finite to an Infinite Principle. With them, Parabrahmam is a passive because an Absolute Cause, the unconditioned Mukta. It is only limited Omniscience and Omnipotence that are refused to the

latter, because these are still attributes (as reflected in man's perceptions); and because Parabrahm, being the "Supreme ALL," the ever invisible spirit and Soul of Nature, changeless and eternal, can have no attributes; absoluteness very naturally precluding any idea of the finite or conditioned from being connected with it... In the sense and perceptions of finite "Beings," THAT is Non-"being," in the sense that it is the one BE-NESS; for, in this ALL lies concealed its coeternal and coeval emanation or inherent radiation, which, upon becoming periodically Brahmâ (the male-female Potency) becomes or expands itself into the manifested Universe. Narayana moving on the (abstract) waters of Space, is transformed into the Waters of concrete substance moved by him, who now becomes the manifested WORD or Logos." (SD 1, pg. 7)

## NOTES:

[1] "The Ocean of Theosophy," by William Q. Judge, pg. 1, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, Ca.

[2] Pantheism: "This does not mean that every bush, tree or stone is God or a god; but only that every speck of the manifested material of Kosmos belongs to and is the substance of "God," however low it may have fallen in its cyclic gyration through the Eternities of the ever becoming; and also that every such speck individually, and Kosmos collectively, is an aspect and a reminder of that universal One Soul—which philosophy refuses to call God, thus limiting the eternal and ever-present root and essence." (SD.1, pg. 533fn)

[3] "Secondless Reality" - "In the beginning, there was Being alone, one only without a second. Some people say 'in the beginning this was non-being alone, one only; without a second. From that non-being, being was produced.'" — Chandogya Upanishad VI.2.1

## CHAPTER 10

### Space - The Full, The Void and The All

Several abstract concepts can be presented to convey the proper idea of Parabrahm, the absolute Deific Principle. These include the Supreme cause, the Supreme reality, the absolute existence, the one Be-ness, and the One Supreme All. Yet, the best representation on our earth, on our plane of existence, and on our plane of consciousness, of the One All is space. In fact, H.P. Blavatsky writes that space "is its only mental and physical representation on this Earth – or our plane of existence." (SD 1, pg. 8) Another portion of the "Proem" explains why. Four reasons are given.

1. Space as the All, cannot evolve or manifest something outside of itself. If it could it would cease to be the All. All objects, beings, worlds, solar systems, and universes are created, evolve and eventually disappear within space, but space does not create, preserve or destroy them. Nor is space changed by what manifests and disappears within it. There is no direct interaction between space and what manifests within it. There is no objective observable end to space, nor is there a conceivable limit to space in our consciousness. Whatever can be said of space in this regard can be said of the Deific Principle.

2. Space is the only physical reality that is not an object of perception and it is the only mental concept that is not subject to perception. We can perceive objects in Space and we can perceive the space those objects occupied when they disappear. However, Space itself cannot be perceived. We can neither perceive Space to be an object that is the cause of any existing object or force, or the effect of any existing object or force. We just know it is. We cannot say it exists as an object or no longer exists as an object. We can conceive of the idea of limited space, but we cannot perceive it in its infinite abstract oneness. No matter how far we stretch our minds to perceive space, we intuitively know that there must be more space beyond our mental perception. Whatever can be said of Space in this regard can be said of the Deific Principle.

3. Space is both an absolute void and a conditioned fullness. Space as an absolute abstraction is infinite and void of any qualities or attributes that we can conceive of. It has no dimensions, since concepts such as length, breadth, and depth are relative to our physical world and relative to a frame of reference. For example, what is the length of this written sentence? Does your answer take into account the distance between the atoms of the paper on which it is printed or the distance between the first and last letters. There can be no such dimension for that which is the All. However, space abhors a vacuum. Every "point" in space as a center for the focus of our limited perception is filled with some degree of substance, force or being. Even the "points" in space we cannot perceive directly with our powers of perception are similarly filled. Space is the All and the absolute container of All. Whatever can be said of space in this regard can be said of the Deific Principle.

4. The fullness of Space is sevenfold in its manifestation from its undifferentiated to its most differentiated degree of substance. It is in and through this fullness of space, symbolized as the "eternal mother-father," that all beings and worlds are born, live, move and have their being. All beings and worlds are sevenfold in regard to their constitution, states, and planes of consciousness. Like space, our consciousness even in the waking state, has its absolute voidness and its conditioned and differentiated fullness. Consciousness, or awareness, in itself is devoid of any attributes or qualities. Yet, the states and planes of consciousness are distinguished by the different objects and subjects which we are conscious of while in those states. While in those states we are consciously full of impressions of different degrees and qualities. What can be said of space in this regard can be said of the fullness of the periodically manifesting Kosmos within the Absolute Deific Principle.

An excerpt from the "SD" will further illustrate the issue:

"The Occultists are, therefore, at one with the Advaita Vedantin philosophers as to the above tenet. They show the impossibility of accepting on philosophical grounds the idea of the absolute ALL creating or even evolving the "Golden Egg," [1] into which it is said to enter in order to transform itself into Brahmâ — the Creator, who expands himself later into gods and all the visible Universe. They say that Absolute Unity cannot pass to infinity; for infinity presupposes the limitless extension of something, and the duration of that "something"; and the One All is like Space — which is its only mental and physical representation on this Earth, or our plane of existence — neither an object of, nor a subject to, perception. If one could suppose the Eternal Infinite All, the Omnipresent Unity, instead of being in Eternity, becoming through periodical manifestation a manifold Universe or a multiple personality, that Unity would cease to be one.

Locke's idea that "pure Space is capable of neither resistance nor Motion" — is incorrect. Space is neither a "limitless void," nor a "conditioned fullness," but both: being, on the plane of absolute abstraction, [2] the ever-incognisable Deity, which is void only to finite minds, and on that of mayavic perception, the Plenum, the absolute Container of all that is, whether manifested or unmanifested: it is, therefore, that ABSOLUTE ALL. There is no difference between the Christian Apostle's "In Him we live and move and have our being," and the Hindu Rishi's "The Universe lives in, proceeds from, and will return to, Brahma (Brahmâ)": for Brahma (neuter), the unmanifested, is that Universe in abscondito, and Brahmâ, the manifested, is the Logos, made male-female in the symbolical orthodox dogmas. The God of the Apostle-Initiate and of the Rishi being both the Unseen and the Visible SPACE. Space is called in the esoteric symbolism "the Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father." It is composed from its undifferentiated to its differentiated surface of seven layers. "What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is — SPACE." (SD 1, pgs. 8-9)

### **Commentary:**

The esoteric catechism directs the student to clearly understand this basic teaching on space because of its meditational and practical value. Thoughtful consideration of space as a transcendent limitless void and a manifesting fullness expands the mind to the realization of the eternal invisible One life, and the unity and interdependence of differentiated forms of life. As all are part of the whole of life, our friends and enemies are part of ourselves. Our welfare and happiness is rapped up in theirs. No one can think, feel or act rightly or wrongly, altruistically or selfishly without advancing or impeding their own evolution and the progress of all. Universal Brotherhood is a fact in nature and the natural duty, or Dharma, of a human being.

### **NOTES:**

[1] "Removing the darkness, the Self-Existent Lord became manifest, and wishing to produce beings from his Essence, created, in the beginning, water alone. In that he cast the seed. That became a golden Egg, in brilliancy equal to the sun; in that he himself was born as Brahma, the progenitor of the whole world." – Laws of Manu, 1.6-9

[2] "The 'Parent Space is the eternal, ever present cause of all – the incomprehensible deity, whose 'invisible robes' are the mystic root of all matter, and of the Universe. Space is the one eternal thing that we can most easily imagine, immovable in its abstraction and uninfluenced by either the presence or absence in it of an objective Universe, It is without dimension, in every sense, self-existent. Spirit is the first differentiation from That, the causeless cause of both Spirit and Matter. It is, as taught in the esoteric catechism, neither limitless void, nor conditioned fullness, but both. It was and ever will be." – SD 1, pg. 35

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **The Eternal Coming, Going and Becoming**

Space, as the best representation of the One All, has been described as an absolute void and a conditioned fullness. It is the One Reality that was, is, and always will be whether there be a Universe or not. As the absolute void it is the reality that eternally is, and as the plenum of boundless homogeneous primordial substance it is the reality that eternally was and will be the root that contains the germ of every manifesting temporary Universe.

A paradox naturally arises in the mind. If space eternally was, is, and will be the One All, in reality there can be no inner or outer, above or below, higher or lower. How can “The Great Breath” expand during a period of out-breathing to bring forth a manifested universe, and contract during a period of inbreathing and withdraw a manifested universe back into the eternal primordial substance? Where can it expand to or contract from that is not already part of the All? The answer is in the esoteric catechism given in the ‘Proem.’ Space is not an infinite static void, nor is it an infinite static fullness. Space and “The Great Breath” are one. Space is forever coming, going and becoming.

As described in the excerpt given below from the esoteric catechism, the expansion that occurs everywhere in space is a gradual manifestation of the kosmos on planes of matter of increasing heterogeneity or differentiation from the one ultimate essence. This is also described as proceeding from “without inwardly,” since the One Spirit that is everywhere becomes the indwelling divine spark of every differentiated being. In footnotes [1], H.P.B. explains that this terminology applies to universal evolution. When referring to the local evolution of smaller “rings” (solar systems, planets) within that “Ring,” the impulse comes from the creative energy of the divine spark within and the expansion is said to proceed from “within outwardly.” The contraction that occurs everywhere in space is the gradual withdrawal of the manifested kosmos from planes of substance that are the most differentiated to dissolution on the plane of the ultimate one essence.

The symbolism of the catechism is very instructive. The root, representing the plane of homogeneous primordial substance, is “cool” and passive. It depends on the “invisible and fiery” ray of divine spirit to give it life and light. The “cold” primordial substance radiates the divine spirit within as it differentiates into different degrees of heterogeneous substance. The life that appears to radiate or manifest through material forms does not have its origin in substance, but in the indwelling spirit. The indivisible point in the circle, which is found nowhere and perceived everywhere, is primordial matter which becomes the visible diameter of the circle when it differentiates and manifests during a period of evolution.

The “hot breath” of the divine spirit consumes the differentiated elements into the one infinite homogeneous element that is the only element it can work through. The “cool breath” of the divine spirit brings forth into manifestation all the limited objective material forms from universe to atom. This is a metaphysical process that is repeated on the physical plane. Hold up the palm of your hand to your face and breathe out without your mouth open as wide as you can make it (representing infinite homogeneous substance). The breath that comes out of your mouth is hot. Now continue breathing out through your mouth as you gradually close your mouth until all your breath is coming out through pursed lips (representing finite forms of matter). The breath that once was hot is now cold. As you open your mouth up wide again. The cold breath becomes hot once more. Interesting, As Above, So Below!

**H.P.B. writes:**

“The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

"Explain, oh Lanoo (disciple)." — "The One is an unbroken Circle (ring) with no circumference, for it is nowhere and everywhere; the One is the boundless plane of the Circle, manifesting a diameter only during the manvantaric periods; the One is the indivisible point found nowhere, perceived everywhere during those periods; it is the Vertical and the Horizontal, the Father and the Mother, the summit and base of the Father, the two extremities of the Mother, reaching in reality nowhere, for the One is the Ring as also the rings that are within that Ring. Light in darkness and darkness in light: the 'Breath which is eternal.' It proceeds from without inwardly, when it is everywhere, and from within outwardly, when it is nowhere... It expands and contracts (exhalation and inhalation). When it expands the mother diffuses and scatters; when it contracts, the mother draws back and ingathers. This produces the periods of Evolution and Dissolution, Manwantara and Pralaya. The Germ is invisible and fiery; the Root (the plane of the circle) is cool; but during Evolution and Manwantara her garment is cold and radiant. Hot Breath is the Father who devours the progeny of the many-faced Element (heterogeneous); and leaves the single-faced ones (homogeneous). Cool Breath is the Mother, who conceives, forms, brings forth, and receives them back into her bosom, to reform them at the Dawn (of the Day of Brahma, or Manvantara). . . ." (SD 1, pgs. 11-12)

**NOTE:**

[1] “Esoteric philosophy, regarding as Maya (or the illusion of ignorance) every finite thing, must necessarily view in the same light every intra-Cosmic planet and body, as being something organized, hence finite. The expression, therefore, "it proceeds from without inwardly, etc." refers in the first portion of the sentence to the dawn of the Mahamanvantaric period, or the great re-evolution after one of the complete periodical dissolutions of every compound form in Nature (from planet to molecule) into its ultimate essence or element; and in its second portion, to the partial or local manvantara, which may be a solar or even a planetary one.” (SD. 1, pg.11)

“By "centre," a centre of energy or a Cosmic focus is meant; when the so-called "Creation," or formation of a planet, is accomplished by that force which is designated by the Occultists LIFE and by Science "energy," then the process takes place from within outwardly, every atom being said to contain in itself creative energy of the divine breath. Hence, whereas after an absolute pralaya, or when the pre-existing material consists but of ONE Element, and BREATH "is everywhere," the latter acts from without inwardly: after a minor pralaya, everything having remained in statu quo — in a refrigerated state, so to say, like the moon — at the first flutter of manvantara, the planet or planets begin their resurrection to life from within outwardly.” (SD. 1, pg. 11)

## CHAPTER 12

### Basic Ideas on Elements

The eternal fullness of space is a boundless homogeneous primordial substance which is the root principle of the manifested kosmos that is forever becoming through a cyclical process of expansion and contraction, manifestation and dissolution on different degrees of substance from the homogeneous to the most heterogeneous and differentiated. This cyclical process in the evolution of the kosmos is a universal law that governs the evolution of solar systems, planets, human beings, and the elements of nature. The objective physical universe observed with the physical senses is the manifestation on the grossest most differentiated degree of matter of the unmanifested universe existing in idea or germ in universal mind on the plane of homogeneous primordial substance. This is the real universe that is the noumenon of every manifesting phenomenal universe.

H.P. B. writes in the “Proem” of the SD that in order for there to be a clearer understanding of this teaching it must be stated that Occult Science recognizes Seven Cosmic Elements. These Elements are not the numerous differentiated compound elements known to science. They are the unmanifested ideal roots of the sub-elements of earth. Just as the root of the manifested universe exists in ideal form on the plane of the homogeneous primordial substance, the real element that is the root of the physical sub-elements exists in germ as a center of creative spiritual intelligent force on a higher and finer degree of substance. It is analogous to the real Man, an immortal triad of spirit-soul-mind, that uses a temporary manifesting personality and physical body on the objective physical plane. As all the differentiated sub-elements are manifestations of the seven cosmic elements, or centers of intelligent force, each is conscious and intelligent in its own degree and has a creative, preservative or destructive potential in its combination with other sub-elements.

The classical terms Fire, Air, Water, Earth, and Ether are the symbols of these informing spiritual centers of intelligent force. The Secret Doctrine teaches that there are seven centers, or seven cosmic elements, but not all have manifested on the gross physical plane at this time. As of this cycle in the evolution of human intelligence on this planet, only the numerous sub-elements of four of the seven cosmic elements have manifested on the physical plane. The three other cosmic elements have manifested on planes of substance beyond normal human perception at this time, but they will become manifest on the physical plane in the far distant future of our evolutionary journey on this planet. The fifth element, Ether, is now only semi-material on our plane so it is not yet visible to us. Similarly, the manifestation of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth on this planet in preceding cycles of evolution was not the same as it is now, nor will it be the same in the future. Nature, and all its elements are forever becoming. Only the One Element, the homogeneous primordial substance, eternally is.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“For clearer understanding on the part of the general reader, it must be stated that Occult Science recognizes Seven Cosmical Elements — four entirely physical, and the fifth ( Ether ) semi-material, as it will become visible in the air towards the end of our Fourth Round, to reign supreme over the others during the whole of the Fifth. The remaining two are as yet absolutely beyond the range of human perception. These latter will, however, appear as presentments during the 6th and 7th Races of this Round, and will become known in the 6th and 7th Rounds respectively. These seven elements with their numberless Sub-Elements far more numerous than those known to Science) are simply conditional modifications and aspects of the ONE and only Element. This latter is not Ether, not even Akâsa but the Source of these. The Fifth Element, now advocated quite freely by Science, is not the Ether hypothesised by Sir Isaac Newton — although he calls it by that name, having associated it in his mind probably with the Æther, "Father-Mother" of Antiquity. As Newton intuitionally says, "Nature is a perpetual circulatory worker, generating fluids out of solids, fixed things out of volatile, and volatile out of fixed, subtile out of gross, and gross out of subtile. . . . Thus, perhaps, may all things be originated from Ether," (Hypoth, 1675).

## CHAPTER 13

### An Introduction to the Three Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy

One of the purposes of the “Proem” of “The Secret Doctrine” is to introduce the reader to a few fundamental conceptions. These include a Deific Principle that is boundless and absolute, an idea of space that is a limitless void and a conditioned fullness, the eternality and ceaselessness of motion, the periodicity of the manifestation and dissolution of the universe as a universal process and means for never-ending possibilities of expression. These concepts are not a new revelation for they are found in the Hindu, Buddhistic, Mazdean, Chaldean, Egyptian and Kabalistic teachings. What is unveiled for the reader is their synthesis into one coherent whole so that they are seen to be the facets of one diamond – eternal, universal, truth. This is the teaching, but why is it a fact?

The Occult Catechism quoted in the “Proem” asks:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka."\* "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space." (SD 1, pg.11)

There are not three Eternals. There is only one eternal reality – Space. It is the absolute boundless source and container of all, which is forever coming and going in the manifestation and dissolution of its fullness of primordial substance, and forever becoming. In other words, Deity, Periodicity, and Evolution are co-eternal and one with Space and each other. There is no point or

time, whether during a period of manifestation or dissolution, where one is present without the other two. This is the scientific fact that is demonstrable in every department of nature.

The entire system of the esoteric thought is also based on the unity and universal application of three philosophical propositions of Deity, Law, and Evolution. There is no detailed aspect or practical application of The Secret Doctrine where they are not the fundamental universal basis. There is no Theosophical teaching on the nature of the Universe or Man where one of these principles is present without the other two. This is the key to the comprehension and practical application of the teachings of Theosophy. This is the philosophical truth that is demonstrated on every page of "The Secret Doctrine."

Space is inseparable from the Absolute Deity that is Be-ness. Space is inseparable from the periodical coming and going that is the law of every manifested Being. Space is inseparable from the drama of evolution that is ever Becoming. The three fundamental conceptions of The Secret Doctrine explain the divine origin and nature of our spiritual Be-ness, the law that rules the conditions of our manifested Being now and in the future, and the process of evolution that determines the perfection of ever-Becoming humanity and nature. Be-ness, Being, and Becoming are not three different realities, but three interdependent views of the one reality of existence, human or otherwise. There is no point or time in the manifestation of any being, where one exists without the other two. This is the key to realizing that universal brotherhood is a fact in nature. This is the psychological truth that is demonstrable in every ethical principle and applicable to every act of altruism for another and self-sacrificing service to humanity.

**H.P.B. writes:**

"Before the reader proceeds to the consideration of the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan which form the basis of the present work, it is absolutely necessary that he should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought to which his attention is invited. These basic ideas are few in number, and on their clear apprehension depends the understanding of all that follows; therefore no apology is required for asking the reader to make himself familiar with them first, before entering on the perusal of the work itself.

The Secret Doctrine establishes three fundamental propositions:

(a) An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable"....

(b) The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," called "the manifesting stars," and the "sparks of Eternity."...

This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature...

(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term." (SD 1, pgs. 13 -17)

## CHAPTER 14

### The Faces of Reality

The first fundamental proposition of The Secret Doctrine invites the reader to consider the nature of the one absolute Reality that precedes all the manifested beings that appear to one to be real. All that was, is, or ever will manifest has been molded or modified by its relations to other beings. All manifested forms and beings are identifiable by their attributes or qualities that limit, identify, particularize, or describe them. If it were not for these attributes one could not form a concept of them or think about them. All of these attributes result from a specific cause and are modifiable by other causes. In other words, everything that one thinks is real is conditioned and therefore has no fundamental enduring reality in and of itself.

What would be the nature of the one absolute Reality that preceded all that manifests? Since there could be no other cause that preceded it or could modify it, it would have to be devoid of all attributes. It would be the infinite, eternal cause, and root of all being that had no root itself. Being devoid of all attributes, one could not possibly think about it or speak about it without limiting it. Since it cannot be limited or conditioned, it cannot have any relation or connection with whatever is manifested, limited or conditioned. That relationship would necessarily require a connection of some kind between two separate objects or entities with different attributes. Such a relationship would necessarily limit that which is limitless and unconditioned.

So, how can we consider the proposition of there being one absolute Reality if it is "unthinkable and unspeakable?" The one absolute Reality is symbolized by two aspects. An aspect is not an attribute or quality. An aspect is the way a thing may be viewed, regarded, or interpreted by the senses or the mind. It is not the "real" thing in itself, but the face or mask by which it can be recognized. There are two concepts that the mind can conceive that can help us consider or view the one absolute Reality. The first concept is unlimited and unrestricted space. The space that we observe is taken up by objects or defined by the relationship between objects. The concept of unconditioned space is a pure abstraction. This space has no objective existence to the senses or mind. It is completely subjective and exists for one as a concept only in the mind and consciousness. The second concept is ceaseless motion. The motion that we observe is objective to the senses and mind. It is determined and defined by the movement of objects in space in relationship to one another. The concept of unconditioned motion or change independent of the movement of objects is also an abstraction that is completely subjective. It has no objective existence for the senses or mind. It exists for one as a concept only in the mind and

consciousness. The comprehension of the one absolute reality is a direct intuitive conscious experience emerging from meditation on the nature of unconditioned space and motion. Everything stated about It must be in the form of a proposition, because the true nature of the Absolute cannot come from without. It is must be a self-evident truth.

If the one absolute Reality is out of all relation to conditioned existence, how is it possible for it to be the root of all manifested existence? The two aspects of the Absolute, space and motion, are the basis of all manifested and conditioned Beings. They account for the duality and contrast characteristic of manifested existence. In the manifested universe they are spirit (consciousness or motion) and matter (the primordial homogeneous substance which is the fullness of space). There is no being that is not formed of some degree of consciousness and some degree of matter. These two aspects are not to be thought of as separate realities, but rather as two faces of the same one absolute reality. Spirit gives rise to every different degree of force and consciousness, and primordial substance is the origin of every different degree and vehicle of matter.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“The Secret Doctrine establishes an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought—in the words of Mandukya, “unthinkable and unspeakable”. (SD.1, pg. 14)

“To render these ideas clearer to the general reader, let him set out with the postulate that there is one absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being. This Infinite and Eternal Cause is the rootless root of “all that was, is, or ever shall be”. It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is “Be-ness” rather than Being (in Sanskrit, Sat), and is beyond all thought or speculation.” (SD. 1, pg. 14)

“This “Be-ness” is symbolised in the Secret Doctrine under two aspects:

On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, the one thing which no human mind can either exclude from any conception, or conceive of by itself.” (SD.1, pg. 14)

“On the other hand [its second aspect, is] absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. This latter aspect of the one Reality is also symbolised by the term “The Great Breath”, a symbol sufficiently graphic to need no further elucidation.” (SD. 1, pg. 14)

“Parabrahm (the One Reality, the Absolute) is the field of Absolute Consciousness, i.e., that Essence which is out of all relation to conditioned existence.” (SD. 1, pg.15)

“But once that we pass in thought from this (to us) Absolute Negation, duality supervenes in the contrast of Spirit (or consciousness) and Matter, Subject and Object.

Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective. (SD 1. Pg. 15)

## CHAPTER 15

### I Think, Therefore I Will and Create

The First Fundamental Proposition of The Secret Doctrine invites the student to consider the essential identity, nature and origin of all things and beings. A thing is usually distinguished from a being in that the former is a discrete material form without inherent life, consciousness, and the power to act. A being, on the other hand, is a discrete material form that is living, conscious, and capable of some degree of perception, feeling, intelligence, and power. Consequently, the common understanding of the universe is that it is divided between that which is animate and that which is inanimate. The separation between the animate and inanimate that predominates contemporary thought is not only an important philosophical issue. It has vital scientific and ethical implications. One of the basic tenets of Theosophy is that everything that exists is inherently alive, aware, and active in some degree or another. The explanation, simply stated, is that the universe is embodied life, consciousness and will. This triad proceeds, sustains, and outlasts everything that manifests. There is no fundamental distinction between the so-called animate and the inanimate because life, consciousness and force are all inseparable aspects of one eternal absolute Reality.

Ceaseless motion and change is one aspect of the absolute. Acting in harmony with the law of cycles, it is likened to a great Breath. The first breath of change in a period of manifestation is the ideation or active formation of the ideal plan of the universe from its latent potential state. "Precosmic Ideation," or spirit, is the source and origin of consciousness and force. It provides the guiding impulse that directs the evolution of the universe. However, it cannot become individualized self-reflective consciousness without the assistance of cosmic substance, the other co-eternal and inseparable aspect of the Absolute. As a lens is necessary to focus a ray of sunlight, a physical basis is necessary to focus a ray of Universal Mind. Cosmic substance is the basis of matter in all its gradations of differentiation. When a vehicle of matter reaches a certain stage of complexity, consciousness wells up as "I am I." The manifested universe is pervaded by the duality of spirit and matter. Everything is alive and conscious in some degree.

Spirit also requires substance in order to become a potent force in the evolution of the universe. As spirit and matter are two inseparable aspects of the One Absolute Unity, there is that which links spirit to matter during an active period of manifestation. We may call this will. It is the bridge by which the ideas existing in universal mind are impressed on cosmic substance and manifest as the forces and laws of nature. The important point is that it is the same ideation, or spirit, working through substance, that becomes individualized consciousness, will and, eventually, force. There can be no consciousness, without some degree of will and force. Every idea has a degree of force of its own and the will to manifest objectively in substance. This makes every self-conscious, self-reflective entity a potential god endowed with tremendous responsibility and opportunity.

Cosmic will has an electric power of affinity and sympathy that forever tries to unite mind with matter, the unmanifested ideal with the manifested being or thing. It may be called cosmic electricity, or more importantly in one aspect, it may be called Divine Love. Every self-conscious and self-reflective entity that thinks, wills, and impresses substance in harmony with the divine universal mind performs an act of love. All beings are alive, conscious, and active in some degree. But only a human being can self-consciously, with free will and choice, manifest the divine will on earth "as it is in heaven."

**H.P.B. writes:**

"Considering this metaphysical triad as the Root from which proceeds all manifestation, the great Breath assumes the character of precosmic Ideation. It is the fons et origo of force and of all individual consciousness, and supplies the guiding intelligence in the vast scheme of cosmic Evolution. On the other hand, precosmic root-substance (Mulaprakriti) is that aspect of the Absolute which underlies all the objective planes of Nature.

Just as pre-Cosmic Ideation is the root of all individual consciousness, so pre-Cosmic Substance is the substratum of matter in the various grades of its differentiation.

Hence it will be apparent that the contrast of these two aspects of the Absolute is essential to the existence of the "Manifested Universe." Apart from Cosmic Substance, Cosmic Ideation could not manifest as individual consciousness, since it is only through a vehicle of matter that consciousness wells up as "I am I," a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity. Again, apart from Cosmic Ideation, Cosmic Substance would remain an empty abstraction, and no emergence of consciousness could ensue.

The "Manifested Universe", therefore, is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as "manifestation".

But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested Universe, there is "that" which links spirit to matter, subject to object.

This something, at present unknown to Western speculation, is called by the occultists Fohat. It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation, the "Thought Divine" transmitted and made manifest through the Dhyana Chohans, the Architects of the visible World. Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualised and attains to self - or reflective - consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life." (SD 1, pgs. 15 – 16)

## CHAPTER 16

### The Ebb and Flow of Universal Law

One of the purposes of the Proem is to present a few basic ideas, or propositions, that underlie the Esoteric Philosophy. Simply stated, there is one absolute eternal be-ness, there is one absolutely fundamental law of being, and there is one evolutionary process of becoming. The first fundamental proposition presents the teaching on the nature of the One Source. The second fundamental proposition of The Secret Doctrine invites the student to consider the existence and nature of the absolutely fundamental law of the universe. The third fundamental proposition describes the process of evolution that is in accordance with that universal law. With the use of the word “law,” the Proem lays down the basics of the Esoteric Sciences and directly challenges the fundamental assumptions of contemporary science and religion.

According to contemporary scientific thought, there is no absolute universal truth. Science observes and records observable facts and by inductive reasoning generalizes this body of observations into a statement that describes a group of phenomena without known exception. Scientists are able to predict phenomena based on these laws. Although scientists refer to laws of the universe, they do not assert that there is one universal law or that this is a universe of law since they assert that some phenomena occur by chance because they are not predictable and have no observable cause.

According to the contemporary thought of monotheistic religions, the laws of nature are the direct creation of a Supreme Being. There is no law of nature that occurs without exception, since the Supreme Being is capable of changing or overriding the operation of natural law. Such supernatural phenomena are called miracles. The primary positive assertion of Theosophy is that this is a universe of law. The two negative assertions are that there is no chance and there is no miracle. There is one fundamental law operating unceasingly and unerringly in all departments of nature.

The Secret Doctrine first strikes at the foundations of the seemingly impregnable edifice of modern scientific and religious thought, not with cold statistics and words of blood and steel, but with the beautiful and gentle use of poetic imagery. The universal law is observed as “the playground of numberless Universes” that are like “manifesting stars,” “sparks of eternity,” and winks “of the Eye of Self-Existence.” The master formula is laid down in most unassuming language, yet it heralds a revolution in the world of thought. “The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.” The one universal law governing the manifesting and disappearing of universes that flow forward and flow backward like the tide, is invisible and unknowable since its operation outlasts everything that manifests. However, its operation may be observed, recorded and used as the basis of predicting events, by its three aspects- cycles, re-embodiment and cause and effect.

The one absolutely fundamental universal law of the universe is a periodical or cyclical alternation that has been observed and recorded by physical science in every department nature, but can also be observed and recorded on non-physical planes of being. It is observed to occur without exception in periods of Day and Night, Life and Death, Waking and Sleeping, Activity and Rest and Flow and Ebb of tides. The transient tide flows forward from one constant source—the ocean, and it returns to the same one enduring source. This natural process helps one grasp a second aspect of universal law. The Universe that ever-exists is the eternal ideal noumenal universe. It is like an unmovable depthless boundless ocean containing the potential of all phenomenal universes that will flow from it and objectively manifest in temporary physical form only to ebb and flow back into the eternity of the ideal universe. This process of periodical temporal re-embodiment of the enduring unmanifested ideal goes on without beginning or ending like the unceasing tide.

In every department of nature the universal law operates as cause and effect, its third aspect. The ideal or idea is the unmanifested cause and its effect is the observable material form or phenomena. There is no ideal cause that does not have a predictable phenomenal effect, and there is no observable effect that does not have a traceable cause. For every action, there is a reaction. This adjustment of every effect to its cause preserves equilibrium and harmony in the cosmos. So long as science basis its laws on observations and recordings of physical phenomena, it will be dealing with the realm of effects and never understand the real causes that are on the inner invisible planes of being. What appears to science as chance and to religion as miracle is the lawful natural operation and influence of these real “occult” causes.

The process of universal evolution that occurs in accordance with universal law also has three aspects. It is periodic and unending; it proceeds or manifests through embodiment from within without and from without within; and it is governed and checked by cause and effect. All universes, solar systems, and worlds are fundamentally identical in essence with the ideal pre-existing universe, a periodic universal manifestation of the ever-existing unmanifested universe, from which they have flowed forth and flowed back. All souls are fundamentally identical in essence with the Universal Over-Soul, a periodic aspect of the ever-unknowable one absolute eternal source. All Souls emanating from the Universal Spirit must flow forth like the tide into embodiment in all the kingdoms of nature and flow back into the Oneness at the end of a cycle of incarnation.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Further, the Secret Doctrine affirms: -

(b.) The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," called "the manifesting stars," and the "sparks of Eternity." "The Eternity of the Pilgrim" is like a wink of the Eye of Self-Existence (Book of Dzyan.) "The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux."

This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping

and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.

Moreover, the Secret Doctrine teaches:

(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul - a spark of the former - through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.

"Pilgrim" is the appellation given to our Monad (the two in one) during its cycle of incarnations. It is the only immortal and eternal principle in us, being an indivisible part of the integral whole - the Universal Spirit, from which it emanates, and into which it is absorbed at the end of the cycle. When it is said to emanate from the one spirit, an awkward and incorrect expression has to be used, for lack of appropriate words in English. The Vedantins call it Sutratma (Thread-Soul), but their explanation, too, differs somewhat from that of the occultists; to explain which difference, however, is left to the Vedantins themselves." (SD. 1 pg. 16-17)

## CHAPTER 17

### Evolution – The Cycle of Necessity

In the "Proem" of "The Secret Doctrine," the Unknown and Unknowable Root of all being is represented to the finite mind of the student as abstract unconditioned space. Co-eternal with the one reality, Space, is primordial homogeneous substance representing the conditioned fullness of space. Space is also dynamic and in eternal motion. It is ever coming, going and becoming. Any point in space, being inseparable from the whole in reality, is one in essence with the Root of all being, permeated with homogeneous substance, and forever becoming. It is subject to the same universal law of ebb and flow observed as periodicity, re-embodiment, and cause and effect. Each point in space is a mirror reflecting the potentiality of the absolute one reality.

In the realm of mathematics, 0 (zero) is like the one unconditioned reality. It has no conditioned value in itself. It has no direct influence on the conditioned value of other numbers either when it is added or subtracted. Yet, without 0, no other numbers can have the possibility of existence, value, or influence on other numbers. The potentiality and potency of all numbers have their root in the 0 that has no root or direct influence. The latent and potential influence of 0 becomes manifested and potent with the appearance of 1 (one). The infinite variety and influence of all numbers are all possible because of permutations and transformations of the number 1. In mathematics, every different number has its root in 1, and that 1 has its root in 0. The 1 is a unity and a duality.

The first breath of change in a period of manifestation is the ideation or active formation of the ideal plan of the universe from its latent potential state in the absolute one reality. This manifested ideation working through and with manifested homogeneous substance is a unity and a duality since neither can manifest without the other. It may be called the Universal Over-Soul,

itself an aspect of the Unmanifested Root. Like the relationship of 1 to all other numbers in mathematics, every individual Soul is identical with it in essence and origin and owes its manifested existence to it. Like the imaginary point in space, each and every soul reflects like a mirror the potentiality of the Universal Over-Soul and the unlimited potentiality of the absolute Unknown Root.

Evolution is the gradual manifestation and development of the potentiality of every soul. As the potentiality of every soul is unlimited there can be no beginning or ending to the process of evolution, but there can be periods of time during which the soul reaches a relative stage of “greatness”. The Third Fundamental Proposition of The Secret Doctrine teaches the evolutionary process that each soul must go through. The evolutionary “cycle of necessity” for the pilgrim soul is governed by periodicity, re-embodiment, and cause and effect. Three reasons are given why the process is called the “cycle of necessity.”

The first reason is that the evolution of soul is governed by the same law that governs the universe. H.P.B. writes: “The Secret Doctrine teaches the progressive development of everything, worlds as well as atoms; and this stupendous development has neither conceivable beginning or imaginable end. Our “Universe” is only one of an infinite number of Universes, all of them “Sons of Necessity”, because links in the great Cosmic chain of Universes, each standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being a cause as regards its successor.” (SD I, p. 43)

The second reason the process is called the “cycle of necessity” is because no soul, a spark of the Universal Over-Soul, can have an individual and independent conscious existence before passing through all the different kingdoms of the phenomenal world of material forms. Conscious existence in all its degrees requires a material form, and independent self-conscious existence requires a human form. There is a universal process of ebb and flow that provides a natural impulse whereby the ideation in the Universal Over-Soul is gradually manifested in more dense and differentiated forms of matter. As the soul is one in essence and origin with the Universal Over-Soul, the natural impulse towards conscious existence in form comes from within the soul itself. It is the soul that brings forth the different degrees of form necessary for its evolutionary progress. In the Esoteric Philosophy the spark of Universal Over-Soul is called the Monad. H.P.B. writes: “The Monad has to pass through its mineral, vegetable and animal forms, before the Light of the Logos is awakened in the animal man.” (SD II, p. 42)

The third reason the process is called the “cycle of necessity” is because once the light of self-conscious mind is lit up in the human form, further individual progress in conscious awareness depends on self-induced and self-devised efforts checked by the lawful effects of previous self-induced causes. In the human condition, the spiritual stream of evolution, whereby the ideal potentiality within the monad is gradually unfolded from within outward and manifested in material form, and the physical stream of evolution whereby more complex and differentiated forms are manifested to provide a suitable material basis for the expression of consciousness of the monad, are blended with the intellectual stream of evolution. In other words, once the human stage of evolution is reached the further impulse to spiritual, physical, and intellectual evolution is provided by self-conscious choices within the mind. Therefore, this aspect of the Third Fundamental Proposition is called the Pivotal Doctrine. At this pivotal point, human evolution and the evolution of nature is influenced by the transformation and growth of mind in the human

being from lower degrees to higher degrees of intelligence. This can only be won by personal effort and merit.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Moreover, the Secret Doctrine teaches: -

(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (divine Soul) can have an independent (conscious) existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth principle, - or the OVER-SOUL, - has (a) passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and (b) acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest archangel (Dhyani-Buddha). The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations. This is why the Hindus say that the Universe is Brahma and Brahmâ, for Brahma is in every atom of the universe, the six principles in Nature being all the outcome - the variously differentiated aspects - of the SEVENTH and ONE, the only reality in the Universe whether Cosmical or micro-cosmical; and also why the permutations (psychic, spiritual and physical), on the plane of manifestation and form, of the sixth (Brahmâ the vehicle of Brahma) are viewed by metaphysical antiphrasis as illusive and Mayavic. For although the root of every atom individually and of every form collectively, is that seventh principle or the one Reality, still, in its manifested phenomenal and temporary appearance, it is no better than an evanescent illusion of our senses.” (SD I, pgs. 17-18)

## CHAPTER 18

### The Universe in a Nutshell

The “Proem” of “The Secret Doctrine” is one of the most remarkable documents in all of Theosophical literature. In 24 pages, H.P.B. introduces the basic geometrical symbolism that records the accumulated wisdom of the ages, the three fundamental propositions upon which the entire philosophy is based, and an outline of the Stanzas of the Book of Dzyan describing the seven stages of cosmic evolution. Considering how important these three aspects of the “Proem” are to the student of Theosophy, one may overlook the significance of the long paragraph on pages 18 – 19. This paragraph is ‘The Secret Doctrine’ in a nutshell. Everything that follows in its two volumes could be viewed as commentary. The paragraph begins:

“In its absoluteness, the One Principle under its two aspects (Parabrahmam and Mulaprakriti) is sexless, unconditioned and eternal. Its periodical (manvantaric) emanation – primal radiation – is

also One, androgynous and phenomenally finite. When the radiation radiates in its turn, all its radiations are also androgenous, to become male and female principles in their lower aspects.”

The Secret Doctrine teaches that neither the universe nor humanity were created in the theological sense or evolved blindly or randomly as postulated in the materialism of current scientific theory. Rather, they evolve under the rule of cyclic law inherent in the whole and under the guidance of intelligent forces within that One Reality which is understood to be both unconditioned and eternal Space (Parabrahmam) and the unconditioned fullness of Space (Mulaprakriti). The eternal Parent, Space, may be said to be sexless in reality, since it is neither “male” in its creative spiritual potency, or “female” in its procreative substantial essence, but above or beyond them both. Figuratively, Space is symbolized as the Mother since its conditioned fullness, primordial undifferentiated substance, is the eternal womb of all of manifested Nature. However, this substance does not become procreative of all forms of matter until fired up into activity by the periodic flash of divine ideation (spirit). Then the fullness of Space may be called the Father – Mother. In the esoteric philosophy the first differentiation and most subtle manifestation of the eternal unconditioned substance is called Akasa. Although periodical and finite compared to the One Reality, the undifferentiated substance – principle, Akasa is also sexless, or rather androgenous, manifesting the dual creative potency of spirit and its vehicle, matter. Since the eternal ideation of the universe to be exists within it in germ, Akasa is also referred to as Father-Mother-Son (spirit, soul, and expressed intelligence). This trinity is inherent in all the subsequent differentiated degrees of manifested being.

Within this paragraph, the teaching of the trinity is further elaborated:

“...in the Eastern doctrine, these are the Seventh Principle of the manifested Universe, or its “Atma-Buddhi-Manas”( Spirit, Soul, Intelligence), the triad branching off and dividing into seven cosmical and seven human principles...”

The best word to describe this process is emanation. This word means that everything that exists has flowed forth from a common source. Nothing that exists is separate from that source in its essential nature or truly separate from any other manifestation. Everything contains the potentiality of the whole in its essential nature. Keeping in mind that a principle is a basis for thought and action (male) working through a particular degree of substance (female), which is its vehicle, each one of the sevenfold cosmic and human principles is androgenous. Each principle contains the potentiality of the whole and the potency of spirit and matter, even though manifesting more predominantly a particular aspect of the whole. It is important to keep this fundamental teaching in mind while studying the rest of ‘The Secret Doctrine’ which describes in more detail the specific qualities of these seven cosmic and human principles, how they relate to one another, and how they manifest and operate on each degree of substance from the highest, Akasa, down to the grossest most differentiated substance of our objective universe.

The objective universe, solar system, planet, and human being are the children, or sons, of this trinity, born in the sevenfold womb of the manifested fullness of Space. Each one has a sevenfold nature, whose seven principles are not separate from one another in their origin or in their differentiated manifestation. These principles are not like the several layers and skin of an onion. Since they occupy the same one reality, Space, they interpenetrate, correspond and interact with one another. The human being, possessed of self-consciousness and the capacity of free will and

choice, can learn to master the seven principles of human nature and control the forces of great nature. The human form, whether male or female in its manifestation, is a microcosm of the macrocosm. All the principles of the cosmos, with their corresponding faculties and powers, are manifested in the human being. So, know thyself. Study, with the care and sincerity of purpose of one endowed with great responsibility and influence, the remaining pages of "The Secret Doctrine."

**H.P.B. writes:**

"In its absoluteness, the One Principle under its two aspects (of Parabrahmam and Mulaprakriti) is sexless, unconditioned and eternal. Its periodical (manvantaric) emanation — or primal radiation — is also One, androgynous and phenomenally finite. When the radiation radiates in its turn, all its radiations are also androgynous, to become male and female principles in their lower aspects. After Pralaya, whether the great or the minor Pralaya (the latter leaving the worlds in statu quo), the first that re-awakes to active life is the plastic Akasa, Father-Mother, the Spirit and Soul of Ether, or the plane on the surface of the Circle. Space is called the "Mother" before its Cosmic activity, and Father-Mother at the first stage of re-awakening. (See Comments, Stanza II.) In the Kabala it is also Father-Mother-Son. But whereas in the Eastern doctrine, these are the Seventh Principle of the manifested Universe, or its "Atma-Buddhi-Manas" (Spirit, Soul, Intelligence), the triad branching off and dividing into the seven cosmical and seven human principles, in the Western Kabala of the Christian mystics it is the Triad or Trinity, and with their occultists, the male-female Jehovah, Jah-Havah. In this lies the whole difference between the esoteric and the Christian trinities. The Mystics and the Philosophers, the Eastern and Western Pantheists, synthesize their pregenetic triad in the pure divine abstraction. The orthodox, anthropomorphize it. Hiranyagarbha, Hari, and Sankara — the three hypostases of the manifesting "Spirit of the Supreme Spirit" (by which title Prithivi — the Earth — greets Vishnu in his first Avatar) — are the purely metaphysical abstract qualities of formation, preservation, and destruction, and are the three divine Avasthas (lit. hypostases) of that which "does not perish with created things" (or Achyuta, a name of Vishnu); whereas the orthodox Christian separates his personal creative Deity into the three personages of the Trinity, and admits of no higher Deity. The latter, in Occultism, is the abstract Triangle; with the orthodox, the perfect Cube. The creative god or the aggregate gods are regarded by the Eastern philosopher as Bhraṇtidarsanatah — "false apprehension," something "conceived of, by reason of erroneous appearances, as a material form," and explained as arising from the illusive conception of the Egotistic personal and human Soul (lower fifth principle). It is beautifully expressed in a new translation of Vishnu Purana. "That Brahma in its totality has essentially the aspect of Prakriti, both evolved and unevolved (Mulaprakriti), and also the aspect of Spirit and the aspect of Time. Spirit, O twice born, is the leading aspect of the Supreme Brahma. The next is a twofold aspect,— Prakriti, both evolved and unevolved, and is the time last." Kronos is shown in the Orphic theogony as being also a generated god or agent." (SD 1, pgs. 18-19)

## CHAPTER 19

### An Introduction to the Stages of Evolution

The final section of the “Proem” of “The Secret Doctrine” introduces the student to a skeleton outline of the teachings of Theosophy on the origin and evolution of the cosmos as traced in the Stanzas of the Book of Dzyan. These Stanzas provide an abstract algebraic formula of that evolution. Algebraic formulas are particularly useful for presenting models of real-life phenomena. They use symbols to express the constant and variable aspects of those phenomena and their relationships to one another. If we were to write out the algebraic formula that describes the seven stages of the evolutionary process it would look something like this:

$$Y = ax + bx + cx + dx + ex + fx + gx$$

Y represents the sum total history of evolution from the beginning of a cycle of active manifestation.

X is the constant factor in the sense that this abstract formula can be applied to the evolution of either the cosmos, earth, chain of planets of the earth forms one aspect, or to the solar system to which that chain belongs.

A, B, C, etc. are the variable factors since they represent the seven great stages of the evolutionary process that can be applied to each and all of the above mentioned scenes of evolution with respective differences taken into consideration (“mutatis mutandis”).

Each of the seven terms of this equation (ax, bx, etc.) represents one of those stages. As the seven stanzas presented in Volume One of “The Secret Doctrine” deal primarily with the evolution of our solar universe and earth, these seven stages generally are as follows:

The Night of the Universe, The Idea of Differentiation, The Awakening of Kosmos, The Appearance of the Septenary Hierarchies, The Manifestation of the Will of the Septenary Hierarchies, The Growth and Development of our World, and The Appearance of Man on Earth.

The first Stanza, or stage, has been called “The Night of The Universe” since it is a stage of darkness to the finite mind that can only conceptualize definitive concepts and specific descriptive attributes of objects. This Stage is a state of absoluteness that can only be presented to the mind as the absence of all those positive abstract attributes that describe objects and subjects. These positive attributes do not exist yet. In other words, time was not, the contrast of light and dark was not, the preceding link of causes was not, bliss and misery were not, truth was not, mind beings who can think, will, feel, imagine and remember were not. Even the idea that differentiation can exist was not, since nothing was, except the One Absolute All.

Every object that we perceive can be described and distinguished by the time or duration of its existence. An orange and an exact copy of that orange made of clay will look the same, but the difference of their duration of existence is one way to distinguish them. Every object can be perceived and recognized by its specific and predictable pattern of light and darkness. If there were only light or only darkness, the color of an orange, the characteristics of its skin, and the edges of the orange could not be perceived. Every object can be understood by the specific causes that led to its existence. The set of causes that led to the existence of the orange fruit and the clay model of an orange are different. If one knew and understood the different links of cause and

effect one could produce either one. The experience of the bliss of biting into the orange or the misery of biting into the clay orange can only be known by a mind capable of feeling and remembering the difference between sweet and sour, hard and soft, dry and wet. The orange and the clay model can not be distinguished unless there is a mind to imagine and hold the idea of orange and its clay model and think this object is truly an orange and not a clay model, and visa versa.

If these attributes and the mind to perceive them do not exist then the objects do not exist for us, even though they have the possibility and potentiality of existence. Such is the first stage Absoluteness which contains the possibility and potentiality of all universes, solar systems, planetary chains, worlds, and beings, even though these objects do not yet exist or have ceased to exist. The “Night of the Universe” is a time of sleep and inactivity that corresponds to the human state of consciousness known as deep sleep. For human beings, that state is one of darkness, unconsciousness and rest because the personality, brain are temporarily paralyzed and inactive. The world and all its objects and beings are unknown to the sleeper even though they continue to exist as a potentiality and possibility once the sleeper awakes. Even the idea of conscious awareness in the waking state does not exist for the sleeper, although it continues to exist as a potentiality and possibility once the dreamer awakes.

The second stanza, or stage, has been called “The Idea of Differentiation”. To those trained and conditioned only to use the reasoning and intellectual capacities of the physical brain, it is a stage that seems identical to the first stage since neither the objects nor their positive attributes that can be conceived and distinguished by the intellect exist. The idea of differentiation and the ideal of all the different objects and attributes exist only in germ, because there is still no mind being to recognize that objects are different and that attributes are different. The germ of the idea of a universe, solar system, planetary chain, planet, or being exists only in potentiality and possibility in undifferentiated, eternal, substance.

Nevertheless, this stage of awakening of the idea of differentiation can be felt and known to the human being through the faculty of intuition, or direct perception of Truth. This second stage of the evolutionary process corresponds to the first awakening of consciousness and activity of the human being, the truth of which can be intuitively and directly known by anyone. The first conscious experience upon awakening from the darkness and unconsciousness of deep sleep is the awareness of the possibility and potentiality of differentiated and individualized conscious existence. It is self-consciousness, but not personal, individualized self-conscious existence. All that exists in consciousness is the awareness “I Am.” The awareness that “I am I”, I am a specific “I” distinguished by attributes of age, sex, physical condition, circumstance, and personal characteristics from every other being does not consciously exist yet, but it potentially does. The objects that make up our little universe do not exist yet, but they potentially do. The attributes and qualities of our own being and that of those around us do not exist yet, but they potentially do. We are distinctly aware that something has changed even though we cannot yet describe it, but we eventually will. Everything that we will do and become that new day exists as the germ of possibility and potentiality in our conscious awareness and human form awakening from deep sleep.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Stanza I. The history of cosmic evolution, as traced in the Stanzas, is, so to say, the abstract algebraical formula of that Evolution. Hence the student must not expect to find there an account of all the stages and transformations which intervene between the first beginnings of "Universal" evolution and our present state. To give such an account would be as impossible as it would be incomprehensible to men who cannot even grasp the nature of the plane of existence next to that to which, for the moment, their consciousness is limited.

The Stanzas, therefore, give an abstract formula which can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to all evolution: to that of our tiny earth, to that of the chain of planets of which that earth forms one, to the solar Universe to which that chain belongs, and so on, in an ascending scale, till the mind reels and is exhausted in the effort.

The seven Stanzas given in this volume represent the seven terms of this abstract formula. They refer to, and describe the seven great stages of the evolutionary process, which are spoken of in the Puranas as the "Seven Creations," and in the Bible as the "Days" of Creation.

The First Stanza describes the state of the ONE ALL during Pralaya, before the first flutter of re-awakening manifestation.

A moment's thought shows that such a state can only be symbolised; to describe it is impossible. Nor can it be symbolised except in negatives; for, since it is the state of Absoluteness per se, it can possess none of those specific attributes which serve us to describe objects in positive terms. Hence that state can only be suggested by the negatives of all those most abstract attributes which men feel rather than conceive, as the remotest limits attainable by their power of conception. The stage described in Stanza II. is, to a western mind, so nearly identical with that mentioned in the first Stanza, that to express the idea of its difference would require a treatise in itself. Hence it must be left to the intuition and the higher faculties of the reader to grasp, as far as he can, the meaning of the allegorical phrases used. Indeed it must be remembered that all these Stanzas appeal to the inner faculties rather than to the ordinary comprehension of the physical brain.”  
(SD 1, pgs. 20-21)

## CHAPTER 20

### The Awakening of the Universe

The “Proem” presents an outline of the stages of evolution of the cosmos, or the visible objective universe. The seven stanzas presented in Volume One of “The Secret Doctrine” (SD) describe each one of those stages. They are not meant to describe the entire process of evolution - cosmic, solar, and planetary. There are many other stanzas that are omitted from the text because they would only make the task of understanding the teaching almost impossible for the intellect of the student. The specific stanzas chosen are calculated to arouse and develop the student’s higher faculty of intuition, which is one of the primary purposes of the SD.

The first two stanzas, “The Night of The Universe” and “The Idea of Differentiation” could be called pre-cosmic stages since they describe state of the One All during Pralaya, or rest, before the “first flutter of reawakening manifestation, “ and the germ of the universe to be while it is still concealed in Divine Thought and primordial homogeneous substance. The third stanza has been called “The Awakening of Kosmos.” because it describes the highest stage of world formation which is the reawakening of the Universe to a period of active life. Unlike the first two stanzas, the third stanza is dynamic.

The third stage is dynamic for three reasons. The first reason is because it “depicts the emergence of the ‘Monads’ from their state of absorption within the ONE.” The rhythm and pulsation of the universal law of periodicity is introduced. The state of dissolution and absorption of all forms of being into the One for a long period of rest is unceasingly followed by the emergence from that state into a long period of active manifestation.

The second reason this stage or stanza is dynamic is because it describes the influence of the monads which are the manifesting potent vehicles of the concealed potential Life, Thought, and Will within the One All. One in essence with the All, they are the periodic manifesting unity of that eternal unknowable unity which can be applied to a universe, solar system, planet, human being or atom. In their spiritual essence they mirror the germ of the universe concealed in divine thought and primordial substance, and provide the evolutionary impulse in all the kingdoms of nature.

The third reason this stage is dynamic is because the reawakening of the universe and the emergence of the monads are accompanied by the conditioning or progressive changing manifestation of unconditioned consciousness and eternal divine thought. The primal radiations of the unity of the One are like rays from the sun that shine equally on all. The universal spiritual and substantial essence of the monad (Atma-Buddhi) provides for the individual manifestation of consciousness and intelligence in every being, of whatever kingdom of nature, according to the nature of the being.

**H.P.B. writes:**

"As the Monads are un-compounded things,... it is the spiritual essence which vivifies them in their degrees of differentiation, which properly constitutes the Monad -- not the atomic aggregation, which is only the vehicle and the substance through which thrill the lower and the higher degrees of intelligence." (SD 1, pg. 179)

The third stage of the awakening of the kosmos has its correspondence to the awakening of the human being to active life. The first stage corresponds to the state of consciousness, or unconsciousness as the case may be, known as deep sleep. The second stage corresponds to the flutter of recognition of conscious existence, “I am”, which contains the germ of all the activity and development for that new day. The third stage of cosmic evolution corresponds to the emergence of the awareness of individual self-conscious existence, “I am I,” after a night of re-absorption of that awareness into the unconsciousness of deep sleep. The life, intelligence and will of the human being are centered in that awareness. It is dynamic. One recognizes the change that has occurred from sleeping to waking and the periodicity of ones life. The individual will is

aroused to actively engage in life on this plane. All the thoughts, memories, and desires particular to ones life begin to flood into ones awareness.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Stanza III. describes the Re-awakening of the Universe to life after Pralaya. It depicts the emergence of the "Monads" from their state of absorption within the ONE; the earliest and highest stage in the formation of "Worlds," the term Monad being one which may apply equally to the vastest Solar System or the tiniest atom.” (SD 1, pg. 22)

“The reader has to bear in mind that the Stanzas given treat only of the Cosmogony of our own planetary System and what is visible around it, after a Solar Pralaya. The secret teachings with regard to the Evolution of the Universal Kosmos cannot be given, since they could not be understood by the highest minds in this age, and there seem to be very few Initiates, even among the greatest, who are allowed to speculate upon this subject. Moreover the Teachers say openly that not even the highest Dhyani-Chohans have ever penetrated the mysteries beyond those boundaries that separate the millions of Solar systems from the "Central Sun," as it is called. Therefore, that which is given, relates only to our visible Kosmos, after a "Night of Brahmâ." (SD 1, pg.11)

“Pilgrim” is the appellation given to our Monad (the two in one) during its cycle of incarnations. It is the only immortal and eternal principle in us, being an indivisible part of the integral whole - the Universal Spirit, from which it emanates, and into which it is absorbed at the end of the cycle. When it is said to emanate from the one spirit, an awkward and incorrect expression has to be used, for lack of appropriate words in English. The Vedantins call it Sutratma (Thread-Soul), but their explanation, too, differs somewhat from that of the occultists; to explain which difference, however, is left to the Vedantins themselves.” (SD 1, pg. 16fn)

## CHAPTER 21

### The Intelligent Embodiment of Law

The “Proem” provides an outline of the stages of cosmic evolution symbolized in the Stanzas in Volume One of “The Secret Doctrine.”(SD) The seven stages poetically described in each one of the seven stanzas may be applied to the evolution of a universe, solar system, or planet. As they represent the operation of the ONE LAW, they have universal application. The universal law guides evolutionary development from within outward accompanied by growth from unity to diversity. The initial manifested uniformity of spirit and substance that contains the potential of every manifested being and world in the universe is symbolized as the “germ” in the Stanzas. This evolutionary process does not occur blindly or automatically.

The mystery of the differentiation of the germ of the universe is described in Stanza IV. This stage describes the differentiation of the “Germ” of the Universe into seven hierarchies who “are the active manifestations of the One Supreme Energy” working through manifested

homogeneous substance. As the prism differentiates white light that is the unity of all colors into the seven colors of the spectrum, the germ of the universe differentiates the light of Divine Universal Mind into seven degrees of conscious divine powers.

The septenary hierarchies are called, in general, Dhyān Chohans in the Secret Doctrine. But whether they are called angelic hosts, Elohim, or The Great Architect of the Universe, these hierarchies are the rulers, framers, shapers, “creators,” if you will, of the universe. They are the embodiment of the ONE LAW. They adjust, control, and guide the sevenfold evolutionary process in the universe, solar system, planet and human being, according to the divine thought and will of Universal Mind. In the SD they are symbolized in terms that appeal to the imagination and intuition of the student. They are called the “Sons of Light,” the “Sons of Light,” and “The Army of the Voice.”

**H.P.B. writes:**

“Stanza IV shows the differentiation of the ‘Germ’ of the Universe into the septenary hierarchy of conscious Divine Powers, who are the active manifestations of the One Supreme Energy. They are the framers, shapers, and ultimately the creators of all the manifested Universe, in the only sense in which the name “Creator” is intelligible; they inform and guide it; they are the intelligent Beings who adjust and control evolution, embodying in themselves those manifestations of the ONE LAW, which we know as “The Laws of Nature.”

Generically, they are known as the Dhyān Chohans, though each of the various groups has its own designation in the Secret Doctrine.

This stage of evolution is spoken of in Hindu mythology as the “Creation” of the Gods.” (SD 1, pgs.21-22)

## CHAPTER 22

### The Record of the History of Evolution

As the student approaches the final pages of the “Proem” it becomes clear that the previous introduction of fundamental conceptions is meant to help one understand the particular and detailed teachings that will follow on the lawful process and history of world formation, appearance of life, and development of “Man” on such a world. The two-fold objective of this preparation is to orient the reasoning intellect to the universal premises and logical deductions of the esoteric philosophy and to arouse the intuition to the direct inner perception of the truth of the teachings. The soul knows what it needs. The voice in the silence of one’s spiritual consciousness responds and confirms sympathetically when presented with a true idea, as two glasses of the same nature will vibrate sympathetically when one is struck. The universal and enduring spiritual nature of a human being is of the same nature as Truth. The history of the world and humanity is recorded in the heart and spiritual center of a human being more permanently, if such an expression may be used, than it could ever be recorded on paper, stone, or metallic disks.

Although “The Secret Doctrine” (SD) is available to all, not all will be benefitted in the same way. The preparation will succeed in proportion to the student’s readiness to receive the teachings. The reasoning mind has to be open and capable of suspending the influence of prejudice and superstition. The heart has to be pure enough to drive out the shadows of ideas that separate the mind from the light of truth of our spiritual oneness and selfish desires that block out the light of compassion for all beings. Only then can a human being become engaged in the true service of humanity free of self-serving interest. Only then can one be called a “true Theosophist” regardless of race, creed, sex, condition, or organization. As H.P.B. writes in the SD,

“This Work I Dedicate to all True Theosophists, In every Country, And of every Race, for they called it forth, and for them it was recorded.”

Continuing with the stages of cosmic evolution outlined in the Proem:

Stanza Five and part of Stanza Six also relate to the evolution of the cosmos and provide the abstract formula for the stages of evolution that may be applied to a universe, solar system, or planet, as the case may be. The remainder of Stanza Six and all of Stanza Seven are concerned with “our Solar System in general, with the planetary chains therein, inferentially, and with the history of our globe (The 4th and its chain) especially.” (SD 1, pg.151)

Stanza Five provides the description of diffused Cosmic matter. It is not mere dust. Rather it is likened to a fiery wind that is glowing, magnetic, and conscious. It responds to the directing thought and will of the hierarchies of intelligent creative forces introduced in Stanza Four. The thought and will of these centers of force is also electromagnetic in essence. Therefore, this stanza is called “Fohat: The Child of the Septenary Hierarchies. Fohat may be described as cosmic electricity impressed with the ideation of the divine mind contained in the collectivity of the seven hierarchies. The first effect of the flow of cosmic electromagnetism is to create circular movement in the diffused Cosmic matter. Just as electrically charged particles moving through a magnetic field take a circular path, cosmic matter influenced by Fohat becomes a fiery whirlwind, the first stage in the formation of a nebula.

In other word, the diffused Cosmic matter, like iron filings following a magnet, are attracted to this center of electromagnetic spiritual force and are condensed into a circulating mass diffuse luminous substance. This mass is not the nebula visible through the most powerful telescopes. It is made of the manifested homogeneous substance before it is differentiated into seven different degrees of cosmic matter under the influence of the seven hierarchies. The transformation and condensation of this nebula of homogeneous substance from the ethereal to the most terrestrial matter is an expansion from within outward. The most outward objective expression is the universe, solar system, or planet as we objective beings know it. However, the universe, solar system, and planet manifest on seven planes substance and corresponding states of consciousness according to the influence of Fohat, the child of the seven hierarchies, who are themselves the intelligent embodiments of the one universal divine law.

The sevenfold nature of a world is called a “planetary chain.” Under the guidance of the universal law of periodicity, its evolution proceeds cyclically in seven great periods or stages. Stanza Six is called “Our World, Its Growth and Development” because it describes the stages of the

evolution of a world, in general, and our world in particular down to its forth great stage which is the period in which we are now living. The septenary hierarchies guide the seven great periods of the evolution of a planetary chain. Stanza Seven is called "The Parents of Man on Earth," because the evolution and gradual appearance of life on this planet also proceeds in a sevenfold cyclical fashion under the influence and guidance of the hierarchies.

This completes the outline of the stanzas in the first book of the SD; however, there is one more aspect to consider before concluding our study of the "Proem."

**H.P.B. writes:**

"In Stanza V. the process of world-formation is described: - First, diffused Cosmic Matter, then the fiery "whirlwind," the first stage in the formation of a nebula. That nebula condenses, and after passing through various transformations, forms a Solar Universe, a planetary chain, or a single planet, as the case may be.

The subsequent stages in the formation of a "World" are indicated in Stanza VI., which brings the evolution of such a world down to its fourth great period, corresponding to the period in which we are now living.

Stanza VII. continues the history, tracing the descent of life down to the appearance of Man; and thus closes the first Book of the Secret Doctrine.

The development of "Man" from his first appearance on this earth in this Round to the state in which we now find him will form the subject of Book II." (SD 1, pg. 22)

## CHAPTER 23

### Many Are Called to Know; Few Choose to Understand

The final "Note" of the Proem definitively states that "The Secret Doctrine"(SD) is written for the benefit of Theosophists and students of Occultism. While its teachings are made available to all, many who read this work will have reactions ranging from confusion and skepticism to outright irritation and rejection. The wide range of reactions must be expected beforehand, partly because every reader has preconceived ideas and prejudices that color the meaning and intent of the teacher and prior knowledge, experience and development that inevitably leads to judgment of the teachings according to what has been previously learnt. All these must be temporarily put aside if one is to grasp the true intent and meaning of the teacher and receive the teachings impartially.

Aside from these obstacles there are other impediments.

First, this initial installment of the esoteric doctrines contains part of the verbal traditions and written records of the early sub-races of the fifth root race of humanity, people unknown to ethnology. Their civilizations flourished and disappeared ages before the written languages and

historical records familiar to our modern philologists and anthropologists were developed. Nevertheless, the records of these early races and civilizations of humanity, as well as all the sacred and philosophical works ever written in whatever language since the art of writing began, are said to be in the possession of adepts in the Secret Science of Occultism. How can one expect the modern scientifically minded individual to accept these sources as reliable and correct if they have no direct access to them?

Second, the Stanzas that introduce the central concepts of each section are from “The Book of Dzyan.” Our modern scholars have never heard of such a book, nor would they be able to understand it in its original even if they had it in their possession. The original commentaries and explanations of the meanings of words in the text are written in Senzar, the secret language of the Adepts and their disciples, that predates Sanskrit. In fact, for the benefit and comprehension of the modern reader, the stanzas given in the SD are modern translations of Chinese Thibetan and Sanskrit translations of the original text. Nevertheless, this book is said to be the source of some of the most ancient works known to modern scholars. Referring to this work H.P.B. writes:

The “very old Book” is the original work from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were compiled. Not only this latter and the Siphrah Dzeniouta but even the Sepher Jezirah, the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham, the book of Shu-king, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Puranas in India, and the Chaldean Book of Numbers and the Pentateuch itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. (SD 1, xliii)

Third, the source from which these teachings emanate, Occultism, is most likely to be rejected by modern materialistic and experimental science as well as dogmatic religion. While modern materialistic science accepts only those doctrines in harmony with its own theories drawn from the evidence of the physical senses and the reproducible results of scientific methods of experimentation, dogmatic religion only accepts those teachings in accord with its creeds and articles of faith. Occultism has no conflict with the facts accumulated by science through observation and experimentation or the spiritual and ethical principles of religion; however, it can only accept those doctrines whose premises are correct and whose formulations are based on all the observable and reproducible visible and invisible facts and laws of nature. Practical scientific occultism requires the training and use of all the physical, mental, and psychic faculties of the individual along with many prior years of training in mental and moral discipline as well as philosophical study. Even for the Theosophist this is the work of lifetimes. So while, not everyone is fitted to be an Occultist, anyone can be, or attempt to become a true Theosophist.

These almost insurmountable obstacles and impediments, for those who only follow the methods of research sanctioned by official science or the sanctified doctrines of a religious creed, to giving the teachings of the esoteric philosophy outlined in the SD a fair hearing, are of no concern to the genuine Occultist, a student of Occultism or a Theosophist. The genuine Occultist has developed the faculties and discipline necessary for first-hand knowledge. The student of Occultism, personally comparing and verifying the teachings given in the SD with the available texts of ancient and modern, eastern and western religion, science and philosophy, will be able to conclude that the esoteric teachings are logical and probable. The true Theosophist dedicated to the true service of Humanity and practical self-sacrificing altruism, regardless of race, creed, sex, condition, organizational affiliation, or scientific inclination, intuitively knows in the mind and

feels in the heart the oneness and interdependence of life, the spiritual unity and common source of all beings, and is in touch with Divine Wisdom - Theosophia. The words of any book point out the way for one to live. By living the life, one knows the truth of the doctrine.

**H.P.B. writes:**

“The Stanzas which form the thesis of every section are given throughout in their modern translated version, as it would be than useless to make the subject still more difficult by introducing the archaic phraseology of the original, with its puzzling style and words. Extracts are given from the Chinese Thibetan and Sanskrit translations of the original Senzar Commentaries and Glosses on the Book of DZYAN — these being now rendered for the first time into a European language. It is almost unnecessary to state that only portions of the seven Stanzas are here given. Were they published complete they would remain incomprehensible to all save the few higher occultists. Nor is there any need to assure the reader that, no more than most of the profane, does the writer, or rather the humble recorder, understand those forbidden passages.

As this work is written for the instruction of students of Occultism, and not for the benefit of philologists, we may well avoid such foreign terms wherever it is possible to do so. The untranslatable terms alone, incomprehensible unless explained in their meanings, are left, but all such terms are rendered in their Sanskrit form. Needless to remind the reader that these are, in almost every case, the late developments of the later language, and pertain to the Fifth Root-Race. Sanskrit, as now known, was not spoken by the Atlanteans, and most of the philosophical terms used in the systems of the India of the post-Mahabharatan period are not found in the Vedas, nor are they to be met with in the original Stanzas, but only their equivalents. The reader who is not a Theosophist, is once more invited to regard all that which follows as a fairy tale, if he likes; at best as one of the yet unproven speculations of dreamers; and, at the worst, as an additional hypothesis to the many Scientific hypotheses past, present and future, some exploded, others still lingering. It is not in any sense worse than are many of the so called Scientific theories; and it is in every case more philosophical and probable.” (SD 1, pgs. 22-24)

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The end of “**On the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine***”.

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In September 2016, after a careful analysis of the state of the esoteric movement worldwide, a group of students decided to form the **Independent Lodge of Theosophists**, whose priorities include the building of a better future in the different dimensions of life.

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Helena Blavatsky (photo) wrote these words: “**Deserve, then desire**”.

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