

Hierarchy of Beings - Part One

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Etymology

The term Hierarchy is a compound of two Greek words: *hieros*, sacred and *archon* from *archein*, to rule, hence authority or government in sacred things. The summit of the hierarchy is termed the Hyparxis. (DP, 47)

The Unity of Beings

The fundamental law is introduced in the Secret Doctrine by a most sublime passage. Geoffrey Barborka thought it eminently appropriate for commencing a study of the Doctrine of Hierarchies; In which the student (Lanoo) is taught the essential oneness of All by his teacher or Master (Gurudeva). In the Catechism, the Master is made to ask the pupil: —

“Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?”

“I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it.”

“Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?”

“It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, ‘Thy Soul and My Soul.’ ” (SD I, 120)

The radical ^[1] unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature — from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyāni-Chohan to the smallest infusoria^[2], in the fullest acceptation of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds — this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science. “**The Deity is boundless and infinite expansion,**” says an Occult axiom ^[3]; (SD I, 120)

This law is exemplified in the pattern of the hierarchal scheme, under which a cosmos functions, namely, **every entity lives its life* in the field, or sphere, of a greater being – the greater being providing a “home” for the lesser being.** It should be emphasized that the unity is made to apply not only to spiritual and intellectual worlds but physical worlds as well.

*JH - or emanates from

(DP 44)

[1] Radical – root or fundamental

[2] Infusoria – protozoans - various microscopic organisms found in infusions of decaying organic matter.

[3] Axiom a self-evident or universally recognized truth

Series of Hierarchies

The Ancient Wisdom does not regard the universe as a vast container. Instead, the universe is the result of the manifestation of *beings*, who build and guide it. Therefore it is stated that: (DP, 45)

“It is on the Hierarchies and correct numbers of these Beings invisible (to us) except upon very rare occasions, that the mystery of the whole Universe is built.” (SD I, 89)

“the Secret Doctrine ... teaches that the whole universe is ruled by intelligent and semi-intelligent Forces and Powers” (SD I, 287)

The Powers are the three great classes or hierarchies known under the generalizing term Dhyāni-Chohan who direct and guide the “semi-intelligent Forces” also called by a generalizing term: the three Classes or Kingdoms of the Elementals.

(DP, 45)

Men and the Dhyāni-Chohan

The whole Kosmos ^[1] (universe) is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who — whether we give to them one name or another, and call them Dhyāni-Chohan or Angels — are “messengers” in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws. They vary infinitely in their respective degrees of consciousness and intelligence; and to call them all pure Spirits without any of the earthly alloy “which time is wont (likely or accustomed to) to prey upon” is only to indulge in poetical fancy. For each of these Beings either *was*, or prepares to become, a man, if not in the present, then in a past or a coming cycle (Manvantara). They are *perfected*, when not *incipient* ^[2], men; and differ morally from the terrestrial human beings on their higher (less material) spheres, only in that they are devoid of the feeling of personality and of the human emotional nature — two purely earthly characteristics.

(SD I, 274)

[1] Whenever a theosophist speaks of the cosmos or the universe, he by no means refers only to the physical sphere or world or cross section of the boundless All in which we humans live, but more particularly to the invisible worlds and planes and spheres inhabited by their countless hosts of vitalized or animate beings. In order to avoid redundancy of words and often confusing repetitions in the midst of an explanation dealing with other matters, since H. P. Blavatsky's time it has been customary among careful theosophical writers to draw a distinction of fact between **cosmos and kosmos**. The solar universe or solar system is frequently referred to as cosmos or solar cosmos; and the galactic universe or our own home-universe it has been customary to refer to as the kosmos. This distinction, however, does not always hold, because sometimes in dealing with abstract questions where the application of the thought can be indifferently made either to the galactic or to the solar universe, the two forms of spelling may be used interchangeably.

[2] Incipient - beginning to exist or appear; just starting to be or happen;

DP = Geoffrey Barborika, *The Divine Plan* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 2002)

SD I = Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* vol. I, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993)

SD II = Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* vol. II, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993)