

PROEM

From *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume 1 by H. P. Blavatsky

PAGES FROM A PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

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. It is the Point in the Mundane Egg,¹ 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-incognizable 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,² wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony.

¹ See Volume I, Part II, Section VI, "The Mundane Egg."

² 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 Vedāntic 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 Māyā. Sensation, again, necessarily postulates limitation. The personal God of orthodox Theism perceives, thinks, and is affected by emotion; he repents and feels "fierce anger." But the notion of such mental states clearly involves the unthinkable postulate of the externality of the exciting stimuli, to say nothing of the impossibility of ascribing changelessness to a Being whose emotions fluctuate with events in the worlds he presides over. The conceptions of a Personal God as changeless and infinite are thus unpsychological and, what is worse, unphilosophical.

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,”³ 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, rotatory 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. Occultism sums up the “One Existence” thus: “Deity is an arcane, living (or moving) FIRE, and the eternal witnesses to this unseen Presence are Light, Heat, Moisture,” — this trinity including, and being the cause of, every phenomenon in Nature.⁴ 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 naught to do with the causal relations of the phenomenal World.

³ Plato proves himself an Initiate, when saying in *Cratylus* that [[*theos*]] is derived from the verb [[*theein*]], “to move,” “to run,” as the first astronomers who observed the motions of the heavenly bodies called the planets [[*theoi*]], the gods. (See Volume II., “Symbolism of the Cross and Circle.”) Later, the word produced another term, [[*aletheia*]] — “the breath of God.”

⁴ Nominalists, arguing with Berkeley that “it is impossible (for me) to form the abstract idea of motion distinct from the body moving” (*Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introd., *par.* 10), may put the question, “What is that body, the producer of that motion? Is it a substance? Then you are believers in a Personal God?” etc., etc. This will be answered farther on, in the Addendum to this Volume; meanwhile, we claim our rights of Conceptionalists as against Roscellinus’ materialistic views of Realism and Nominalism. “Has science,” says one of its ablest advocates, Edward Clodd, “revealed anything that weakens or opposes itself to the ancient words in which the Essence of all religion, past, present, and to come, is given; to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly before thy God?” Provided we connote by the word God, *not the crude anthropomorphism which is still the backbone of our current theology, but the symbolic conception of that which is Life and Motion of the Universe*, to know which in physical order is to know time past, present, and to come, in the existence of successions of phenomena; to know which, in the moral, is to know what has been, is, and will be, within human consciousness. (See “Science and the Emotions.” A Discourse delivered at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, London, Dec. 27th, 1885.)

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

A few years ago only, it was stated that:

The esoteric doctrine, then, teaches, like Buddhism and Brahminism, and even the persecuted *Kabala*, 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 these conditions are called the “day” and the “night” of Brahmā. The latter is either “awake” or “asleep.” The *Svābhāvikas*, 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 *Svabhavat*, and deem it foolish to theorize upon the abstract and “unknowable” power in its passive condition. Hence they are called atheists by both Christian theologians and modern scientists; for neither of the two are able to understand the profound logic of their philosophy. The former will allow of no other God than the personified *secondary* powers which have blindly worked out the visible universe, and which became with them the anthropomorphic God of the Christians — the male Jehovah, roaring amid thunder and lightning. In its turn, rationalistic science greets the Buddhists and the *Svābhāvikas* as the “positivists” of the archaic ages. If we take a one-sided view of the philosophy of the latter, our materialists may be right in their own way. The Buddhists maintained that there is *no* Creator, but an infinitude of *creative powers*, which collectively form the one eternal substance, the *essence* of which is inscrutable — hence not a subject for speculation for any true philosopher. Socrates invariably refused to argue upon the mystery of universal being, yet no one would ever have thought of charging him with atheism, except those who were bent upon his destruction. Upon inaugurating an active period, says the *Secret Doctrine*, an expansion of this Divine essence from without inwardly and from within outwardly,⁵ 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.*⁶

⁵ [The words “from without inwardly and” do not occur in the original edition of *Isis Unveiled*, and must have been added here by H.P.B.]

⁶ See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 264-265; also, Section VII, *The Days and Nights of Brahmā* in Part II of Vol. I, p. 368.

This passage will be explained, as far as it is possible, in the present work. Though, as it now stands, it contains nothing new to the Orientalist, its esoteric interpretation may contain a good deal which has hitherto remained entirely unknown to the Western student.

The first illustration being a plain disc \bigcirc , the second one in the Archaic symbol shows \odot , 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 \ominus . It now symbolizes a divine immaculate Mother-Nature within the all-embracing absolute Infinitude. When the diameter line is crossed by a vertical one \oplus , 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 \dagger it is a sign that the fall of man into matter is accomplished, and the FOURTH race begins. The Cross within a circle symbolizes pure Pantheism; when the Cross was left uninscribed, it became phallic. It had the same and yet other meanings as a TAU inscribed within a circle \oplus or as a “Thor’s hammer,” the Jaina cross, so-called, or simply Svastica within a circle \oplus .

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 — \top — 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 \odot , the circle, or sexless life modified or separated — a double glyph or symbol. With the [sub]races of our Fifth Race it became in symbology the Hebrew *zākhār*, and *negēbāh* of the first-formed races;⁷ then it changed into the Egyptian \dagger (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 \star — 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.⁸

⁷ See that suggestive work, “The Source of Measures,” (1875, pp. 236-37) where the author explains the real meaning of the word “*zākhār*,” from which he derives “sacred,” and “sacrament,” which have now become synonyms of “holiness,” though purely phallic!

⁸ We are told by the Western mathematicians and some American Kabalists, that in the Kabala also “the value of the Jehovah name is that of the diameter of a circle.” Add to this the fact that Jehovah is the third Sēphirōth, *Bīnāh*, a feminine word, and you have the key to the mystery. By certain Kabalistic transformations this name, *androgynous* in the first chapters of *Genesis*, becomes in its transformations entirely masculine, Cainite and phallic. The fact of choosing a deity among the pagan gods and making of it a special national God, to call upon it as the “One living God,” the “God of Gods,” and then proclaim this worship Monotheistic, does not change it into the ONE Principle whose “Unity admits not of multiplication, change, or form,” especially in the case of a priapic deity, as Jehovah [is] now demonstrated to be.

It is hoped that during the perusal of this work the erroneous ideas of the public in general with regard to Pantheism will be modified. It is wrong and unjust to regard the Buddhists and Advaitin Occultists as atheists. If not all of them philosophers, they are, at any rate, all logicians, their objections and arguments being based on strict reasoning. Indeed, if the Parabrahman 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. Parabrahman is not “God,” because It is not *a* God. “It is that which is supreme, and not supreme (*parāvāra*),” explains Mundaka [Māṇḍūkya] Upanishad (II, 2.8). It is “Supreme” as CAUSE, not supreme as effect. Parabrahman is simply, as a “Secondless Reality,” the all-inclusive Kosmos — or, rather, the infinite Cosmic Space — in the highest spiritual sense, of course. Brahman (neuter) being the unchanging, pure, free, undecaying supreme Root, “the ONE true Existence, Paramārthika,” and the absolute Chit and Chaitanya (intelligence, consciousness) cannot be a cogniser, “for THAT can have no subject of cognition.” Can the flame be called the essence of Fire? This Essence is “the LIFE and LIGHT of the Universe, the visible fire and flame are destruction, death, and evil.” “Fire and Flame destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence makes him immortal.” (*Bodimör, Book II.*)⁹ “The knowledge of the absolute Spirit, like the effulgence of the sun, or like heat in fire, is naught else than the absolute Essence itself,” says Śaṅkarāchārya. IT — is “the Spirit of the Fire,” not fire itself; therefore, “the attributes of the latter, heat or flame, are not the attributes of the Spirit, but of that of which that Spirit is the unconscious cause.” Is not the above sentence the true key-note of later Rosicrucian philosophy? Parabrahman is, in short, the collective aggregate of Kosmos in its infinity and eternity, the “THAT” and “THIS” to which distributive aggregates cannot be applied.¹⁰ “In the beginning THIS was the Self, one only”;¹¹ the great Śaṅkarāchārya, explains that “THIS” referred to the Universe (Jagat); the sense of the words, “In the beginning,” meaning before the reproduction of the phenomenal Universe.

⁹ [Zirkoff Note 9] *Bodimör* is a Mongolian translation of a Tibetan Sūtra. It is a Manual of Tsong-Kha-pa’s Lam-rim chen-mo (“The Great Road to Perfection”). Mör mean Path, and the full title of the work is: *Bodhi Mör-un Jerge-yin ulagan Kötebüri Gamug-yi Ayiladugci-dur Odqui Amur Mör Kemegdeku Orusiba*. It was written by bLo-bzan Chhos-kyi rGyal-mts’an, a Tibetan.

¹⁰ See *The Vedāntasāra* (1881) by Major G. A. Jacob; as also *The Aphorisms of Śaṅḍilya*, (1878), translated by E. B. Cowell, p. 42.

¹¹ Aitareya-Upanishad, 4th Adhyāya, (I. i. 1) 1st Khaṇḍa.

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, Parabrahman 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 Parabrahman, 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. And if the Vedāntin postulates attributes as belonging simply to its emanation, calling it “*Īśvara plus Māyā*,” and *Avidyā* (Agnosticism and Nescience rather than ignorance), it is difficult to find any Atheism in this conception.¹² Since there can be neither two INFINITES nor two ABSOLUTES in a Universe supposed to be Boundless, this Self-Existence can hardly be conceived of as creating personally. 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 *Brahmā* (the male-female Potency) becomes or expands itself into the manifested Universe. *Nārāyaṇa* 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.

The orthodox Brahmins, those who rise the most against the Pantheists and Advaitins, calling them Atheists, are forced, if *Manu* has any authority in this matter, to accept the death of *Brahmā*, the creator, at the expiration of every “Age” of this (creative) deity (100 Divine years — a period which in our years requires fifteen figures to express it). Yet, no philosopher among them will view this “death” in any other sense than as a temporary disappearance from the manifested plane of existence, or as a periodical rest.

¹² Nevertheless, prejudiced and rather fanatical Christian Orientalists would like to prove this pure Atheism. For proof of this, see about Major Jacob’s *Vedāntasāra*. Yet, the whole Antiquity echoes this Vedāntic thought: —

“Omnis enim per se divom natura necesse est
Immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur.”

[Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II, 646-7]

The Occultists are, therefore, at one with the Advaita Vedāntin 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,” into which it is said to enter in order to transform itself into Brahmā — 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, the ever-incognizable Deity, which is void only to finite minds,¹³ and on that of *māyāvic* 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,”¹⁴ and the Hindu Ṛishi’s “The Universe lives in, proceeds from, and will return to, Brahman (Brahmā):” for Brahma (neuter), the unmanifested, is that Universe *in abscondito*, and Brahmā, the manifested, is the Logos, made male-female¹⁵ in the symbolical orthodox dogmas. The God of the Apostle-Initiate and of the Ṛishi 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.

¹³ The very names of the two chief deities, Brahmā and Vishṇu, ought to have long ago suggested their esoteric meanings. For the root of one, Brahman, or Brahm, is derived by some from the word *bṛih*, “to grow” or “to expand” (see *Calcutta Review*, vol. lxxvi., p. 14); and of the other, Vishṇu, from the root *viś*, “to pervade,” to enter in the nature of the essence; Brahmā-Vishṇu being this infinite SPACE, of which the gods, the Ṛishis, the Manus, and all in this universe are simply the potencies, Vibhūṭayaḥ. [*Vishṇu-Purāṇa*, Bk. III, i.]

¹⁴ [Acts xvii, 28]

¹⁵ See Manu’s account of Brahmā separating his body into male and female, the latter the female Vāch, in whom he creates Virāj, and compare this with the esotericism of chapters II, III, and IV of *Genesis*.

It is not the One Unknown ever-present God in Nature, or Nature *in abscondito*, that is rejected, but the God of human dogma and his *humanized* “Word.” In his infinite conceit and inherent pride and vanity, man shaped it himself with his sacrilegious hand out of the material he found in his own small brain-fabric, and forced it upon mankind as a direct revelation from the one unrevealed SPACE.¹⁶

¹⁶ Occultism is indeed in the air at the close of this our century. Among many other works recently published, we would recommend one especially to students of theoretical Occultism who would not venture beyond the realm of our special human plane. It is called *New Aspects of Life and Religion* (1886), by Henry Pratt, M.D., F.T.S. It is full of esoteric dogmas and philosophy, the latter rather limited, in the concluding chapters, by what seems to be a spirit of conditioned positivism. Nevertheless, what is said of Space as “the Unknown First Cause,” merits quotation.

“This unknown something, thus recognized as, and identified with, the primary embodiment of Simple Unity, is invisible and impalpable” — [*abstract space, granted*]; “and because invisible and impalpable, therefore incognizable. And this incognizability has led to the error of supposing it to be a simple void, a mere receptive capacity. But, even viewed as an absolute void, space must be admitted to be either self-existent, infinite, and eternal; or to have had a first cause outside, behind, and beyond itself.

“And yet could such a cause be found and defined, this would only lead to the transferring thereto of the attributes otherwise accruing to space, and thus merely throw the difficulty of origination a step farther back, without gaining additional light as to primary causation.” (pages 4-5.)

This is precisely what has been done by the believers in an anthropomorphic Creator, an extracosmic, instead of an intracosmic God. Many — most of Mr. Pratt’s subjects, we may say — are old Kabalistic ideas and theories which he presents in quite a new garb: “New Aspects” of the Occult in Nature, indeed. Space, however, viewed as a “Substantial Unity” — the “living Source of Life” — is as the “Unknown Causeless Cause,” is the oldest dogma in Occultism, millenniums earlier than the *Pater-Aether* of the Greeks and Latins. So are the “Force and Matter, as Potencies of Space, inseparable, and the Unknown revealers of the Unknown.” They are all found in Āryan philosophy personified by Viśvakarman, Indra, Viṣṇu, etc., etc. Still they are expressed very philosophically, and under many unusual aspects, in the work referred to.

The Occultist accepts revelation as coming from divine yet still finite Beings, the manifested lives, never from the Unmanifestable ONE LIFE; from those entities, called Primordial Man, Dhyāni-Buddhas, or Dhyāni-Chohans, the “Rishi-Prajāpatis” of the Hindus, the Elōhīm or “Sons of God,” the Planetary Spirits of all nations, who have become Gods for men. He also regards the Ādi-Śakti — the direct emanation of Mūlaprakṛiti, the eternal Root of THAT, and the female aspect of the Creative Cause Brahmā, in her Ākāśic form of the Universal Soul — as philosophically a Māyā, and cause of human Māyā. But this view does not prevent him from believing in its existence so long as it lasts, to wit, for one Mahamanvantara; nor from applying Ākāśa, the radiation of Mūlaprakṛiti,¹⁷ to practical purposes, connected as the World-Soul is with all natural phenomena, known or unknown to science.

The oldest religions of the world — exoterically, for the esoteric root or foundation is one — are the Indian, the Mazdean, and the Egyptian. Then comes the Chaldean, the outcome of these — entirely lost to the world now, except in its disfigured Sabaeism as at present rendered by the archaeologists; then, passing over a number of religions that will be mentioned later, comes the Jewish, esoterically, as in the Kabala, following in the line of Babylonian Magism; exoterically, as in *Genesis* and the *Pentateuch*, a collection of allegorical legends. Read by the light of the *Zohar*, the initial four chapters of *Genesis* are the fragment of a highly philosophical page in the World’s Cosmogony. (See Book III, *Gupta Vidyā* and the *Zohar*.)¹⁸ Left in their symbolical disguise, they are a nursery tale, an ugly thorn in the side of science and logic, an evident effect of Karma. To have let them serve as a prologue to Christianity was a cruel revenge on the part of the Rabbis, who knew better what their *Pentateuch* meant. It was a silent protest against their spoliation, and the Jews have certainly now the better of their traditional persecutors. The above-named exoteric creeds will be explained in the light of the Universal doctrine as we proceed with it.

¹⁷ In contradistinction to the manifested universe of matter, the term *Mūlaprakṛiti* (from *mūla*, “the root,” and *prakṛiti*, “nature”), or the unmanifested primordial matter — called by Western alchemists Adam’s Earth — is applied by the Vedāntins to *Parabrahman*. Matter is dual in religious metaphysics, and septenary in esoteric teachings, like everything else in the universe. As *Mūlaprakṛiti*, it is undifferentiated and eternal; as *Vyakta*, it becomes differentiated and conditioned, according to *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, I, 8, and *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The author of the Four Lectures on the Bhagavad Gitā, says, in speaking of *Mūlaprakṛiti*: “From its [the Logos’] objective standpoint, *Parabrahman* appears to it as *Mūlaprakṛiti*. . . Of course this *Mūlaprakṛiti* is material to it, as any material object is material to us . . . *Parabrahman* is an unconditioned and absolute reality, and *Mūlaprakṛiti* is a sort of veil thrown over it.” (*Theosophist*, Vol. VIII., p. 304.)

¹⁸ [Zirkoff Note 10] (On Pages 11, 76, 394, Quest Edition), In all three cases, H.P.B. makes reference to “Book III.” She uses the word “Book” every time when she means “Volume.” This reference is to Volume III. The subject under consideration must have been intended for further elaboration in the prospective Volume III of her *magnum opus* which never saw the light. The reference on page 11 mentions a title, namely, *Gupta Vidyā* and the *Zohar*. This could very well refer to the text contained in sections XX et seq. of the so-called Volume III published in 1897, and consisting of Miscellaneous paper from H.P.B.’s pen. However, this cannot be proved with any degree of certainty.

The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

“What is it that ever is?” “Space, the eternal Anupapādaka.”¹⁹ “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 — (i.e., māyā,²⁰ one of the centres²¹). 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, Manvantara and Pralaya. The Germ is invisible and fiery; the Root [the plane of the circle] is cool; but during Evolution and Manvantara 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 Brahmā, or Manvantara] . . .”

¹⁹ Meaning “parentless” — see farther on.

²⁰ Esoteric philosophy, regarding as Māyā (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 Mahā-manvantaric 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.

²¹ 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.

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.²² 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*,²³ not even Ākāśa but the *Source* of these. The Fifth Element, now advocated quite freely by Science, is not the Ether hypothesized by Sir Isaac Newton — although he calls it by that name, having associated it in his mind probably with the Aether, “Father-Mother” of antiquity. As Newton intuitionally says,

“Nature is a perpetual circulatory worker, generating fluids out of solids, fixed things out volatile, and volatile out of fixed, subtile out of gross, and gross out of subtile. . . . Thus, perhaps, may all things be originated from Ether.”²⁴

²² It is curious to notice how, in the evolutionary cycles of ideas, ancient thought seems to be reflected in modern speculation. Had Mr. Herbert Spencer read and studied ancient Hindu philosophers when he wrote a certain passage in his *First Principles* (p. 482)? Or is it an independent flash of inner perception that made him say half correctly, half incorrectly,

“motion as well as matter, being fixed in quantity [?], it would seem that the change in the distribution of matter which motion effects, coming to a limit in whichever direction it is carried [?], the indestructible motion thereupon necessitates a reverse distribution. Apparently, the universally co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion which, as we have seen, necessitate rhythm in all minor changes throughout the Universe, also necessitate rhythm in the totality of its changes — produce now an immeasurable period during which the attracting forces predominating, cause universal concentration, and then an immeasurable period, during which the repulsive forces predominating, cause universal diffusion — alternate eras of evolution and dissolution.”

²³ Whatever the views of physical Science upon the subject, Occult Science has been teaching for ages that Ākāśa — of which Ether is the grossest form — the fifth universal Cosmic Principle (to which corresponds and from which proceeds human Manas) is, cosmically, a radiant, cool, diathermanous plastic matter, creative in its physical nature, correlative in its grossest aspects and portions, immutable in its higher principles. In the former condition it is called the Sub-Root; and in conjunction with radiant heat, it recalls “dead worlds to life.” In its higher aspect it is the Soul of the World; in its lower — the DESTROYER.

²⁴ [Sir I. Newton’s letter to Henry Oldenburg, dated December 7th, 1675, and entitled “An Hypothesis explaining the Properties of Light discoursed of in my several Papers.” See *Register* of the Royal Society, Vol. V, p.65]

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 Dhyāni-Chohans have ever penetrated the mysteries beyond those boundaries that separate the milliards 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 Brahma.”

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 *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, “unthinkable and unspeakable.” [Verse 7]

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 — dimly formulated in the “Unconscious” and “Unknowable” of current European philosophy — 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 सत्*), and is beyond all thought or speculation.

This “Be-ness” is symbolized 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. On the other, absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. Even our Western thinkers have shown that Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolizes change, its essential characteristic. This latter aspect of the one Reality, is also symbolized by the term “The Great Breath,” a symbol sufficiently graphic to need no further elucidation. Thus, then, the first fundamental axiom of the Secret Doctrine is this metaphysical One Absolute — BE-NESS— symbolized by finite intelligence as the theological Trinity.

It may, however, assist the student if a few further explanations are given here.

Herbert Spencer has of late so far modified his Agnosticism, as to assert that the nature of the “First Cause,”²⁵ which the Occultist more logically derives from the “Causeless Cause,” the “Eternal,” and the “Unknowable,” may be essentially the same as that of the Consciousness which wells up within us: in short, that the impersonal reality pervading the Kosmos is the pure noumenon of thought. This advance on his part brings him very near to the esoteric and Vedāntin tenet.²⁶

Parabrahman (the One Reality, the Absolute) is the field of Absolute Consciousness, *i.e.*, that Essence which is out of all relation to conditioned existence, and of which conscious existence is a conditioned symbol. 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 (Parabrahman), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.

Considering this metaphysical triad as the Root from which proceeds all manifestation, the Great Breath assumes the character of pre-cosmic 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, pre-cosmic root-substance (*Mūlaprakṛiti*) 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 vehicle²⁷ 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.

²⁵ The “first” presupposes necessarily something which is the “first brought forth,” “the first in time, space, and rank” — and therefore finite and conditioned. The “first” *cannot be the absolute*, for it is a manifestation. Therefore, Eastern Occultism calls the Abstract All the “Causeless One Cause,” the “Rootless Root,” and limits the “First Cause” to the *Logos*, in the sense that Plato gives to this term.

²⁶ See T. Subba Row’s four able lectures on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, February, March, April, July, 1887.

²⁷ Called in Sanskrit: *upādhi*.

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 Dhyāni-Chohans,²⁸ 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 individualized 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.

The following summary will afford a clearer idea to the reader.

- (1.) The ABSOLUTE; the *Parabrahman* of the Vedāntins or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.
- (2.) The first manifestation, the impersonal, and, in philosophy, *unmanifested* Logos, the precursor of the “manifested.” This is the “First Cause,” the “Unconscious” of European Pantheists.
- (3.) Spirit-matter, LIFE; the “Spirit of the Universe,” the Purusha and Prakṛiti, or the *second* Logos.
- (4.) Cosmic Ideation, MAHAT or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called MAHĀ-BUDDHI.

The ONE REALITY; its *dual* aspects in the conditioned Universe.

²⁸ Called by Christian theology: Archangels, Seraphs, etc., etc.

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”²⁹ 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.”³⁰

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. 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 (Dhyāni-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.

²⁹ “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 Vedāntins call it *Sūtrātman* (Thread-Soul), but their explanation, too, differs somewhat from that of the occultists; to explain which difference, however, is left to the Vedāntins themselves.

³⁰ See Part II, Section VIII, “Days and Nights of Brahmā.”

This is why the Hindus say that the Universe is Brahma and Brahmā, 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 microcosmical; and also why the permutations (psychic, spiritual and physical), on the plane of manifestation and form, of the sixth (Brahmā the vehicle of Brahma) are viewed by metaphysical antiphrasis as illusive and Māyāvic. 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.³¹

In its absoluteness, the One Principle under its two aspects (of Parabrahman and Mūlaprakṛiti) 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*),³² the first that reawakes to active life is the plastic Ākāśa, 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 reawakening. (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 “Ātma-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, Yāh-Ḥavāh. 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 *Śaṃkara* — three hypostases of the manifesting “Spirit of the Supreme Spirit” (by which title Prithivī — the Earth — greets Vishṇu in his first Avatāra) — are the purely metaphysical abstract qualities of formation, preservation, and destruction, and are the three divine Avasthās (lit. hypostases) of that which “does not perish with created things” (or Achyuta, a name of Vishṇu); 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.

³¹ See, for clearer definition, Vol. I, Part III, Section XV, “Gods, Monads and Atoms”, p. 610; and also “Theophania,” “Bodhisattvas and Reincarnation,” etc., etc.

[Zirkoff Note 11] There are no Sections in the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* to which these titles would correspond. H.P.B. may have had in mind some material she was preparing for another volume of her great work. The so-called “Volume III” published in 1897, and consisting of miscellaneous articles, and essays, does contain a few brief explanations of the real nature of *Theophania* (consult its index) and it is of course quite possible that these texts might have been intended to be used in a further volume.

³² It is not the physical organisms that remain in *statu quo*, least of all their psychical principles, during the great Cosmic or even Solar pralayas, but only their Ākāśic or astral “photographs.” But during the minor pralayas, once over-taken by the “Night,” the planets remain intact, though dead, as a huge animal, caught and embedded in the polar ice, remains the same for ages.

The creative god or the aggregate gods are regarded by the Eastern philosopher as *Bhrāntidarśanatah* — “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 *Vishṇu Purana*:

“That Brahmā, in its totality, has essentially, the aspect of Prakṛiti, both evolved and unevolved [Mūlaprakṛiti], and also the aspect of spirit and the aspect of time. Spirit, O twice-born, is the leading aspect of the Supreme Brahma.³³ The next is a twofold aspect, — Prakṛiti, both evolved and unevolved, and is the time last.³⁴”

Kronos [Chronos] is shown in the Orphic theogony as being also a generated god or agent.

At this stage of the re-awakening of the Universe, the sacred symbolism represents it as a perfect Circle with the (root) point in the Centre. This sign was universal, therefore we find it in the Kabala also. The Western Kabala, however, now in the hands of Christian mystics, ignores it altogether, though it is plainly shown in the *Zohar*. These sectarians begin at the end, and show as the symbol of pregenetic Kosmos this sign ⊕, calling it “the Union of the Rose and Cross,” the great mystery of occult generation, from whence the name — Rosicrucians (Rose Cross)!

As may be judged, however, from the most important, as the best known of the Rosicrucians’ symbols, there is one which has never been hitherto understood even by modern mystics. It is that of the “Pelican” tearing open its breast to feed its seven little ones — the real creed of the Brothers of the Rosie-Cross and a direct outcome from the Eastern Secret Doctrine. Brahma (neuter) is called Kalahaṃsa, meaning, as explained by Western Orientalists, the Eternal Swan or goose (see Stanza III., Comment. 8), and so is Brahmā, the Creator. A great mistake is thus brought under notice; it is Brahma (neuter) who ought to be referred to as Haṃsa-vāhana (He who uses the swan as his Vehicle) and not Brahmā the Creator, who is the real Kalahaṃsa, while Brahma (neuter) is haṃsa, and “a-haṃsa,” as will be explained in the Commentary. Let it be understood that the terms Brahmā and Parabrahman are not used here because they belong to our Esoteric nomenclature, but simply because they are more familiar to the students in the West. Both are the perfect equivalents of our one, three, and seven-vowelled terms, which stand for the ONE ALL, and the One “All in all.”

Such are the basic conceptions on which the Secret Doctrine rests.

³³ Thus Spencer, who, nevertheless, like Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, only reflects an aspect of the old esoteric philosophers, and hence lands his readers on the bleak shore of Agnostic despair — reverently formulates the grand mystery: “that which persists unchanging in quantity, but ever changing in form, under these sensible appearances which the Universe presents to us, is an unknown and unknowable power, which we are obliged to recognize as without limit in Space and without beginning or end in Time.” It is only daring Theology — never Science or philosophy — which seeks to gauge the Infinite and unveil the Fathomless and Unknowable.

³⁴ H. H. Wilson, *The Vishṇu-Purāṇa*, Vol. I. p. 18; note by Fitzedward Hall, Editor

It would not be in place here to enter upon any defense 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.

Once that the reader has gained a clear comprehension of them and realized 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. 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.

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 *Purāṇas* 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 symbolized; to describe it is impossible. Nor can it be symbolized 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.

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.

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 Dhyāni-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.

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] Volume 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] Volume II.

NOTE

The Stanzas which form the thesis of every section are given throughout in their modern translated version, as it would be worse 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 Tibetan 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. To facilitate the reading, and to avoid the too frequent reference to footnotes, it was thought best to blend together texts and glosses, using the Sanskrit and Tibetan proper names whenever those cannot be avoided, in preference to giving the originals. The more so as the said terms are all accepted synonyms, the former only being used between a Master and his chelas (or disciples).

Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — “Tho-og in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakāya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Barnang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), etc., etc.” which would sound like pure *Abracadabra*.

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-Mahābhāratan 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.

In view of the abundant comments and explanations required, the references to the footnotes are given in the usual way, while the sentences to be commented upon are marked with letters. Additional matter will be found in the Chapters on Symbolism forming Part II, as well as in Part III, these being often more full of information than the text.