

**TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY
LODGE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY;
DISCUSSIONS ON THE STANZAS OF
THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE SECRET
DOCTRINE. PART I-II. STANZAS I-IV;
JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1889**

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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY BLAVATSKY LODGE

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[The following transactions are compiled from shorthand notes taken at the meetings of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society, from January 10th to June 20th, 1889, being somewhat condensed from the original discussions.

"The Secret Doctrine" being based upon the archaic stanzas of the "Book of Dzyan," and these being too abstruse for most of the new students of Exoteric philosophy, the members of the "B. L. of the T. S." agreed to devote the debates of the weekly meetings to each stanza and sundry other metaphysical subjects.

The questions were put by members who, for the most part, supported their objections and exceptions on modern scientific grounds, and assumed logical deductions based thereon. As such objections are generally the common property of students of "The Secret Doctrine," it has been judged unnecessary to incorporate them in full, so that their substance alone has been retained. The answers in all cases are based on the shorthand Reports, and are those of Esoteric Philosophy as given by H. P. B. herself.]

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I.

Meeting held at 17, Lansdowne Road, London, W., on January 10th, 1889, at 8.30
p.m., MR. T. B. HARBOTTLE in the chair.

Subject:—

THE STANZAS OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE—VOL. I.

STANZA I.

Stoka (1). THE ETERNAL PARENT (*Space*), WRAPPED IN HER
EVER INVISIBLE ROBES, HAD SLUMBERED ONCE
AGAIN FOR SEVEN ETERNITIES.

Q. Space in the abstract is explained in the Proem (pp. 8 and 9) as follows:—

" . . . 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 fulness,' but both, being on the plane of absolute abstraction, 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 (Brahmā)'; for Brahma (neuter), the unmanifested, is that Universe *in abscondito*, and Brahmā, 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."*

But why is the Eternal Parent, Space, spoken of as feminine?

A. Not in all cases, for in the above extract Space is called the "Eternal Mother-Father"; but when it is so spoken of the reason is that though it is impossible to define Parabrahm, yet once that we speak of that first something which *can* be conceived, it has to be treated of as a feminine principle. In all cosmogonies the first differentiation was considered feminine. It is Mulaprakriti which conceals or veils Parabrahm; Sephira the *light* that emanates first from Ain-Soph; and in Hesiod it is Gaea who springs from Chaos, preceding Eros (THEOG. IV.; 201—246). This is repeated in all subsequent and less abstract material creations, as witnessed by Eve, created from the rib of Adam, etc. It is the goddess and goddesses who come first. The first emanation becomes the immaculate Mother from whom proceed all the gods, or the anthropomorphized creative forces. We have to adopt the masculine or the feminine gender, for we cannot use the neuter *it*. From *it*, strictly speaking, nothing can proceed, neither a radiation nor an emanation.

Q. Is this first emanation identical with the Egyptian Neith?

A. In reality it is beyond Neith, but in one sense or in a lower aspect it is Neith.

Q. Then the IT itself is not the "Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father"?

A. Assuredly not. The *IT* is, in the Hindu philosophy, Parabrahm, that which is beyond Brahmá, or, as it is now called in Europe, the "unknowable." The space of which we speak is the female aspect of Brahmá, the male. At the first flutter of differentiation, the Subjective proceeds to emanate, or fall, like a shadow into the Objective, and becomes what was called the Mother Goddess, from whom proceeds the Logos, the Son and Father God at the same time, both unmanifested, one the Potentiality, the other the Potency. But the former must not be confounded with the manifested Logos, also called the "Son" in all cosmogonies.

Q. Is the first differentiation from the absolute IT always feminine?

A. Only as a figure of speech; in strict philosophy it is sexless; but the female aspect is the first it assumes in human conceptions, its subsequent materialisation in any philosophy depending on the degree of the spirituality of the race or nation that produced the system. For instance: in the Kabbala of the Talmudists *IT* is called AIN-SOPH, the endless, the boundless, the infinite (the attribute being always negative),

which *absolute* Principle is yet referred to as *He!!!* From it, this negative, Boundless Circle of Infinite Light, emanates the first Sefhira, the Crown, which the Talmudists call "Torah," the law, explaining that she is the wife of Ain-Soph. This is anthropomorphising the Spiritual with a vengeance.

Q. Is it the same in the Hindu Philosophies?

A. Exactly the opposite. For if we turn to the Hindu cosmogonies, we find that Parabrahm is not even mentioned therein, but only Mulaprakriti. The latter is, so to speak, the lining or aspect of Parabrahm in the invisible universe. Mulaprakriti means the Root of Nature or Matter. But Parabrahm cannot be called the "Root," for it is the absolute *Rootless Root* of all. Therefore, we must begin with Mulaprakriti, or the Veil of this unknowable. Here again we see that the first is the Mother Goddess, the reflection or the subjective root, on the first plane of Substance. Then follows, issuing from, or rather residing in, this Mother Goddess, the unmanifested Logos, he who is both her Son and Husband at once, called the "concealed Father." From these proceeds the first-manifested Logos, or Spirit, and the Son from whose substance emanate the Seven Lógoi, whose synthesis, viewed as one collective Force, becomes the Architect of the Visible Universe. They are the Elohim of the Jews.

Q. What aspect of Space, or the unknown deity, called in the Vedas "THAT," which is mentioned further on, is here called the "Eternal Parent"?

A. It is the Vedantic Mulaprakriti, and the Svábhávát of the Buddhists, or that androgynous *something* of which we have been speaking, which is both differentiated and undifferentiated. In its first principle it is a pure abstraction, which becomes differentiated only when it is transformed, in the process of time, into Prakriti. If compared with the human principles it corresponds to Buddhi, while Atma would correspond to Parabrahm, Manas to Mahat, and so on.

Q. What, then, are the seven layers of Space, for in the "Proem" we read about the "Seven-Skinned Mother-Father"?

A. Plato and Hermes Trismegistus would have regarded this as the *Divine Thought*, and Aristotle would have viewed this "Mother-Father" as the "privation" of matter. It is that which will become the seven planes of being, commencing with the spiritual and passing through the psychic to the material plane. The seven planes of thought or the seven states of consciousness correspond to these planes. All these septenaries are symbolized by the seven "Skins."

Q. The divine ideas in the Divine Mind? But the Divine Mind is not yet.

A. The Divine Mind *is*, and must be, before differentiation takes place. It is called the divine Ideation, which is eternal in its Potentiality and periodical in its Potency, when it becomes *Mahat, Anima Mundi* or Universal Soul. But remember that, however you name it, each of these conceptions has its most metaphysical, most material, and also intermediate aspects.

Q. What is the meaning of the term "Ever invisible robes"?

A. It is of course, as every allegory in the Eastern philosophies, a figurative expression. Perhaps it may be the hypothetical Protyle that Professor Crookes is in search of, but which can certainly never be found on this our earth or plane. It is the non-differentiated substance or spiritual matter.

Q. Is it what is called "Laya"?

A. "Robes" and all are in the *Laya* condition, the point from which, or at which, the primordial substance begins to differentiate and thus gives birth to the universe and all in it.

Q. Are the "invisible robes" so called because they are not objective to any differentiation of consciousness.

A. Say rather, invisible to finite consciousness, if such consciousness were possible at that stage of evolution. Even for the Logos, *Mulaprakriti* is a veil, the Robes in which the Absolute is enveloped. Even the Logos cannot perceive the Absolute, say the Vedantins.*

Q. Is Mulaprakriti the correct term to use?

A. The *Mulaprakriti* of the Vedantins is the Aditi of the Vedas. The Vedanta philosophy means literally "the end or Synthesis of all knowledge." Now there are six schools of Hindu philosophy, which, however, will be found, on strict analysis, to agree perfectly in substance. Fundamentally they are identical, but there is such a wealth of names, such a quantity of side issues, details, and ornamentations—some emanations being their own fathers, and fathers born from their own daughters—that one becomes lost as in a jungle. State anything you please from the esoteric standpoint to a Hindu, and, if he so wishes, he can, from his own particular system, contradict or refute you. Each of the six schools has its own peculiar views and terms. So that unless the terminology of one school is adopted and used throughout the discussion, there is great danger of misunderstanding.

*Vide Mr. Subba Row's four Lectures, *Notes on the Bhagavat Gita*.

Q. Then the same identical term is used in quite a different sense by different philosophies? For instance, Buddhi has one meaning in the Esoteric and quite a different sense in the Sankya philosophy. Is not this so?

A. Precisely, and quite a different sense in the Vishnu Purana, which speaks of seven Prakritis emanating from Mahat, and calls the latter Maha-Buddhi. Fundamentally, however, the ideas are the same, though the terms differ with each school, and the correct sense is lost in this maze of personifications. It would, perhaps, if possible, be best to invent for ourselves a new nomenclature. Owing, however, to the poverty of European languages, especially English, in philosophical terms, the undertaking would be somewhat difficult.

Q. Could not the term "Protyle" be employed to represent the Laya condition?

A. Scarcely; the Protyle of Professor Crookes is probably used to denote homogeneous matter on the most material plane of all, whereas the substance symbolized by the "Robes" of the "Eternal Parent" is on the seventh plane of matter counting upwards, or rather from without within. This can never be discovered on the lowest, or rather most outward and material plane.

Q. Is there, then, on each of the seven planes, matter relatively homogeneous for every plane?

A. That is so; but such matter is homogeneous only for those who are on the same plane of perception; so that if the Protyle of modern science is ever discovered, it will be homogeneous only to us. The illusion may last for some time, perhaps until the sixth race, for humanity is ever changing, physically and mentally, and let us hope spiritually too, perfecting itself more and more with every race and sub-race.

Q. Would it not be a great mistake to use any term which has been used by scientists with another meaning? Protoplasma had once almost the same sense as Protyle, but its meaning has now become narrowed.

A. It would most decidedly; the Hyle (ἔην) of the Greeks, however, most certainly did not apply to the matter of this plane, for they adopted it from the Chaldean cosmogony, where it was used in a highly metaphysical sense.

Q. But the word Hyle is now used by the materialists to express very nearly the same idea as that to which we apply the term Mulaprakriti.

A. It may be so; but Dr. Lewins and his brave half-dozen of

Hylo-Idealists are hardly of this opinion, for in their system the metaphysical meaning is entirely disregarded and lost sight of.

Q. Then perhaps after all Laya is the best term to use ?

A. Not so, for Laya does not mean any particular something or some plane or other, but denotes a state or condition. It is a Sanskrit term, conveying the idea of something in an undifferentiated and changeless state, a zero point wherein all differentiation ceases.

Q. The first differentiation would represent matter on its seventh plane : must we not, therefore, suppose that Professor Crookes' Protyle is also matter on its seventh plane ?

A. The ideal Protyle of Professor Crookes is matter in that state which he calls the "zero-point."

Q. That is to say, the Laya point of this plane ?

A. It is not at all clear whether Professor Crookes is occupied with other planes or admits their existence. The object of his search is the protylic atom, which, as no one has ever seen it, is simply a new working hypothesis of Science. For what in reality is an atom ?

Q. It is a convenient definition of what is supposed to be, or rather a convenient term to divide up, a molecule.

A. But surely they must have come by this time to the conclusion that the atom is no more a convenient term than the supposed seventy odd elements. It has been the custom to laugh at the four and five elements of the ancients ; but now Professor Crookes has come to the conclusion that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a chemical element at all. In fact, so far from discovering the atom, a single simple molecule has not yet been arrived at.

Q. It should be remembered that Dalton, who first spoke on the subject, called it the "Atomic Theory."

A. Quite so ; but, as shown by Sir W. Hamilton, the term is used in an erroneous sense by the modern schools of science, which, while laughing at metaphysics, apply a purely metaphysical term to physics, so that nowadays "theory" begins to usurp the prerogatives of "axiom."

Q. What are the "Seven Eternities," and how can there be such a division in Pralaya, when there is no one to be conscious of time ?

A. The modern astronomer knows the "ordinances of Heaven" by no means better than his ancient brother did. If asked whether he could "bring forth Mazzaroth in his season," or if he was with "him" who