

# *Akasha-Alaya vs. Astral Light*



Red Kiss by Thomas Weicker

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## Abstract

In Its highest aspect, Ākāśa is “Divine mind reflected in the waters of Space or Chaos.” It is undifferentiated Noumenal and Abstract Space, which will be occupied by Primordial Consciousness, and has several fields:

“The first is the field of latent consciousness which is coeval with the duration of the first and second manifested Logoi.”

Another Ākāśic field is coeval with the emergence of the Third Logos “from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyān-Chohans of sentient life of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Manasaputras on the subjective.”

Ākāśa is eternal. Astral Light is periodic and ephemeral. The ideals of Divine Mind “become reflected and reversed in the Astral Light, which also reflects on its lower individual plane the life of our Earth.” Ākāśa is “eternal divine consciousness,” undifferentiated, and unconditioned. Astral Light is a periodic projection of the One Celestial Unconsciousness to myriads of terrestrial, individualised, consciousnesses. Ākāśa is the germ within the acorn; Astral Light is the acorn.

Ākāśa is the Divine Soul of Thought and Compassion, a perpetually reasoning Divinity. For, Compassion is the Law of the laws. Ākāśa is the Soul of the World on the spiritual plane; Astral Light, the Body of the World on the psychic plane.

“Prakriti, Svabhavat or Ākāśa is — Space as the Tibetans have it.” Ākāśa is “the noumenon of the sevenfold differentiated Prakriti.” Its first differentiation is Universal Intelligence, Mahat, or Logos.

Ākāśa-Alaya, being Cosmic Buddhi, differentiates through seven planes. Our Buddhi, as the vehicle of Atman, is of the highest essence of Ākāśa and, therefore, it does not differentiate. Our Higher Mind is a ray of Ākāśa. Our Lower Mind, is Its reflection, “leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether.”

Ākāśa is the Primordial Substance, vehicle of Divine Thought. Ether is Astral Light’s lowest plane. “Ether or Ākāśa being the first Idea of the yet unmanifested Universe; from which must emanate the future Kosmos, in its descending grades of materiality.” But Ākāśa is not the Ether of the Kabalists, of Science, and even of the Occultists. Ākāśa is akin to Ether as the Vedic god was to his son. Ākāśa is universal principle, Chaos, or the Great Spatial Void. It is neither Ether, nor Space. Its only attribute is “Sound, of which it is the substratum,” The Sabda Brahmā of the mystics. “For the Occultist ‘Space’ and ‘Universe’ are synonyms.”

Ākāśa-Alaya is Pradhāna or unevolved cause, that which is eternal, and which at once comprehends what is and what is not. In the beginning there was neither day nor night, nor sky, nor earth, nor darkness, nor light, nor any other thing, save only ONE, unapprehensible by intellect, or That which is Brahma, Pums, and Pradhāna. “Every thought, as much as action, is dynamic and is impressed in the imperishable Book of Nature — the Ākāśa.”



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AKASHA VS. ASTRAL LIGHT

Astral Light is the dregs of Ākāśa polluted by man's selfish and perverted thoughts and deeds, "storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities." Astral Light is "bi-sexual." The male part is purely spiritual; the female part, tainted with matter.

Astral Light is not even the "thought substance" of the Universe, but a mere recorder of every thought. Astral Light retains the thoughts and deeds of the Animal Man. Ākāśa, those of the Spiritual Man. "Happy are those whose astral sense is not opened and who do not see all the terrible things that are about us."



## Akasha and Astral Light compared

Q. *What is meant by prototypes existing in the Astral Light?*<sup>1</sup>

**In Its highest aspect, Ākāśa is “Divine mind reflected in the waters of Space or Chaos.” It is undifferentiated Noumenal and Abstract Space, which will be occupied by Primordial Consciousness, and has several fields:**

**“The first is the field of latent consciousness which is coeval with the duration of the first and second manifested Logoi.”**

**Another Ākāśic field is coeval with the emergence of the Third Logos “from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyan-Chohans of sentient life of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Manasaputras on the subjective.”**

**Ākāśa is eternal. Astral Light is periodic and ephemeral.**

A. Astral Light is here used as a convenient phrase for a term very little understood, *viz*: “the realm of Ākāśa, or primordial Light manifested through the divine Ideation.” The latter must be accepted in this particular case as a generic term for the universal and divine mind reflected in the waters of Space or Chaos, which is the Astral Light proper, and a mirror reflecting and reversing a higher plane. In the ABSOLUTE or Divine Thought everything exists and there has been no time when it did not so exist; but Divine Ideation is limited by the Universal Manvantaras. The realm of Ākāśa is the undifferentiated noumenal and abstract Space which will be occupied by *Chidakasam*, the field of primordial consciousness. It has several degrees, however, in Occult philosophy; in fact, “seven fields.” The first is the field of latent consciousness which is coeval with the duration of the first and second unmanifested Logoi. It is the “Light which shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not” of St. John’s Gospel. When the hour strikes for the Third Logos to appear, then from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyan-Chohans of *sentient life* of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Manasaputras on the subjective. The Astral Light is that which mirrors the three higher planes of consciousness, and is above the lower, or terrestrial plane; therefore it does not extend beyond the fourth plane, where, one may say, the Ākāśa begins.<sup>2</sup>

There is one great difference between the Astral Light and the Ākāśa which must be remembered. The latter is eternal, the former periodic. The Astral Light changes not only with the Maha manvantaras but also with every sub-period and planetary cycle or Round.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 63

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 360

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* X p. 361



Q. *Then do the prototypes exist on a plane higher than that of the Astral Light?*

**The ideals of Divine Mind “become reflected and reversed in the Astral Light, which also reflects on its lower individual plane the life of our Earth.”**

A. The prototypes or ideas of things exist first on the plane of Divine eternal Consciousness and thence become reflected and reversed in the Astral Light, which also reflects on its lower individual plane the life of our Earth, recording it on its “tablets.” Therefore, is the Astral Light called illusion. It is from this that we, in our turn, get our prototypes. Consequently unless the Clairvoyant or SEER can get beyond this plane of illusion, he can never see the Truth, but will be drowned in an ocean of self-deception and hallucinations.<sup>4</sup>

Q. *And what is the Ākāśa proper?*

**Ākāśa is “eternal divine consciousness,” undifferentiated, and unconditioned.**

**Astral Light is a periodic projection of the One Celestial Unconsciousness to myriads of terrestrial, individualised, consciousnesses.**

**Ākāśa is the germ within the acorn; Astral Light is the acorn.**

A. The Ākāśa is the eternal divine consciousness which cannot differentiate, have qualities, or act; action belongs to that which is reflected or mirrored from it. The unconditioned and infinite can have no relation with the finite and conditioned. The Astral Light is the Middle Heaven of the Gnostics, in which is Sophia Achamoth, the mother of the seven builders or Spirits of the Earth, which are not necessarily good, and among which the Gnostics placed Jehovah, whom they called Ildabaoth. (*Sophia Achamoth must not be confounded with the divine Sophia.*) We may compare the Ākāśa and the Astral Light, with regard to these prototypes, to the germ in the acorn. The latter, besides containing in itself the astral form of the future oak, conceals the germ from which grows a tree containing millions of forms. These forms are contained in the acorn potentially, yet the development of each particular acorn depends upon extraneous circumstances, physical forces, etc.<sup>5</sup>

All the forces in nature, whether great or small, are trinities completed by quaternaries; *all* — except the ONE, the CROWN of the Astral Light. . . . It is only after reaching the stage called *Tribeni* and passing through the study of preliminary *sounds*, that a Yogi begins to see *Kala Brahmā*, *i.e.*, perceives things in the Astral Light.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 361

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* (“THARANA,” OR MESMERISM) IV p. 166; [on the “point,” “centre,” or “seat” of unmanifested deity, “the seventh principle within the six points of the *chakra*.”]



**Ākāśa is the Divine Soul of Thought and Compassion, a perpetually reasoning Divinity.**

This idea of Mahat (the great) Ākāśa or Brahmā's aura of transformation with the Hindus, of Alaya, "the divine Soul of thought and compassion" of the trans-Himālayan mystics; of Plato's "perpetually reasoning Divinity," is the oldest of all the doctrines now known to, and believed in, by man. Therefore they cannot be said to have originated with Plato, nor with Pythagoras, nor with any of the philosophers within the historical period. Say the *Chaldean Oracles*: "The works of nature co-exist with the intellectual [*νοερώ*], spiritual Light of the Father. For it is the Soul [*ψυχή*] which adorned the great heaven, and which adorns it after the Father."<sup>7</sup>

It is the "Ancient," because, whether it be called Sophia, Krishna, Buddhi-Manas or Christos, it is ever the "first-born" of *Alaya-Mahat*, the Universal Soul and the Intelligence of the Universe.<sup>8</sup>

**For, Compassion is the LAW of Laws.**



Kwan-Yin, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy

The Yajña [Compassion – Sacrifice], say the Brahmans, exists from eternity, for it proceeded forth from the Supreme One, the *Brahmā-Prajāpati*, in whom it lay dormant from "no beginning." It is the key to the TRIVIDYĀ, the thrice sacred science contained in the *Rig* verses, which teaches the Yajus or sacrificial mysteries.

"The Yajña exists as an invisible thing at all times, it is like the latent power of electricity in an electrifying machine, requiring only the operation of a suitable apparatus in order to be elicited. It is supposed to extend, when unrolled, from the *Āhavanīya* or sacrificial fire into which all oblations are thrown, to heaven, forming thus a bridge or ladder, by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend when alive to their abodes."

This Yajña is again one of the forms of the Ākāśa, and the mystic world calling it into existence and pronounced mentally by the initiated Priest is the *Lost Word* receiving impulse through WILL POWER.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE MIND IN NATURE) XIII p. 267; [on "Thought Divine" or Anima Mundi, and quoting Proclus in *Timaeus*, 106, as quoted by Cory, *Ancient Fragments* 1832, p. 251; in: Wizards Bookshelf, Mpls. 1976.]

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* (THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM) XII p. 313; [analysing Job's statement, "With the Ancient (man's Higher Ego) is Wisdom, and in the length of days (or the number of its reincarnations) is understanding," *Book of Job*, xxviii, 12, & xii, 12.]

<sup>9</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. xliii-xliv; [& quoting M. Haug, *Aitareya-Brahmanam*, Introd., pp. 73-74.]



**Ākāśa is the Soul of the World  
on the spiritual plane;**

**Astral Light, the Body of the  
World on the psychic plane.**

This first-born is the Sanskrit *aja*, the Greek *αμνός* or lamb. Lambs, sheep and goats were sacrificed to Kālī, the lower aspect of Ākāśa or the Astral Light. The “only begotten Son” was sacrificed to the Father; that is to say that the spiritual part of man is sacrificed to the astral. Grace (*χάρις*) is a difficult word to translate. It corresponds to the higher aspect of Ākāśa. The two aspects are as follows:

[1] Spiritual plane: Ālaya (Soul of the Universe);  
Ākāśa.

[2] Psychic Plane: Prakriti (Matter or Nature);  
Astral Light or Serpent.<sup>10</sup>

**“Prakriti, Svabhavat or Ākāśa  
is — SPACE as the Tibetans  
have it.”**

. . . Space filled with whatsoever substance or no substance at all; *i.e.*, with substance so imponderable as to be only metaphysically conceivable.<sup>11</sup>

**Ākāśa is “the noumenon of  
the sevenfold differentiated  
Prakriti.”**

Ākāśa, then, is Pradhāna in another form, and as such cannot be Ether, the ever-invisible agent, courted even by physical Science. Nor it is Astral light. It is . . . the *noumenon* of the sevenfold differentiated Prakriti — the ever-immaculate “Mother” of the *fatherless* Son, who becomes “Father” on the lower manifested plane. For MAHAT is the first product of Pradhāna, or Ākāśa, and Mahat — Universal intelligence “whose *characteristic property* is *Buddhi*” — is no other than the *Logos*, for he is called “Īśvara,” Brahmā, Bhāva, etc.<sup>12</sup>

**Ākāśa-Alaya,<sup>13</sup> being Cosmic  
Buddhi, differentiates through  
seven planes.**

Cosmic *Buddhi*, the emanation of the Spiritual Soul *Alaya*, is the vehicle of Mahat only when that *Buddhi* corresponds to Prakriti. Then it is called Maha-*Buddhi*. This *Buddhi* differentiates through seven planes, whereas the *Buddhi* in man is the vehicle of Atman, which vehicle is of the essence of the highest plane of Ākāśa and therefore does not differentiate. The difference between Manas and *Buddhi* in man is the same as the difference between the Manasa-putra and the Ah-hi in Kosmos.<sup>14</sup>

**Our *Buddhi*, as the vehicle  
of Atman, is of the highest  
essence of Ākāśa and, there-  
fore, does not differentiate.**

<sup>10</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN) XI p. 490

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* (THE SEVENFOLD PRINCIPLE IN MAN) III p. 405 *fn.*

<sup>12</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 256

<sup>13</sup> “Another name for the universal mind.” See *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION) XII p. 371

<sup>14</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 324



**Our Higher Mind is a ray of Ākāśa.**

**Our Lower Mind, is Its reflection, “leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether.”**

. . . if the Higher Mind-Entity — the permanent and the immortal — is of the divine homogenous essence of “Alaya-Ākāśa,”<sup>15</sup> or Mahat — its reflection, the Personal Mind, is, as a temporary “Principle,” of the Substance of the Astral Light. As a pure ray of the “Son of the Universal Mind,” it could perform no functions in the body, and would remain powerless over the turbulent organs of Matter. Thus, while its inner constitution is Manasic, its “body,” or rather functioning essence, is heterogeneous, and leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether. It is part of the mission of the Manasic Ray, to get gradually rid of the blind, deceptive element which, though it makes of it an active spiritual entity on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions.<sup>16</sup>

**Ākāśa is the Primordial Substance, vehicle of Divine Thought. Ether is Astral Light’s lowest plane.**

Ether, this *hypothetical* Proteus . . . is one of the lower “principles” of what we call PRIMORDIAL SUBSTANCE (Ākāśa, in Sanskrit), one of the *dreams* of old, and which has now become again the dream of modern science. It is the greatest, just as it is the boldest, of the surviving speculations of ancient philosophers. For the Occultist, however, both ETHER and the Primordial Substance are a reality. To put it plainly, ETHER is the Astral Light, and the Primordial Substance is Ākāśa, the *Upādhi* of DIVINE THOUGHT.<sup>17</sup>

**“Ether or Ākāśa being the first Idea of the yet unmanifested Universe; from which must emanate the future Kosmos, in its descending grades of materiality. . . .”**

. . . The Ether is the “Vast abyss” on which the Spirit “dove-like, sat brooding”; it is also “the face of the waters” on which “the spirit rested.”<sup>18</sup>

The first unmanifested Logos is simultaneous with the line drawn across the diameter of the Circle. The first line or diameter is the Mother-Father; from it proceeds the Second Logos, which contains in itself the Third Manifested World. In the *Purānas*, for instance, it is again said that the first production of Ākāśa is Sound, and Sound means in this case the “World,” the expression of the unuttered thought, the manifested Logos, that of the Greeks and Platonists and St. John. Dr. Wilson and other Orientalists

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<sup>15</sup> Another name for the universal mind. [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 324 — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>16</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION) XII p. 371

<sup>17</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 326

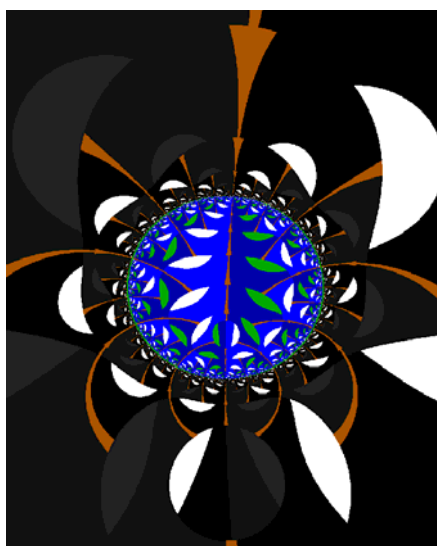
<sup>18</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE NATIONAL EPIC OF FINLAND) X p. 146



speak of this conception of the Hindus as an absurdity, for according to them Ākāśa and Chaos are identical. But if they knew that Ākāśa and Pradhāna are but two aspects of the same thing, and remember that Mahat, the *divine ideation on our plane* — is that manifested *Sound* or Logos, they would laugh at themselves and their own ignorance.<sup>19</sup>

**But Ākāśa is not the Ether of the Kabalists, of Science, and even of the Occultists.**

The astral light of the Kabalists is very incorrectly translated by some as “Aether”; the latter is confused with the hypothetical Ether of Science, and both are referred to by some theosophists as synonymous with Ākāśa. This is a great mistake.



“A characteristic of Ākāśa will serve to show how inadequately it is represented by ‘Aether,’” writes the author of *Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems* [Nikilantha Gore], thus unconsciously helping Occultism. “In dimension, it is . . . infinite; it is not made up of parts; and color, taste, smell, and tangibility do not appertain to it. So far forth it corresponds exactly to time, space, *Īśvara*, (“The Lord,” but rather creative potency and soul — *anima mundi*.) Its speciality, as compared therewith, consists in its being the *material cause of sound*. Except for its being so, we might take it to be one with vacuity” (p. 120).<sup>20</sup>

It is *vacuity*, no doubt, especially for Rationalists. At any rate Ākāśa is sure to produce vacuity in the brain of a materialist. Nevertheless, though Ākāśa is not that Ether of Science, not even the Ether of the Occultist, who defines the latter as one of the principles of Ākāśa only, it is as certainly, together with its primary, the cause of sound, only a physical and spiritual, not a material cause by any means. The relations of Ether to Ākāśa may be defined by applying to both Ākāśa and Ether the words said of the god in the *Vedas*, “So himself was indeed (his own) son,” one being the progeny of the other and yet itself. This may be a difficult riddle to the profane, but very easy to understand for any Hindu — though not even a mystic.<sup>21</sup>

**Ākāśa is akin to Ether as the Vedic god was to his son.**

<sup>19</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 314; [on whether First Logos is the first point within the circle.]

<sup>20</sup> [Quoted in *Vishnu-Purāna* (Wilson), Vol. I, p. 34 *fn.* — Boris de Zirkoff.]

<sup>21</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 296 *et seq.*, *fn.*



**Ākāśa is universal principle, Chaos, or the Great Spatial Void. It is neither Ether, nor Space. Its only attribute is “Sound, of which it is the substratum,”**

For once Ākāśa, an almost homogeneous and certainly universal principle, is translated Ether, then Ākāśa is dwarfed and limited to our visible universe, for assuredly it is not the Ether or Space. Ether, whatever modern Science makes of it, is differentiated Substance; Ākāśa, having no attributes save one — SOUND, *of which it is the substratum* — is no substance even exoterically and in the minds of some Orientalists, but rather Chaos, or the Great Spatial Void. Esoterically, Ākāśa alone is *Divine* Space, which becomes Ether only on the lowest and last plane, or our visible Universe and Earth. In this case, the blind is in the word “attribute,” which is given as Sound! It is no attribute at all, but the primal correlation of Ākāśa; its primordial manifestation, the Logos, or Divine Ideation made WORD, and that “Word” made flesh. Sound may be considered an “attribute” of Ākāśa only on the condition of anthropomorphizing the latter. It is not a characteristic of it, though it is certainly as innate in it as the idea “*I am I*” is innate in our thought.

Occultism teaches that Ākāśa contains and includes the seven Centres of Force, therefore the seven Tattvas of which Ākāśa is the seventh, or rather their synthesis.<sup>22</sup>

**the Sabda Brahmā of the mystics.**

It is the God Sabda Brahmā called also *Kala Brahmā Gouri* — one of the mystic names for ĀKĀŚA, which gives rise to occult sound — the initiates say. And the ancient Greek mystics, equally with the Western occultists and the adept Brahmans, all agreed in teaching that sound emanated from the Astral Light, or *Ākāśa*, in its purest essence. The Hindu occultist, or devotee, while practising Raja Yoga, hears the occult sounds as emanating from his own *Mūlādhāra* — the first of the series of six centres of force in the human body (fed at the inexhaustible source of the *seventh* or the UNITY, as the sum total of all) and *knows* that it emanates from there, and from nowhere else.<sup>23</sup>



Still life with mandolin by Vladimir Kush

<sup>22</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 611; [on Tattvic Correlations and Meaning.]

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* (“THARANA,” OR MESMERISM) IV pp. 164-65



**“For the Occultist ‘Space’ and ‘Universe’ are synonyms.”**

. . . In Space, there is not Matter, Force, nor Spirit, but all that and much more. It is the One Element, and that one the Anima Mundi — Space, Ākāśa, Astral Light — the Root of Life which, in its eternal, ceaseless motion, like the out- and in-breathing of one boundless ocean, evolves but to reabsorb all that lives and feels and thinks and has its being in it. As said of the Universe in *Isis Unveiled*, it is:

. . . the combination of a thousand elements, and yet the expression of a single Spirit — a chaos to the sense, a Cosmos to the reason.<sup>24</sup>

The spiral movement is the double movement of the astral light, one spiral inside the other. The diastole and systole of the heart are caused by that double movement of the Ākāśa.<sup>25</sup>

**Ākāśa-Alaya is Pradhāna or unevolved cause, that which is eternal, and which at once comprehends what is and what is not.**

With [Esoteric Buddhists] “Alaya” has a double and even a triple meaning. In the Yogāchāra system of the contemplative Māhāyana school, Alaya is both the Universal Soul (Anima Mundi) and the Self of a progressed adept. “He who is strong in the Yoga can introduce at will his Alaya by means of meditation into the true Nature of Existence.” The “Alaya has an absolute eternal existence,” says Āryaśāṅga — the rival of Nāgārjuna. In one sense it is *Pradhāna*; which is explained in *Vishnu-Purāna* as:

That which is the unevolved cause is emphatically called, by the most eminent sages, *Pradhāna*, original base, which is subtile *Prakriti*, viz., that which is eternal, and which at once is [or comprehends what is] and [what] is not, or is mere process.<sup>26</sup>

“Prakriti,” however, is an incorrect word, and Alaya would explain it better; for Prakriti is not the “incognizable Brahma.”<sup>27</sup>



Nagarjuna

<sup>24</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (NIRVANA-MOKSHA) XIV p. 412

<sup>25</sup> *Judge Letters*, II (viii) p. 87

<sup>26</sup> [Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 20, note by Fitzedward Hall.]

<sup>27</sup> “The indiscreet cause which is uniform, and both cause and effect, and which those who are acquainted with first principles call Pradhāna and Prakriti, is the incognizable Brahma who was before all” (*Vāyu-Purāna*, as quoted in Wilson, Vol. I, p. 21); *i.e.*, Brahma does not put forth evolution itself or create, but only exhibits various aspects of itself, one of which is Prakriti, an aspect of Pradhāna. (*Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 49-50 & fn.)



**In the beginning there was neither day nor night, nor sky, nor earth, nor darkness, nor light, nor any other thing, save only ONE, unapprehensible by intellect, or *That* which is Brahma, Pums, and Pradhāna.**



Marshmallow by Rafal Olbinski

No Hindu has ever mistaken *Prakriti* — the Astral Light being only above the lowest plane of *Prakriti*, the material Kosmos — for the “immortal Spirit.” *Prakriti* is ever called *Māyā*, illusion, and is doomed to disappear with the rest, the gods included, at the hour of the *Pralaya*; for it is shown that *Ākāśa* is not even the Ether, least of all then, we imagine, can it be the Astral Light. Those unable to penetrate beyond the dead letter of the *Purānas*, have occasionally confused *Ākāśa* with *Prakriti*, with Ether, and even with the visible Sky! It is true also that those who have invariably translated the term *Ākāśa* by “Ether” . . . have ignorantly imagined it to be “material,” in the physical sense. True, again, that if the characteristics are accepted literally, then, since nothing material or physical, and therefore conditioned and temporary, can be immortal — according to metaphysics and philosophy — it would follow that *Ākāśa* is neither infinite nor immortal. But all this is erroneous, since both the words *Pradhāna* (primeval matter) and *sound*, as a property, have been misunderstood; the former term (*Pradhāna*) being certainly synonymous with *Mūlaprakriti* and *Ākāśa*, and the latter (*sound*) with the *Verbum*, the Word or the Logos. This is easy to demonstrate; for it is shown in the following sentences in *Vishnu-Purāna*:

[In the beginning] there was neither day nor night, nor sky, nor earth, nor darkness, nor light, nor any other thing, save only ONE, unapprehensible by intellect, or *That* which is Brahma and Pums (Spirit) and *Pradhāna* (primordial matter).<sup>28</sup>

**“Every thought, as much as action, is dynamic and is impressed in the imperishable Book of Nature — the *Ākāśa*.”**

Now it is a well-known principle of Occultism that the ONE LIFE which pervades ALL connects all the bodies in space. All heavenly bodies have thus mutual relation, which is blended with man’s existence, since he is but a microcosm in the macrocosm. Every thought, as much as action, is dynamic and is impressed in the imperishable Book of Nature — the *Ākāśa*, the objective aspect of the UNMANIFESTED LIFE. All our thought and actions thus produce the vibrations in space, which mould our future career.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 255-56; [& quoting Book I, ch. ii; Wilson, Vol. I, p. 23.]

<sup>29</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ASTROLOGY) VI p. 228



Q. *What, in reality, is the Astral Light?*

**Astral Light is the dregs of Ākāśa polluted by man's selfish and perverted thoughts and deeds, "storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities."**

A. As the Esoteric Philosophy teaches us, the *Astral Light* is simply the dregs of *Ākāśa* or the Universal Ideation in its metaphysical sense. Though invisible, it is yet, so to speak, the phosphorescent radiation of the latter, and is the medium between it and man's thought-faculties. It is these which pollute the Astral Light, and make it what it is — the storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities. In its primordial genesis, the astral light as a radiation is quite pure, though the lower it descends approaching our terrestrial sphere, the more it differentiates, and becomes as a result impure in its very constitution. But man helps considerably in this pollution, and gives it back its essence far worse than when he received it.

**"Can you explain to us how it is related to man, and its action in dream-life?"**

A. Differentiation in the physical world is infinite. Universal Ideation — or *Mahat*, if you like it — sends its homogeneous radiation into the heterogeneous world, and this reaches the human or *personal* minds through the Astral Light.<sup>30</sup>

**Astral Light is "bi-sexual." The male part is purely spiritual; the female part, tainted with matter.**

The Astral Light, or *anima mundi*, is dual and bi-sexual. The male part of it is purely divine and spiritual; it is the *Wisdom*; while the female portion (the spiritus of the Nazarenes) is tainted, in one sense, with matter, and therefore is evil already. It is the life-principle of every living creature, and furnishes the astral soul, the fluidic *périsprit*, to men, animals, fowls of the air, and everything living. Animals have only the germ of the highest immortal soul as a third principle. It will develop but through a series of countless evolutions; the doctrine of which evolution is contained in the kabalistic axiom: "A stone becomes a plant; a plant a beast; a beast a *man*; a man a *spirit*; and the spirit a god."<sup>31</sup>

**Astral Light is not even the "thought substance" of the Universe, but a mere recorder of every thought.**

According to Occult teaching the Astral light is *not* the "thought substance" of the Universe, but the recorder of every thought; the universal mirror which reflects every event and thought [of] every being and thing, animate or inanimate. We call it the great Sea of Illusion, *Maya*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (DREAMS) X pp. 251-52

<sup>31</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, I p. 301 fn.

<sup>32</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) XII p. 58



Q. *What relation have the Astral Light and Ākāśa to memory?*

**Astral Light retains the thoughts and deeds of the Animal Man. Ākāśa, those of the Spiritual Man.**

A. The former is the “tablet of the memory” of the animal man, the latter of the spiritual Ego. The “dreams” of the Ego, as much as the acts of the physical man, are all recorded, since both are actions based on causes and producing results. Our “dreams” being simply the waking state and actions of the true Self, must be, of course, recorded somewhere. Read “Karmic Visions” in *Lucifer*,<sup>33</sup> and note the description of the real Ego, sitting as a spectator of the life of the hero, and perhaps something will strike you.<sup>34</sup>

**“Happy are those whose astral sense is not opened and who do not see all the terrible things that are about us.”**

. . . *But [in] a holy life there is a kind of aura developed which protects a man from them. All Elementals and Duggas are afraid of the Protean Power. Its very presence seems to strike terror into them. The Permanent Element has followers, but the Protean power does all its work itself. . . .*

Referring to the function of the Permanent Element of the First Ray when the time comes directing each man’s Logos to come to it, it exercises a kind of control over the other Logoi.<sup>35</sup>



<sup>33</sup> [Vol. II, No. 10, June, 1888, pp. 311-22. Incorporated into Vol. IX of the present Series, in its correct chronological sequence. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

<sup>34</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (DREAMS) X p. 251

<sup>35</sup> *Esoteric Writings*, (SACRIFICE AND RAYS) pp. 546, 547





Evening in the City by J Huss

Imagine a given point in space as the primordial one; then with compasses draw a circle around this point; where the beginning and the end unite together, emanation and reabsorption meet. The circle itself is composed of innumerable smaller circles, like the rings of a bracelet, and each of these minor rings forms the belt of the goddess which represents that sphere. As the curve of the arc approaches the ultimate point of the semi-circle — the nadir of the grand cycle — at which is placed our planet by the mystical painter, the face of each successive goddess becomes more dark and hideous than European imagination is able to conceive. . . .

This picture is either a copy of the one described to posterity by Berosus, the priest of the temple of Belus, at Babylon, or the original. We leave it to the shrewdness of the modern archaeologist to decide. But the wall is covered with precisely such creatures as described by the semi-daemon, or half-god, Oannes, the Chaldean man-fish,<sup>36</sup> “. . . hideous beings, which were produced of a two-fold principle” — the astral light and the grosser matter.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Berosus, fragment preserved by Alexander Polyhistor. Cf. Cory, *Anc. Fragm.*, 1832, p. 24

<sup>37</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 348 & 349



## Kabalistic symbols corrected

Eliphas Lévi shows it [the Astral Light<sup>38</sup> very truly “a force in Nature,” by means of which “a single man who can master it . . . might throw the world into confusion and transform its face”; for it is the “great Arcanum of transcendent Magic.” Quoting the words of the great Western Kabbalist in their translated form (see *The Mysteries of Magic*, by A.E. Waite), we may explain them perhaps the better by the occasional addition of a word or two to show the difference between Western and Eastern explanations of the same subject. The Author says of the great Magic Agent: “This ambient and all-penetrating fluid, this ray detached from the (Central or ‘Spiritual’) Sun’s splendour . . . fixed by the weight of the atmosphere (? ! ) and the power of central attraction. . . the Astral Light, this electro-magnetic ether, this vital and luminous caloric, is represented on ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis which twines round two poles . . . and in ancient theogonies by the serpent devouring its own tail, emblem of prudence and of Saturn” [emblem of infinity, immortality, and Kronos (Chronos) — Time — not the god Saturn or the planet]. “It is the winged dragon of Medea, the double serpent of the caduceus, and the tempter of *Genesis*; but it is also the brazen snake of Moses encircling the Tau . . . lastly, it is the devil of exoteric dogmatism, and is really the blind force (it is not blind, and Lévi knew it), which souls must conquer in order to detach themselves from the chains of Earth; for if they should not, they will be absorbed by the same power which first produced them, and will return to the central and eternal fire.” . . . Eliphas Lévi commits a great blunder in always identifying the Astral Light with what we call Ākāśa. What it really is will be given in Part II. of Vol. II.<sup>39</sup>

### PS

In April 1880 an English medical doctor wrote to *The Theosophist*<sup>40</sup> asking advice about a patient who was “being *made a medium* against his wish, through having attended a few *séances* for the purpose of witnessing ‘materialization’” and, finally, “went out of control.” HP Blavatsky’s response entitled “A Case of Obsession” is now part of her *Collected Writings*, II pp. 395-400. In the last page she advises treatment for:

“ . . . a negatively polarized man, a man of a susceptible temperament, being suddenly brought into a current of foul emanations from some vicious person, perhaps still living or perhaps dead, (who) absorbs the insidious poison as rapidly as quicklime does moisture, until he is saturated with it.”

### Further reading

Another paper on the illusions produced by Astral Light, entitled “The Bright Spot of Light,” also from the pen of Blavatsky, is now reproduced in our series “Blavatsky Speaks.”

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<sup>38</sup> [“ . . . which the paradoxical Éliphas Lévi calls in one breath “the body of the Holy Ghost,” and in the next “Baphomet,” the “Androgyne Goat of Mendes.” — *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 253.]

<sup>39</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 253 *fn.*; [on “FIRE or pure ĀKĀŚA, the first Matter of the *Magnum Opus* of the Creators and ‘Builders.’”]

<sup>40</sup> [*The Theosophist*, Vol. I, No. 8, May, 1880, pp. 207-8.]



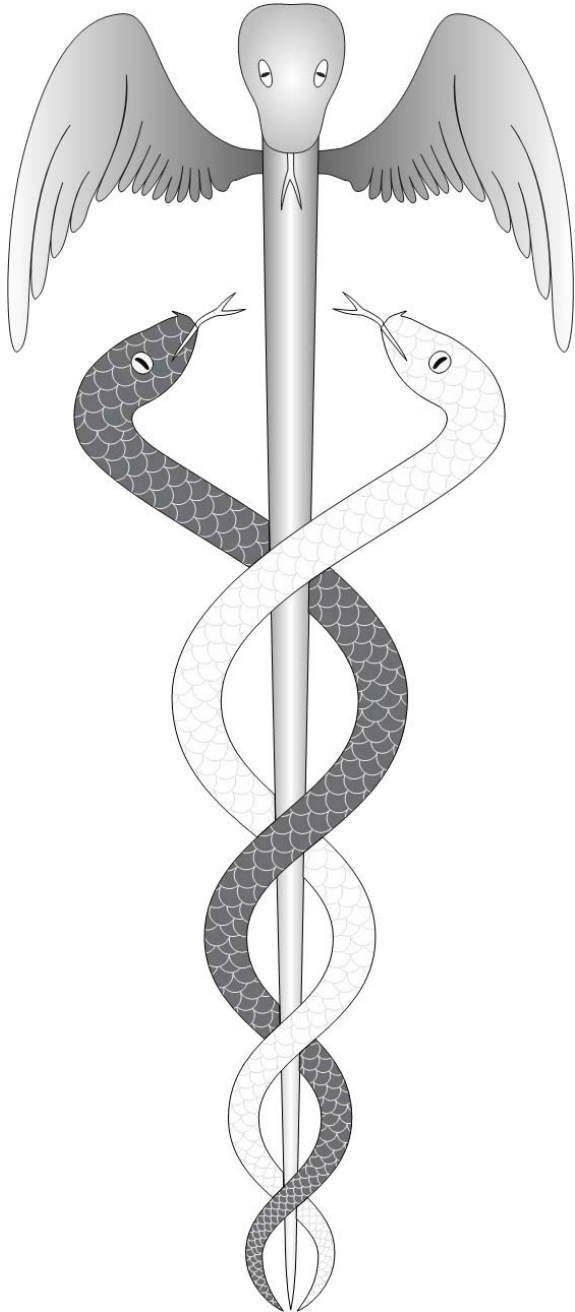
## Akasha and Astral Light contrasted

<b>Ākāśa</b>	<b>Astral Light</b>
Undifferentiated, Abstract Space, (noumenal) about to be occupied by Primordial Consciousness	
Field 1 — Latent Consciousness (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Logos)	
Field 2 — Differentiated Consciousness (3 <sup>rd</sup> Logos, Mahat)	
Dhyan-Chohans, collectively . . .	or humanity at large.
Plato's "The Good" (To Ἀγαθόν)	
Represented by the Manasaputras, subjectively . . .	and by Fohat, objectively.
Eternal Unconsciousness <i>i.e.</i> , Perfect, Divine Consciousness . . .	periodically displaying aspects of Itself to the perception of self-conscious minds.
Ideal Divine Mind . . .	reflected and reversed in human thoughts and aspirations.
Germ within acorn	Acorn
"So himself was indeed . . .	(his own) son."
Soul of the World, of Thought and Compassion	Body of the World, of Perceptions and Action
Primordial Cosmic Substance	Aggregate of all possible perceptions or Matter
Vehicle of Divine Thought	Storehouse of human (psychic) iniquities
Not Thought-Substance but recorder of every thought and deed of the spiritual man . . .	of the animal man.
Spiritual plane	Psychic plane
Reality	Illusion



## Astral Light summed-up

ASTRAL LIGHT. — The same as the *sidereal light* of Paracelsus and other Hermetic philosophers. Physically, it is the ether of modern science. Metaphysically, and in its spiritual, or occult sense, ether is a great deal more than is often imagined. In occult physics, and alchemy, it is well demonstrated to enclose within its shoreless waves not only Mr. Tyndall's "*promise* and potency of all terrestrial life," but also the *realization* of the potency of every quality of spirit. Alchemists and Hermetists believe that



their astral, or sidereal ether, besides the above properties of sulphur, and white and red magnesia, or *magnes*, is the *anima mundi*, the workshop of Nature and of all the cosmos, spiritually, as well as physically. The "grand magisterium" asserts itself in the phenomenon of mesmerism, in the "levitation" of human and inert objects, and may be called the ether from its spiritual aspect.

The designation *astral* is ancient, and was used by some of the Neoplatonists. Porphyry describes the celestial body which is always joined with the soul as "immortal, luminous, and starlike." The root of this word may be found, perhaps, in the Scythic *aist-aer* — which means star, or the Assyrian *Ishtar*, which, according to Burnouf has the same sense. As the Rosicrucians regarded the real, as the direct opposite of the apparent, and taught that what seems light to *matter*, is darkness to *spirit*, they searched for the latter in the astral ocean of invisible fire which encompasses the world; and claim to have traced the equally invisible divine spirit, which overshadows every man and is erroneously called *soul*, to the very throne of the Invisible and Unknown God. As the great cause must always remain invisible and imponderable, they could prove their assertions merely by demonstration of its effects in this world

of matter, by calling them forth from the unknowable down into the knowable universe of effects. That this astral light permeates the whole cosmos, lurking in its latent state even in the minutest particle of rock, they demonstrate by the phenomenon of the spark from flint and from every other stone, whose spirit when forcibly disturbed springs to sight sparklike, and immediately disappears in the realms of the unknowable.



Paracelsus named it the *sidereal light*, taking the term from the Latin. He regarded the starry host (our earth included) as the *condensed* portions of the astral light which “fell down into generation and matter,” but whose magnetic or spiritual emanations kept constantly a never-ceasing intercommunication between themselves and the parent fount of all — the astral light. “The stars attract from us to themselves, and we again from them to us,” he says. The body is wood and the life is fire, which comes like the light from the stars and from heaven. “Magic is the philosophy of alchemy,” he says again.<sup>41</sup> Everything pertaining to the spiritual world must come to us through the stars, and if we are in friendship with them, we may attain the greatest *magical* effects.

“As fire passes through an iron stove, so do the stars pass through man with all their properties and go into him as the rain into the earth, which gives fruit out of that same rain. Now observe that the stars *surround* the whole earth, *as a shell does the egg*; through the shell comes the air, and penetrates to the centre of the world.” The human body is subjected as well as the earth, and planets, and stars, to a double law; it attracts and repels, for it is saturated through with double magnetism, the influx of the astral light. Everything is double in nature; magnetism is positive and negative, active and passive, male and female. Night rests humanity from the day’s activity, and restores the equilibrium of human as well as of cosmic nature. When the mesmerizer will have learned the grand secret of polarizing the action and endowing his fluid with a bisexual force he will have become the greatest magician living. Thus the astral light is androgyne, for equilibrium is the resultant of two opposing forces eternally reacting upon each other. The result of this is LIFE. *When the two forces are expanded and remain so long inactive, as to equal one another and so come to a complete rest, the condition is DEATH.* A human being can blow either a hot or a cold breath; and can absorb either cold or hot air. Every child knows how to regulate the temperature of his breath; but how to protect one’s self from either hot or cold air, no physiologist has yet learned with certainty. The astral light alone, as the chief agent in magic, can discover to us all secrets of nature. The astral light is identical with the Hindu *akasha*, a word which we will now explain.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *De ente spirituali*, lib. iv; *De ente astrorum*, lib. i; and *Opera omnia* (Geneva, 1658), Vol. I, pp. 634, 698

<sup>42</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. xxv-xxvii



## Laya and Alaya

“Whatsoever quits the *Laya* (homogenous) state, becomes active conscious life. Individual consciousness emanates from, and returns into Absolute consciousness, which is eternal MOTION.”

— *Esoteric Axiom*<sup>43</sup>

**At the culmination of the Ascending Arc, Heterogeneity resumes its original state of Homogeneity once again through Seven Laya Centres.**

*Laya* or *Layam* (*Sk.*). From the root *Li* “to dissolve, to disintegrate” a point of equilibrium (*zero point*) in physics and chemistry. In occultism, that point where substance becomes homogeneous and is unable to act or differentiate.<sup>44</sup> . . . the point of matter where every differentiation has ceased.<sup>45</sup>

**Laya and Nirvana are one the same: luminous shadows of the matter *that was*, resting between Manvantaras.**

No world, as no heavenly body, could be constructed on the objective plane, had not the Elements been sufficiently differentiated already from their primeval *Ilus*, resting in *Laya*. The latter term is a synonym of *Nirvāna*. It is, in fact, the *Nirvānic* dissociation of all substances, merged after a life-cycle into the latency of their primary conditions. It is the luminous but bodiless shadow of the matter *that was*, the realm of negativeness — wherein lie latent during their period of rest the active Forces of the Universe.<sup>46</sup>

**The “Imperishable Laya Centres” are pivotal to the condition and direction of Consciousness.**

The “imperishable Laya Centres” have a great importance, and their meaning must be fully understood if we would have a clear conception of the Archaic Cosmogony, whose theories have now passed into Occultism. At present, one thing may be stated. The worlds are built neither *upon*, nor *over*, nor *in* the *Laya* centres, the zero-point being a condition, not any mathematical point.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (KOSMIC MIND) XII p. 133; [opening quotation.]

<sup>44</sup> *Theosophical Glossary*

<sup>45</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 138 *fn*; [Commentary on Stanza VI.2a, THE SWIFT AND RADIANT ONE PRODUCES THE SEVEN LAYA CENTRES.]

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* I p. 130; [Commentary on Stanza VI.3a.]

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* I p. 145; [Commentary on Stanza VI.4a.]



**It is through these Centres that the “Seven Sons” of Life and Light, began journeying to the valley of matter.**

The seven *Laya* centres are the seven Zero points, using the term Zero in the same sense that Chemists do, to indicate a point at which, in Esotericism, the scale of reckoning of differentiation begins. From the Centres — beyond which Esoteric philosophy allows us to perceive the dim metaphysical outlines of the “Seven Sons” of Life and Light, the Seven Logoi of the Hermetic and all other philosophers — begins the differentiation of the elements which enter into the constitution of our Solar System.<sup>48</sup>

**When the hour strikes for the Monad that lives in solitude and darkness to radiate from Itself the first number, the One<sup>49</sup> (point in circle) falls into Heterogeneity through the Laya Centres (zero-points), and emerges as One + Two (triangle).**

Therefore the Circle is the first geometrical figure and symbol in the subjective world, and it becomes a Triangle in the objective. The Triangle is the next figure after the Circle. The first figure, the Circle with the Point, is really no figure; it is simply a primeval germ, the first thing you can imagine at the beginning of differentiation; the Triangle must be conceived of once that matter has passed the zero point, or *Laya*. Brahmā is called an atom, because we have to imagine it as a mathematical point, which, however, can be extended into absoluteness. *Nota bene*, it is the divine germ and not the atom of the chemists.<sup>50</sup>

**“The great Breath [Motion Unmanifested] digs through Space seven holes into Laya to cause them to circumgyrate [Motion Manifested] during Manvantara.”**

When Fohat is said to produce “Seven Laya Centres,” it means that for formative or creative purposes, the GREAT LAW (Theists may call it God) stops, or rather modifies its perpetual motion on seven invisible points within the area of the manifested Universe. (Occult Catechism). We have said that Laya is what Science may call the Zero-point or line; the realm of absolute negativeness, or the one real absolute Force, the NOUMENON of the Seventh State of that which we ignorantly call and recognise as “Force”; or again the Noumenon of undifferentiated Cosmic Substance which is itself an unreachable and unknowable object to finite perception; the root and basis of all states of objectivity and subjectivity too; the neutral axis, not one of the many aspects, but its centre.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 138-39; [Commentary on Stanza VI.2a, THE SWIFT AND RADIANT ONE PRODUCES THE SEVEN LAYA CENTRES.]

<sup>49</sup> Cf. “The One does not bear to be numbered in with anything else, with a one or a two or any such quantity; it refuses to take number because it is measure and not the measured”; Plotinus: *Ennead V*, v, ¶ 4; (tr. MacKenna & Page)

<sup>50</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE – IX) X p. 385

<sup>51</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 147-48; [Commentary on Stanza VI.4b.]



Q. What is the “upper space” and “shoreless sea of fire”?

**Motion Unmanifested always resides in the Upper Space.**

**Motion Manifested is a shoreless expanse of Consciousness, a “sea of fire.”**

**Laya Centres are lighted and awakened into life by the noetic fire of another “pilgrim,” after which the new “Centre” rushes into space and becomes a comet.**

**They are the Heavenly Gates through which Divine Mind keeps falling to matter before redeeming itself through the flesh.**



A. The “upper space” is the space “within,” however paradoxical it may seem, for there is no *above* as no *below* in the infinitude; but the planes follow each other and solidify *from within without*. It is in fact, the universe as it first appears from its *laya* or “zero” state, a shoreless expanse of spirit, or “sea of fire.”<sup>52</sup>

The birth of the celestial bodies in Space is compared to a crowd or multitude of “pilgrims” at the festival of the “Fires.” Seven ascetics appear on the threshold of the temple with seven lighted sticks of incense. At the light of these the first row of pilgrims light their incense sticks. After which, every ascetic begins whirling his stick around his head in space, and furnishes the rest with fire. Thus with the heavenly bodies. A *laya*-centre is lighted and awakened into life by the fires of another “pilgrim,” after which the new “centre” rushes into space and becomes a comet. It is only after losing its velocity, and hence its fiery tail, that the “Fiery Dragon” settles down into quiet and steady life as a regular respectable citizen of the sidereal family.<sup>53</sup>

This evolution — viewed from its several standpoints — *i.e.*, as the *universal* and the *individualized* Monad; and the chief aspects of the Evolving Energy, after differentiation — the purely Spiritual, the Intellectual, the Psychic and the Physical — may be thus formulated as an invariable law;

[1] a descent of Spirit into Matter, equivalent to an ascent in physical evolution;

[2] a re-ascent from the depths of materiality towards its *status quo ante*, with a corresponding dissipation of concrete form and substance up to the LAYA state, or what Science calls “the zero-point,” and beyond.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE – VIII) X p. 378

<sup>53</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 203; [Commentary on Stanza VI.6b.]

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* I p. 620; [on Gods, Monads, and Atoms.]



## Questions & Answers

Q. *And are these terms produced from the remaining pair of terms of each trinity; for instance, the Son from the Father and Mother, the men from the Chain and the Universe, etc., etc., and finally in Pralaya is the son merged back again into its parents?*

A. . . . Father-Mother is a compound term which means primordial Substance or Spirit-matter. When from Homogeneity it begins through differentiation to fall into Heterogeneity, it becomes positive and negative; thus from the “Zero-state” (or *laya*) it becomes active and passive, instead of the latter alone; and, in consequence of this differentiation (the resultant of which is evolution and the subsequent Universe), — the “Son” is produced, the Son being that same Universe, or manifested Kosmos, till a new *Mahapralaya*.

Q. *Or — the ultimate state in laya, or in the zero point, as in the beginning before the stage of the Father, Mother and Son?*

A. There is but slight reference to that which was before the Father-Mother period in *The Secret Doctrine*. If there is Father-Mother, there can, of course, be no such condition as *Laya*.

Q. *Father, Mother are therefore later than the Laya condition?*

A. Quite so; individual objects may be in *Laya*, but the Universe cannot be so when Father-Mother appears.<sup>55</sup>

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Q. *Are the “Virgin-Egg” and the “Eternal Egg” the same thing, or are they different stages of differentiation?*

A. The eternal egg is a pre-differentiation in a *laya* or zero condition; thus, before differentiation it can have neither attributes nor qualities. The “virgin egg” is already qualified and therefore differentiated, although in its essence it is the same. No one thing can be separated from another thing, in its abstract essential nature. But in the world of illusion, in the world of forms, of differentiation, everything, ourselves included, *seems* to be so separated.<sup>56</sup>

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Q. *Does “Alaya” mean that which is never manifested and dissolved, and is it derived from “a,” the negative particle, and “laya”?*

A. If it is so etymologically — and I am certainly not prepared to answer you one way or the other — it would mean the reverse, since *laya* itself is just that which is not manifested; therefore it would signify *that which is not unmanifested* if anything. Whatever may be the etymological vivisection of the word, it is simply the “Soul of the World,” *Anima Mundi*. This is shown by the very wording of the Sloka, which speaks

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<sup>55</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE - III) X pp. 333-34; [on the different meanings of Father, Mother and Son explained in the Commentary, as (a) Spirit, Substance and Universe, (b) Spirit, Soul and Body, (c) Universe, Planetary Chain and Man.]

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE - VI) X pp. 366-67



of Alaya being in *Paramartha* — *i.e.*, in Absolute Non-Being and Unconsciousness, being at the same time absolute perfection or Absoluteness itself.<sup>57</sup>

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Research by David Reigle<sup>58</sup> has now shed light on the last question:

As can be seen from the Buddhist texts now available, *ālaya* is short for *ālaya-vijñāna*, which can be defined literally as the “storehouse consciousness.” This is the eighth and highest consciousness posited by the Yogācāra school, where it is indeed understood to be the universal consciousness, or “soul,” as the basis of all.<sup>59</sup>

## Beyond Laya

The *Aśvattha* tree of “Life and Being” of the *Bhagavad Gītā*<sup>60</sup> grows with its roots above the Earth and its branches below. Its heavenly “roots represent the Supreme Being, or First Cause, the Logos; but one has to go beyond the roots to *unite oneself with Krishna*, who, says Arjuna, is ‘greater than Brahman, and First Cause . . . the indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them.’”<sup>61</sup> *Aśvattha*’s germ or rootless-root is Alaya, undifferentiated noumenal and Abstract Space, the first of the “Two ONES,” permanent and indissoluble, beyond even the latent consciousness of First Logos.

. . . the One on the unreachable plane of Absoluteness and Infinity, on which no speculation is possible, and the Second “One” on the plane of Emanations. The former can neither emanate nor be divided, as it is eternal, absolute, and immutable. The Second, being, so to speak, the reflection of the first One (for it is the Logos, or *Īśvara*, in the Universe of Illusion), can do all this.<sup>62</sup>

In the *Aśvattha* tree allegory, the surface of the Earth (or, rather, the Earth’s “atmosphere”) is Laya, a kind of “ring pass-not”<sup>63</sup> between the illusionary planes of *being* and the “one infinite changeless Spirit of Love, Truth and Wisdom in the Universe, as one Light for all, in which we live and move and have our Being.”<sup>64</sup> This Ultimate Reality is also the Ultimate Limit, the *Dhyāni-pāśa* or “Rope of the Gods.”<sup>65</sup> It can only be crossed on the Day “BE-WITH-US.”

The Lipikas separate the world (or plane) of pure spirit from that of Matter. Those who “descend and ascend” — the incarnating Monads, and men striv-

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<sup>57</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE – IV) X pp. 346-47

<sup>58</sup> EASTERN TRADITION RESEARCH INSTITUTE, <http://www.easterntradition.org/index.html>

<sup>59</sup> Reigle D. *Technical Terms in Stanza I*. “Book of Dzryan Research Reports,” 1995-99

<sup>60</sup> *Bhagavad Gītā*, 15 vs. 1-4

<sup>61</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 406-07; [quoting *Gītā* 11 vs. 37.]

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* I p. 130; [Commentary on Stanza V.6b.]

<sup>63</sup> *I.e.*, “FOR THOSE WHO DESCEND AND ASCEND (*as also for those*), WHO, DURING THE KALPA, ARE PROGRESSING TOWARD THE GREAT DAY ‘BE-WITH-US.’” — *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 129; [Stanza V.6b.]

<sup>64</sup> *Cf. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ONE ETERNAL TRUTH) XIII p. 269; *cf.* “For ‘In him we live, and move, and have our being;’ as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’” *Acts xvii*, 28 (Paul quoting Aratus’ *Phainomena*.)

<sup>65</sup> *Cf. ibid.* (COMMENTARY ON THE PISTIS SOPHIA) XIII p. 32



ing towards purification and “ascending,” but still not having quite reached the goal — may cross the circle of “Pass-Not,” only on the day “Be-With-Us”; that day when man, freeing himself from the trammels of ignorance, and recognising fully the non-separateness of the Ego within his personality — erroneously regarded as his own — from the UNIVERSAL EGO (Anima Supra-Mundi), merges thereby into the One Essence to become not only one “with us” (the manifested universal lives which are “ONE” LIFE), but that very life itself.<sup>66</sup>



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<sup>66</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 130-31; [Commentary on Stanza V.6b.]

