

The Seven Worlds of Being

After HP Blavatsky and WQ Judge



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According to our doctrine, the Universe is filled with septenary chains of worlds, each chain being composed of seven globes, ours being the 4th of its chain and being found exactly in the middle. It is after passing through all the races as well as all the *sub-races* and having reached the planetary *Pralaya* (dissolution) that we shall go to a planet of a superior world. There is ample time for that.

— Helena Petrovna Blavatsky¹

They assert that there are seven corporeal worlds, one Empyrean and the first; after this, three etherial, and then three materials worlds,² the last of which is said to be terrestrial, and the hater of life.

— Psellus³

Thus man functions on, and responds to, seven distinct yet correlated *wave-lengths*, each of which corresponds to a specific plane or world of being while the One Cosmic Life - Consciousness, binding and permeating everything flows through all of them.

— Helena Petrovna Blavatsky⁴

The First World of Being, or World of Truth

“A bright star dropped from the heart of Eternity; the beacon of hope on whose Seven Rays hang the Seven Worlds of Being.”

The “First is the Second,” because the “First” cannot really be numbered or regarded as the First, as that is the realm of noumena in its primary manifestation: the threshold to the World of Truth, or SAT, through which the direct energy that radiates from the ONE REALITY — the Nameless Deity — reaches us. Here again, the untranslatable term SAT (*Be-ness*) is likely to lead into an erroneous conception, since that which is manifested cannot be SAT, but is something phenomenal, not everlasting, nor, in truth, even sempiternal. It is coeval and [120] coexistent with the One Life, “Secondless,” but as a manifestation it is still a Māyā — like the rest. This “World of Truth” can be described only in the words of the Commentary as “A bright star dropped from the heart of Eternity; the beacon of hope on whose Seven Rays hang the Seven Worlds of Being.” Truly so; since those are the Seven Lights whose reflections are the human immortal Monads — the Ātman, or the irradiating Spirit of every creature of the human family.⁵

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITISM) V p. 44 *fn.*

² These three material worlds, are the inerratic sphere, the seven planetary spheres, and the sublunary regions.

³ Taylor T. (*Tr. & Annot.*). *Oracles and Mysteries* (Vol. VII of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2001; [*A concise exposition of Chaldaic Dogmas by Psellus*, p. 3.]

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. 1) XII p. 530; [*fn.* by Boris de Zirkoff.]

⁵ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 119-20; [Commentary on Stanza V.4b, THE FIRST DIVINE WORLD.]



How the solitary ray, shooting like a falling star through the planes of non-being into the first world of being, gives birth to One, Two, and Three, before withdrawing once more to realm of non-being.

However many the Rays may appear to be on this plane, when brought back to their original source they will finally be resolved into a unity, like the seven prismatic colours which all proceed from, and are resolved into the one white ray. Thus too, this one solitary Ray expands into the seven rays (and their innumerable subdivisions) on the plane of illusion only. It is represented in connection with the Triangle because the Triangle is the first perfect geometrical figure. As stated by Pythagoras, and also in the Stanza, the Ray (the Pythagorean Monad) descending from “no-place” (*Aloka*), shoots like a falling star through the planes of non-being into the first world of being, and gives birth to Number One; then branching off, to the right, it produces Number Two; turning again to form the base-line it begets Number Three, and thence ascending again to Number One, it finally disappears therefrom into the realms of non-being as Pythagoras shows.⁶

The solitary ray is Vedic Vishnu (Fohat) striding through the Seven Regions of the Universe in three steps.

The three steps

First Logos, The One

Second Logos, The One made Three, or triangle concreting into

Third Logos, The Three living within The One or Quaternary

In India, Fohat is connected with Vishnu and Sūrya⁷ in the early character of the (first) God; for Vishnu is not a high god in the *Rig-Veda*. The name Vishnu is from the root *viś*, “to pervade,” and Fohat is called the “Pervader” and the Manufacturer, because he shapes the atoms from crude material. In the sacred texts of the *Rig-Veda*, Vishnu, also, is “a manifestation of the Solar Energy,” and he is described as striding through the Seven regions of the Universe in three steps, the Vedic God having little in common with the Vishnu of later times. Therefore the two are identical in this particular feature, and one is the copy of the other.⁸

Hence, also, the Hindu serpent Śesha or Ananta, “the Infinite,” a name of Vishnu, whose first Vahan or vehicle on the primordial waters is this serpent.⁹ Yet they all

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE - VII) X p. 368; [on STANZA III, *Shloka* 3: “DARKNESS” RADIATES LIGHT, AND LIGHT DROPS ONE SOLITARY RAY INTO THE WATERS, INTO THE MOTHER DEEP. THE RAY SHOOTS THROUGH THE VIRGIN-EGG; THE RAY CAUSES THE ETERNAL EGG TO THRILL, AND DROP THE NON-ETERNAL (*periodical*) GERM, WHICH CONDENSES INTO THE WORLD EGG. Answering “Why is Light said to drop one solitary ray into the waters and how is this ray represented in connection with the Triangle?”]

⁷ [Sk. for the Sun. Cf. “Sūrya, the Sun, is one of the nine divinities that witness all human actions.” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE TRIAL OF THE SUN INITIATE) XIV p. 260 *fn.*] “In the archaic secret system of the Hindus, the sun is the visible Logos, ‘Sūrya’; over him there is another, the divine or heavenly Man — who, after having established the system of the world of matter on the archetype of the Unseen Universe, or Macrocosm, conducted during the Mysteries the heavenly *Rāsa Mandala*,” (*Ibid.* PAGAN SIDEREAL WORSHIP, OR ASTROLOGY, XIV p. 332.) “The seven rays of Sūrya (the Sun) are made therein parallel to the Seven Worlds (of every planetary chain), to the seven rivers of heaven and earth, the former being the seven creative Hosts, and the latter the Seven men, or primitive human groups.” (*Secret Doctrine*, II p. 605; on the Septenary Element in the Vedas.) — ED. PHIL.]

⁸ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 112

⁹ Like the *Logoi* and the Hierarchies of Powers, however, the “Serpents” have to be distinguished one from the other. Śesha or Ananta, the “couch of Vishnu” is the allegorical abstraction, symbolizing infinite Time in Space, which contains the germ and throws off periodically the efflorescence of this germ, the *manifested* Universe; whereas the Gnostic *Ophis* contained the same triple symbolism in its seven vowels as the One, Three, and Seven-syllabled *Oeahoo* [“which stand for the ONE ALL, and the One ‘All in all.’” *SD*, I 20] of the Archaic



made a difference between the good and the bad Serpent (the Astral Light of [74] the Kabalists) — between the former, the embodiment of divine Wisdom in the region of the Spiritual, and the latter, Evil, on the plane of matter.¹⁰

The “three and seven” strides refer to the Seven spheres inhabited by man, in the esoteric Doctrine, as well as to the Seven regions of the Earth. Notwithstanding the frequent objections made by would-be Orientalists, the Seven worlds or spheres of our planetary chain are distinctly referred to in the exoteric Hindu scriptures. But how strangely all these numbers are connected with like numbers in other Cosmogonies and with their symbols, can be seen from comparisons and parallelisms made by students of old religions. The “three strides of Vishnu” through the “seven regions of the Universe,” of the *Rig-Veda*, have been variously explained by commentators as meaning “fire, lightning, and the Sun” cosmically; and as having been taken in the Earth, the atmosphere, and the sky; also as the “three steps” of the dwarf (Vishnu’s incarnation), though more philosophically — and in the astronomical sense, very correctly — they are explained by Aurnavābha as being the various positions of the sun, rising, noon, and setting. Esoteric philosophy alone explains it clearly, and the *Zohar* laid it down very philosophically and comprehensively. It is said and plainly demonstrated therein that in the beginning the Elōhīm (Alhim) were called Ehād, “one,” or the “Deity is one in many,” a very simple idea in a pantheistic conception (in its philosophical sense, of course). Then came the change, “Jehovah is Elōhīm,” thus unifying the multiplicity and taking the first step towards Monotheism. Now to the query, “How is Jehovah Elōhīm?” the answer is, “by three Steps” from below. [113]

The meaning is plain. They are all symbols, and emblematic, mutually and correlatively, of Spirit, Soul and Body (MAN); of the circle transformed into Spirit, the Soul of the World, and its body (or Earth). Stepping out of the Circle of Infinity, that no man comprehendeth, Ain-Soph (the Kabalistic synonym for Parabrahm, for the Zervān Akarana, of the Mazdeans, or for any other “UNKNOWABLE”) becomes “One” — the EHĀD, the EKA, the AHU — then he (or it) is transformed by evolution into the One in many, the Dhyāni-Buddhas or the Elōhīm, or again the Amshāspends, his third Step being taken into generation of the flesh, or “Man.” And from man, or Yāh-Havāh, “male female,” the *inner* divine entity becomes, on the metaphysical plane, once more the Elōhīm.¹¹

doctrine; *i.e.*, the One Unmanifested Logos, the Second manifested, the triangle concreting into the Quaternary or Tetragrammaton, and the rays of the latter on the material plane.

¹⁰ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 73-74

¹¹ *Ibid.* I pp. 112-13



The seven strides

The Seven Rays of Logos 3 + 4 — Three Principles + Four Vehicles Or the seven-syllabled Oeaoohoo on the material plane of Kosmos

The eternal *kosmos*, the Macrocosm, is divided in the Secret Doctrine like man, the Microcosm, into three Principles and four Vehicles,¹² which in their collectivity are the seven Principles. In the Chaldaean or Jewish *Kabalah*, the Kosmos is divided into seven worlds: the Original, the Intelligible, the Celestial, the Elementary, the Lesser (Astral), the Infernal (Kāma-loka or Hadēs), and the Temporal (of man). In the [210] Chaldaean system it is in the Intelligible World, the second, that appear the “Seven Angels of the Presence,” or the Sephirōth (the three higher ones being, in fact, one, and also the sum total of all). They are also the “Builders” of the Eastern Doctrine: and it is only in the third, the celestial world, that the seven planets and our solar system are built by the seven Planetary Angels, the planets becoming their visible bodies. Hence — as correctly stated — if the universe as a whole is formed out of the Eternal *One* Substance or Essence, it is not that everlasting Essence, the Absolute Deity, that builds it into shape; this is done by the first Rays, the Angels or Dhyāni-Chohans, that emanate from the One Element, which becoming periodically Light and Darkness, remains eternally, in its Root-Principle, the one unknown, yet existing Reality.¹³

The seven ladders

There are many “ladders” in the mystic philosophies and schemes, all of which were, and some still are, used in the respective mysteries of various nations. The *Brahmanical Ladder* symbolizes the *Seven Worlds* or *Sapta Loka*; the *Kabalistical Ladder*, the seven lower Sephiroth; *Jacob’s Ladder* is spoken of in the Bible; the *Mithraic Ladder* is also the “Mysterious Ladder.” Then there are the Rosicrucian, the Scandinavian, the Borsippa Ladders, etc., etc., and finally the *Theological Ladder* which, according to Brother Kenneth Mackenzie, consists of the four cardinal and three theological virtues.¹⁴

¹² The three *root-principles* are, exoterically: Man, Soul, and Spirit (meaning by “man” the intelligent personality), and esoterically: Life, Soul, and Spirit; the four vehicles are Body, Astral double, Animal (or human) Soul, and Divine Soul (Śthūla-Śarīra, Linga-Śarīra, Kāma-Rūpa, and Buddhi, the vehicle of Ātman or Spirit). Or, to make it still clearer:

- (1) the *Seventh* Principle has for its vehicle the Sixth (Buddhi);
- (2) the vehicle of Manas is Kāma-Rūpa [However, cf. *B.C.W.*, Vol. XII, pp. 707-9.];
- (3) that of Jiva or Prāna (life) is the Linga-Śarīra (the “double” of man; the Linga-Śarīra proper can never leave the body till death; that which appears is an astral body, reflecting the physical body and serving as a vehicle for the human soul, or intelligence); and
- (4) the Body, the physical vehicle of all the above collectively.

The Occultist recognizes the same order as existing for the cosmical totality, the *psycho-cosmical* Universe.

¹³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE “ZOHAR” ON CREATION AND THE ELOHIM) XIV pp. 209-10

¹⁴ *Theosophical Glossary*: Ladder



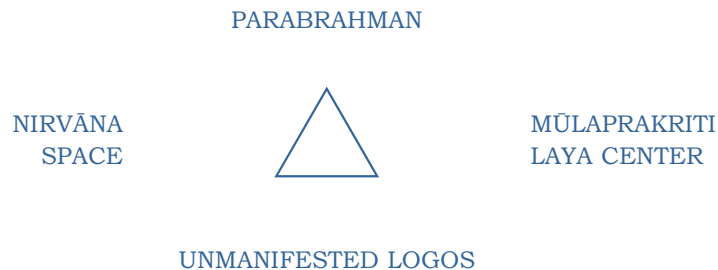
The Seven Worlds of Being

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“A world, when called a ‘higher world,’ is not higher by reason of its location, but because it is superior in quality or essence.”¹⁵

World 1 The Absolute

Of this we can predicate nothing. Diagrammatically:



The upper triangle is the root, on the one side, of the manifested, on the other, of the unmanifested Logos. The one Ray first becomes two, which meaning only divergence, cannot stand. It therefore becomes three, the base of the triangle being the “point,” or unmanifested Logos, from which proceeds the manifested Logos, or Creative Word. The sexless ‘life-giving principle of universal nature’ was called Eros by the Greeks. Metaphysically, it is the highest and noblest, absolutely sexless power of creation, symbolized by Brahmā, Ouranos, Kronos, etc. It is the noumenon of Fohat. Eros is thus a universal love, a desire for manifestation. It is unavoidable law, creating those divine powers which descend to the manifested plane, and which may be regarded as the personified desire of the One Absolute. Eros is often called the One Ray¹⁶ in the *Secret Doctrine*. It is that which “sets fire” to the Absolute and causes manifestation.” (MS. of a Teacher). “Eros, . . . the divine desire in the gods, as well as in all nature, to create and give life to beings. This the rays of the one ‘dark’ Flame could achieve only by themselves descending into matter.”¹⁷ We shall see later how they draw to themselves a mind and a body. They belong to World 2. This noumenon of Fohat is then:

¹⁵ (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I p. 221, fn.)

¹⁶ [Cf. “The *Monads* are not *discrete* principles, limited or conditioned, but rays from that one universal *absolute* Principle. The entrance into a dark room through the same aperture of one ray of sunlight following another will not constitute *two* rays, but one ray intensified.” *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 167 — ED. PHIL.]

¹⁷ (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II p. 234)



World 2 **The Archetypal World**

. . . Alaya-Ākāśa; the plane of cosmic ideation. “What springs up in the Logos at first is simply an image, a conception of what is to be in the Cosmos.”¹⁸ This world seems to correspond to the Auric Egg in man, as in it are all formative powers and potentialities. In man imagination is the plastic or formative power of the soul. The *Secret Doctrine* speaks of this as the world of the divine flames, or formless fiery Breaths, the Lions of Life. “It is the nucleole of the superior divine world.”¹⁹

World 3 **The Spiritual World**

This appears to be the “superior divine world” above mentioned; the plane of cosmic motion or the “light or energy” which “catches the image (in the Logos) and impresses it upon the cosmic matter which is already manifested. Thus spring into existence all the manifested solar systems.”²⁰ This light is what is known as Fohat. It seems to be the universal prototype of Buddhi as an *active* force (Ātma-Buddhi) in man.

“First the divine (vehicle) — the one from the mother Spirit (Ātman); then the *spiritual* (Ātma-Buddhi).”²¹ It is the plane of noetic force. “The divine astral is a place or plane of Nature; the divine spiritual is a state.” (MS. of a Teacher).

World 4 **The Manasic World**

This appears to be the “divine astral” above mentioned. It corresponds to the human soul (Manas) and to Mahat and Manas in the universe, from all that is said on the subject.

World 5 **The Psychic World**

It is, in the universe, the plane of cosmic dust; of those interstellar atoms of which the *Secret Doctrine* says that the Divine Radiations (the Powers of World 2) attach them to themselves, to form objective bodies, just as they attach agglomerations of monads *from the next world above* (World 3, Monas), Mahat, to form an omniscient mind.²² This is the plane of magnetic, attractive *drawing* force, and seems to be the universal correspondent of the Kāma principle in man. *Isis*, Vol. I, p. 168, says that Paracelsus “demonstrates further that in man lies hidden a ‘sidereal force,’ which is that emanation from the stars and celestial bodies of which the spiritual form of man — the astral spirit — is composed. This identity of essence which we may term the spirit of cometary matter, always stands in direct relation with the stars from which it was drawn, and thus there exists a mutual attraction between the two, both being magnets.” H.P.B. adds that even the spectroscope shows the “composition of man

¹⁸ (S. Row's *Notes on Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 13)

¹⁹ (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I p. 213, *et seq.*)

²⁰ (S. Row's *Notes on Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 13)

²¹ (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I p. 213)

²² (*Ibid.* Vol. I p. 633)



and the stars to be identical.” She elsewhere states: “Occultism calls the force transmitted [in magnetism] the ‘auric *fluid*’ . . . the ‘fluid’ being a correlation of *atoms* on a higher plane, and a descent to this lower one, [earth] in the shape of impalpable and invisible plastic Substances.²³ This form of magnetic force seems to be that which inheres in the *kāma-rūpa* for a time after death, and in which are the Skandhas. In *Lucifer*, Dec., 1888,²⁴ H.P.B. says that the *kāma* or desire principle is used by the Adept as the *vehicle* for the *Māyāvi-rūpa* or thought body, so that we see why Paracelsus speaks of this force as forming the astral spirit of man. It is the attractive, pulling force.

World 6 The Astral World

This appears to be the lower astral, the plane of the astral light, corresponding to the *linga-śarīra* or astral body of man, and also to the psycho-physiological forces of the universe and of man, in which last the plane above shares. It is of this plane, apparently, that H.P.B. speaks in these terms: “A medium is simply one in whose personal Ego, or terrestrial mind (*psychē*), the percentage of “astral” light so preponderates as to impregnate with it their whole physical constitution. Every organ and cell is thereby attuned, so to speak, and subjected to an enormous and abnormal tension. The mind is ever on the plane of, and quite immersed in, that deceptive light whose *soul* is divine, but whose body — the light waves on the lower planes — infernal; for they are but the black and disfigured reflections of the earth’s memories.”²⁵ *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 11, says that the disciple must be able to destroy or paralyze his “lunar body,” which is defined as the astral form. This identifies *linga-śarīra* in man with this sixth world.

World 7 The Elemental World

While there are three classes of formless (*arūpa*) beings²⁶ and numberless side branches, the above term here appears to refer especially to the lower *classes*, called nature spirits, while generally including all classes. “In their turn the *phenomenal* subdivisions were informed by the elementals, so called, the ‘Nature Spirits’ of lower grades.²⁷ Man’s “physical body is shaped by the lowest elemental lives, through physical, chemical, and physiological evolution. ‘The Blessed Ones have naught to do with the purgations of matter.’”²⁸ Under the terms “atom” and “monad” in the index we find more upon this subject. All these atomic (and monadic) lives are among the *jīvas*, and this plane seems to correspond with *Prāna* in man. *Prāna* is said to fash-

²³ [Article *Hypnotism*; *Lucifer*, Dec., 1890, p. 295; B.C.W., XII p. 396 — Dara Eklund.]

²⁴ [See B.C.W., X p. 219 — Dara Eklund.]

²⁵ [See *ibid.* XII p. 372 — Dara Eklund.]

²⁶ (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I p. 218, *et seq.*)

²⁷ (*Ibid.* Vol. I p. 461)

²⁸ (*Ibid.* Vol. I p. 224)



ion the physical body, and returns to the universal life-current as jīva after the “death” of a body. “Prāna is one stage finer than the gross matter of the earth.”²⁹

World 8 **The Earth**

It corresponds to, and furnishes, says *Secret Doctrine*, the physical body of man.³⁰ It does not count among these seven worlds or planes, any more than the physical body of man counts among the seven principles. In this connection we are referred to a diagram in *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 200, showing the relation of our world to the other planes or worlds (exoterically given). It is instructive to note that, in this diagram, the seven worlds of our chain are placed in the same manner as the seven upper orifices, or centers of action in the head of man. (Instructions No. I, lower oval of double-page diagram).³¹



²⁹ [*The Theosophist*, May 1888, p. 478 — Dara Eklund.]

³⁰ (Vol. I pp. 181, 191, 227)

³¹ [See *B.C.W.* XII, DIAGRAM I, facing p. 524 — Dara Eklund.]

