

Time was not. Eternity is.

We feel and know that we are eternal.
— Spinoza¹

There are two Times: Universal and Finite. Stanza III. *Shloka* (1). THE LAST VIBRATION OF THE SEVENTH ETERNITY THRILLS THROUGH INFINITUDE. THE MOTHER SWELLS, EXPANDING FROM WITHIN WITHOUT LIKE THE BUD OF THE LOTUS.

“One is the abstraction or noumenon of infinite time (Kāla); the other its phenomenon appearing periodically, as the effect of Mahat.” “The seemingly paradoxical use of the sentence ‘Seventh Eternity,’ thus dividing the indivisible, is sanctified in esoteric philosophy. The latter divides boundless duration into unconditionally eternal and universal Time and a conditioned one (*Khandakāla*). One is the abstraction or noumenon of infinite time (Kāla); the other its phenomenon appearing periodically, as the effect of *Mahat* (the Universal Intelligence limited by Manvantaric duration).”²

“What is called temporal can exist only in time, which is a portion of the revolution of the highest sphere.” . . . the new-making or creation of a thing requires a material principle (mayeth), such as may admit the possibility of its new existence in some portion of the revolution of the circle of eternity. But this can have reference only to temporal existence. Now Intelligences, in consequence of their independence, are free from the affections of time: for what is called temporal can exist only in time, which is a portion of the revolution of the highest sphere: whereas the being of Intelligences is not connected with time; and to ascribe existence in time to the First Intelligence would lead to reasoning in a circle; because in this point of view, time would be dependent on the Sphere, while the being of the sphere is dependent on the being of the First Intelligence.³

¹ Spinoza: *Ethics* V, 23, note

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE – VI) X p. 358; [quoting *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 62.]

³ *The Desatir or the Sacred Writings of the Ancient Prophets*, tr. by Mulla Firuz Bin Kaus, Bombay, 1818, 2 Vols.; with additional notes by Dhunjeebhoy Jamsetjee Medhora, Bombay, 1888; “The Book of Shet Sasan the First,” Commentary on *vs.16*, “Intelligences are without beginning,” p. 128



Secondary Logoi, like Zeus-Jupiter are born *in*, and *out* of Chronos-Saturn or Infinite Time.

. . . . all the creative gods, or *personal* Deities, begin at the secondary stage of Cosmic evolution. Zeus is born *in*, and *out* of *Chronos* — Time. So is Brahmā the production and emanation of *Kala*, “eternity and time,” *Kala* being one of the names of Vishnu. Hence we find Odin, the father of *the gods and of the Aesir*, as Brahmā is the father of *the gods and of the Asuras*, and hence also the androgynous character of all the chief creative gods, from the second MONAD of the Greeks down to the Sēphirōth Adam-Kadmon, the Brahmā or Prajāpati-Vāch of the *Vedas*, and the androgynous of Plato, which is but another version of the Indian symbol.⁴

Time is asleep in the bosom of the Orphic trinity.

. . . that, which is called “energy” or “force” in Science and has been explained as a *dual* Force by Samuel Metcalfe, is never, in fact, and cannot be *energy* alone; for it is the substance of the world, its soul, the *all-permeant* “Sarvaga,” in conjunction with *Kāla* “time.” The three are the trinity in one, during Manvantara, the all-potential Unity, which acts on the plane of illusion (*Māyā*) as three distinct things. In Orphic philosophy in Greece they were called *Phanēs*, *Chaos*, and *Chronos* — the triad of the Occult philosophers of that period.⁵

Q. *Does the commencement of Time as distinguished from Duration, correspond to the appearance of the manifested Logos?*

First Logos is “The last vibration of the Seventh Eternity,” when Time was not.

A. Certainly, it cannot do so earlier. But “the seventh vibration” applies to both the First, and to the manifested Logos — the first out of Space and Time, the second, when Time has commenced. It is only when “the mother swells” that differentiation sets in, for when the first Logos radiates through primordial and undifferentiated matter there is as yet no action in Chaos. “The last vibration of the Seventh Eternity” is the first which announces the Dawn, and is a synonym for the First or unmanifested Logos. There is no Time at this stage. There is neither Space nor Time when beginning is made; but it is all in Space and Time, once that differentiation sets in. At the time of the primordial radiation, or when the Second Logos emanates, it is Father-Mother potentially, but

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 427

⁵ *Ibid.* I pp. 582-83



when the Third or manifested Logos appears, it becomes the Virgin-Mother. The “Father and the Son” are one in all the world Theogonies; hence, the expression corresponds to the appearance of both the unmanifested and the manifested Logos one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the “Seventh Eternity.”⁶

Q. *Can you, then, speak of Time as existing from the appearance of the Second or Unmanifested-Manifested Logos?*

Time dawns in Second Logos and is fully expressed in the Third.

A. Assuredly not, but from the appearance of the Third. It is here that the great difference between the two lies, as just shown. The “last vibration” begins outside of Time and Space, and ends with the third Logos, when Time and Space begin, *i.e.*, periodical time. The Second Logos partaking of both the essences or natures of the first and the last. There is no differentiation with the First Logos; differentiation only begins in latent World-Thought, with the Second Logos, and receives its full expression, *i.e.*, becomes the “Word” made flesh — with the Third.⁷

All Logoi “are all ‘Sons of the Mother’ before they become those of the ‘Father.’”

Hence all the higher gods [logoi] of antiquity are all “Sons of the Mother” before they become those of the “Father,” The Logoi, like Jupiter or Zeus, Son of Kronos-Saturn,⁸ “Infinite Time” (or Kāla), in their origin were represented as male-female. Zeus is said to be the “beautiful Virgin,” and Venus is made bearded. Apollo is originally bisexual, so is Brahmā-Vāch in *Manu* and the *Purānas*. Osiris is interchangeable with Isis, and Horus is of both sexes. Finally St. John’s vision in *Revelation*, that of the Logos, who is now connected with Jesus — is hermaphrodite, for he is described as having female breasts. So is the Tetragrammaton = Jehovah. . . .⁹

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X pp. 358-59

⁷ *Ibid.* (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 359

⁸ “We must bear in mind that *Kronos*, equated with Saturn(us), father of Jupiter (= Zeus), is totally distinct from *Chronos* (Time), but certain Greeks and Romans, notorious as they are for false etymology, confused the two. *Chronos* = *Χρόνος* = *Khronos* was raised by some to a personified or quasi-personified rank as deity, like *Αἰών* = *Aiōn* = Time. However, *X* (ch or kh) is distinct from *K*, and the *h* in *ch* or *kh* was important, but dialects vary sometimes in that particular. Macrobius in his *Saturnalia*, I, 8.9, confuses *Saturnus* with *tempus*.” *Secret Doctrine* I, p. 802; [note 13 by Boris de Zirkoff on the difference between *Kronos* and *Chronos*; *ibid.* p. 269 fn.]

⁹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 72 fn.



Time is “the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness.”

Our Present, Past, and Future are compound phenomenal time.

By “that which is and yet is not” is meant the Great Breath itself, which we can only speak of as absolute existence, but cannot picture to our imagination as any form of existence that we can distinguish from Nonexistence. The three periods — the Present, the Past, and the Future — are in the esoteric philosophy a compound time; for the three are a composite number only in relation to the phenomenal plane, but in the realm of noumena have no abstract validity. As said in the Scriptures: “The Past time is the Present time, as also the Future, which, though it has not come into existence, still is”; according to a precept in the Prasanga Madhyamika teaching, whose dogmas have been known ever since it broke away from the purely esoteric schools. Our ideas, in short, on duration and time are all derived from our sensations according to the laws of association. Inextricably bound up with the relativity of human knowledge, they nevertheless can have no existence except in the experience of the individual ego, and perish when its evolutionary march dispels the Māyā of phenomenal existence. What is Time, for instance, but the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness? In the words of a Master, “I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words — Past, Present, and Future — miserable concepts of the objective phases of the Subjective Whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving.”¹⁰

“ . . . the unreality of two of the three divisions of time is given in public works, namely. . . ”

(a) that there is neither past nor future, both of these divisions being correlative to the present; and
(b) that the reality of things can never be sensed or perceived except by him who has obtained the Dharmakāya body; here again is a difficulty, since this body “without remains” carries the Initiate to full Pari-nirvāna, if we accept the exoteric explanation verbally, and can therefore neither sense nor perceive.¹¹ . . . One has to acquire *Paramārtha* lest one should become too easy a prey to *Samvriti* — is a philosophical axiom.¹²

¹⁰ [The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, p. 29.]

¹¹ Blavatsky Collected Writings, (A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED) XIV p. 440

¹² Secret Doctrine, I p. 44; Cf. “In clearer words: ‘One has to acquire true Self-Consciousness, in order to understand *Samvriti*, or the ‘origin of delusion.’” *Ibid. fn.*



Time in Greek Philosophy

Plutarch's comments upon Timaeus (Question VIII)

WHAT MEANS TIMAEUS,¹³ WHEN HE SAYS THAT SOULS ARE DISPERSED INTO THE EARTH, THE MOON, AND INTO OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF TIME?

. . . so by Plato in his Republic¹⁴ the sun is called the king and lord of the whole sensible nature, as the Chief Good is of the intelligible. For it is said to be the offspring of Good, it giving both generation and appearance to things visible; as it is from Good that things intelligible both are and are understood. But that this God, having such a nature and so great power, should be only an instrument of time, and a sure measure of the difference that happens among the eight orbs, as they slow or swift in motion, seems neither decent nor highly rational. It must therefore be said to such as are startled at these things, that it is their ignorance to think that

- time is the measure of motion in respect of sooner or later, as Aristotle calls it;
- or quantity in motion, as Speusippus;
- or an interval of motion and nothing more, as some of Stoics define it, by an accident, not comprehending its essence and power,
- which Pindar has not ineptly expressed in these words: Time, who surpasses all in the seats of the blest.
- Pythagoras also, when he was asked what time was, answered, it was the soul of this world.

For time is affection or accident of motion, but the cause, power, and principle of that symmetry and order that confines all created beings, by which the animated nature of the universe is moved. Or rather, this order and symmetry itself — so far as it is motion — is called time. For this,

Walking by still and silent ways,
Mortal affairs with justice guides.¹⁵

According to the ancients, the essence of the soul is a number moving itself. Therefore

Plato says that time and heaven were coexistent, but that motion was before heaven had being. But time was not. For then there neither was order, nor measure, nor determination; but indefinite motion, as it were, the formless and rude matter of time.

. . . But when matter was informed with figures, and motion with circutions, from that came the world, from this time. Both are representations of God; the world, of his essence; time, of his eternity in the form of motion, as the world is God in creation. Therefore they say heaven and motion, being bred together, will perish together, if ever they do perish. For nothing is generated without time, nor is any thing intelli-

¹³ See *Timaeus*, p. 42d

¹⁴ Plato: *Republic* VI, pp. 508, 509

¹⁵ Euripides: *Troad* 887



gible without eternity; if this is to endure for ever, and that never to die when once bred. Time therefore, having a necessary connection and affinity with heaven, cannot be called simple motion, but (as it were) motion in order having terms and periods; whereof since the sun is prefect and overseer, to determine, moderate, produce, and observe changes and seasons, which (according to Heraclitus) produce all things, he is coadjutor to the governing and chief God, not in trivial things, but in the greatest and most momentous affairs.¹⁶

Time after Plotinus

Time in its ceaseless onward sliding produces parted interval; Eternity stands in identity, pre-eminent, vaster by unending power than Time with all the vastness of its seeming progress; Time is like a radial line running out apparently to infinity but dependent upon that, its centre, which is the pivot of all its movement; as it goes it tells of that centre, but the centre itself is the unmoving principle of all the movement.

Time stands, thus, in analogy with the principle which holds fast in unchanging identity of essence: but that principle is infinite not only in duration but also in power: this infinity of power must also have its counterpart, a principle springing from that infinite power and dependent upon it; this counterpart will, after its own mode, run a course — corresponding to the course of Time — in keeping with that stationary power which is its greater as being its source: and in this too the source is present throughout the full extension of its lower correspondent.¹⁷

Time is an intellectual dance of finite souls around the centre of the World Soul.

Archytas the Pythagorean defined time to be the universal interval of the nature of the universe, in consequence of surveying the continuity in the productive principles of that nature, and their departure into division. Others still more ancient defined time to be, as the name manifests, *a certain dance of intellect*; but others defined it to be the periods of soul; others, the natural receptacle of these periods; and others, orderly circulations; all which (says Iamblichus, from whom this information is derived) the Pythagoric sect comprehends. Both Archytas also and Aristotle appear to have admitted time to be *a continued and indivisible flux of nows*. See a treasure of the conceptions of the ancients on this subject, in the Additional Notes to my translation of Aristotle's *Physics*. [TTS vol. XIX]

Time, however, according to Proclus, is a medium between that which is *alone* the cause of motion, as soul, and that which is *alone* immoveable, as intellect. Hence time is truly, so far as it is considered in itself, immoveable, but so far as it is in its participants, it is moveable, and subsists together with them, unfolding itself into them. He adds, *hence it is a certain proceeding intellect*, established indeed in eternity, but proceeding and abundantly flowing into the things which are guarded by it. This definition of time by Proclus, appears to me to be uncommonly beautiful, and

¹⁶ *Plutarch's Morals. Translated from the Greek by Several Hands.* (Corrected and revised by W.W. Goodwin). Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1878. (Vol. V "Platonic Questions" VIII pp. 440-41; tr. Brown.)

¹⁷ Plotinus: *Ennead* VI, v, "On the Integral Omnipresence of the Authentic Existent (2)," ¶ 11. (tr. MacKenna & Page)



accurate. See the whole of the passage from which it is taken, in my translation of the *Commentary on the Timæus* [246e, TTS vol. XVI, p. 749].¹⁸

[Intellect] alone *is*, and *is* always, but is never *future*; for when the future arrives, it then also *is*; nor it is the *past*. For nothing there has passed away, but all things abide in the present *now*;¹⁹



Father Time Overcome by Love, Hope and Beauty (1627) Simon Vouet, Museo del Prado

¹⁸ Taylor T. (Tr. & Annot.). *Collected Writings of Plotinus*. (Vol. III of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2000; [Taylor's note to *Ennead* III, vii ¶ 6, p. 270 *fn.* & ¶ 10, p. 277 *fn.*]

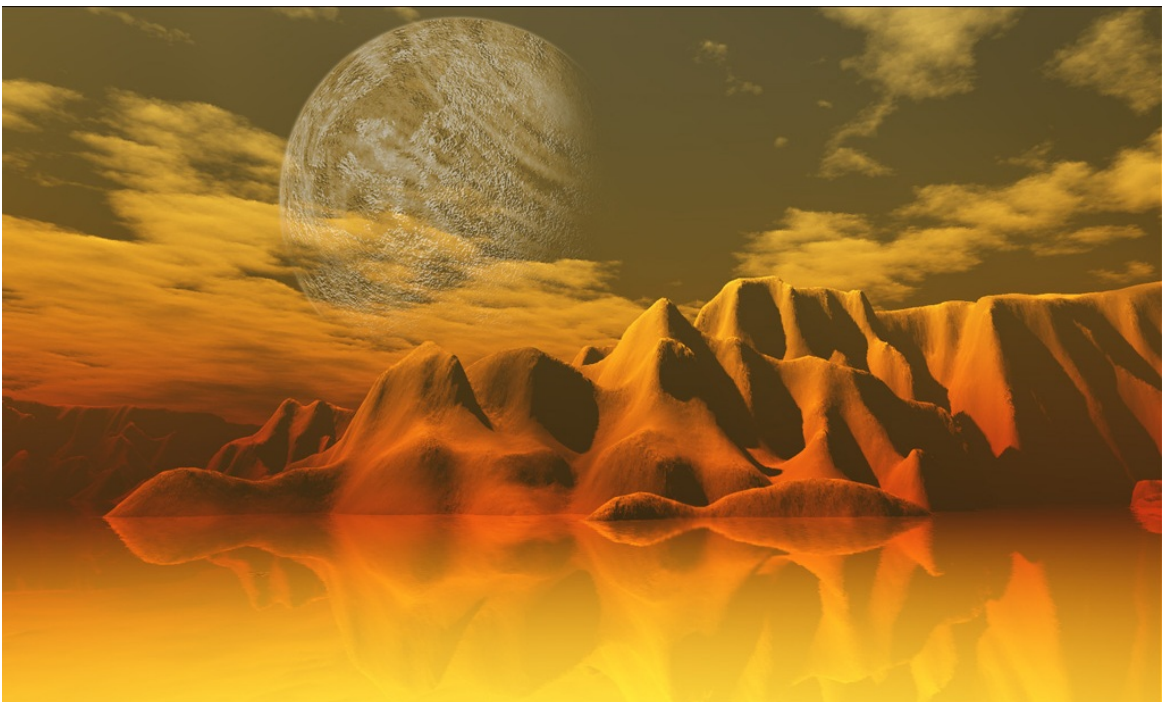
¹⁹ *Ibid.* *Ennead* V, i ¶4, p. 303



Attired with Stars, we shall for ever sit, triumphing over Death, and Chance, and Thee, O Time!

Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race,
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss
So little is thy gain,
For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And last of all they greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss;
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood
When everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever shine
About the supreme Throne
Of him t' whose happy-making sight alone,
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this Earthly grossness quit,
Attired with Stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O time.

— JOHN MILTON



Time by Inga Nielsen

