

Modifications of

CONSCIOUSNESS

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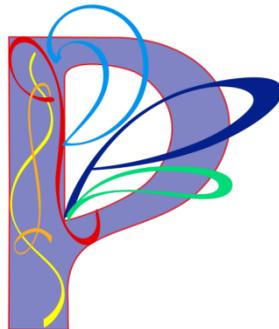
Integrative Theosophical Studies Online Series 2
Cosmogogenesis

Modifications of
CONSCIOUSNESS

The one and only Capacity of Perception ever analysing and reflecting upon Itself

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Abstract

We are dual, manifested, aspects of an ultimate state of Unconsciousness, the One and only Reality. The Secret Doctrine asserts that out of a Perfect, Unconditioned, Unmanifested Consciousness, myriads of short-lived, bundles of individualised consciousnesses keep emerging, like sparks of a fire. That is how Unknowable Causality evolves to omnipresent mind and life immanent in every atom, and keeps transferring informing principles from one planet to the other, from one eternity to another.

Intelligent Law is an aspect of Cosmic Consciousness. It governs Universe, Man and All. Consciousness, Universe, and Karman are one and the same, inseparable and inter-dependent. The whole Universe is the sum total of multifarious states of Consciousness. The only Reality is Ultimate Unconsciousness within the bosom of Parabrahman. All else is maya-illusion.

Cosmic Ideation and Cosmic Substance are inseparable, interdependent, and readily convertible into each other. The Fire of Unconsciousness unfolds from within without and differentiates to sparks of self-consciousness. Even our senses are progressive differentiations of *That One Sense-Consciousness*.

Beware! Impulses of Psychic Force, act from without within. Noetic Force acts from within without.

Spirit and Matter are illusionary aspects of the One Consciousness which underpins and sustains All. Spirit can only cognise Itself through the flesh or “matter.” Thus matter is an aggregate of objects of possible perception. Endless Worlds are set into motion by an unquenchable Desire for Self-Knowledge that burns silently in the bosom of Parabrahman. When “the last vibration of the Seventh Eternity thrills through Infinitude,” the Fire of Desire becomes Fohat, or Light of Logos. It differentiates primordial matter into atoms, seeds of manifold Life, ever-revealing latent, unmanifested, potentialities of Infinite Thought and Ideals to the perception of finite minds.

Consciousness is septenary. It vibrates and illumines the seven brains of the heart as it does the seven divisions or rays around the pineal gland. For the heart is the abode of Spiritual Consciousness. The Higher Mind or Manas is Spiritual Self-Consciousness, itself; Divine Consciousness, when united with Buddhi. The Lower Mind with its seven gateways is the organ of animal or terrestrial consciousness. Every single cell in our body is gifted with a brain and a consciousness of its own. Thus Consciousness is the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself “I,” a breath of Heaven.

One day, when our true individuality is withdrawn in the Unconscious Immateriality of its Divine Counterpart, it will regain the true happiness of Non-Being. But “the seed is not quickened, except it die.”

Everything in the Universe, throughout its kingdoms, is conscious, i.e., endowed with a consciousness of its own kind; a kind we do not always understand.

Every World emanates from a single Unevolved Cause. And, like all else, our World has a Soul. Though eternal and changeless in Its inner essence, the Soul of the World alters during Its outer manifestations. This has been the subject of centuries of scholastic disputations.

Consciousness is the One and only Capacity of Perception, ever analysing and reflecting upon Itself. Humanity is a periodic manifestation of Cosmic Consciousness. Spirit, Soul, and Matter are Consciousness' three aspects integrated by Consciousness Itself. Universal Consciousness is unlimited and beyond space and time. While it can only be expressed through matter, it is not of matter, It is our Sensing Principle. Other considerations of the intrinsic Intelligence of Consciousness include the Unity of Spirit and Trinity of Nature.

Personal, individualised, consciousness, ego and egoism, mind and mentality, self and selfishness, I-ness and me-ness, character and charisma, persona and personality, individualism and capitalism, they are all one and the same: they are the cause of separateness and all suffering in the world!

Consciousness can neither imagine its own cessation nor its own beginning. Though Its contents are of a pseudo-infinite duration, It is the dream that never dies.

Every plane of consciousness creates a different level of illusion. Everything is maya-illusion. Can we ever account for the origin of consciousness? Life and death are illusions, time is illusion. The illusion of time is produced by the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness. Time does not exist even in sleep! All things are real but only relatively real.

The Infinite can only see Itself through the eyes of the finite. When the Infinite cannot conceive Itself by Itself, How can the finite ever perceive the Infinite? Such feats are beyond the boundary of human capability. That's why the Infinite is, and will remain forever, Unknown and Unknowable.

Only by abandoning personal thoughts and pursuits, the lower mind can begin to ascend toward its higher counterpart. Such an uplifting of consciousness can only be attained by self-devised but unselfish efforts, checked by Karman.

Finally, Madame Blavatsky affirms three requisites for those who are after self-knowledge.



Editorial Notes

This is a study of the one and only Capacity of Perception ever analysing and reflecting upon Itself. It began in 1994 as research notes from *The Secret Doctrine* and was subsequently shared with fellow Theosophists and others. In 2006, it was released to the public at large under the auspices of <http://www.theosophy.gr>

Further revised and typographically enhanced, it is now republished as part of our Integrative Theosophical Studies Online Series 2 on Cosmogenesis.

Titles of frequently quoted works are abridged as indicated in: *Compassion the Spirit of Truth* (2009). Other editor's notes are common to all our publications, and can be found in the same place.

SERIES EDITOR

17th November 2009



Absolute Unconsciousness is the fount and sustainer of All Consciousness

We are dual aspects of an ultimate state of Unconsciousness, the One and Only Reality.

The Secret Doctrine asserts that out of a Perfect, Unconditioned, Unmanifested Consciousness, myriads of short-lived, bundles of individualised consciousnesses emerge, like sparks of a fire.

“ . . . one eternal Truth, and 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. . . . ”¹

1. The ABSOLUTE; the *Parabrahman*² of the Vedāntins, or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel³ says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.

2. The first manifestation, the impersonal, and, in philosophy, *unmanifested* Logos,⁴ the precursor⁵ of the “manifested.” This is the “First Cause,” the “Unconscious” of European pantheists.

3. Spirit-matter, LIFE; the “Spirit of the Universe,” the Purusha and Prakriti, or the *second* Logos.

4. Cosmic ideation, Mahat or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon⁶ of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called Mahā-Buddhi.⁷

¹ *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*.

² [*Parabrahman* of the Vedāntists, *That of the Chhāndogya Upanishad*, *The Absolute* of Hegel, *The Good* of the Platonists, *The One Life* of the Buddhists, etc., etc., constitutes the basis of conditioned being, whether subjective or objective. Parabrahman is Sat, the One Reality, Perfect Consciousness, containing the cogniser, the thing cognized and the cognition. Brahman or Brahma (neuter) is the impersonal, supreme, and incognisable principle of the universe from the essence of which all emanates, and into which all returns. It is incorporeal, immaterial, unborn, eternal, beginningless, endless. It is all-pervading, animating the highest god as well as the smallest mineral atom. Brahmā (male) is the creator of the Indian pantheon and, in conjunction with Prakriti or Matter, alternates between periods of manifestation (*manvantara*) and disappearance from objective existence (*pralaya*).]

³ [Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, 1770–1831. German philosopher, greatly influenced the study of history and metaphysics, in that he perceived reality as a dynamic process, rather than as a reflection of static ideals, and maintained that the process of reality is governed by dialectical law: every thesis implies its own contradiction or antithesis, and their conflict ends in a synthesis which, again, brings forth its antithesis. History, understood in terms of the dialectic, is produced by the conflicting impulses and interests of men but, at the same time, shows the progressive self-realisation of human reason and freedom. Great men are those whose personal aims coincide with the aim of the historical process.]

⁴ [Gr., lit., *word*. In Stoic philosophy Logos was the active principle living in and determining the world; the manifested deity with every nation and people; the outward expression of the effect of a cause, which is ever concealed. Thus speech, being the logos of thought, it is aptly translated as “verbum” and “word” in a metaphysical sense.]

⁵ [Something that exists or goes in advance of another, a predecessor.]

⁶ [Adjective of *noumenon*; contraction of νοούμενον, neuter of present participle, passive of *noein*: to think, to apprehend, to conceive – *noos* (*nous*), mind (Gr.). *Noumenon* was introduced by German philosopher Immanuel Kant, 1774–1804, to contrast *phenomenon*; pl. *phenomena*, neuter of present participle, passive of *phainein*: to show, to be seen, to appear), appearing, apparent to the senses and the mind. In Kant’s philosophy, *noumenon* is an object of purely intellectual intuition, devoid of all phenomenal attributes; a thing whose existence can be reasoned but never perceived. Cf. abstract thinking, a quality of the Higher Mind.]

⁷ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 16; [summarising the First Philosophical Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*.]

That is how Unknowable Causality evolves to omnipresent mind and life immanent in every atom,

For, “just as a human being is composed of seven principles, differentiated matter in the solar system exists in seven different conditions.” So does Fohat. He is One and Seven, and on the Cosmic plane is behind all such manifestations as light, heat, sound, adhesion, etc., etc., and is the “spirit” of ELECTRICITY, which is the LIFE of the Universe. As an abstraction, we call it the ONE LIFE; as an objective and evident Reality, we speak of a septenary scale of manifestation, which begins at the upper rung with the One Unknowable CAUSALITY, and ends as Omnipresent Mind and Life immanent in every atom of Matter. Thus, while science speaks of its evolution through brute matter, blind force, and senseless motion, the Occultists point to *intelligent* LAW and *sentient* LIFE, and add that Fohat is the guiding Spirit of all this. Yet he is no personal God at all.¹

And keeps transferring informing principles from one planet to the other,

It is Fohat² who guides the transfer of the principles from one planet to the other, from one star to another child-star. When a planet dies, its informing principles are transferred to a *laya* or sleeping centre, with potential but latent energy in it, which is thus awakened into life and begins to form itself into a new sidereal³ body.⁴

from one eternity to another.

. . . the one absolute, ever acting and never-erring law, which proceeds on the same lines from one eternity (or Manvantara⁵) to the other — even furnishing an ascending scale for the manifested, or that which we call the great Illusion (*Mahā-Maya*), but plunging Spirit deeper and deeper into materiality on the one hand, and then *redeeming it through flesh* and liberating it — this law . . . uses for these purposes the Beings from other and higher planes, men, or *Minds* (Manus), in accordance with their Karmic exigencies.⁶

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 139; [Commentary on Stanza VI.2a & quoting T.S. Row: “A Personal and an Impersonal God,” *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, February 1883, p. 105.]

² [Tib. occult term representing the aggregate of all the spiritual and creative ideations above, and of all the electro-dynamic and creative forces below, poised to reveal Divine Thought to the perception of finite minds.]

³ [Anything relating to the stars: esoterically, to various influences emanating from such regions, such as the “sidereal force,” of Paracelsus.]

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 147; [Commentary on Stanza VI.4b.]

⁵ [A period of manifestation applied to various cycles, i.e. “a day of Brahmā” 432 X 10⁷ solar years, the reign of one Manu 308,448 X 10³; as opposed to pralaya, a period of dissolution, withdrawal, or rest.]

⁶ *Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 87-88; [Commentary on Stanza IV.14a.]

**Intelligent Law is an aspect of
Cosmic Consciousness.
It governs Universe,
Man and All.**

KARMA is an Absolute and Eternal law in the World of manifestation; and as there can only be one Absolute, as One eternal ever-present Cause, believers in Karma cannot be regarded as Atheists or materialists — still less as fatalists: for Karma is one with the Unknowable, of which it is an aspect in its effects in the phenomenal world.¹

The ONE LIFE is closely related to *the one* law which governs the World of Being — KARMA. Exoterically, this is simply and literally “action,” or rather an “effect-producing cause.” Esoterically it is quite a different thing in its far-fetching moral effects. It is the unerring LAW OF RETRIBUTION. . . . at the first flutter of renascent life, Svabhāva, “the mutable radiance of the Immutable Darkness unconscious in Eternity,” passes, at every new rebirth of Kosmos, from an inactive state into one of intense activity; that it differentiates and then begins its work through that differentiation. This work is KARMA.²

**Consciousness, Universe, and
Karman are one and the same,
inseparable and inter-
dependent.**

Karma is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being. As no cause remains without its due effect from greatest to least, from a cosmic disturbance down to the movement of your hand, and as like produces like, *Karma* is that unseen and unknown law *which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably* each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer. Though itself *unknowable*, its action is perceivable.³ . . . we, who are not Seers or Initiates, cannot know anything about the details of the working of the law of Karma.⁴

**The whole Universe is the sum
total of multifarious states
of Consciousness.**

When my readers once realize the fact that this grand universe is in reality but a huge aggregation of various states of consciousness, they will not be surprised to find that the ultimate state of unconsciousness is considered as Parabrahman by the Advaitī.⁵

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 305-6

² *ibid.*, I pp. 634-35

³ *Key to Theosophy*, p. 201

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 215

⁵ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 598; [quoting T.S. Row’s article “A personal and an Impersonal God.”]

**The only Reality is Ultimate
Unconsciousness within the
bosom of Parabrahman.**

[According to the Advaitīs¹] a conscious God cannot be the origin of the Universe, as his *Ego* would be the effect of a previous cause, if the word conscious conveys but its ordinary meaning. They cannot admit that *the grand total of all the states of consciousness in the Universe* is their deity, as these states are constantly changing, and as cosmic ideation ceases during *Pralaya*. There is only one permanent condition in the Universe, which is the state of perfect unconsciousness, bare *Chidākāśa* (the field of consciousness) in fact.²



¹ [After the decline of Buddhism in India different sects arose, the chief being Advaita (non-dualism) founded by Śamkarāchārya, Viśishtādvaita (qualified non-dualism), Dvaita (dualism), and Suddhādvaita (pure non-dualism).]

² *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 598; [quoting T.S. Row's article "A personal and an Impersonal God."]

The Fire of Unconscious Intelligence reflects upon Itself through sparks of self-conscious mind

Cosmic Ideation and Cosmic Substance are inseparable, interdependent, and readily convertible into each other.

Just as pre-cosmic Ideation is the root of all individual consciousness, so pre-cosmic Substance is the substratum of matter in the various grades of its differentiation. . . . the contrast of these two aspects of the Absolute is essential to the existence of the “Manifested Universe.” Apart from Cosmic Substance, Cosmic Ideation¹ could not manifest as individual consciousness, since it is only through a vehicle² of matter that consciousness wells up as “I am I,” a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity. Again, apart from Cosmic Ideation, Cosmic Substance would remain an empty abstraction, and no emergence of consciousness could ensue.³ . . . For how can the *absolute* attain [Finite Self-Consciousness] otherwise than as simply an *aspect*, the highest of which known to us is human consciousness?⁴

The Fire of Unconsciousness unfolds from within without and differentiates to sparks of self-consciousness. Our senses are progressive differentiations of That One Sense-Consciousness.

. . . for the understanding of the Higher Triad it is needful that the Lower Quaternary shall be in some measure understood. And first let the student clearly realize that he cannot see things spiritual with the eyes of the flesh, and that in studying even the Body he must use the eyes of the Spiritual Intelligence, else will he fail and his study will be fruitless. For growth is from within outwards, and always the inner remains the more perfect. Even the development of a physical sense is always preceded by a mental feeling, which proceeds to evolve a physical sense. As said all senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness, and become so differentiated on the Astral plane, where perceptive life proper begins; from that the differentiation is continued on to the lowest sub-plane of the Prākritic plane, to which the physical molecules of our Bodies belong.⁵

¹ [Unconscious Universal Mind.]

² Called in Sanskrit *upādhi*.

³ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 15; [on the First Philosophical Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*.]

⁴ *ibid.*, I p. 50 *fn.* [On Anaxagoras’ “Mundane Intelligence, the nous (vous), the principle that according to his views is absolutely separated and free from matter and acts on design, was called Motion, the ONE LIFE, or *Jīvātman*, ages before the year 500 B.C. in India.”]

⁵ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 691

Beware! Impulses of Psychic Force, act from without-within. Noetic Force always acts from within-without.

Indeed, every organ in our body *has its own memory*. For if it is endowed with a consciousness “of its own kind,” every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own *psychic* and *noëtic* action. Responding to the touch of both a physical and a *metaphysical* Force, the impulse given by the *psychic* (or psycho-molecular) Force will act from *without within*; while that of the *noëtic* (shall we call it Spiritual-dynamical?) Force works *from within without*. For, as our body is the covering of the inner “principles,” soul, mind, life, etc., so the molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its “principles,” the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell’s activity and behaviour are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly, by the noëtic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the *physical* cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms — being psycho-spiritual, *not physical units* — *act under laws of their own*, just as Professor Ladd’s “Unit-Being,” which is our “Mind-Ego,” does, in his very philosophical and scientific hypothesis. Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds. Every key contains the potentiality of good or bad, of producing harmony or disharmony. This depends on the impulse given and the combinations produced; on the force of the touch of the artist at work, a “double-faced Unity,” indeed.¹

Spirit and Matter are illusionary aspects of One Consciousness which underpins and sustains All.

But what is “Spirit” pure and impersonal *per se*? . . . why, such a *Spirit* is a nonentity, a pure abstraction, an absolute blank to our senses — even to the most spiritual. It becomes *something* only in union with matter — hence it is always *something* since matter is infinite and indestructible and *non-existent* without Spirit which, in matter is *Life*. Separated from matter it becomes the absolute negation of *life* and *being*, whereas matter is inseparable from it.² . . . *pure Spirit* can have no consciousness *per se*.³

¹ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (PSYCHIC AND NOËTIC ACTION) XII pp. 368-69

² *Mahatma Letter* 23b (93b), p. 155; 3rd Combined ed.

³ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (A LEVY OF ARMS AGAINST THEOSOPHY) IV p. 548

Spirit can only cognise Itself through the flesh or “matter.”

Cosmic Ideation is non-existent during Pralaya¹ periods, for the simple reason that there is no one, and nothing, to perceive its effects. There can be no manifestation of Consciousness, semi-consciousness, or even “unconscious purposiveness,” except through the vehicle of matter.²

Matter is an aggregate of objects of possible perception.

As Matter existing apart from perception is a mere abstraction, both of these aspects of the ABSOLUTE — Cosmic Substance and Cosmic Ideation — are mutually interdependent. In strict accuracy . . . the term “Matter” ought to be applied to the aggregate of objects of possible perception, and “Substance” to *noumena*; for inasmuch as the phenomena of *our* plane are the creation of the perceiving Ego — the modifications of its own subjectivity — all the “states of matter representing the aggregate of perceived objects” can have but a relative and purely phenomenal existence for the children of our plane. As the modern Idealists would say, the co-operation of Subject and Object results in the sense-object or phenomenon.³

Endless worlds are set into motion by an unquenchable Desire for Self-Knowledge that burns silently in the bosom of Parabrahman.

“The Causes of Existence” mean not only the physical causes known to science, but the metaphysical causes, the chief of which is the desire to exist, an outcome of Nidāna and Maya. This desire for a sentient life shows itself in everything, from an atom to a sun, and is a reflection of the Divine Thought propelled into objective existence, into a law that the Universe should exist. According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, and of all existence, remains for ever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank.⁴

¹ [Pralaya is a period of dissolution, obscuration, repose — planetary, cosmic, or universal.]

² *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 328-29

³ *ibid.*, I p. 329

⁴ *ibid.*, I p. 44; [Commentary on Stanza I.7a, re: eternal desire for sentient life.]

When “the last vibration of the Seventh Eternity thrills through Infinitude,” the Fire of Desire becomes Fohat, or Light of Logos. It differentiates primordial matter into atoms, seeds of manifold Life,

All the Kabbalists and Occultists, Eastern and Western, recognize:

(a) The identity of “Father-Mother” with primordial *Aether* or *Ākāśa*, (Astral Light); and

(b) Its homogeneity before the evolution of the “Son,” cosmically *Fohat*, for it is Cosmic Electricity. “Fohat hardens and scatters the seven brothers” (Book III, *Dzyan*); which means that the primordial Electric Entity — for the Eastern Occultists insist that Electricity is an Entity — electrifies into life, and separates primordial stuff or pregenetic matter into atoms, themselves the source of all life and consciousness.

The ancients represented it by a serpent, for “Fohat hisses as he glides hither and thither” (in zigzags). The Kabala figures it with the Hebrew letter Teth, whose symbol is the serpent which played such a prominent part in the Mysteries.¹

Ever-revealing latent, unmanifested, potentialities of Infinite Thought and Ideals to the perception of finite minds.

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 *Chidakasham*, 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 Dhyāni-Chohans of *sentient life* of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Mānasaputras 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.²

¹ Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 75-76; [Commentary on Stanza III.7d.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 361; [explaining what is meant by prototypes existing in the Astral Light, re: *Secret Doctrine* I, p. 63]

Consciousness is septenary. Occultism teaches that physical man is one, but the thinking man septenary, thinking, acting, feeling, and living on seven different states of being or planes of consciousness, and that for all these states and planes the permanent Ego (not the false personality) has a distinct set of senses.¹

Dreamless sleep is one of the seven states of consciousness known in Oriental esotericism. In each of these states a different portion of the mind comes into action; or as a Vedantīn would express it, the individual is conscious in a different plane of his being. The term “dreamless sleep,” in this case is applied allegorically to the Universe to express a condition somewhat analogous to that state of consciousness in man, which, not being remembered in a waking state, seems a blank, just as the sleep of the mesmerized subject seems to him an unconscious blank when he returns to his normal condition, although he has been talking and acting as a conscious individual would.²

It vibrates and illumines the seven brains of the heart as it does the seven divisions or rays around the pineal gland.

The special organ of consciousness is of course the brain, and is located in the aura of the pineal gland in the living man. During the process of mind or thought manifesting to consciousness, constant vibrations of light take place. If one could see clairvoyantly in the brain of a living man one could almost count (see with the eye) the seven shades of the successive scales of light, from the duldest to the brightest.

What consciousness *is* can never be defined psychologically. We can analyse and classify its work and effects — we cannot define it, unless we postulate an Ego distinct from the body. The septenary scale of states of consciousness is reflected in the heart, or rather its area,³ which vibrates and illumines the *seven brains* of the heart as it does the seven divisions or rays around the pineal gland.

Every one of the five recognized senses was primarily a mental sense.⁴

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (DREAMS) X p. 259

² *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 47; [commentary on Stanza I.8*b*.]

³ Word difficult to decipher; may be intended for “Aura,” though it looks like “area.” — C.J.

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, [CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS] XIII p. 289

**For the heart is the abode of
Spiritual Consciousness.**

The Consciousness which is merely the animal Consciousness is made up of the Consciousness of all the cells in the Body, except those of the Heart. For the Heart is the organ of the Spiritual Consciousness; it corresponds indeed to Prāna, but only because Prāna and the Auric Envelope are essentially the same, and because again as Jīva it is the same as the Universal Deity (p. 672). The Heart represents the Higher Triad, while the Liver and Spleen represent the Quaternary, taken as a whole. The heart is the abode of the Spiritual Man, whereas the Psycho-Intellectual Man dwells in the Head with its seven gateways. It has its seven brains, the upādhis and symbols of the seven Hierarchies, and this is the exoterically four, but esoterically seven, leaved Lotus, the “Saptaparna,” the “Cave of Buddha” with its seven compartments. . . . The Heart of the king of the Body, its most important organ.¹

**The Higher Mind or Manas is
Spiritual Self-Consciousness,
itself; Divine Consciousness,
when united with Buddhi.**

In its purely metaphysical aspect, Manas, being again one remove (on the downward plane) from Buddhi, is still so immeasurably higher than the physical man, that it cannot enter into direct relation with the personality, except through its reflection, the lower mind. Manas is *Spiritual Self-Consciousness*, in itself, and Divine Consciousness when united with Buddhi, which is the true “producer” of that “production” (vikāra), or Self Consciousness, through Mahat. Buddhi-Manas, therefore, is entirely unfit to manifest during its periodical incarnations, except through the human mind, or lower Manas. Both are linked together and are inseparable, and can have as little to do with the lower Tanmātras (rudimentary atoms) as the homogeneous with the heterogeneous.²

The “principles” . . . save the body, the life, and the astral *eidolon*, all of which disperse at death, are simply *aspects* and *states of consciousness*. There is but one *real* man, enduring through the cycle of life and immortal in essence, if not in form, and this is *Manas*, the Mind-man or embodied Consciousness.³

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 694

² *ibid.*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 630-31; [on Manas and its functions.]

³ *Key to Theosophy*, p. 100; [on the sevenfold Constitution of Man.]

The Lower Mind with its seven gateways is the organ of animal or terrestrial consciousness.

. . . the human brain is simply the canal between two planes — the psycho-spiritual and the material — through which every abstract and metaphysical idea filters from the Manasic down to the lower human consciousness. Therefore, the ideas about the infinite and the absolute are not, nor can they be, within *our* brain capacities. They can be faithfully mirrored only by our Spiritual consciousness, thence to be more or less faintly projected onto the tables of our perceptions on this plane. Thus while the records of even important events are often obliterated from our memory, not the most trifling action of our lives can disappear from the “Soul’s” memory, because it is no MEMORY for it, but an ever present reality on the plane which lies outside our conceptions of space and time. “Man is the measure of all things,” said Aristotle;¹ and surely he did not mean by man, the form of flesh, bones and muscles! . . . at the moment of the great change that man calls death — that which we call “memory” seems to return to us in all its vigour and freshness.²

Every single cell in our body is gifted with a brain and a consciousness of its own.

The brain, or thinking machinery, is not only in the head and skull, but, as every physiologist who is not quite a materialist, will tell you, every organ in man, heart, liver, lungs, etc., down to every nerve and muscle, has, so to speak, its own distinct brain, or thinking apparatus. As our brain has naught to do in the guidance of the collective and individual work of every organ in us, what is that which guides each so unerringly in its incessant functions, that makes these struggle and that too with disease, throw it off and act, each of them even to the smallest not in a clock-work manner, as alleged by some materialists (for, at the slightest disturbance or breakage the clock stops), but as an entity endowed with instinct? To say that it is Nature is to say nothing, if not a fallacy; for Nature, after all, is but a name for these very same functions, the sum of the qualities and attributes, physical, mental, etc., in the universe and man, the total of agencies and forces guided by intelligent laws.³

¹ [NB. Socrates says to Hermogenes that it was Protagoras “who said that man was the measure of all things”; in: Plato, *The Cratylus*, 386a; tr. Taylor.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MEMORY IN THE DYING) XI pp. 451, 452

³ *ibid.*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 624 *fn.*

Consciousness is the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself “I,” — a breath of Heaven.

One day, when our true individuality is withdrawn in the Unconscious Immateriality of its Divine Counterpart, it will regain the true happiness of non-being.

But “the seed is not quickened, except it die.”⁴

[Theosophy] teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping Man or Humanity. . . . For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle,¹ “the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself ‘I’ . . . a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man.”² This denied, man is but an animal — “the shame and scandal of the Universe,” as Pascal puts it.³

Absolute *Non-Being*, which is equivalent to absolute *Being* or “Be-ness,” [is] the state reached by the human Monad at the end of the great cycle.⁵

“This state of unconscious immateriality . . . is the *true* or eternal state of every being, for saving it there can be found no other true existence; therefore, every rational being’s *dharma* or natural duty and Religion is first to acquire the *dhyāna* (knowledge) or *vidyā* of its real Self, the *Paramātmā*, and then *by the annihilation of its ātma, or worldly self or soul* to experience the infinity of Happiness prevalent in its unconscious Immateriality.”⁶



¹ [Thomas Carlyle, 1795–1881, eminent Scottish historian, essayist, and sage.]

² Cf. “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” *John* xv, 13

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BABEL OF MODERN THOUGHT) XIII p. 97. [Is it a coincidence that *Leviticus* xix, 18 & *Matthew* xix, 19 advocate to “love your neighbour as yourself”? — Ἀγαπά τον πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν.]

⁴ *1 Corinthians* xv, 36

⁵ *Theosophical Glossary*: Parinirvāna

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “TRUE RELIGION DEFINED”) III p. 142; [quoting Vishnu Bāwā.]

The whole world is nothing but Consciousness

Everything in the Universe, throughout its kingdoms, is conscious, i.e., endowed with a consciousness of its own kind,

. . . and on its own plane of perception. We men must remember that because *we* do not perceive any signs — which we can recognize — of consciousness, say, in stones, we have no right to say that *no consciousness exists there*. There is no such thing as either “dead” or “blind” matter, as there is no “Blind” or “Unconscious” Law. These find no place among the conceptions of Occult philosophy. The latter never stops at surface appearances, and for it the *noumenal* essences have more reality than their objective counterparts;¹

A kind we do not always understand.

Nature taken in its abstract sense, *cannot* be “unconscious,” as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals *a consciousness of their own*. All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension.²

. . . Since no single atom in the entire Kosmos is without life and consciousness, how much more then its mighty globes? — though they remain sealed books to us men who can hardly enter even into the consciousness of the forms of life near us?³

Every World emanates from a single Unevolved Cause. And like all else, our World has a Soul.

The “Alaya has an absolute eternal existence,” says Āryāsanga⁴ — the rival of Nāgārjuna.⁵ 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, →

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 274; [summing up the Seven Chapters of Creation.]

² *ibid.*, I p. 277 fn.

³ *ibid.*, II p. 702 fn.

⁴ [The founder of the first Yogacharyā school of pure Buddhism, which is neither northern nor southern, but absolutely esoteric; also cf. extensive commentary in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XIV pp. 432-35, 451 fn. & *Theosophical Glossary*.]

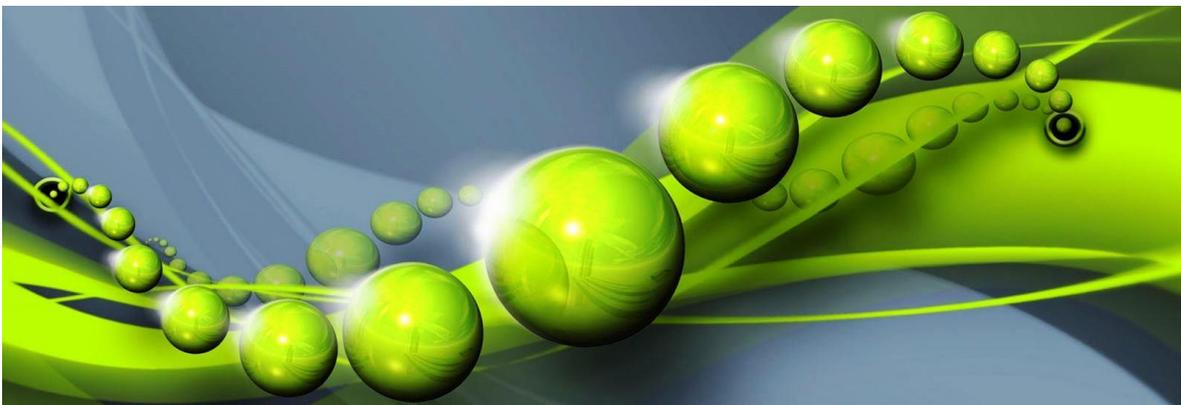
⁵ [Cf. *The Voice of the Silence*, frag. II vs. 103, p. 23 fn. 47: “The ‘tree of knowledge’ is a title given by the followers of the *Bodhidharma* (wisdom religion) to those who have attained the height of mystic knowledge — adepts. Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Madhyamika School, was called the ‘dragon tree,’ dragon standing as a symbol of wisdom and knowledge. The tree is honoured because it is under the bodhi (wisdom) tree that Buddha received his birth and enlightenment, preached his first sermon, and died.”]

or is mere process.

“Prakriti,” however, is an incorrect word, and Alaya would explain it better; for Prakriti is not the “incognisable Brahma.”¹

Though eternal and changeless in Its inner essence, the Soul of the World alters during its outer manifestations. This has been the subject of centuries of scholastic disputations.

The two terms “Alaya” and “Paramārtha” have been the causes of dividing schools and splitting the truth into more different aspects than any other mystic terms. Alaya is literally the “Soul of the World” or Anima Mundi, the “Over-Soul” of Emerson, and according to esoteric teaching it changes periodically its nature. Alaya, though eternal and changeless in its inner essence on the planes which are unreachable by either men or Cosmic Gods (Dhyāni-Buddhas), alters during the active life-period with respect to the lower planes, ours included. During that time not only the Dhyāni-Buddhas are one with Alaya in Soul and Essence, but even the man strong in the Yoga (mystic meditation) “is able to merge his soul with it” (Āryāsanga, of *Bumapa* school). This is not Nirvana, but a condition next to it. Hence the disagreement. Thus, while the Yogāchāras (of the Mahayana school) say that Alaya is the personification of the Voidness, and yet Alaya (*Nying-po* and *Tsang* in Tibetan) is the basis of every visible and invisible thing, and that, though it is eternal and immutable in its essence, it reflects itself in every object of the Universe “like the moon in clear tranquil water,” other schools dispute the statement. The same for Paramārtha.²



¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 49-50; [& quoting Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 20, note by Fitzedward Hall. Cf. “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 incognisable Brahma who was before all’ (*Vayu-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.” *ibid.*, p. 50, *fn.*]

² *ibid.*, I p. 48; [Commentary on Stanza I.9a, re: absolute being and consciousness, which is “non-being” and “unconsciousness.”]

What exactly is Consciousness?

Consciousness is the One and only Capacity of Perception, ever analysing and reflecting upon Itself.

“The whole Cosmos must necessarily exist in the One Source of energy from which this light [*Fohat*] emanates.” Whether we count the principles in Kosmos and man as seven or only as four, the forces of, and in, physical Nature are Seven; and it is stated by the same authority that “*Prajñā*, or the capacity of perception, exists in seven different aspects corresponding the seven conditions of matter.” For, “just as a human being is composed of seven principles, differentiated matter in the solar system exists in seven different conditions.”¹

Humanity is a periodic manifestation of Cosmic Consciousness.

There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe — and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Kosmos — which hath no bounds, and which people call SPACE, considered independently of anything contained in it. But the first differentiation of its *reflection* in the manifested World is purely Spiritual, and the Beings generated in it are not endowed with a consciousness that has any relation to the one we conceive of. They can have no human consciousness or Intelligence before they have acquired such, personally and individually.²

Spirit, Soul, and Matter are Consciousness’ three aspects integrated by Consciousness Itself.

Esoteric philosophy teaches that everything lives and is conscious, but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings. Life we look upon as “the one form of existence,” manifesting in what is called matter; or, as in man, what, incorrectly separating them, we name Spirit, Soul and Matter. Matter is the vehicle for the manifestation of the soul in this plane of existence, and soul is the vehicle on a higher plane for the manifestation of spirit, and these three are a trinity synthesized by Life, which pervades them all. The idea of universal life is one of those ancient conceptions which are returning to the human mind in this century as a consequence of its liberation from anthropomorphic theology.³

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 139; [Commentary on Stanza VI.2a & quoting T.S. Row’s article “A personal and an Impersonal God.”]

² *ibid.*, I p. 277; [on the fact that “every ‘Spirit’ so-called is either a *disembodied* or a *future man*.”]

³ *ibid.*, I p. 49

Universal Consciousness is unlimited and beyond space and time. And while it can only be expressed through matter, it is not of matter,

[Consciousness is] a Ray on the graduated scale of its manifested activity, of the one all-pervading, limitless Flame, the reflections of which alone can differentiate; and, as such, consciousness is ubiquitous, and can be neither localized nor centred on or in any particular subject, nor can it be limited. Its effects alone pertain to the region of matter, for thought is an energy that affects matter in various ways, but consciousness *per se*, as understood and explained by Occult philosophy, is the highest quality of the sentient spiritual principle in us, the Divine Soul (or Buddhi) and our Higher Ego, and does not belong to the plane of materiality. After the death of the physical man, if he be an Initiate, it becomes transformed from a human quality into the independent principle itself; the conscious Ego becoming Consciousness *per se* without any Ego, in the sense that the latter can no longer be limited or conditioned by the senses, or even by space or time. Therefore it is capable, without separating itself from or abandoning its possessor, Buddhi, of reflecting itself at the same time in its astral man that was, without being under any necessity for localizing itself. This is shown at a far lower stage in our dreams. For if consciousness can display activity during our visions, and while the body and its material brain are fast asleep — and if even during those visions it is all but ubiquitous — how much greater must be its power when entirely free from, and having no more connection with, our physical brain.¹

It is our Sensing Principle.

Whether science will ever be able to prove or not that thought, consciousness, etc., in short, the *sensus internum* has its seat in the brain, it is already demonstrated and beyond any doubt that under certain conditions our consciousness and even the whole batch of our senses, can act through other organs, *e.g.*, the stomach, the soles of the feet, etc. The “sensing principle” in us is *an entity* capable of acting outside as inside its material body; and it is certainly independent of any organ in particular, in its actions, although during its incarnation it manifests itself through its physical organs.²

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES) XIV p. 387; [commenting upon whether the original consciousness of a Buddha who just entered Nirvana resides in the Nirvāni or in the subsequent reincarnations of his “remains” as *Nirmānakāya*.]

² *ibid.*, (PROBLEMS OF LIFE) XII p. 414

Other considerations of the intrinsic Intelligence of Consciousness include the Unity of Spirit and Trinity of Nature.

. . . a partless and unbreakable unity in essence, and uniform in manifestation though varying endlessly, throughout the World-process, in degrees of unfoldment, parallel with the endless variations in the quantity, quality, and activity, the density or subtlety, peculiarity, simple or complex organisation, etc., of the vehicles of its manifestation, its sheaths or bodies.

But even apart from these considerations, the facts, established into the evolution of intelligence in the various kingdoms found on this earth, by themselves suffice to establish common features of consciousness in minerals, vegetables, animals and men, and to show that the differences are differences mainly of degrees of complexity and definiteness. Consciousness unfolds evenly in all three departments, cognition, desire and action, though, of course, one is generally predominant and the other two subordinate, in any given time, place, and circumstance, so that there is also an appearance of succession and consecutiveness in the development of the three.¹

The great classics and philosophers felt this truth, when saying that “there must be something within us which produces our thoughts. Something very subtle; it is a breath; it is a fire; it is ether, it is quintessence; it is a slender likeness; it is an intellection; is a number; it is harmony . . . ” (Voltaire)²

Can it be that Nature is cruel because she ensures the survival of the fittest?

The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a *higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which ensure the “survival of the fittest,” though so cruel in their immediate action — all are working toward the grand end. The very *fact* that adaptations *do* occur, that the fittest *do* survive in the struggle for existence, shows that what is called “unconscious Nature” is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings (Elementals) guided by High Planetary Spirits (Dhyāni-Chohans), whose collective aggregate forms the man-

¹ Cf. *Science of the Emotions*, pp. 76-78

² *Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 88-89

ifested *verbum* of the unmanifested Logos, and constitutes at one and the same time the MIND of the Universe and its immutable LAW.¹

Myths and legends are the dream foundation of our collective consciousness.

It has been often remarked by observant writers, that the

“ . . . origin of nearly every popular myth and legend could be traced invariably to a fact in nature.”

In these fantastic creations of an exuberant subjectivism, there is always an element of the objective and real. The imagination of the masses, disorderly and ill-regulated as it may be, could never have conceived and fabricated *ex nihilo* so many monstrous figures, such a wealth of extraordinary tales, had it not had, to serve it as a central nucleus, those floating reminiscences, obscure and vague, which unite the broken links of the chain of time to form with them the mysterious, dream foundation of our collective consciousness.²



¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 277-78

² *ibid.*, II p. 293

Consciousness and self-consciousness

[Possibly a rough beginning of an article by H.P. Blavatsky which exists in the Adyar Archives as a Ms. in her handwriting. Originally published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. XLVI, No. 11, August, 1925, pp. 632-34, and reproduced therein, according to C. Jinaradasa, exactly as Blavatsky wrote it. — *Dara Eklund.*]

The *cycle* of consciousness. It is argued that there cannot be more than one object of perception at a time before the soul because soul is a unit. Occultism teaches that simultaneously our conscious[ness] could receive no less than *seven* distinct impressions, and even pass them into memory. This can be proved by striking at the same time seven keys of the scale of an instrument — say a piano. The 7 sounds will reach consciousness simultaneously; though the untrained consciousness may not be capable of registering them the first second, their prolonged vibrations will strike the ear in 7 distinct sounds one higher than the other in its pitch. All depends on training and attention. Thus the transference of a sensation from any organ to consciousness is almost instantaneous if your attention is fixed upon it; but if any noise distracts your attention it will take a number of seconds before it reaches consciousness. The Occultist should train himself to receive and transmit along the line of the seven scales of his consciousness every impression or impressions simultaneously. He who reduces the intervals of physical time the most, has made the most progress.

The names and order of the 7 scales are:

- 1 Sense-perception;
- 2 Self-perception (or apperception)
- 3 Psychic apperception — which carries it to
- 4 Vital perception.

These are the four lower scales and belong to the psychophysical man.

The[n] come

- 5 Manasic discernments;
- 6 Will perception and
- 7 Spiritual conscious apperception.

The special organ of consciousness is of course the brain, and is located in the aura of the pineal gland in the living man. During the process of mind or thought manifesting to consciousness, constant vibrations of light take place. If one could see clairvoyantly in the brain of a living man one could almost count (see with the eye) the seven shades of the successive scales of light, from the dullest to the brightest.

What consciousness *is* can never be defined psychologically. We can analyse and classify its work and effects — we cannot define it, unless we postulate an Ego distinct from the body. The septenary scale of states of consciousness is reflected in the

heart, or rather its area,¹ which vibrates and illumines the *seven brains* of the heart as it does the seven divisions or rays around the pineal gland.

This consc[iousness] shows to us the difference between the nature and essence of, say, astral body and Ego. One molecular, invisible unless condensed, the other atomic-spiritual. (See example of smoker — ten cigarettes the smoke of each retaining its affinity.)

Idea of Ego the only one compatible with the facts of physiological observation.

The mind or Ego, the *subject* of all and every state of consciousness is essentially a unity. The millions of various sub-states of consc[iousness] are a proof of the existence of this Ego. Even the brain cells furnish us with those states which affirm to us that there is an immortal soul etc.

Every one of the five recognized senses was primarily a mental sense. A fish born in a cave is blind — let it out into a river and it will begin to *feel* it sees, until gradually the physical organ of sight evolves and it will see. A deaf and dumb man hears *internally*, in his own way. Knowing, feeling, willing, not faculties of mind — its colleagues. [p. 631]

[H.P. BLAVATSKY]²



Une mascarade au XVII siècle (1887) Adrien Moreau

¹ Word difficult to decipher; may be intended for “Aura,” though it looks like “area.” — C. J.

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS) XIII pp. 288-89

The downfall of self-consciousness

- Personal, individualised, consciousness,** At the commencement of a great Manvantara, Para-brahman manifests as Mūlaprakriti and then as the Logos. This logos is equivalent to the “Unconscious Universal Mind,” etc., of Western Pantheists. It constitutes the Basis of the SUBJECT-side of manifested Being, and is the source of all manifestations of individual consciousness. Mūlaprakriti, or Primordial Cosmic Substance, is the foundation of the OBJECT-side of things — the basis of all objective evolution and Cosmogenesis.¹
- Ego and egoism, Mind and mentality, Self and selfishness, I-ness and me-ness, Character and charisma, Personal and personality, Individualism and capitalism, they are all one and the same. They are the cause of separateness and all suffering in the world!** Mind is “*the middle principle, the vehicle of the personal consciousness of JIVA*”; explains the Commentary.²
- Mahat* (Understanding, Universal Mind, Thought, etc.), before it manifests itself as Brahmā or Śiva, appears as Vishnu says Sāṅkhya-Sara; hence *Mahat* has several aspects, just as the *Logos* has. *Mahat* is called the Lord, in the *Primary* Creation, and is, in this sense, Universal Cognition or *Thought Divine*; but, “That *Mahat*, which was first produced, is (afterwards) called *Egoism*, when it is born as . . . “I,” that is said to be the *second* creation.” And the translator (an able and learned Brahman,³ not a European Orientalist) explains in a footnote (7), “*i.e.*, when the *Mahat* develops into the feeling of self-consciousness — I — then it assumes the name of egoism,” which, translated into our esoteric phraseology, means when *Mahat* is transformed into the human *Manas*, (or even that of the finite gods), and becomes *Aham*⁴-ship.⁵



¹ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 24

² *ibid.*, II p. 241

³ [Brahman is the highest of the four castes in India, one supposedly fancying himself as high among men as Brahman, the absolute of the Vedāntins, is high among, or above, the gods.]

⁴ [“I” — the basis of ahamkāra or selfhood.]

⁵ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 75; [& quoting *Anugītā*, ch. xxvi, p. 333, fn. 7.]

Can we ever gain Absolute Consciousness?

Consciousness can neither imagine its own cessation nor its own beginning, Complete or true immortality — which means an unlimited *sentient* existence, can have no breaks and stoppages, no arrest of Self-consciousness.¹

“Through the numberless months, years, cycles, aeons, yugas and kalpas, gone in the measureless past and to come in the inexhaustible future, what rises not, nor sets, is this One Self-luminous Consciousness alone.”²

“Never has the cessation of consciousness been witnessed; or if it has been, then the witness thereof himself remains as the embodiment of that same consciousness.” If I say that the solar system began a thousand million years ago, and will end another thousand million years hence, my *consciousness* stretches before and behind and comprehends and includes all those years, though, obviously, my *body* has a very small lifetime. Apart from such metaphysical considerations, mausolea, including some of the greatest handiworks of man, from the Pyramids to the Taj Mahal, triumphal memorials of victories, odes and elegies, and mournings and boastings, are all clear psychological proofs of the perpetuation in consciousness, individual and collective, of the relations of love and of hate and of the objects thereof.³

Though Its contents are of a pseudo-infinite duration. We must not forget that if the whole complicated tree is the result of the seed, the seed, in turn, is the result of a previous whole tree. The seed of life is not merely material, but spirituo-material, and contains pre-existing infinite potencies, and, therefore only, serves as a means of manifesting endless effects. The pseudo-infinite contents of the Universal Consciousness are in the biophore⁴ as ids.⁵

“The quintessence of the digested food is the seed of life, and it is eternal Brahman.”⁶

¹ *Mahatma Letter 20c (70c)*, p. 125; 3rd Combined ed. [On after death states, re: adepts or sorcerers.]

² *Science of the Emotions*, pp. 116-17; [quoting *Panchadashi* i, 7]

³ *ibid.*, p. 117; [quoting *Devi-Bhāgavata* III, xxxii, 15, 16.]

⁴ [August Friedrich Leopold Weismann's, 1834–1914, hypothetical unit of living matter.]

⁵ [In Weismann's theory, an element in a chromosome carrying all hereditary characters.]

⁶ *Science of the Emotions*, pp. 44-45

It is the dream that never dies.¹

To see in Nirvana² annihilation amounts to saying of a man plunged in a sound *dreamless* sleep — one that leaves no impression on the physical memory and brain, because the sleeper's Higher Self is in its original state of absolute consciousness during those hours — that he, too, is annihilated. The latter simile answers only to one side of the question — the most material; since *reabsorption* is by no means such a “dreamless sleep,” but, on the contrary, *absolute* existence, an unconditioned unity, or a state, to describe which human language is absolutely and hopelessly inadequate.³

“One has to acquire true Self-Consciousness [*Paramārtha*], in order to understand *Samvriti*, or the ‘origin of delusion.’” *Paramārtha* is the synonym of the Sanskrit term *Svasamvedanā*, or “the reflection which analyses itself.”⁴

Can we ever account for the origin of consciousness?

To give a Western student [the sevenfold classification of the Brahmins] is to try to make him suppose that he can account for the origin of consciousness, by accounting for the process by which a certain knowledge, through *only one of the states* of that consciousness, came to him; in other words, it is to make him account for something he knows on *this* plane, by something he knows nothing about on the other planes; *i.e.*, to lead him from the spiritual and the psychological, direct to the ontological.⁵ This is why the primary, old, classification was adopted by the Theosophists . . .⁶

Every plane of consciousness creates a different level of illusion.

Esoteric philosophy teaches that everything lives and is conscious, but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings.⁷

¹ [The *Dream that never dies* is the title of an inspiring collection of articles and scholarly essays by Boris de Zirkoff (W. Emmett Small, *Ed.*), San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1983]

² [Exoterically, “blowing out,” like the flame of a candle, the utter extinction of existence. Esoterically, the state of absolute existence and absolute consciousness, into which the ego of one who has reached the highest degree of perfection and holiness during life “enters” after the final incarnation and, occasionally, as in the case of Gautama Buddha and others, during life. For commentaries on the motives of those who refuse to “enter” the nirvānic state, or “don the dharmakāya robe and cross to the other shore,” see *The Voice of the Silence*.]

³ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 266

⁴ *ibid.*, I p. 44 *fn.*

⁵ [Pertaining to the principles of pure being, the nature and essence of things. Gr. *on*, *ontos*, present participle of *einai*, to be, and *genesis*, generation.]

⁶ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 641

⁷ *ibid.*, I p. 49

Everything is maya-illusion. From the standpoint of the highest metaphysics, the whole Universe, gods included, is an illusion; but the illusion of him who is in himself an illusion differs on every plane of consciousness; and we have no more right to dogmatise about the possible nature of the perceptive faculties of an Ego on, say, the sixth plane [Buddhi], than we have to identify our perceptions with, or make them a standard for, those of an ant, in *its* mode of consciousness. The pure object apart from consciousness is unknown to us, while living on the plane of our three-dimensional world, as we know only the mental states it excites in the perceiving Ego.¹

Life and death are illusions, The reasonableness of *Conscious* Existence can be proved only by the study of the primeval — now esoteric — philosophy. And it says “there is neither death nor life, for both are illusions; being (or *be-ness*) is the only reality.” This paradox was repeated thousands of ages later by one of the greatest physiologists that ever lived. “Life is Death” said Claude Bernard. The organism lives because its parts are ever dying. The survival of the fittest is surely based on this truism. The life of the superior whole requires the death of the inferior, the death of the parts depending on and being subservient to it. And, as life is death, so death is life, and the whole great cycle of lives forms but ONE EXISTENCE — *the worst day of which is on our planet.*²

Time is illusion. Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but “lies asleep.” The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past. Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change . . . ; [the “present”] comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past.³

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 329

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE GREAT PARADOX) VIII, p. 124

³ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 37; [Commentary on Stanza I.2a.]

The illusion of time is produced by the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness.

Our ideas . . . 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 Maya 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 even 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.”¹ One has to acquire *Paramārtha* lest one should become too easy a prey to *Samvriti* — is a philosophical axiom.²

Time does not exist even in sleep!

The consciousness of time, in the present sense of the word, does not exist even in sleep; much less, therefore, can it exist in the essentially absolute. Can the sea be said to have a conception of time in its rhythmical striking on the shore, or in the movement of its waves? The Absolute cannot be said to have a consciousness, or, at any rate, a consciousness such as we have here. It has neither consciousness, nor desire, nor wish, nor thought, because it is absolute thought, absolute desire, absolute consciousness, absolute “all.”³

All things are real but only relatively real.

. . . for the cogniser is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself. Whatever reality things possess must be looked for in them before or after they have passed like a flash through the material world; but we cannot cognize any such existence directly, so long as we have sense-instruments which bring only material existence into the field of our consciousness. Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities.⁴

¹ *Mahatma Letter* 8 (15), p. 29; 3rd Combined ed.

² *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 43-44; [i.e., “one has to acquire true self-consciousness, in order to understand samvriti, the origin of delusion “Paramārtha is svasamvedanā, “the reflection which analyses itself.”]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 315; [on whether awareness of time is limited to the plane of waking physical consciousness or whether it exists on higher planes. Cf. “Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists.” *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 37.]

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 39-40

The Infinite can only see Itself through the eyes of the finite.

. . . the *Absolute*, or the *Unconditioned*, and (especially) the unrelated, is a mere fanciful abstraction, a fiction, unless we view it from the standpoint and in the light of the more educated pantheist. To do so, we will have to regard the “Absolute” merely as the aggregate of all intelligences, the totality of all existences, incapable of manifesting itself but through the interrelationship of its parts, as *It* is absolutely incognisable and non-existent outside its phenomena, and depends entirely on its ever-correlating Forces, dependent in their turn on the ONE GREAT LAW.¹

When the Infinite cannot conceive Itself by Itself,

To know itself or oneself, necessitates consciousness and perception (both limited faculties in relation to any subject except Parabrahman), to be cognized. Hence the “Eternal Breath which know itself not.” Infinity cannot comprehend Finiteness. The Boundless can have no relation to the bounded and the conditioned. In the occult teachings, the Unknown and the Unknowable MOVER, or the Self-Existing, is the absolute divine Essence.²

How can the finite ever perceive the Infinite?

Man, unable to form one concept except in terms of empirical phenomena, is powerless from the very constitution of his being to raise the veil that shrouds the majesty of the Absolute. Only the liberated Spirit is able to faintly realize the nature of the source whence it sprang and whither it must eventually return . . . As the highest Dhyāni-Chohan, however, can but bow in ignorance before the awful mystery of Absolute Being; and since, even in that culmination of conscious existence — “the merging of the individual in the universal consciousness,” to use a phrase of Fichte’s³ — the Finite cannot conceive the Infinite, nor can it apply to it its own standard of mental experiences, how can it be said that the “Unconscious” and the Absolute can have even an instinctive impulse or hope of attaining clear self-consciousness?⁴

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ARE DREAMS BUT IDLE VISIONS?) III p. 436 fn.

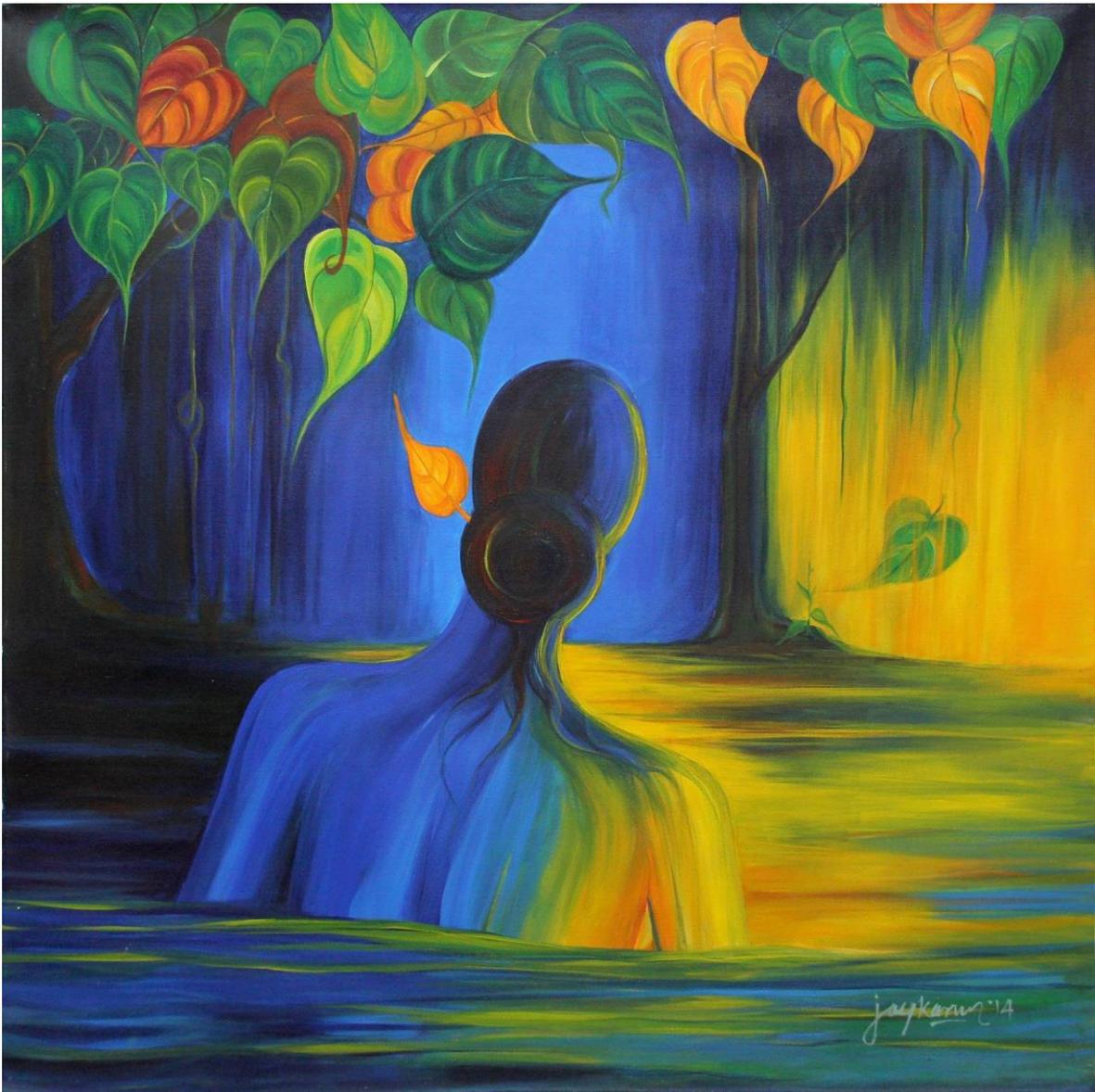
² *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 56

³ [Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 1762–1814, German philosopher. Developed the distinction made by Kant between phenomenal reality and the *thing-in-itself*, the noumenon. Fichte maintained that the essence of the universe is ego, and that the ego itself posits the material world by a process described as productive imagination. Man’s ideas do not come from experience on the material world, for his mind is part of the universal creative ego.]

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, p. I 51; [quoting A. Schweigler’s *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*.]

Such feats are beyond the boundary of human capability. That is why the Infinite is, and will remain forever, Unknown and Unknowable.¹

[The esoteric sevenfold classification] . . . has seven distinct principles, which correspond with seven distinct states of Prajñā or consciousness. It bridges the gulf between the objective and subjective, and indicates the mysterious circuit through which ideation passes. The seven principles are allied to seven states of matter, and to seven forms of force. These principles are harmoniously arranged between two poles, which define the limits of *human* consciousness.²



¹ Find out why in “The Law of Karma is Unknown and Unknowable,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Second Proposition Series.

² *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 635; [quoting T.S. Row’s article “The Constitution of the Microcosm.”]

The mind is the great slayer of the real. Let the disciple slay the slayer.¹

Only by abandoning personal thoughts and pursuits, the lower mind can begin ascending towards its higher counterpart.

Real ecstasy² was defined by Plotinus³ as

“ . . . the liberation of the mind from its finite consciousness, becoming one and identified with the infinite.”

This is the highest condition, says Prof. Wilder, but not one of permanent duration, and it is reached only by the very *very* few. It is, indeed, identical with that state which is known in India as *Samadhi*. The latter is practised by the Yogis, who facilitate it physically by the greatest abstinence in food and drink, and mentally by an incessant endeavour to purify and elevate the mind.⁴

“The soul is the camera in which facts and events, future, past, and present, are alike fixed; and the mind becomes conscious of them. Beyond our every-day world of limits all is one day or state — the past and future comprised in the present. . . . Death is the last *ecstasis* on earth. Then the soul is freed from the constraint of the body, and its nobler part is united to higher nature and becomes partaker in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the higher beings.”⁵

“The passage from the physics of the *brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable.*”⁶

“No one, therefore, has the right to hold that in the future *we* shall not be able to pass beyond those limits of our knowledge that today seem impassable.”⁷

¹ *Voice of the Silence*, frag. I vs. 2-5, p. 1

² [A state of temporary mental alienation and altered or diminished consciousness; excessive joy: enthusiasm: exalted feeling. Gr. *ek*, from, and root of *histamai*, to make, to stand.]

³ [Plotinos, c. 204–270, Greek philosopher. After studying in Alexandria under Ammonius Saccas, settled in Rome where he persuaded his friend, emperor Gallienus, to build a city for philosophers to be governed according to the laws of Plato.]

⁴ *Key to Theosophy*, p. 10

⁵ “This is what the scholarly author of ‘The Eclectic Philosophy,’ Prof A. Wilder, F.T.S., describes as ‘spiritual photography.’” *Key to Theosophy*, p. 11 *fn.*; [quoting Wilder’s *Eclectic Philosophy*.]

⁶ [Quoting Tyndall’s *Fragments of Science*. John Tyndall, 1820–1839, Irish physicist.]

⁷ *Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 673-74; [quoting Ernst Haeckel, 1834–1919, German zoologist and philosopher, who popularised the ideas of Darwin and applied the doctrine of evolution to philosophy and religion.]

Such an uplifting of consciousness can only be attained by self-devised but unselfish efforts, checked by Karman.¹

Read the Mahavagga and try to understand, not with the prejudiced Western mind but the spirit of intuition and truth what the Fully Enlightened one says in the 1st Khandhaka. Allow me to translate it for you.

“At the time the blessed Buddha was at Uruvela on the shores of the river Neranjara as he rested under the Bodhi tree of wisdom after he had become Sam Buddha, at the end of the seventh day having his mind fixed on the chain of causation he spake thus:

From Ignorance spring the *śamkharas*² of three-fold nature — productions of body, of speech, of thought.

From the *śamkharas* springs consciousness,

From consciousness springs name and form,

From this spring the six regions (of the six senses, the seventh being the property of but the enlightened);

From these springs contact.

From this sensation;

From this springs thirst (or desire, *kāma*, *tanhā*),

From thirst attachment, existence, birth, old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair.

Again by the destruction of ignorance, the *śamkharas* are destroyed, and their consciousness, name and form, the six regions, contact, sensation, thirst, attachment (selfishness), existence, birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair are destroyed.

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.”³

¹ [The essence of the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*.]

² [Samsara, from *sam* and *kri*, to improve, refine, impress. In Hindu philosophy the term is used to denote those impressions left upon the mind by one’s actions, or external circumstances, that are capable of being re-developed on any future favourable occasion — even in a future birth. Samsara, therefore, indicates the germs of propensities and impulses from previous births, to be developed in this or the coming, incarnation. In Tibet samsara is called doodyed; in China is defined as (or is associated with) karma, action. Samsara is a metaphysical term which in exoteric philosophies is variously defined, for example, in Nepal as illusion, in Tibet as notion, in Sri Lanka as discrimination. Its true meaning, however, is the esoteric one given above and, as such, is connected with karma and its working. Elsewhere, it is believed that samsaras work through five classes of skandhas, attributes (*rūpa*, *vedana*, *sañjñā*, *samsara*, *vijñāna*) of character and personality, that have been formed in previous lives, and which help to rebuild a befitting constitution of man in subsequent incarnations. Cf. *Theosophical Glossary*]

³ Cf. *Mahatma Letter* 10 (88), pp. 58-59; 3rd Combined ed.

Madame Blavatsky affirms three requisites for those who are after self-knowledge.

The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fibre of the heart that one is *ceaselessly* self-deceived.

The second requisite is the still deeper conviction that such knowledge — such intuitive and certain knowledge — can be obtained by effort.

The third and most important is an indomitable determination to obtain and face that knowledge.

Self-knowledge of this kind is unattainable by what men usually call “self-analysis.” It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man.

To obtain this knowledge is a greater achievement than to command the elements or to know the future.¹



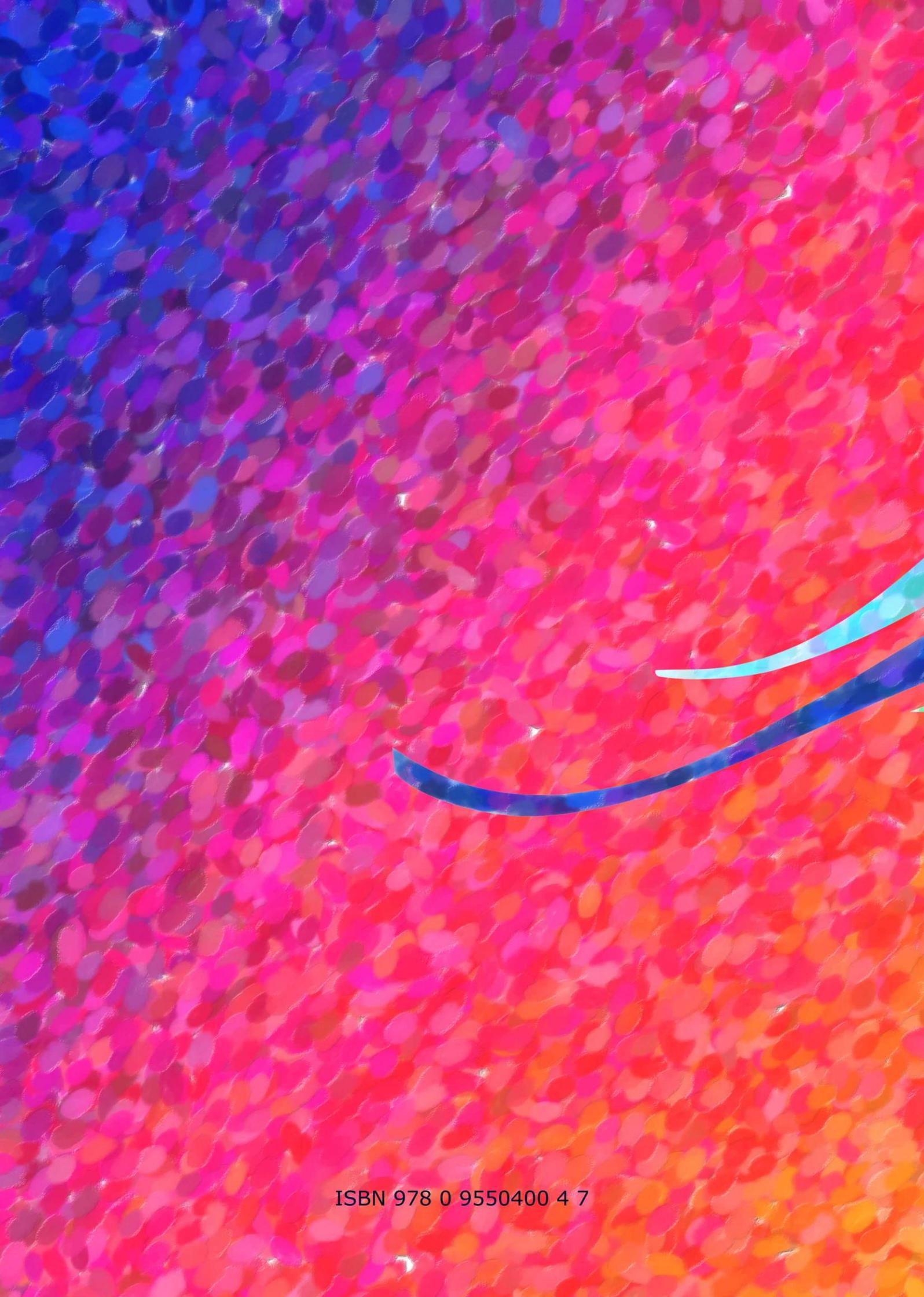
¹ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (SELF-KNOWLEDGE) VIII p. 108; [authorship presumed by H.P. Blavatsky — Boris de Zirkoff.]



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- For an anthology on Consciousness, and the difference between Higher and Lower Conscience, see Appendix I in: C.A. Bartzokas (*Comp. & Ed.*). *Compassion: the Spirit of Truth* (2009); pp. 369-76.
- For the nature of the seven States of Consciousness on the objective, terrestrial plane, *i.e.* globe D, see “Eastern and Kabbalistic Cosmogonies are Identical,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series (after *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I p. 200).
- For the States of Consciousness on the astral prākritic plane, see “Drawing 1 - Forces and States of Consciousness,” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series (after *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, E.S. INSTRUCTION No. IV, Vol. XII pp. 660-67).
- Also consult “Etymology of Consciousness,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series, and “The Law of Karma is Unknown and Unknowable,” in our Second Proposition’s Series.





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