

*Blavatsky on the elucidation
of long-standing enigmas*



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S O MUCH INFORMATION relating to the highest science of Nature has lately been given out to the world through these columns, that it is worthwhile at this stage of the proceedings to call the reader's attention to the way in which new methods of dealing with spiritual truths illuminate the old methods adopted by occult writers of a former date. It will grow more and more apparent to students of occult philosophy as time goes on, that the explanations now in process of development were all foreshadowed by mystic writers of the earlier school. Books that have hitherto irritated impatient readers by their almost hopeless obscurity, will already have grown intelligible to a considerable extent, and many of the riddles they still present to the student will probably be interpreted as time goes on. In this elucidation of old-standing enigmas there is a double interest for all serious investigators of Nature. Firstly, the occult writings of the obscure school gather fresh importance in modern estimation as it is thus demonstrated that their obscurity of style is not — as unsympathetic critics may often have been inclined to think — a mere cover for obscurity of thought; secondly, the recent teachings, of which the Theosophical Society and these pages have been the channel, will be invested with all the more authority in the eyes even of comparatively apathetic recipients as it grows evident that they were familiar long ago to advanced students of the mystic era.

The science, in fact, which is now being given out to the world in clearly intelligible language for the first time, has been in possession of the elect from time immemorial. Never mind, for the moment, why that science has hitherto been jealously hidden from mankind at large. There are plenty of reasons forthcoming in justification of that reticence really, and it may not be unreasonable to suggest that the world at large, by which the elements of occult doctrine are now received as something new and strange, almost too wonderful for belief, should give credit to the exceptionally gifted persons who have fathomed these mysteries and many more besides, for having had some motives for the policy they have pursued, which everybody may not yet be in a position to understand. But this is another branch of the subject: the justification of Nature's most advanced explorers, in regard to the precautions they have hitherto taken in reporting their discoveries, may be remitted to a future period. What we are concerned to show for the present is that, though purposely veiled and expressed in language which ordinary readers were not expected to understand, the science which all who wish to learn may now be taught very freely was long ago recorded in books to which we may now appeal for the retrospective confirmation of the explanations now given.

Anyone who will read Éliphas Lévi's writings after thoroughly assimilating the ideas that have been expounded in our "Fragments,"¹ will find for himself abundant illustrations of the coincidences to which we refer; the obscure language at once breaking out into significance by the light of the clear explanations given under the new method; and Mr. Hargrave Jennings' *Rosicrucians* will in the same way be invested with new significance for readers who take it up with perceptions sharpened by recent study of that science, which, if the new method is persevered with long enough, will hardly any longer deserve to be called "mysticism." But for the purpose of these remarks, their purport may best be illustrated by reference to a passage in a later work which will ultimately be seen, when it comes to be fully understood, to have bridged over the chasm between the old and new methods, viz. *Isis Unveiled*.

If the reader will keep in mind the Hindu ideas of cosmogony, as given in chapter VI, he will better understand the relation between the Biblical antediluvian patriarchs, and that puzzle of commentators — "Ezekiel's wheel." Thus, it may be it remembered:

- 1 That the universe is not a spontaneous creation, but an evolution from pre-existent matter;
- 2 That it is only one of an endless series of universes;
- 3 That eternity is pointed off into grant cycles, in each of which *twelve* transformations of our world occur, following its partial destruction by fire and water, alternately. So that when a new minor period sets in, the earth is so changed, even geologically, as to be practically a new world;
- 4 That of these twelve transformations, the earth after each of the first six is grosser, and everything on it — man included — more material, than after the preceding one: while after each of the remaining six the contrary is true, both earth and man growing more and more refined and spiritual with each terrestrial change;
- 5 That when the apex of the cycle is reached, a gradual dissolution takes place, and every living and objective form is destroyed. But when that point is reached, humanity has become fitted to live subjectively as well as objectively. And not humanity alone, but also animals, plants, and every atom. After a time of rest, say the Buddhists, when a new world becomes self-formed, the astral souls of animals, and of all beings, except such as have reached the highest Nirvāna, will return on earth again to end their cycles of transformations, and become men in their turn.²

Who can have read the recent "Fragments" without being in a position to see that this passage contains a brief *exposé* of the doctrine there elaborated with much greater amplitude. It really contains allusions to a great deal that has not yet been

¹ [This series of articles was started in the October 1881 issue of *The Theosophist*, the second instalment appearing in March 1882, and the third in September of the same year. From various statements in *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* and several of H.P. Blavatsky's own letters, it can be conclusively demonstrated that these three instalments were written by A.O. Hume, even though they exhibit here and there a few characteristics of Blavatsky's style. Later instalments under the same title are by A.P. Sinnett. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

² *Isis Unveiled*, II pp. 455-56

elaborated in the “Fragments”; for the return “to earth” — and to the chain of worlds of which the earth is one, of the astral souls that have not in the preceding *manvantara* attained the highest Nirvana, has to do with the destinies of individualities (as distinguished from personalities) that are not launched on the main stream of evolution with which the recent essays on the Evolution of Man have been concerned. And the “Fragments” have not yet dwelt at any length on the vast phenomenon of *Solar* “manvantaras” and “pralayas” as distinguished from those of the septenary chain of worlds to which our earth belongs. The sun, which is the centre of our system, is the centre of other systems too, and a time comes when all these systems go into *pralaya* together. Therefore the period of activity between two periods of rest which is a *mahā* or great cycle for one world only, is a *minor* cycle for the solar system. This leads to a superficial confusion of language sometimes in occult writing, which, however, embodies no confusion of thought and never need for an instant embarrass a reader who remembers the constant similitudes and resemblances connecting microcosms and macrocosms. Again, the reader of the “Fragments” will be puzzled at the reference in the passage cited above to the *twelve* transformations of the planet. Twelve transformations will not at first seem to fit into the septenary divisions to which students of occultism under the new method have been accustomed. But the explanation simply is that the new method is very frank and outspoken about a good many points on which the old system has been very reserved and mysterious. The seventh form of all things has been regarded by the older school of occult writers as too sacred to be written about. A hundred and one quotations might easily be put together to show how profoundly they were impressed with the septenary idea, and what enormous importance they attributed to the number 7 in all its bearings. These quotations would serve, on the principle we are now pointing out, as foreshadowing the explanation of the “Fragments” on the sevenfold constitution of man, the world, the system of which it is a part and the system of which that is a part again. But just as the seventh principle in man has been passed over silently by some occult writers who have referred to only six, so the twelve transformations are the exoteric equivalent of fourteen.¹ And those transformations again, may be taken to refer either to the cataclysms which intervene between the evolution of the great root-races of earth in the course of one “Round” period, or to the Rounds themselves and their intervening “Obscurations.” Here we come upon the micro-macrocosmic principle again. But we are not concerned at present with the anticipation of future teachings or the repetition of those which have been already given out: merely with the interesting way in which anyone who chooses may go back, either to the relatively obscure expositions of *Isis Unveiled* or the more obscure dissertations of earlier occult works, and trace the identities of the Great Doctrine — which the Theosophical Society, faithful to the promise of its triple programme, is engaged in bringing to light.



¹ Thus, in *esoteric* Buddhism the seven kinds of Wisdom (*Bodhyanga*) are often referred to as six; the seven *qualities* or properties of living bodies also as six; while of the seven states of matter the *esoteric* doctrine says that “strictly speaking there are only *six* states,” since the seventh state is the sum total, the condition or aspect of all the other states. When speaking of the “*six* glories” that “glitter on the incomparable person of Buddha,” the Book of *Kiu-te* explains that only *six* are to be mentioned, as the student (Yu-po-sah) has to bear in mind that the *seventh* glory can by no means “glitter” since “it is the *glittering* itself.” This latter explanation is sufficient to throw light on all.