

# *Emanation and Radiation*



## Emanation versus Evolution

**Aeons,<sup>1</sup> Angels, Emanations, Evolutions, are all one and the same.**

In its metaphysical meaning, [Emanation] is opposed to Evolution, yet one with it. Science teaches that evolution is physiologically a mode of generation in which the germ that develops the foetus pre-exists already in the parent, the development and final form and characteristics of that germ being accomplished in nature; and that in cosmology the process takes place *blindly*, through the correlation of the elements, and their various compounds. Occultism answers that this is only the *apparent* mode, the real process being Emanation, guided by intelligent Forces under an immutable LAW. Therefore, while the Occultists and Theosophists believe thoroughly in the doctrine of Evolution as given out by Kapila and Manu, they are *Emanationists* rather than *Evolutionists*. The doctrine of Emanation was at one time universal. It was taught by the Alexandrian as well as by the Indian philosophers, by the Egyptian, the Chaldean, and Hellenic Hierophants, and also by the Hebrews (in their Kabbala, and even in *Genesis*). For it is only owing to deliberate mistranslation that the Hebrew word *asdt* was translated “angels” from the *Septuagint*, when it means *Emanations*, *Æons*, precisely as with the Gnostics. Indeed, in *Deuteronomy* (xxxiii, 2) the word *asdt* or *ashdt* is translated as “fiery law,” whilst the correct rendering of the passage should be,

. . . from his right hand went (not a *fiery law*, but) *a fire according to law*;

*viz.*, that the fire of one flame is imparted to, and caught up by another like as in a trail of inflammable substance. This is precisely emanation, as shown in *Isis Unveiled*:

In Evolution, as it is now beginning to be understood, there is supposed to be in all matter an impulse to take on a higher form — a supposition clearly expressed by Manu and other Hindu philosophers of the highest antiquity. The philosopher’s tree illustrates it in the case of the zinc solution.<sup>2</sup> The controversy between the followers of this school and the Emanationists may be briefly stated thus: The Evolutionist stops all inquiry at the borders of “the Unknowable”; the Emanationist believes that nothing can be evolved — or, as the word means, unwombed or born — except it has first been involved, thus indicating that life is from a spiritual potency above the whole.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Period of existence — *Liddell & Scott*

<sup>2</sup> Annotation 7 by Boris de Zirkoff from *Isis Unveiled*, I p. 630:

The expression “philosopher’s tree” or *arbor Dianæ* (tree of Diana, or of silver) has been used, both in chemistry and alchemy, to designate the beautiful arborescent growth of silver amalgam, formed when mercury is placed in a silver-nitrate solution.

<sup>3</sup> *Theosophical Glossary*; [on emanations & quoting *Isis Unveiled*, I p. xxxii]

**Aeons are neither worlds, nor ages, nor angels. They are the fabricators of the visible world, divine emanations proceeding from the One.**

I have said that I should prove from the testimony of the Apostle Paul, that the Jews were not consistent in confounding *angels* properly so called with Gods. And this appears to me to be evident in the first place from the following passage in *Hebrews* ii, 9, *πιστει νοομεν καταρτισθαι τους αιωνας ρηματι θεου, εις το μη εκ φαινομενων τα βλεπομενα γεγονεναι*. This in the English version is erroneously rendered;

Through faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.

I say this is erroneously translated, because in the first place *the worlds* is evidently a forced interpretation of *αιωνας*; and even admitting it is not, leaves the passage very ambiguous, from the uncertainty to what worlds Paul alludes. If we adopt *ages*, which is the general sense of the word in the New Testament, we shall indeed avoid a forced and ambiguous interpretation, but we shall render the meaning, of the Apostle trifling in the extreme. For as he has elsewhere said, “that all things were framed by the word of God,” what particular faith does it require to believe, that by the same word he framed the ages?

In the second place, from the definition of faith, given in the first verse of this chapter, that it is “the evidence of *things not seen*,” it is clear, that Paul is speaking in this passage of something *invisible*. Since then *αιωνας* is neither *worlds* nor *ages*, what shall we say it is? I answer, the *æones* of the Valentinians. And agreeably to this, the whole passage should be translated as follows:

By faith we understand, that the *æones* were framed by the word of God, in order that things which are seen, might be generated from such as do not appear (*i.e.* from things *invisible*).

Everyone who is much conversant with Greek authors, must certainly be convinced that *εις* means *in order that*; and Bishop Pearson translates as I have done the latter part of this verse.

Now we learn from the second book of Irenæus against the heretics, that according to the Valentinians, all created things are the images of the *æones*, resident in the *plērōma*, or *fullness* of deity. And does it not clearly follow from the above version, that according to Paul too, the *æones* are the exemplars of visible or created things? To which we may add, that this sense of the passage clearly accords with the assertion that “faith is the evidence of things not seen.” For here the things which do not appear are the *æones*; these, according to the Valentinians, subsisting in deity. So that from our version, Paul might say with great propriety, that “we understand by faith, that the *æones* were framed by the word of God, in order that things which are seen, might be generated from such as do not appear,” for this naturally follows from his definition of faith.

I farther add, that among these *æones* of the Valentinians were *νοϋς*, *βυθος*, *σιγη*, *αληθεια*, *σοφια*, *i.e.*, *intellect*, *a profundity*, *silence*, *truth*, and *wisdom*, which as Gale well observes in his notes on *Iamblichus de Mysteriis*, etc. prove their dogmas to be of

Chaldaic origin. For these words perpetually occur in the fragments of the Chaldaic oracles. And the middle of the Chaldean intelligible triad is denominated *αιων* (*æon*),<sup>1</sup> i.e., *eternity*, and is also perfectly conformable to the theology of Plato, as is very satisfactorily shown by Proclus in the third book of the following work. According to the Chaldeans therefore, the *æones* are Gods; and considered as the exemplars of the visible universe, they are analogous to the ideas of Plato, which also are Gods, as is evident from the *Parmenides* of that philosopher.<sup>2</sup> According to Paul too, as the *æones* are the fabricators of the visible world, they must be beings of a much higher order than angels, and consequently must be Gods; productive power being one of the great characteristics of a divine nature.<sup>3</sup>

### But what say the Occult Sciences to this, and what do they add?

They say that what is called collectively *Monads* by Leibnitz — roughly viewed, and leaving every subdivision out of calculation, for the present — may be separated into three distinct Hosts,<sup>4</sup> which, counted from the highest planes, are, firstly, “gods,” or conscious, spiritual *Egos*; the intelligent architects, who work after the plan in the *Divine Mind*. Then come the Elementals, or *Monads*, who form collectively and unconsciously the grand Universal Mirrors of everything connected with their respective realms. Lastly, the atoms, or material molecules, which are informed in their turn by their *apperceptive* monads, just as every cell in a human body is so informed.<sup>5</sup> There are shoals of such *informed* atoms which, in their turn, inform the molecules; an infinitude of monads, or Elementals proper, and countless spiritual Forces — *Monadless*, for they are pure incorporealities, except under certain laws, when they assume a form — not *necessarily human*. Whence the substance that clothes them — the apparent organism they evolve around their centres? The *Formless* (“*Arūpa*”) Radiations, existing in the harmony of Universal Will, and being what we term the collective or the aggregate of Cosmic Will, and being what we term the collective or the aggregate of Cosmic Will on the plane of the subjective Universe, unite together an infinitude of monads — each the mirror of its own Universe — and thus individualize for the time being an independent mind, omniscient and universal; and by the same process of magnetic aggregation they create for themselves objective, visible bodies, out of the interstellar atoms. For atoms and Monads, associated or dissociated, simple or complex, are, from the moment of the first differentiation, but the *principles*, corporeal, psychic and Spiritual, of the “Gods,” — themselves the Radiations of primordial nature. Thus, to the eye of the Seer, the higher Planetary Powers appear under two aspects: the subjective — as *influences*, and the objective — as mys-

<sup>1</sup> Proclus begins the sixth book of the following work with observing that he has celebrated in the preceding book the hebdomadic *æon* of the intellectual Gods. The *æones* therefore, though the cause of them exists in the intelligible, properly belong to the intellectual order; and the Demiurgus or artificer of the universe subsists at the extremity of that order. But the demiurgus according to Orpheus, prior to the fabrication of the world absorbed in himself Phanēs the exemplar of the universe. Hence he became full of ideas of which the forms in the sensible universe are the images. And as all intellectual natures are in each, it is evident that *things which are seen were generated from the invisible æones*, conformably to the assertion of Paul.

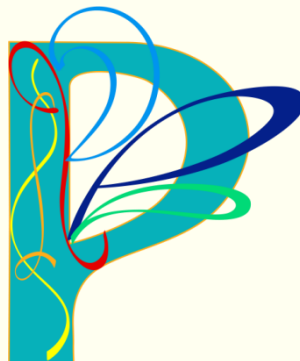
<sup>2</sup> I refer the reader who is desirous of being fully convinced of this to the notes accompanying my translation of that dialogue, in Vol. 3 of my Plato. [TTS vol. XL]

<sup>3</sup> Taylor T (Tr. & Annot.). *Proclus' Theology of Plato*. (Vol. VIII of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 1995; [Taylor's Introduction to *The Theology of Plato*, pp. 14-16]

<sup>4</sup> These three “rough divisions” correspond to *spirit*, *mind* (or soul), and *body*, in the human constitution.

<sup>5</sup> See *infra*, pp. 672-74.

tic FORMS, which, under Karmic law, become a *Presence*, Spirit and Matter being One, as repeatedly stated. Spirit is matter *on the seventh plane*; matter is Spirit — on the lowest point of its cyclic activity; and both — are MĀYĀ.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 632-33

## Discussion

### Emanation and Radiation differ

From the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society*. Sixth Meeting, held 14<sup>th</sup> February 1889. Presiding Chairman, W. Kingsland.<sup>1</sup>

- Scott-Elliot** You mentioned radiation and emanation. One has never any distinct idea. What is the difference — the difference between radiation and emanation?
- Blavatsky** Enormous. Radiation is the unconscious action, so to say, of something from which something radiates, but emanation is — well, it supposes already something that emanates out itself consciously. Now radiation can come from the Absolute; emanation cannot. Nothing can emanate from it.
- Scott-Elliot** Radiation comes from the Absolute.
- Blavatsky** Yes, the first radiation, when the Logos radiates. The first ray, that of which it is said in the Bible: “Let there be Light, and Light was.” The first divine light, this is radiation. It radiates; but emanating means emanating one from the other — how shall I say — from one being to another being, that is the difference. I make this difference because I do not know how to translate it in any other way. We have a word for it in the occult language, but it is impossible to translate it into English.
- Scott-Elliot** Then there is a closer connection between that which has emanated and that from which it emanates than there is between that which radiates and that from which the radiation takes place.
- Blavatsky** No. You see, the radiation — if it radiates, it is sure, sooner or later, to be withdrawn again. Emanation emanates and may run into other emanations and it is separated; that is a different thing. It may be, of course, that at the end of the cycle of times it will also be withdrawn into the one Absolute. But meanwhile, during the cycle of changes and the cycle of change of forms, this will be an emanation. And it is in my mind the same as evolution — of course, in another sense, but it is exactly the same thing. One thing evolves from the other and one thing emanates from the other, with the change of forms and substance and so on.



<sup>1</sup> First published in two parts by (1) The Theosophical Publishing House, London and New York, 1890 and 1891, respectively. Republished by (2) The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1923. Subsequently republished by Boris De Zirkoff (*Comp.*) *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. X. Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1964 and 1974. The latter includes a historical review of the *Transactions*, etc., pp. 298-300. Various other editions and reprints, conventional and digital, exist today. While all issues were apparently abridged and anonymised, a presumably unabridged copy of the original minutes from the estate of the late B.P. Wadia has been made available for publication to the Theosophical Society, Point Loma-Covina, in 1992. A transcription of that MS. was subsequently published in: (4) Gomes M. (*Transc. & Annot.*). *H.P. Blavatsky The Secret Doctrine Commentaries*. I.S.I.S. Foundation, Hague, 2010, from where this passage was excerpted (pp. 162-63). Typography by ED. PHIL.

## Suggested reading for students.



### More commonly confusing words.

- ADULTERY, LUST, MALICE
- ADYTUM AND ASYLUM
- AETHER AND ETHER
- AGNOSTICISM, ATHEISM, MONISM
- AION, ETERNITY, DURATION
- APPREHENSION AND COMPREHENSION
- ASTRAL LIGHT IS A TERM VERY LITTLE UNDERSTOOD
- AURA AND MAGNETISM
- BUDDHA AND PRINCE SIDDHARTHA BUDDHA
- BUDHISM IS INNER WISDOM
- CELIBACY, CONTINENCE, MONASTICISM
- CHEMIST AND ALCHEMIST
- CHILIASTS, MILLENNIUMISTS, MILLENARIANS
- DARKNESS IS INNER LIGHT
- DEVOTION, WORSHIP, LOYALTY
- EMBLEM AND SYMBOL
- GRAIKOS, HELLENE, HELLAS
- HIGHER SELF AND HIGHER EGO
- IMAGINATION AND IMITATION
- JIVA AND JIVATMAN
- JNANA AND YAJNA
- KAMIC VERSUS MANASIC ACTION
- KARMA AND KRIYA
- KARMA, NEMESIS, ADRASTEIA, THEMIS
- KOSMOS AND COSMOS
- KRONOS AND CHRONOS

**CONFUSING WORDS SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- LAUGHTER, SMILES, TEARS
- LIGHT AND HEAT
- LUST, JEALOUSY, PHYSICAL LOVE
- MAGNETISM, MESMERISM, HYPNOTISM
- MATERIALISM, SPIRITUALISM, MONISM
- MUZIRIS, MNIZURIN, MNOUZIRIS
- NIRVANA AND PARINIRVANA
- PANTACLE AND PENTACLE
- RAJA AND RISHI
- REMEMBRANCE, RECOLLECTION, REMINISCENCE
- SKANDHA, SHLOKA, STANZA, SUTRA
- SPIRIT, SPIRITS, SPIRITUALISM
- SPIRITUALISM IS A PHILOSOPHY OF YESTERDAY
- SVABHAVA AND SVAYAMBHU
- TELETE, MYESIS, EPOPTeia
- THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL OCCULTISM
- THEOSOPHIST AND THEOSOPHER
- TRANSMIGRATION, REINCARNATION, GILGULIM
- TRIRATNA AND TRISHARANA
- TRUE AND FALSE PERSONALITY
- UNITY AND DUALITY
- VACH IS NOT MERE SPEECH
- VEDANTA, BUDDHISM, THEOSOPHY
- VRIL AND BOVRIL
- WILL AND DESIRE
- YOGIS AND MAHATMAS

