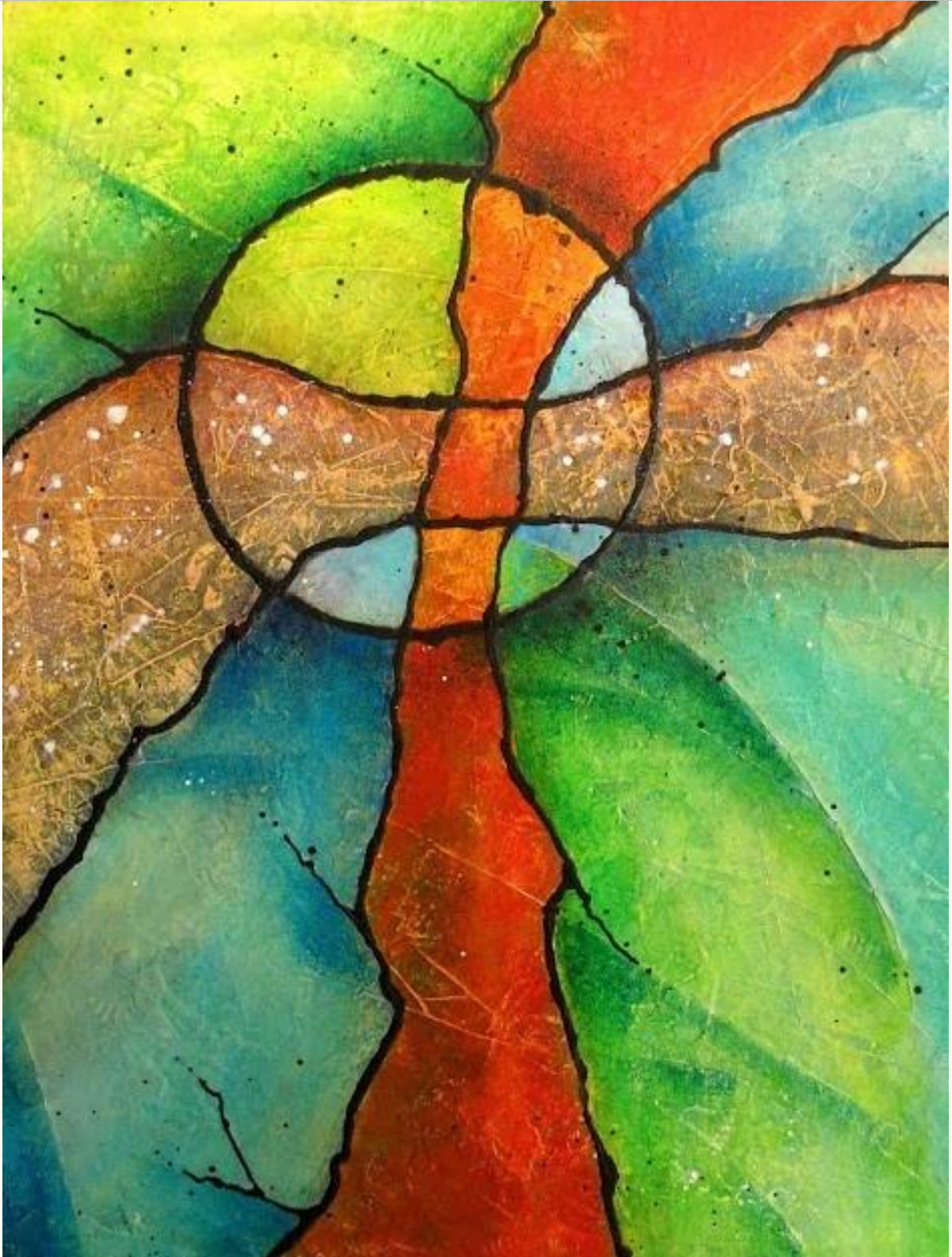


Madame Blavatsky on the Vishishtadvaita Philosophy



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Quick definitions of Parabrahman, Ishvara, and Vishishtadvaitism.

Compiled by the Series Editor.

**Parabrahman (Absoluteness) is the One and Only Reality,
an unthinkable and unspeakable state of Ultimate Subjectivity.**

Parabrahman is Absolute Consciousness, containing the cogniser, the thing cognised, and the cognition. We give names to things according to the appearances they assume for ourselves. We call Absolute consciousness “unconsciousness,” because it seems to us that it must necessarily be so, just as we call the Absolute “Darkness,” because to our finite understanding it appears quite impenetrable, yet we recognise fully that our perception of such things does not do them justice. We involuntarily distinguish in our minds between unconscious absolute consciousness, and unconsciousness, by secretly endowing the former with some indefinite quality that corresponds, on a higher plane than our thoughts can reach, with what we know as consciousness in ourselves. But this is not any kind of consciousness that we can manage to distinguish from what appears to us as unconsciousness.¹

Parabrahman is Absolute Darkness, self-existent, uncaused, free from conditions, limits, or restrictions. The essence of Darkness being absolute Light, Darkness is taken as the appropriate allegorical representation of the condition of the universe during Pralaya, or the term of absolute rest or non-being, as it appears to our finite minds.² According to the Rosicrucian tenets,

“Light and Darkness are identical in themselves, being only divisible in the human mind”;

and according to Robert Fludd,

“Darkness adopted illumination in order to make itself visible.”

According to the tenets of Eastern Occultism, Darkness is the one true actuality, the basis and the root of Light, without which the latter could never manifest itself, nor even exist. Light is Matter, and Darkness pure Spirit. Darkness, in its radical, metaphysical basis, is subjective and Absolute Light; while the latter in all its seeming effulgence and glory, is merely a mass of shadows, as it can never be eternal; it is just an illusion (māyā).³

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 56

² *ibid.*, I p. 69

³ Cf. *ibid.*, I p. 70

Ishvara is Conscious Universal Mind (Second Logos),¹ not the personal God and Master.

Īśvara is not the personal God and Master, whom the believers in such God suppose to be the creator of the universe, and outside the universe. Our god is Brahmā, the eternal and universal essence, which pervades everything and everywhere. He is the divine essence overshadowing man and his moral guide. Īśvara corresponds to Adonai, the Lord of the Kabbalists (the Lord within man).²

Those who worship Īśvara, or some other deity, are too apt to attribute every psychological effect during the hours of religious meditation, whereas in most cases such effects are merely psycho-physiological.³

Īśvara is not mentioned in the Upanishads as a personal noun because the Upanishads do not teach belief in a personal God, endowed with humanly conceived attributes.⁴

Īśvara, whether as a personal god, or as an intelligent independent principle, every Buddhist will reject; while some Vedāntins would define him as Parabrahman plus māyā only — a conception valid during the reign of māyā, but not otherwise. That which remains during pralaya is the eternal potentiality of every condition of consciousness (prajñā) contained in that plane or field of consciousness, which the Advaita calls *Chidākāśa* and *Chinmatra* (abstract consciousness) and which, being absolute, is Perfect Unconsciousness — as a *true* Vedāntin would say.⁵

In Esoteric Philosophy Īśvara stands for the Second Logos, and Nārāyana for the First (unmanifested) Logos.⁶



¹ [Third Logos is Conscious, *Individualised* Mind. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “THE BRAHMACHARI BAWA”) II, p. 160. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Cf. *ibid.*, (THE BRIGHT SPOT OF LIGHT) III p. 328. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ [Cf. *ibid.*, (THE GOD-IDEA) VI p. 10. — ED. PHIL.]

⁵ [Cf. *ibid.*, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI p. 476. — ED. PHIL.]

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 313. Students to consult is “Narayana First or Third Logos?” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Vishishtadvaita Philosophy in a nutshell.

1 The Vishishtadvaitis are a sect of Vedantins; refusing to accept dualism, they place willy-nilly the origin of evil and good in Parabrahman.¹

The *Vedānta* philosophy finds nothing of the kind, nor does it teach of a god (least of all with a capital G). But there is a sect of Vedāntins, the *Viśishtādvaita* who, refusing to accept *dualism*, attribute the origin of all evil as of all good in Parabrahman. But Parabrahman is *not* “God” in the Christian sense, at any rate in the Vedānta philosophy.²

2 They believe that the sun-souls attract lost earth-souls, and direct them to the path that leads to Nirvana.

This is a doctrine of the *Viśishtādvaita* sect of the Vedāntins. The *Jīva* (spiritual life principle, the living *Monad*) of one who attained Moksha or Nirvana, “breaks through the Brahmarandhra and goes to *Suryamandala* (the region of the sun) through the Solar rays. Then it goes, through a dark spot in the Sun, to Paramapada,” to which it is directed by the Supreme Wisdom acquired by *Yoga*, and helped thereinto by the *Devas* (gods) called Archis, the “Flames,” or Fiery Angels, answering to the Christian archangels.³

3 They refer to Advaitis as Buddhists in disguise.

So true is the claim that there is no difference whatever between esoteric Buddhism and those Vedāntins who understand the correct meaning of Śamkarāchārya’s teachings (the advanced Advaitis) that the latter are spoken of throughout southern India as *Prachchhanna Bauddhas* — or “Buddhists in disguise” especially by the *Viśishtādvaitis*.⁴

4 Refined Vishishtadvaitism is Ancient Magianism.

Colonel Olcott would probably answer that Professor Draper was right with regard to the many phases which the great religion of Persia — if we have to call it thus — had passed. But Draper mentions by name only Monotheism, Dualism, Magianism (a kind of refined Viśishtādvaitism) and Fire or element worship, whereas he might

¹ [Consult “The Origin of Good and Evil” and “The Original Sin is a Jewish Invention,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “BUDDHIST DOCTRINE OF THE WESTERN HEAVEN”) IX pp. 136-37. [Responding to Rev. Joseph Edkins’ statement that the Vedānta philosophy finds the origin of transmigrating and other evils in God, who is the cause of virtue and vice.]

³ Cf. *ibid.*, (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) IX p. 63. [In *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 132, H.P. Blavatsky quotes at greater length from the *Viśishtādvaita Catechism* of Pandit N. Bhāshyāchārya, F.T.S. It is apparently a more complete text of the quotation as given in the above editorial comment, and runs thus:

“The Jīva (Soul) goes with Sūkshma Śarīra from the heart of the body to the Brahmarandhra in the crown of the head, traversing Sushumnā, a nerve connecting the heart with the Brahmarandhra. The Jīva breaks through the Brahmarandhra and goes to the region of the Sun (*Suryamandala*) through the solar Rays. Then it goes, through a dark spot in the Sun, to Paramapada. The Jīva is directed on its way by the Supreme Wisdom acquired by Yoga. The Jīva thus proceeds to Paramapada by the aid of Athi-vahikas (bearers in transit), known by the names of Archi-Ahas . . . Ādityas, Prajāpati, etc. The Archis here mentioned are certain pure Souls, etc., etc.”

Madame Blavatsky defines in a footnote the Sūkshma-śarīra as being the “‘dream-like’ illusive body, with which are clothed the inferior Dhyanis of the celestial Hierarchy.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, (PARABRAHM, DEFINED BY VEDĀNTINS) IV p. 451

have [528] enumerated the gradual changes by the dozen. Moreover, he begins his enumeration at the wrong end. If Monotheism has ever been the religion of the Parsis at any time, it is so now, not then, namely in the Zoroaster period.¹

C. O.



¹ Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ZOROASTRIANISM AND OCCULT PHILOSOPHY) IV pp. 527-28

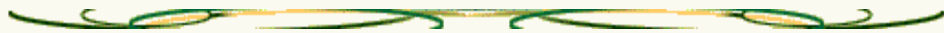
Madame Blavatsky comments on the non-dualistic philosophy of Vishishtadvaita.

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, No. 8, May 1883, pp. 196-97.

Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (VISHISHTADVAITA PHILOSOPHY) IV pp. 422-26.

For the last three and odd years that your Journal has been in existence, there has never been any contribution presenting consistently the philosophy of the Viśishtādvaita. Originated by Sri Rāmānujachārya, it stands between the two extreme philosophies, respectively known as the Advaita and the Dvaita; and accepts all those passages in the *Vedas* which are admitted by either in support of its own views. There are many points, however, in the subjoined dialogue that both a Dvaitī and an Advaitī would call into question. The authors of the dialogue promise to answer the objections of the devotees of either sect. In the case of such emergency, the readers of the Magazine and our Brothers in Theosophy, of the Madras Presidency, are referred to Srīman S. Parthasarathy Iyengar, F.T.S., residing in Triplicane, Madras.

A. GOVINDA CUARLU, F.T.S.



[Only those questions and answers to which H.P. Blavatsky appended footnotes are shown here, and these are highlighted in RGB 253-255-194. — ED. PHIL.]

What is Moksha? Enjoyment of *Brahmā* (*Brahmā*, *Parabrahma*, *Paramātmā*, *Īśvara*, *Bhagavanta*, denote the same principle) after dis severance or disen-thralment from all material connection.

What is the nature of *Īśvara*? It has no bad but only good qualities, it is everlasting and universal wisdom; omnipotent, having truth as its principle and final purpose. It is the universal Master, omnipresent, having for its body *chetana* (animate) and *achetana* (or inanimate) nature; and it is quite distinct from *Jīva*.

If “*Brahmā*, *Parabrahma*, *Paramātmā*, *Īśvara*, *Bhagavanta* denote the same principle,” and are all immutable, uncreated, indestructible, omnipotent, omnipresent; if again it has “truth as its principle and final purpose,” and if at the same time it “has no bad but only good qualities,” we beg to humbly enquire the origin and the existence of evil in that all-pervading and all-powerful goodness, according, to the Viśishtādvaita Philosophy.



What is the nature of *Jīva*? *Jīva* partakes of the nature of *Brahmā* in wisdom; is subservient to *Brahmā* and is an indivisible (spiritual) particle (monad); can neither be created nor destroyed; *per se* is changeless and has no form; and yet distinct from *Īśvara*.

The *monad* or “*Jīva*”¹ being “distinct from *Īśvara*” and yet “changeless *per se*, uncreated and indestructible,” it must be forcibly admitted, in such a case, that there are, not only two but numberless distinct entities in our universe, that are infinite, uncreated, indestructible and immutable? If neither has created the other, then they are, to say the least, on a par, and both being infinite, we have thus two Infinites *plus* numberless fractions? The idea, if we understand it rightly, seems to us still less philosophical than that of the God of the Jews and Christians who, infinite and *omnipresent*, passes eternities in *creating*, out of himself, souls which, though created, become immortal, *i.e.*, eternal and, having to be present somewhere, *must* either crowd off the Omnipresent Presence or become one with it, *i.e.*, lose their individuality like a lesser absorbed by a larger flame. Again, if *Jīva* “partakes of the nature of *Brahmā* in wisdom” and is also eternal, indestructible and immutable like the latter, then in what respect is it “distinct” from *Brahmā*?

Are *Jīva*, *Īśvara*, *Māyā* real existences (truth or realities)? All the three are true.

This answer is incomplete, hence unsatisfactory. We would like to know in what sense is each of these three understood to have real existence?

Parabrahma has *Jīva* for his body; he has *Prakriti* for his body; *Chit* and *Achit* forming the body to the indweller, *Īśvara*, as the *primum mobile*.

And if for “*Īśvara*” we say the “One Life,” of the Buddhists, it will come to just the same thing. The “One Life” or “Parabrahma” is the *primum mobile* of every atom and is non-existent apart from it.

Take away the *chit* and *achit*, the *gunas*, *etc.*, and *Īśvara* will be nowhere.

What is *Karma*? *Īśvara*’s ordination or will.

In such case the Viśishtādvaita philosophy either teaches that man is irresponsible and that a devotee of that sect can no more avert or change his fate than the Christian Predestinarian, or that he can do so by praying and trying to propitiate *Īśvara*? In the first case *Īśvara* becomes an unjust tyrant, in the second — a fickle deity capable of being entreated and of changing his mind.

What does *Īśvara* ordain? “Thou be’st happy,” “thou be’st unhappy,” and so on.

Why does *Īśvara* so will? On account of the good and bad acts of *Jīva*:

But since *Karma* is “*Īśvara*’s ordination or will,” how can *Jīva* be made responsible for its acts? *Īśvara* creating or willing the *Karma* of each man, and then punishing him for its badness, reminds us of the Lord God of *Israel* who creates man ignorant, allowing not a hair of his head to fall without his will, and then when man sins through ignorance and the temptation of God’s creature — the Serpent, he is eternally damned for it. We suspect the Viśishtādvaita philosophy of being as full of incom-

¹ [Consult “*Jīva* and *Jivātman*,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

prehensible mysteries which *Īśvara* “has not so ordained” that they should be questioned — as missionary Christianity itself. Questions and answers from Nos. 24 to 27 are entirely incomprehensible to our limited conceptions. First of all we are told that the conditional existence of *Jīva* is “through its eternal companionship with *Achit*,” a state due to *Karma*, i.e. *Īśvara*’s “ordination or will”; and yet further on it is said “*Īśvara* so wills on account of the good and bad acts of *Jīva*.” These two propositions seem to us to be entirely irreconcilable. What “good or bad acts” *Jīva* had to do, and in what state of existence it was before *Īśvara* ordained or willed it into its conditional existence, and whether even those acts were not due to *Īśvara*’s “ordination,” are questions still clouded with a perfect mystery. We hope, however, that our Brother, the compiler of the above Catechism, will clear our doubts upon these delicate points.

Since *Jīva* is subservient to *Īśvara* and *Jīva* is able only to do that which he is ordered to do, how can *Īśvara* punish him? And how does *Īśvara* point out, by means of *Śāstras* (Laws or Institutes) what is good and what bad, to subordinate *Jīva*? *Īśvara* gives to *Jīva* organs (body), etc., free will, and capability of knowledge, and a code explaining what must be avoided. *Jīva* is dependent, but has still enough independence given him to execute the work entrusted into his hands. *Īśvara* deals out reward or punishment accordingly as *Jīva* uses the functions he is endowed with, in conformity with *Śāstras* or not. (Consider the consequences of the use or abuse of power with which the king invests his premier.)

Precisely as in the Christian Catechism. Hence the latter as much as the former, to the strictly philosophical mind, are — unphilosophical and illogical. For either man is endowed with free will and then his *Karma* is his own creation and not at all the “ordination or will” of *Īśvara*, or he is irresponsible and both reward and punishment become useless and unjust.

Īśvara being omnipresent, what is the meaning of *Moksha*-attainment in other *Lokas*? As soon as full-wisdom (*Brahmājñāna*) is obtained, i.e., the state of complete illumination, *Jīva* shakes off his *Sthūla śarīra*; being blessed by *Īśvara* dwelling in his heart, it goes in *Sūkshma śarīra* to *Aprākṛita Loka* (non-material world); and dropping *Sūkshma śarīra* becomes *Mukta* (emancipated).

“Emancipated” then from *Īśvara* also? Since “*Īśvara* is dwelling in his heart and that the heart forms a portion of *Sthūla śarīra* which he has to shake off before he becomes emancipated and enters into the non-material world, there is every reason to believe that *Īśvara* is ‘shaken off’ at the same time as *Sūkshma śarīra*, and with all the rest?” A true *Vedāntin* would say that *Īśvara* or *Brahmā* is “*Parabrahman* plus *MĀYĀ* (or ignorance).”



How do you know all this is true? From *Śāstras*.

What is *Śāstra*? The Sacred Scriptures called “*Veda*” which is *Anadi* (had no beginning), *Apurusheya* (non-human), *Nitya* (unaffected by past, present, or future), and *Nirdosha* (pure).

That is just what is denied by most of the Pandits who are not *Viśishtādvaitins*. The *Śāstras* can be regarded identical with the *Vedas* as little as the many hundreds of conflicting commentaries upon the Gospels by the so-called Christian Fathers are identical with the Christianity of Christ. The *Śāstras* are the repository of the many individual opinions of fallible men. And the fact alone that they do conflict in their endless and various interpretations with each other, prove that they must also conflict with the subject they comment upon. Hence — that they are distinct from, and not in the least identical with, the *Vedas*.

For various reasons we are unable to print, along with the above translation, its Sanskrit text. It may be reserved for future use and portions of it published as occasion may require, to answer the possible objections that may be brought forward by our *Advaitī* and *Dvaitī* brothers. In our humble opinion, since there cannot be but one and only Truth, the thousand and one interpretations by different sectarians of the same and one thing are simply the outward and evanescent appearances or aspects of that which is too dazzling (or perchance too dark and too profound) for mortal eye to correctly distinguish and describe. As already remarked by us in *Isis Unveiled*¹ the multitudinous creeds and faiths have all been derived from one primitive source. TRUTH standing as the one white ray of light, it is decomposed by the prism into various and eye-deceiving colours of the solar spectrum. Combined, the aggregate of all those endless human interpretations shoots and offshoots — represent one eternal truth; separate, they are but shades of human error and the signs of human blindness and imperfection. However, all such publications are useful, since they fill the arena of discussion with new combatants and that truth can be reached at but after the explosion of innumerable errors. We invite our *Dvaitī* and *Advaitī* Brothers to answer.



¹ Vol. II, p. 639

Supplementary annotations to the Vishishtadvaita.

First published in *The Theosophist* Vol. IV, No. 9, June 1883, p. 228. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “VISHISHTADVAITA PHILOSOPHY”) IV pp. 535-37.

[The translator of the Catechism on the Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy writes that he is not responsible for the opinions expressed in the original Sanskrit text. He briefly answers the objections raised from a hurried explanation given him by the authors of the text. The paragraphs on which H.P. Blavatsky comments are reprinted:]

Parabrahm being an All-pervading principle, itself being the All, is still considered as a separate substance from *Jīvan*, although the former contains the latter, in the same manner that we talk of a part as separate from the whole of which it is a part.

We cannot conceive of an “*All-pervading whole*,” being separate from its part. The idea put forward by our learned brother is of course the theistic, but not very philosophical doctrine which teaches the relation of man to God as that between father and child.

A part is therefore of the same nature as the whole, yet its distinguishing qualification is the fact of its being a part, *viz.*, the individualization, and dependence on the whole. In this way is *Jīvan* considered in relation with, and distinct from, *Parabrahm*.

Would it not be better and far more philosophical to resort, in such a case, to the oft-repeated simile of the ocean? If we suppose, for a moment, infinity to be a vast and an *all-pervading* ocean, we can conceive of the individual existence of each of the drops composing that sea. All are alike *in essence*, but their *manifestations* may and do differ according to their surrounding conditions. In the same manner, all human *individualities*, although alike in nature yet differ in *manifestations* according to the vehicles and the conditions through which they have to act. The *Yogi*, therefore, so far elevates his other principles, or let us call them vehicles, if preferred, as to facilitate the manifestation of his individuality in its original nature.

My own inference is that Advaita and this coincide, the former considering that *Jīvan* is *Parabrahm*, modified by the latter into “*Jīvan is a part only of Parabrahm*.”

We believe not. A true esoteric Vedāntic Advaitī would say: *Aham eva Parambrahm*, “I am also Parabrahm.” In its external manifestation *Jīvan* may be regarded as a distinct individuality — the latter a *māyā*; in its essence or nature *Jīvan* is — *Parabrahm*, the consciousness of the paramātmā manifesting through, and existing solely in, the aggregated *Jīvans* viewed collectively. A creek in the shore of the ocean is one, so long only as the land it stretches upon is not redeemed. Forced back, its water becomes the ocean.

Considered in this manner, there is one Infinite, made up of numberless infinities.

We are at a loss to know what our learned brother can mean by Jīvan being “dependent” on the whole, unless “inseparable from” is meant. If the whole is “*all-pervading*” and “infinite,” all its parts must be indivisibly linked together. The idea of separation involves the possibility of a vacuum — a portion of space or time where the *whole* is supposed to be absent from some given point. Hence the absurdity of speaking of the parts of one Infinite being also infinite. To illustrate geometrically, suppose there is an infinite line, which has neither a beginning nor end. Its parts cannot also be infinite, for when you say “parts,” they must have a beginning and end; or, in other words, they must be finite, either at one or the other end, which is as evident a fallacy as to speak of an *immortal* soul which was at some time *created* — thus implying a beginning to that which, if the word has any sense, is eternal.

Jīva, *Īśvara* and *Māyā* are considered to be *real*, all the three in this light, *i.e.*, as long as anything has existence, it is real or true, although that existence may not last forever. The Advaitī says that only that which is immutable is true, and all things temporary and liable to change are illusionary; whereas the *Viśishtadvaitī* says that as immutability is real in the eternity, so mutability is also real for the time being, and so long as there is no change. My own inference is that all the difficulty here lies in the words, but that the idea is one.

We would like our learned brother to point out to us one thing in the whole universe, from the sun and stars, down to man and the smallest atom, that is not undergoing some change, whether visible or invisible, at every smallest fraction of time. Is it “man’s *personal* individuality” — that which the Buddhists call *attavāda* — “*delusion of self*” — that is a *reality* elsewhere than in our own *Māyā*?

Jīvan is said to be dependent and independent, in the same sense that a minister, a dewan, is independent in exercising authority, and dependent on his king for the bestowal of that authority.¹

The comparison of the king and the dewan² is meaningless with reference to the subject illustrated. The power of conferring authority is a finite attribute, inapplicable to infinity. A better explanation of the contradiction is therefore necessary, and we trust our brother will get it from his inspirers.

A subtle distinction is made between *Īśvara*’s will and *Jīva*’s Karma; *Īśvara*’s will or Karma being the ever-active state of the whole — the *Parabrahm*.

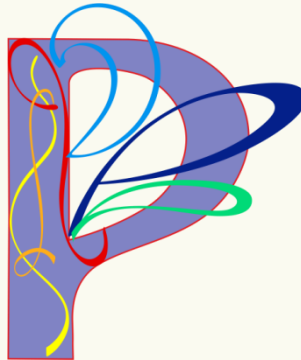
This is indeed a “*subtle* distinction.” How can *Parabrahm* be “the ever-active state of the whole” when the only attribute — an absolutely negative one — of *Parabrahm* is passivity, unconsciousness, *etc.*? And how can *Parabrahm* the *one* principle, the universal Essence or the TOTALITY, be only a “state of the WHOLE” when it is itself the WHOLE, and when even the Vedāntic Dvāitīs assert that *Īśvara* is but a mere manifestation of, and secondary to, *Parabrahm* which is the “all-Pervading” TOTAL?

¹ [Cf. Nārada Bhakti Sutra No. 32. Full text in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [A chief treasury official, finance minister, or prime minister in some Indian states.]

I perfectly agree with the Editor in saying that truth stands as the one white ray of light decomposed into several colours in the spectrum; and I add that the one white ray is true as well as the decomposed colours. This is the Theosophical view.

Not quite so, we are afraid. The eye-deceiving colours of the spectrum being dismembered and only illusionary reflections of the *one* and *only* ray — *cannot be true*. At best they rest upon a substratum of truth for which one has often to dig too deeply to ever hope to reach it without the help of the esoteric key.



Madame Blavatsky amplifies the distinction between Impersonal and Personal God.

Key Metaphysical Concepts by the Series Editor.

After death the old personality fades out, and its most spiritual and noblest aspirations follow Buddhi and the Seventh Principle into Devachan (Swarga), before the new personality emerges in due course out of Devachan and reincarnates.

Yet the spiritual individuality (Ātma-Buddhi) is preserved to the end of the Great Cycle (Mahā-Manvantara) when the Immortal Ego, freed from the trammels and tyranny of the personal ego (egotism), enters Parinirvāna* and retires into the darkness and majestic solitude of Parabrahman “absorbed in the absolute self-unconsciousness of physical Self, plunged in the depths of true Being, which is no being but eternal, universal Life.”¹

* N.B. Man’s liberated spirit, though impersonal (noetic), preserves its distinct individuality in Parinirvāna, owing to the accumulation in it of the aggregates (skandhas) that have survived after each death, from the highest faculties of Manas.



First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VII (76), January 1886, pp. 279-80. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (“ISIS UNVEILED” AND THE VISISHTADVAITA) VII pp. 50-52.

[In a letter dated June 3rd, 1886, written by H.P. Blavatsky to Col. H.S. Olcott from Elberfeld, Germany,² she explains to him the changed attitude of Bawaji.³ She writes:

And now since he came here he said to my face before all the Gebhard family that *I knew nothing* of the esoteric teaching; *Isis* was full of ludicrous mistakes; my *Theosophist* articles likewise.

To this last remark, Madame Blavatsky adds a footnote as follows:

The letter you signed with my name in the January *Theosophist*, which letter contains certainly some flapdoodles — became a nice pretext for him.

It would appear from this, that the present article was not written by Madame Blavatsky herself, and that Col. Olcott merely signed it with her name. The intrinsic characteristics of it, however, the nature of the teachings treated upon,

¹ [Mahatma Letter 17 (31) p. 238; 3rd Combined ed.]

² Originally published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. LII (11), August 1931, pp. 673-75.

³ Also known as Darbhagiri Nath, M. Krishnamachari, and S. Krishnaswami Iyengar.

and the general “atmosphere” of the article strongly suggest Madame Blavatsky’s authorship. It is extremely doubtful that Col. Olcott would have ever written in this style. The student is invited to judge for himself. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]



Sir,

“R.R.” attempts in the October number of our Magazine to prove that I have taught in *Isis Unveiled* substantially the doctrine of Viśishtādvaita, to which view I take exception. I am quite aware of the fact that *Isis* is far from being as complete a work as, with the same materials, it might have been made by a better scholar; and that it lacks a symmetry, as a literary production, and perhaps here and there accuracy. But I have some excuse for all that. It was my first book; it was written in a language foreign to me — in which I had not been accustomed to write; the language was even more unfamiliar to certain Asiatic philosophers who rendered assistance; and, finally, Colonel Olcott, who revised the manuscript and worked with me throughout, was then — in the years 1875 and 1876 — almost entirely ignorant of Āryan Philosophy, and hence unable to detect and correct such errors as I might so readily fall into when putting my thoughts into English. Still, despite all this, I think [51] “R.R.’s” criticism is faulty. If I erred in making too little distinction between an Impersonal God, or Parabrahm, and a Personal God, I scarcely went to the length of confounding the one with the other completely. The pages¹ that he relies upon, represent not my own doctrine but the ideas of others. The first two are quotations from Manu, and show what an educated Brahman and a Buddhist might answer to Prof. Max Müller’s affirmation that Moksha and Nirvana mean annihilation; while the third² is a defence and explanation of the inner sense of the Bible, as from a Christian mystic’s standpoint. Of course this would resemble Viśishtādvaitism, which, like Christianity, ascribes personal attributes to the Universal Principle. As for the reference to the Preface, it seems that even when read in the dead-letter sense, the paragraph could only be said to reflect my personal opinion and not the Esoteric Doctrine. A sceptic in my early life, I had sought and obtained through the Masters the full assurance of the existence of a principle (not Personal God) — “a boundless and fathomless ocean” of which my “soul” was a drop. Like the Advaitis, I made no difference between my Seventh Principle and the Universal Spirit, or Parabrahm; nor did, or do, I believe in an individual, segregated spirit in me, as a something apart from the whole. And see, for proof, my remark about the “omnipotence of man’s immortal spirit” — which would be a logical absurdity upon any theory of egoistic separation. My mistake was that throughout the whole work I indifferently employed the words Parabrahm and God to express the same idea: a venial sin³ surely, when one knows that the English language is so poor that even at this moment I am using the Sanskrit word to express one idea, and the English one for the other! Whether it be orthodox Advaita or not, I maintain as an occultist, on the authority of the Secret Doctrine, that though merged

¹ Vol. II, 116-17; and 153; and preface, p. 2.

² Vol. II, p. 153

³ [warranting only temporal punishment]

entirely into Parabrahm, man's spirit while not individual *per se*, yet preserves its distinct individuality in Parinirvāna, owing to the accumulation in it of the aggregates, or [52] *skandhas* that have survived after each death, from the highest faculties of the *Manas*. The most spiritual — *i.e.*, the highest and divinest aspirations of every personality follow *Buddhi* and the Seventh Principle into Devachan (*Swarga*) after the death of each personality along the line of rebirths, and become part and parcel of the *Monad*. The personality fades out, disappearing before the occurrence of the evolution of the new personality (rebirth) out of Devachan: but the individuality of the spirit-soul¹ is preserved to the end of the great cycle (*Mahā-Manvantara*) when each Ego enters Parinirvāna, or is merged in Parabrahm. To our talpatic,² or mole-like, comprehension the human spirit is then lost in the One Spirit, as the drop of water thrown into the sea can no longer be traced out and recovered. But *de facto* it is not so in the world of immaterial thought. This latter stands in relation to the human dynamic thought, as, say, the visual power through the strongest conceivable microscope would to the sight of a half-blind man: and yet even this is a most insufficient simile — the difference is “inexpressible in terms of footpounds.”³ That such Parabrahmic and Parinirvānic “spirits,” or units, have and must preserve their divine (not human) individualities, is shown in the fact that, however long the “night of Brahmā” or even the Universal Pralaya (not the local Pralaya affecting some one group of worlds) yet, when it ends, the same individual Divine Monad resumes its majestic path of evolution, though on a higher, hundredfold perfected and more pure chain of earths than before, and brings with it all the essence of compound spiritualities from its previous countless rebirths. Spiral evolution, it must be remembered, is dual, and the path of spirituality turns, corkscrew-like, within and around physical, semi-physical, and supra-physical evolution. But I am being tempted into details which had best be left for the full consideration which their importance merits to my forthcoming work, *The Secret Doctrine*.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



Semi-Exoteric Constitution of Man (Table).

There now follows a table from “Constitution of Man – Overview.” Full text in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.

¹ Dear, dear, what can be made out of this English!

² [*Talpidae*, a family of insectivorous mammals, includes most moles except the golden and marsupial species.]

³ [Footpound is unit of work or energy equal to a force of one pound moving through a distance of one foot.]

**Semi-Exoteric Constitution
of the Microcosm or Man,
Citizen of the Universe
and Telesphoros.**

Immortal Higher Triad, the Divine Self

- True individuality, the Sutratman of the Upanishads.
- The Imperishable Monas, *i.e.*, Atman–Buddhi–Manas, permeated by the One Universal Life, or Breath.
- Spiritual Self dying (**Death 4**), so that Its Ideation can live.

Mortal Lower Tetrad, overshadowed by the Divine Self

- False individuality of the common man, who identifies with the personal and the transient.
- Other ephemeral aspects of the quaternary personality.
- The heart, being the organ of Spiritual Consciousness, represents the Higher Triad. The liver and spleen represent the quaternary, taken as a whole.

Macrocosmic planes	ADI-BUDDHA	MAHA-BUDDHI	MAHAT, COSMIC INTELLIGENCE	FOHAT	JIVA	ASTRAL	PRAKRITI
Microcosmic planes	Atman	Buddhi	Manas or Dual Mind	Kama (Manas)	(Kama) Prana	Linga-Sharira	Shthula-Sharira
Consciousness' virtual foci	Universal Self	Spiritual Ego	Higher Ego	Lower Ego	Animal Desires	Life Force	Visible Body
Auric Egg (Atmic Aura)	Principle ②: Auric Egg, monadic envelope and amnion of the physical man. Auric Egg and Prana are essentially the same.						
Auric Egg dynamics	Periphery of the Auric Egg and our point of communication with Universal Planes.		The two are bridged by Antahkarana. When Ahankara (selfish Self) is strong, Antahkarana is said to be “drunk or insane.”		Vital Animal, Living Soul, Nephesh.		Transitory emanation of the Auric Egg.
Three? Five? Seven?	Higher Principles			Middle Principle		Lower Aspects	
	Potency of the spiritual man: divine, higher manas-mind, nous or noetic intelligence, the reincarnating ego.			Potential of the worldly man: animal, astral, lower mind or soul; psyche-périsprit.		Physical man is the musical instrument; his Higher Ego, the performing artist.	
Pauline ternary	Spirit (Plato's λόγον, ideal life or ζωή)		Soul (Plato's ἄλογον)		(Physical life or βίος)	Body	
Platonic terms	Agathon	Nous		Phren	Thymos	Eidolon	Soma
Principles and aspects	Principle ①, Universal, not individual. I-ness	Principle ③ Spiritual Soul. I am, That I am	Principle ④ Enduring Individuality.	Aspect ③ I am I	Permeates every principle & aspect.	Aspect ① vitalising aspects ③ and ②.	Medium of every principle & aspect.
Faculties, fields, and forte	The Will to Be, and to Become. The Amaranthine Dream.	Spiritual intelligence, discrimination, intuition by inner sight.	Abstract, impersonal, noble thoughts, and ideals.	Concrete, personal, selfish thoughts, and “realistic” interests.	Worldly desires, lust (ἐπιθυμία), propensities, and proclivities.	Individualised breath of the One Life, electromagnetic vitality.	Protean model of the gross physical body; and its subtle counterpart.
Radiation and emanations	Radiation of the Ineffable One Pure Spirit. (First Logos)	Emanation of Alaya (Anima Mundi), Ray and Vehicle of Atman.	First emanation of Pradhana, or unevolved cause.	Reflection or shadow of Buddhi plus Higher Manas, having potentialities of both.	Closely linked with Lower Manas, the Green-Red animal monster in us.	Closely linked with Kama-Manas. Prana has no number, as it pervades every other principle.	Closely linked with Kama-Prana, and inseparable from it.
Other terms and allegories	A Ray of Paramatman (Uncreated Ray) Jivatman.	Sophia-Wisdom, Beautiful Helena, Chase Penelope.	Manasaputras, Breaths or Principles.			Vehicle (Vahan) of Prana, Astral, Etheric Double.	
Metaphorical gender	Sexless	Female	Sexless	Male	Male	Sexless	Male
Apparitions to distant places	Adepts can project consciously, and dying persons unconsciously, an illusory form or phantom of their personality to any distant location — while their physical body is left “entranced.” This double is termed Mayavi-Rupa.						
Deaths and post-mortem states	After Death 2 the purified mind enters Devachan, a long period of personal “bliss during the interim between two incarnations, as a reward for all the unmerited suffering he has endured” and where unfulfilled aspirations are enacted subjectively.			Death 2. Kama-manas becomes a distinct body of ante-mortem desires (Kama-Rupa) and remains in “desire world” (Kama-Loka) until its final dissipation. Attempts to delay death, <i>e.g.</i> , by necromancy, is Black Magic.		Eventually, Kama-Prana is released and re-becomes Jiva.	Death 3. Clinging to the physical body, it dissipates only with the disappearance of its last atom.
							Death 1. Attempts to preserve death, <i>e.g.</i> , by taxidermy, is Black Magic.

Suggested reading for students.



She being dead, yet speaketh.

- BLAVATSKY ABOUT TO UNVEIL ISIS
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST ECCLESIASTICAL CHRISTIANITY
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST SPIRITUALISM
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE A CARPING CRITIC OF HETERODOXY
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE A SHAM ADEPT AND VULGAR BULLY
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS ISIS UNVEILED
- BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- BLAVATSKY EXPELS A FRIEND OF COMMUNISTS
- BLAVATSKY HATED BALLS
- BLAVATSKY ON A CASE OF OBSESSION
- BLAVATSKY ON A CHRISTIAN MINISTER WHO WAS LOST IN GOD
- BLAVATSKY ON A HEAVY CURSE
- BLAVATSKY ON AN INTRO- AND RETROSPECTIVE DREAM
- BLAVATSKY ON ANIMAL SOULS
- BLAVATSKY ON BULGARIAN SUN WORSHIP
- BLAVATSKY ON CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE
- BLAVATSKY ON ELEMENTALS AND ELEMENTARIES
- BLAVATSKY ON FOETICIDE BEING A CRIME AGAINST NATURE
- BLAVATSKY ON HINDU WIDOW-BURNING
- BLAVATSKY ON JESUITRY IN MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND CELIBACY
- BLAVATSKY ON NEBO OF BIRS-NIMRUD
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT ALPHABETS AND NUMERALS
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT VIBRATIONS

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- BLAVATSKY ON OLD AGE
- BLAVATSKY ON OLD DOCTRINES VINDICATED BY NEW PROPHETS
- BLAVATSKY ON PLATO'S TIMAEUS
- BLAVATSKY ON PROGRESS AND CULTURE
- BLAVATSKY ON RELIGIOUS DEFORMITIES
- BLAVATSKY ON RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON SHAMBHALA, THE HAPPY LAND
- BLAVATSKY ON SPINOZA AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS
- BLAVATSKY ON SUNDAY DEVOTION TO PLEASURE
- BLAVATSKY ON TEACHINGS OF ÉLIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOGEYMAN OF SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOK OF ENOCH
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DOOMED DESTINY OF THE ROMANOVs
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ELUCIDATION OF LONG-STANDING ENIGMAS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HARMONICS OF SMELL
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HIDDEN ESOTERICISM OF THE BIBLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HISTORY AND TRIBULATIONS OF THE ZOHAR
- BLAVATSKY ON THE INTROVERSION OF MENTAL VISION
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KNIGHTED OXFORD SANSKRITIST WHO COULD SPEAK NO SANSKRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LETTERS OF LAVATER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LUMINOUS CIRCLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MODERN NEGATORS OF ANCIENT SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MONSOON
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR AND FALSE NOSES
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR'S MORROW
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QABBALAH BY ISAAC MYER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QUENCHLESS LAMPS OF ALCHEMY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE RATIONALE OF FASTS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ROOT CAUSES OF SECTARIANISM AND INTOLERANCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ROOTS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

- BLAVATSKY ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE SIR ORACLES OF ORIENTAL RELIGIONS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TEACHINGS OF ÉLIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THEOSOPHY AND ASCETICISM
- BLAVATSKY ON WHETHER THE RISHIS EXIST TODAY
- BLAVATSKY REBUKES A SHAM THEOSOPHIST AND BIGOTED ASS
- BLAVATSKY REBUTS UNSPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD
- BLAVATSKY'S LAST WORDS
- BLAVATSKY'S OPEN LETTER TO HER CORRESPONDENTS
- GEMS FROM THE EAST
- INDUCTIVE REASONING LEADS TO FAKE DEDUCTIONS
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL MIND OF THE CHINESE
- OBITUARY TO MIKHAIL NIKIFOROVICH KATKOV
- OBITUARY TO PUNDIT DAYĀNAND SARASWATĪ
- OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
- OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
- OPEN LETTERS TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION
- PAGES FROM ISIS UNVEILED
- PAGES FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 1 - ABRIDGED
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 2 - FULL TEXT
- PANTHEISTIC THEOSOPHY IS IRRECONCILABLE WITH ROMAN CATHOLICISM
- ROSICRUCIANISM WAS AN OFFSHOOT OF ORIENTAL OCCULTISM
- ROSICRUCIANS EMERGED AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE MATERIAL SIDE OF ALCHEMY
- THE HERMETIC FIRE OF THE MIND IS THE KEY TO THE OCCULT SCIENCES
- THE REAL MEANING OF THE FIRST LINE OF GENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 1 OF 2 ON COSMOGENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 2 OF 2 ON ANTHROPOGENESIS
- THOTH IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HERMES AND MOSES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON CRITICISM AND AUTHORITIES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE EIGHTH WONDER

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE MORNING STAR
- WE ARE MORE OFTEN VICTIMS OF WORDS RATHER THAN OF FACTS
- WITHOUT THE REVIVAL OF ARYAN PHILOSOPHY, THE WEST WILL FALL TO EVEN GROSSER MATERIALISM

