Blavatsky and Mead on the Gospel according to John

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Suggested reading for students.

From our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. 23

Preamble by George Mead.

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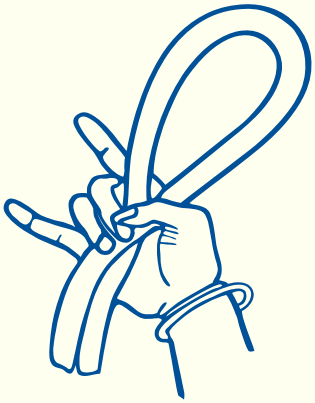
[The following notes formed the basis of discussion at the meetings of the Blavatsky Lodge, in October 1889. They were prepared by myself before the meetings, mostly from notes taken down from H.P. Blavatsky As it is impossible to throw the matter into any precise form, the notes must stand simply as hints for students, and especially as a useful example of Blavatsky's method of interpretation. — G.R.S. Mead.]

The preliminary paper deals mainly with the translation of the opening verses of the original text, as we have it, pointing out difficulties and the liberty of translation that can be used without violating the Greek. It will be of interest even to those who do not understand the original language as showing the danger of relying on the received translation, or in fact any translation, without a copious commentary. Moreover, when it is understood that such great difficulties present themselves even when the original scripture is in Greek, it will be easily seen that a translation of the Hebrew texts, from a language essentially occult and open to infinite permutation of meaning, is fraught with far greater difficulty.

The original texts of the Jewish Scriptures were written without vowel points, and each school had its own tradition as to which points should be used. Why, therefore, the pointing of one particular school, the Masoretic, should be insisted on to the exclusion of all others, passes the comprehension of any but the orthodox bibliolater.

From this point of view, then, the preliminary paper may not be without interest.[1]



[2]

[1] [Though unsigned, these opening paragraphs are very probably from the pen of G.R.S. Mead. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

[2] [For the profound meaning of this symbol, look up "Proposition 1 - The Rope of the Angels," in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

Part 1.
George Mead on the Gospel of John i, 1-9[1]

1. In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was *προς του θεόν*, and the Logos was *θεός*.

In the very first verse a grave difficulty presents itself: *viz.*, the right interpretation of the curious complement *προς του θεόν*. In the *Vulgate* it is translated *apud Deum*, "with God" — not "*together with* God," which would be *cum Deo*, but in the sense of "at," "by." But does *apud* render the Greek *προς? Apud* is a preposition denoting rest; *προς*, with the accusative, denotes fundamentally motion — *versus*, *adversus*, presenting in fact an idea of hostility, and metaphorically of comparison. To translate *προς του θεόν*, therefore, by "*with God*" is decidedly unwarranted by the ordinary meaning of the word.

All that can be said, then, from the text, as it stands, is that something is predicated on the Logos with respect to God, and that this predication differs considerably from the following: *viz.*, that "The Logos was God." It leaves us, therefore, free to assign a philosophical interpretation to the phrase. Notice that the article is used in one phrase with *θεός* and omitted in the other. The Logos was God or Divinity; that is to say, that the First or Unmanifested Logos is essentially the same as Parabrahman. But once the first potential Point appears, there is then this Point and the rest, *viz.*, *ο λόγος* and *ο θεός* — and their relation one to the other, stated in the sentence, "The Logos was *προς του θεόν*.

The phrase occurs again in *Romans*.[2] "We have peace with God," (*ειρήνην προς του θεόν*).

2. The latter (the Logos) was, in the beginning, *προς του θεόν*.

Why is this repeated? Does it mean that at the first "flutter of manvantaric dawn" there was the Logos and Mūlaprakriti?

But here a doubt arises: does *αρχή* mean "beginning"? We know that great controversy has arisen concerning the interpretation of the first verse of *Genesis*, and though the Orthodox translate by "in the beginning," the *Targum of Jerusalem* renders *berēshīth* as "in wisdom."

Now *αρχή* has been shown by Godfrey Higgins in his *Anacalypsis*, by Inman and a host of other writers of the same school, to be the same as *argha*, *ark*, *argo*,[3] the ship of Jason in which he sailed to find the "golden fleece,"[4] and, therefore, is the same as the Jagad-yoni, the "womb of the universe," or rather the material cause or *kārana* thereof, according to the Paurānik commentators,[5] but according to the Esoteric Philosophy the *ideal spirit of that cause*. It

[1] [Cf. H.P. Blavatsky's commentaries on the same verses in Part II. — ED. PHIL.]

[2] v, 1

[3] [See "Proposition 1 - Noah is Logos," in the same Series. — ED. PHIL.]

[4] Apollonius Rhodius

[5] *The Secret Doctrine*, I *p.* 46

is the Svabhāva of the Buddhists and the Mūlaprakriti of the Vedāntin philosophers.

If this is so, we shall have to seek a new interpretation.

The First Logos was in Mūlaprakriti. The Point within the Circle of Space, "whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere."

So far, so good. But what is the distinction between *θεός* and *ο θεός?* Which is the superior term; can either be said to be identical with Parabrahman?

Does it mean that in Pralaya the Logos is concerned with or united with Parabrahman alone, in fact, is one with It?

If so, verse 2 would mean that the Logos, when differentiation has not yet taken place, is pure spirit, and concerned only with the things of spirit.

If, however, this is the meaning, it is difficult to understand why the article is omitted before *αρχή*.

3. All things are wont[1] to be (or exist) through it (*viz.*, the Logos), and without it not one single thing which is (or is wont to come) comes into being.

Πάντα "all things," is to be distinguished from *κόσμος* (cosmos)[2] in the 10th verse.

Now *κόσμος* is used by the philosophers to mean the organized universe in contradistinction to the *indigesta moles*[3] or Chaos.[4] It will be, moreover, clearly seen that verse 10 refers to a later stage of emanation or evolution than verse 3. Therefore, it does not seem too bold to translate *πάντα* as "all manifestation," that is to say, all universes and systems.

There is nothing to warrant the translation, "all things were made by him." The verb *γίγνομαι* does not mean "to make" but "to become." It is rare to find *διά* — used in the sense of an agent or instrument — in the sense of "by." The fundamental idea is "through," whether of place or time. Metaphorically, it is used in a causal sense, and in later prose, of the material out of which a thing is made. So that even if the creative idea were adopted, it would show that all things were made "through" or "out of" the Logos.

Comparing these first three verses with the first chapter of *Genesis*, we notice an entire omission of the Void or Chaos, this is an additional reason why the word *αρχή* should be carefully considered.

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[1] [Accustomed, used]

[2] [See "Kosmos and Cosmos," in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

[3] [Disordered mass]

[4] [See "Chaos to sense, latent deity to reason," in the same Series. — ED. PHIL.]

4. In it (the Logos) was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

Ζωή (life) differs from *πάντα* (objective manifestation) in that it is in (or inherent in) the Logos, and is not emanated through it. It may, therefore, be taken as a power of the Logos. Now the Logos of the 3rd verse is not the same as the Logos of the 1st. Essentially or in eternity, of course, they are the same, but in time in a different stage of emanation. In *The Secret Doctrine* this Logos is called the Second or Third Logos, the "luminous sons of manvantaric dawn," or the "builders" — a septenary hierarchy.

Is, then, this potency of the Third Logos Fohat? And if so, is *φως* (Light) Buddhi or Manas?

> That which I say to you in Darkness (*εν τη σκοτία*), speak in Light (*εν τω φωτί*), and what ye hear "mouth to ear," preach on the housetops.[1]
>
> Wherefore, whatsoever ye said in Darkness (*εν τη σκοτία*) shall be heard in Light (*εν τω φωτί*), and that which ye have sounded into the ear in the crypts (closets, secret chambers) shall be preached on the housetops.[2]

In these passages *σκοτία* (darkness) is evidently used in a metaphorical sense, and indeed it is a rare and late word, and very seldom applied to physical darkness; *σκοτία* (darkness), therefore, refers to esoteric, and *φως* (light) to exoteric teachings: the relation between the two ideas is the same by *analogy* as between the *σκοτία* and *φως* in *John*.

Ταμείου (closet), a strange word, used in *Pistis-Sophia* for the different divisions of Kāma Loka, in the Great Serpent or Astral Light.

> "That which ye have sounded (*λαλείν*) into the ear."

Now *λαλείν* (to babble) does not mean to speak in the ordinary way, as translated in the orthodox version: *λαλείν* is always distinguished from *λέγειν*, and is very often used of music, nature sounds, and singing. Those who have read about Gnostic invocations and mystery names, mantrams, etc., will understand this meaning.

The word *σκότος*[3] in every case has a mystic meaning, the enquiry into which, though of great interest, would take us too far from the present subject. We should, however, be on our guard against seeking to support the meaning of any word in the *New Testament* by a citation of the same from other passages and books. The *New Testament* is not unity; it is as useless to try to reconcile the meanings of particular words out of their contexts or stereotype a special meaning, as to take the word *buddhi* and claim for it the same meaning in the Esoteric, Sānkhya, Yoga, Buddhist, or other schools of Hindu philosophy.

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[1] *Matthew* x, 27

[2] *Luke* xii, 3

[3] Used in *Ephesians* v, 8; *Luke* xxii, 53; *Matthew* viii, 12; *2 Peter* ii, 17.

5. And the Light shineth in the Darkness, and the Darkness did not comprehend it.

> In *The Secret Doctrine* this Darkness is taken as synonymous with pure spirit, and Light as typifying matter:
>
> > 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, and is simply an illusion, or Māyā.[1]
>
> Are "Light" and "Darkness" in this verse, used in the same sense? Or does it mean that this "Life" which is a potency of the Logos, is regarded by men as "Light," whereas that which is higher than the "light," *viz.*, the Logos (or to them "Darkness"), is the real "Light"? "Darkness comprehended it not," then, means that absolute spirit did not comprehend or understand this illusive "Light."

6. There was a man sent divinely (*παρά θεού*) whose name was John.

7. He came for bearing witness in order that he might testify concerning the Light, in order that all might have confidence through it.

> If this "Light" is to be taken as identical with the Christ-spirit, it will be Buddhi; but if *φως* is Manas, the difficulty may be avoided by taking *φως* to mean Buddhi-Manas.

8. He was not the Light, but was for a witness concerning the Light.

9. The Light was the true (real) Light which illuminates every man (human being) coming into the world.

[1] *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, *p.* 70

Part 2.
Madame Blavatsky on the Gospel of John i, 1-18[1]

1. In the beginning (Mūlaprakriti) was the Word (Third Logos), and the Word was with God (*προς του θεόν*; Second Logos), and the Word was God (First Logos).

> Yet all the three Logoi are one.

2. This Logos (the essence of the Logoi) was in the beginning (in Mūlaprakriti) identical with Parabrahman.

> There is evidently a great difference between the phrase *προς του θεόν*, when predicated of the Logos as a unity and the same when predicated of its second aspect, as in verse 1.

3. The 3rd verse refers to the Third or Creative Logos.

> All things came into existence through it, *viz.*, the third aspect of the Logos, and the source of their existence, or the things themselves, were the two superior aspects of the Essence.

4. In it, the Logos as a unity, was Life, and the Life was the Light of "men" (*viz.*, the initiates; for the profane are called "shades [chhāyās] and images").

> This Light (*φως*) is Ātma-Buddhi, of which Kundalinī, or the sacred fire, is a Siddhi or power; it is the serpentine or spiral force, which if misused can kill.

5. And the Light of Life, as one Essence, shineth in Darkness and the Darkness comprehended it not.

> Neither does this Essence of the Logos comprehend Parabrahman, nor does Parabrahman comprehend the Essence. They are not on the same plane, so to speak.

6. There was a man, an initiate, sent of the spirit, whose name was John.

> John, Ōannēs, Dagon, Vishnu, the personified microcosm. The name may be taken in its mystic significance; that is to say, this man personifies the power of the mystery name, "*Ioa* nnes."

7. He came to bear witness concerning the Light that all might be strengthened through it.

> In the same way Krishna, the Avatāra of Vishnu in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, says that he has come to be a witness.

8. He was not the Light, but came to bear witness concerning the Light.

9. This Light is the One Reality which illuminates every man that cometh into the world.

> That is to say, we all have a spark of the Divine Essence within us.

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[1] [Cf. G.R.S. Mead's exegesis of verses 1-9, in Part I of this study. — ED. PHIL.]

10. The next two verses represent the descent of Spirit into Matter, the 10th repeating the 3rd on a lower plane.

> Moreover, the light directly it descends into the Cosmos, is anthropomorphized.
>
> He (*viz.*, the Light) was in the Cosmos, and the Cosmos came into being through him, and the Cosmos knew him not.

11. He came unto his own (that is to say, into the lower principles or lower man, or generally mankind — *τα ίδια*, a neuter term) and his own (masculine) received him not.

> The first part of the verse is from the abstract or impersonal standpoint, the latter from the personal standpoint. The principles and their powers become individualized.

12. But as many as received him (Ātma-Buddhi) to them he gave power to become Children of God (initiates), *viz.*, to those who have confidence in his name.

> This is the septenary name, or *sound*, the Oeaohoo of *The Secret Doctrine* and the *αεηιουω* of the *Pistis Sophia*. It is strange that the Latin words *nomen* (name) and *numen* (deity or divinity) so resemble one another.

13. Who are born (iterative aorist) not from "bloods," nor of the will of the flesh, nor from the will of the male, but of God.

> The term "bloods," a strange use of the plural, is the same as "lives" in *The Secret Doctrine*; they are elemental centres of force, the microcosmic aspect of the macrocosmic Tattvas; the "Sweat-born" who were not "Will-born," but rather, born unconsciously.
>
> Those "born of the will of the flesh" are the androgynous "Egg-born" of *The Secret Doctrine*, born through Kriyāśakti, by "Will-power."
>
> Those "born of the will of the male" — not man, are men born in the usual manner after the separation of the sexes.
>
> Whereas the term "those born of God," the Sons of God, refers to the "Second Birth."

14. So the Logos became flesh (was incarnated) and dwelt (*lit.*, tabernacled itself) in us (that is to say was clothed in a body, or bodies). And we saw his appearance (not glory except in the sense of *shekhīnah* or veil), the appearance as of the only-begotten son of the Father full of grace and truth.

> The word *δόξα* which is translated by glory, is nowhere found with this meaning in Greek.
>
> Plato uses *δόξα* in the sense of opinion, as distinguished from *επιστήμη*, knowledge, and Aeschylus[1] employs it to denote a vision.
>
> The "Father" in this verse means the Svabhāva, Father-Mother. The Svabhāva of the Buddhists, the Father-Mother (a compound word) of *The Secret Doctrine* and the Mūlaprakriti of the Vedāntins, Mūlaprakriti is not Parabrahman, alt-

[1] *Choëphorae*, 1053

hough, so to speak, contemporaneous with it. It may perhaps be defined as the cognizable aspect of it.[1]

This first-born is the Sanskrit *aja*, the Greek *αμνός* or lamb. Lambs, sheep and goats were sacrificed to Kālī, the lower aspect of Ākāśa or the Astral Light. The "only begotten Son" was sacrificed to the Father; that is to say, that the spiritual part of man is sacrificed to the astral.

Grace (*χάρις*) is a difficult word to translate. It corresponds to the higher aspect of Ākāśa. The two aspects are as follows:

1 Spiritual Plane: Ālaya (Soul of Universe); Ākāśa.

2 Psychic Plane: Prakriti (Matter or Nature); Astral Light or Serpent.

15. John bears witness concerning him and cries saying: He it was of whom I spake: who coming after me was before me: for he was before me (*πρώτος*, curious).[2]

That is to say, that from the point of view of a disciple the divine principle Ātma-Buddhi is later in respect of time, for union therewith is not attained till the end of the Path is reached. Yet this spark of the divine Fire was before the personality of the neophyte, for it is eternal and in all men, though not manifested.

We, therefore, have Ōannēs as the representative of Vishnu; the man who becomes an adept through his own exertions, a Jīvanmukta. This typical personage, an individual representing a class, speaks in space and time; whereas the One Wisdom is in Eternity and therefore "first."

16. And of the Fullness (*Πλήρωμα*) thereof we all received, and favour for favour.

The *Πλήρωμα* (Plērōma or Plenum) must be distinguished from Mūlaprakriti.

The Plērōma is infinite manifestation in manifestation, the Jagad Yoni or Golden Egg: Mūlaprakriti is an abstraction, the Root of the Jagad Yoni, the Womb of the Universe, or the Egg of Brahmā.

The Plērōma is, therefore, Chaos. "Favour for favour" means that what we receive we give back, atom for atom, service for service.

The meaning of verse 16 depends on verse 17.

17. For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth was through Jesus Christ.

The external illusion or "Eye Doctrine" through Moses; the reality or "Heart Doctrine" through the divine Spirit Ātma-Buddhi.

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[1] Cf. *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, *p.* 10, note

[2] [*i.e.*, the eternal spark of Divine Fire was well before the personality of the neophyte, for the Divine Fire was eager to know Itself.]

18. No man has seen God (Parabrahman) at any time.

No, not even the First Logos who, as stated in the Lectures on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, by T. Subba Row, can only behold its veil, Mūlaprakriti.

The only-begotten Son, the Logos, who is in the bosom of the Father, in Parabrahman, he has declared him (shown him in manifestation, but not seen him).

Marriage at Cana (1563) Paolo Caliari, Louvre

Part 3.
Madame Blavatsky on the Gospel of John i, 19-51

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. XII, No. 67, March 1893, *pp.* 20-30.

19. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

This verse relates to the great dissension between the Kabbalists or Initiates of pre-Christian Judaea, and the Synagogue, and was a continuation of the struggle between the Prophets and Priests.

John in this context, therefore, signifies Joannes or Wisdom, the Secret Word or voice, Bath Kol, which the Jews called the Voice of God or Daughter of God. It is in truth the Voice of Wisdom. In the present context, however, we have only an echo of the tradition.

20. And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

That is to say, I am not the glorified Christos.

21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

The root of the name Elias in Hebrew and Coptic has the meaning of Buddhi. It is a pun on Buddhi. The meaning conveyed is that of the principles Manas and Buddhi without Ātma. It is not the same as the Christos, the anointed by Alaya.

"That prophet," or rather "the prophet," is the higher Manas.

John speaking as a man, the Lower Manas, did not speak as one of the three higher "principles," Ātma (the Absolute), Buddhi (the Spiritual), and the Higher Manas or Mind.

With regard to the idea that John was the reincarnation of Elias it is interesting to quote a remarkable passage from *Pistis-Sophia*. The "Living Jesus," the "First Mystery," or King Initiate speaks as follows:

> It came to pass, when I had come into the midst of the Rulers of the Aeons, having looked from above into the World of men, I found Elizabeth,[1] mother of John the Baptist, before she had conceived him. I planted the Power in her, which I had received from the Little IAŌ, the Good, who is in the Midst,[2] that he should preach before me, and prepare my way, and baptize with water the remission of sins. This Power then *is*[3] in the body of John. Moreover, in the Place of the Soul of the Rulers, appointed to receive it, I found the Soul of the prophet Elias in the Aeons of the Sphere, and I took him, and receiving his Soul also, brought it to the Virgin of light, and she gave it to her Receivers, who led it to the Sphere of the rulers and carried it into the womb of Elizabeth. So the Power of the Little

[1] [Elizabeth is the personified female Power, or Śakti.]

[2] This is to say, that the Power planted is the reflection of the Higher Ego, or the Lower *Kāma-Manas*.

[3] Notice the tense, the orthodox John being dead years before.

IAŌ, the Good, which is in the Midst, and the Soul of the prophet Elias, are bound together in the body of John the Baptist.

For which cause, therefore, did ye doubt at that time, when I said unto you: John said, "I am the Christ"; and ye said unto me: "It is written in the Scriptures, if the Christ come, Elias comes before him, and will prepare his way." And I replied: "Elias, indeed, is come, and has prepared all things according as it was written; and they have done unto him whatsoever they would." And when I perceived that you did not understand those things which I spake to you concerning the Soul of Elias, as bound in John the Baptist; I then answered openly and face to face: "If ye will receive it, John the Baptist is that Elias, who," I said, "was coming."[1]

22. [Narrative]

23. He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

I am the Voice of Wisdom[2] crying in the wilderness of Matter: Purify the Antahkarana ("Internal Organ" or Astral Man), the Path that leads from the Lower to the Higher Man.

Antahkarana is the Lower Manas, the Path of Communication or communion between the personality and the Higher Manas or Human Soul. At death it is destroyed as a Path or Medium of communication, and its remains survive in a form as the Kāma Rūpa — the "shell."[3]

24. [Narrative]

25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

"*What* baptizest thou?" rather than, "Why baptizest thou?"

In the *Pistis-Sophia* many baptisms, seals and symbols, or passwords, are mentioned. They all typify grades of Initiation, but there are two main divisions — the Little and Great Mysteries.

The Little Mysteries (*e.g.*, the Eleusinian).

- Those relating to the Jīva or Prāna, the Life-principle; teachings relating to the animal side of man, because Prāna is concerned with all the functions of nature.
- Those relating to the Astral.
- Those relating to the Kāma and Lower Manas.

[1] [Cf. *Lucifer*, Vol. VI, April 1890, *p.* 113, G.R.S. Mead's translation of the *Pistis-Sophia*. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

[2] Cf. 19.

[3] *The Voice of the Silence*, *p.* 88

The Great Mysteries

- Relating to the Higher Manas, Buddhi and Ātma.[1]

26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.

The baptism with water typifies the Terrestrial Mary, or the Astral.

"Whom ye know not" — because it is the inner and higher "principle," Christos.

27. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

A repetition of verse 15, referring to the mystery of the Higher and Lower man, Ātma-Buddhi and the Lower Manas.

"Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" — that is to say, even the lowest of the Great Mysteries, those of the Spiritual Man, I, John, the Lower Man, am not worthy to reveal; such is the penalty of the "fall into generation."

28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Most probably a blind, unless we enquire into the mystic meaning of the words Bethabara and Jordan: to do this, it is necessary to have the original texts, for the change of even one letter is important.

29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

"Behold Jesus"; Jesus or Issi means Life, and therefore typifies a living man. The Lamb of God is the Aja, previously spoken of — the Logos.

"Which taketh away the sin of the world" — by the lower Initiation, Prāna, or the Life-principle, is so purified that the Candidate becomes worthy of receiving the higher Initiation of the Lamb or Aja, which removes the sin of the Lower Man.

The name *Jes*-us is from the Hebrew word *Aish*, "man." *Jes* (in Greek *Ies*, *Jes*, the Hebrew יש) means several things, such as *Fire*, the *Sun*, a *God* or Deity, and also *Man*. It is so in the writings of the pre-Masoretic schools, and the latter on coming into use corroborated the true original pronunciation. *Man* became written איש, *Ish*, and *Jes*, whose feminine form was אשה, *is-a*, or "woman," also the hermaphrodite Eve before the birth of Cain, as shown in the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*, the Egyptian *Isis*. So poor was the Hebrew language, especially before the settled pronunciation of the words by the Masoretic vowels — that almost every word and name in the Bible is liable to be made into a *pun*. *Isi*, or *Issi*, is also *Jesse*, David's father, from whom the concoctors of the New Testament tried to make Jesus descend. Now the Gnostics had also a nickname for their *ideal* Jesus — or the man in the *Chrēst* condition, the Neophyte on trial, and this nickname was *Ichthus*, the "fish."

[1] [See "The holy rites of Eleusis were Archaic Wisdom Religion dressed in Greek garb," in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

With this fish, with the waters in general, and, for the Christians, with the Jordan waters in particular, the whole program of the ancient Mystery-Initiation is connected. The whole of the *New Testament* is an allegorical representation of the Cycle of Initiation, *i.e.*, the natural birth of man in *sin* or flesh, and of his second or spiritual birth as an Initiate followed by his resurrection after three days of trance — a mode of purification — during which time his human body or Astral was in Hades or Hell, which is the earth, and his divine Ego in Heaven or the realm of truth.[1] The *New Testament* describes unselfish *white* or divine magic; the *Old Testament* gives the description of *black*, or selfish magic. The latter is psychism, the former all spirituality.

Now the name of Jordan, according to Hebrew scholars, is derived from the Hebrew *Jar-ed*, to flow down or descend; add to the word *Jared* the letter *n* (in Hebrew *nun*) and you have fish-river. And Jar-Dan-*Jar*, "flowing river," and *Dan* the name of the tribe of Dan — means the "river of Dan," or judgement. Jesus, the man and the neophyte, is born of Mary, *Mar*, the waters, or the sea, as every other man is born; this is his first birth. At his second birth he enters and stands in the river Dan, or fish; and at the death of his body of flesh (the body of sin) he enters the river Styx, which river is in Hades, or Hell, the place of judgement, whither Jesus is said to have descended after death. For the zodiacal sign of the tribe of Dan was Scorpio, as all know; and Scorpio is the sign of the female procreative principle, the matrix, and even geographically the heirloom of the tribe of Dan was the place of Dan, which included that of the springs or sources of Jordan, whose waters flowed out of the bowels of the earth. As the Styx with the Greeks, which, during the mystery trial by *water*, played a like part in the crypts of the temples, so the whale or fish that swallowed Jonah in the *Old Testament*, and Jordan that immersed Jesus in the *New* — all of these great "deeps" and small "deeps," the interior of fish, waters, etc., all typified the same thing. They signified entering into conditions of existence by *death*, which became a *new birth*. As Jonah, the Initiate of the *Old Testament*, enters the womb of the whale (Phallic Initiation), so Jesus, the *man*, entering the water (the type of the spiritual womb of his second birth) enters *Jar-Dan*, the river of Dan, the tribe which astronomically was in Scorpio (the "gates of woman," or the matrix). Emerging from it, he became Christos, the glorified Initiate, or the divine and sexless androgyne. So also, Jonah, upon emerging, became the "Lord," with the Jews *Jah-hovah*; thus preceding *Jes*-us, the new life. The Jesus of the *New Testament* becomes the anointed by the Spirit, symbolized by the Dove. For John, Ōannēs, or Jonah, or the Whale-Fish, the emblem of the terrestrial world of the Old Dispensation, is transformed into the Dove, *over* the waters, the emblem of the Spiritual World. As said by Nigidius: →

[1] [See "Crucified between two thieves," in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

> The Syrians and Phoenicians assert that a *dove* sat several days in *Euphrates* [one of the four rivers in Eden] on the *egg* of a *fish*, whence their Venus was born.[1]

Venus is but the female form of Lucifer, the planet; and the bright Morning Star is Christos, the Glorified Ego — Buddhi-Manas. As said in *Revelation* xxii, 16:

> "I Jesus . . . am . . . the bright and morning star,"

— Phōsphoros or Lucifer.

There is one thing worth remembering. If you read the Bible you will find all the names of the Patriarchs and Prophets and other prominent characters that begin with the letter J (or I), such as, Jubal Cain, Jared, Jacob, Joseph, Joshua, Jesse, Jonah, John, Jesus, all were meant to depict:

- A series of reincarnations on the terrestrial or physical plane, as their legends show in the biblical narratives; and
- All typified the Mysteries of Initiation, its trials, triumphs, and birth to Light, first terrestrial, then psychic, and finally Spiritual Light, every particular being made to fit in with the various details of the ceremony and its results.

30. Repetition of verses 15 and 27 (three times).

31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

> "I" as a personality; or those initiated into the Lower Mysteries only.
>
> "Israel" is a "blind," but here must be taken to mean those who wish to enter the Path.

32. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

> The Dove in symbology has many meanings; it here typifies the Erōs (Love) or Charity.[2]

33. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

> And I, the terrestrial man, knew him not, but my Buddhic principle, which sent me to initiate into the lower Mysteries, recognized the sign. I, the terrestrial man, knew not, but Elias and the Prophet and Christos knew.
>
> This Dove descending and remaining upon man, that is to say, this Purified Love, Charity, or Compassion descending on the Initiate, helps him to unite himself with the Holy Ghost or Ātma.
>
> On the terrestrial plane, it means, that by the "Dove," the Cloud or Aura, an Initiate is recognized by his fellows.

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[1] C.F. Volney, *Ruins, or a Survey of the Revolution of Empires*, 2nd English ed., 1795, *p.* 391, notes.

[2] [Χάρις]

34-38. Narrative, and therefore a "blind."

39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

> The two disciples symbolize two Neophytes near the end of their trials, and the abiding with the Master, or Higher Self, is being in the Christos-Spirit.
>
> The tenth hour signifies the period before the last of the great trials. Compare the labours of Hercules.

40-41. [Narrative]

42. Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, *pp.* 29 & 91.

43-45. [Narrative]

46. Out of Nazareth, *i.e.*, from the Sect of the Nazars.

47-50. [Narrative]

51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

> Thou shalt see the Higher descend on the Lower, and gain illumination and know greater wonders than the simple power of clairvoyance.

Part 4.
Madame Blavatsky on the Gospel of John ii, 1-20

The first eleven verses in the second chapter contain the allegorical representation of the last and final Initiation; herein we find mention of all the divine and human "principles" veiled in allegorical language, and personified, and of the purification wrought in them by Initiation; the incident ends abruptly and mysteriously, so much so, that we have reason to suspect that more was originally added. A very superficial knowledge of the laws of esoteric allegory shows it to be so.

The main point of the allegory is the turning of "Water" (the Astral) into "Wine," or Matter into Spirit.

1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

In all the Mysteries, after the *four* days of trial or temptation, came the *three* days of descent into Hades, or the tomb, from which the Glorified Candidate, or Initiate, arose.

"On the third day," therefore, means that the time for the final Initiation had come, when Jesus, or the Neophyte, would become Christ, or the Initiate; that is, at one with Buddhi or the Christ-principle.[1]

(With reference to the 4 days mentioned above, it is interesting to note that Jesus is said to have been tempted for 40 days. Here the nought is a "blind," for in mystery-numbers ciphers can be disregarded and changed according to the rules of the method employed.)

"There was a marriage in Cana" — that is to say, that the Disciple was joined to his Higher Self, the marriage of the Adept with Sophia, Divine Wisdom, or the Marriage of the Lamb, in Cana.

Now Cana or Khana is from a root which conveys the idea of a place consecrated or set apart for a certain purpose. Khanak is the "royal abode," or "the place of the ruler," with the Arabs. Cf. *Devakhan*, the place consecrated to the Devas, *i.e.*, a state of such bliss as Devas or Angels are supposed to enjoy.[2]

"And the Mother of Jesus was there," this means that the Candidate was there in Body, or at least the lower "principles" were present; for from this aspect the "Mother of Jesus" is especially the Kāma-rūpic "principle," that is to say, the vehicle of material human desires, the giver of life, etc. This must not be confounded with the higher aspect, Buddhi the "Mother of Christ," the so-called

[1] N.B. In diagrams where the principles are symbolically represented by a triangle superimposed on a square [⧋], it should be remarked that after the "second birth" the "principles" have to be re-arranged.

[2] [This error occurs in more than one place and should be corrected. *Devachan* is a Tibetan word; when transliterated from Tibetan characters, it would be *bde-ba-chan*, meaning a sphere or realm or state of unalloyed happiness. It is a term analogous to the Sanskrit word *Sukhāvatī*. The Sanskrit word *deva* does not enter into the composition of this Tibetan term. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Spiritual Soul. The distinction is the same as that between Sophia-the-Divine, and Sophia-Akhamōth, the Terrestro-Astral.

2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

That is to say, the Higher Manas or Ego (not Self) which was now dominant in the Candidate, and his disciples[1] or lower principles were present as necessary to the purification of the whole *Man*.

3. And when they wanted wine the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

The mother of Jesus here signifies his now purified desire aspiring upwards. The verse means that the human material passions of the lower self, the guests at the festival, must be made drunk or paralyzed, before the "bridegroom" can be married. It is the lower Manas (Sophia-Akhamōth), that says to Jesus, "They have no wine," that is to say, the lower "principles" are not yet spiritualized, and therefore not ready to participate in the feast.

4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

Woman (Matter or Water, the lower quaternary), what hath the Spirit-Ego to do with thee at this hour? There is no unity as yet between me and thee, my hour of Initiation is not yet come, I have not yet made myself one with Buddhi, my Supernal Mother, when I shall be able to associate with thee without any danger.

5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

The servants are the lower "principles," their thoughts, instincts and passions, the Lhamayin, or elementals and evil spirits, adverse to men and their enemies.[2]

6. And there were set there *six* waterpots of stone after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

The six waterpots typify the six principles, the seven without Ātma, the seventh or universal principle — six from the earthly standpoint including the body. These are the containing principles from Ākāśa to the Astral; also the four lower principles (the others being latent) filled with Astral Water. The Lower Manas sports in the Astral waves.

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[1] The 12 "disciples" are the 3 aspects of the 4 lower principles, the △ reflected in the □.

[2] Cf. *The Voice of the Silence*, note 17 to Part III.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

> In the Lesser Mysteries all the powers of the four lower planes were brought to bear on the Candidate to test him.
>
> The six waterpots were filled with Water — the symbol of Matter — that is to say, that during the Neophyte's trials and temptations before Initiation, his human passions being made full to the brim, he had to conquer them or fail. Jesus, the Higher Manas, in changing that Water into Wine, or Divine Spirit, conquers and is thus filled with the Wisdom of the Gods.[1] Lustral water was given to the Neophyte to drink and turned into Wine at the last moment; in India it was turned into the Soma juice, the Water of Life Eternal.

8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

> The "governor of the feast" was the chief official who had the direction of the feast and servants and the duty of *tasting* the food and drink. Here it typifies the conclave of Initiates who do not know whether the Candidate will succeed or fail, and who have to test him. This explains the sentence in the next verse, "he knew not whence it came," that is, did not know until the Candidate had been fully tested.

9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew); the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.

> The servants, or lower "principles," and the lower powers that had been subjected to the purified will of the Christ-man, knew that the great change was accomplished and that the lower "principles" were purified and spiritualized.
>
> The "bridegroom" is, of course, the Candidate, who is to be married to his Higher or Divine Self, and so become a Son of God.
>
> It is curious and interesting to remark in the ancient cosmogonies, especially in the Egyptian and the Indian, how perplexing and intricate are the relationships of the Gods and Goddesses. The same Goddess is mother, sister, daughter and wife to a God. This most puzzling allegory is no freak of the imagination, but an effort to explain in allegorical language the relation of the "principles," or, rather, the various aspects of the one "principle." Thus we may say that Buddhi (the vehicle of Ātma) is its wife, and the mother, daughter, and sister of the Higher Manas, or rather Manas in its connection with Buddhi, which is for convenience called the Higher Manas. Without Buddhi, Manas would be no better than animal instinct, therefore she is its mother; and she is its daughter, child or progeny, because without the conception which is only possible through Manas, Buddhi, the Spiritual Power, or Śakti, would be inconceivable and unknowable.

[1] See ch. xv, "I am the true vine," etc.

10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

> "At the beginning" means when the Mānasa-putra first incarnated.
>
> Every candidate as he progresses needs less and less good Wine, or Spirit, for he becomes that Spirit himself as his powers and knowledge increase the new-won strength. At the entrance of the Path "good wine," or the spiritual impetus, is given, but as the disciple mounts the ladder such help is no longer needed, for he tends ever more and more to become All-Spirit.

11-13. [Narrative]

14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.

> This represents the attitude of the Initiate to exoteric religion and his work after he has attained the victory. The "temple" here signifies all externals, exoteric creeds, or bodies of flesh.
>
> "Oxen" typify material things, the physical man. In all symbology, the bull has the significance of bodily strength and generative power. "Sheep" typify the passions and desires which are subdued and tamed, and "Doves" spiritual aspirations. The "money changers" are those who traffic in spiritual things, the money-seeking priesthood.

15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords [symbolizing that which binds the passions], he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables.

> The "scourge," which appears so often on the Egyptian monuments and cartouches, signifies the means whereby the passions and lower nature are tamed. The noose of Śiva has the same signification, symbolizing that whereby the passions, desires and fears are bound together, tamed and subdued.

16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.

> Those "that sold doves" are the traffickers in spiritual knowledge. "My Father's house" is the human body which is the temple of God, that which should be naturally the temple of the Holy Ghost.

17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

> The domination of the lower man had devoured the higher.

18. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

> By what authority do you endeavour to reform the popular religion, what right have you?

19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

> That is to say, that he had passed through Initiation, and had died to his old life, and risen again from the "dead" in a "new birth."

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

> Wilt thou with the three Fires do more, then, than with the forty-six? — There are in all forty-nine Fires, 7 x 7.

Suggested reading for students.[1]

From our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series.

- ALCHEMY IS THE QUINTESSENCE IN NATURE'S HIGHEST CORRELATIONS
- ALLEGORIES AND MYTHS UNDERLYING PURANIC COSMOLOGY
- CROSS IS THE SYMBOL OF PRE-COSMIC DIVINE MIND
- DIAGRAM 1 - HINDU COSMOGONY
- DIAGRAM 2 - CHALDEO-JEWISH COSMOGONY
- DIAGRAM 3 - THE IDEAL TRIAD AND ITS REFLECTION
- DIAGRAM 4 - THE WHEEL OF EZEKIEL
- DRAWING 0 - BESTRIDE THE BIRD OF LIFE
- DRAWING 1 - THE SEVENTEEN-RAYED SUN
- DRAWING 2 - THE WINGED SUN
- FOHAT IS THE LIFE OF THE UNIVERSE
- HERMES' DIVINE PYMANDER - TR. EVERARD
- HERMES' VIRGIN OF THE WORLD - TR. KINGSFORD & MAITLAND
- HINDU VS. CHALDEO-JEWISH COSMOGONY
- HOW VIBRATION BRINGS FORTH SOUND, FORM, AND COLOUR
- INERTIA, THE GREAT OCCULT FORCE
- INFINITE IS THE CREATIVE POTENCY OF FEMININE LOGOS
- JUDGE ON THE GITA AND THE ZODIAC
- LUNAR MYTH AND WORSHIP THROUGH THE AGES
- MAHANARAYANA UPANISHAD - TR. VIMALANANDA
- PROPOSITION 1 - AKASHA VS. ASTRAL LIGHT
- PROPOSITION 1 - BESTRIDE THE BIRD OF LIFE
- PROPOSITION 1 - CENTRE + CIRCLE
- PROPOSITION 1 - CHAOS TO SENSE, LATENT DEITY TO REASON

[1] Students should be fully conversant with the metaphysical concepts and learning aids set out in our Secret Doctrine's Propositions Series 2 and 3. — ED. PHIL.

- PROPOSITION 1 - CHURNING THE OCEAN OF MILK
- PROPOSITION 1 - CROSS + FIRE
- PROPOSITION 1 - DAWN OF CHAOS-THEOS-KOSMOS
- PROPOSITION 1 - DESIRE PROPER IS BEING
- PROPOSITION 1 - DIAGRAM
- PROPOSITION 1 - DIAGRAM NOTES[1]
- PROPOSITION 1 - ETYMOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- PROPOSITION 1 - GOD DWELLS IN THE HEART
- PROPOSITION 1 - LIGHT DROPS ONE SOLITARY RAY (DRAWING)
- PROPOSITION 1 - NARAYANA FIRST OR THIRD LOGOS?
- PROPOSITION 1 - NOAH IS LOGOS
- PROPOSITION 1 - ONE LIGHT FOR ALL
- PROPOSITION 1 - SUN IS THE MIRROR OF FIRE
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE INEFFABLE NAME
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE MYSTERY OF BEING
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE ROPE OF THE ANGELS
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE SEVEN ETERNITIES
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE SEVEN FORCES OF NATURE
- PROPOSITION 1 - THE SEVEN RAYS OF THE SUN
- PROPOSITION 1 - TIME WAS NOT
- SONA, THE INDIAN RED RIVER, KEEPS WANDERING OFF ITS BED
- SQUARING THE CIRCLE IN HEAVEN
- TETRAGRAMMATON IS THE KEY TO OCCULT THEOGONY
- THE ATOMS OF SCIENCE ARE THE VIBRATIONS OF OCCULTISM
- THE COSMOGONY OF THE KALEVALA IS A FAITHFUL ECHO OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- THE HINDU PANTHEON DRESSED IN BIBLICAL GARB
- THE HOLY FOUR OF PYTHAGORAS
- THE MONADS OF LEIBNIZ ARE THE JIVAS OF OCCULTISM
- THE SIX-POINTED AND FIVE-POINTED STARS
- THE ZODIAC IS A VEIL THROWN OVER COSMOGENESIS
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - COSMOGENESIS FOR BABIES
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - COSMOGENESIS FOR GROWN-UPS

[1] Published under the title "How the Heavenly Snails clothed themselves in the Fabric of Darkness."

- VAST IS THE ANTIQUITY AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE ZODIAC
- WHAT IS MATTER AND WHAT IS FORCE?
- WORLDS OF BEING - EASTERN AND KABBALISTIC COSMOGONIES ARE IDENTICAL
- WORLDS OF BEING - THE ONE RAY STRIDES THROUGH 7 REGIONS IN 3 STEPS
- WORLDS OF BEING - THE PYTHAGOREAN WORLD, ROOT OF ILLUSION