

# *Samudra Manthanam*

## *Churning the Ocean of Milk*



Suras and Asuras (Gods and Daimons) twisting Shesha (the Great Serpent), round Mt. Mandara causing it to revolve. The Suras are at the one end of the serpent, the Asuras at the other.  
Built at Angkor-Wat by the same hands that had planned the pyramids of Egypt.

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## An Indian Ballad.<sup>1</sup>

Sad and bitter was the season,  
In the lonely days of yore,  
When the mighty demon's treason  
Vexed the world from shore to shore:

When the Suras were but mortal,  
And they fell by force or guile:  
While the Asurs<sup>2</sup> to Heaven's portal  
Near and nearer drew the while.

Came the gods by Brahmā bidden —  
Doubt and dread in every face;  
Long they held a council hidden —  
Strait and evil seemed their case.

Vishnu prayed they then to save them;  
Only him their trust they made:  
Deep the counsel which he gave them,  
When they looked to him for aid.

When they left the realms of pleasure,  
“Know ye not, Asuras wise,”  
Thus they said, “the priceless treasure  
Ocean hideth from our eyes?”

“Sweet is life the while one liveth,  
But death cometh soon or late;  
Win with us the draught which giveth  
Life exempt from change of fate.

“If to churning of the ocean  
Our united strength we bring,  
From the swift and swirling motion  
Will that virtuous liquor spring.”

Then they made a pact between them,  
Gods and demons in that tide;  
Joyously did they demean them  
As they laboured side by side.

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<sup>1</sup> By Wm. Waterfield, in *Indian Ballads and Other Poems*. London, Smith, Elder & Co, 1868; pp. 20-28.

<sup>2</sup> [The Hierarchy of Compassion, also known as Mānasaputras, Kumāras, Agnishvāttas, etc. They are the Great Breath coming-and-going as manvantara and pralaya, or motion manifested and unmanifested. Consult “Sons of the Fire-Mist” in the same Series, “The Masque of Love” in the homonymous series, and C.A. Bartzokas (Comp. & Ed.). *Compassion: The Spirit of Truth*, Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2005; v. 05.88.2021. This is our first Major Work. — ED. PHIL.]

CHURNING THE OCEAN OF MILK  
BY WILLIAM WATERFIELD

Mandar first, that mighty mountain,  
From his roots they wrenched and tore;  
Him with tree and rock and fountain  
For their churning-staff they bore.

Shesha next, the hundred-headed,  
World-support — the Serpent King —  
Round the mountain him, the dreaded,  
Wound they for their churning string.

Still their work remained unready;  
For their staff support they lack,  
Till by Vishnu's grace 'twas steady  
On the eternal Tortoise' back.

But the demons, danger scorning.  
Heedless seized the poison head,  
While the gods at Vishnu's warning  
Safely grasped the tail instead.

So they ranged their ranks asunder;  
So they toiled with might and glee:  
When was ever heard a wonder  
Like the churning of the sea!

Eager strove they, struggling, straining;  
Round the mountain whirled and swung;  
Shesha writhed, the task disdainning;  
High their crests the billows flung.

White the width of waters boiling  
Roared and burst around the hill:  
Ocean, all the labour foiling,  
Battled for his treasures still.

Lo! at last the waves are breaking!  
Lo! a prize of marvel won!  
From his manes the foam-drops shaking,  
Sea-green courser of the sun.

Lo! Airavat's<sup>1</sup> form stupendous!  
'Tis the beast that Indra rides.  
Spouting from his trunk tremendous  
Fountains o'er his monstrous sides.

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<sup>1</sup> [The white King Elephant, also known as Ardha-Matanga, "elephant of the clouds," Naga-malla, "fighting elephant, and Arkasodara, "brother of the sun."]



CHURNING THE OCEAN OF MILK  
BY WILLIAM WATERFIELD

Cow of plenty, boon-bestowing,  
Yieldeth now the rifled sea:  
Now with sweetest blossoms blowing,  
Swarga's<sup>1</sup> first and fairest tree.

Eager strove they, struggling, straining;  
Round and round the mountain swung;  
Shesha gasped, the toil sustaining;  
Loud the thundering echoes rung;

Whirled the waste of waters raging;  
White and wide the yeasty froth;  
Ocean fiercer warfare waging  
Held his treasures still in wrath.

Forms of brightness, silvern, golden.  
Moon and Sun by turn appear:  
They by Soma, Sūrya, holden,  
Rule the changes of the year.

Vishnu gained his lustrous jewel,  
Couch and disc instinct with life;  
Shiva won that weapon cruel  
None but he can bend in strife.

Shadowy shapes of perfect beauty  
Form amidst the creaming foam;  
Nymphs who — meed<sup>2</sup> of warrior's duty —  
Make the Swarga bowers their home.

Eager strove they, struggling, straining;  
Round the mountain whirled and swung;  
Shesha panted, uncomplaining;  
Flames from rocks and bushes sprung;

Billows raging, roaring, raving;  
Stirred the waters' utmost deep;  
Ocean's foamy banners waving  
Still their choicest treasures keep.

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<sup>1</sup> [In Hindu philosophy, a heavenly abode a.k.a. called Indraloka or Svarloka, on Mt. Meru. It corresponds to the Tibetan term Devachan. Cf. "[Kailāsa is] said to be the home of Śiva: the highest peak of Meru, the mountain used for the churning of the Ocean, where Śiva alone resorts, and where he alone can be seen." *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO "THE PURĀNAS") XIII p. 160]

<sup>2</sup> [reward]

CHURNING THE OCEAN OF MILK  
BY WILLIAM WATERFIELD

Dhanwantari,<sup>1</sup> sage physician,  
Next his priceless casket brings —  
Healing hand, if ill condition  
E'er might touch celestial things.

Now a vision comes enthralling —  
Lakshmi<sup>2</sup> comes, the queen of grace;  
Gods and demons prostrate falling  
Bow before that lovely face.

By the charmer unaffected  
Sur or Asur stood not one;  
Thus by rival hands neglected  
All their toil was nigh undone.

Slow, more slow, was Mandar turning:  
Calmer grew the angry main:  
Ocean from the fearful churning  
Deemed the prize his own again.

But the demons fainter growing  
Could not win so fair a bride;  
She, herself her hand bestowing,  
Seated her at Vishnu's side.

Eager strained they, struggling, striving;  
Round and round Mount Mandar swung:  
Shesha, drooping, scarce surviving, —  
On his jaws the poison hung.

Nigh those jaws of horror gaping  
All the demons faint and tire,  
Till beyond control escaping  
Burst around the stream of fire.

Then had earth and sky been blasted.  
Then the seven oceans blazed,  
Had the flaming torrent lasted —  
While the gods in stupor gazed →

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<sup>1</sup> [Physician of the devas, and god of Ayurvedic Medicine, in the *Vedas* and *Purānas*.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lakshmi, the passive or feminine counterpart of Vishnu, the creator and the preserver, is also called Ādi-Māyā. She is the “Mother of the World,” *Devamatrī*, the Venus Aphrodite of the Greeks; also Isis and Eve. While Venus is born from the sea-foam, Lakshmi springs out from the water at the churning of the sea; when born, she is so beautiful that all the gods fall in love with her. The Jews, borrowing their types wherever they could get them, made their first woman after the pattern of Lakshmi. It is curious that Viracocha, the Supreme Being in Peru, means, literally translated, “foam of the sea.” *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 259]

CHURNING THE OCEAN OF MILK  
BY WILLIAM WATERFIELD

But that Shiva, strong in aiding,  
Drained himself the fatal draught;  
While the throat-stain never fading  
Shows how fierce a cup he quaffed.

Lo, once more a sight surprising!  
Lo, two maidens side by side!  
Each amid the waters rising  
Bears a beaker from the tide.

Roaring sink the seas defeated:  
Rests the serpent: stands the hill:  
All their labour now completed,  
Let the toilers take their fill.

Then the Asuras dazed and hasting  
Seized the larger, fairer flask;  
While the gods the Amrit<sup>1</sup> tasting  
Gained the profit of the task.

Yet each eager demon seeker  
Boasted loud — “the prize is mine”;  
For from that deceitful beaker  
First was poured the enchanter, Wine.

Only of the Amrit flagon  
One more wary tasted too, —  
Rāhu<sup>2</sup> — spite his shape of dragon —  
Mingled with the Sura crew.

Sūrya soon the craft espying,  
Vishnu cleft his form in twain:  
But the head lives on undying —  
Mortal yet the fish-like train.

Sun and moon his hate pursuing  
Chases ever night and day:  
Woe for earth’s and man’s undoing,  
Should he seize them on their way!

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<sup>1</sup> [Immortality, water or elixir of life produced during the contest between the Devas and Asuras when churning the “milky sea.” Corresponds to the Greek ambrosia and the northern European mead. Look up “Proclus on Ambrosia and Nectar,” in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers Series. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Rāhu is the Dragon’s head; Ketu, his tail.* Cf. “Rāhu, mythologically is a *Daitya* — a giant, a Demi-god, the lower part of whose body ended in a Dragon or Serpent’s tail. During the churning of the Ocean, when the gods produced *Amrita* — the water of Immortality — he stole some of it, and drinking, became immortal. The Sun and Moon, who had detected him in his theft, denounced him to Vishnu, who placed him in the stellar spheres, the upper portion of his body representing the Dragon’s head and the lower (*Ketu*) the Dragon’s tail; the two being the ascending and descending nodes. Since then, Rāhu wreaks his vengeance on the Sun and Moon by occasionally swallowing [occulting] them. But this fable had another mystic meaning, since *Rāhu*, the Dragon’s head, played a prominent part in the mysteries of the Sun’s (*Vikartana*’s) initiation, when the candidate and the Dragon had a supreme fight.” *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 381]

## Commentary by Madame Blavatsky.

### The radiant essence of the Unknowable Deity curdles and spreads throughout the depths of the Great Breath (Space in Pralaya), the Eternal Parent.

Stanza III.4. THEN THE THREE (*triangle*) FALL INTO THE FOUR (*quaternary*). THE RADIANT ESSENCE BECOMES SEVEN INSIDE, SEVEN OUTSIDE (*a*). THE LUMINOUS EGG (*Hiranyagarbha*), WHICH IN ITSELF IS THREE (*the triple hypostases of Brahmā, or Vishnu, the three "Avasthās"*), CURDLES AND SPREADS IN MILK-WHITE CURDS THROUGHOUT THE DEPTHS OF MOTHER, THE ROOT THAT GROWS IN THE OCEAN OF LIFE (*b*).

(*b*) "The radiant essence curdled and spread throughout the depths" of Space. From an astronomical point of view this is easy of explanation: it is the "Milky Way," the world-stuff, or primordial matter in its first form. It is more difficult, however, to explain it in a few words or even lines, from the standpoint of Occult Science and Symbolism, as it is the most complicated of glyphs. Herein are enshrined more than a dozen symbols. To begin with, the whole pantheon of mysterious objects,<sup>1</sup> every one of them having some definite Occult meaning, extracted from the allegorical "churning of the ocean" by the Hindu gods. Besides *Amrita*, the water of life or immortality, "*Surabhi*" the "cow of plenty," called "the fountain of milk and curds," was extracted from this "Sea of Milk." Hence the universal adoration of the cow and bull, one the productive, the other the generative power in Nature: symbols connected with both the Solar and the Cosmic deities. The specific properties, for occult purposes, of the "fourteen precious things," being explained only at the fourth Initiation, cannot be given here;<sup>2</sup> but the following may be remarked. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* it is stated that the churning of the "Ocean of Milk" took place in the Satya-Yuga, the first age which immediately followed the "Deluge." As, however, neither the *Rig-Veda* nor *Manu* — both preceding Vaivasvata's "deluge," that of the bulk of the Fourth Race — mention this deluge, it is evident that it is not the "great" deluge, nor that which carried away Atlantis, nor even the deluge of Noah, which is meant here. This "churning" relates to a period before the earth's formation, and is in direct connection with that other universal legend, the various and contradictory versions of which culminated in the Christian dogma of the "War in Heaven," and the fall of the Angels.<sup>3</sup> The *Brāhmanas*, reproached by the Orientalists with their versions on the same subjects, often clashing with each other, *are pre-eminently occult works*, hence used purposely as blinds. They were allowed to survive for public use and property only because they were and are absolutely unintelligible to the masses. Otherwise they would have disappeared from circulation as long ago as the days of Akbar.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The "Fourteen precious things." The narrative or allegory is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* and others. The Japanese Secret Science of the Buddhist Mystics, the *Yamabūshi*, has "seven precious things." We will speak of them, hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> [Uchchaih-Sravas (*Sk.*). The model-horse; one of the fourteen precious things or jewels produced at the Churning of the Ocean by the gods. The white horse of Indra, called the Rāja of horses. *Theosophical Glossary*: Uchchaih-Sravas]

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. II; also, *Revelation*, xii.

<sup>4</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 67-68



## Breathing out Chaos-Theos-Kosmos, an all-in-all Triple Deity.

The Hindus have an endless series of allegories to express this idea.<sup>1</sup> In the primordial Chaos, before it became developed into the *Seven Oceans* (Sapta Samudra) — emblematical of the *seven gunas* (conditioned qualities) composed of *trigunas* (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, see *Purānas*) — lie latent both *Amrita* (immortality) and *Visha* (poison, death, evil). This allegory is found in the “Churning of the Ocean” by the gods. *Amrita* is beyond any *guna*, for it is UNCONDITIONED *per se*; yet when fallen into the phenomenal creation it got mixed up with EVIL, *Chaos*, with latent *Theos* in it, and before *Kosmos* was evolved. Hence, one finds Vishnu — standing here for eternal Law — periodically calling forth *Kosmos* into activity — churning out of the *primitive* Ocean (boundless Chaos) the *Amrita* of Eternity, reserved only for the gods and devas; and he has to employ in the task *Nāgas* and *Asuras* — demons in exoteric Hinduism. The whole allegory is highly philosophical, and we find it repeated in every philosophical System. Plato, having fully embraced the ideas of Pythagoras — who had brought them from India — compiled and published them in a form more intelligible than the mysterious numerals of the Greek Sage. Thus the *Kosmos* is “the Son” with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought and Matter.<sup>2</sup>

### Who is churning the Waters of Space?

#### Thirty-three divinities, higher and lower Elementals.

Apsaras [is] an Undine or Water-Nymph, from the Paradise or Heaven of Indra. The Apsarases are in popular belief the “wives of the gods” and called *Surānganās* and by a less honourable term, *Sumad-ātmajās* or the “daughters of pleasure,” for it is fabled of them that when they appeared at the churning of the Ocean neither Gods (Suras) nor Demons (Asuras) would take them for legitimate wives. *Urvasī* and several others of them are mentioned in the *Vedas*. In Occultism they are certain “sleep-producing” aquatic plants, and inferior forces of nature.<sup>3</sup>

[The genii of the Arab romances] are the *Preta*, *Yaksha*, *Dakini* — the lowest of the Hindu elementals, while the *Gandharvas*, *Vidyadharas* and even the *Apsaras* belong to the highest. Some of them — the former, are dangerously mischievous, while the latter are benevolent, and, if properly approached willing to impart to men useful knowledge of arts and sciences.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> [Of 3+4=7]

<sup>2</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 348

<sup>3</sup> *Theosophical Glossary*: Apsaras

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO “NOTES ON MODERN EGYPTIAN THEOSOPHY”) VI p. 169



**The Apsarases differ from the Gandharva Devas: the former are mere qualities and quantities. The latter, celestial singers, musicians, and instructors of mankind in the Secret Science. They are the Asuras or Daimons of the allegory.**<sup>1</sup>

. . . much in these so-called [Purānic] “fables” refers to astronomical allegories about constellations, asterisms, stars, and planets. Yet, while the *Gandharva* of the *Rig-Veda* may there be made to personify the fire of the Sun, the *Gandharva devas* are entities both of a physical and psychic character; while the Apsarases (with other Rudras) are both *qualities* and *quantities*. In short, if ever unravelled, the theogony of the Vedic Gods will reveal fathomless mysteries of Creation and being. Truly says Parāśara:

“These thirty-three divinities . . . exist age after age, and [their appearance and disappearance is] in the same manner as the sun sets and rises again.”<sup>2</sup>

### The ocean-churning allegory or Samudra Manthanam<sup>3</sup> explained.

That “Mystery of the Serpent” was this:

Our Earth, or rather *terrestrial life*, is often referred to in the Secret Teachings as the great Sea, “the sea of life” having remained to this day a favourite metaphor. The *Siphra di-Tseniuthā* speaks of primeval chaos and the evolution of the Universe after a destruction (*pralaya*), comparing it to an uncoiling serpent: — “Extending hither and

<sup>1</sup> [“The Gandharva of the *Veda* is the deity who knows and reveals the secrets of heaven and divine truths to mortals.

*Cosmically* — the Gandharvas are the aggregate powers of the solar fire, and constitute its Forces;  
*Psychically* — the intelligence residing in the *Sushumnā*, Solar ray, the highest of the *seven* rays;  
*Mystically* — the occult force in the Soma (the moon, or lunar plant) and the drink made of it;  
*Physically* — the phenomena, and *spiritually* — the noumenal causes of *Sound* and the ‘Voice of Nature.’

Hence, they are called the 6,333 ‘heavenly’ Singers and musicians of Indra’s loka who personify (even in number) the various and manifold sounds in Nature, both above and below. In the latter allegories they are said to have mystic power over women, and *to be fond of them*. The esoteric meaning is plain. They are one of the forms, if not the prototypes, of Enoch’s angels, the Sons of God, who saw that the daughters of men were fair (*Genesis vi*) who married them, and taught the daughters of the Earth *the secrets of Heaven*.” *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 523 *fn.* [Illustration above: Apsarases at Angkor-Wat]

<sup>2</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 585; [& quoting *Vishnu-Purāna*, Bk. I, ch. xv; Wilson, Vol. II, p. 29]

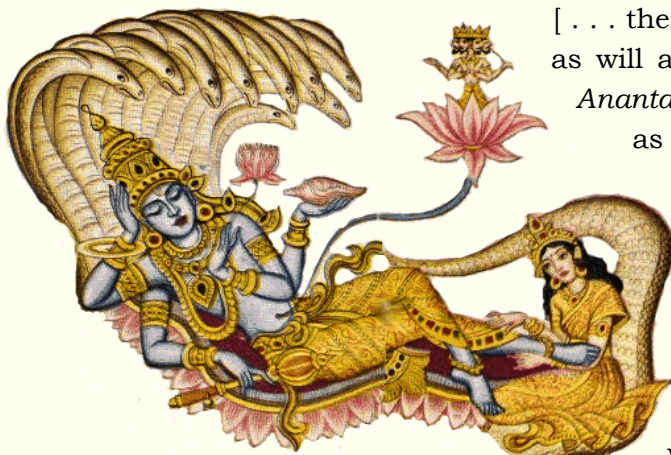
<sup>3</sup> One of the most famous episodes in the *Vishnu-Purāna*, *Bhāgavata Purāna*, and *Mahabharata*. *Samudra* is the Sanskrit word for “gathering together of waters” that are later personified as Ocean. With the Greeks, the primeval Ocean (Chaos in its masculine aspect, the Amrita of Eternity) is the Father of the “River-gods.” (*Secret Doctrine*, I p. 345 *fn.*) *Manthana(m)* means kindling fire by friction (*i.e.*, by rubbing pieces of wood together), agitating, churning milk into butter; also the churning stick.

[*Note to Students*: *Manthanam* has been epitomised and personified in Prometheus, the Logoic Sacrifice. For the etymology of the term, look up *Compassion: the Spirit of Truth*, op. cit., p. 26, *fn.* 4. — ED. PHIL.]

thither, its tail in its mouth, the head twisting on its neck, it is enraged and angry. . . . It watches and conceals itself. *Every thousand Days* it is manifested.”<sup>1</sup>

**At the churning of the Ocean of Amrita, the Water of Immortality, the Suras and the Asuras twisted Shesha, the Great Serpent, rope-like round Mt. Mandara causing it to revolve. The Gods were at the one end of the serpent, the Daimons at the other.**

The “pit” into which the Eastern Initiate was made to descend was, as shown before, Pātāla, one of the seven regions of the nether world, over which ruled Vāsuki, the great “snake God.” This pit, Pātāla, has in the Eastern Symbolism precisely the same manifold meaning as is found by Mr. J. Ralston Skinner in the Hebrew word *shiac* in its application to the case in hand. For it was the synonym of Scorpio — Pātāla’s depths being “impregnated with the brightness of the new Sun” — represented by the “newly born” into the glory; and Pātāla was and is in a sense, “a pit, a grave, the place of death, and the door of Hadēs or Sheol” — as, in the partially exoteric Initiations in India, the candidate had to pass through the matrix of the heifer before proceeding to Pātāla. In its non-mystic sense it is the Antipodes — America being referred to in India as Pātāla. But in its symbolism it meant all that, and much more. The fact alone that Vāsuki, the ruling Deity of Pātāla, is represented in the Hindu Pantheon as the great Naga (Serpent) — who was used by the Gods and Asuras as a rope round the mountain Mandara, at the churning of the ocean for Amrita, the water of immortality — connects him directly with Initiation.<sup>2</sup>



[ . . . the serpent is a very significant symbol, as will appear from the names *Shesha* and *Ananta* given to it].

Shesha is represented as a serpent with a thousand heads, which is said to be the couch and canopy of Vishnu, when he sleeps during his intervals of creation. Sometimes Shesha is shown as the supporter of the world and sometimes as the upholder of the seven Pātālas (hells, earths, etc.).

Whenever he yawns, there are earthquakes. At the end of the Kalpa he vomits forth fire and so destroys all the creation. At the Churning of the Ocean (of Space), Shesha was twisted round the Mountain Mandara, and used as a great rope to cause it to revolve. The Gods were at the one end of the rope and the Demons at the other. The hood of Shesha, the thousand-headed cobra, is called the “Island of Jewels,” and his palace is said to be “jewelled walled.” But these gems are not of earth, as the merest tyro in symbology will at once perceive; they are the Jewels of Wisdom and Self-knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 504; [& quoting *Zohar*, III, 9b, 10a, Brody ed.; Cremona ed., iii, fol. 4a, col. 14. Cf. Isaac Myer, *Qabbalah*, pp. 416-17.]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRACES OF THE MYSTERIES), XIV p. 284

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (FOOTNOTES TO “THE PURĀNAS”) XIII p. 159





The spirit of Fire (or Heat), which stirs up, fructifies, and develops into concrete form everything (from its ideal prototype), which is born of WATER or primordial Earth, evolved Brahmā — with the Hindus. The lotus flower, represented as growing out of Vishnu’s navel — that God resting on the waters of space and his Serpent of Infinity — is the most graphic allegory ever made: the Universe evolving from the central Sun, the POINT, the ever-concealed germ. Lakshmī, who is the female aspect of Vishnu,<sup>1</sup> and who is also called *Padma*, the lotus, is likewise shown floating at “Creation,” on a lotus flower, and during the “churning of the ocean” of space, springing from the “sea of milk,” like Venus from the froth.

. . . Then seated on a lotus  
Beauty’s bright goddess, peerless Śrī, arose  
Out of the waves . . .

sings an English Orientalist and poet, Sir Monier Williams.<sup>2, 3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Lakshmī is Venus–Aphrodite and, like the latter, she sprang from the froth of the ocean with a lotus in her hand. In the *Rāmāyana* she is called Padma. [See “Plotinus on the Dual Aphrodite,” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Indian Wisdom*, etc., Oxford, 1875, p. 499: poetical rendition of *Vishnu-Purāna*, Bk. I, ch. 9]

<sup>3</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 379-80

## Discussion with Madame Blavatsky.

From the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society*. Seventh Meeting, held 21<sup>st</sup> February 1889. Presiding Chairman, T.B. Harbottle.<sup>1</sup>

**B. Keightley** You refer here, speaking about the World-stuff and the primordial matter, to the Hindu allegory of the “Churning of the Ocean of Space.” . . . Can you give us an idea of how the analogies of “churning the ocean,” “the cow of plenty,” and “the war in heaven” are related to each other and to the cosmogonic process?

**Blavatsky** Now fancy only this: I have got to give a thing which begins at non-being and ends at the end of the Mahā-Pralaya, and I have got to give it in one of the séances at the Blavatsky Lodge in five minutes. How is it possible to put such a question as that? If you gave me one-twentieth part of the first question, I may be able to do it. In the first place, do you know what the “churning of the ocean” means with the Hindus?

**B. Keightley** I know the story, the allegory.

**Blavatsky** But what does it mean in reality? It simply means an allegorical representation of the unseen and the unknown primeval intelligences, the atoms of our occult science, fashioning and differentiating the shoreless ocean of the radiant essence. It means that it is the atoms which are churning the ocean, and that they are differentiating the matter. It is simply an allegorical representation.

**B. Keightley** It refers also to a process you mention later on, of the vortical movements.

**Blavatsky** Most assuredly; but this is one of the details. I speak of the general aspect of the thing. This is the allegorical representation of that period. Now to give the analogies between the “churning” and “war in heaven” is rather difficult. This war began at the first vibration of Manvantaric dawn and will end at the blast of the last trumpet. That is to say, the “war in heaven” is going on eternally. Theologians may have taken one period and made of it all kinds of things, e.g., the fall of man — the picture that is given in the Revelation, which has entirely another meaning in reality — but this war in heaven is going on eternally.

**Harbottle** As long as there is differentiation, there must be war.

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<sup>1</sup> [The *Transactions* were 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, and (3) De Zirkoff B. (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. 218-20). Typography by ED. PHIL.]



**Blavatsky** You cannot say otherwise. It is just as light and darkness fighting and trying each to overcome the other. Differentiation means contrast, and contrasts will be always fighting.

**Harbottle** But there are various stages of the war in heaven, referred to under different names.

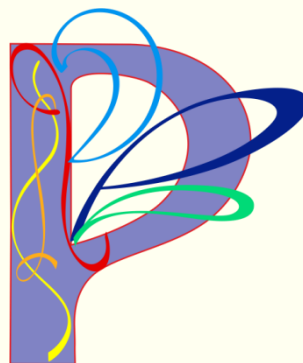
**Blavatsky** Most assuredly. There is the astronomical and the physical, and the war in heaven, when the first Manvantara begins in general; then for everyone every time there is a war in heaven. There is a war in heaven of the fourteen Manus who are supposed to be the presiding genii of our Manvantaric plane, the Seed Manus and the Root Manus. The war in heaven means that there is a struggle and an adjustment, because everything tends to harmonize and equilibrate; everything must equilibrate before it can assume any kind of shape. The elements of which each one of us is composed are always fighting, one crowding out the other; and we change every moment, just as some of your men of science say. Or as one says when he is sick: "I am not anymore the man I was; I am quite a different man." It is quite true. We change every seven years of our lives, sometimes becoming worse than we were before.

**Harbottle** Then there really does not seem to be much analogy between that churning and the other, because that is a special process.

**Blavatsky** It refers to the churning by the gods, when the Nāgas came and some of them stole of the Amrita, and there was war between gods and Asuras, and the gods were worsted. This refers to the first portion, to the extension of the universe and the differentiation of primordial, primeval matter.

**Hall** Even literally, "churning" means differentiation.

**Blavatsky** Oh, my dear Hall, you are a pundit! But churning means also something else. There are seven symbolical meanings to everything, not one. This is only cosmogonically speaking. That is what it refers to, but there are others, too. You can remember in *Revelation* that there is a thing in the twelfth or the eighth chapter when the woman comes.



## Suggested reading for students.<sup>1</sup>



### From our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series.

- ALCHEMY IS THE QUINTESSENCE IN NATURE'S HIGHEST CORRELATIONS
- ALLEGORIES AND MYTHS UNDERLYING PURANIC COSMOLOGY
- BLAVATSKY AND MEAD ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN
- 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**SECRET DOCTRINE'S FIRST PROPOSITION SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- PROPOSITION 1 - CHAOS TO SENSE, LATENT DEITY TO REASON
- PROPOSITION 1 - CROSS + FIRE
- PROPOSITION 1 - DAWN OF CHAOS-THEOS-KOSMOS
- PROPOSITION 1 - DESIRE PROPER IS BEING
- PROPOSITION 1 - DIAGRAM
- PROPOSITION 1 - DIAGRAM NOTES<sup>1</sup>
- 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

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<sup>1</sup> Published under the title "How the Heavenly Snails clothed themselves in the Fabric of Darkness."

**SECRET DOCTRINE'S FIRST PROPOSITION SERIES  
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- 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

