

TEXTS FOR THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS

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FOREWORD

We have gathered together in this pamphlet the Theosophical teachings necessary for class work. They are in the form of extracts taken from the most important and voluminous, hence also the most expensive, works of H. P. Blavatsky. That is why they are now presented in this form, both practical and at a price accessible to all.

The first two extracts are from the *Secret Doctrine*, the monumental textbook which answers all questions on religion, science and philosophy, and which offers a complete system of thought that is essentially synthetic and harmonious, and has its origin in the Ancient Orient, that Orient which today is forgotten in the Orient itself! The third extract is from the first important work of the same erudite author, H.P. Blavatsky, - *Isis Unveiled* - which was published in 1877.

The first extract answers the question: "What is Theosophy?" So many strange and fantastic things are given out under this sacred name of Theosophy, that it has become necessary that students should begin by learning that Theosophy is ancient and immemorial, that it is a consistent and fully evolved system, full of common sense and susceptible of being applied in daily life.

The second extract contains the Three Fundamental Propositions, well-known in the ancient Wisdom-Religion. These are the philosophical and metaphysical answers Theosophy gives to the problems of God, Divine Law, and Soul Evolution. Their ethical bearing is universal, and they enable the student to widen his vision and deepen his understanding in all spheres of life.

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The third extract gives the famous Ten Points, so necessary for us to understand if we want to grasp the fundamental ideas of occult science. Psychism and unconscious practices in magic are the grave dangers of our cycle, and these ten points will allow the student to escape the pitfalls which ruin not only physical health but also character and intellect.

These three texts are constantly in use at our study classes; years of experience have proven their value and beneficent influence. Reiterated and attentive study of these passages, and their constant exposition at the meetings, have helped thousands of students in the West, and it is our hope that this pamphlet will do the same for the Indian learners.

THE ANCIENT SOURCE

THE FIRST ITEM OF *THE SECRET DOCTRINE*

(Vol. I, pp. 272-3)

THE Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: e.g., even in the exotericism of the Purânas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs. The flashing gaze of those seers has penetrated into the very kernel of matter, and recorded the soul of things there, where an ordinary profane, however learned, would have perceived but the external work of form. But modern science believes not in the "soul of things," and hence will reject the whole system of ancient cosmogony. It is useless to say that the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. That for long ages, the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives in learning, not teaching. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts; i.e., men who have develop-

ed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organisations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions-so obtained as to stand as independent evidence-of other adepts, and by centuries of experiences.

GOD – LAW – BEING

THREE FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS

(S.D., Vol. I, pp. 13-17)

BEFORE the reader proceeds to the consideration of the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan which form the basis of the present work, it is absolutely necessary that he should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought to which his attention is invited. These basic ideas are few in number and on their clear apprehension depends the understanding of all that follows; therefore no apology is required for asking the reader to make himself familiar with them first, before entering on the perusal of the work itself.

The Secret Doctrine establishes three fundamental propositions:-

(a) An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought-in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable."

To render these ideas clearer to the general reader, let 'him set out with the postulate that there is one absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being. This Infinite and Eternal Cause - dimly formulated in the "Unconscious" and "Unknowable" of current European philosophy

- is the rootless root of "all that was, is, or ever shall be." It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is "Be-ness" rather than Being (in Sanskrit, *Sat*), and is beyond all thought or speculation.

This "Be-ness" is symbolised in the Secret Doctrine under two aspects. On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, the one thing which no human Mind can either exclude from any conception, or conceive

of by itself. On the other, absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. Even our Western thinkers have shown that Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolises change, its essential characteristic. This latter aspect of the one Reality, is also symbolised by the term "The Great Breath," a symbol sufficiently graphic to need no further elucidation. Thus, then, the first fundamental axiom of the Secret Doctrine is this metaphysical ONE ABSOLUTE - BE-NESS - symbolised by finite intelligence as the theological Trinity.

It may, however, assist the student if a few further explanations are given here.

Herbert Spencer has. of late so far modified his Agnosticism, as to assert that the nature of the "First Cause,"¹ which the Occultist more logically derives from the "Causeless Cause,"

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the "Eternal," and the "Unknowable," may be essentially the same as that of the Consciousness which wells up within us : in short, that the impersonal reality pervading the Kosmos is the pure noumenon of thought. This advance on his part brings him very near to the esoteric and Vedantin tenet."²

Parabrahm (the One Reality, the Absolute) is the field of Absolute Consciousness, *i.e.*, that Essence which is out of all relation to conditioned existence, and of which conscious existence is a conditioned symbol. But once that we pass in thought from this (to us) Absolute Negation, duality supervenes in the contrast of Spirit (or consciousness) and Matter, Subject and Object.

Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.

Considering this metaphysical triad as the Root from which proceeds all manifestation, the great Breath assumes the character of precosmic Ideation. It is the *fons et origo* of force and of all individual consciousness, and supplies the guiding intelligence in the vast scheme of cosmic Evolution. On the other, hand, precosmic root-substance (*Mulaprakriti*) is that aspect of the Absolute which

¹ The "first" presupposes necessarily something which is the "first brought forth," "the first in time, space, and rank" and therefore finite and conditioned. The "first" *cannot be the absolute*, for it is a manifestation. Therefore, Eastern Occultism calls the Abstract All the "Causeless One Cause," the "Rootless Root," and limits the "First Cause" to the Logos, in the sense that Plato gives to this term.

² See Mr. Subba Row's four able lectures on the Bhagavad Gita, "Theosophist," February, 1887.

underlies all the objective planes of Nature; just as pre-Cosmic Ideation is the root of all individual consciousness, so pre-Cosmic Substance is the substratum of matter in the various grades of its differentiation.

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Hence it will be apparent that the contrast of these two aspects of the Absolute is essential to the existence of the "Manifested Universe." Apart from Cosmic Substance, Cosmic Ideation could not manifest as individual consciousness, since it is only through a vehicle³ of matter that consciousness wells up as "I am I," a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity. Again, apart from Cosmic Ideation, Cosmic Substance would remain an empty abstraction, and no emergence of consciousness could ensue.

The "Manifested Universe," therefore, is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its Existence as "manifestation." But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested Universe; there is "that" which links spirit to matter, subject to object.

This something, at present unknown to Western speculation, is called by the occultists Fohat. It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation, the "Thought Divine" transmitted and made manifest through the Dhyan Chohans,⁴ the Architects of the visible World. Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualised and attains to self - or reflective - consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind

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and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life.

The following summary will afford a clearer idea to the reader.

³ Called in Sanskrit: "Upadhi."

⁴ Called by Christian theology: Archangels, Seraphs, etc., etc.

(1). The ABSOLUTE, the *Parabrahm* of the Vedantins or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.

(2). The first manifestation, the impersonal, and, in philosophy, *unmanifested* Logos, the precursor of the "*manifested*." This is the "First Cause," the "Unconscious" of European Pantheists.

(3). Spirit-matter, LIFE; the "Spirit of the Universe," the Purusha and Prakriti, or the *second* Logos.

(4). Cosmic Ideation, MAHAT or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature also called MAHA-BUDDHI.

THE ONE REALITY: its dual aspects in the conditioned Universe.

Further, the Secret Doctrine affirms:-

(b) The Eternity of the Universe in taro as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," called "the manifesting stars," and the "sparks of Eternity." "The Eternity

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of the Pilgrim"⁵ is like a wink of the Eye of Self-Existence (Book of Dzyan). "The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux."

This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of feature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.

Moreover, the Secret Doctrine teaches: -

(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul - a spark of the former-through the Cycle of Incarnation (or

⁵ "Pilgrim" is the appellation given to our *Monad* (the two in one) during its cycle of incarnations. It is the only immortal and, eternal principle in us, being an indivisible part of the integral whole the Universal Spirit, from which it emanates, and into which it is absorbed at the end of the cycle. When it is said to emanate from the one spirit, an awkward and incorrect expression has to be used, for lack of appropriate words in English. The Vedantins call it Sutrātma (Thread-Soul), but their explanation, too, differs somewhat from that of the occultists; to explain which difference, however, is left to the Vedantins themselves.

"Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (divine Soul) can have an independent (conscious) existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth principle, - or the OVER-SOUL, - has (a)

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passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara and (b) acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest archangel (Dhyani-Buddha). The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and incarnations.

PROPOSITIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY

TEN ITEMS FROM ISIS UNVEILED

(Vol. II, p. 587 *et seq.*)

TO comprehend the principles of natural law involved in the several phenomena hereinafter described, the reader must keep in mind the fundamental propositions of the Oriental philosophy which we have successively elucidated. Let us recapitulate very briefly:

- 1st There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law-eternal, immutable, ever active. Apparent miracle is but the operation of forces antagonistic to what Dr. W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S. - a man of great learning but little knowledge - calls "the well-ascertained laws of nature." Like many of his class, Dr. Carpenter ignores the fact that there may be laws once "known," now unknown to science.
- 2nd Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal, and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.
- 3rd Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third - the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man

succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

- 4th Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.
- 5th Arcane knowledge misapplied, is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or WISDOM.
- 6th Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.
- 7th All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their record upon the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known.
- 8th Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality; among some peoples seership naturally prevails, among others mediumship: Some are addicted to sorcery, and transmit its secret rules of practice from generation to generation, with a range of psychical phenomena, more or less wide, as the result.
- 9th One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the case of some

mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction - "a brown study," as some call it.

10th The corner-stone of MAGIC is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man.

To sum up all in a few words, MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will.