

# THEOSOPHY on

## The Milky Way, The Pleiades, and Sirius

The firm foundation for all study of Theosophy is the Three Fundamental Propositions of “The Secret Doctrine.” Both volumes of that book (Vol. 1 “Cosmogogenesis” and Vol. 2 “Anthropogenesis”) begin with their own three fundamental propositions but those of Vol. 1 are most applicable to the present study.

In brief they are: **(1)** There is ONE absolute, infinite, eternal, omnipresent, impersonal Divine *Principle*, the only unchanging Reality, the Causeless Cause, Rootless Root, and Sourceless Source of all; some call it “God” but Theosophy, knowing how this word generally has a very different meaning, prefers to avoid that term, favouring instead “The Absolute,” “Deity,” “Absolute Abstract Space,” “Parabrahm,” etc., IT (not “He” or “She”) is not a *Being* but the ultimate unconditioned “Be-ness” Itself; **(2)** There is an incessant cyclic appearance and disappearance of the Universe and of everything in it, cycles within cycles, wheels within wheels, all occurring within the one great Universal Life-Cycle; just as planets have their own birth, death, and eventual rebirth in accordance with Cyclic Law, so does every solar system, galaxy, and eventually the entire manifested Universe itself, the Universe being the multi-layered product of the Logos, i.e. of the divine evolutionary Energy that radiates forth from the Absolute; **(3)** There is an ongoing progressive inner evolution and unfoldment of all life, governed for each human soul by the process of reincarnation and the workings of the Law of Karma, which is the law of self-created destiny through cause and effect, action and reaction.

These are all elaborated upon from p. 13-17 of the Proem of Vol. 1. H. P. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas or Masters of Wisdom (who wrote independently and repeatedly that They were the real inspirers and authors of that book) do not ask us to *believe* them but merely to try to *understand* them, in order to be able to clearly understand everything else that follows in the book. With these Three Fundamentals in mind, we can begin to explore more specifically some of the majestic features of the living Universe around us . . .

### THE MILKY WAY

Modern science tells us that our own solar system (consisting of our sun, our Earth, and the other planets best known to us) is located at the edge of one of the spiral arms – the one which has been named the Orion Arm – of the Milky Way Galaxy. Scientists currently estimate that there are a *further* 100-billion to 400-billion solar systems within the Milky Way Galaxy. They also say that there are millions or billions of *other* galaxies, each of which may contain a similar number of solar systems. The collectivity of these many galaxies is what constitutes the Universe.

The Milky Way is also said to contain a huge mass of dust and gas. “Dust” and “gas” sound rather dull and unappealing but what they *actually* are in this case, according to the teachings of Theosophy, is particularly interesting.



In the first volume of her major work “The Secret Doctrine,” H. P. Blavatsky translates Seven Stanzas on the subject of Cosmogogenesis or Cosmic Evolution from an ancient and still publicly inaccessible esoteric text referred to as the Secret Book of Dzyan. The third of those Stanzas is titled “THE AWAKENING OF KOSMOS” and, describing the cyclic rebirth and re-manifestation of the Universe, says in its fourth shloka or verse:

“THE LUMINOUS EGG, WHICH IN ITSELF IS THREE, CURDLES AND SPREADS IN MILK-WHITE CURDS THROUGHOUT THE DEPTHS OF MOTHER, THE ROOT THAT GROWS IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN OF LIFE.”

Commenting on this, HPB writes:

““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. . . . The curds are the first differentiation, and probably refer also to that cosmic matter which is supposed to be the origin of the “Milky Way” – the matter we know. This “matter,” which, according to the revelation received from the primeval Dhyani-Buddhas, is, during the periodical sleep of the Universe, of the ultimate tenuity conceivable to the eye of the perfect Bodhisatva – this matter, radical and cool, becomes, at the first reawakening of cosmic motion, scattered through Space; appearing, when seen from the Earth, in clusters and lumps, like curds in thin milk. These are the seeds of the future worlds, the “Star-stuff.”” (“The Secret Doctrine” Vol. 1, p. 67, 69)

This is further elaborated on in “Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge” where HPB informs her students regarding the Milky Way that –

“It is the store-house of the materials from which the stars, planets and other celestial bodies are produced. Matter in this state does not exist on earth; but that which is already differentiated and found on earth is also found on other planets and *vice-versa*. But, as I understand, before reaching the planets from its condition in the Milky Way, matter has first to pass through many stages of differentiation.” (p. 113-114)

“. . . all the planets in our solar system . . . began life as wanderers over the face of the infinite Kosmos. They detached themselves from the common storehouse of already prepared material, the Milky Way (which is nothing more or less than the quite developed world-stuff, all the rest in space being the crude material, as yet invisible to us); then, starting on their long journey they first settled in life where conditions were prepared for them by Fohat, and gradually became suns. Then each sun, when its Pralaya arrived, was resolved into millions and millions of fragments. Each of these fragments moved to and fro in space collecting fresh materials, as it rolled on, like an avalanche, until it came to a stop through the laws of attraction and repulsion, and became a planet in our own, as in other systems, beyond our telescopes. The sun’s fragments will become just such planets after the Solar pralaya.” (p. 145-146)

To summarise, the point is being made that at least part of what gives the Milky Way its milky or cloudy appearance (to us) is that it contains scatterings of Primordial Matter “in its first form.” It is thus the “storehouse” of matter in a state so extremely rarefied and so close to its original primordial state – the latter of which is often called by Theosophists “Mulaprakriti” or pre-cosmic root substance, the Eternal Matter – as to be inconceivable to us.

The term “Central Sun,” “Central Spiritual Sun,” or “Great Central Sun,” is used numerous times in Theosophical literature. It does not refer to the sun we see in the sky nor to any material cosmic

body. Information as to what this admittedly somewhat vague term really means is provided in “The Secret Doctrine” Vol. 2, p. 240:

“This “central sun” of the Occultists, which even Science is obliged to accept astronomically, for it cannot deny the presence in Sidereal Space of a central body in the milky way, a point unseen and mysterious, the ever-hidden centre of attraction of our Sun and system – this “Sun” is viewed differently by the Occultists of the East. While the Western and Jewish Kabalists (and even some pious modern astronomers) claim that in this sun the God-head is specially present . . . the Eastern Initiates maintain that, as the *supra-divine* Essence of the Unknown Absolute is equally in every domain and place, the “Central Sun” is simply the centre of Universal life-Electricity; the reservoir within which that divine radiance, already differentiated at the beginning of every *creation*, is focussed. Though still in a *laya*, or neutral condition, it is, nevertheless, the one attracting, as also the ever-emitting, life Centre.”

The last part is so important as to warrant repetition:

“the “Central Sun” is simply **the centre of Universal life-Electricity; the reservoir within which that divine radiance**, already differentiated at the beginning of every *creation*, **is focussed**. Though **still in a *laya*, or neutral condition**, it is, nevertheless, **the one attracting, as also the ever-emitting, life Centre.**”

Also important is the implication made by HPB that *a vital connection and relation exists between the “Central Spiritual Sun” and the Milky Way.*

More specifically, “a central body in the milky way, a point unseen and mysterious, the ever-hidden centre of attraction” (and which science cannot deny) is the connection-point with that equally or even more mysterious “focus” of DIVINE RADIANCE.

And what is that “central body” or “point” within the Milky Way? Science tells us that the entire Milky Way “orbits around a hub of sorts called the Galactic Centre, with a supermassive black hole called Sagittarius A\* (pronounced “A-star”) at its core.” If exoteric science and Esoteric Science could but work together, many complementary and remarkable discoveries and understandings might be arrived at.

It was only in the 1960s that astronomers first began to suspect that the Milky Way is actually of spiral formation or, as they express it, a “barred spiral galaxy.” This is now common knowledge.

Stanza V, shloka 4, in Vol. 1 of “The Secret Doctrine,” published in 1888, says that “FOHAT [i.e. the Essence of Cosmic Electricity] TRACES SPIRAL LINES” and in “The Secret Doctrine Dialogues” we find HPB declaring:

“It is a law that everything proceeds spirally, it never goes in straight lines. . . . There is nothing in this world that can proceed otherwise than in spirals, or on such things as that, but never in the direct line, never.” (p. 358)

This may be part of the reason why “The Secret Doctrine” Vol. 2, p. 356, says that “figuratively, the astral light, the milky way, and also the path of the Sun to the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, as well as the circles of the Sidereal or Tropical year, were always called “Serpents” in the allegorical and mystic phraseology of the adepts.”

## THE PLEIADES

“These Pleiades are the most occult constellations that exist. . . . They are very occult, because they are connected with all the Rishis, too; they have an interchange of thought with the Rishis.” (*The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*” p. 319-320)

“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” (*Job 38:31*)

It would be no exaggeration to say that the New Age Movement has gone mad with an abundance of fantastical and often absurd science-fiction type claims about the Pleiades. Their esoteric significance was first brought to public attention in modern times by H. P. Blavatsky and mainly in the two volumes of “The Secret Doctrine.” Since then, many more things have been said and written on this subject by a myriad of writers, including some later Theosophists whose work stands wholly contrary to that of HPB and her Teachers. The aim here is simply to find out exactly what the original Theosophical teachings have to say about the Pleiades.



It is useful to be aware that there is a constellation called Ursa Major, also known as “The Great Bear,” “The Big Dipper,” and “The Plough.” In India it is referred to as the “Saptarishi,” which means “Seven Rishis,” the Sanskrit term “Rishi” meaning a Sage or Saint. It consists of seven bright stars.

These Saptarishi have a connection, both in Hindu mythology and in esotericism, with the Pleiades. The Pleiades, also known as the “Seven Sisters,” is a star cluster located in the constellation of Taurus and although having several thousand stars there are said to be six of particular brightness and a seventh which is hidden or not visible to physical sight.

In “The Secret Doctrine” it is explained:

“As to the mysterious constellation of the Seven Rishis in the great Bear, if Egypt made them sacred to “the oldest genitrix, Typhon” – India has connected all these symbols ages ago with time or *Yuga* revolutions, and the Saptarishis are intimately connected with our present age – the Dark *Kali Yug*.”

She goes on to say that in the Bhagavata Purana scripture, also called the Shrimad Bhagavatam, the “great Circle of Time” is represented as a tortoise and “*across its loins* the Seven Rishis.”

“. . . it is they, the Seven Rishis, who mark the time and the duration of events in our septenary life cycle. They are as mysterious as their supposed wives, the Pleiades, of whom only one – she who hides – has proven virtuous. The Pleiades (Krittika) are the nurses of Karttikeya, the God of War (Mars of the Western Pagans), who is called the Commander of the celestial armies – or rather of the Siddhas (translated Yogis in heaven, and holy sages on the earth) – “Siddha-sena,” which would make Karttikeya identical with Michael, the “leader of the celestial hosts” and, like himself, a virgin *Kumara*. Verily he is the “Guha,” the *mysterious one*, as much so as are the Saptarishis and the Krittika (seven Rishis and the Pleiades), for the interpretation of all these combined, reveal to the adept the greatest mysteries of occult nature.” (Vol. 2, p. 549)

A couple of pages further on, p. 551, we find: “. . . the Pleiades are the central group of the system of sidereal symbology. They are situated in the neck of the constellation of *Taurus*, regarded . . . in the Kabala and Eastern Esotericism, as the *sidereal septenate* born from the first manifested side of the upper triangle, the concealed  $\Delta$ . This manifested side is *Taurus*, the Symbol of ONE (the figure 1), . . . The Pleiades (Alcyone, especially), are thus considered, even in astronomy, as the central point around which *our Universe of fixed stars revolves*, the focus from which, and into which the *divine breath*, MOTION, works incessantly during the Manvantara.”

More is revealed about the Pleiades elsewhere in “The Secret Doctrine,” such as:

“Astraea is *Virgo*, the constellation of the Zodiac. Astronomically it has a very plain significance, and one which gives the Key to the occult meaning. But it is inseparable from *Leo*, the sign that precedes it, and from the Pleiades and their sisters, the Hyades, of which Aldebaran is the brilliant leader. All of these are connected with the periodical renovations of the earth, with regard to its continents – even Ganymedes, who in astronomy is Aquarius.” (Vol. 2, p. 785)

“The *Pleiades*, as all know, are the seven stars beyond the Bull, which appear at the beginning of spring. They have a very occult meaning in the Hindu esoteric philosophy, and are connected with *sound* and other mystic principles in Nature.” (Vol. 1, p. 648)

“Again, number seven is closely connected with the occult significance of the Pleiades, those seven daughters of Atlas, “the six present, the seventh *hidden*.” In India they are connected with their nursling, the war god, Karttikeya. It is the *Pleiades* (in Sanskrit, *Krittika*) who gave the god their name, for Karttikeya is the planet Mars, *astronomically*.” (Vol. 2, p. 618-619)

William Q. Judge, closest and most trusted colleague of HPB, once wrote, shortly after she had passed away: “Speaking to those who know and believe that HPB was all the time in communication with the Masters in their retreats somewhere on the globe, I can say that a serious series of consultations was held among them as to what should go into *The Secret Doctrine*, and that it was plainly said that the book was to be done in such a manner as to compel the earnest student to dig out many profound truths which in a modern book would be announced specifically, and included in the regular course. It was also said, from the same source, that this age, being a transition one in all respects, that full revelations were not for this generation. But enough was to be given out in the manner described, and plainly, to make it substantially a revelation. All students, then, who are in earnest will do well not to pass carelessly over the pages of any part of the book.” (from “About The Secret Doctrine,” p. 90-91 of Countess Wachtmeister’s book “Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and The Secret Doctrine”)

**What then might we carefully and attentively “dig out” from these various statements? Let us see . . .**

\* The Saptarishi (The Great Bear) is associated with Cycles of Time and especially connected with the Kali Yuga, the Dark Age presently underway on our Earth. They are symbolised as lying “across the loins” of the Circle of Time, thus suggesting a possible connection with sexual or generative action.

\* Although Hinduism implies a connection between the seven stars of the “Great Bear” and seven great Rishis or enlightened beings who periodically appear on our planet to help and teach mankind, *Theosophy does not* affirm or imply that such a connection is genuinely the case. HPB does say that the so-called “Saptarishi” is “mysterious” but says no more.

\* HPB once warned: “Those who fall off from our *living* human Mahatmas to fall into the *Saptarishi* – the Star Rishis, are no Theosophists.” (“She Being Dead Yet Speaketh” article) And WQJ elaborated: “The Saptarishis as meant by H.P.B. are in a very advanced class of elementals, able sometimes to communicate with man, and by their apparent knowledge to make him suppose them to be high spiritual beings . . . by communicating with them one is deflected from the normal line of human development.” (“William Q. Judge Theosophical Articles” Vol. 2, p. 488-489) Whether the “Saptarishi” spoken of *here* by HPB and WQJ are genuinely connected with the so-called “Saptarishi” *constellation* is not made clear but either way it is apparent that Theosophy does not equate the latter with anything of a purely spiritual and beneficent nature.

\* Of the “Seven Sisters” of the Pleiades, “only *one* – she who hides – has proven virtuous.” In ancient Greek mythology the names of these sisters were Alcyone, Maia, Electra, Taygete, Asterope, Celaeno, and Merope. The unseen or invisible one is variously said in legend to be either *Electra* or *Merope*. However, *Alcyone* (the brightest star in the Pleiades) is spoken of in S.D. 2:785 as being of tremendous occult importance and significance.

\* The constellation of Taurus is described as being “the first manifested side of the upper triangle, the concealed  $\Delta$ ” – the “concealed upper triangle” referring presumably to the Logos. This shows the tremendous occult importance of Taurus.

\* And from Taurus are born the Pleiades. **The Pleiades, especially Alcyone, are the “central point” that our manifested Universe revolves around.** Early in “The Secret Doctrine” (Vol. 1, p. 43) it is said that “The appearance and disappearance of the Universe are pictured as an outbreathing and inbreathing of “the Great Breath,” which is eternal, and which, being Motion, is one of the three aspects of the Absolute – Abstract Space and Duration being the other two. When the “Great Breath” is projected, it is called the Divine Breath, and is regarded as the breathing of the Unknowable Deity – the One Existence – which breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos. So also is it when the Divine Breath is inspired again the Universe disappears into the bosom of “the Great Mother,” who then sleeps “wrapped in her invisible robes.” **The Pleiades, especially Alcyone, are “the focus” through which this “Divine Breath” works during the period of Universal manifestation.**

\* The Pleiades are “connected with *sound* and other mystic principles in Nature” including “the periodical renovations of the earth, with regard to its continents,” thus with the various successive Root Races.

\* Mars is in one sense the child of the Pleiades and exerts a mysterious influence upon Sages and Adepts. Generally speaking, in Esoteric Science, the names of the seven sacred planets do not refer primarily to the physical planetary body that can be seen in the sky but to the particular one of the Seven *Hierarchies* of Dhyān Chohans (celestial beings) that is especially associated with that planet. Hence why HPB speaks of Mars here as “a virgin *Kumara*.”

\* The “combination” of the Pleiades, the Saptarishi/Great Bear, and Mars, when correctly and fully understood, will “reveal to the adept the greatest mysteries of occult nature.”

We may take note that it says “reveal to the *adept*,” not “reveal to the student of Theosophy,” not “reveal to the inquisitive person interested in esotericism,” nor even “reveal to those who become disciples or chelas of the Adepts.”

It is the Adept alone who is entitled and fitted to receive the full and unveiled Truth regarding these and many other matters. To some it will seem that only an extremely minute amount of information has been divulged about such subjects in the pages of “The Secret Doctrine” but “all

True Theosophists” (the only people to whom HPB dedicated the book) feel sincerely grateful for what has been granted from “the Secret Archaic Doctrine” itself, knowing that, as said in the Introductory, “it will take centuries before much more is given from it.” (Vol. 1, p. xxxviii)

Many systems may *call* themselves “Esoteric Astrology” but according to the great Adepts and Masters who gave Theosophy to the world, Esoteric Astrology “remains to this day . . . a secret science in the East,” (“The Theosophical Glossary” p. 38, Entry for “Astrology”) for They say that “Astrology is built wholly upon this mystic and intimate connection between the heavenly bodies and mankind; and it is one of the great secrets of Initiation and Occult mysteries,” (S.D. 2:500).

## SIRIUS



The brightest star in the night sky of our Earth, Sirius is said by modern science to be twice the size of our sun and twenty-five times more luminous than it. It is often called the “Dog Star” due to its position of prominence in the constellation that has been named Canis Major, literally “Greater Dog.” Science says that it is moving closer to our solar system, meaning that it will very

gradually become brighter to us.

HPB wrote and explained very little about Sirius but this does not mean that she *knew* very little about it but rather that she was only permitted or instructed to *say* very little about it by those Eastern Adepts and Initiates who she spoke of as “The Masters.” Her key statements on the subject are this:

“Sirius was called the *dog-star*. It was the star of Mercury or Budha, called the great instructor of mankind, before other Buddhas.” (S.D. 2:374; note that “Budha” and “Buddha” are two different words in Sanskrit, “Budha” being the name for the planet Mercury)

And this: “In Egyptian, *Sothis*. The dog-star: the star worshipped in Egypt and revered by the Occultists; by the former because its heliacal rising with the Sun was a sign of the beneficent inundation of the Nile, and by the latter because it is mysteriously associated with Thoth-Hermes, god of wisdom, and Mercury, in another form. Thus Sothis-Sirius had, and still has, a mystic and direct influence over the whole *living* heaven, and is connected with almost every god and goddess. . . . [it] is directly connected with the ring “Pass me not”; . . . Being connected with the Pyramid, Sirius was, therefore, connected with the initiations which took place in it. . . . To sum up, all religions are not, as Dufeu, the French Egyptologist, sought to prove, derived from Sirius, the dog-star, but Sirius-Sothis is certainly found in connection with every religion of antiquity.” (“The Theosophical Glossary” p. 300, Entry for “Sirius”)

There is much food for thought in the “Glossary” entry, such as the facts that –

(1) Sirius is “reverenced by the Occultists.” (2) Sirius has “a mystic and direct influence over the whole *living* heaven.” (3) Sirius bears a connection with initiations that take place here on Earth. (4) Sirius is “directly connected” with what is known in the Masters’ Esoteric Doctrine as “the Ring PASS-NOT.” (5) Sirius bears a mysterious close association with Mercury; not only the

planet of that name but the Divine Wisdom which it represents and with which it is occultly connected.

On the fifth point, it is interesting to note that in her article “The History of a Planet,” which is about Venus, HPB happens to mention also the planet Mercury, calling it “the double of Sirius in our solar system.”

As for the “Ring PASS-NOT,” also called “The great circle of “Pass not” and “the Dhyani-pasa, the “rope of the Angels,” this is dealt with primarily on p. 90 and p. 130-135 of the first volume of “The Secret Doctrine.” It is said to be the unseen “rope” (figuratively speaking, of course) that serves as the border and boundary between the world of matter and the world of pure spirit, between the finite and the truly INFINITE. It is instituted by the Lipika (high celestial beings) and until the Universal Pralaya, i.e. when the whole life cycle of our whole Universe reaches its inevitable periodical end, it is they alone who can cross its “forbidden line.” Until then – the Great Day “BE-WITH-US” when all is absorbed into the state of Parinirvana – no man, deva, or Dhyani Chohan, can cross it, “not even in spirit.” It is connected in some way with the numbers 31415, the mathematical value of  $\pi$  or “pi.”

“The semi-initiated Occultist will represent this laya-point to himself as existing on some plane which, if not physical, is still conceivable to the human intellect. But the full Initiate *knows* that the ring “Pass-Not” is neither a locality nor can it be measured by distance, but that it exists in the absoluteness of infinity. In this “Infinity” of the full Initiate there is neither height, breadth nor thickness, but all is fathomless profundity, reaching down from the physical to the “para-parametaphysical.” In using the word “down,” essential depth – “nowhere and everywhere” – is meant, not depth of physical matter.” (S.D. 1:131)

Even the little that can be said about it shows that it really defies words but nonetheless we are told that Sirius is directly connected with it.



The original approach of the Theosophical Movement is also the approach adopted and recommended in the United Lodge of Theosophists, i.e. to give equal time and attention to the theoretical, metaphysical, intellectual side of Theosophy *and* the devotional, ethical, practical side. The latter is particularly expressed in the “devotional” books such as “The Voice of the Silence,” “Light on the Path,” the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali’s Yoga Aphorisms, the Dhammapada, the Tao Teh Ching, “The Light of Asia,” “Through The Gates of Gold” etc. As these tend to be less mentally demanding and thus easier to read than some of the other books, one may sometimes end up favouring them. But B. P. Wadia advises: “Psychic and spiritual teachings are not more fully understood because their metaphysical basis is not contemplated upon. We must guard against the tendency of neglecting metaphysics. The student of *The Secret Doctrine* has to learn at the very start that “*outside* of metaphysics no occult philosophy, no esotericism is possible.” (S.D. 1:169) Morality and ethics separated from philosophy and metaphysics would land us into that dire heresy of separateness – to divide wisdom from compassion, head from heart, the *Stanzas of Dzyan* from *The Voice of the Silence*. . . . *The Secret Doctrine* recommends the study of metaphysics. Universal and impersonal ideas free the mind from circumscribing personal notions; in the presence of such ideas, petty, mean, narrow thoughts vanish. Metaphysics (not metaphysical jargon) are capable of evolving a true international outlook in the mind of the politician; of elevating to cosmic heights the intuitions of the poet; of infusing wisdom and a sense of proportion in the love of the saint; of suffusing with compassion the heart of the sage.”  
 (“Studies in The Secret Doctrine” Book I, p. 75, Book II, p. 34)

Interestingly, perhaps surprisingly, he also says that “The Secret Doctrine” is specifically designed to awaken and develop the *intuition* and the faculty of *spiritual perception*, not merely the intellectual part of the mind. His pamphlet “Some Observations on The Study of The Secret Doctrine” states that “The Secret Doctrine” activates in us the Buddhist faculties of intuition and compassion just as the devotional books do but only when it is carefully studied on a frequent basis and in a detailed way. To assist those who are interested in such studies is one of the purposes of the Lodge.

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