

The Symbolism of The Sun and Moon



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The symbols of the Sun and Moon relate to both Humanity and the Universe. Theosophy gives us keys to understand their deeper meaning.

THE GAYATRI MANTRA

Devotional Reading from the Rig Veda scripture of Hinduism

The Gayatri Mantra, also known as the Savitri, is the most ancient mantra known to man. In Sanskrit, it is “Om bhur bhuvah svaha! Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.” WQJ’s rendition in English: “Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the True Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat.”

(...) The first word contains in it a declaration of the three periods of a Manvantara and the three powers of that great Being who alone Is. Of a manvantara it is the beginning, the middle, and the end, and the three powers are Creation (or manifesting), Preservation (or carrying on), and Destruction. The three first words, Om, bhur, bhuvah, draw attention to and designate the three worlds. The whole verse is an aspiration in the highest sense. Every Brahman at his initiation is further instructed in this verse, but from giving that I am necessarily excused, as I cannot give it in a way in which I have not received it.

Unveil is the cry of the man who is determined to know the truth and who perceives that something hides it from him. It is hidden by his own Karmic effects, which have put him now where the brain and the desires are too strong for the higher self to pierce through so long as he remains careless and ignorant. The cry is not made to some man-made god with parts, passions, and attributes, but to the Self above who seeth in secret and bringeth out to light. It is directed to that on which the Universe is built and standeth,—no other than the Self which is in every man and which sitteth like a bird in a tree watching while another eats the fruit. (...) The ancients held that all things whatsoever existed in fact solely in the idea, and therefore the practitioner of Yoga was taught—and soon discovered—that sun, moon, and stars were in himself, and until he learned this he could not proceed. (...) The request made in the verse to unveil the face of the True Sun is that the Higher Self may shine down into us and do its work of illumination. This also spreads forth a natural fact unknown to moderns, which is that the sun we see is not the true sun, and signifies too that the light of intellect is not the true sun of our moral being. Our forefathers in the dim past knew how to draw forth through the visible Sun the forces from the True one. We have temporarily forgotten this because our evolution and descent into the hell of matter, in order to save the whole, have interposed a screen. (...)

Which is now hidden by a vase of Golden Light. That is, the light of the True Sun—the Higher Self—is hidden by the blood contained in the vase of the mortal body. The blood has two aspects—not here detailed—in one of which it is a helper to perception, in the other a hindrance. But it signifies here the passions and desires, Kama, the personal self, the thirst for life. It is this that veils from us the true light. So long as desire and the personality remain strong, just so long will the light be blurred, so long will we mistake words for knowledge and knowledge for the thing we wish to know and to realize.

The object of this prayer is that we may carry out our whole duty, after becoming acquainted with the truth, while we are on our journey to thy Sacred Seat. This is our pilgrimage, not of one, not selfishly, not alone, but the whole of humanity. For the sacred seat is not the Brahmanical heaven of Indra, nor the Christian selfish heaven acquired without merit while the meritorious suffer the pains of hell. It is that place where all meet, where alone all are one. It is when and where the three great

sounds of the first word of the prayer merge into one soundless sound. This is the only proper prayer, the sole saving aspiration.

“A Commentary on the Gayatri”, *The Path*, January 1893, William Q. Judge

Introduction on the Monad

In short, as the spiritual Monad is One, Universal, Boundless and Impartite, whose rays, nevertheless, form what we, in our ignorance, call the "Individual Monads" of men, so the Mineral Monad—being at the opposite point of the circle—is also One—and from it proceed the countless physical atoms, which Science is beginning to regard as individualized.

Otherwise how could one account for and explain mathematically the evolutionary and spiral progress of the Four Kingdoms? The "Monad" is the combination of the last two "principles" in man, the 6th and the 7th, and, properly speaking, the term "human monad" applies only to the dual soul (Atma-Buddhi), not to its highest spiritual vivifying Principle, Atma, alone. But since the Spiritual Soul, if divorced from the latter (Atma) could have no existence, no being, it has thus been called Now the Monadic, or rather Cosmic, Essence (if such a term be permitted) in the mineral, vegetable, and animal, though the same throughout the series of cycles from the lowest elemental up to the Deva Kingdom, yet differs in the scale of progression. It would be very misleading to imagine a Monad as a separate Entity trailing its slow way in a distinct path through the lower Kingdoms, and after an incalculable series of transformations flowering into a human being; in short, that the Monad of a Humboldt dates back to the Monad of an atom of horneblende. Instead of saying a "Mineral Monad," the more correct phraseology in physical Science, which differentiates every atom, would of course have been to call it "the Monad manifesting in that form of Prakriti called the Mineral Kingdom." (...) The tendency towards segregation into individual Monads is gradual, and in the higher animals comes almost to the point.

Secret Doctrine, I:177 onwards, by H. P. Blavatsky

On the Symbol of the Moon

“A few words more of the Moon. What, it may be asked, are the "Lunar Monads," just spoken of? The description of the seven classes of Pitris will come later, but now some general explanations may be given. It must be plain to everyone that they are Monads, who, having ended their life-cycle on the lunar chain, which is inferior to the terrestrial chain, have incarnated on this one. But there are some further details which may be added, though they border too closely on forbidden ground to be treated of fully. The last word of the mystery is divulged only to the adepts, but it may be stated that our satellite is only the gross body of its invisible principles. Seeing then that there are 7 Earths, so there are 7 Moons, the last one alone being visible; the same for the Sun, whose visible body is called a Maya, a reflection, just as man's body is. "The real Sun and the real Moon are as invisible as the real man," says an occult maxim. (...)

“In reality the Moon is only the satellite of the Earth in one respect, viz., that physically the Moon revolves round the Earth. But in every other respect it is the Earth which is the satellite of the Moon, and not *vice versa*. Startling as the statement may seem it is not without confirmation from scientific knowledge. It is evidenced by the tides, by the cyclic changes in many forms of disease which coincide with the lunar phases; it can be traced in the growth of plants, and is very marked in the phenomena of human gestation and conception. The importance of the Moon and its influence on the Earth were recognized in every ancient religion, notably the Jewish, and have been remarked by many observers of psychical and physical phenomena. But, so far as Science knows, the Earth's action on the Moon is confined to the physical attraction, which causes her to circle in her orbit. And should an objector insist that this fact alone is sufficient evidence that the Moon is truly the Earth's satellite on other planes of action, one may reply by asking whether a mother, who walks round and round her child's cradle keeping watch over the infant, is the subordinate of her child or

dependent upon it; though in one sense she is its satellite, yet she is certainly older and more fully developed than the child she watches.

It is, then, the Moon that plays the largest and most important part, as well in the formation of the Earth itself, as in the peopling thereof with human beings. The "Lunar Monads" or Pitris, the ancestors of man, become in reality man himself. They are the "Monads" who enter on the cycle of evolution on Globe A, and who, passing round the chain of planets, evolve the human form as has just been shown. At the beginning of the human stage of the Fourth Round on this Globe, they "ooze out" their astral doubles from the "ape-like" forms which they had evolved in Round III. And it is this subtle, finer form, which serves as the model round which Nature builds physical man. These "Monads" or "divine sparks" are thus the "Lunar" ancestors, the Pitris themselves. For these "Lunar Spirits" have to become "Men" in order that their "Monads" may reach a higher plane of activity and self-consciousness, *i.e.*, the plane of the Manasa-Putras, those who endow the "senseless" shells, created and informed by the Pitris, with "mind" in the latter part of the Third Root-Race.

SD 1:179-181, by HPB

The triple lines of evolution in Nature

It now becomes plain that there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme, for the formation of the three *periodical Upadhis*; or rather three separate schemes of evolution, which in our system are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical evolutions. These three are the finite aspects or the reflections on the field of Cosmic Illusion of ATMA, the seventh, the ONE REALITY.

1. The Monadic is, as the name implies, concerned with the growth and development into still higher phases of activity of the Monad in conjunction with:—
2. The Intellectual, represented by the Manasa-Dhyanis (the Solar Devas, or the Agnishwatta Pitris) the "givers of intelligence and consciousness" * to man and:—
3. The Physical, represented by the Chhayas of the lunar Pitris, round which Nature has concreted the present physical body. This body serves as the vehicle for the "growth" (to use a misleading word) and the transformations through Manas and—owing to the accumulation of experiences—of the finite into the INFINITE, of the transient into the Eternal and Absolute.

Each of these three systems has its own laws, and is ruled and guided by different sets of the highest Dhyanis or "Logoi." Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him which makes him the complex being he now is.

"Nature," the physical evolutionary Power, could never evolve intelligence unaided—she can only create "senseless forms," as will be seen in our "ANTHROPOGENESIS." The "Lunar Monads" cannot progress, for they have not yet had sufficient touch with the forms created by "Nature" to allow of their accumulating experiences through its means. It is the Manasa-Dhyanis who fill up the gap, and they represent the evolutionary power of Intelligence and Mind, the link between "Spirit" and "Matter"—in this Round.

(...) Let us recapitulate. The most developed Monads (the lunar) reach the human germ-stage in the first Round; become terrestrial, though very ethereal human beings towards the end of the Third Round, remaining on it (the globe) through the "obscuration" period as the seed for future mankind

in the Fourth Round, and thus become the pioneers of Humanity at the beginning of this, the Fourth Round. Others reach the Human stage only during later Rounds, *i.e.*, in the second, third, or first half of the Fourth Round. And finally the most retarded of all, *i.e.*, those still occupying animal forms after the middle turning-point of the Fourth Round— will not become men at all during this Manwantara. They will reach to the verge of humanity only at the close of the seventh Round to be, in their turn, ushered into a new chain after *pralaya*—by older pioneers, the progenitors of humanity, or the Seed-Humanity (*Sishta*), *viz.*, the men who will be at the head of all at the end of these Rounds.

As above, so below: correspondence between macrocosmic and the microcosmic

"The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-centre of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein. . . . The planets are its limbs and pulses. . . ."
(Commentary.)

It was stated elsewhere (*in the Theosophist*) that Occult philosophy denies that the Sun is a globe in combustion, but defines it simply as a world, a glowing sphere, the *real* Sun being hidden behind, and the visible being only its reflection, its *shell*. The Nasmyth willow leaves, mistaken by Sir J. Herschell for "Solar inhabitants," are the reservoirs of solar vital energy, "the vital electricity that feeds the whole system. . . . The Sun *in abscondito* being thus the storehouse of our little Kosmos, self-generating its vital fluid, and ever receiving as much as it gives out," and the *visible* Sun only a *window cut into the real* Solar palace and presence, which reflects, however, faithfully the interior work.

Thus, there is a regular circulation of the vital fluid throughout our system, of which the Sun is the heart —the same as the circulation of the blood in the human body—during the manvantaric solar period, or life; the Sun contracting as rhythmically at every return of it, as the human heart does. Only, instead of performing the round in a second or so, it takes the solar blood ten of its years, and a whole year to pass through its *auricles* and *ventricles* before it washes the *lungs* and passes thence to the great veins and arteries of the system.

(...) We maintain that it (the Sun) evolves out only the *life-principle*, the Soul of those bodies, *giving and receiving* it back, in our solar system, as the 'Universal Life-Giver' . . . in infinitude and Eternity; that the solar system is as much the *microcosm* of the ONE Macrocosm as man is the former when compared with his own little Solar Cosmos.

HPB, SDIp541

It was at the ray of this *First* mother, one in three, that "God," according to Plato, lighted a fire which we now call the sun," * and which is *not* the cause of either light or heat, but merely the focus, or, as we might say, the lens, by which the rays of the primordial light become materialised, are concentrate upon our Solar System, and produce all the correlations of forces.

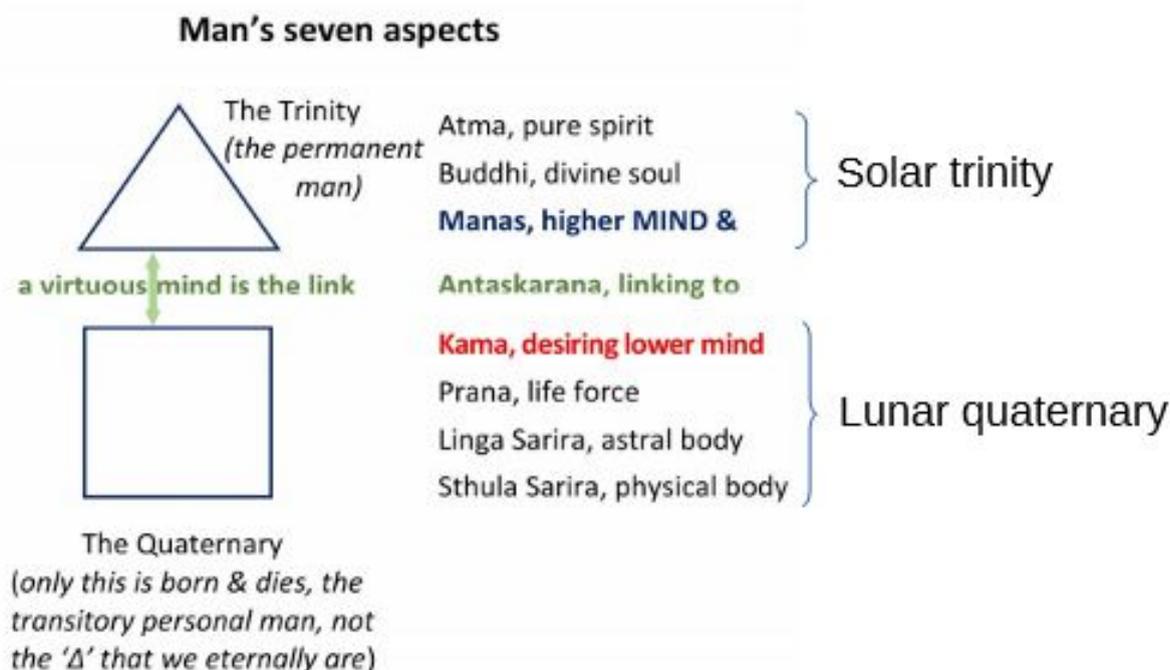
HPB, SDIp579

The "Three Fires," Pavaka, Pavamâna, and Suchi, who had forty-five sons, who, with their three fathers and their Father Agni, constitute the 49 fires. Pavamâna (fire produced by friction) is the parent of the *fire of the Asuras*; Suchi (Solar fire) is the parent of the fire of the gods; and Pavaka (electric fire) is the father of the fire of the *Pitris* (See *Vayu Purâna*). But this is an explanation on the material and the terrestrial plane. The flames are evanescent and only periodical; the fires — eternal in their triple unity. They correspond to the *four* lower, and the *three* higher human principles.

HPB, SDIIp57 fn

Symbolism of the Sun and Moon applied to the microcosm, Man

The septenary constitution of Man (microcosm) correspond to the 7 planes of the Universe (macrocosm)



That which propels towards, and forces evolution, *i.e.*, compels the growth and development of Man towards perfection, is (a) the MONAD, or that which acts in it unconsciously through a force inherent in itself; and (b) the lower astral body or the *personal SELF*. The former, whether imprisoned in a vegetable or an animal body, is endowed with, is indeed itself, that force. Owing to its identity with the ALL-FORCE, which, as said, is inherent in the Monad, it is all-potent on the *Arupa*, or formless plane. On our plane, its essence being too pure, it remains allpotential, but individually becomes inactive: *e.g.*, the rays of the Sun, which contribute to the growth of vegetation, do not select this or that plant to shine upon. Uproot the plant and transfer it to a piece of soil where the sunbeam cannot reach it, and the latter will not follow it. So with the Atman: unless the higher Self or EGO gravitates towards its Sun — the Monad — the lower *Ego*, or *personal Self*, will have the upper hand in every case. For it is this Ego, with its fierce Selfishness and animal desire to live a Senseless life (*Tanha*), which is "the maker of the tabernacle," as Buddha calls it in *Dhammapada* (153 and 154).

Hence the expression, "the Spirits of the Earth clothed the shadows and expanded them." To these "Spirits" belong temporarily the human astral selves; and it is they who give, or build, the physical tabernacle of man, for the Monad and its conscious principle, Manas, to dwell in. But the "Solar" *Lhas*, Spirits, warm them, the shadows. This is physically and literally true; metaphysically, or on the psychic and spiritual plane, it is equally true that the Atman alone *warms* the inner man; *i.e.*, it enlightens it with the ray of divine life and alone is able to impart to the inner man, or the reincarnating Ego, its immortality. Thus, as we shall find, for the first three and a half Root-Races, up to the middle or turning point, it is the astral shadows of the "progenitors," the lunar Pitris, which are the formative powers in the Races, and which build and gradually force the evolution of the physical form towards perfection — this, at the cost of a proportionate loss of spirituality. Then, from the turning point, it is the Higher Ego, or incarnating principle, the *nous* or *Mind*, which reigns over the animal Ego, and rules it whenever it is not carried down by the latter. In short, Spirituality

is on its ascending arc, and the animal or physical impedes it from steadily progressing on the path of its evolution only when the selfishness of the *personality* has so strongly infected the real *inner* man with its lethal *virus*, that the upward attraction has lost all its power on the thinking reasonable man. In sober truth, vice and wickedness are an *abnormal, unnatural* manifestation, at this period of our human evolution - at least they ought to be so. The fact that mankind was never more selfish and vicious than it is now, civilized nations having succeeded in making of the first an ethical characteristic, of the second an art, is an additional proof of the exceptional nature of the phenomenon.

HPB, SDIIp109

The moon *is* the deity of the mind (Manas) but only on the lower plane. "Manas is dual — *lunar* in the lower, *solar* in its upper portion," says a commentary. That is to say, it is attracted in its higher aspect towards Buddhi, and in lower descends into, and listens to the voice of its animal soul full of selfish and sensual desires; and herein is contained the mystery of an adept's as of a profane man's life, as also that of the post-mortem separation of the divine from the animal man.

HPB, SDIIp495

THE Progenitors of Man, called in India "Fathers," Pitara or Pitris, are the creators of our bodies and lower principles. They are ourselves, as the *first personalities*, and *we are they*. Primeval man would be "the bone of their bone and the flesh of their flesh," if they had body and flesh. As stated, they were "*lunar* Beings."

The Endowers of man with his conscious, immortal EGO, are the "Solar Angels"— whether so regarded metaphorically or literally. The mysteries of the Conscious EGO or human Soul are great. The esoteric name of these "Solar Angels" is, literally, the "Lords" (*Nath*) of "persevering ceaseless devotion" (*pranidhâna*). Therefore they of the *fifth* principle (*Manas*) seem to be connected with, or to have originated the system of the Yogis who make of *pranidhâna* their *fifth* observance (see *Yoga Shastra*, II., 32.) It has already been explained why the trans-Himalayan Occultists regard them as evidently identical with those who in India are termed *Kumâras*, *Agnishwattas*, and the *Barhishads*."

HPB, SDIIp88

Our Sun and the True Sun

Considering how little is known of the sun of this system, it is not to be wondered at that still more is this the case respecting the true sun. Science laughs, of course, at the mystic's "true sun," for it sees none other than the one shining in the heavens. This at least they pretend to know, for it rises and sets each day and can be to some extent observed during eclipses or when spots appear on it, and with their usual audacity the 19th century astronomers learnedly declare all that they do not know about the mighty orb, relegating the ancient ideas on the subject to the limbo of superstitious nonsense. It is not to the modern schools that I would go for information on this subject, because in my opinion, however presumptuous it may seem, they really know but little about either Moon or Sun. (...)

My object, however, is to draw your attention to the doctrine that there is a true sun of which the visible one is a reflection, and that in this true one there is spiritual energy and help, just as our own beloved luminary contains the spring of our physical life and motion. It is useless now to speculate on which of the many stars in the heavens may be the real sun, for I opine it is none of them, since, as I said before, a physical centre of attraction for this system may only be a grade higher than ours, and the servant of a centre still farther removed. We must work in our several degrees, and it is not in our power to overleap one step in the chain that leads to the highest. Our own sun is, then, for us the symbol of the true one he reflects, and by meditating on "the most excellent light of the true

sun” we can gain help in our struggle to assist humanity. Our physical sun is for physics, not metaphysics, while that true one shines down within us. The orb of day guards and sustains the animal economy; the true sun shines into us through its medium within our nature. We should then direct our thought to that true sun and prepare the ground within for its influence, just as we do the ground without for the vivifying rays of the King of Day.

Having once turned thy mind to the light of that True Sun, thou hast cast thyself upon that great stream of divine energy which flows to and from that Sun; and nevermore canst thou claim back for thyself that life; live, then, so that the duty may be well performed.

The Path, February, 1890 WQJ

The Ancients celebrated and understood what was called by them “the birth of the Sun”, or the return of the Sun on its northern course, beginning on the 21st of December. They knew that all the occult forces in Nature have an upward and increasing tendency at the return of the Sun. When the Sun’s rays become warmer and stronger, all the other forces behind the Sun itself, and behind ourselves, become stronger within us. In the rising wave of spiritual and psychic renewal, all that we desire to do has a greater impulsion than at some other time of year.

Robert Crosbie



The Moon

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