

The Messenger
of Light

Lucifer

For seekers of Truth

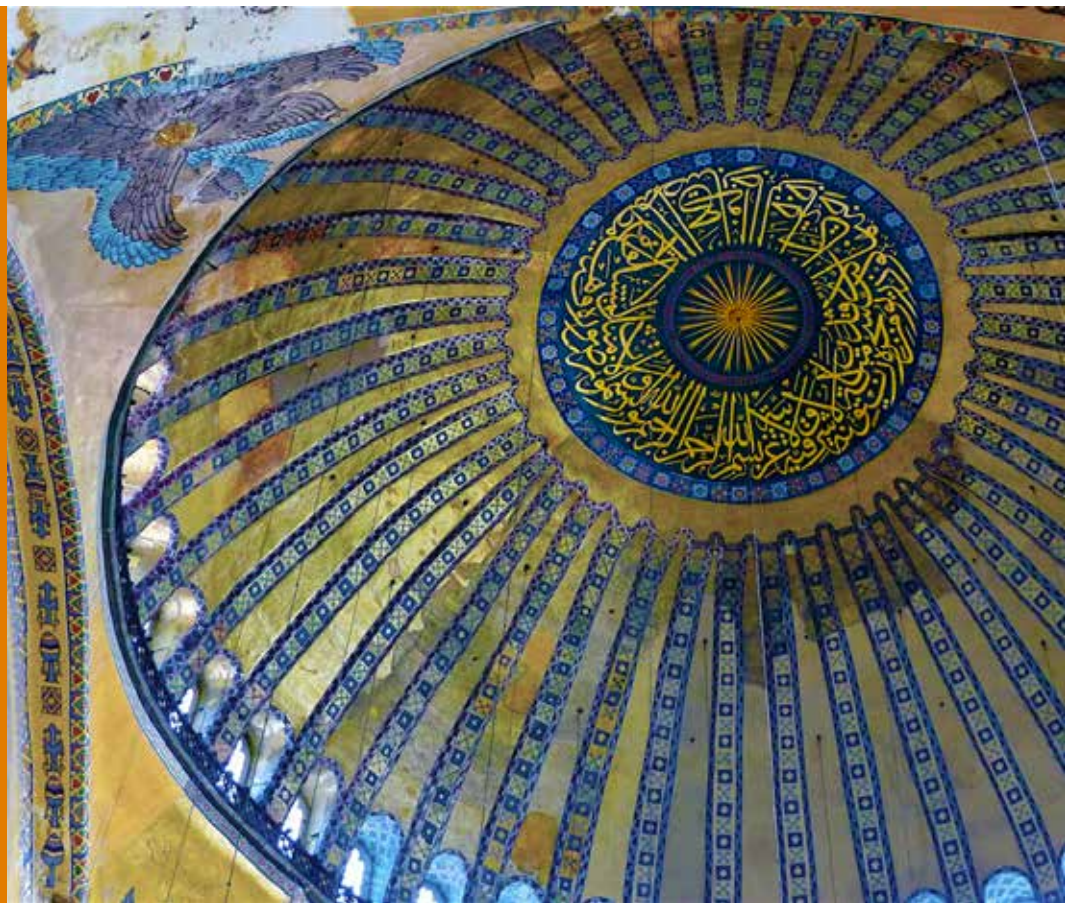
Current topics viewed in the light of the Ancient Wisdom or Theo-sophia — the common source of all great world religions, philosophies and sciences

H.P. Blavatsky's
message to the
world

How to prove
Theosophy?

Esoteric Islam

Emanation and
Fohat as the
fundament for the
electric universe



Cover illustration:
Calligraphy of the 'Light
Verse' from the Qur'an
inside the dome of the
Hagia Sophia (Aya Sophia),
Istanbul.

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When H.P. Blavatsky founded The Theosophical Society, she brought a universal system of doctrines, a kind of Religious-Philosophical Mathematics. No rules, no dogmas, but a set of axioms, hypotheses. How timeless and actual is the message of H.P. Blavatsky?

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Theosophy is not a religion. And it's certainly not a belief. All theosophical leaders emphatically and repeatedly stated that you should investigate Theosophy yourself. But how? And how do you know it is true? If you do not have to put blind faith in theosophical leaders, then what function do they perform?

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Some people think that Islam in itself is violent. However, Islam is, like any other religion, in its core noble: a core that inspires an ethical and spiritual way of life. But if a religion is interpreted in a sectarian way, it divides people instead of unifying them, and thus it becomes the main source of evil. Therefore, it is high time to take a closer look at Islam and its principles in the hope that more people will discover the *real* fundamentals of this religion.

Barend Voorham



Emanation and Fohat as the fundament for the electric universe

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Scientists have discovered that electromagnetism is an important organizing force, in the cosmic field as well as in the human body. The Theosophia is able to explain these discovered facts. Key factors are *Emanation* and *Fohat*. These are universal concepts; they apply to any universe.

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Editorial

H.P. Blavatsky's message to the world

Truth as a product

In our society, it is difficult to deal with truth as just truth. Truth has become a product: a product that has financial or political value, and that value should pay off as well. I mean that truths, found by means of research, are adapted and presented so that they will serve another purpose: for a sale, for political needs, or as a justification to start a war or any other acts of violence whatsoever; not to speak of agitating people or creating situations to justify such actions. In this respect, the well-known saying that in wartime truth is the first casualty, is illustrative. In the following issue of *Lucifer* we will publish an article on this subject.

What can we say about the truth in the message of H.P. Blavatsky? The article 'How to prove Theosophy' elaborates on that topic. In this editorial we want to make it clear that in the message of H.P. Blavatsky you should distinguish between the ever prevailing theosophical principles, Theosophia, and examples from her time, used by H.P. Blavatsky to illustrate these theosophical principles.

Obsolete Theosophy?

Now you might think that Theosophists, 'those who study Theosophy', are not guilty of manipulating the truth. Yet we see that original texts are often adjusted. I assume without any doubt that this does not happen consciously or maliciously, although the altering of original texts is inexcusable. A question that is constantly asked is: what is the value of the message that H.P. Blavatsky brought at the end of the 19th century, if we compare it with the current state of modern science and the many developments that we have experienced since 1875?

Theosophia as Religious-Philosophical Mathematics

What brought H.P. Blavatsky, when she founded The Theosophical Society in 1875 in New York? She arrived physically empty handed, but with an enormous treasure of knowledge. With this she restored our contact with the knowledge of the Theosophia and the existence of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion.

Let us examine what Blavatsky's message entails and entailed and what her intentions were.

The message she brought is known to us under different names such as 'Theosophia', 'Divine Wisdom', 'Gupta Vidyâ'. But what does it mean? It is a universal system of doctrines, a kind of Religious-Philosophical Mathematics. Mathematics is a formal science of, among others, numbers, patterns and structures, studied by means of certain axioms. It is a totally different approach than the Aristotelian, 'empirical' science, that

seeks to generalize observations and by doing so, discover laws. But then you will be dependent upon your own experiences. If, for example, so far you have experienced that all the people who believe in reincarnation are Theosophists, you conclude that anyone who believes in reincarnation is a Theosophist. This reasoning, however, is too limited. Real logic is much broader than this.

Mathematics is based on a limited number of axioms. These axioms together have an unlimited number of applications and provide the same number of solutions. Each axiom is a limited description of an ideal, but it is universally applicable.

Continuous growth

When we notice this parallel between Theosophia and mathematics, we understand that Blavatsky brought no definite or complete system of external forms, such as rules, a set of dogmas, a catechism, or whatever that we can learn by heart and that we can thoughtlessly apply in order to tune in with the whole (our whole), so that we can go on with our lives in harmony.

Blavatsky brought the Theosophia, the Divine Wisdom, a Wisdom-system, a religious-philosophical system, and she explained it on the basis of hypotheses. It was not meant to follow dogmatically. You should study it, ponder over it and apply it to your life. You should investigate independently whether or not you can recognize these hypotheses in nature and in your own life. By considering them actively and working them out on your own level, you add experiences to your mental and ethical treasury. You won't do that statically but dynamically, because, while probing and experimenting, you will add to your individual qualities and allow them to grow, so that you are able to live from an ever growing and deepening vision of theosophical life. But here we also have the greatest problem, because, as Blavatsky herself says in the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine*, in response to the publication of Mr. Sinnett's latest book *Esoteric Buddhism*: "It [the title of Mr. Sinnett's book; HCV] proved unfortunate, because people are always in the habit of judging things by their appearance, rather than their meaning".⁽¹⁾

Theosophia: timeless and actual

This teaches us to distinguish between two things: on the one hand, the message brought by Blavatsky; and on the other hand, how people understood it, or even worse, what they made out of it. If we do not thoroughly understand what Blavatsky meant – or maybe we don't understand it at all – we cannot blame her by judging her message as too limited or outdated. Theosophia is just like the axioms in mathematics, which go along for thousands of years and which still prove to be useful. Blavatsky brought knowledge for the next thousands of years. We have just begun studying Theosophia. When *The Secret Doctrine* was prepared for publication, the young co-workers, who had helped Blavatsky herewith, asked her to write a clear introduction, because everything in *The Secret Doctrine* was (and still is) so new and strange to our Western minds. And so she did, and the Prologue in *The Secret Doctrine* became one of the most accessible writings explaining the three fundamental propositions. These are in fact the three main

hypotheses or axioms that we must examine. These three fundamental propositions give us a very deep understanding, but they are also the perfect check for ourselves: if we derive a thought or a conclusion from theosophical teachings which does not correspond with these three basic ideas, we know immediately that we have built up an idea that does not correspond to Theosophia, as brought by Blavatsky.

Now, almost 140 years after Blavatsky began to break the molds of thought of humanity and acquainted us with Theosophia, we should be modest and we should ask ourselves whether our understanding is correct, before we say that the Theosophia is outdated or inconsistent. Then we must show that these theosophical axioms do not correspond with the facts. As far as we know, this has never been done.

H.P. Blavatsky showed us that the principles of the Theosophia are universal. She did this by quoting from ancient traditions from all over the world, by giving examples and demonstrating the similarities between those traditions. In short, Theosophia has never been as current as it is now; its correctness is proven almost daily.

In *Lucifer, the Messenger of Light* we continually try to demonstrate how current and up-to-date these theosophical principles are. The article 'Emanation and Fohat' for instance demonstrates that Theosophy can place scientifically discovered facts in a comprehensive framework. And another example: the article about 'Esoteric Islam' shows that in this religion, you cannot find any justification for the current brutal violence, provided you interpret it with theosophical keys.

We do hope that this volume may inspire you to explore the universality of Theosophia.

Herman C. Vermeulen

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1. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*. Vol. 1, p. xviii.



How to prove Theosophy?

H.P. Blavatsky and her successors

Key thoughts

- » Proof is conviction for the heart, mind and feelings.
- » You can be convinced by three causes: perception of truth, confidence and belief.
- » Start studying Theosophy by testing the principles.
- » Theosophy must be based on its intrinsic merits and not on the authority of the one who proclaims it.
- » In attempting to spread Theosophy H.P. Blavatsky, commissioned by the Masters, laid the cornerstone. After her death the Masters continued to support the work.

Theosophy is not a religion. And it's certainly not a belief. All theosophical leaders emphatically and repeatedly stated that you should investigate Theosophy yourself. But how? And how do you know it is true? If you do not have to put blind faith in theosophical leaders, then what function do they perform?

How do you know that something is true? If it has been proven. But what is proof?

Proof is information that shows something is definitely true. It is an external factor and gives decisive assurance of the correctness of something. It's like a quizmaster who assesses the answer to a quiz question, right or wrong. And his judgment cannot be discussed.

The reality, however, is different, because proof is always related to the individual consciousness of man. Gottfried de Purucker, fourth leader of the Theosophical Society (T.S.), describes it as “the bringing of conviction that a thing is true to the thoughtful mind”. And he adds, “if by the adduction of evidence the mind is not swayed into the belief that a thing is true, that thing has not been proved, even though it may be true”.⁽¹⁾

So no one can give you proof. It is only available through self-

examination.

But when are we convinced that something is true?

There are three main aspects on which that conviction may be based: the *perception of truth*, *confidence* and *belief*. These three concepts play an important role to achieve convictions and therefore proof.

The perception of Truth – the heart

When we talk about TRUTH, we mean the loftiest and most universal expression of BEING. BEING is boundless. No entity is able to know it, not even the most exalted god. For every entity is limited and can therefore never experience the ultimate TRUTH. Even a god knows only a part of it.

Increasing of consciousness means becoming more aware of this Universal Truth. What we have experienced of it thus far, is *our* ultimate conviction. We are aware of

something and are convinced of its truth. Our perception of Truth is always limited, but it is constantly subject to growth.

In order to realize Universal Truth we must activate our highest aspects of thinking. We may call these aspects the *heart* of our being. They constitute the divine-spiritual aspects within us, which in Sanskrit are called *Ātman* and *Buddhi*. It is the part of us that perceives the unity and interconnectedness of all entities. It is the basis of all ethics. It is supra-personal, so it is never tied to any limited personal opinion.

Confidence – the head

When we are able to check part of a doctrine, proposition or hypothesis by experiencing it in our daily life as true – because that part matches with what we already know, or *extends* our concepts – we have built confidence in its truth. Could it be stated that in this case there is also conviction? In a certain sense there is, although it does not reach as deep as perception of truth by the heart. We cannot oversee and check the whole doctrine, but only parts or aspects of it. Yet we do understand the logic of those aspects and perceive that the doctrine is consistent. That provides us with the confidence that the rest of that doctrine is also true. Although we cannot see the whole picture, we are able to grasp facets of truth, which help us to be convinced of the aspects of a doctrine, which in its entirety goes above our understanding. We can therefore touch on a certain level of conviction. That conviction has become for us a very reasonable hypothesis.

In this way of thinking the intellect is highly effective, but it is focused on the spiritual and divine; those aspects are therefore also partially active. It is the combination of these three aspects of consciousness – *Ātman*, *Buddhi* and *Manas* – which provides us with confidence of the truth of a doctrine. And if we apply that doctrine consistently and with perseverance in our lives, and it repeatedly turns out to be true, our conviction in the Truth will grow and grow.

Belief – inner feelings

Can conviction be based on belief?

Belief is accepting the truth of anything on the authority of someone else. You assume that someone has so much knowledge, or is so wise, that his sayings are true. This can apply to everything. There is religious authority. There is the authority of the civil service. Parents or teachers can have a certain authority, and so on.

Having this belief, some people may be very content,

because it deprives them of their responsibility. It is then left to others. It's true, they say, because so-and-so has said so. He has proven it to be true.

Of course, this is the most passive way to deal with issues. The lower aspects of the mind are now active and are satisfied, which can give a certain degree of conviction.

Newton's laws: an example

Let's illustrate these three aspects of evidence by applying them to Newton's laws.

The discovery by Newton of three fundamental laws of nature was the beginning of a new phase in science. These laws are generally accepted as true. They are taught in schools and universities. But the question is: on what basis do we presume that those laws of nature are true? According to these laws all objects exert an attraction to one another. We can clearly see that all objects fall to earth. Everyone experiences gravity. Everyone can therefore understand that objects are attracted to the earth. But the law of gravity also teaches that all objects fall at the same time a similar distance.

The latter is not confirmed by our observation. When



'Fallturm Bremen' is a drop tower at the Center of Applied Space Technology and Microgravity (ZARM) of the University of Bremen, Germany. It has a 123-metre-high drop tube (actual drop distance is 110 m), in which for 4.74 seconds weightlessness can be produced.

you drop a feather and a piece of lead from the same height, they do not simultaneously reach the earth. Do we, nevertheless, still believe Newton, who claims that all objects fall with the same acceleration?

Closer examination, however, shows that the aerodynamic properties of the atmosphere exert a highly disruptive influence on the speed of objects. This was demonstrated many years after Newton in a so-called vacuum drop tower. Probably few readers of *Lucifer* have repeated the tests with a drop tower. They did not determine by their own observation that Newton's laws are indeed correct. Only those who did so, actually *experienced* the truth.

But most people have only observed that objects fall to earth. So if they want to assume Newton's laws as true, they must have *confidence* in Newton and other researchers who have collected more information about this topic. They get that confidence by independently pondering on the details of the various investigations. They must be active in order to understand it.

Others may never have thought about gravity. They *believe* on the authority of scientists or teachers that Newton was right. They assume that he and the physicists after him are such clever people that they most likely will be right. So there are three kinds of conviction, or three types of humans. Those who believe, those who have confidence and those who know. Of course there are combinations of these three.

H.P. Blavatsky's message

Now let's look at our real subject, Theosophia. This 'Divine Wisdom' was brought by H.P. Blavatsky at the end of the 19th century. Later on it was further developed and disseminated by others.

Blavatsky has shown in the books and many articles she wrote, what Theosophy entails. She explained the theosophical teachings by using then-current examples. Some of the scientific theories of her time are obsolete. But she only used those examples to explain the universal principles. Recent discoveries may often illustrate them better. It therefore comes to doctrines and not to the examples.

Another issue is that Theosophy contains a vast field of teachings. It offers a clear vision on every topic. There is no subject to invent, or Theosophia has a vision on it. Sometimes the teachings are very detailed, and it's difficult to find your way through the maze of information. We can't see the wood for the trees.

If you want to find truth, however, you should not start

with the details, but with the bigger picture. In other words: what are the principles of Theosophy?

Now, these principles are crystal clear. They are not dogmas, but you should take them as hypotheses or axioms.⁽²⁾ The main principles are: 1) boundlessness; 2) cyclicity; 3) progressive evolution and the utter equality of all living beings. In other words, all living beings are in their core boundless. And being in the depths of their hearts unlimited, there is an utter equality. In a cyclical process they appear and disappear. During the period in which they appear on this stage on earth, they have the possibility to develop more of their infinite potential.

From these three basic ideas you can deduce that every phenomenon is a manifestation of consciousness, a manifestation of an underlying, more etheric formative power or substance. A phenomenon is therefore like a shadow: it comes and goes, while the force that projects the shadow remains.

All theosophical teachings, to the smallest detail, are based on these core ideas. They are emanated logically from those ideas and can never contradict them.

Proof

Can these theosophical core ideas be proven? Can you be convinced of their truth?

At this point we have to be realistic. The highest form of proof is perceiving, recognizing, realizing and experiencing the truth for yourself. Most people are not yet able to experience a lot of Theosophy. The Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE, which is the starting point of the whole theosophical system, cannot be experienced even by gods. For if any being *experiences* the Boundless, it gives expression to IT and is no longer a being or an ego, because a being, however great it may be, is always limited. That is why no entity is by definition able to completely understand the Boundless.

Most people are also not able to experience reincarnation consciously. When we fall asleep we lose our self-awareness. Just like falling asleep we undergo the processes of dying and being born unconsciously and cannot gain firsthand knowledge.

But in the field of *confidence* we can absolutely achieve a certain degree of proof. You can consider the theosophical principles as hypotheses and test them with the truths you have already experienced. Furthermore, you examine whether they match with what you perceive around you. You critically assess whether the theosophical ideas are consistent and logical, and answer all kinds of questions.

In this way, based on reasoning and logic, you can form an idea of the Boundless.

This idea is of course not perfect. How could that be possible! But at least you will understand that finiteness is illogical in nature and contrary to the human observations, for neither in the microcosmos, nor in the great universe do we come across limits. Don't the scientific facts about the atom and the universe point in the direction of infinity? Are you therefore confident that the concept of boundlessness is correct?

With regard to reincarnation, you can also say that it is a logical doctrine. Everywhere in nature there are cycles. You can find cyclicity in both your own life as well as in human civilizations. Moreover, many psychological phenomena are elucidated and explained with the concept of cyclicity.

You can also *believe* in Theosophy. You don't reason for yourself but believe others. Maybe you have faith in it because your partner calls himself a Theosophist, or because you find some Theosophists so nice and trustworthy. This belief is obviously the weakest form of conviction, because if your partner let you down or if you lose your theosophical friends, the basis of your belief vanishes too.

***Pistis*: spiritual confidence**

Actual proof of a doctrine must therefore be found in your own consciousness. It cannot be provided by another, however wise he may be. Nevertheless, you may have a huge confidence in the one who proclaims a doctrine.

Perchance it seems as though we have deviously arrived to the point that we should accept a doctrine based on the authority of another. Do we contradict ourselves here? First of all, we have to realize that we all assume certain matters because we trust others. Few readers have ever put a foot on the North Pole. Yet most of them assume that it exists. They have confidence in the reports about this inhospitable region and assume that the pictures of these ice sheets are not manipulated.

However, this confidence is not a blind belief. It is more a recognition, based on logic and on your own experience, of the correctness of a vision of others, which you apply as a useful hypothesis.

Our society cannot exist without this confidence. After all, if we did not trust the electrician, the bus driver, the doctor and the baker we could not live together in harmony. For the same reason you can put faith in spiritual teachers. When this confidence has more to do with spiritual

matters, it can be called, just like in ancient Greece, *Pistis*. That word is translated as 'faith' or sometimes as 'belief'. However, it is based on reason and intuitively knowing that something is true. It is not blind faith. It is an inner knowledge that is free of personal preferences. It is familiar to you, because it matches with your own experiences and resonates with the core of your being.

Pistis can certainly be of service to us on our quest for truth. As we said, evidence is the conviction of our thinking. Thus, the truth does not come from the outside, but must be developed from the inside. Better yet, it should be recognized or remembered. *Pistis* is the confidence in ourselves. We are able to find truth, because it is *within* us. Plato wrote about this. Any knowledge, any truth, says this Greek philosopher, is within us. To prove this, he reasons in *Phaedo* as follows. By seeing an object – a lyre for example – we can remember something else. And seeing a rose, may evoke the awareness of beauty. So the concept of 'beauty' – Plato speaks of the *idea* of beauty – is already within us, but we did not notice it. The outer rose was the trigger to remember the inner knowledge of the idea of beauty.⁽³⁾ In fact, this is an awakening; your faith in something is sublimated to the realization of truth. You rise up from the 'head' to the 'heart'.

This also works with certain teachings. The knowledge is already within us. By a myth, a symbol, an argument or a treatise we become aware of the truth in our Self. We are a part of the infinite whole, and just a bit infinite is also infinite.

Trust in the Teachers

Modern Theosophy was brought back to humanity by the Theosophical Society (T.S.). It was founded in 1875 in New York by H.P. Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, W.Q. Judge and thirteen others.

These pioneers however – or at least three of them – alleged that the *actual* founders were the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. There have been in the last 150 years the wildest speculations about who those Masters were. Few have ever met them. According to Blavatsky, they are human beings who are far above the average humans in terms of abilities, wisdom and especially compassion. Since 1875, there has been a deluge of theosophical teachings, and although most of those teachings can be found in the religious and philosophical writings of antiquity, albeit often in veiled language, they are so new and strange for many modern men, that for most of them it will take great difficulty to comprehend at least something.

Living in 2015, 140 years after the founding of the T.S., it is much easier to understand some of those theosophical teachings. Karma and reincarnation, for example, are nowadays more or less familiar and therefore much easier to understand. But at the end of the 19th century all was new and odd.

Making a study of the early years of the Theosophical Society can be very inspiring. The difficulties that the pioneers were facing, were huge. There were hostile attacks from the outside world: scientists who alleged that the theosophical teachings were outdated superstition; the Christian church, which could not bear the fact that the T.S. had much esteem for Buddhism and Hinduism; spiritualists, of whom Blavatsky did not deny the phenomena, but she explained them very differently than the spiritualist did. The greatest struggles and problems, however, arose because former collaborators opposed the T.S., and especially the main founder, H.P. Blavatsky. That the T.S. survived all those troubles is for a lot of scholars an evidence that it was indeed preserved by the Masters. During those first years it was also clear that Blavatsky was the link between the Masters and the T.S. Of course there were other people who contributed significantly to the work. Henry Steel Olcott, president-founder, played a very important role in the organization. But when it came to teaching, H.P. Blavatsky was the authority. Thanks to her, some theosophical members could correspond with the Masters. She was known as the 'occult postman'. When she was no longer in a certain place, the influence of the Masters pined away there too. When, forced by circumstances, she left the headquarters in India, the influence of the Masters disappeared as well.⁽⁴⁾

Although after her death her work was not studied thoroughly by all Theosophists, she was still a benchmark. She was the torchbearer. But are her writings also the final word?

Intrinsic merits

Blavatsky herself states in an article that Theosophy should stand on its own intrinsic merits.⁽⁵⁾ She made this statement in the context of performing occult phenomena, with which she had initially tried to arouse interest in the theosophical teachings. At a certain moment she stopped producing those phenomena, because they did not stimulate a study in Theosophy but aroused only sensationalism.

This statement can be interpreted in a much broader way: all teachings, all writings, those of H.P. Blavatsky

as well as those of other theosophical writers, must prove themselves. They are not true because the author can perform occult phenomena or has been inspired by a Master. Proof is conviction of thought. You get it by thinking independently, not by believing others! When you test the teachings with your own, already experienced, truths, and the test confirms the doctrine, then you can have *confidence* in its truth.

Theosophy is by definition not dogmatic. And how highly we esteem and love H.P. Blavatsky, her writings should be approached just as critical as any other writing. Theosophy only benefits a human, if he understands the truth of it. In other words, a critical attitude towards a teaching, and constantly, with your own inner faculties, testing it, is a responsibility that should not be underestimated, because otherwise on what are we basing our confidence that Blavatsky was *the* messenger of the Masters?

Of course, H.P. Blavatsky did not give the complete and absolute truth. She pointed the seekers of truth to the *principles* of Theosophy, and gave a large number of elaborations thereof with respect to humanity and the planet, but she never pretended to give the 'Wisdom of the Gods' completely, which, by the way, would be impossible. At the end of *The Secret Doctrine* she writes that her 'explanations are by no means complete' and that she simply wanted 'to prepare the soil'.⁽⁶⁾ Volumes III and IV of *The Secret Doctrine* had already been planned and it would depend on the reception of volumes I and II, whether they would be published, though they were *almost* completed. They were never published.⁽⁷⁾

So Blavatsky did not give the last word, but rather the first, at least in the impulse of 1875 from the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. The teachings that she brought can be elaborated and further explained. She also said that in the 20th century "some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called *Gupta-Vidyâ*; and that, like the once-mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found".⁽⁸⁾

Theosophy after Blavatsky

In no way do we want to belittle the role of H. P. Blavatsky in spreading Theosophy. On the contrary. She was the one who, after many centuries, lifted the veil a bit. Only someone who knows something about teaching Theosophia, understands what a huge task this is. She

more a handicap than an aid for a theosophical life. For a Theosophist must learn to make decisions independently.

Real proof means applying

We are confident that after Blavatsky, others were helped and supported by the Masters as well. It is known that there are letters from the Masters, written after the death of Blavatsky. Annie Besant of T.S. Adyar received in 1900, nine years after the passing of Blavatsky, a letter from a Master.⁽¹¹⁾ W.Q. Judge also received letters from the Masters after the death of Blavatsky, which, by the way, gave rise to many troubles, because not everyone believed him. Katherine Tingley and Gottfried de Purucker were, so they said, in contact with the Mahâtmas as well, years after the passing of Blavatsky.

It would be illogical if the Masters would have turned their back on the T.S. Even an 'average' man would not, halfway through his mission, throw in the towel. Would these great, compassionate sages act like this? We don't think so. That is why we are convinced that after Blavatsky, other advanced students explained and elaborated Theosophia with the support of the Masters.

Is there a touchstone on which to judge messengers? For sure! First and foremost, they must be the living example of their teachings. They should practice what they preach. Furthermore, you recognize a tree by its fruit. Did a messenger really give more insight? To what extent has he contributed to shaping the practical brotherhood? And finally, does the doctrine that he gives, conflict with that of the Esoteric Tradition of which Blavatsky was the last, great representative, and we do not mean her words (which are only tools) but the integrated whole of teachings? That does not mean that a new messenger cannot explain and elaborate her teachings. Of course he can: the purpose of his mission is to do that. He should not just repeat Blavatsky's words. If you compare Blavatsky's first major work, *Isis Unveiled* with *The Secret Doctrine*, you will notice that the last book does not contradict the first one, but it explains and complements it on numerous points. When Gottfried de Purucker presents his famous egg-diagram,⁽¹⁰⁾ he certainly does not contradict the seven-fold division of human consciousness given by Blavatsky.⁽⁹⁾ But he goes a step further. When you grasp the idea of the egg-diagram, you are able to understand better the deeper meaning of Blavatsky. Read for example stanza 7 of *The Secret Doctrine* I, and Blavatsky's comment on this stanza, especially verse 1 with the statement from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*.⁽¹²⁾ Combine this with the egg-

diagram and you will comprehend what Blavatsky was trying to communicate.

Even we, editors of the current *Lucifer*, inspired by a quote from H.P. Blavatsky,⁽¹³⁾ have developed this egg-diagram somewhat, by drawing in each ego an octave of a piano; a modest attempt to make the teaching a little more clear. In short, when Theosophy is really proven to you, you apply it. Because by doing so, you show that you really understand it. Then you have digested the teachings and new spiritual food can be ingested.

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3. Plato, *Phaedo*, 72e-77a.
4. See: H.P. Blavatsky, 'Why I do not return to India'. *Collected Writings*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1990, Vol. 12, p. 157-158.
5. H.P. Blavatsky, 'What of Phenomena'. *Collected Writings*, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1990, Vol. 9, p. 50.
6. H.P. Blavatsky was always very clear about this issue. See for instance: *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol 1, p. viii, where she says that the Secret Doctrine *claims consideration, not by reason of any appeal to dogmatic authority, but because it closely adheres to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy*; and: *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 20, where it states that *once that the reader has gained a clear comprehension of them [of the three fundamental propositions] and realized the light which they throw on every problem of life, they will need no further justification in his eyes, because their truth will be to him as evident as the sun in heaven*.
7. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 2, p. 797-798.
8. See ref. 7, Vol. 1, p. xxxviii.
9. See: H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, chapter 6, section 5.
10. G. de Purucker *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, Point Loma Publications, San Diego 1990, p. 225.
11. <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/lastkh.htm>
12. See ref. 7, Vol. 1, p. 213-222.
13. H.P. Blavatsky, 'Psychic and Noetic Action'. *Collected Writings*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1990, Vol. 12, p. 368-369.



Esoteric Islam

Key thoughts

- » The idea of Unity is the core idea of every religion. Allah, as described in the Qur'an, is a Principle permeating every being.
- » The hierarchical structure of the Universe is easy to find in Islam.
- » All nations form one humanity: this is the original meaning of the word *Ummah*.
- » Islam teaches clearly that not war but study opens the path to Allah.
- » To return to Allah, we need to stand above our *nafs* – our animal instincts.

There is a lot of Islamic violence in the world. What is striking, is that this violence is often between Muslims themselves. That is one of the reasons why people think that Islam in itself is violent.

However, Islam is, like any other religion, in its core noble: a core that inspires an ethical and spiritual way of life. But if a religion is interpreted in a sectarian way, it divides people instead of unifying them, and thus it becomes the main source of evil.

Therefore, it is high time to take a closer look at Islam and its principles in the hope that more people will discover the *real* fundamentals of this religion.

The core thought of every religion is Unity. Practicing religion means to unify yourself with the divine and therefore with your fellow humans, for the divine is the unifying aspect of human consciousness.

Many influences

This idea of Unity does not exclusively belong to Islam. On the contrary, it is the core idea of every religion. That is why the Qur'an repeatedly refers to the other 'peoples of the Book', to other prophets that preached the same message. In fact, the word 'Islam' originates from the Arabic root s-l-m, which forms a great deal of words that relate to wholeness and peace. Most scholars translate Islam by 'voluntary submission to God'. A Muslim is someone who

'resigns himself', e.g. lives in the perception of unity.

One of the 'prophets' that is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but who exerted nevertheless a huge influence on Islam, was Plotinus. Plotinus was a philosopher who stayed in Persia in the company of the Roman Emperor Gordian III, and exercised much influence there, also on a group of mystics that in later days were called the Sufis.

It is not surprising that Plotinus had such a strong impact on the Sufis and Islamic philosophy in general, because he also put a strong emphasis on the ONE. But the ONE was for him not a personal God, but an impersonal Principle. We will later see that his concept of the ONE is more like the original concept of

Allah than the current belief of Christians about God. It is always difficult, if not impossible, to describe the underlying Oneness of the manifestation. You seek for words, but not one fits. That is also the problem with the word God. In the way Christians use that word nowadays, God seems to be a kind of superhuman being, a personal god. But that was not always so.

When you look for instance at books from the early Christians, the so called Nag Hammadi Library, you find a totally different description. Like Plotinus' idea of the One, God has no properties. It is not right to think of Him as a god or something similar. Everything exists in Him. He is illimitable, unsearchable, immeasurable, invisible, unnamable, eternal and no one can comprehend Him.⁽¹⁾ You should not consider Islam as a completely new religion. It's an undercurrent of that broad, religious river of wisdom and compassion, which has flowed through all cultures and eras. With ease, you can find all sorts of Jewish, Persian and Christian influences in it, but also, especially in his more philosophical side, it is very strongly influenced by the Neo-Platonists, particularly Plotinus. This Neo-Platonic influence is reflected in the doctrine of the underlying unity of all expressions of life and in the process of emanation.

Every Muslim, whether he is Sunni or belongs to the Shi'a, living in Europe, Pakistan, America or Arabia, uses the same word to express that Unity: Allah.

Allah: Unity

Allah is the Arabic word for God. And without any doubt many Muslims imagine Allah as a personal God, just like other believers of monotheistic religions, such as Christians, Jews or Sikhs, anthropomorphize their God. But is Allah, as presented in the Qur'an, a personal god? What stands out strongly is that all Muslims, whether illiterate or great scholars, highlight the unity of Allah. Rightly so, because in many places in the Qur'an, and also in the *hadith* – the recorded traditions of the Prophet Muhammad – that unity is strongly emphasized.

In the 112th *Surah* (chapter) of the Qur'an we read:

Say: He is Allah, the One!

Allah, the eternally Besought of all!

He begetteth not nor was begotten.

And there is none comparable unto Him.

Pondering deeply about this *Surah*, you don't get an image of a personal God, but of a Principle; a Principle of Life,

that is everything and everyone.

Allah is One and cannot be divided. Therefore there cannot be a thing that is not Allah. So He cannot be a person, an ego. In fact you should better refer to Allah with the impersonal personal pronoun 'It' rather than 'He'. Furthermore, Allah is eternal. He has always been and will always be. A very interesting phrase is: *He begetteth not nor was begotten*. When Allah does not beget, nothing flows forth out of it. That means that He has created nothing. Allah cannot create, because then there would be something separated from Allah that nevertheless is rooted in it. Then there would have been two Unities, two Gods, and not one.

The only positive thing you can say about Allah, is that Deity is there, eternal and unchangeable.

There are Muslims who interpret this Quranic verse as directed against Christianity, for Christians assert that Jesus is the son of God. To prove they are wrong, these pious Muslims quote this verse, "Allah has not begotten". But the meaning of this verse goes much further. Allah has begotten NOTHING, for a principle cannot conceive, nor can it create. That is why the whole idea of Allah is beyond our comprehension. Exactly as Lao Tzu says that the true TAO – the infinity – cannot be named, this verse expresses that Allah is in fact everything but nothing in particular and thus beyond our understanding.

Allâhu Akbar

This idea is also reflected in the saying *Allâhu Akbar*, which is usually translated as *God is great*. That phrase is frequently uttered to justify the most terrible things, but in fact it means, that God is greater than anything we can conceive.⁽²⁾ Allah goes beyond our imagination, beyond the horizon of our existence. This is the same as the Hindu idea of *Parabrahman*, which means 'beyond Brahman', beyond the top of our hierarchy. The divine is greater than our grandest imagination.

On the other hand however, the Qur'an states that Allah is also very close. He is closer than the jugular vein (Surah 50:16). Also interesting is this statement: *...whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's Countenance*.(2:115) There are Muslim scholars who place this Quranic verse in the light of the fact that Muhammad changed the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca. That may be so, but Ali ibn Taleb, the cousin and son in law of the Prophet, says that each Quranic verse has four meanings, four layers of interpretation.⁽³⁾ This verse means without any doubt more than just the direction of prayer. The divine is everywhere.

Up, down, left, right, closer than your jugular vein and yet above and beyond your greatest imagination. Allāhu Akbar. Or the deity is both transcendent and omnipresent at the same time: beyond or behind the phenomenal world. Too great to understand, not even approximately. And on the other hand, the divinity is everywhere in the phenomenal world. Everything is imbued with the divine. That is the image of the immanent deity.

Shahada

That picture is also evoked by the *Shahada*, the first of the five pillars. You may call it the creed of Islam. *La ilaha illa Allaah*. Literally this means: *there is no God; there is one God*. The usual translation is: *there is no God but God*. A remarkable phrase, composed of both a confirmation and a denial. Like all paradoxes, it should be food for thought. What is meant by the phrase that there is no God, and there is one God?

It means that you can say nothing at all about Allah. Anything you say about it, does detract from it. The only thing you can say about the Deity, is that it is everything. It is boundless, timeless, unchanging.

You can come to profound meditations on *La ilaha illa Allaah*. There is affirmation and negation, but affirmation and negation are only applicable in the manifested world. But Allah is both the manifested and non-manifested, and at the same time it is not, for it is more.

So, Allah is, as said, the transcendent divinity, the Force beyond the world, beyond the universe, beyond the phenomena; unknowable in its essence. The first part of the Shahada – there is no God – relates to this aspect. It is too far, too high, too dark and too incomprehensible for us. Beyond our imagination.

And yet the divinity is present in the manifestation. It is a force that is everywhere. That is the part of the Shahada which says there is one God.

This idea is also expressed in the following verse:

[He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; and He is Knower of all things. \(57:3\)](#)

The Outward is the manifestation and the Inward is which is not-manifested. It is the picture of the transcendent and immanent deity. In other words: being and non-being. You might think that Allah is the synthesis between affirmation and negation, between non-being and being, between transcendent and immanent, but even that word synthesis does not express the correct understanding of

Allah, because Allah is UNITY *per se*. God is absolute UNITY, indivisible, and impossible to define. That unity is the starting point, the principle, on which the entire Islamic philosophy and mysticism is based.

Names of Allah

However, there still rise a few questions for people who have studied Islam. Allah is given a number of names, such as: the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Seer, the Creator and the King. Thus Allah is indicated with 99 names, of which, by the way, only 84 are mentioned in the Qur'an. It may seem as if those names prejudice the vastness and infinity of Allah. After all, a name indicates a property. And if someone has a certain property, then he lacks another property and is therefore not boundless. A property – how exalted it may be – always has a certain limitation in itself, while we already had determined that the Allah-Principle is the boundlessness itself. That is the reason why the *Mu'tazili* – an influential group in young Islam – taught that each property or characteristic that you grant to God, is a form of anthropomorphism and in fact polytheism, which is the biggest heresy in Islam. And indeed, when you consider the names as attributes of Allah, you interpret the great idea of the boundlessness anthropomorphically. You modulate the big picture according to your little human perceptions.

But you may interpret these names in another way. Ibn al-Arabi, for example, who lived from 1165 to 1240, has a very different idea. The central idea of his philosophy is, of course, the unity of Allah. He calls it the unity of Being. And since everything must be, by definition, *Being*, and since there are not two *Beings*, or two Absolute Truths, the universe must be permeated by *Being*, or is identical to *Being*. That does not mean that *Being* – or Allah – is the universe, or that the universe is Allah, because Allah is more than just conditional existence.

Allah, says al-Arabi, is exalted above all the properties, and the manifestation exists due to properties. Properties are neither God, nor is God, paradoxically, different from those properties. God manifests only by means of his names, which never can manifest its essence. And with those names al-Arabi refers to the names of whom Allah is known in the Qur'an. In its essence, in what you can call Necessary Being, Allah cannot be understood to experience, not in any way to become aware of. Nevertheless, from the divine flows forth life and life returns back into it. That life is presented as the names of Allah.⁽⁴⁾

Emanation

This idea of flowing out or emanation of life, so well-known in young Islam, is deeply rooted in the doctrines of the Neo-Platonists, especially the greatest of them: Plotinus. The doctrine of emanation implies that each being is the starting point of a flow of life. It is like a fountain source in which other beings are originated.

Imagine a being that creates an atmosphere, in which less developed beings can manifest themselves. These are entities with the same kind of characteristics as the Source-Being who created that atmosphere. In that sense, every entity is the result of a further developed being, and is also the source for less developed entities.

We humans stem from higher beings and create an atmosphere for less developed entities. Some of those lesser beings are the trillions of cells that make up our body, or the atoms that compose the cells, et cetera. So we are the 'creators' of those less developed beings, not in the literal sense, but in the sense that in our atmosphere they can live, have their existence and being. In Arabian scriptures these lower beings are referred to as *Jinn*, elemental beings, primitive, barely evolved beings, completely unselfconscious.

In turn, we emerged, or rather were attracted, to the sphere of what we may call a divine being that comes out of a still nobler being, et cetera. In that way, hierarchies of life come to being, in which each link switches, or transforms the life to a lower link. Each being is a link in a current of life. The hierarchical structure of the Universe is easy to find in Islam, albeit sometimes in symbolic form. Take for example the so called Night Journey, the journey that Muhammad made on the *Buraq* – the mythical steed – to Jerusalem, where he was taken to the seven heavens. If you study the teachings of the *Ismaili*, a group of Muslims who in the 10th and 11th century were very influential, you will see that they strongly emphasized these hierarchies, which they divided in seven steps.

As mentioned, the doctrine of emanation was emphatically taught by Plotinus. The One, the Divine, seeps by means of a process of emanation, just briefly described, into the outer world.



Buraq, the mythical steed on which Mohammad made his Night Journey to the seven heavens. Illustration made in the Mughal empire, 17th century.⁽¹³⁾

Light Verse

Let us now take a look at the famous Light Verse (24:35) of the Qur'an.

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

The parable of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light!

Many scholars have studied this verse. And although you can interpret it in different ways, it seems clear that the divine life-principle – the Light of the heavens and the earth – transforms via a number of links, into the material world. The expression "Light upon Light" is a phrase that you can also find in the work of Plotinus, who therefore uttered the same words six centuries before the Prophet of the Islam.⁽⁵⁾

This doctrine of emanation was widespread in Islam. Ibn Sina (980-1037), known in the West under the name of Avicenna, the great philosopher who has exerted so much influence on medieval thinking, uses the following comparison to make this thought clear. You can compare Allah – or Being – with the Sun. Of course, every comparison detracts from the reality of the unity of Allah, but to get at least to some extent an image, you

can compare Allah with the Sun. The universe is formed by the rays of the sun. Of course those rays are different from the sun, but at the same time, they are nothing more than the Sun. This comparison was probably well known among the Neo-Platonists. It goes back to the great Plato himself.⁽⁶⁾ It is basically the same as what Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*:

I establish this universe with a single portion of myself, and yet remain separate.⁽⁷⁾

The Ummah

The doctrine of the Oneness of Allah in combination with that of emanation is of paramount importance. First and foremost, all ethics are based on it.

If unity is the basis of all life, we have all emerged from the same source, yes, we are essentially the same. We consist of the same life. So we are brothers of one another. We must live for each other. We should not only help each other, no, we have to pay service to the whole community. In Islam the community is called *Ummah*.

To see this in its proper perspective, we need to place it in historical context. So we take you back to the Arabia of the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

There was at that time not the slightest feeling of general interest. It was a time of tribalism. Every tribe had its principles and laws and was almost constantly at war with other ones. So there was no sense of interconnectedness. The message of Muhammad was to bring about that unity. Every man, every nation, every tribe is a facet of the unity. So the Ummah is not explicitly the community for Muslims, but for every human being. When you read the Qur'an well, you will find this idea easily. We give two quotations:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. (49:13)

Mankind were one community, ... (2:213)

According to a *hadith* Mohammad also said that an Arab is not better than a non-Arab, a white man no better than a black or vice versa, except in terms of piety and good deeds. When Muhammad was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina, where he became the leader of the emigrated Muslims who had fled with him, a document was drafted under his leadership, which is nowadays known as the

'Constitution of Medina'. It expressly stated that the community does not only consist of Muslims but also of the Jews, Christians and pagans residing in Medina. It was a universal community, where people of all faiths and races belonged to.

A community can only function harmoniously, if people respect each other. So you should never force someone to accept a faith that you adhere yourself.

It may be dangerous to quote Quranic texts as evidence for your opinion, especially if you pluck them out of their context. Fanatics do that too much. Yet it seems to us that the famous verse 2:256 – *There is no compulsion in religion* – can be explained in no other way than by cherishing freedom for everybody to believe whatever they want.

Today the word Ummah is often limited to the Muslim community, but that shows a cramped form of separation and is in fact contrary to the message of the Prophet Muhammad, who emphasized so strongly the unity of everything and everyone.

Polytheism

Unity is very important throughout Islamic thought. It explains the aversion to polytheism, the belief in various gods.

Now you can find in the Qur'an a whole army of archangels and angels. This Holy Book itself – so is the tradition – was dictated by the archangel Jibril or Gabriel. So there is no doubt that there are beings that are more advanced than humans. The Qur'an tells also about beings that are less developed than humans: the jinn, extremely primitive entities. But this whole hierarchy forms a unity. This emphasis on the unity of Allah leads to the rejection of more gods. For the gods in ancient Arabia were all tribal gods. Each tribe had its own god, who was of the greatest importance for the ancient Arabs, even when this feeling was to the detriment of other tribes. That's why morality was limited to one's own tribe. As a result, there was much war and discord. There were no overarching ethics.

But because of the *Hijra* – Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina – Islam got a universal character. Initially the preaching of Muhammad was only addressed to the Meccans, but now he spoke to all mankind. Polytheism was thus rejected as being the return to the separateness of living in one's own tribe. For every tribe had, after all, their own tribal god. So if you denied the existence of all those gods, you put an end to the tribal sense of separateness. Compare it with today's national symbols. The symbol

of the USA is an eagle, of France a rooster, of Spain it is a bull and of the Netherlands a lion. Suppose that all those peoples grant their symbol great power. They pray to it. They beg to it for prosperity. In doing so, they isolate themselves from other nations, with hatred and war as a result.

You can counteract this by saying that all those symbols are illusions and false. There is unity. People need to know each other and learn from each other, so they can better shape the unity.

An important conclusion that can be drawn from the doctrine of emanation is that the divine is not outside but within us. When all is One, there can be nothing but Oneness. So every being is rooted in the Oneness. Rooted in a common divine Source, the divine is in all. Nevertheless, there is a great variety of beings in the world. Humans are different from animals, animals differ from plants, et cetera. And mutually men also, of course, differ from each other. The doctrine of emanation explains that too. Every entity gives in its own unique way shape to the unity. Therefore beings always differ in their outward form from each other and due to those differences they can learn from each other.

Evolution

The Light Verse shows that life – the Light of the heavens and the earth – is cascading down via various steps to the material world. The divine falls as it were in the materialistic fabric. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, we find the same thought:

*We have certainly created man in the best of stature;
Then We return him to the lowest of the low. (95:4-5)*

This idea is perhaps more understandable, if you take in consideration the hadith, popular by the Sufis, that the Prophet had told that all things were created in Darkness, but every being attracted light to himself according to his ability, and by doing so, got himself illuminated. Every being comes from the depths of the depth, from what we just called the unknown transcendent deity. That is the aspect of the Shahada that says there is no god. That is to say: there is no god for *us*, because the abyss for us is formless, it is the great Void, as Buddhists say. It is nothing, in the sense of *no thing*. But then a being comes into manifestation, just like fire throws off sparks, or, as Ibn Sina says, like the sun radiates rays. Every being is a spark of the divine light. The gloss of every man is like

a sparkle of the deity. That is the aspect of the Shahada that says there is one God. Everything is the one God, because everything comes from that depth into being and is therefore at the core of the core of his being that God. This idea is expressed in another way. A tradition states that every human being is in fact a Muslim, 'someone who resigns himself'. When God created all souls, he would have said: 'Am I not your Lord', and all souls answered: 'yes'. (Surah 7:172)

The consequence of this idea is of great meaning. Man is basically 'good'. Few doctrines erode ethics more than those which say that man is always inclined to be evil. No, man is created 'in the best of stature'. In the depths of his heart man is a noble creature. But apparently he does not realize this yet. He must learn to be who he really is. And in order to learn, he descended into the material fabric. He became 'the lowest of the low'.

So the divine being by origin descends into matter, thus loses the divine state, loses the knowledge where he once resided.

And how can he learn? How can he remember that he has to return to that divine state? By knowledge.

Knowledge and return

Knowledge, said Muhammad, is light.⁽⁸⁾ The ink of the scholar is therefore more valuable than the blood of the martyr, according to a hadith.

It is obvious and it does not need further discussion that so many cruelties executed by the so called *jihadis*, have nothing to do with genuine Islam. Many Islamic scholars have noticed that.⁽⁹⁾ Islam disapproves of cruelty and revenge sharply. See what the Sufi Shaikh Sharfuddin Maneri says about this:

Find him that flees for you; forgive him that offends you; do good unto him that does not want to bestow you anything.⁽¹⁰⁾

Islam teaches clearly that not war but study opens the path to Allah. That's why there is no other religion that emphasizes more the accumulation of knowledge than Islam.

The light of the heavens and the earth streams through links into the manifestation. The more it descends, the darker it gets. Sometimes, unfortunately, it is almost completely extinguished. Then people hate each other, then they live in the separation of their 'tribe'. Whether they give their 'tribe' the name of their religion, their country or race, is actually an afterthought. They are in

the illusion that others, who do not belong to their 'tribe', are different, evil, heretics, don't have the right faith. Then they kill each other. Then there is no knowledge, and so there is no light.

But we can come to knowledge. Then we return to where we came from, and we learn to live in the light that is in us. The whole Qur'an, the entire Islam, and in particular the mystical branch of it, is therefore dominated by *tauba*. This Arabic word is often translated as 'repentance', or 'remorse', but a better translation is 'repent', or even better 'return'. After all, if it is true that all souls emanated from Allah, then they will return to the Source one day.

That is exactly the meaning of religion. You will reconnect to the Source from which you come. We return to Him, we read constantly in the Qur'an.

The methods for 'going home' are the rules of the exoteric Islam: the five pillars that you can find in every book on this faith. But for those who want to go faster, there is the esoteric path, such as the different *tariqa's* (Paths) of the Sufi-masters. They practice poverty, asceticism, detachment and meditation.

Nafs: the lower self

The difficulty is that the light inside oneself is dimmed by what is called the *nafs*.

Man does have a spark of light in his soul, but that soul is composed of several parts. There is also a part of that soul that identifies itself with the earthly, the transient. That part is the *nafs*.

The *nafs* did not exist in the garden of Eden, the heavenly state, the initial stage in human evolution, when we still lived in Allah and were created in the best of stature.

Then we descended. In this process of emanation in which we became the 'lowest', the *nafs* was developed. *Nafs* is the instrument with which we could work in this outer world. We identified ourselves, however, with this external instrument, so that we forgot who we really were.

Nafs is described as the seat of the passions. In many Sufi writings it is presented as a very real thing. It sometimes lives as a separate entity outside the body. It is compared with the cruel Pharaoh; so it is the tyrant in us. It is compared with a woman (*nafs* in Arabic is a feminine noun) that seduces men. More often it takes the form of an animal, frequently a pig.

Those who are aware of the composite constitution of the human being, as Theosophy teaches, understand this metaphor all too well. The personal man may easily focus himself on his animal nature and then he banishes

the divinity.

Sometimes the *nafs* takes the form of hypocrisy; it comes with the Qur'an and rosary in one hand and with the scimitar and dagger in the mews, says the Sufi-poet Rumi. Hence, you find many warnings in Islamic literature not to give in to the desires of the *nafs*.

Yet it is not that we should eliminate the *nafs*, not in the absolute sense, but we must not listen to its voice. We should not be affected by it. *Nafs* is the element in us that attaches us to the phenomena. Therefore, we must rise above it.

The fight against this *nafs* is the true *jihad*, the true holy war. A hadith says: the worst enemy – the *nafs* – is between your sides. And the Prophet Muhammad would have said, when he returned from a battle field: we are going now to the *jihad akbar* — the great battle, the fight against the *nafs*.

In the Qur'an we read:

I do not exculpate myself. Lo! the (human) soul enjoineeth unto evil, save that whereon my Lord hath mercy. (12:53)

The *nafs* is here translated as soul, which could be misleading, for one could draw the wrong conclusion, that man is prone to evil. But it is the *nafs*, the lower part of the soul that, left to itself, focuses on the material side of life.

But as evidenced by the Qur'an, the *nafs* may be also used for good. Live in unity and you win the big *jihad*. Sufis love to compare the attempts to master the *nafs* with the training of a dog. The lower aspects should not be slain, they must be controlled, so that they can serve us.

Rumi compares that struggle with a man trying to maneuver his camel in the right direction, e.g. to the tent of the beloved. If you live in the knowledge of Allah, the soul obeys his master.⁽¹¹⁾

Extinction

Returning to the Source is described as a journey full of perils and temptations.

It is often expressed in symbolic language, as in the famous allegory *The Birds' Conversation* of Farid ad-Din Attar. In this inspiring story the birds – symbols of souls – set out to find the mysterious Simurgh. They pass through seven valleys. The last is that of destruction. What does that mean?

It is basically the same as Nirvâna. Nirvâna means literally 'blown out'. But what is blown out?

The lower part in man is blown out. The lower principles are destroyed. The nafs is destroyed. Only when that is the case, you can merge into the unity. There is an absorption in pure cosmic Being.

The Sufis use this image of destruction. In Arabic it is called *Fanâ*, or *Fanâ' fi-Allah*, which means annihilation in God. But to fully understand this, they link it with *Baqâ' bi-Allah*, 'be eternal in God'. You destroy the personal man, you detach from all the limited, oppressive, small, deciduous shadows and illusions. In fact you detach from all emanations. And because of that destruction you live in Allah. You are aware of the all-encompassing unity of life. You do not see yourself as a separate being, but as a drop in the sea of life.

However, the voyage does not end. For as various Sufis assert: the journey to God stops, but the journey in God begins.⁽¹²⁾ After all, there is boundlessness. So there can never be limits.

There is yet another stage in *Fanâ' fi-Allah*, and *Baqâ' bi-Allah*, which, according to Theosophia, is the highest, and that is: the journey from God with God. This means that after the destruction, when you 'live in Allah', you descend again into the world of phenomena. You remain conscious of the unity, but nevertheless live in the multiplicity of the outer world.

Why is this the highest form of unification? Because there is the greatest perception that an individual is essentially the same as another. Therefore we should not live for our own bliss and salvation, but we should identify ourselves with the whole, the Ummah. Compassion is the highest form of unification.

Wherever there is a form of 'I', where one's own 'I' desires to be destroyed, where that 'I' wants to live in Allah, there is still a form of illusion. When the ego is on the foreground, man limits himself.

You can never wake up the divine completely within yourself, if there is still some form of 'I'; if the 'I' is still the dominant factor in your consciousness. There is nothing that describes this clearer and more beautiful than the poem of the greatest of the Sufi poets, Djalaal ad-Din Rumi:

Someone went to the door of the Beloved and knocked.

A voice asked, "Who's there?"

He replied, "I".

The voice said, "There is no place for Me and You."

The door was closed.

After a year of solitude and deprivation he returned and

knocked.

A voice from inside asked, "Who's there?"

The man said: "Thou."

The door opened for him.

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3. Henri Corbin, *Histoire de la Philosophie islamique*, Part I. Gallimard, Paris 1964, p. 20.
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5. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V 3.12.
6. Plato, *Politeia*, p. 508c.
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9. In September 2014 more than hundred prominent Muslims, including professors from different countries, have written a letter to the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In that Open Letter to al-Baghdadi, Muslims condemn the actions and positions of IS. They call 24 ways in which IS is violating Islamic teachings. See: <http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/>.
10. Shaikh Sharfuddin Maneri. *Letters From A Sufi Teacher*. Translated by Baijnâth Singh. Theosophical Publishing Society, Benares/London 1867, p. 74. Online: www.gutenberg.org/files/47749/47749-h/47749-h.htm.
11. See for nafs: Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1975, p. 112-4.
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13. Source: Wikipedia, 'Buraq'.



Emanation and Fohat as the fundament for the electric universe

Science uses models. Models give explanations and predictions of what we perceive. A new, useful model is that of the so-called 'electric universe'. Scientists have discovered that electromagnetism is an important organizing force, in the cosmic field as well as in the human body. The Theosophia is able to explain these discovered facts. Key factors are *Emanation* and *Fohat*. These are universal concepts; they apply to any universe. This article is a slightly edited report of the lecture Joop Smits held on August 13, 2011 at the International Theosophy Conference in Julian, California.

Key thoughts

» Emanation is the outflowing of things lying latent in inner worlds: a higher being emanates a magnetic field in which less developed beings can develop themselves.

» Fohat is cosmic vitality, led by Cosmic Desire and Intelligence.

» In the physical world Fohat expresses itself as electricity, magnetism, sound, warmth and cohesion. The universe and all its suns and planets are thoroughly electrical.

In this investigation of 'Emanation and Fohat as the basis for the electric universe', there is a clear correspondence between science and spirituality. We will demonstrate this by discussing the theosophical teachings about Emanation and Fohat first, after which we will consider some ideas of modern science that are consistent with the theosophical teachings.

1. Why Emanation and Fohat?

What make Emanation and Fohat so interesting?

The answer is that the archaic doctrine of Emanation provides

a universal key to understand the process of re-embodiment at a cosmic, terrestrial and human level and it shows how every living being exists within the sphere of a higher being. E.g. how we humans live in the sphere of the earth and sun and how the cells of our body live in the sphere of the human being. This is, of course, based on the theosophical standpoint of the *living* universe or cosmos. We can perceive the universe as embodied consciousness which is ordered as a hierarchy consisting of different levels of consciousness, in line with the original Greek meaning of the word 'cosmos,' as 'order' or 'arrangement'.^(*)

* Theosophical insights on Emanation and Fohat apply to cosmoses of all levels: galaxies, solar systems, planets, yes, even humans, plants and minerals. Unless otherwise indicated, the word 'cosmos' in this article is to be taken in this general meaning.

In this doctrine of Emanation, the universal force of Fohat plays an important role. One of the aspects of Fohat is electricity and in this aspect we can find a correspondence with the ideas of some modern scientists who consider the universe to be essentially electric in nature. Theosophy may be of help here to give impulses to stimulate further developments in science. In this article we will make use of the so called *deductive method*, propagated by Plato. This means that we start from universal theosophical principles which we test by examining whether they can be confirmed by specific facts. Now, let us see what light the theosophical teachings on Emanation and Fohat can throw on the discussion on the 'electric universe', also called the 'plasma universe'.

2. Problem definition

This article will discuss the following key questions:

- What is Emanation? – section 3.
- What is Fohat and what is its role in Emanation? – section 4.
- What are electricity and magnetism and what is their role in the Emanation process? – section 5.
- What are recent scientific insights on the electric universe or plasma universe? – section 6.
- Can we recognize examples of concurrence of the theosophical concept of Emanation and Fohat with these recent scientific insights on the 'electric universe'? – section 7.

3. What is Emanation?

'Emanation' is a compound derived from Latin, meaning the 'flowing out' of what is within. In the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge (VI)* H.P. Blavatsky defines Emanation as: "something from which another thing issues in a constant efflux, and emanates consciously".⁽¹⁾ And with 'something' she indicated a leading consciousness, a 'source being'. This source being emanates 'another thing', which is a 'force field' or a 'sphere'. This 'force field' is emanated in a constant efflux and is emanated *consciously*.

Let us have a closer look at the process of Emanation. In all myths of the world, we find the idea of man as the child of a divine source that carries many names. And all those names express the same thought: a state of consciousness, which is higher and more constant than human consciousness. And according to the old traditions, it is not only man who emanates from this spiritual source; all beings such as suns, planets and atoms, emanate from a source which is spiritually more developed than they are.

Take the example of embryonic growth of a human being. The first fertilized cell has the inherent powers of all future organs. It is the most universal cell of the body. From this first cell countless cells are born, which have the same or more limited abilities such as the ability to form skin or muscle tissue. And those specialized cells in their turn give birth to even more specialized cells like sweat gland cells. So the general idea is: a less developed being manifests itself in the 'sphere' of a higher developed source being and together they form a hierarchical structure.

In the doctrine of Emanation we can distinguish three key thoughts:

A higher consciousness emanates a sphere, a magnetic field, on a lower plane in which less developed beings can live and develop themselves further.

This higher consciousness is the source being for the less developed beings. Please note that a source being is not a supreme being in the traditional sense of the word. Every being, of whatever type, is a source being for a group of less developed beings. For example, each of us is a source being for the cell beings of our body. And at the same time those cell beings compose the body of their source being; a human being.

It is this emanated sphere, this magnetic field that attracts the lesser developed beings and activates and inspires them to continue their evolutionary pilgrimage with the aim to eventually reach the same spiritual level as the source being. At the same time the less developed beings contribute to the evolution of the source being by collectively forming its vehicle or body.

It is important to note that the process of Emanation is essentially different from a process of 'creation' in the absolute sense. We can recognize the process of Emanation in the example of the human embryo. The human consciousness forms, out of its consciousness, a magnetic field in which cells and atoms can live and find their appropriate place. This magnetic field structures the cells and atoms in the same way a magnet structures magnetic material, and besides that, it also nourishes them. What is the relation between the source being and the many less developed beings that live within its sphere? The answer to this question is the second key thought on Emanation:

Similarity in character results in mutual attraction.

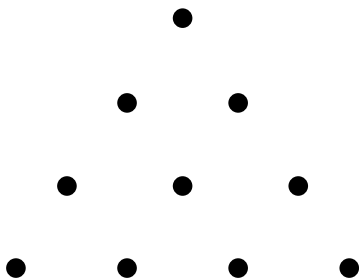
This is why the leaves of an apple tree all have their characteristic shapes. It also explains why you are more

likely to be surrounded by friendly people if you are friendly yourself.

The third key thought is:

The less developed beings are – in their turn – the source being for still less developed beings.

Think – as an analogous example – of a tree of which the roots provide the conditions for the growth of the trunk. The trunk does the same for the branches and each branch does the same for the twigs and then we arrive at the individual leaves. The process of Emanation results in a hierarchy of life with different planes or levels of existence. All beings are in fact such a hierarchy of life. The old Pythagoreans used the famous *Tetraktys* to symbolize it:



4. What is Fohat and what is its role in Emanation?

In the process of Emanation *Fohat* plays an important role.

4.1 What is Fohat?

The main verbal root *foh* is a Tibetan-Mongolian word which can be translated as ‘Buddha-life’ or ‘Buddha-vitality’. Fohat is a philosophical term, having the general meaning of *cosmic life* or *cosmic vitality*, ever guided by Cosmic Mind or Intelligence.⁽²⁾ Why did the Mongols use this term? Because they refused to see a play of blind and soulless forces on dead matter in the wonderful, symmetrical, mathematical and harmonic structure of the universe, as opposed to the dominant way of scientific thought in the West for so many years. They named it Fohat because their consciousness conceived of the cosmic vitality for what it really is — *Buddha-life*: the intelligent *buddhic* foundation of the manifested universe. Fohat is cosmic life, conducted by universal consciousness, by universal wisdom. They correctly understood universal life to be the embodiment of the leading universal intelligence. In *The Secret Doctrine* this is expressed as follows:

Fohat is the steed: the Cosmic Thought is the rider.⁽³⁾

The source of Fohat is Cosmic Kâma, or desire, in the Cosmic Thought.⁽⁴⁾ In a specific meaning it is identical with the old mystical Greek word ‘eros’. In the *Symposium* of the *Dialogues of Plato* Socrates discusses with his friends the characteristics of the god eros. They conclude that eros can neither be beautiful or good, because one only desires what one does not possess yet. Subsequently Socrates speaks of the lessons he learned from a wise woman called Diotima. She described eros generally as

the desire (the love) of the everlasting possession of the good ... and that, through this desire, man seeks immortality.⁽⁵⁾

From this we may infer that Fohat or eros is the desire, the driving force, that will bring a being from its present – relative – disharmonious state into a state of balance, of harmony. In science this force is expressed by the delta (Δ), a Greek letter that always indicates a *difference*, for instance a difference in voltage, pressure, height, et cetera. So we can say that on the human plane Fohat corresponds to desire or passion. We can also call it kâma-prâna or prâna-kâma; desire combined with vitality. The two are inseparable, because there is vitality in every one of the human principles. Fohat is the incessantly active, ever moving driving force in Nature. It is continual activity and it is both constructive and destructive. For through the incessant activity of Fohat endless transitions take place — from one phase of manifested existence to another. Fohat is active on both macrocosmic and microcosmic level: between the suns of the Milky Way, between the electrons of an atom and between the atoms themselves.

4.2 What is the role of Fohat in the process of Emanation?

What exactly is the relation between Emanation and Fohat?

We can say that we as human beings live in the *emanated* force-field, the life-sphere, the fohatic sphere, the prânic sphere, of the Divine aspect of our solar system. In a similar way the cells and atoms of our physical body are living in the *emanated* force-field, the life-sphere, the fohatic sphere, the prânic sphere, of the Divine aspect of our human constitution. In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P. Blavatsky describes the essential character of Fohat as: “the ‘bridge’ by which the ‘Ideas’ existing in the ‘Divine Thought’ are imprinted on Cosmic substance as the ‘laws of Nature.’”⁽⁶⁾

Fohat, being the cosmic life in the sense of the vital flow

of a universe, is divisible into seven or ten principles or elements.⁽⁷⁾ Each one of them is a vitality with its own *swabhâva* or characteristic, and their unity forms the general Fohat of which Blavatsky wrote in *The Secret Doctrine*: “Each world has its Fohat, who is omnipresent in his own sphere of action. But there are as many Fohats as there are worlds, each varying in power and degree of manifestations.”⁽⁸⁾

4.3 How can we recognize the activity of Fohat?

Please keep in mind that – from the theosophical standpoint – the universe is alive, because it is filled with living beings, whatever we call them: cosmic spirits, planetary spirits, divinities, et cetera. We are all living in the life-sphere of the Deity of our solar system.⁽⁹⁾

Now with respect to all natural phenomena that we witness around us: earthquakes, meteorological phenomena like rain, lightning, moving of clouds, thunder-storms, hail-storms, sunny and bright days; all those are expressions of the vital essence of the planetary spirit working in and with the solar spirit, just like this solar spirit itself moves within the life-sphere of an entity still greater, the galactic spirit, which in its turn moves within the life-sphere of a still vaster spirit. All those movements are based on Fohat: *the driving force*, which, as said, is perceived by scientists as a *difference* in voltage, pressure, height, et cetera.

We get the same picture when we look at the countless beings that compose a person's body. They live and move and have their being within the entire human constitution, which is composed of a hierarchy of ‘vehicles’ or ‘sheaths’ of the spirit. It is a wonderful image, in which we recognise the symmetry, harmony and beauty of the universe. We should realize that every time we witness the expression of a force of nature, we are looking at the *automatic* workings of the vitality of our own planetary, or maybe even solar spirit. We may call those automatic workings the *habit patterns* of those cosmic beings. For us human beings this is difficult to imagine. We can compare it to the human plane: a being living on an electron, helping to form one of the atoms of my body, may not notice it when I raise my arm. Nevertheless, all the cooperating forces that give vitality to my body affect every molecule, every atom, every electron in my body. In precisely the same way the cosmic spirits, the Forces of Nature, have a range of action so vast, an intellect so far-reaching and active during such an immense time-period, that we cannot grasp it.

A last point to complete the general description of Fohat is

the idea of the ‘circulations of the cosmos’. The circulations of the cosmos are the pathways or channels connecting the invisible worlds of the solar system by means of cosmic vital flows, cosmic ‘neural pathways’. The solar system, like the human body, has its own network of nerves, arteries, and veins, as well as its pathways along which run to and fro the flows of forces embodying the various degrees of cosmic life. The sun, as the heart and brain of the solar system, receives the circulations of the solar system at its North Pole.⁽¹⁰⁾ They pass through the heart of the sun, are purified there and leave the sun through its South Pole. The same applies to the planets, like our Earth: each has its receptor at the North Pole, and its ejector at the South Pole. And the periodic pulsations in those circulating flows are the ‘heart beats’ of the solar system as a living organism. We can recognize an identical image in the flows of the blood circulation and the nervous system in the human body.

In this respect I mention a relevant quotation from *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gîtâ* by W.Q. Judge and R. Crosbie:

There is in nature a law that operates in every department whether moral or physical, and which may now be called that of undulation and then that of inhibition; while at other times it reappears as vibration, and still again as attraction and repulsion, but all these changes are only apparent because at bottom it is the same. Among vegetables it causes the sap to flow up the tree in one way and will not permit it to return in the same direction. In our own blood circulation we find the blood propelled from the heart, and that nature has provided little valves which will not permit it to return to the heart by the way it came, but by the way provided. Medical and anatomical science are not quite sure what it is that causes the blood to pass these valves; whether it is pressure from behind communicated by the heart, or the pressure by atmosphere from without which gently squeezes, as it were, the blood upon its way. But the occultist does not find himself limited by these empirical deductions. He goes at once to the center and declares that the impulse is *from the heart* and that that organ receives its impulse from the great astral heart or the Âkâsha, which has been said by all mystics to have a double motion, or alternate vibration — the systole and diastole of nature.⁽¹¹⁾

We can summarize our thoughts on Emanation and Fohat as follows:

- The vitality of cosmic beings manifests itself as Fohat, which is guided by Cosmic Desire.

- Fohat expresses itself as a *difference* in voltage, pressure, height et cetera, which strives towards balance or harmony.
- Cosmic, terrestrial and human emanations all work through or with fohatic forces which maintain the organism by means of their ‘circulations’.

5. What is electricity and magnetism and what is their role in the Emanation process?

5.1 Fohat in relation to electricity and magnetism

Now let us describe the nature of Fohat in more detail. In her *Theosophical Glossary* H.P. Blavatsky defined Fohat as “the essence of cosmic electricity. An occult Tibetan term for *Daivīprakriti*, primordial light ...”.⁽¹²⁾ In describing *Daivīprakriti*, she defines it as: “Primordial, homogeneous light, ... when differentiated this light becomes *Fohat*”.⁽¹³⁾ And in the following quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* we find:

(b) Bear in mind that Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity, is said, metaphorically, to have sprung like Rudra from Brahmā ‘from the brain of the Father and the bosom of the Mother,’ and then to have metamorphosed himself into a male and a female, *i.e.*, polarity, into positive and negative electricity. He has *seven sons* who are *his brothers*; and Fohat is forced to be born time after time whenever any two of his son-brothers indulge in *too close contact* — whether an embrace or a fight. To avoid this, he binds together and unites those of unlike nature and separates those of similar temperaments. This, of course, relates, as anyone can see, to electricity generated by friction and to the law involving attraction between two objects of unlike, and repulsion between those of like polarity. The Seven ‘sons-brothers,’ however, represent and personify the seven forms of cosmic magnetism called in *practical Occultism* the ‘Seven Radicals’, whose co-operative and active progeny are, among other energies, Electricity, Magnetism, Sound, Light, Heat, Cohesion, et cetera.⁽¹⁴⁾

In short:

- Fohat is the essence of cosmic electricity and is bipolar, resulting in attraction and repulsion.
- Fohat expresses itself in seven forms of cosmic magnetism which result in ‘energies’ which we know in their *effects* as electricity, magnetism, sound, light, heat, cohesion, et cetera.

In addition we find in *The Mahatma Letters* a further explanation of electricity and magnetism in nature by Master K.H.:

We know of no phenomenon in nature entirely unconnected with either magnetism or electricity — since, where there are motion, heat, friction, light, there magnetism and its *alter ego* (according to *our* humble opinion) — electricity will always appear, as either cause or effect — or rather both if we but fathom the manifestation to its origin. All the phenomena of earth currents, terrestrial magnetism and atmospheric electricity, are due to the fact that the earth is an electrified conductor, whose potential is ever changing owing to its rotation and its annual orbital motion, the successive cooling and heating of the air, the formation of clouds and rain, storms and winds, etc. This you may perhaps, find in some text book. But then Science would be unwilling to admit that all these changes are due to *ākāśic* magnetism incessantly generating electric currents which tend to restore the disturbed equilibrium.⁽¹⁵⁾

In more scientific terms we could – in general – sum it up by speaking of ‘forms of electromagnetic energy with which all phenomena in nature are connected’. And in *The Secret Doctrine* we find:

“Electricity, light, heat, etc. have been aptly termed the ‘Ghost or Shadow of Matter in Motion,’ *i.e.*, supersensuous states of matter whose effects only we are able to cognize.”⁽¹⁶⁾

Scientifically put: electromagnetic phenomena are related to particles in motion, resulting in wave-phenomena. Modern science describes light in two ways: as the motion of photons and as a wave phenomenon. From the above we can conclude that electricity and magnetism are the physical counterparts or ‘reflections’ of universal cosmic vitality — cosmic electromagnetism, or Fohat. Scientists like Faraday, Maxwell and Lorentz have discovered various laws in the field of electromagnetism which explain a number of facts in nature which we will discuss later on.

5.2 The role of electricity and magnetism in relation to the Emanation process

Let us have a look again at the Emanation process, now in relation to and in terms of electricity and magnetism:

- A higher consciousness emanates an electromagnetic field or sphere on a lower plane, in which less developed beings can live and develop themselves.

- The less developed beings in their turn emanate a similar electromagnetic field on a plane one step lower. In this way the hierarchy of life is built up at different levels. Electromagnetic fields within electromagnetic fields emerge.

Whether a being is attracted to or repelled from a certain electromagnetic field depends on the 'similarity' with that type of electromagnetism. The peregrinations of a comet can serve as an example here. When a comet travels through space it may pass through the electromagnetic spheres of many solar systems, but in the end it will be attracted to one specific solar system with which it has a corresponding electromagnetism. The comet will settle and will find its position there on the basis of a balance between electromagnetic forces of attraction and repulsion – and again, the real cause lies in the activity of the consciousness behind the comet.

In science this 'position finding' of a cosmic body is usually attributed to gravitational forces. In science, gravitation is based on the concept of the gravitational force between two bodies. The strength of that force is based on their masses *and* the presence of a certain gravitational field. In Theosophy however gravitation, like all natural phenomena, is attributed to living beings of cosmic magnitude by reason of the vital electricity or vital magnetism emanating from these beings, in combination with the electromagnetic sphere in which they live themselves. Gravitation could be described as an induction process: a force that is generated by the motions of a being, within the electromagnetic sphere in which it lives. We would rather call it an *effect* than a cause! And more in general it can be considered as the attraction and repulsion of a being – based on desire – towards a sphere of consciousness with a specific characteristic. The Greek Empedocles called it hate and love.⁽¹⁷⁾ Cohesion among atomic particles is the microcosmic expression of the same fundamental qualities that manifest themselves in macrocosmic phenomena, such as gravitation.

6. New scientific insights: views on the electric universe or plasma universe

During the last decade a number of scientists have come up with a new vision, based on the assumption that the universe is of an electrical nature. The 'electric universe', also called the 'plasma universe', is a hypothesis, a new way of interpreting scientific facts in the light of recent knowledge about electricity and plasma and the application of this knowledge to observed phenomena in space.

The term 'plasma universe' is a term coined by Nobel Prize Laureate (1970) Hannes Alfvén to highlight the importance of plasma throughout the universe.

What is a plasma? It is a gaseous substance (often ionized gas), consisting of free, charged particles such as electrons, protons and electrically charged atoms, that respond very strongly to electromagnetic fields. The free charges make the plasma highly electrically conductive and therefore they may carry electric currents and generate magnetic fields that may cause, among other causes, the plasma to constrict (or pinch) into so-called filaments (fiber-like structures). Plasma is usually considered to be a phase of matter distinct from solids, liquids and gases because of its unique properties. That is why it is called the 'fourth fundamental state of matter'.

The work of Alfvén (1908-1995) and of physicist Kristian Birkeland (1867-1917) has given us a deeper understanding of the effects of electricity and magnetism in the universe. More about this later. These scientists have made it plausible – by theory and observed facts – that space is not *empty* but filled with plasma and that plasma based electric currents and magnetic fields are present in space and may play a much more important role than we have assumed so far.

Based on their work, a number of scientists recently presented the theory of the 'electric universe', stating that:

1) *The universe is highly electrical in nature.*

Celestial bodies are not electrically neutral but charged, including our sun, planets, etc. Interactions between bodies are mainly electromagnetic, instead of being based on gravitation.

2) *Radiation phenomena observed in space do not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the universe is expanding.*

I refer to my lecture 'Universal or specialized science' during the International Theosophy Conference 2010, where I presented some thoughts on this subject from both a theosophical and a scientific perspective.⁽¹⁸⁾

The scientists who are enthusiastic about their electric universe theory are so, because it is based on well understood principles, such as the laws of Maxwell. Plasma physics is the same in the laboratory as in the universe. Phenomena which we observe on the scale of the laboratory are the same as when observed on a cosmic scale i.e. with dimensions of billions of kilometers. The only difference is that processes on a cosmic scale can take a much longer time.

The electrical view on the universe also seems to explain phenomena which are not easily explained by gravitation theory.⁽¹⁹⁾

7. Recognizing examples of correspondence

We will now try to recognise some examples of correspondence of the theosophical concept of Emanation and Fohat – at a cosmic, terrestrial and human level – with the scientific insights on the electric universe.

7.1 Recognizing life: self-motion

First of all let us give a useful theosophical definition of a living being, of *life*. The Second Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* states that cyclic motion is the expression of the consciousness of a living being.⁽²⁰⁾ It states in other words: *panta rhei*; everything changes and moves continuously. In line with this Second Fundamental Proposition a very interesting and useful definition of *life* was given by Plato by stating that: life is characterized by *self-motion* i.e.:

- the ability to *act*, to set itself into motion, combined with
- the ability to *react* to the acts of other beings.

Therefore the motion of objects in space – whether rotating or rectilinear – like the motion of nebulae, planets, or galaxies, is already a first indication of *life* from the theosophical point of view!

7.2 Cosmic level: galaxies

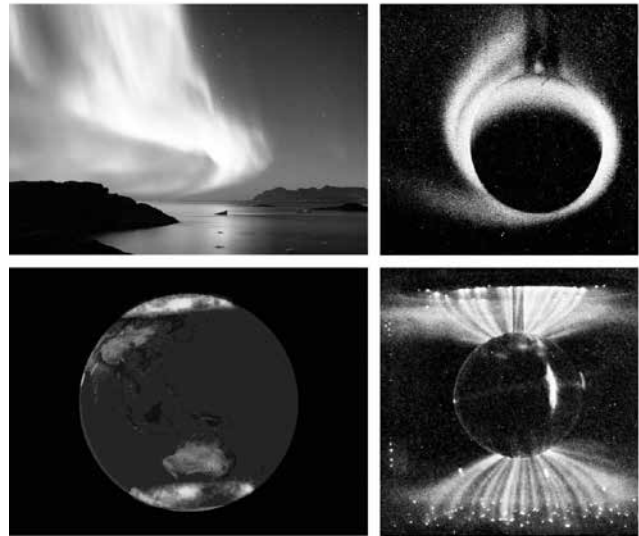
Let us have a look at the universe at the cosmic level. In the cosmos we can see spiral shaped galaxies, in their entirety showing a whirling motion. This motion is an expression of the rhythmic, pulsating life of the cosmic consciousness, expressing itself throughout all its planes of being and manifesting itself astronomically on the physical plane. There we can recognize it as the cyclical whirling of the galactic body.⁽²¹⁾ And applying the same rule to the worlds of atomic particles, we can see at once that the whirling of the electronic bodies in the atoms, or the atoms themselves, are of precisely the same nature. Let us look at some scientific facts. In astronomical observations various kinds of motions have been identified in the universe. And especially when we keep the electric universe approach in mind we can see interesting things.

1. Birkeland currents

First of all I would like to mention the so-called Birkeland currents. A Birkeland current usually refers to the electric

currents in the upper airspace (the ‘ionosphere’) of a planet that follow magnetic field lines, like the auroras at the Poles of the earth.

The aurora results from the interaction of the electrically



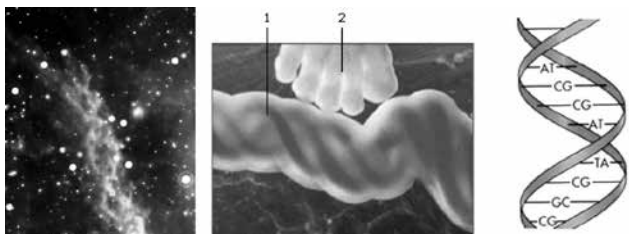
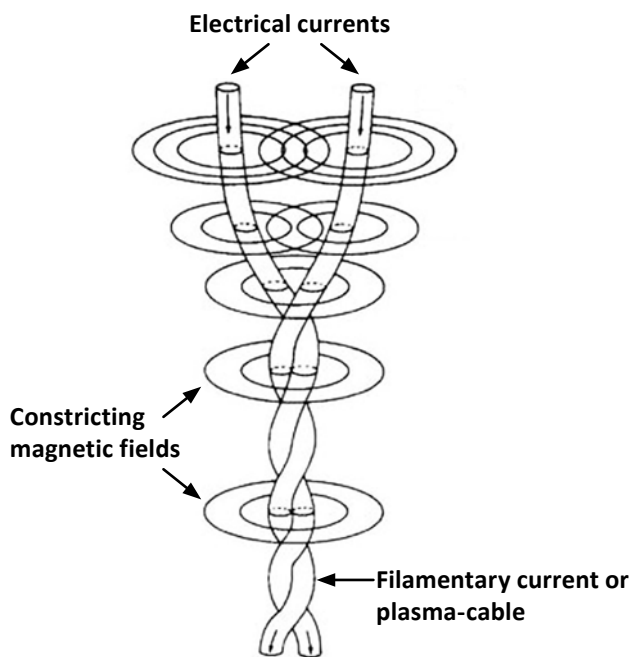
Photos left: polar light. Photos right: two images of Birkeland's simulations by means of his electromagnetic model of the earth.

charged particles within the plasma of the solar wind and the earth's magnetic field.

The currents were predicted in 1903 by Norwegian explorer and physicist Kristian Birkeland, who undertook expeditions into the Arctic Circle to study the aurora and subsequently he studied those currents extensively. He also built an electromagnetic model of the earth, the ‘Terrella’, to simulate the phenomena. Birkeland currents are also known as *field-aligned currents* (currents that line up to a force field), *magnetic ropes* and *magnetic cables*. It describes any magnetic field-aligned electric current in a plasma in space. These currents often show a filamentary, or twisted ‘rope-like’, helix-type magnetic structure. This is caused by the motion of a plasma perpendicular to a magnetic field.⁽²²⁾ In nature we encounter similar shapes, like the human umbilical cord and the DNA spiral.

2. Simulation of the evolution of a spiral galaxy

The father of the electric or plasma universe approach is Hannes Alfvén. He received the Nobel Prize in 1970 for his work on this subject, although unfortunately his research has mostly been ignored by the majority of the scientific community. As early as 1937 he proposed that our galaxy contains a large-scale magnetic field and that charged particles move in spiral orbits within it, owing to forces exerted by this magnetic field. Anthony Peratt, a close colleague of Alfvén, showed by means of laboratory



Birkeland currents in space (left) and analogical spiral forms in Nature, like the umbilical cord and DNA.

experiments and computer simulations that the simulated evolution of a spiral type galaxy structure accurately matches observed spiral galaxies in space.⁽²³⁾

7.3 Cosmic level: our solar system

Let us look at our solar system now.

1. Magnetic field strength

According to Theosophy, the evolution of the life of a planet takes place in seven phases, usually called 'Rounds' ⁽²⁴⁾ Before the first Round there is an 'embryonic phase'. Theosophy teaches that the presence and strength of a planetary magnetic field depends on the phase or stage of the life of a planet. Take for instance the planet Mars. It has completed three Rounds and is now in its so-called 'obscurisation period' between the third and fourth Round. This means that all life on the planet is 'asleep'. At present Mars has no global magnetic field, or a measurable large-scale magnetic field. However, measurements of the spacecraft Mars Global Surveyor showed that *parts* of the surface of Mars are magnetic. This can only be the

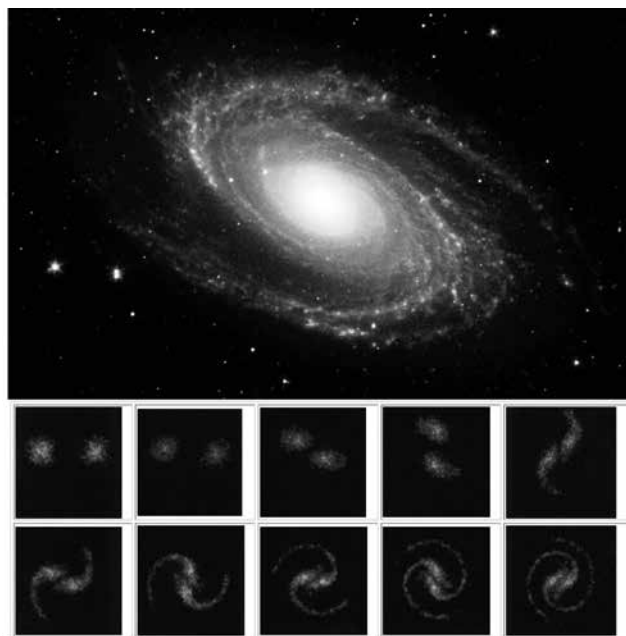


Photo above: spiral galaxy, photo made by the Spitzer telescope. Photos below: Peratt's simulation of the genesis of a spiral galaxy.⁽²³⁾

case if there once was a planetary magnetic field. This is exactly what Theosophy teaches. In the period of the third Round there was a planetary magnetic field, which will be reinforced again at the beginning of the fourth Round. A similar analysis applies to the moon. Some rock formations on the moon are magnetic and can be considered remnants of a former magnetic field. This is a scientific confirmation of the theosophical teaching that the moon has completed its seventh Round long time ago, as the previous embodiment of what we now call our earth. To complete the picture, the *known* magnetic field strengths of the planets in the solar system are listed in the table on page 28, together with the available theosophical information on the planet's stage (or phase) of life.

One remark should be made. The stage of life of a planet is something else than the evolutionary level of a planet. Think for instance of a child of ten years old, who is still less capable than a man of thirty. Nevertheless it may be much further evolved spiritually than the older man. We could call the child an 'old Soul'.

When we look at the diagram we can make a division into three groups of planets:

- the younger planets: Neptune, Uranus, Saturn and Jupiter;
- the middle aged planets: Earth (in its fourth Round) and Mars (now 'asleep');
- the old planets: Venus and Mercury (both in their seventh Round).

Magnetic field strength of the planets and the moon in the solar system⁽²⁴⁾, compared to the stage of life according to Theosophy.⁽²⁵⁾

	Science		Theosophy
	Global magnetic field? (*)	Magnetic field strength (relative to Earth) (**)	Stage of life
Moon	no	0.000	dead
Mercury	yes	0.006	old (in 7th Round)
Venus	no	0.000	old (in 7th Round)
Earth	yes	1.000	middle age (in 4th Round)
Mars	no	0.000	'sleeps'/asleep (between 3rd and 4th Round)
Jupiter	yes	19,519.000	young
Saturn	yes	578.000	very young
Uranus	yes	47.900	very young
Neptune	yes	27.000	very young

(*) This tells whether the planet has a measurable large-scale magnetic field. Mars and the moon have localized regional magnetic fields but no global field.

(**) Listed is the magnetic field strength compared to earth. A magnetic field strength of 27 means that it is 27 times as powerful as the magnetic field of the earth.

We can derive the following from this table:

- The younger planets have the most powerful magnetic field;
- The old planets do not have a magnetic field, or one that is only scarcely perceptible.
- Earth is in between;
- Mars is not a good comparison, for it is asleep.

A strong magnetic field is typically a characteristic of youth; it fits the stage of building up a body. Young people are much more energetic and active than adults. Magnetism is also a form of vitality. Wouldn't it be logical to suppose that children have a stronger magnetic field than adults, at least at the physical-vital level? Therefore the analogy between man and planet seems correct.

2. Motion of planets

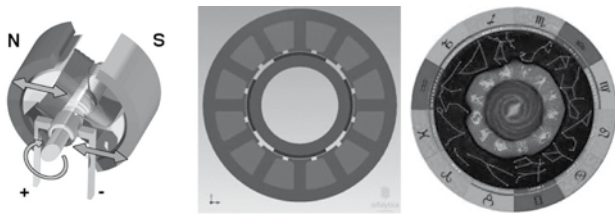
There is another point I want to mention briefly, about the motion of the planets. In the explanation on Emanation the conclusion was that we can speak of the hierarchical structure of the universe as 'life within life,' but also as 'electromagnetic fields within electromagnetic fields'. Our solar system is surrounded by, amongst others, the twelve constellations and the 'houses or mansions of the celestial Zodiac'. Now each fohatic magnetic Emanation from the Zodiac produces its corresponding fohatic magnetic effect in our earth. From Theosophy we know that the earth is an electric conductor. One of the consequences of this is that the earth – as a big 'charged particle' – will

move in orbits around the center of those twelve fohatic magnetic fields, and this center is the sun.⁽²⁶⁾ Those with a background in physics may recognize the concept of a 'direct current electric motor' with twelve poles.

7.4 Terrestrial level

Regarding the sphere of our earth the following interesting aspect may be added. During the seven 'active' phases of evolution or Rounds, each planet is protected by a 'blanket' of cosmic dust which acts like a protective shield against external influences like the solar wind. This shield is called the 'meteoric continent' by the teachers of Madame Blavatsky. It also plays an important role in the formation of meteorological phenomena like snow, hail and storms. In view of Emanation this also illustrates that the emanated terrestrial sphere in which we live is a sphere confined in space.

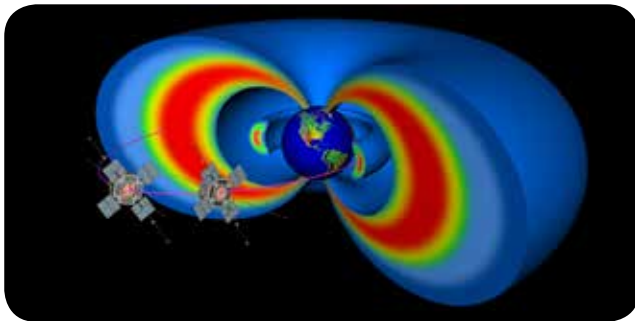
In between two Rounds the life on a planet sleeps, the planet is 'in obscurity', in theosophical terms. In this period of rest, the planet loses its visible (its clouds) and invisible 'blankets' of cosmic dust, in which every active planet has enwrapped itself by attracting this cosmic dust towards itself. This is what we can recognize as the situation on Mars, where we can detect hardly any atmosphere. Our planet earth is very much alive and therefore it has a meteoric continent. The electromagnetic interaction between the cosmic dust of the meteoric continent and earth itself accounts for – according to



Left: an electric motor (direct current) with 2 poles. Middle: the same but now with 12 poles. Right: a revolving celestial body amidst the 12 poles of the Zodiac — similar to a 12-pole electric motor.

Master K.H. – at least two thirds of the terrestrial heat.⁽²⁷⁾ The meteoric continent also functions as a membrane. The dynamics in the entire process result in the expanding or shrinking of our atmosphere and increasing or decreasing heat production on earth. This causes the variation in temperature in our atmosphere.

The exact position and properties of the meteoric continent form a subject of study on their own. The so-called Van



Drawing of the Van Allen belts of the Earth.

Allen belts are possibly a part of the meteoric continent which the Master mentioned. It is an important topic for future study in view of climate change.

7.5 Human level

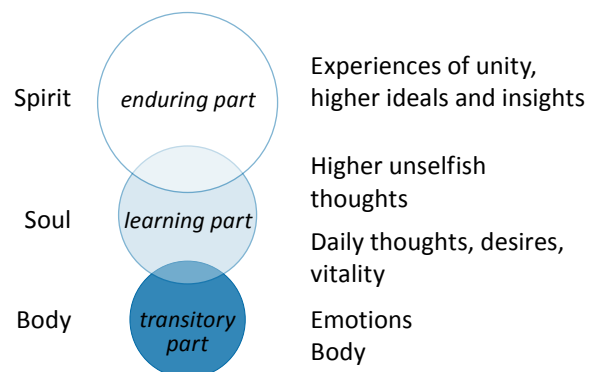
We can recognize Emanation and Fohat at the human level as well if we look at the composite nature of man:

- Our *spirit* is our *enduring part*. We can recognize it as our experiences of unity, higher ideals and insights and higher unselfish thoughts.
- Our *soul* is our *learning part*. We can experience it when we focus on our daily thoughts, desires and vitality. We can learn to shift our focus towards higher unselfish thoughts and ideals.
- Our *body* is our *transitory part*. We can experience it when we focus on our body and our emotions.

Put in terms of Emanation, our spirit is the source being for the soul. The soul has its existence in the inspiring fohatic sphere which emanates from the spirit. And the body has – in its turn – its existence in the fohatic sphere which

emanates from the soul. We can learn from this that we, human souls, determine in what extent we *identify* with the inspiring fohatic forces that flow from our enduring part, our spirit, or with the fohatic forces which have the character of our transitory part, our body.

According to Theosophy we are all gods-in-embryo. We can become of the same quality as the source being in whose emanated sphere we live. We just have to learn to express the divine qualities in our lives. Patañjali said: *You will become what you think*. This means that the character of our thoughts determines which part of our composite nature our soul identifies with: the spirit or the body.



The Human Being, a composite entity.

We can also see a relation with the *HeartMath Institute* here. This institute demonstrates at a physical level the interconnections between the inner aspects of our consciousness – such as (the nature and force of) our emotions – and the phenomena in nature surrounding us (the earth, solar system, et cetera) and of which we are a part.

The key question remains: what is our motive? Do we concentrate ourselves on our own spiritual development or that of *all* people?

8. Summary and conclusions

The substance of this article can be summarized as follows:

1. The archaic doctrine of *Emanation* provides us with a universal key to understand how every being exists within the sphere of a higher being. ‘Worlds exist within worlds’. The doctrine applies to every level of the universe: cosmic, terrestrial, human and atomic. We human beings have the potential to become one with our source being: our spirit. The key question is: what is our motive?
2. In the process of Emanation *Fohat* plays an important role. Fohat is the ‘bridge’ by which the ‘Ideas’ existing in

the 'Divine Thought' are imprinted on Cosmic substance as the 'laws of Nature'. Fohat manifests in various forms, and electricity as we know it is one of its lowest manifestations. What vitality is in the human frame, electromagnetism is in the framework of the physical universe.

3. The present scientific concept of the universe is based on the general perception of gravity. The synthesis of science and spirituality – from the theosophical perspective – can teach us that we are part of a living universe where cosmic electromagnetism is the corporeal vitality of the cosmic entity in which we have our existence. The electromagnetic Nature appears to be confirmed by new scientific facts on the electric universe.

Therefore we would like to plead for more, and more profound, research based on the living electric universe!

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Questions & Answers

Four or seven Yugas?

Question referring to the article on Kali Yuga in Lucifer the Lightbringer 2nd issue, 2014.

Regarding the Yugas, the standard exposition is 4-3-2-1 for four total, the ciphers indicating the relative time periods. After the fourth and shortest Yuga, the Kali Yuga, immediately starts the first and longest Yuga of the next cycle, the Satya Yuga. However, we see that nearly everything is septenary. Has no one entertained the idea that there are actually seven Yugas: 4-3-2-1-2-3-4? Tsong Kha Pa mentioned the Deva Yuga somewhere. It seems odd that four Yugas would end with a return to a fresh Satya Yuga immediately.

R. Robb

Answer

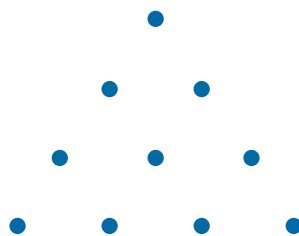
This is a very interesting but not an easy question. The doctrine of the cycles is certainly one of the most difficult ones. We therefore don't pretend to give a complete answer but more ideas to think about.

Firstly, we want to say something about the sevenfold division. It is good theological practice to divide man's consciousness into seven. But that is no dogma, at least it should not be so. Not all systems are septenary. The division into three – spirit, soul and body – is also correct, although it does not enable us to distinguish certain details. Subba Row, who was a chela of the same Master as H.P. Blavatsky, divides man's consciousness into four.⁽¹⁾

It is a good tradition to divide the year

in four seasons. Likewise the mystical year has four holy moments, four initiations, which take place during the passing of one season to another. A human's life has also four stages: youth, adolescence, adulthood and old age.

So the number four is certainly used in the spiritual literature of the world. For Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans the Tetraktys (the four) was a very sacred number, by which they swore a secret oath. They said that the Tetraktys symbolizes the four elements (fire, air, water, and earth) and the four seasons. The Universe was built on the Tetraktys. If you thoroughly study this Tetraktys, you will discover that in fact this four is the result of other numbers. For the top of the Tetraktys is the Monad (the One). From the One flows the Dyad (the Two): spirit and matter. Then comes the Triad (father, mother and son, the start of a manifestation) and then the four (Tetrad), the cosmos.



When you add all those numbers, you get the ten (decade), for $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$. So you see in the Tetraktys the same rhythmic process as in the four Yugas. What we want to say is that this order is a natural phenomenon.

Now, if you also realize that a Tetraktys is in fact nothing more than a dot in a larger triangle, and each dot of a Tetraktys is again divided into ten smaller

dots, you get a picture of the process that what happens in small is a copy of something greater. This is exactly what the third proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* teaches us. Everything is interwoven. Everything belongs to, is a part of something greater and at the same time it is built of smaller things following the same pattern.

So it is with the Yugas. The four Yugas of a Root Race for instance are only one episode of the complete life of the planet, which can also be divided into four. But a Root Race can be divided into smaller cycles. Each of them has four parts in the ratio 4: 3: 2: 1. Each cycle has four facets. However, there is not a direct passing from one Yuga to another, for there is the so called *Sandhyâ* or rest-period. So we don't immediately go from Kali Yuga to Satya Yuga.

Due to the hermetic Law, as above, so is below, this fourfold division should also be recognized in a man's life. In Hindu tradition, the life of a man has indeed four phases. But the confusing difficulty is that the last period of man's life doesn't seem to be his individual Kali Yuga, because old age should be the most spiritual period in one's life whereas Kali Yuga is the most materialistic. According to Gottfried de Purucker however, a man's Kali Yuga doesn't take place in his advanced age but at middle age — at least in present mankind.⁽²⁾ Then he is most aggressively active. His powers to act in this outer world are strongest. It is a period of great intensity, and correspondingly great trials. At this age a lot of people encounter what we call the midlife crisis.

Here is an analogy with Root Races or other cycles. Those cycles overlap. During the Kali Yuga of a Root Race the so-called race-catastrophe occurs. There is a separation between humans who have developed a new mentality and those who stick with the old one. This catastrophe occurs about halfway through the complete Root Race. It resembles a midlife crisis in an individual man. H.P. Blavatsky writes that when the Kali Yuga of a Root Race is still there, the next Root Race has already been born and is in its Satya Yuga phase.⁽³⁾ During the prolonged overlap between two Root Races, individuals 'make the inner step' constantly. So not all mankind takes the step at the same time. There are individuals who make that step much earlier than others. And there are individuals who do not make the step at all. They stick with the old mentality.

In a certain sense that overlap is also noticeable in an individual lifetime. Here too you can see that some people make that step in an easy, natural way, and others have to suffer a lot before they come to a new period in their lives. Now, who are the ones who have problems with aging? Humans who concentrate on the outside rather than on the inside; who do not sow seeds of spiritual thoughts before they are forty years old. They fail to sow 'the next race'. Humans who do sow those seeds, make an inner step forward. Even though they do not make the real decision in their younger years, in their minds and hearts they develop a clear image of a more spiritual life: the succeeding phase in their development is already born in their minds, as an embryonic ideal. It is already in its 'Satya Yuga'.

In other words: when a man does not live a decent and ethical life, he is unfit for a more advanced age. But when he

cooperates with nature and fulfills his duties towards his family, the society and mankind in general, then the more advanced and old age will be the most beautiful and spiritual period of his life. In fact it is a new start. He is like a new born baby, living in his Satya Yuga, a Golden Age. Such a person will concentrate more and more on spiritual things. In this last phase he develops all his spiritual powers. Then he dies and rests. In his next life he will harmoniously build up his new vehicle, reactivate his qualities, be active in his youth, have his midlife period in which again he has to take an inner step, gets old, dies and has his rest. The four-spoked wheel rolls on and on.

Nevertheless, everything changes. So we were taught that in former Root Races, the end of man's life was his Kali Yuga, because he had not yet developed the more spiritual part of his consciousness. We were on the descending arc. But strangely enough in the next Root Races we shall have our Kali Yuga again when we are old. Then we shall have the full flowering of all our potentialities in the years just before we die.

So there is a great deal more to say about these Yuga's, but we think that the sequence of time periods is always the same: 4, 3, 2, 1 – and then starting again with the 4, the Satya phase. Living today in Kali Yuga, the turbulent age, perhaps we can get more insight into these Yuga's. Who knows?

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Reaction on 'Brotherhood and Sisterhood?'

Dear editors,

Enjoyed reading Barend Voorham's articles on 'Brotherhood and sisterhood?' and 'Why Theosophy doesn't have its rightful place in the world'. Barend is such a good writer I hope he does not mind a challenge.

On 'Brotherhood and sisterhood': Barend's points seems to be that (1) brotherhood really had to do with a spiritual dimension which has no sex; (2) we only use the word brotherhood because of our imperfect language and "we have no word to specify this genderless, universal aspect." and (3) the spirit has no gender and it sometimes tends to the male side and then again to the female side "just like a human being can be a man during a number of incarnations and will subsequently incarnate as a woman several times." His thought is that because of the above we can keep the word brotherhood and there is no need to add sisterhood also. Perhaps if the woman waits until a few more lifetimes he/she will be a male anyway.

To this we would respectfully disagree. In our lodge in San Diego we have a woman who is a strong feminist. She is a committed Theosophist yet she states every time she comes across the word brotherhood in the theosophical literature she feels diminished. In fact, when reading aloud she deliberately adds in the word sisterhood. At the Naarden Conference this year in August when giving a presentation I suggested it is time Theosophists add the word sisterhood. When I said this there was perfect silence from the audience. However, in my focus group I asked what the feelings were on this. All three females started applauding and saying "right on" and the males were

silent looking confused. At the least I hope Barend will recognize there is a part of our population, which has strong feelings on this topic. It should also be recognized the word brotherhood has been a developing concept in the theosophical world. In W.Q. Judge's article on "Brotherhood and the Admission of Members" written in 1894 he found a resolution to a conflict where certain white Theosophists did not want African American persons as part of their membership. The resolution was that the Blacks could have their own group. Of course, in these times this would never have been acceptable. Probably in 1894 his solution may have been brotherly. In 2014 it would be disastrous, suggesting a developing meaning to the word brotherhood. Is it not also time in 2014 that we as Theosophists can add the word sisterhood? As a final thought, the reason this male is so supportive of the female is the knowledge approximately 25 percent of our children are sexually molested during the path to adulthood in the United States. The female is far more protective of children than the male. Think of a world with less molestation.

Hope Barend is OK with these remarks. I look forward to his writing and very much enjoyed his presentation in Naarden.

Jim Colbert

Answer

I fully agree with Jim Colbert that a part of the theosophical population has strong feelings on this topic. And I think I know the reason why. That reason may be summarized with the title of a John Lennon's song: *Woman is the nigger of the world*. For all over the world men have mistreated women. This fact is so obvious that we don't need to give examples. And since Theosophists cannot bear injustice, they do

not accept this.

This injustice is made by men ... and women. A lot of men think they are better than women, and women accept this as normal. But humans are complicated beings and have a composite consciousness. The feeling that men are better than women originates in that part of human consciousness that we call the soul. When that soul identifies itself with the outer world, it sees differences and gives a great value to those differences. Such a soul however is like the human in Plato's cave: it confuses shadows with reality. It takes the differences as really existing. It makes an illusion a reality for him ... or her. The spiritual Reality is behind all shadows. We can grasp some of that Reality when our soul identifies itself with the Spirit, the Source from which everything flows forth. In that Reality there is no difference between men and women. For if Theosophy is right and there is UNITY and every being, man or woman, is rooted in the same Essence of Life, all the differences of the outer world are just human, manmade illusions. I think that Jim agrees with this statement.

Now the question is: what is the best way to make our world a reflection of this spiritual Reality. Should we *strive* for it? Or should we *live* it?

When you strive for it, you place the Ideal outside of you. You think that there are barriers and hindrances – like stupid laws, crooked politicians and ignorant men – who prevent you from achieving that spiritual Ideal. So you suppose that if you get rid of those barriers and overcome the hindrances, you reach that Ideal. So you strive for new legislation, another president, a certain quantity of women in the parliament and so on. In the worst case scenario you use means that are contrary to the goal you are trying to

accomplish.

When you *live* your spiritual Ideal, you try to implement it in all your thoughts and acts. There is nothing that impedes you from living it. No president, no ignorance, no unjust laws can stop you from living the Ideal of Unity. Now you may say that the world is still so far away from that spiritual Ideal of Unity, that sometimes we have to accept the fact that we should separate humans. In W.Q. Judge's article "Brotherhood and the Admission of Members" an example is given: some people may not enter a certain theosophical branch, although they may be members of the TS itself. They may not enter that specific branch because they belong, so to speak, to another family with other cultural habits. This situation is far from perfect, but in that time it was probably the best solution to avoid quarrels.

But is this the case with men and women? Do men and women belong to another family? Should we forbid women in our lodges, and should women forbid men in their lodges? Should we accept the outer differences as real and important? Or should we always try to live according to the spiritual Reality of Unity, that we are all capable of perceiving when we look deep within our hearts?

If you don't live your spiritual Ideal but strive for it, you distinguish men from women and talk about brotherhood and sisterhood. But that is at most the second best. For in the spiritual Reality there are neither men nor women. If you talk about brotherhood *and* sisterhood, you divide the essential UNITY into two. For if you apply sisterhood, you exclude 50% of humanity and if you apply brotherhood – used here as a union of only men – you exclude 50% too.

We strongly believe that you have to

live your Ideal. So you have to approach fellow humans in the most noble part of their being: their spirit, which is sexless. Of course, we are only talking about words. I strongly believe that Jim and I feel the same about the relationship between men and women. We both believe, I guess, that a human is a spiritual being with a temporal personality. But we need words to spread this idea. Which words serve our purpose best? Sometimes we use words slightly different than what is usual. We have to explain that. So when we talk about brotherhood we don't use it in a sentimental way but as a fact in Nature. We try to reach human beings in their

individual, spiritual part. Therefore we call them our brothers, because verily we *are* brothers, parts of each other. If we speak about brotherhood and sisterhood, what should we answer the public when they ask us 'what is sisterhood'? Is a 'brother' a part of sisterhood? And is there a difference between brotherhood and sisterhood? When we try to be 'politically correct' and we would talk about brotherhood and sisterhood, maybe we were in line with the feminist trend, but we did detract from the spiritual idea of unity. If we tried to use politically correct words, we soon would realize that we can never satisfy all groups and

individuals. H.P.B. called one of her magazines *Lucifer*, because the true esoteric meaning of the word sets the right tone, although she knew that it would be misunderstood by a large group of people in her time. Her right now appears: the current generations (at least here in the Netherlands) have little or no trouble at all with that name. So we think that when you stress the differences of the sexes, by talking explicitly of sisterhood, you focus on differences, while we are convinced that the only solution for the problems in the world is to be found in UNITY, or UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

Barend Voorham

Events

International I.S.I.S. Symposium 2015

**Râja-Yoga Education of the
Reincarnating Child**

Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st of May, The Hague

The problems that many people struggle with can often be traced back to the fact that people have never been taught to get acquainted with their own nature and to master it. A right education enables people to develop a broader view. The importance of education is therefore essential. However, what is right education?

At this Symposium, organized by the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth), an answer to that question will be searched for during two days. Starting point for this search will be an ancient education system called Râja-Yoga. Children are not born blank, but have shaped their character in former lives. Râja-Yoga teaches them to fully develop the noble parts of their character, which enables them to control the less noble parts and to ennoble them. They learn to familiarize themselves with all qualities of their composite consciousness, which allows them to create a view of their own, to acknowledge their responsibilities and accordingly take part in and work for a greater cause.

The Râja-Yoga system is not for children only. We are all

each other's educator. But more important: we are our own educators! During this Symposium the Râja-Yoga principles will be presented in short lectures, followed by workshops. The program and venue of the Symposium will follow soon on our website www.stichtingisis.org. You can subscribe online for the Symposium there as well.

Theme of ITC 2015:

**Helena Petrovna Blavatsky Through
Different Eyes With One Heart**

Thursday 6th to Sunday 9th of August, The Hague

What is our understanding of H. P. B.'s writings?

How do they inspire all Theosophists, affiliated with an organization or independent, to embody and transmit her timeless message to the modern world?

International Theosophy Conferences (ITC) is dedicated to spreading Theosophy and is supported by theosophical organizations, groups and independent students all over the world. The venue for the ITC 2015 will be the Carlton Ambassador Hotel, in The Hague, the Netherlands. For information and registration: <http://www.theosconf.org>. Seats are limited, so you are invited to register as soon as possible.

Colophon

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I.S.I.S. Foundation

The name of the Foundation [Stichting] is 'Stichting International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth'. Its registered office is in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The object of the Foundation is to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood by disseminating knowledge about the spiritual structure of human beings and the cosmos, free from dogma.

The Foundation endeavors to accomplish this object by giving courses, organizing public and other speeches and lectures, issuing books, brochures and other publications, and by drawing on all other resources available to it.

I.S.I.S. Foundation is a non-profit organization, which is recognized as such by the tax authorities in The Netherlands. For the purposes of the tax authorities, I.S.I.S. Foundation has what is called ANBI status.

ANBI stands for General Benefit Organisation (Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling). The most important requisites in obtaining this ANBI status are:

- It is a non-profit organization, so it has no earnings. Any profit earned from for example book sales, must be fully used for general beneficial activities. For I.S.I.S. Foundation, this is spreading the Theosophia. (We refer to the statutes, aims and principles for further information.)
- Board members must meet integrity requirements.
- The ANBI must have a separate property, whereby a director or policymaker cannot dictate over this property as though it were his own.
- The remuneration of board members may only consist of a reimbursement for expenses and attendance.

I.S.I.S. Foundation ANBI number is 50872.

I.S.I.S. Foundation

The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

1. The essential unity of all that exists.
2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily practice.



Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

Each culture in the East and West has his bringers of light: inspiring individuals who give the initial impulse to spiritual growth and social reform. They stimulate independent thinking and living with a profound awareness of brotherhood.

These bringers of light have always been opposed and slandered by the establishment. But there are always those who refuse to be put off by these slanderers, and start examining the wisdom of the bringers of light in an open-minded and unprejudiced way.

For these people this journal is written.

“... the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ...

We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty – as it is that of physical Science – to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance ... But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, are still more important ...”

(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)