

THE POEM WITHIN THE PROEM

– FUNDAMENTALS OF ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY
AS EMBODIED IN OCCULT SCIENCE –

Seed words: Unity, Noumenon, Being, Becoming, Manifested, Substance, Principle, Unconditioned, Consciousness, Parabrahman, Mulaprakriti, Newton

Introduction

The kernel of the occult philosophy and science has received its clearest, detailed and most forceful expression in *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. This doctrine is expounded by way of three propositions that are axiomatic in their universal application, but which, let it be clearly understood, resonate with our inner, intuitive faculties, rather than addressing the dualistic brain-intellect that works through dichotomy in its ordinary mode of operation.¹

The first proposition is the affirmation: the What IS, the stark and unequivocal FACT of the Unity of Existence – not a hyperbole, verbalisation, suggestion, hypothesis, theory, or what is fashionably known as a 'model of reality'. The ex-pression² of the What IS, its ever-becoming as periodically manifesting universes, its method, mode and manner of appearance is the subject of the second proposition. Then the third proposition affirms the relationship of all beings with each other, and to their one source and essence. The first axiom is reflected in the third, and the second provides the interface between the two, thereby partaking of both.

FIRST PROPOSITION: THERE IS ONLY ONE ULTIMATE REALITY, THE UNMANIFESTED~INTEGRATED STATE

Principal Quotations from Occult Science

In the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB states: ‘An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and can only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought – in the words of the *Māndūkya* [Upanishad], “unthinkable and unspeakable.”’³

Note carefully that this One Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, is equivalent to the Unmanifested~Integrated State⁴ and is referred to as a PRINCIPLE (not a thing). Furthermore, the One Reality is not the same as the First cause but antedates it. For

¹ The reader is invited to verify for himself just how energising, liberating and above all, exhilarating it can be to ponder over these fundamental life principles. What follows cannot be proven like a geometrical theorem. The only ‘proof’ is the actual experience, however fleeting, gained in prolonged contemplation upon these eternal verities.

² The word 'express' deliberately hyphenated to emphasize the idea of 'pressing out of'.

³ *SD-1*, p. 79. The most fundamental, powerful and all-inclusive of all Occult axioms stated in the Proem. (In the 1886 Manuscript the words “unthinkable and unspeakable” were rendered “unpronounceable”, that is, indefinable.)

⁴ For which the acronym ‘UNITED State’ would seem to be particularly apt.

the 'First' implies something that is 'first brought forth,'⁵ i.e. a manifestation and therefore it cannot be the Absolute which is also referred to in Occultism as the 'Causeless One Cause' and the 'Rootless Root.'⁶

But whenever we move away 'in thought from this (to us) Absolute Negation [i.e. Unmanifested~Integrated State],⁷ duality supervenes in the contrast of Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter, Subject and Object.'⁸ Accordingly then, this ONE PRINCIPLE presents a *dual* aspect in the conditioned Universe [for whatever is conditioned is always manifested, and vice versa].⁹ These two aspects pertain to:

- *Parabrahman*, as 'the field of Absolute Consciousness'¹⁰ which underlies all the subjective aspects of experience and is the basis of Consciousness and its various grades of differentiation as Mind; and its opposite polar correlate –
- *Mulaprakriti*, as pre-Cosmic, Root-Substance that underlies all the objective planes of Nature and is the substratum of Matter in its various grades of differentiation.¹¹

Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti are broadly equivalent to Shiva and Shakti as described in Dr. I. K. Taimni's books on occultism and science.

Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti are also Principles, 'One, in reality, yet Two in the universal conception of the Manifested'. Hence as indicated above, 'it will be apparent that the contrast of these two aspects of the Absolute [or the ONE PRINCIPLE] is essential to the existence of the "Manifested Universe."'

'The Manifested Universe, therefore, is pervaded by duality'¹² which science confirms in its investigation of physical nature where energy (radiation) and matter, or wave and particle are regarded as two sides of the same coin, so to say. But just as the opposite poles Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti are integrated in the ONE PRINCIPLE [UNITED State] of which they are aspects, so in the *manifested* Universe there is a bridge that links and correlates Spirit to Matter, Subject to Object. That link is called Fohat by Occultists and it provides the bridge, or means and mechanism whereby Divine Thought (i.e. the Ideas existing in Divine Mind) is impressed on Cosmic Substance in what science recognizes on the physical plane as the 'laws of nature'.¹³

⁵ *SD-1* p. 80.

⁶ The reader will now appreciate the crippling limitation of words and language in attempting to express or describe the sublimely transcendental – the ineffable.

⁷ Negation **not** in any sense of an annihilation, but as containing no-thing; therefore the noumenon and potential containment of all things. (A photographic negative – the noumenon – acting as a template that can produce any number of differently contrasting positive prints – the phenomena, may be a helpful analogy, if not pushed too far.)

⁸ *SD-1*, p. 80.

⁹ Further elaborated in *SD-1*, p. 317, para (3).

¹⁰ *SD-1*, p. 80. Note the reference not just to Absolute Consciousness, but to the *field* of the latter. The importance of this 'field' becomes apparent in connection with the role of Sound in manifestation.

¹¹ *SD-1*, pp. 80, 81. The word 'underlie' is important as it signifies the *substratum*.

¹² *SD-1*, p. 81.

¹³ Based on *SD-1*, p. 81. Fohat is similar to the term Krama (not to be confused with Karma) as used by Dr. I. K. Taimni, but with different shades of meaning.

Two aphorisms below present nuances of the same facts from the standpoint of Western science and Occult Science.

Suggestive Aphorisms from Western Science and Occult Science

In his *Opticks*, Sir Isaac Newton states:

And ... does it not appear from Phaenomena that there is a [noumenal] Being incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent, who in infinite Space, as it were in his Sensory, sees the things themselves intimately, and thoroughly perceives them, and comprehends them wholly by their immediate presence to himself ...¹⁴

Newton clearly alludes to an impersonal and non-anthropomorphic ‘God-Principle’ and he also refers to a ‘very first Cause, which is certainly not mechanical.’¹⁵ But as succinctly stated by HPB: ‘That which in the mind of the great mathematician assumed the shadowy, but firmly rooted image of God, as the *Noumenon* of all, was called more philosophically by ancient and modern Philosophers and Occultists – “Gods,” or the *creative* fashioning Powers.’¹⁶

From Vedic philosophy in the *Tejobindu*, we are told:

And Siva declared: I am of the nature of Parabrahman ... I am beyond the reach of mind and speech ... I am Atman ... There is none other than Brahman, and that is I ... I am Brahman that is Sat ... I alone am the Adisesa [primeval time] ... without name and form ... I am of the nature of the All-Void [nothing in the sense of no-thing]... I am the unconditioned, the permanent, the Unborn ...¹⁷

This affirmation contains seed thoughts of profound significance and implications such as the identity of Shiva with the *nature* of Parabrahman and the Void, also with Brahman, Atman and Time.

Corollary

A logical inference of the First Axiom just enunciated is ‘The FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE. This unity is a thing altogether different from the common notion of unity ... It is that existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things linked together. Fundamentally there is [only] ONE BEING.’¹⁸ Hence the ‘essential unity of all manifested things is due to the originating Reality, the One Principle.’¹⁹

Accordingly, as a logical deduction from the above, there is but ‘One Homogeneous Divine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE, the One Radical Cause. ... It is called “Substance-Principle,” for it becomes “Substance” on the plane of the manifested Universe, an

¹⁴ Newton, *Opticks*, qu. 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *SD-2*, p. 215.

¹⁷ P. D. Mehta, *The Heart of Religion*, Compton, Russell, Element, 1976, chapter 3.

¹⁸ *Bowen Notes*, 8.

¹⁹ Geoffrey A. Farthing, *Deity, Cosmos and Man*, Point Loma Publications, 1993, p. 120.

Illusion, while it remains a “Principle” in the beginningless and endless, abstract, visible and invisible SPACE. ... It is latent in every atom in the Universe, and is the Universe itself’.²⁰

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Occult Science then declares the ...

SECOND PROPOSITION: THE LAW OF PERIODICITY

‘The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically the “playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing” .. “The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.”’²¹

The disarmingly simple word ‘playground’ has important connotations as expressions in space and time, as will become apparent. Meanwhile note that the periodic appearance and disappearance of Universes is strictly according to cyclic and karmic law and refer to the:

- *waking* state of the Universe (manvantara, or the Day of Brahma) being a projection outwards from subjective realms into objectivity – i.e. as manifestation, evolution, unfolding, centrifugal action, and the movement from within to without; and
- *slumbering* state of the Universe (pralaya or the Night of Brahma) being a withdrawal and dissolution of the manifested state back into subjective realms – as involution, enfolding, centripetal action, and the movement from without to within.

This may be likened, on the micro-cosmic scale, to the daytime waking and night-time sleeping states of man. During the day we perform various tasks bearing a relationship with one another in mutual correlation with ourselves; during sleep all our extraverted daytime activities are subsumed into the integrated state of sleep.

Western science of course acknowledges alternating cycles (not to be confused with the duality mentioned above, to which science also concedes) such as sleeping and waking, flux and reflux, ebb and flow, night and day, etc; but science must also appreciate that such periodicity is not limited just to physical nature, which is its only scope of inquiry, but applies also on the grandest macrocosmic scale to globes and Universes, for periodicity is one of the universal and fundamental laws of Occult Science.

Finally Occult Science instructs about the ...

THIRD PROPOSITION: IDENTITY OF PARTS WITH THE WHOLE

²⁰ SD-1, p. 316.

²¹ SD-1, p. 82.

‘The fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul – a spark of the former – through the Cycle of Incarnation, or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic Law, during the whole term’.²²

Picture a hologram, or a fractal, where each fragment, however small, mirrors the whole representation, although the distinctness and clarity with which each fragment reflects the whole obviously varies with the fragment in question. In this sense each unit of manifested life is like a holographic fragment into which the whole Divine Plan is *actively* impressed and reflected, some fragments capturing the Divine spark more than others, but nevertheless, each life fragment having to undertake the obligatory journey back to its source to realize consciously what it always knew unconsciously within the depths of its being. Has not William Blake captured the essence of this ‘Occult holography’ in both Space and Time in his beautiful poem Auguries of Innocence with the opening lines ‘To see a World in a Grain of Sand and a Heaven in a Wild Flower. Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand and Eternity in an hour’²³

The third proposition is to do with undertaking the 'obligatory pilgrimage' to realize and re-claim in full consciousness the Divinity we unconsciously knew we always had holographically reflected into us when we commenced our journey. On the outward journey we started out unconsciously Divine; on the return cycle we become knowingly Divine.²⁴

IMPLICATIONS OF OCCULT FUNDAMENTALS IN A SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT - THE UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE

Another way of expressing the First Axiom is that ‘The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature – from star to mineral atom, from the highest Dhyan Chohan to the smallest infusorium ... is the one fundamental law in Occult Science.’²⁵

Modern science can indeed substantiate such a statement of ‘radical unity,’ albeit partially. Consider the following from the two pillars of twentieth-century physics. Firstly, Einstein’s special theory of relativity where it is mathematically proven that if we could ride on a beam of light, we would touch all places of the Universe at one and the same time. Then, quantum physics has demonstrated mathematically the fact of action-at-a-distance, or non-locality, i.e. any disturbance to one system affecting another coupled system instantaneously, even though the latter may be billions of light years away. Non-locality has also been demonstrated in the most carefully

²² SD-1, p. 82.

²³ An apt title indeed, for it is the *childlike* (not childish) innocence of heart and not the intellect-burdened head that renders one sensitively receptive to the profoundest Truths.

²⁴ A mundane example of this process is when we have an intuitive flash or ‘hunch’ about someone or something, but then not trusting our original feeling, we feel impelled to question it intellectually thinking of all sorts of questions and counter-arguments, only to realize, this time knowingly, that all the trial and error attempts have shown that the original idea was the best one after all.

²⁵ SD-1, p. 179.

controlled and repeatable laboratory experiments and there is no disputing the hard fact of the fundamental interconnectedness of every entity in the Universe.²⁶

Incredibly, and not for the first time, the mathematician/scientist and the poet/philosopher have touched the same insight. For did not Francis Thompson intuitively say that ‘All things by immortal power, Near or far, Hiddenly to each other linked are, That thou canst not stir a flower Without Troubling of a star.’²⁷ – and incidentally, Thompson’s insight into the intrinsic interconnectedness and Unity of all Life was attained through the age-old method of mystic meditation – less costly than the phenomenally expensive laboratory apparatus constructed in modern times to eke out a fraction of such intuitively attained wisdom.

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We must close this presentation of the fundamentals of Occult Science with a helpful word of warning.

It is easy to become lost in a jungle of concepts, confusing terminology and to indulge in ‘occult gymnastics’ with all sorts of superfine nuances of meaning, particularly where Indian metaphysics is concerned, which has evolved over countless centuries. As in trying to find our way through a large, unfamiliar city, we sense the orientation of main roads before venturing down alleyways, so always refer back in thought to the occult fundamentals just presented. Let them provide the compass points for our onward journey of exploration and we shall never become lost. For although the ramifications and detailed working out of Occult Science is immense, its core-principles are few and simple; and the most important of all is the Unity of Existence²⁸ – there is one and only ONE REALITY that manifests innumerable appearance under all sorts of names – of ITSELF.

... existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things linked together. Fundamentally there is ONE BEING [having] two aspects, positive and negative. The positive is Spirit, or CONSCIOUSNESS. The negative is SUBSTANCE, the subject of consciousness. This Being is the Absolute in its primary manifestation. The moment one lets it go [i.e. the fundamental unity] the idea of SEPARATION supervenes, and the study loses its value.²⁹

²⁶ Sections 2 provides several esoteric pointers that may be gleaned from the groundbreaking discoveries in quantum physics.

²⁷ *The Mistress of Vision*.

²⁸ The word existence deliberately hyphenated to emphasize the idea of 'standing out of'.

²⁹ *Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*, Theosophical Publishing House, 1960. See also *Bowen Notes*, 8 and 9.