

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge: How It Was Written — I

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A SET of eight notebooks in HPB's handwriting has been preserved in the Archives of the Theosophical Society (Adyar, Chennai, India).¹ Notebook No. 1 contains the following cryptic passages:

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1. Universal Mind in its general, abstract meaning means Absolute Mind. Therefore, it only implies that as there are no finite, differentiated minds even of the Ah-hi to reflect or contain an ideation of this Absolute Mind, the latter is not. Every thing outside of the Absolute & immutable Sat, Be-ness — is necessarily finite & conditioned since it has a

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beginning and end. Imagine Vacuum, if you can, in its highest, Parabrahmic sense. Produce Vacuum in an empty glass ball & then break these Vessels, where will be your vacuum? And yet it still is, though we neither know nor

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sense it, anywhere, simply because we

cannot locate it. The Ah-hi are vehicles or vessels. Your third para gives the answer.

1. I have just done so.

2. No "Powers" but the one Periodical Law.

3. To the 1st, 2d, & 3d.

4. No; but in the next Manvantaras, they will

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when from the Highest Arupa they evolve gradually into the Manasaputras & Pitris.

5. No; a man has free will and individual Will. The Ah-hi have only a Collective one will among them, the original impulse of the Law that emanates from the Causeless Cause, periodically —

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6. The reasoning higher mind of the physical man is not; his front brain or cerebrum sleeps; but his back brains, or the cerebellum, is wide awake. This human mind passes in sleep from the plane

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of the objective and illusionary Universe, to the astral & still more illusionary plane I say, still more because it is so full of these terrestrial emanations. Unless the Higher Ego helps it, it becomes more confused than ever.

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7. Cosmic Buddhi is certainly the vehicle of the Universal Mahat, for in this sense Buddhi is Prakriti nature, in all its seven stages from Akasa down to Bhumi, Earth, or Malkuth, as it is called in the Kabala. But the human Buddhi derives its essence only from Akasa, the 2d principle which

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is Mulaprakriti, the place of Atman being taken by Parabrahman. In man, it is Divine, as man is in the higher triad, the post type of the Higher never manifested Triad as Father Mother and Son (Manas).

8. Consciousness is only a faculty of the mind the quality of self perception in the rational Ego. What is mind — in our understanding

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it is the Soul. Then you may just as well ask if a conscious Soul exists . . . which survives. To doubt that Consciousness can exist without mind is the same as saying that there is no Soul, no individual self conscious soul, at any rate.

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Sloka 4.

1. Practical faculty of which you may learn hereafter.

2. Almost the same.

Read them.

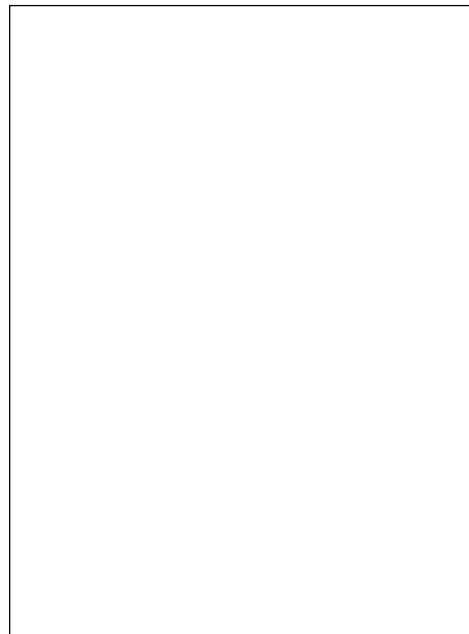
3. All these are either theological dogmas or mysteries of the ways of the unfolding Soul which belong to the highest Esoteric Teaching.

4. They are the manifestation of the One Law, which acts

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universally.

5. Nidana is the cause producing effect, the concatenation of causes and effects, & Maya is simply illusion. If you call the Universe an illusion then of course it is Maya with everything else like Nirvana, etc.



* * *

Before the discovery, transcription, and publication of the records of the discussions on which *Transactions of*

the Blavatsky Lodge was based, the significance of HPB's notes reproduced above was not obvious to anyone. Even Boris de Zirkoff did not seem to realize their significance or comment on them in any way. In the light of the now-published transcriptions^{2,3} we can now see that these notes were apparently jotted down by HPB in response to questions that had been submitted by students in the [London] Blavatsky Lodge as they worked through the successive stanzas of the book of Dzyan and the commentaries given by HPB in *The Secret Doctrine*. What seems to have happened is this:

1. Students submitted questions that were presented to HPB in preparation for each upcoming meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge.

2. HPB made brief notes to herself for reference in the discussions to follow.

3. During the lodge meetings, HPB engaged in back-and-forth discussions with her students using her notebook as a starting point. The discussions were recorded and compiled. After spending twelve decades in the hands of private students, this material has now been transcribed by modern students and published by the Point Loma Society in the Netherlands and the United Lodge of Theosophists in Los Angeles. (For further information see <blavatskyarchives.com/24folios.pdf>.)

4. At some point toward the end of HPB's lifetime it was decided to create a series of "transactions" in which *some* of the discussions held at the Blavatsky

Lodge could be made available to the public. This was done under the supervision of HPB and published while she was still living. The *Transactions* have remained in print up to the present time⁴ and were included in the 10th volume of HPB's *Collected Writings* along with some helpful introductory comments by Boris de Zirkoff.⁵

By extracting the relevant portions and grouping them together (HPB's handwritten notes, transcription of the meeting, and published *Transactions*), we have reconstructed twelve examples of the three stages through which the *Transactions* passed for the meeting of 17 January 1889. It is instructive to see the gradual evolution of HPB's cryptic notes into the polished philosophical explanation that appears in the published *Transactions*. Unfortunately, HPB's original notes seem to exist for only one of the many meetings that were held.

Example 1. HPB's Notebook:

Universal Mind in its general, abstract meaning means Absolute Mind. Therefore, it only implies that as there are no finite, differentiated minds even of the Ah-hi to reflect or contain an ideation of this Absolute Mind — the latter is not. Everything outside of the Absolute and immutable Sat, (Be-ness) — is necessarily finite and conditioned since it has a beginning and end. Imagine Vacuum, if you can, in its highest, *parabrahmic* sense. Produce Vacuum in an empty glass ball and then break these Vessels, where will be your vacuum? And yet it still is, though we neither know nor

sense it, anywhere, simply because we cannot locate it. The Ah-hi are vehicles or vessels. Your third para gives the answer.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mme Blavatsky: Universal mind and absolute mind are one. Are they not? Very well, that only implies that as there are no finite differentiated minds during Pralaya therefore it is just as though there were no mind at all, if there is nothing to contain it, or to perceive it. That is the meaning. There is nothing to reflect or contain the ideation of the absolute mind, therefore it is not, because everything outside of the absolute and immutable Sat, or the Be-ness, is necessarily finite and conditioned since it has a beginning and end, and here is something with no beginning and no end. Therefore since the Ah-hi were not, there was no universal mind, because you must make a distinction between the absolute mind which is ever present, and its reflections in the Ah-hi at the first flutter of Manvantara. The Ah-hi are on the highest plane; they are those who reflect the universal mind collectively, and begin the work of evolution of all the lower forces until they come, throughout the seven planes, down to our lowest plane. Mr A. Keightley: Then the Ah-hi and the universal mind are necessary complements of one another?

Mme Blavatsky: Not at all. Universal mind, or absolute mind, always *is*, whether during Manvantara or during Pralaya; it is immutably one. But since the term Ah-hi means the highest Dhyani

— the Logoi perhaps — those which begin, which are the creation — or evolution, not creation, because everything is an emanation; since the Ah-hi were not, there was no universal mind, because it was the absolute dormant, latent mind, and it was not differentiated in the collectivity of these Dhyanis. The President: It was rather absolute consciousness.

Mme Blavatsky: It was absolute consciousness which is not consciousness. What is consciousness? Further on you make a question: “Can consciousness exist without any mind?” But it will come in time. You had better proceed, unless you have some other questions to ask. For instance, let us represent to ourselves, if you can do such a thing, that universal mind is a vacuum, but vacuum with latent consciousness in it. You just suppose you pump out all the air you can from some vessel, there is a vacuum. You cannot represent yourselves in that particular vessel as a vehicle: there is the vacuum; but break these vessels that contain this soi-disant vacuum; where shall you look for it? It has disappeared, it is everywhere and nowhere. It is something, yet it is the absence of something. It is entirely a homogeneous thing. . . . You break those vessels and nothing exists, therefore universal mind is not, because there are no vehicles to contain it.

Published Transactions:

Q. This sloka seems to imply that the Universal Mind has no existence apart from the Ah-hi; but in the Commentary it is stated that:

“During Pralaya the Universal Mind remains as a permanent possibility of mental action, or as that abstract absolute thought of which mind is the concrete relative manifestation, and that the Ah-hi are the vehicle for divine universal thought and will. They are the intelligent forces which give to Nature her laws, while they themselves act according to laws imposed upon them by still higher powers, and are the hierarchy of spiritual beings through which the universal mind comes into action.”

The Commentary suggests that the Ah-hi are not themselves the Universal Mind, but only the vehicle for its manifestation.

A. The meaning of this sloka is, I think, very clear; it means that, as there are no finite differentiated minds during Pralaya, it is just as though there were no mind at all, because there is nothing *to contain or perceive it*. There is nothing to receive and reflect the ideation of the Absolute Mind; therefore, *it is not*. Everything outside of the Absolute and immutable Sat (Be-ness), is necessarily finite and conditioned, since it has beginning and end. Therefore, since the “Ah-hi were not”, there was no Universal Mind as a manifestation. A distinction had to be made between the Absolute Mind, which is ever present, and its reflection and manifestation in the Ah-hi, who, being on the highest plane, reflect the universal mind collectively at the first flutter of Manvantara. After which they begin the work of evolution of all the lower forces throughout the seven planes, down to the lowest — our own. The Ah-hi are the

primordial seven rays, or *Logoi*, emanated from the first Logos, *triple*, yet one in its essence.

Q. *Then the Ah-hi and Universal Mind are necessary complements of one another?*

A. Not at all: Universal or Absolute Mind always *is* during Pralaya as well as Manvantara; it is immutable. The Ah-hi are the highest Dhyanis, the Logoi as just said, those who begin the downward evolution, or emanation. During Pralaya there are no Ah-hi, because they come into being only with the first *radiation* of the Universal Mind, which, *per se*, cannot be differentiated, and the radiation from which is the first *dawn* of Manvantara. The Absolute is dormant, latent mind, and cannot be otherwise in true metaphysical perception; it is only Its shadow which becomes differentiated in the collectivity of these Dhyanis.

Q. *Does this mean that it was absolute consciousness, but is so no longer?*

A. It is *absolute consciousness* eternally, which consciousness becomes *relative consciousness* periodically, at every “Manvantaric dawn”. Let us picture to ourselves this latent or potential consciousness as a kind of vacuum in a vessel. Break the vessel, and what becomes of the vacuum; where shall we look for it? It has disappeared; it is everywhere and nowhere. It is something, yet *nothing*: a *vacuum*, yet a *plenum*. But what in reality is a vacuum as understood by Modern Science — a homogeneous something, or what? Is not absolute Vacuum a figment of our fancy? A pure negation, a supposed Space where

nothing exists? This being so, destroy the vessel, and — to our perceptions at any rate — nothing exists. Therefore, the Stanza puts it very correctly; “Universal Mind was not” because there was no vehicle to contain it.

Example 2. HPB’s Notebook:

Apparently responding to: “1. CAN YOU GIVE US A DEFINITION OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND?”

1. I have just done so.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: The first question is, can you give us a definition of the universal mind, which will solve the difficulty?

Mme. Blavatsky: Well, I think I have just done so.

Example 3. HPB’s Notebook:

Responding to “2. WHAT ARE THE HIGHER POWERS WHICH CONDITION THE AH-HI?”

2. No “Powers” but the one Periodical Law.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Quite so. Then number 2. “What are the higher powers which condition the Ah-hi?”

Mme Blavatsky: Well I don’t call them powers at all; it is simply a manifestation of the periodical law, the universal law, which becomes by turns active or inactive. Thus that law of periodical manifestation which creates them, which emanates them. I always use the word create, which is a very bad and wrong word to use, for there is no creation.

Mr A. Keightley: Then the power which is higher than the Ah-hi is the law which necessitates manifestation.

Mme Blavatsky: Just so; periodically, when the hour strikes, it comes, and they appear into manifestation. They are on the first rung of manifestation, after which it goes on gradually shaping itself more and more.

Mr B. Keightley: It should really be THE law, and not A law.

Mme. Blavatsky: The law, and not a law. I give it [to] you from the standpoint of esoteric, or Eastern teaching. If physical science objects, just say so, and I will try to repent. . . .

Published Transactions:

Q. What are the higher powers which condition the Ah-hi?

A. They cannot be called powers; power or perhaps Potentiality would be better. The Ah-hi are conditioned by the awakening into manifestation of the periodical, universal LAW, which becomes successively active and inactive. It is by this law that they are conditioned or formed, not created. “Created” is an impossible term to use in Philosophy.

Q. Then the power or Potentiality which precedes and is higher than the Ah-hi, is the law which necessitates manifestation?

A. Just so; periodical manifestation. When the hour strikes, the law comes into action, and the Ah-hi appear on the first rung of the ladder of manifestation.

Q. But surely this is THE law and not A law?

A. Precisely, since it is absolute and “Secondless” — therefore it is not an attribute, but that Absoluteness itself.

Example 4. HPB’s Notebook:

Responding to “3. WHAT COSMIC

PLANE DO THE AH-HI HERE SPOKEN OF BELONG?”

3. To the 1st, 2d, and 3d.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: “To what cosmic plane do the Ah-hi here spoken of belong?”

Mme Blavatsky: To the first the second and the third. Because it is a triad, a manifested triad, a reflection of the non-manifested. Taking the triad in the sense that Pythagoras gives it, it disappears in the darkness and the silence. Taken in this sense it is the only thing, as there is Atma, Buddhi, Manas — well all, the first, second, and third planes — the Ah-hi belong to these planes.

Mr A. Keightley: That is to say the Ah-hi belong to the cosmic planes which correspond to Atma, Buddhi, Manas.

Mme Blavatsky: Just so, they correspond.

Mr B. Keightley: They are successive emanations; you get the Atma, Buddhi in man, before Manas makes its appearance.

Mme Blavatsky: But we do not speak of man now, if you please, we speak in general that these correspond. Don't you go and mix up man with it now. We speak of the macrocosm simply, at the beginning when there was the first flutter of the manvantaric dawn, and then evolution begins.

Mr B. Keightley: The question I want to put exactly is this: are those three planes simultaneous emanations or do they emanate one from the other?

Mme Blavatsky: I suppose one from another, but I could not tell you that. Don't ask me questions I cannot answer.

Published Transactions:

Q. To what cosmic plane do the Ah-hi, here spoken of, belong?

A. They belong to the first, second, and third planes — the last plane being really the starting point of the primordial manifestation — the objective reflection of the unmanifested. Like the Pythagorean *Monas*, the first Logos, having emanated the first triad, disappears into silence and darkness.

Q. Does this mean that the three Logoi emanated from the primordial Radiation in Macrocosm correspond to Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, in the Microcosm?

A. Just so; they correspond, but must not be confounded with them. We are now speaking of the Macrocosm at the first flutter of Manvantaric dawn, when evolution begins, and not of Microcosm or Man.

Q. Are the three planes to which the three Logoi belong simultaneous emanations, or do they evolve one from another?

A. It is most misleading to apply mechanical laws to the higher metaphysics of cosmogony, or to space and time, as we know them for neither existed then. The reflection of the triad in space and time or the objective universe comes later.

Example 5. HPB's Notebook:

Responding to “4. HAVE THESE AH-HI BEEN MEN IN PREVIOUS MANVANTARAS OR WILL THEY BECOME SO?”

5. No; but in the next Manvantaras, they will. When from the Highest Arupa they evolve gradually into the Manasaputras and Pitris.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Question 4. “Have these Ah-hi been men in previous Manvantaras or will they become so?”

Mme Blavatsky: They will become men in a subsequent Manvantara.

Mr A. Keightley: Do they remain permanently on this very exalted plane during the whole period of the Manvantara?

Mme Blavatsky: Of the 15 figures? No, they pass through all the planes until they become on the third plane Manasaputra, the sons of Manas or mind. They are arupa. On the higher planes these Ah-hi are arupa, that is to say formless, bodies, without any substance, without anything, they are breaths. On the second plane they approach to rupa or to form. On the third they become Manasarupa, those who become incarnated in men.

Mr A. Keightley: Then the Ah-hi of this manvantara —

Mme Blavatsky: They do not exist any more, if you please. They have become long ago. . . Read *The Secret Doctrine*, you will see the thing there.

Mr A. Keightley: I understood you to say they did not become men in this Manvantara.

Mme. Blavatsky: The 15 figures apply to the solar system. The first answers relate to the beginning of the whole objective universe, but after that, when you begin to speak about Father-Mother, then it relates to our objective universe and to the solar system only because our teaching does not busy itself at all with things outside. At least those things that I have selected. I could not go and select the

whole thing. I have only taken that which relates to our solar system. I have just taken two or three just to show the general idea, and then skipped over whole stanzas and came to the point. I have said there are some 60 stanzas passed over.

Mr. B. Keightley: Then on the reawakening will the men of one Manvantara have to pass through a similar stage to the Ah-hi stage in the next Manvantara?

Mme. Blavatsky: In many, many Manvantaras at the end of the tail of the serpent; when the tail will be in the mouth of the serpent, I might say. What have you got the ambition of becoming? An Ah-hi, or what? You will have time, my dear fellow, to do many things before you become an Ah-hi.

Published Transactions:

Q. Have the Ah-hi been men in previous Manvantaras, or will they become so?

A. Every living creature, of whatever description, was, is, or will become a human being in one or another Manvantara.

Q. But do they in this Manvantara remain permanently on the same very exalted plane during the whole period of the life-cycle?

A. If you mean by “life cycle” a duration of time which extends over fifteen figures, then my answer is most decidedly — no. The “Ah-hi” pass through all the planes, beginning to manifest on the third. Like all other Hierarchies, on the highest plane they are *arupa*, *i.e.*, formless, bodiless, without any substance, mere breaths. On the second plane, they first approach to Rupa, or form. On the third, they became Manasaputras, those who became incarnated in men. With

every plane they reach they are called by different names . . . Later, they become Rupa — ethereal forms.

Q. *Then the Ah-hi of this Manvantara . . . ?*

A. Exist no longer; they have long ago become Planetary, Solar, Lunar, and lastly, incarnating Egos, for, as said, “they are the collective hosts of spiritual beings.”

Q. *But it was stated above that the Ah-hi did not become men in this Manvantara.*

A. Nor do they as the formless “Ah-hi”. But they do as their own transformations. The Manvantaras should not be confounded. The fifteen-figure Manvantaric cycle applies to the solar system; but there

is a Manvantara which relates to the whole of the objective universe, the Mother-Father, and many minor Manvantaras. The slokas relating to the former have been generally selected, and only two or three relating to the latter given. Many slokas, therefore, have been omitted because of their difficult nature.

Q. *Then, on reawakening, will the men of one Manvantara have to pass through a stage corresponding to the Ah-hi stage in the next Manvantara?*

A. In some of the Manvantaras, the tail is in the mouth of the serpent. Think over this Symbolism. *(To be continued)*

Endnotes

1. H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* (1966), Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), vol. 1, p. 25.
2. _____, *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* (2010), The Hague: I.S.I.S. Foundation.
3. _____, *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues* (2014), Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company.
4. _____, *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (1923), Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company.
5. _____, *Collected Writings* (1964), Adyar: TPH, vol X, pp. 298–406.

Acknowledgment: Thanks to Michele Sender for transcribing HPB’s notes.

**Human life is the allegory of the spirit,
a drama of the unfoldment of consciousness;
and the emancipation of woman in the world
corresponds to and symbolizes the emergence
of the intuition in the consciousness.**

Claude Bragdon
Delphic Woman