



**Theosophy  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**Carlos Pérez Menéndez**



THEOSOPHY  
IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY



# **THEOSOPHY IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

A modern course in Theosophy

**Carlos Pérez Menéndez**

Sociedad Teosófica Española

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2019 Edition

English version corrected in 2021

Translated from the Spanish course

"La Teosofia en el siglo 21", 2019 edition



*Dedicated to my wife Adela, who is also my Theosophical companion and who endured the time I have dedicated to this work.*







## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I want to thank Ananya Sri Ram Rajan very much for her proofreading of this book. Despite her busy schedule she did not put this project aside. Without Ananya's work it would not have been possible to have this finished edition in English. Her work has been difficult because she had to correct the English translation without being able to read the original in Spanish. Often she had to guess what I had meant. Ananya has done a great job making the book easier for English speaking readers.

I also want to thank the students who attended the course in previous years when the material was not complete and who with their support and feedback gave me the strength to complete this project.







# PREFACE

Many people wonder about the meaning of Life and the Universe. Theosophy is the essential knowledge about Life that has been expressed by notable people in different eras and cultures. Helena Blavatsky rediscovered this perennial tradition for general culture at the end of the 19th century and since then many thinkers have explored it, making their contributions, and modern science in many cases corroborates and broadens this vision.

The purpose of this course is to offer a presentation of the fundamental ideas of Theosophy with a current focus based on the discoveries of modern science, historical research and the culture of our time. I propose an inquiry into the essential foundations of Theosophy with a minimum of beliefs, based on the oriental traditions presented by Helena Blavatsky.

The course focuses on the essential principles of Theosophy that allow us to have a much wider world view than that offered by ordinary culture and it prepare us to address to awaken to a more conscious way of living, in harmony with the whole.

I want this presentation to be able to encourage both those who for the first time are approaching a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Life, as well as those excited students already introduced to Theosophy. The Internet currently offers us huge amounts of information at our fingertips. But we have to know how to search and filter it by discerning the false from the true. The Internet is somehow the Library of Alexandria of our time, but democratized and with universal access, at least for now.

I do not intend that the course offers only information but also that it encourages research and self-discovery, highlighting the realization of our internal nature. In other words, we are especially interested in the potential of Theosophy to transform our lives and thereby improve the world.

This edition of the course is the result of its maturation of 12 years. Since its first edition in 2007, delivered in the Hesperia Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Madrid (Spain), I have elaborated much more material and documentation each time it was presented. There are many citations, bibliographic references and Internet links to encourage research. Unfortunately, Internet links are more unstable than books. If the readers find one link that no longer works, they can try searching for the title of the cited article or blog.

The material of this course has already been used in several Spanish-speaking Lodges in different countries. It is intended to serve members of the Theosophical Society who want to teach it, to the students who attend the course, and also to the reader who does not have a Lodge to attend a course and who wants to have a modern introduction to Theosophy.

Because of the restrictions forced by the Covid-19 pandemic, this course was delivered by other colleagues and myself via Zoom. The downside of this method is the limit of interaction and it does not allow to the presenter to connect as deeply as in a physical class. However it has the advantage to allow people of different cities and countries to attend the course, and without wearing face masks!

While someone can read this book completely and we hope he or she get a lot of benefit, it does not equal the experience of attending a course and exchanging questions, thoughts and everything that involves personal interaction.



All the course material is available in electronic format on the Theosophy resources website, Theosophy World ([www.theosophy.world](http://www.theosophy.world)), and on other theosophical websites. It can be downloaded freely. A PDF file viewer is required to read it on a computer or on a tablet. Separate slides are also available upon request in PDF format so that those who teach this course can project them. Almost all PDF viewers have a full-screen presentation mode that can be used to project slides.

The course consists of 12 sessions of 90 minutes, or much better, 120 minutes each. It is intended that students do not just listen passively but actively participate in classes. At the end of each chapter some questions are left that students have to prepare and answer in the next session. A session begins by addressing the questions that were left in the previous class, as well as other questions and doubts that arose and also expanding some concepts if necessary before moving on to the new chapter.

It is not intended that a class explore all the material available in the book since class time would be insufficient. The essential ideas are summarized in each of the slides. Students have to review and deeply study this material. It would be much better if students can read each chapter in advance.

Theosophy is the eternal Wisdom of Life and is not expressed in any supposed revelation or in any book, or in any course, including this one, of course. It is immanent in the Universe and it exists everywhere, but each individual must discover and experience it for himself. The Theosophical Society does not seek to spread just another belief in the world, but to help awakening the conscience of people who aspire to know the Truth. Therefore these ideas are offered for consideration not as a dogma but with the open spirit of research. We will be very happy if these ideas are provocative and inspiring and if they help us better understand life, be happier and make others happier too.

Any group of the Theosophical Society is authorized to use this material to teach this course or to complement any of its own programs with the author's attribution provided there is no commercial use of it. Readers are also authorized to freely share this material with other interested persons. Maybe they do a great service.

Thank you for sharing this adventure of the human soul.

Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
Theosophical Society, Spain  
[carlosmprz@gmail.com](mailto:carlosmprz@gmail.com)



# COURSE TOPICS

## 1 What is Theosophy?

Essential questions about life. Answers of religions, philosophy and science. Theosophy: the integral vision. Name's origin. Modern Theosophy and Helena Blavatsky. The Theosophical Society. Objectives. Books of Blavatsky.

## 2 Fundamental ideas of Theosophy

Sources of Theosophy. Religions and initiatory traditions. Great thinkers. Modern presentations. The Secret Doctrine of H.P. Blavatsky. The 3 fundamental propositions of the Proem.

## 3 The Unity of Life

Unity and diversity. The oneness of Universe. Origin of the Universe according to astronomy. The matter. The oneness in biology. Quantum physics. Unity. The emanations. The holographic model. Fractals. The theory of Gaia. Indra's network. Synchronicity. First Proposition.

## 4 The Manifestation

From unity to diversity. Stanzas of Dzyan. Unity, duality, trinity. The Manifestation according to Pythagoras. The transcendent and the immanent. The transcendent Reality. The evolution. Third proposition of the Proem of the Secret Doctrine.

## 5 Who are we?

The human being according to biology. Our essence. The triune classification. What does psychology tell us? Theosophical ideas. The principles of the human being. The personality. The 3 brains. The upper triad. We are social beings. Who am I?

## 6 The cyclical evolution

The law of cycles. Cycles in matter and energy. Cycles in Nature. Cyclic Cosmology. Manvantara and Pralaya. Cycles within cycles. The reincarnation. The school of Life. A universal idea. Is there any evidence? Unexplained affections. Hypnotic regression. The past lives of children. Reincarnation explains life.

## 7 Karma: the universal law of cause and effect

Cause and effect. Principle of causality. Chain of causes and effects. Karma: action and reaction. The fabric of Karma. Karma and reincarnation. The Skandhas. Karmic ties. How do we sow and harvest? Karma and responsibility. Myths about Karma. Free will and predetermination. Fatality and precognition. Building our destiny.

## 8 The mind and beyond

What is the mind? The mind according to science. The mind according to the Vedanta. Functions of the mind. The fragmented mind. The renewal of the mind. Yoga. The meditation.

## 9 Symbolism and the esoteric tradition

The symbol. Symbols and allegories. The circle and the cross. The emblem of the Theosophical Society. Ansata cross. Myths and legends. Reasons for the myth. The myth of Eros and Psyche.

## 10 Theosophy through the ages

The initiatory tradition in Egypt. The myth of Osiris. The schools of Mysteries. Hermeticism. The axial era. Lao-Tzu. Buddha. Pythagoras. Plato. Neoplatonists. Middle Ages and Renaissance. Giordano Bruno. Spinoza. Modern Theosophy. Modern influences.

## 11 The evolution

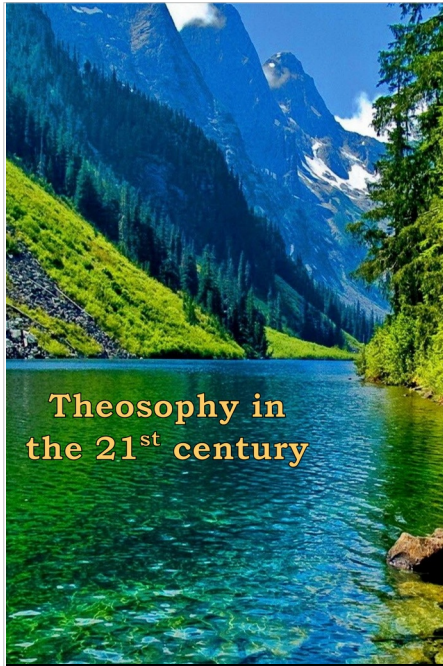
What is the meaning of life? The Law of Evolution. The evolution of matter and stars. Biological evolution. Self-organizing systems. Is there an intention in evolution? Evolution of Consciousness. Duality of the world. Good and evil. The ignorance, Avidya.

## 12 The awakening of consciousness

The flowers of human evolution. The nature of a Mahatma. Evolving. Can we improve? The awakening. Why wake up? What can we do? Travel guides. What is needed? The transformation. The preparation. Can we do it? The action must be now.





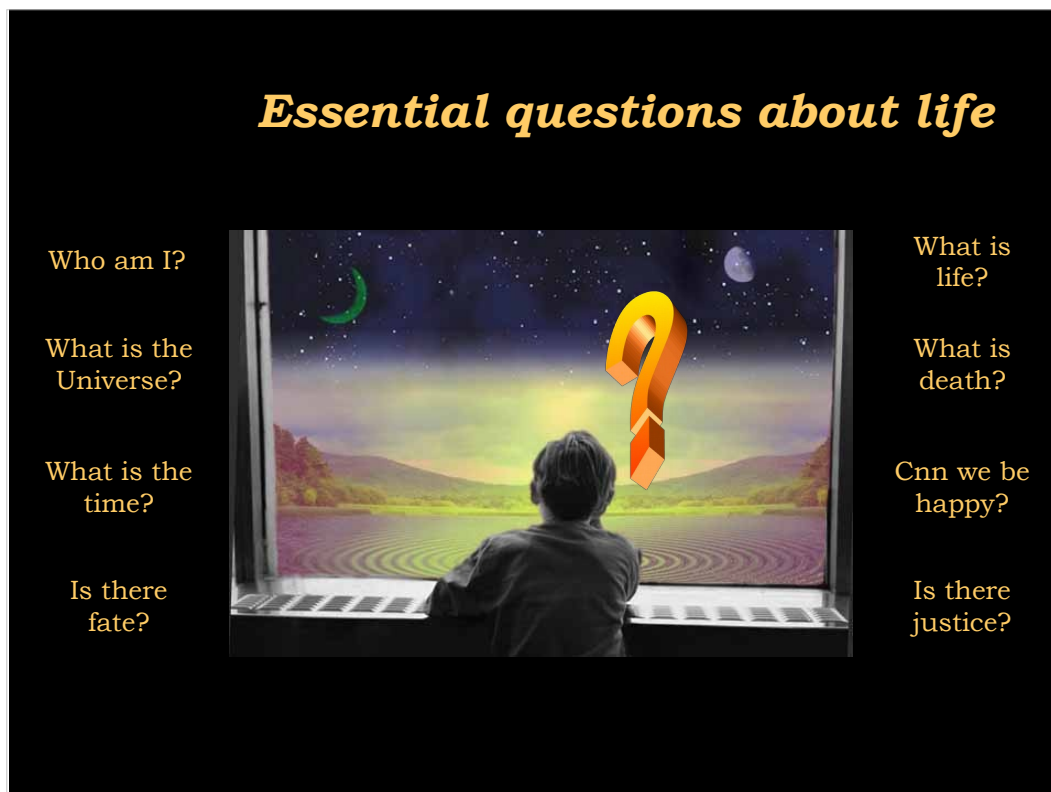


Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century

# *1 What is Theosophy?*

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019



From time immemorial human beings have been asking essential questions about life:

Who am I?

What is the Universe? What is its meaning? What does time mean?

What is life? What is death?

Why are things like this?

Why do pain and joy exist?

Can we achieve happiness?

These questions often arise in our mind when we face critical moments or special circumstances in our life. Events such as the death of a loved one, a major professional or emotional crisis, the feeling of being misunderstood or lonely, or having an illness often pulls us away from the incessant flow of everyday things and demands us to try to understand, try to remedy a situation that bothers us.

In such situations, we want things to be different, we wish that there was no conflict, that we could understand each other and that we were understood.

We feel at the mercy of the forces of nature. Tornadoes, volcanoes and earthquakes remind us that although our technology has greatly advanced, we do not control our environment. We are reminded that we still know little and that nature can still cause us harm while we continue destroying it. In short, we face the **unknown** but try to understand it.

Asking the right questions is the beginning of wisdom. And the genuine aspiration of the seeker to understand truth, is to find the essential facts of life that transcend everyday knowledge and general issues discussed in the media and in culture.



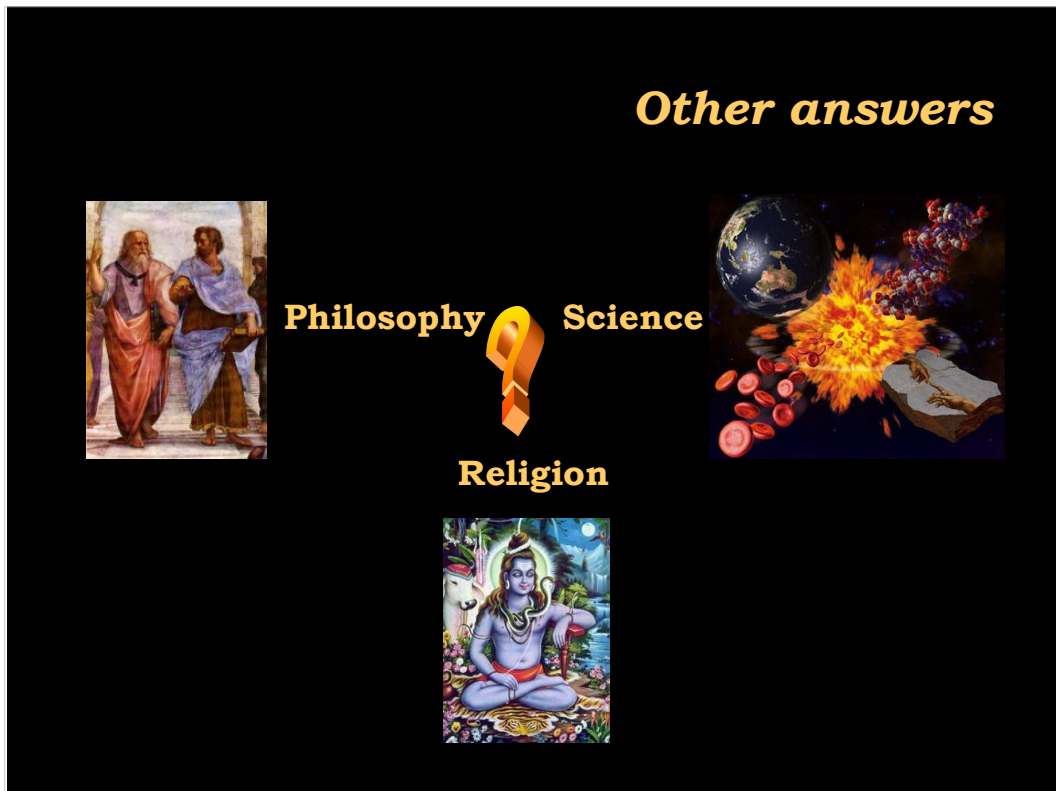


Humanity has attempted to answer these questions through various means.

Our attempt to understand the forces of Nature, has caused mixed feelings. We wish to know the unknown, but we fear it; we wish to be free, but want to feel secure and be guided. In this way we develop **beliefs**.

In the early stages of our quest, human beings have created animistic representations and religions with unforgiving gods who are selfish and zealous. These are mere projections of our own ignorance and limitations.

We resorted to the personification of the forces of Nature, believing that behind the lightening, the sun, the moon, the winds, the sea, and so many things, that there were mysterious gods, supernatural beings superior to our own understanding. This gave us an explanation that calmed our anxiety and gave us a sense of security, but, at the same time, we were stunted intellectually. This prevented us from using our minds to discern, to investigate and to understand the true nature of things.



However humanity also developed more elaborate approaches to find answers to the essential questions.

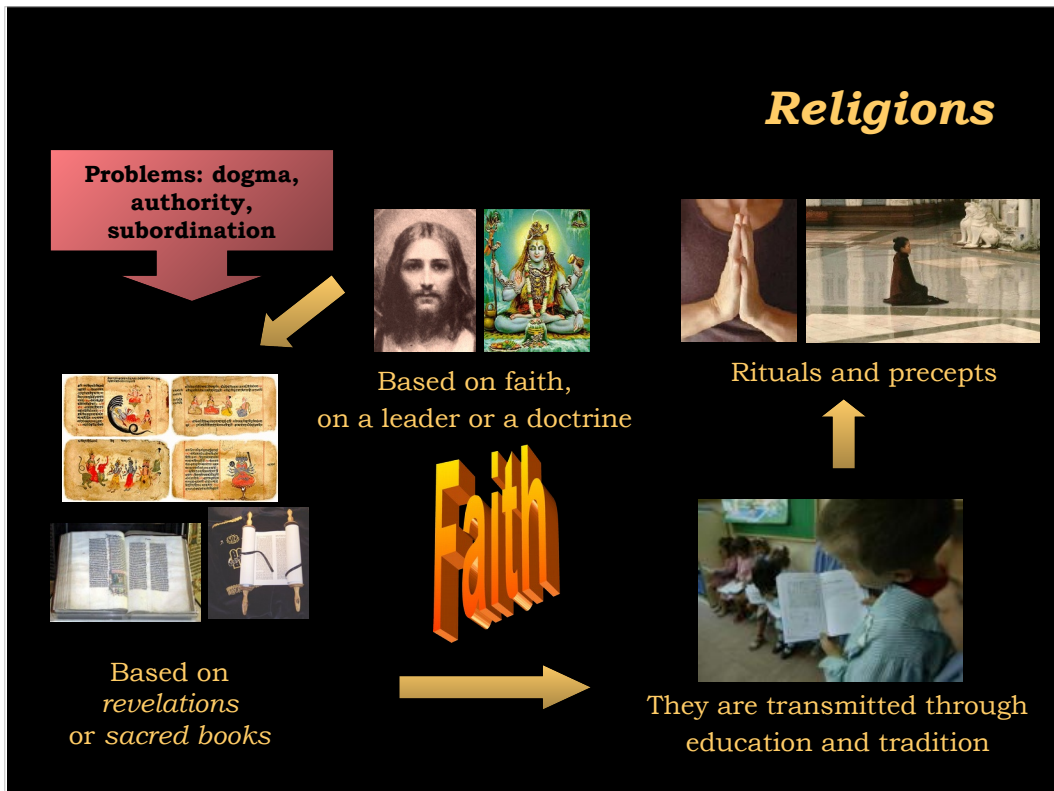
We can identify three major ways that human beings have tried to answer the essential questions about Life, especially in critical moments:

- Religion
- Philosophy
- Science

These are three access routes, three approaches to Reality, each one with its own characteristics. Unlike culture in general that has more expressions like art or technology these are knowledge channels that we can use to try to know Reality.

We will look at these three avenues in more detail to see how each has its own characteristics, its benefits and its limitations.





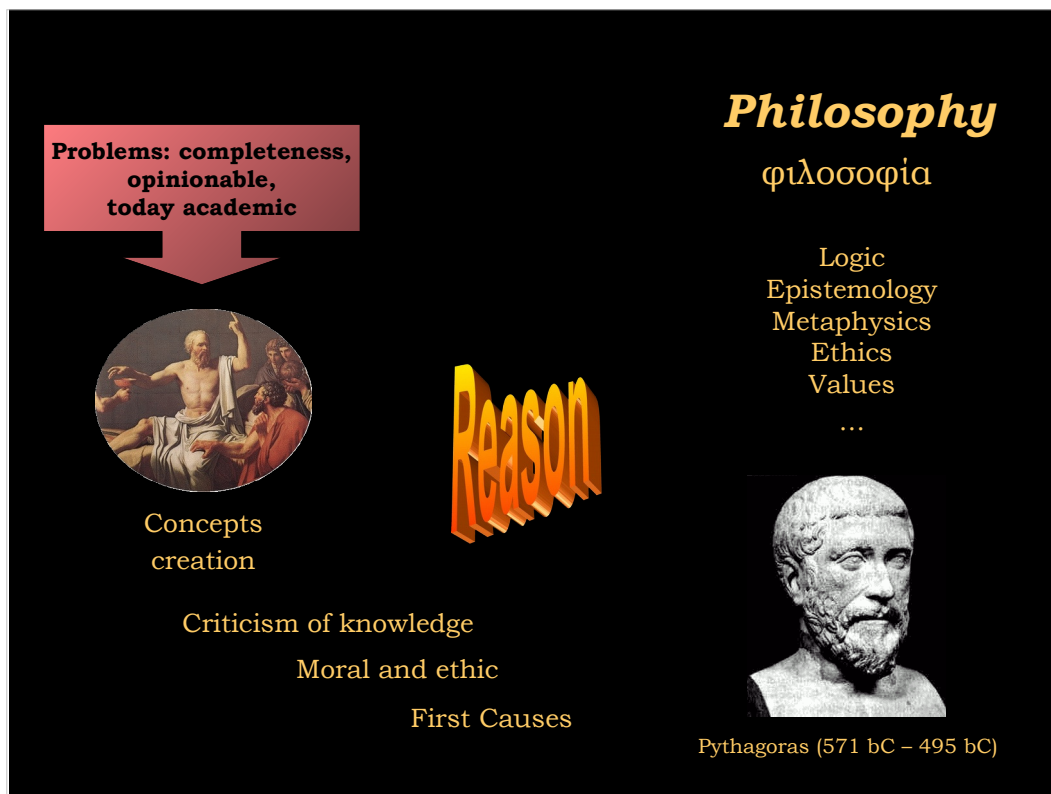
The **religious** teachings arose from the need to answer the essential questions and from the difficulty of obtaining them only through pure reason. Its essence is faith in a doctrine that attempted to explain the Universe, humanity and life, giving an answer of a more emotional nature to these deep needs. Generally, it is said that these doctrines have a divine or superior origin and that they have been obtained by means of a **revelation**, a teaching given by supernatural means to a prophet or leader. These revelations together with their interpretations constitute a doctrine, which has been turned into Scriptures or **Sacred Books**.

Thus, essential in religions is the belief and acceptance of the **authority** of some religious **leader**, who, pretending to be a special person transmitting a *revelation* or elaborating himself the doctrine, sets forth a vision of the world and the life that has resulted useful as a foundation for the organization and moral structure of its followers.

There are many religions in the world. Almost all have been derived from older ones, either becoming more sectarian, a reform of another existing religion, or as the combination of several earlier religions. In most religions there are some common ideas, expressed through their own language and symbols, which are often supported by myths, symbols and rites that are expressed in the daily lives of the faithful.

However, since religious dogma is a matter of faith and authority, it often causes conflicts in the mind of the human being, who develops their lifestyle based on personal experiences. This makes it difficult to search for truth when one's life is different from what one's religious authority is promoting.

We must differentiate between a **religion** and the **religious attitude**. A religion is a set of doctrines as we have mentioned, but the religious attitude is a quality of the individual who seeks the Truth and, despite having a limited understanding of it, submits its way of being and its behavior to it. The person with a religious attitude regards life and existence as sacred. We must not forget that according to some meanings, the origin of the word religion is the Latin *religio* and refers in some way to the moral obligation or bond that a person has to their convictions.



Other thinkers were not satisfied with just faith and felt the need to observe, deduce, contrast and elaborate ideas to find answers to the essential questions of life. Feeling ignorant in their search for Truth, they preferred to call themselves **philosophers**, lovers of wisdom, because this name best represented their status as seekers and researchers, rather than as sages. In antiquity, the philosopher was not a mere speculator, but someone who was willing to compromise his life in his quest. It was not an academic exercise, but an effort to find a sincere desire to know.

According to Plato: **"Astonishment is the origin of Philosophy"**.

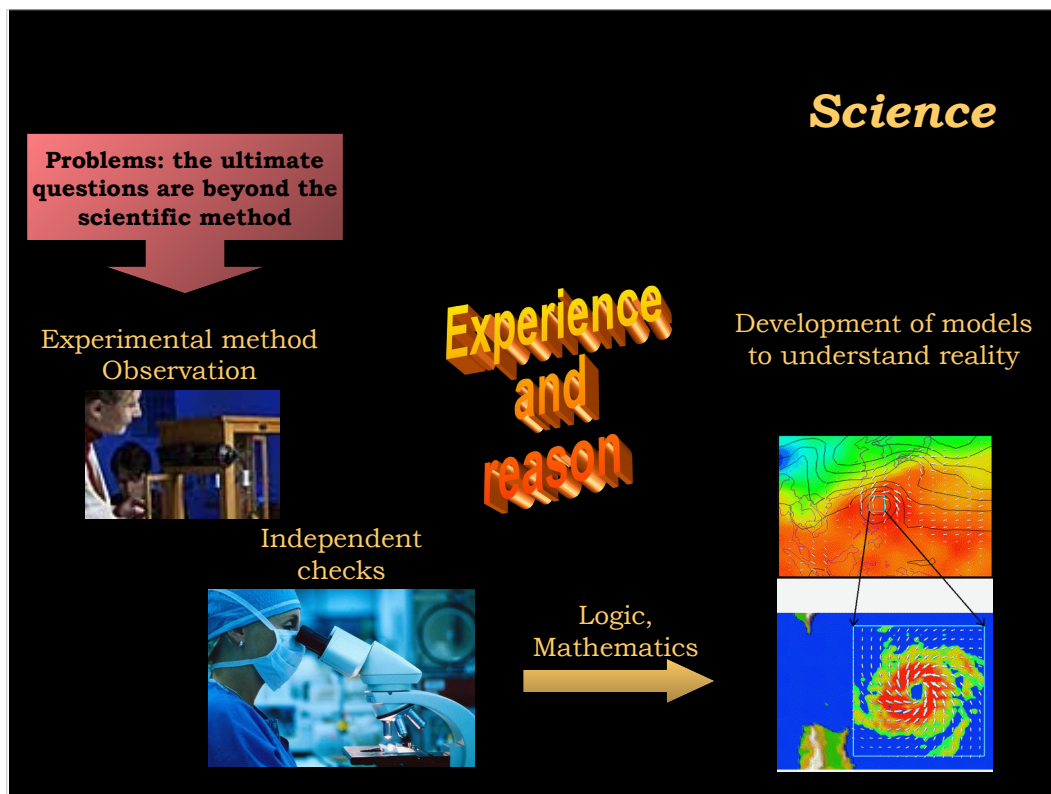
Isocrates, an orator and contemporary of Plato, credits the Egyptians with the invention of philosophy:

"...In addition, the cultivation of the **practice of wisdom** can also be reasonably attributed to the aforementioned Egyptian (Busiris). [...] The priests enjoyed such conditions of life, discovering for the body the help that medical art produces, not the one that uses dangerous drugs but only drugs of that nature that are as harmless as daily food, and which with all its effects is so beneficial, that all men agree that the Egyptians are the healthiest and have the longest possible life among men. And then, for the soul, they introduced the training of **Philosophy**, a search that has the power not only to establish laws but also to investigate the nature of the universe..."

Isocrates, *Discourses and Letters*. Busiris; 11, 21-22

Philosophy makes use of reason to elaborate concepts, develop a critical sense about knowledge and how we come to it and what moral and ethical implications our view of the world has. Philosophy tries to answer the basic questions of life, tries to look for the first causes, but its method makes it almost impossible to get results that are valid for the majority. There are as many philosophies as philosophers, based on different points of view, and it is very difficult to reconcile them. At the same time, the discipline of philosophy today has acquired a very academic slant in which the person does not really involve their own life or behaviors in their ideas, so they become just theoretical speculations. However, true philosophy is the foundation of the search for the Truth about the Universe, Life and Being on the part of the philosopher.





In more recent times, another avenue of knowledge emerged: **Science**.

The **scientific method** seeks to develop reliable responses systematically through observation, experimentation and reasoning. Using logic and mathematics, scientists develop **formal models** to explain the world. Their results must be verifiable by others and in this way it is possible for researchers to work on the results of those who preceded them. This method gives Science the advantage of being able to declare verifiable laws and to show through the past contributions of other scientists that such declarations are based on proven foundations.

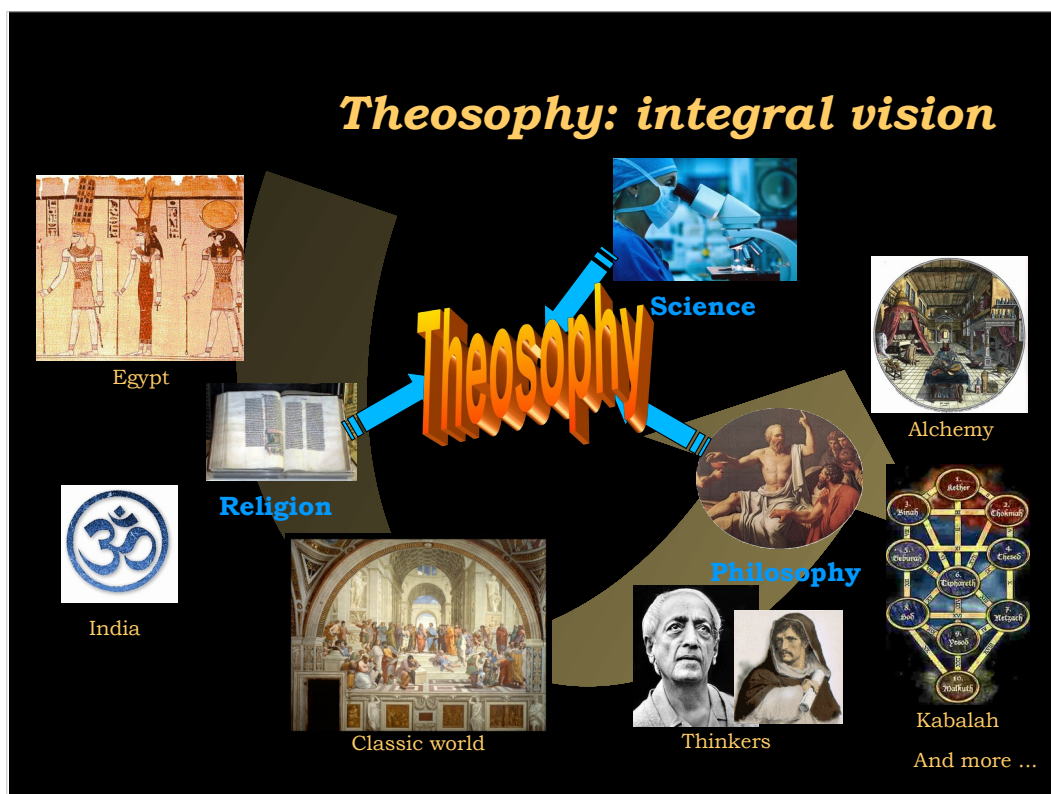
Science has grown enormously in the last few centuries allowing us to know many secrets of mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology and other branches of knowledge.

Science has made possible the impressive technological development of the 20th century, allowing human being to explore as never before the world around him, and to shape the natural environment, to some extent, according to his convenience or what he thought fit. However, the requirement of objectivity, ability to repeat reasoning and experimental testing has been at a cost. The basic questions are elusive, and although scientists have expanded the limits of knowledge, the answers to the basic questions seems unattainable by this method. The first cause is out of the field of study of Science.

It is also necessary to distinguish and understand the contrast between Knowledge and the innumerable theories that are elaborated to explain observed facts. Theories change, evolve and are perfected, so they should not be taken as dogma or the last word.

“Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are a part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.”

Max Planck



In ancient times the branches of knowledge were not formally specified and separated as they are now.

There have always been people who considered Reality as a whole, Life as something complete and integrated that cannot be understood if it is divided.

In distant times and places like Egypt, India, China, Greece and Rome, even to medieval Europe, there were more or less public currents of thought that expressed a body of similar ideas trying to answer the essential questions of life.

There were people who realized that many myths, legends, religious traditions, philosophical schemes and symbols are only flashes of Truth. Yet, though only partially understood and manifested in these different expressions, they recognized a common current lies behind them. Among these people, were those who with their own consciousness managed to connect more closely with Reality and understand the mysteries of Life. They left their testimony and tried to convey signs of Reality, which is an experience and not simply a set of ideas or doctrines.

The seeker of Truth, therefore, should not adhere dogmatically to any of these ideas but must see what lies behind them, must see behind the veil, to find one's own expression, their own understanding and point of view.

This syncretic, eclectic, integrative, holistic approach is known as **Theosophy**.

Theosophy can then be considered as the synthesis of Philosophy, Science and Religion in the constant search for Truth.

## Theosophy: semantics

- From the Greek: *Theos* + *Sophia*

### Θεοσοφία

- Theosophy is the **Divine Wisdom**.
- It is the wisdom of the essential principles of Life.
- Wisdom is not knowledge but realization, experience, identity.
- Other equivalent words:
  - Brahma Vidya
  - Ageless wisdom
  - Perennial philosophy
  - Occult doctrine
  - Esoteric philosophy



Sophia (Wisdom) in the Celso library, Efeso

The body of ideas that appeared in so many times and places under different forms but with the same essence, was given the name of **Theosophy**.

The word comes from the Greek:

<b>Theos</b>	Divine, from the realm of the gods
<b>Sophia</b>	Wisdom

Therefore, Theosophy is **Divine Wisdom**. It is the first-hand knowledge of the laws of Nature that give humans a transcendent sense of Life, as well as an ability to understand the apparent contradictions and conflicts one faces.

You have to differentiate between **knowledge** and **wisdom**. Knowledge is information with context, it is explanation based on models, based on ideas and reasoning. But wisdom is something more, it is experience, realization, it is a consciousness of Reality that surpasses the limits of mind and reasoning.

Theosophy has also been known by other names, according to where it has manifested itself or the approach given to it, such as Brahma Vidya, Ageless Wisdom, Perennial Philosophy, Occult Doctrine, Esoteric Philosophy, etc.

Although the *word* Theosophy can be defined, it is not possible to define what is Theosophy because it is not a set of ideas or doctrines. Any attempt to express Truth in words is reduced to speaking about it but it cannot be enclosed in a set of concrete ideas. This is similar to the fact that a map or travel guide to a particular place is not the same as experiencing the trip to that place. An old aphorism states, "The finger that points the moon is not the moon."

In this course we will touch on some fundamental principles of Theosophy to promote exploration and reflection, but we cannot state Theosophy, since it is really an individual and transcendent experience of reality.

Theosophy is the science of Life and the art of living.

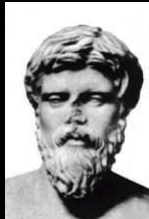
C. Jinarajadasa



## Theosophy: origin of the name



Alexandria Library  
(reconstruction)  
Ancient Center of  
Research and Knowledge



Ammonius Saccas  
(175? - 242)



Plotinus  
(205 - 270)

### Neoplatonism

### Theosophical Eclectic School

And also Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, ...

According to historical records, the first time the word Theosophy was used, was in Alexandria around 200 AD by the Neoplatonic philosophers of the *School of Alexandria*.

In Alexandria, during the first centuries of our era, a wonderful center of universal knowledge developed thanks to the presence of many thinkers from different branches of science and philosophy, such as Archimedes, Heron, Euclid, Aristarchus of Samos, Eratosthenes. This was possible by the creation of a large library that, according to some, contained a million books and scrolls.

There, a philosopher, **Ammonius Saccas**, founded a school of philosophy in which he tried to rescue the subtle essence that lies behind so many philosophies and religions, integrating them, and called it the **Theosophical Eclectic School**.

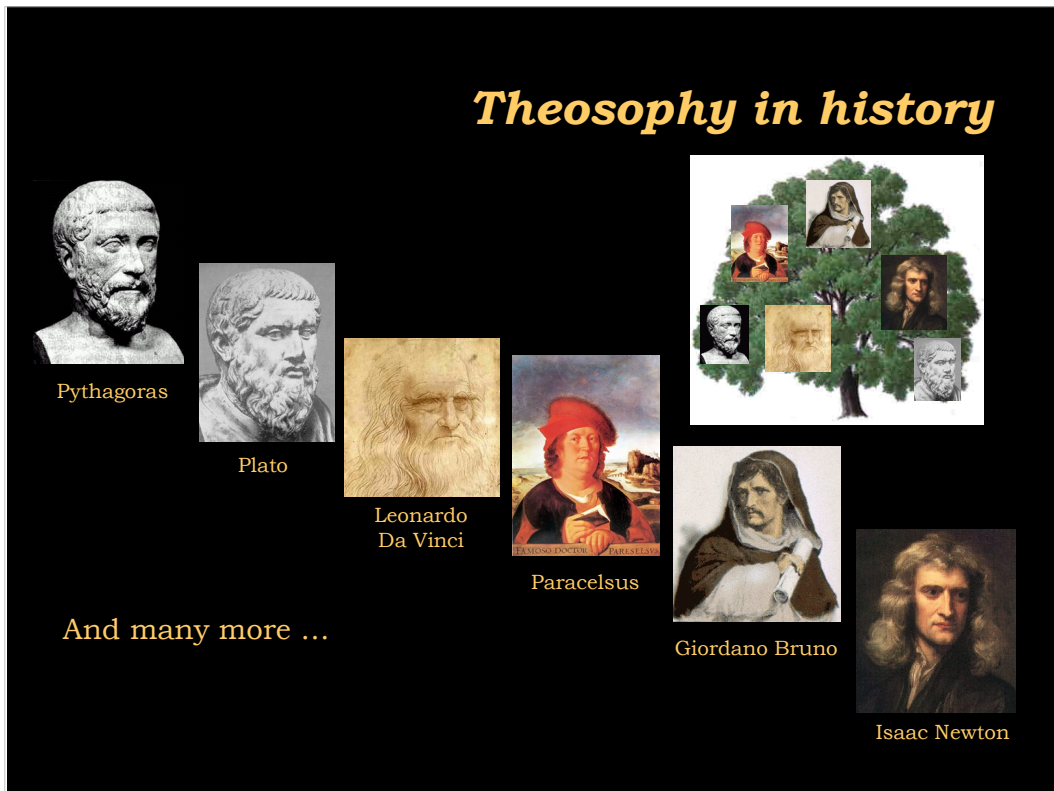
His main disciple, **Plotinus**, organized it and continued this line, as well as many other philosophers, who also expanded it geographically, showing the world the possibilities of this body of ideas and how they offered a coherent explanation of the Universe.

Its teachings, in turn, have their roots in a tradition that goes back to Egypt, India, pre-Socratic philosophers, mainly Pythagoras, and other important sources of wisdom in the ancient world.

The Theosophical School enjoyed a great reputation and attracted the attention of thinkers and influential people of the ancient world who were disciples of some of its highest exponents. In addition to the above, we must name Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus as the most outstanding.

It should be noted that the influence of the Neoplatonists was not limited to their epoch, but it is extended to the present day.

## Theosophy in history



Theosophy flourished throughout history and in different places due to the message of notable thinkers who were brilliant visionaries and have left a mark that has transcended their own time. They have expressed their vision of Perennial Wisdom under different names or without any particular one.

A long list of philosophers, religious leaders, scientists, writers, artists and thinkers have been and are, even today, an individual expression of some aspect of the Theosophical tradition. Many scriptures considered sacred are veiled in allegory, but are partial and symbolic expressions of this very essence.

They have all been expressions of the Ageless Wisdom, much like leaves of a tree that have been nourished from the same sap like all the other leaves, to give their particular view or personal message. But, ultimately, they are all based on the same universal wisdom, found in Divine Wisdom or Theosophy.

If we wanted to make a list of these historical figures this would be extremely incomplete, but we should include names like Gautama Buddha, Hermes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Lao-Tze, Plato, Jesus of Nazareth, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Shankaracharya, Paracelsus, Patanjali, Leonardo Da Vinci, Giordano Bruno, Isaac Newton, Spinoza, and many, many more.

The Theosophical student has at their disposal an extensive collection of information with sources about these thinkers, their studies and contributions, which can motivate and enrich the research. However we must remember that not even the most extensive collection of all these sources is in itself Theosophy. Theosophy is one's own direct experience of Reality. Divine Wisdom is the realization of the identity of our conscience with the reality inside ourselves and the Universe.

## Theosophy in modern times

- It emerged at the end of the 19th century thanks to **Helena P. Blavatsky**, an extraordinary Russian woman of her time.
- She traveled extensively visiting knowledge centers in the East and relating to notable beings, who introduced her to Esoteric Philosophy.
- She gathered interested people with whom she founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875.
- Her teaching had an important impact on all modern culture.



Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

At the end of the nineteenth century, there was an awakening of interest in the occult or the paranormal that was beyond the scientific mechanistic explanations of the time as well as the established religious dogmas.

An extraordinary Russian woman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), traveled extensively during her youth, visiting different cultures and centers of knowledge, particularly in the East. She was associated with notable beings who taught her the depths of Esoteric Philosophy or Theosophy. These beings were known by her and other people as **Mahatmas** (meaning great soul in Sanskrit), or spiritual masters. They were another expression of the long chain of enlightened beings who through various ages gave the world these teachings.

In 1873 Helena Blavatsky went to the United States and met Colonel Henry Steel Olcott who, at that time, was on assignment as a journalist investigating psychic phenomena. Together they undertook to investigate spiritual phenomena. This was during a time when such phenomena defied the materialistic culture that dominated.

Blavatsky herself possessed extraordinary psychic powers, but she gave them no importance and considered them only as a sign that there was much more to the material world than it seemed.. Her interest laid in the Perennial Wisdom which explains the basic questions of life, the origin of the Universe and the transformation of the human being to realize his magnificent inner potential.



## The Theosophical Society

- Founded on November 17, 1875 in New York by:
  - Helena P. Blavatsky
  - Henry S. Olcott
  - William Q. Judge
  - and others

Internacional name:

**The Theosophical Society**

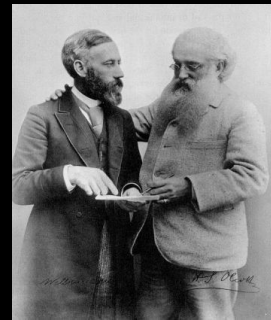
- Dedicated to the research, study and promotion of Theosophy.

Motto:

**There is no religion higher than truth**



Blavatsky and Olcott



Olcott and Judge

Blavatsky, also known by the initials HPB, and Olcott were enthusiastic in the task of recovering the teachings of Perennial Philosophy almost lost in the western world at that time.

To this end they initiated a movement to attract people interested in investigating the ancient mysteries, strange phenomena and philosophy, which led to the founding of **The Theosophical Society** in New York City on November 17, 1875.

The main founders of the TS were Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the first Russian woman naturalized as an American citizen, and Henry Steel Olcott, a prominent lawyer and journalist who became the first President of the Society. Associated with them were William Quan Judge, a young lawyer from New York and other enthusiasts interested in the philosophy presented by Madame Blavatsky.

The circumstances and stories surrounding the meeting of the founders and early times of the Theosophical Society are very well told first hand by Olcott in his book: *Old Diary Leaves* [Henry Steel Olcott]

The book recounts what happened from the meeting of the founders to the early years of the Theosophical Society including the establishment of its present International Headquarters in India.

## Objectives of the Theosophical Society

- 1- To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
- 2- To encourage the comparative study of Religion, Philosophy and Science.
- 3- To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.



Emblem of the Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded with a dedication to self enquiry and to the improvement of humanity. The wording of its objectives evolved overtime, but the essence was maintained in its present three objects:

1. **To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.**
2. **To encourage the comparative study of Religion, Philosophy and Science.**
3. **To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.**

The first objective establishes as the basis for the TS the formation of a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without any kind of distinctions. As we will see throughout the course, this is not simply a moral basis for establishing a harmonic group. It is much more. The essential foundation of all the theosophical work centers on the unity of all Life.

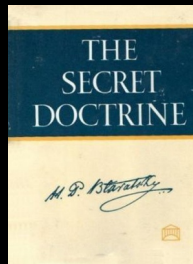
The second objective establishes that the TS seeks to promote access to knowledge of the essential aspects of life provided by religion, philosophy and science. However, this is from a broad, integrating, non-dogmatic point of view, so students may seek to understand the universal essence that underlies the three ways.

The third objective proposes a direct challenge to go into the unknown and investigate the Laws of Nature that are still a mystery to common academic knowledge. It is not a mere curiosity but the development of latent capabilities in every human being. The great enlightened beings that have existed, and still exist, prove to us that we have an extraordinary potential that we can develop if we want to unravel the mysteries of the Universe and of ourselves. It is not the development of paranormal faculties, but the pure expansion of Consciousness, the development of faculties such as discernment, universal love, the consciousness of the eternal or a glimpse of the Real.

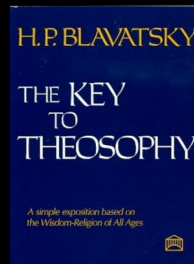
## Fundamental works of Helena P. Blavatsky



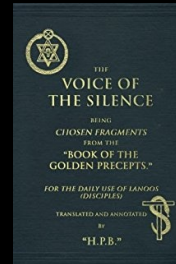
1877  
2 volumes



1888  
3 volumes



1889



1889



Helena P. Blavatsky  
(1831 – 1891)

Helena P. Blavatsky was a Russian woman of noble birth. Her family members were writers, novelists, and passionate about culture. Her grandfather had a library with books about Hermeticism and Alchemy in which HPB, at a very young age, became interested.

As a young woman, she traveled all over the world in search of wisdom about the nature of life and the reason for human existence. Finally, Blavatsky brought the spiritual wisdom of the East and the ancient Mysteries to the modern West, where they were virtually unknown. Her writings became the first exposition of modern Theosophy.

In 1877, H.P. Blavatsky published **Isis Unveiled**, which, according to her, was "the fruit of a somewhat intimate relationship with Eastern adepts and the study of their science." Its success was immediate worldwide. It aroused the interest of notable people in many countries and a considerable number of people joined the Society and came to play an important role in its future.

Later, Blavatsky wrote her masterpiece, **The Secret Doctrine**. The first volume was published in 1888 and constitutes a profound treatise on the ideas of the Ancient Wisdom based on a book not known till then in the West called *The Book of Dzyan*.

In 1889 she wrote the book **The Key to Theosophy**. The book is in the form of questions and answers based on the collection of frequently asked questions about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society that were presented to HPB.

In the same year, Blavatsky wrote another book called **The Voice of the Silence**, a classic for the seekers of inner realization. In the preface, HPB explains that the book is a partial translation of an ancient book called "The Book of the Golden Precepts" which is part of the same series from the Stanzas of Dzyan found in *The Secret Doctrine*.

We do not regard the work of HPB as dogma, but as a monumental work worthy of study and analysis. It had an extraordinary influence, not only in esotericism, but as many scholars have recognized, in the general culture.



## The Theosophical Society today

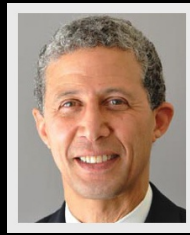
### The Theosophical Society

Present in more than 60 countries (National Sections).

Members are grouped in Branches or Lodges in different cities.

Headquarter: Adyar, Chennai (formerly Madras), India

International President Mr. Tim Boyd (since 2014)



Tim Boyd  
International President



Headquarter in Adyar, Chennai, India

The Theosophical Society is an international organization formed by National Sections present in more than sixty countries around the world.

The members of the TS meet in groups called Branches or Lodges, in which they carry out various activities with the intent to meet the three Objects already set forth. They do this through study, the exchange of ideas and experiences, courses, conferences, workshops and fraternization. Branches exist in several cities but there are also provisions for members who live where there are no Branches or Lodges in proximity. Such members maintain a correspondence relationship with the Secretary of the Section.

The headquarters of the Theosophical Society is a large campus known as **Adyar**, which is located in the city of Chennai, formerly called Madras, in the state of Tamil Nadu in southern India. Adyar is a well-known place in the region. It is set on the banks of the Adyar river where the mouth of the river meets the Bay of Bengal and is home to one of the oldest Banyan trees in the world, which draws many visitors. The profuse vegetation, its peaceful atmosphere and the fact it is from this center where pursuit for the betterment of humanity is conducted makes Adyar a very special place. The headquarters is also home to the Adyar Library, a research center visited by academic scholars from around the world. The library contains a collection of 20,000 palm leaf manuscripts from different places in the East and 250,000 printed volumes related to Theosophy.

TS members from around the world democratically elect their local representative and their International President. Since 2014, Mr. Tim Boyd of the United States of America has been the International President. There is also a General Council composed of the Presidents of the National Sections and other designated persons who make important decisions and assist the President.

### On Internet

The International Headquarters website: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/>.

It provides a directory with links to the websites of National Sections and Federations around the world.

# Members of the Theosophical Society

## Requirements


- Accept the 3 objectives of The Theosophical Society
- Payment of TS dues

## Freedom of thought

- Guaranteed by a resolution of the General Council
- Freedom of expression
- It only demands respect to others

## Rights

- Participation in Lodge meetings
- Events
- Use of library
- Elect officers
- Get elected on positions



Becoming a member of the TS does not make you a theosophist.  
The ideal member is to be a seeker of Truth.

To join the Theosophical Society it is necessary to fill out an application, be in sympathy with Oits three objectives and pay the fees set by the Section and by the Branch.

The TS does not impose beliefs on its members, who are united by a common search for Truth and the desire to learn the meaning and purpose of existence through study, reflection, self-responsibility, and compassionate service.

There is freedom of thought and expression, guaranteed by a resolution of the General Council which gives the right to any member to freely express their opinions on the sole condition that they also respect the opinions of others.

A member has the right to participate in the Branch meetings, attend the national and international events and to use the facilities of the Branch such the library. A member can also take part in the election of local and international officers as long as it complies with the provisions of the Statutes.

There are various publications, magazines, e-newsletters, forums and other means by which a member may communicate with the TS organization and with other members.

It should be noted that joining the Theosophical Society does not make one a **Theosophist**, since the experience of Divine Wisdom is a personal experience that cannot be gained by any external means. The Society simply expects its members to be heartfelt seekers of the Truth by discarding the ignorance and illusion that causes so much suffering in the world and through compassionate thoughts, words and action, improve the Life of all.

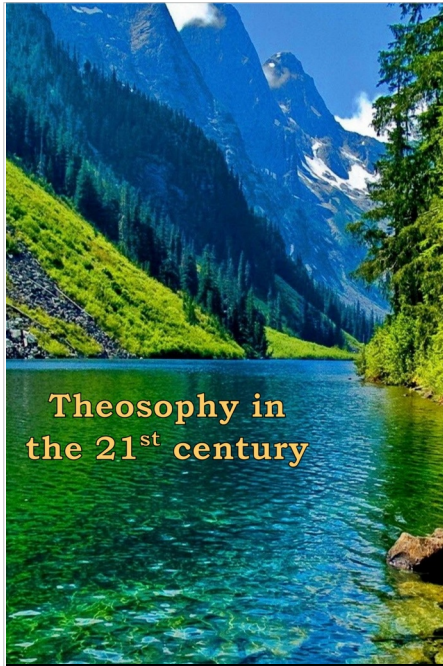
## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- What is the meaning of the word Theosophy? What is the antiquity of Theosophy? And of the name Theosophy?
- 2- In what sense can it be said that Theosophy is religious but it is not a religion, it is philosophical but it is not a philosophy, and it is scientific but it is not a science?
- 3- Is Theosophy a revelation given to the world in the works of Helena P. Blavatsky?
- 4- What is the meaning of the word religion in the context of the TS motto "*There is no religion higher than truth*"?
- 5- Is a student of Theosophy the same as a Theosophist?
- 6 - What does the phrase "*the powers latent in man*" mean in the third object of the TS? Think of a latent power that would be important to develop.
- 7- The elevator speech: If you had to briefly explain to someone what Theosophy is, what would you say?





**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## ***2 Fundamental Ideas of Theosophy***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## What are the sources of Theosophy?

- The true source is the very essence of each one of us.
- Those who have somehow experienced an achievement of Perennial Wisdom, have left us a body of teachings which we also often call "Theosophy."
- Remember: A travel guide about Vienna is not the same as visiting Vienna.



School of Athens (Rafael)

When we intend to study a body of teachings we need to know what is its origin, what are its sources. In the case of Theosophy, which is the Divine Wisdom, we must remember that its only true source is the essence of our Being, the essence of each one of us.

However there is a tradition or a set of teachings that have existed since ancient times which are also known by the name of Theosophy. This body of teachings is called the **Ancient Wisdom** or **Perennial Wisdom** because in almost every epoch and culture there have been notable people who have understood, proclaimed, and taught their principles, even though they differed from those commonly accepted.

But we must be cautious and remember that a travel guide of the city of Vienna is not the same as visiting the city. Nothing replaces first hand experience and knowledge of teaching is not the same as living and experiencing Reality first hand. Let's briefly mention some of these sources.

THEOSOPHIST: The WISDOM-RELIGION was ever one, and being the last word of possible human knowledge, was, therefore, carefully preserved. It preceded by long ages the Alexandrian Theosophists, reached the modern, and will survive every other religion and philosophy.

ENQUIRER: Where and by whom was it so preserved?

THEOSOPHIST: Among Initiates of every country; among profound seekers after truth—their disciples; and in those parts of the world where such topics have always been most valued and pursued: in India, Central Asia, and Persia.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*

## Religions and initiatory traditions

- Religions have two aspects:
  - **Exoteric**: Scriptures, dogma, priests, rituals, for the general public
  - **Esoteric**: Symbols, myths, only for seekers
- Initiatic traditions: fundamental part of the ancient Schools of Mysteries.
- **Initiation** = beginning of a new life
  - New understanding
  - New consciousness



We can trace the principles of Theosophy in the teachings of the ancient religions, especially when viewed in the light of less dogmatic and deeper interpretations. Ancient religions have had an **exoteric** or external aspect dedicated to the general public, composed of scriptures, canons, precepts, worship, rituals and in general monks or priests who act as preceptors or intermediaries. But there was also an **esoteric** or internal aspect dedicated to restless, thinking people, interested in obtaining a teaching that goes beyond the shell of the external. In this esoteric aspect, religious writings in general are considered not as literal assertions but as a series of symbols, myths and legends that the student must interpret to find their meaning. There are many indications in the history of religions of such groups, some of whom were persecuted and condemned by orthodoxy.

It is important to consider the ancient religions, because modern religions, in many cases, do not have original content but are based on other religions with previous approaches or interpretations given by some leader.

In the ancient world, especially in places of the Mediterranean such as Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor and others, groups were created that had characteristics in common with the religions, such as the rites and rituals, but it actually served like a school where students studied human nature and of its transformation. The purpose of many of these schools was the development and transition of the human being from a life of ignorance and misery to a life full of understanding and happiness.

The **Mystery Schools** were very popular organizations which, by using symbolism, taught students the mysteries of life and provided their followers with a teaching that was kept secret and safeguarded by the curious. Candidates needed to experience the teaching rather than it being mere information. The most famous Mystery Schools were those of Isis, Orpheus, Eleusis, Mitra, Samothrace, and others.

One ritual that was regularly used in the Mysteries is that of **Initiation**, which is the process by which the aspirant produces a change in consciousness by initiating a new life, with a deeper understanding of things and a wider consciousness that allows the candidate to work toward an transformative life and live in harmony with the world.



## Great thinkers of the ancient world

▪ Notable philosophers who were nourished by the initiatic tradition:

- Presocratics: Pythagoras, ...
- Plato
- Alexandrians: Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Iamblichus
- Spinoza

▪ Mystical and philosophical traditions:

- Hermeticism
- Alchemy
- Kabbalah

▪ Free thinkers

- Giordano Bruno
- Paracelsus
- ...



Ageless Wisdom also flourished among the classical philosophers, from some pre-Socratic such as Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, or Parmenides, who were interested in explaining nature and the Universe. The most notable of these was Pythagoras (-582 to -507) who maintained that the Universe is mathematical and that it is a unit. He traveled through Mesopotamia and Egypt where he is believed to have been in contact with sages and from whom he learned some of his ideas. Pythagoras coined the term *philosophy* to designate the pursuit of wisdom, and his Pythagorean school was an esteemed training center for human development.

Later, among the classical philosophers, we can highlight Plato (-427 to -347), the founder of the Academy of Athens, whose ideas about the intelligible world, the apparent world, the role of good and evil were probably inspired by his travels through Egypt and Sicily.

The light that Plato threw on the world extended to the future, and although his ideas were questioned at one time, it was in Alexandria, Egypt, where they were rescued and amalgamated in along with those of Pythagoras and with the Eastern tradition by the philosophers known as Neoplatonist, noticeably Ammonius Saccas and its successors like Plotinus, Iamblicus and others. They were who founded the *School of Alexandria* and called this knowledge **Theosophy**.

The Middle Ages in Europe were a difficult age for free thought and philosophy. Culture and the world of ideas, in general, were restricted by Christianity, which had become so powerful and political as to decide who should reign and mark the fate of people. At that time, there arose thinkers who dared to challenge the power of the Church by veiling their ideas in symbols and metaphors so they went relatively unnoticed in the eyes of ecclesiastical power. Such was the case with the alchemists, who expressed through the metaphor of chemical transmutations the process of human transformation.

Eventually the resurgence of ancient traditions and a more humane and less theological approach to science and the arts produced the Renaissance period. Great geniuses like Leonardo Vinci and Giordano Bruno rescued the transcendent dimension of the mystery of the Life through their works. There were also secret and esoteric societies which, to a greater or lesser degree, recognized the tradition of the Ageless Wisdom and propagated it among their followers.

## Modern presentations

- H. P. Blavatsky originated a stream of thinkers that still continues.
- Theosophical Society writers:
  - Sinnet, Besant, Judge, Leadbeater, Van der Leeuw, Jinarajadasa, Sri Ram, Rohit Mehta, Taimni, Barborka, Radha Burnier, ...
- Writers outside of the TS:
  - Krishnamurti, Sri Aurobindo, Frijot Capra, Eckhart Tolle, Dalai Lama ...



Helena P. Blavatsky

In modern times, Theosophy was rediscovered for the Western world by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. She was a vigorous thinker and writer, a tireless traveler, who dared to go to unconventional places for a woman in her day, such as Egypt, the Middle East, India, and even Tibet. In her travels, she established contact with notable beings who inspired her to found the Theosophical Society. HPB set out to travel, to write some fundamental works and articles in various magazines that were of interest to the seekers of esotericism. Theosophy in the modern world was not presented as a new invention, but as the synthesis of science, philosophy and religion. HPB highlighted the value of the ancient symbols, traditions and philosophies of the East, which were misunderstood and despised for many years as mere superstitions.

The influence of HPB and Theosophy is not limited to the Theosophical Society. Theosophy has been the inspiration for many artists, thinkers, and, in general, the spiritual movement known today as *New Age*, that announces a life of hope and enlightenment for humanity. She herself expressed that she presented this ageless tradition in the following words:

But to the public in general and the readers of the "Secret Doctrine" I may repeat what I have stated all along, and which I now clothe in the words of Montaigne: Gentlemen,

*"I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers,  
and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."*

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 1

At the end of the nineteenth century, throughout the twentieth century and now in the twenty-first century, an innumerable number of thinkers and writers have arisen who, using or not using the term Theosophy, have presented their particular vision of life coinciding with the fundamental ideas of Perennial Wisdom. There are traditional authors within the Theosophical Society, but also many authors who are not related to it and who nevertheless express the living essence of Theosophy that can inspire us. It is the student's personal task to discern where the authentic fragrance of Divine Wisdom lies versus where it is simply sensationalism, superstition, or a repetition of information.

## Statement of fundamental principles

- Presenting the essentials is not easy:
  - They are universal principles
  - They are therefore closer
  - They provide the necessary vision
- There are many presentations of traditional and modern writers.
- We chose the presentation of H. P. Blavatsky in the Proem of "*The Secret Doctrine*" for its universality and simplicity.



To approach the postulates of Theosophy, we must identify its fundamental principles, which tend to be abstract and are not always easy to understand. But without this, these fundamentals are deprived of their deeper meaning. The fundamental principles provide the necessary vision if we want to understand the propositions of Theosophy and its outcome in practical life. Our understanding of the essential principles will become deeper over time if we are true investigators and work to discover them through our own inner essence.

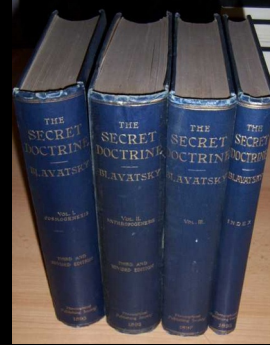
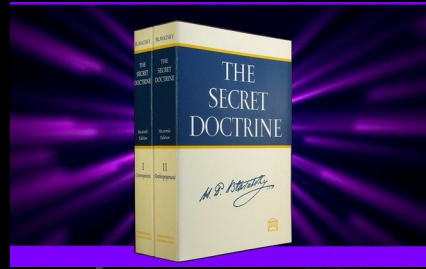
The essential principles form the foundation of the Ancient Wisdom or ***Brahma Vidya*** (the wisdom of Brahma, in Sanskrit), as it is known in India. Although they are abstract and transcendent principles, they are personal and concern us at a very deep level. It is very important to try to understand them first before examining other ideas. These are not intellectual speculations but propositions or statements that try to explain the foundations of Life.

Throughout the course we will see concepts that were known since ancient times by wise men from the East and that have been written in books such as the Vedas or the Bhagavad Gita. Words have been used in the original languages to describe those concepts, notably Sanskrit, that do not have an exact translation in modern languages. Some texts try to replace the words in Sanskrit or in Greek with a translation to facilitate access to the reader. But this generally has negative effects due to the loss of the original meaning and the addition of unwanted meanings associated with the word used for translation. For this reason, in this course, we prefer to keep the original concepts and this will lead us to have to sometimes use some words in Sanskrit, Pali or Greek. Whenever we do it, we will explain its meaning.

There are several presentations of the fundamental ideas of Theosophy. In this course we will start from the one exposed by Blavatsky in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* because it has the beauty of simplicity and the power of universality.

## The Secret Doctrine

- Masterpiece of HPB
  - Volume 1 published in 1888
  - Based on the **Book of Dzyan**
- It was regarded as an “epitome of the Occult Wisdom”. **It’s not a revelation.**
- Part 1: Cosmogogenesis  
Part 2: Anthropogenesis  
Part 3: Based on notes of HPB, published after her dead by Annie Besant
- Each part contains:
  - Stanzas of Book of Dzyan with commentaries
  - Simbology
  - Comparison with the Science at the time



*The Secret Doctrine* was originally intended as a profound revision of *Isis Unveiled*. However, seeing the magnitude of the changes that were necessary, HPB set out to create a new and great work, an endeavour much more difficult, but more structured and polished.

Its first editions consisted of two volumes. The first dedicated to Cosmogogenesis and the second to Anthropogenesis. After the death of HPB, Annie Besant and a group of collaborators gathered and organized HPB notes that were published in a third volume. In some editions, these three parts have been divided into six volumes to make them more manageable.

The **Proem** is an initial part of the work where the author justifies the existence of a knowledge such as Theosophy and presents principles necessary to understand the topics that will be developed in the book. In the Proem, HPB states **three propositions** that we will study later. She justifies the need to first understand them all in the following way:

Before the reader proceeds to the consideration of the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan which form the basis of the present work, it is absolutely necessary that he should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought to which his attention is invited. These basic ideas are few in number, and on their clear apprehension depends the understanding of all that follows; therefore no apology is required for asking the reader to make himself familiar with them first, before entering on the perusal of the work itself.

The Secret Doctrine establishes three fundamental propositions:

...



## 1<sup>st</sup> Proposition

*I. An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable."*



The Essence of the existence  
Causeless Cause

Unity of Life

The first proposition speaks of the Universal Principle as the “infinite and eternal Cause, ... the root without root of all that was, is or will be”.

It is “Be-ness” rather than Being (in Sanskrit, Sat), and is beyond all thought or speculation.

The Universe as a whole is a manifestation of this Root. Notice that the Be-ness is not a being in itself but the essence or nature of Being in the abstract.

One aspect of this proposition is the fundamental idea of Theosophy that the Universe is a Unity. Not a unit as a conceptual abstraction such as when we refer to the set of all the people of the planet, but an entity in itself.

This **Universal Principle** or **One Life** is the root of all, the Cause without cause, the **Absolute**, the **Parabrahman** (which transcends the Brahman to the Hindus).

No attribute can be asserted about the Absolute because it implies the limiting and conditioning of it. This, in turn, deprives it of its universal and infinite nature. When we want to mentally approach it, we incur paradoxes because Unity transcends the mind's needs to separate and differentiate in order to know.

In the next chapter of this course we will see that this fundamental idea has a meaning that escapes us to the extent that we are not able to consciously perceive this unity of the Universe. One consequence of this Principle of Unity is that all Beings, all Life in the Universe, are members of Unity, which is the basis for respect for all life and for true brotherhood.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Proposition

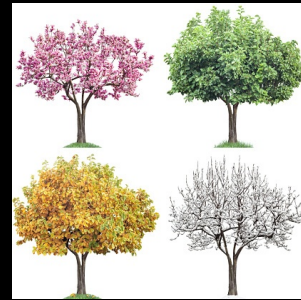
*II. The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," called "the manifesting stars," and the "sparks of Eternity." "The Eternity of the Pilgrim" is like a wink of the Eye of Self-Existence (Book of Dzyan.) "The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux."*



Periodic manifestation

**Manvantara**  
(activity, manifestation)

**Pralaya**  
(rest, unmanifested)



**Law of Periodicity**

The second proposition of the Secret Doctrine tell us about the Law of Periodicity of the Universe, or Law of the Cycles, where there are a succession of periods of manifestation and of rest.

Everything in nature has a cyclical expression. We participate in countless cycles: astronomical, biological, physical, psychological and many more.

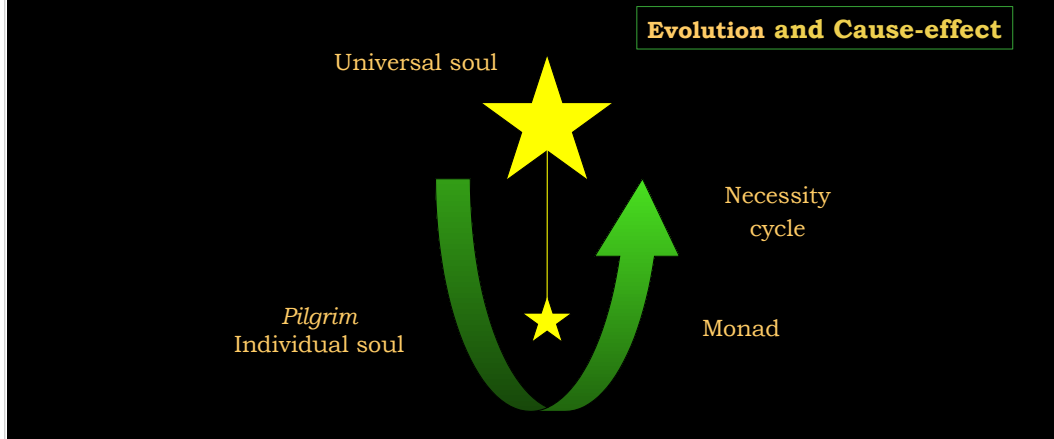
This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.

According to the law of periodicity, the manifested Universe, its matter and its creatures are expressed in a cyclical way, alternating periods of unmanifestation or rest, called **Pralaya**, in which Life is in a latent, mysterious, potential state with periods of manifestation or expression, denominated **Manvantara**, in which Life is active, expressed and differentiated.

The alternation of cycles of manifestation and rest makes sense in the light of the third Proposition which explains its function.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Proposition

III. *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.*



The third proposition of The Secret Doctrine tells us of some closely related ideas.

First, it establishes the identity of the essence of each living being, the *Monad*, with the **Universal Soul**, which is practically a consequence of the principle of the Unity of Life, but also establishes its similarity. That is to say that the Monad is a reflection of the Universal Soul that has all its qualities in potential state.

Then the third principle tells us that all souls are subject to a process of Evolution, known among other names as the *Cycle of Necessity* because the Monad, the manifested essence of the individual Life, needs to realize it to develop itself. In this process, the individual monads are going through various states of evolution, increasingly developing their latent faculties over eons of time, passing through different states and life forms.

HPB also tells us that this Cycle of Necessity takes place according to two important laws: the **Cyclic Law** (already stated in the second proposition) and the **Law of Karma**.

The first law implies that the development of the Monad is not a one-time linear process, but occurs through cycles like everything in Nature. These cycles in the human stage are the successive incarnations that the soul takes..

The other law mentioned is the universal law of Cause-Effect or *Karma*, as it is known in Sanskrit and states that every action has an effect on the present and on the future, a consequence, both on the environment and on the being that produced it.

We will see these ideas in much more detail throughout the course, but we can say that the knowledge of Theosophy is based on these essential principles of Nature. The Theosophical researcher needs to pay the utmost attention to the discovery and understanding of these principles throughout his life.

## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

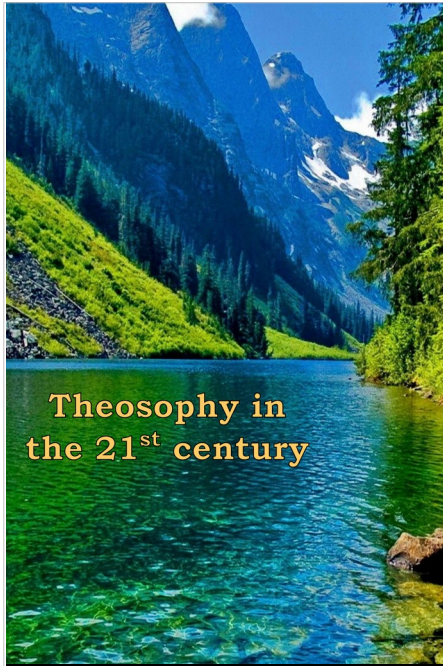
- 1- Is Theosophy a tradition of India?
- 2- Did Theosophy disappear from mainstream culture at some period in time?
- 3- Has there ever been a philosopher like Pythagoras, Socrates, or Plato who has utterly expressed the truth of Theosophy?
- 4- What authors of our time can relate to the Theosophical teachings even though they are not part of the Theosophical Society?
- 5- How could we describe the three fundamental propositions of the Proem of the Secret Doctrine in our own words?

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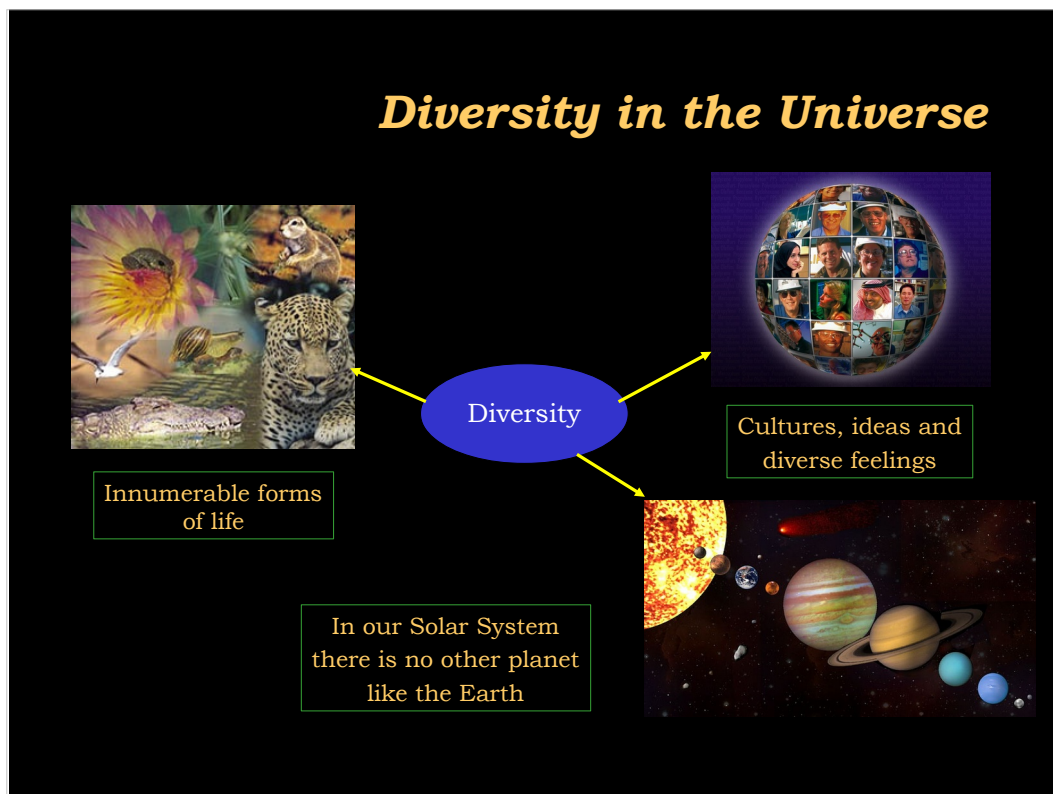


**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## ***3 The Unity of Life***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019



It is clear that the Universe presents a great diversity.

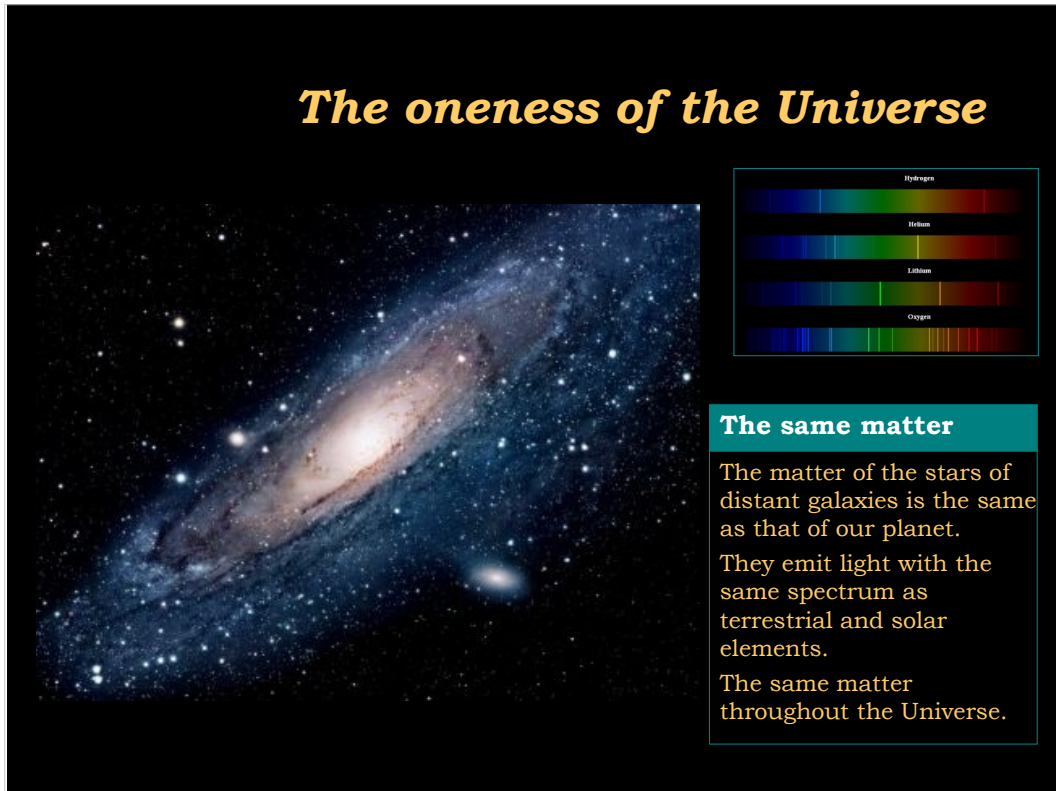
From the material point of view, we can observe a large number of galaxies with their stars and their planets. However, we have not yet discovered any planet equal to our Earth. In the Solar System itself we have no other planet whose conditions approximate those of the Earth to hold Life as we know it. In addition we know a great quantity of substances with very different characteristics in terms of color, hardness, elasticity, and so on in Nature

In living beings we also observe a great diversity with innumerable species and varieties, where each one has developed a different survival strategy and has adapted to different environments.

In the human kingdom we observe a great variety of cultures, people, traditions, customs and ideas. We know that there are no two human beings who are alike in appearance and biologically, as well as their ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

But what is behind this great diversity on the Universe? Is there anything in common? Is there any reality that escapes us at first sight?

We will carefully investigate what we can know about it.



When we contemplate the Universe with the help of astronomy, we are astonished by its immensity and its mysteries. The Universe reveals to us a huge habitation with a number of galaxies and stars.

In spite of the extension and variety of the celestial bodies, there is a oneness in the **components** of the Universe that we know. The matter of the stars of other galaxies is the same matter that we find in our Solar System. Distance or age does not matter. How do we know?

Each substance emits, according to the structure of the electrons in its molecules and under certain circumstances, a characteristic light that does not have all the possible frequencies of light but only some of them. When the light emitted by a substance is analyzed with a spectrometer, a pattern of lines appears, each one corresponding to a frequency of light. This pattern is like a signature of that substance, it is the characteristic **spectrum** of it. All substances--Hydrogen, helium, carbon, oxygen--have their characteristic spectrum. The spectrum is usually used in the laboratory to identify substances, such as when determining the components of a mixture.

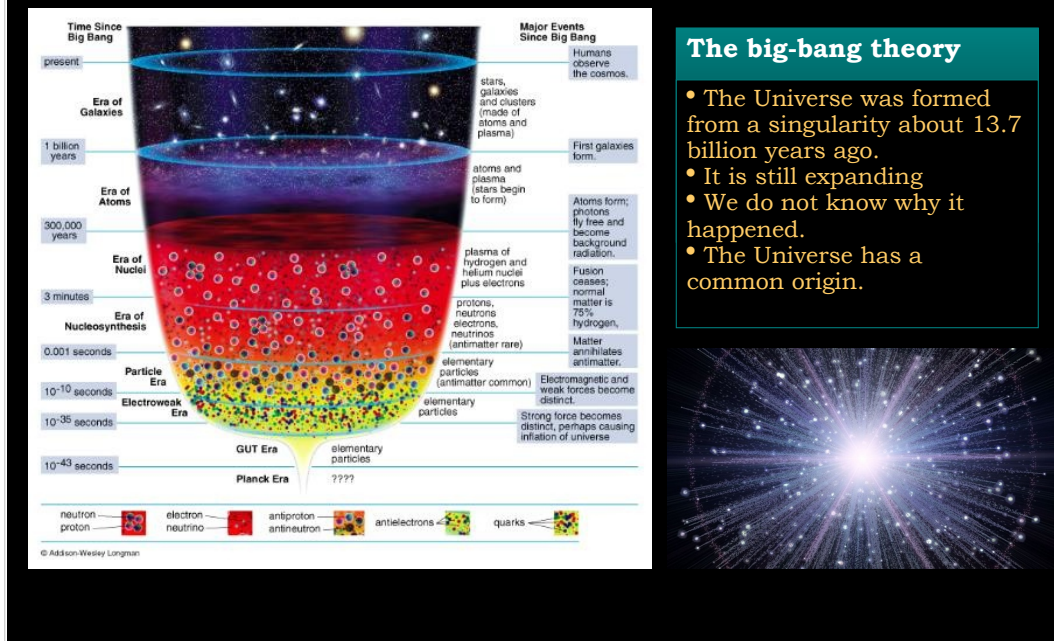
The spectrum of light emitted by the stars reveals that they all have the same elements that we find in our Solar System: Hydrogen, Helium, Carbon, etc.

We have not found in space indications of matter different from the one that exists in our Solar System. The so-called "dark matter" (not visible because it does not emit light) is a hypothetical matter with which astronomers try to explain certain observed phenomena, but which seems to exist throughout all the Universe.

Therefore although the Universe is very large, it is composed of the **same matter** that we know here in this region.



# The origin of the Universe according to Astronomy



**The big-bang theory**

- The Universe was formed from a singularity about 13.7 billion years ago.
- It is still expanding
- We do not know why it happened.
- The Universe has a common origin.

Astronomy has always been interested in the origin of the Universe. Different theories have been elaborated to explain this.

The theory about the origin of the Universe widely accepted today and with increasing evidence is the **Big-Bang**. It argues that the Universe originated from a singular point, a great "explosion", which occurred about 13.7 billion years ago. According to this theory, matter and energy were condensed into an extremely hot and dense point, which some call the cosmic egg, where the laws of physics were totally different from the present ones.

After the explosion, the Universe expanded and transformed through stages in which matter did not exist as we know it now. It is estimated that hydrogen and helium atoms only appeared about 300,000 years after the Big-Bang.

There is much evidence for the Big-Bang theory, such as the observation that distant galaxies are moving away and the measurement of residual radiation from the earliest beginnings of the Universe in the microwave zone that has been mapped by the WMAP space probe and again by the Planck probe.

Physicists continue to study what the conditions of the material world might have been only a few millionths of a second after the Big Bang. The formidable concentration of energy would have made the present laws of physics as we know invalid.

The big bang, its causes and circumstances, still remain a great enigma. It is the cause of many speculations and theories. The future evolution of the Universe is also a subject of discussion and there are several theories not yet tested, ranging from extreme cooling to the collapse of the Universe in a process inverse to the Big Bang known as the Big-Crunch. There are also those postulating a Big-Bounce after this collapse producing a new big-bang.

One thing is certain: the Universe has a common origin, which explains the **oneness** of matter as we have observed before.

## The variety in matter

### The elements

The immense variety of matter is due to just over 100 elements. From the H to the heavy elements.

### The substances

Combinations of the elements originate all substances.

### The atoms

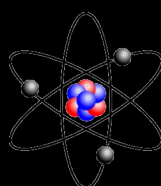
The atoms of the elements are composed of a few elementary particles.

- Protons
- Neutrons
- Electrons

Grupo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Período 1	1	2																
2	H	He																
3	Li	Be											B	C	N	O	F	Ne
4	Na	Mg											Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar
5	K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
6	Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
7	Cs	Ba	La	Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
8	Fr	Ra	Lr	Rf	Db	Sa	Bh	Hs	Mt	Uun	Uuq	Uub	Uut	Uuq	Uuh	Uus	Uuo	
* Lantánidos			*	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	
** Actínidos			**	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	
				La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Hf	Er	Tm	Yb	
				Ac	Th	Pa	U	Np	Pu	Am	Cm	Bk	Cf	Es	Fm	Md	No	

Periodic table of the elements

The elements differ only in the number of particles, not in their nature



The structure of electrons in a substance determines most of its properties

It is remarkable that the immense variety of substances found in the world is due to a few chemical elements, only about 92 natural elements from hydrogen (H) to uranium (U). The human being has created other elements beyond uranium, which practically do not exist in the natural state, such as plutonium (Pu), which is used in nuclear reactors.

Chemistry has grouped the elements in a specific order based on certain characteristics like the chemical valence which determines their ability to combine with other elements. This is known as the *Periodic Table of the Elements*.

It has also been found that matter is composed of **atoms**. The atom is the smallest unit of a given element. In turn the atom is composed of particles. Put simply only three (3) kinds of particles are found in an atom: protons and neutrons in the nucleus and electrons forming a cloud around them.

Physical properties such as hardness, plasticity, density and others are determined by the crystalline structure adopted by the atoms of the substance. The soft graphite and the hard diamond are formed by the same carbon atoms, but organized in very different crystalline nets. Other properties such as color and the ability to conduct electricity depend on the distribution of the peripheral electrons in the atoms of the substance.

It is very interesting to note that all the immense variety of substances that we find in the Universe, from the rough beauty of a rock to the delicacy of the petals of a flower are built from these 92 elements suitably combined.

The difference between the elements lies only in the **quantity** of the three kinds of atomic particles that each possesses. For example, the normal hydrogen atom (H) has only one proton and one electron, the most common carbon atom (C) has 6 protons, 6 neutrons and 6 electrons, while iron (Fe) has 26 protons, 30 neutrons and 26 electrons.

In this way, only *three kinds of particles* form the immense variety of substances that we know in the material world. Of course, physics does not stop here and it seeks to understand a model of elementary particles, and some pose unified theories like String Theory that tell us that matter and energy are essentially vibration.

This shows us the **oneness** of matter, since the atoms of all the elements are constructed with the same 3 particles and only differ in their quantities.

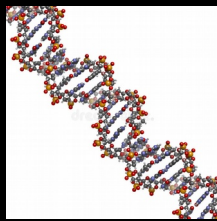
## The oneness in biology: The DNA

DNA is the macromolecule that contains the information necessary to build a living being.

### Bases of DNA

DNA is composed of only **4 bases** or nucleotides:  
- **A** Adenine - **T** Thymine  
- **C** Cytosine - **G** Guanine

They form facing pairs in the helix: A-T, C-G

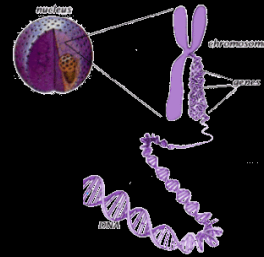


DNA sequence

AGTCCGCGAATACAGGCTCGGT

Only 0.5% of human DNA is different from one person to another

- Cells →  
Chromosomes →  
DNA →  
Genes
- Human DNA:
  - stretched: 1.8 m long
  - 3.200 M of bases
  - grouped in 23 pairs of chromosomes



In the world of so-called living things, Biology allows us to observe something also exciting. All living organisms are composed of one or more cells. Cells are complex functional units constructed with **proteins** that are large molecules and of very complex structure.

The key to the organization of living organisms is in a wonderful macro-molecule called **DNA** that has the information necessary to build a particular organism and acts as a memory from where the cell reads instructions to make proteins.

The DNA molecule is very long. It has the structure of twisted strands in the form of double helix as James Watson and Francis Crick discovered in 1953 and is composed of many pairs of **bases** that are simpler molecular units. These chemical bases are *only of 4 types: Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine and Guanine*, abbreviated by their initials A, T, C and G.

The 4 bases are complementary, so that if in a strand there is a base A, opposite, in the other strand of the double helix, there is a base T because they complement each other chemically. And where there is a base C, opposite there is a base G. Hence the bases in the DNA are organized into complementary pairs.

A DNA molecule in humans has about 3.2 billion base pairs and if stretched it would measure approximately 1.8 meters.

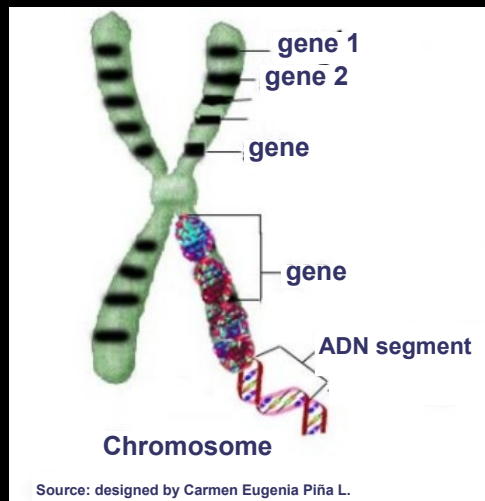
One important property of the DNA molecule is that it can replicate and every new cell in the organism inherits it. In organisms with sexual reproduction, the DNA of the parents is combined to generate the DNA of the child that will be different from that of the parents and will grant very similar, but somewhat differentiated qualities. However, at most only 0.5% of one person's DNA is different from any other.

DNA can also *mutate* in the course of the life of the organism as a result of various factors. For instance, the adaptation to the environment may cause heritable changes in the associated chemistry, leading to small alterations in the organism.

Although the functioning of DNA is not yet fully known, it is known that there are portions thereof which are called **genes** that are information to specify proteins. Proteins are the substances from which the cells are made and which fulfill all the necessary material functions of the organism.

## In the DNA are the genes

- **Genes** are parts of the DNA sequence that specify proteins.
- A gene is defined on average by 25,000 base pairs.
- It is estimated that humans have about 20,000 genes.
- Only 2% of our DNA contains genes.
- DNA parts that are not genes also play an important role in causing genes to express themselves or not (**epigenetics**).



The DNA system is very complex and still it is being investigated

DNA is not free in cells but is compacted and divided into parts called **chromosomes**. Bacteria have a single chromosome, usually circular because they have a much simpler DNA. In more complex organisms that have cells with nuclei, the chromosomes are presented in pairs. The human being has 23 pairs of chromosomes. Each chromosome contains a segment of DNA.

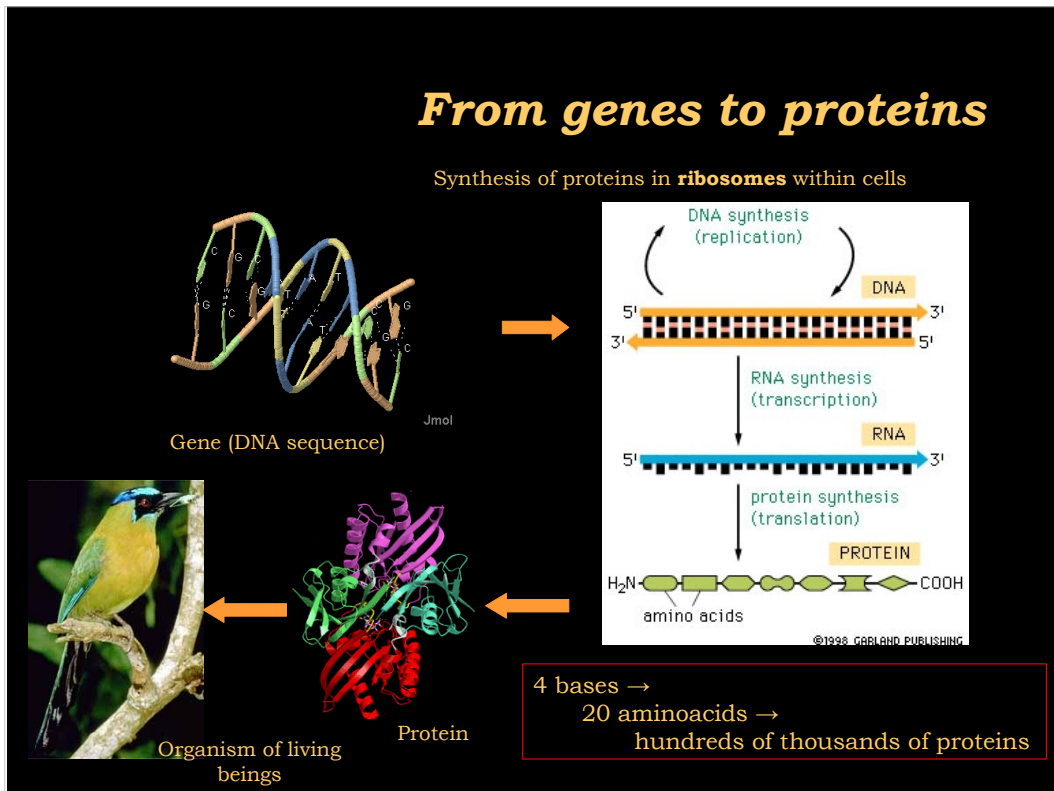
As mentioned previously, although the functioning of DNA is not yet fully known, it is known that **genes** fulfill the function of specific amino acid sequences. These amino acids combined together form the **proteins** that are the substances from which the cells are made and which fulfill all the material functions that the organism needs. The defective manufacture of a protein or the absence of it gives rise to diseases of genetic origin.

A gene is composed on average by 20,000 to 30,000 base pairs of DNA and has a complex structure. It is estimated that human DNA has about 20,000 genes. It has been possible to identify the function of many of them. However only 2% of our DNA contains genes encoding proteins.

Other parts of the DNA that are outside the genes serve as keys allowing a gene to be expressed or inhibited causing the cell to produce or not the corresponding proteins. Chemistry related to these keys may mutate as a result of adaptation to the environment or other factors by modifying the behavior of genes. These changes are also hereditary. The study of genes and their influence is the object of *genetics* while the study of these functional parts of DNA that are outside the genes is the object of *epigenetics*.

We see how DNA is really a memory in which is the information necessary to make the proteins that constitute a biological being. But how does this wonder of nature happen?





In the cells there are wonderful special corpuscles called **ribosomes**, which are responsible for making proteins from the information contained in DNA genes.

Ribosomes do not read DNA directly but do so through a complex process of *transcription* through intermediate molecules called messenger RNA (mRNA).

Ribosomes *read* the information encoded in the mRNA as a computer would. It takes base pairs in groups of three, called *codons*, and produces amino acids by chemical affinity. Although the possible combinations of groups of 3 bases having 4 possible values each:  $4^3 = 64$ , only 20 classes of amino acids are produced in all living beings because there are certain mechanisms to compensate for possible transcription errors. These 20 amino acids linked together form the hundreds of thousands of proteins that make up the organisms of all living things.

Therefore Molecular Biology shows us that Life has developed much earlier than humanity's computer science. DNA is a complex information system based on carbon chemistry rather than silicon physics as the memories of our current computers.

Biology teaches us the wonderful oneness in the organisms of living beings, as only **4 bases** serve to produce **20 amino acids**, which produce **hundreds of thousands of proteins** that make up organisms of all species.

## Summarizing

- Less than 100 chemical elements determine the variety of matter throughout the Universe.
- Only 3 classes of elementary particles determine all the elements.
- A sequence of 4 classes of nucleotides determines the whole variety of living beings.



Behind the diversity of forms there is a unique architecture, common laws ...

But ... is there anything else?

Summarizing what we have seen, we now know that substances on Earth and in the Universe are composed of only 92 natural chemical elements. Their diversity lies in the different combinations between them and how they are structured.

In turn the chemical elements are composed of atoms. Each chemical element consists of a class of atoms. But only 3 kinds of elementary particles determine the entire range of atoms. Their differences lie only in the number of these sub-atomic particles, not in a different nature.

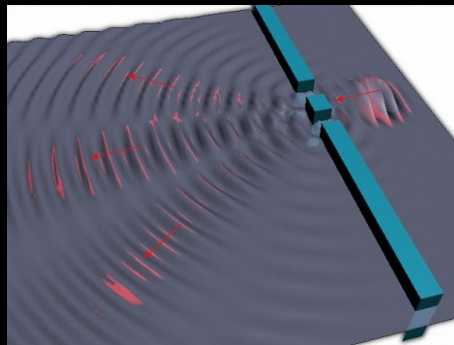
Biology shows us that in living organisms all the variety of forms we see are determined by a sequence of the same 4 bases or nucleotides in the DNA of each organism.

For all the above, we see that Science reveals to us that behind the immense diversity of forms that we find in the Universe, there is a unique architecture, based on common laws, with a uniqueness and ingenuity that surprises us.

But let us find out if there is anything more known about the unity of the whole Universe behind the innumerable changing forms.

## The wave-particle duality

- Quantum mechanics shows us that the "particles" of matter are particle and wave at the same time.
- This implies that **each particle is distributed throughout the space.**
- This is **non-locality** and has great philosophical implications.
- It match with descriptions made on the Vedas and other ancient writings about the nature of the Universe.



Double slit experiment



Symbol of Yin and Yang, duality in nature

As demonstrated by John Bell, nonlocality is a necessity in quantum mechanics

Quantum Physics shows us that the material world is not as we imagine it according to our perceptions from the senses. When we enter the scale of the atomic we see that the behavior of matter and energy is different than we perceive. Energy is exchanged in packets or **quanta** of energy and the particles have quantum states that correspond to their properties at a given moment.

The equations of quantum mechanics describe very well what happens and are able to predict very complex situations. The behavior of the particles according to the circumstances seems to be sometimes that of a particle of concentrated matter and sometimes of a wave. Mathematically, everything is fine, but what does all this mean? There are many interpretations of quantum mechanics, some very exotic proposing multiple possible universes and the like. The physicist Louis de Broglie proposed that waves always form part of the particle's reality and act as guides. David Bohm rediscovered this abandoned concept, built on it and created the De Broglie-Bohm Theory.

The interpretation of quantum mechanics by De Broglie and Bohm is of extraordinary value. It states that the particle is not something materially circumscribed to a point in space, but its material reality is a duality, a singularity located at a point, while its associated wave is distributed in space. This means that the particles influence each other due to the distributed nature of their associated waves. This explains the famous double-slit experiment whereby the wave associated with a single particle passes through the two slits and generates interference patterns.

This is known as **nonlocality**, the property that the particles are correlated with each other, which was denied by Einstein and many other physicists as a "*spooky action at a distance.*" But modern physicist John Bell has shown that nonlocality is a necessity in quantum mechanics for it to offer a complete description of physical reality.

Given this, we see the material world is very different from what we commonly know. The wave-particle duality and nonlocality coincide with the descriptions given in the ancient Indian scriptures, the Vedas and in the great philosophical systems of the ancient world. In Taoism there is the concept of the duality of things like Yin and Yang.

# Quantum entanglement

- Two particles can have their quantum states linked in such a way that they form a unique system even if they are physically in **distant positions**.

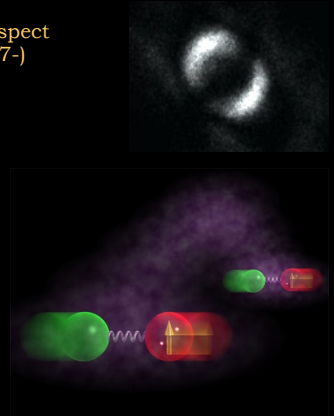
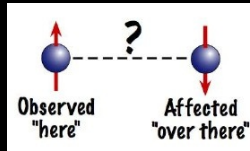
- If we affect one, we also affect the other. They are part of the same reality.

- Confirms the concept of non-locality of physical phenomena.

- Experimentally proved in 1982 by Alain Aspect.



Alan Aspect  
(1947-)



There is nothing else supreme beyond Me, O Dhananjaya. On Me, all that is here is strung like pearls upon a thread.

[Bhagavad Gita, 7]

Evidence of non-locality can be found in one of the most spectacular experiments called quantum entanglement. The equations of quantum mechanics predict that two particles may have their quantum states bound together to form a unique system where the change of a quantum state in one particle is immediately reflected in the other particle.

In 1982, the physicist Alain Aspect demonstrated in the laboratory this spectacular property producing particles, initially using photons, in a special way so that they were entangled. Subsequent experiments confirmed and extended the study of this phenomenon. The particles can be separated physically by several meters, which is a huge distance in the atomic world, but still, what is done to one affects the other. It is necessary to emphasize that it is not when modifying the state of a particle that certain information or perturbation travels at the speed of light towards the other particle replicating the change. On the contrary, the change is instantaneous.

This means that entangled particles are one reality even though they look like two separate particles in space. The philosophical implication of this fact is enormous. It shows us, through physics, that the separateness and isolation we perceive in the world is not real. It is only a construction of our mind, it is the way we imagine the world, and it is just an illusion.

More recent studies have found the quantum entanglement present in complex systems of many particles. See the article:

Experimentally testing nonlocality in many-body systems:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/06/140620120444.htm>


Quantum entanglement is a powerful demonstration of the illusion of separateness.




## The Unity

- The Universe is One, Life is One.
- There are 3 different models of what the Universe is:
- **Theism, Creationism.** The Universe was created by a supernatural God.
- **Pantheism.** The Universe is the sum of all its parts.
- **Emanations.** The Universe is a unit, forms and beings emanate from it although they remain united.


Creation



Pantheism



Emanations



There are three general ideas about the Universe: Theism or Creationism, Pantheism and the philosophy of Emanations.

**Theism** holds that the universe has been created by a supernatural entity that is above us, a God. This God acts on the Universe, which is his creation as a painting is the creation of a painter. The Universe is not God but the work of God.

**Pantheism**, or more properly Panentheism, holds that the Universe is an entity whose life is distributed in all its parts, in all its beings. For pantheism, "God is everything," meaning that God is immanent in all of Nature.

Theosophy holds the third idea, the philosophy of **Emanations**. Briefly stated, it is that the Universe is a *transcendent* reality, which manifests periodically as an *immanent* reality from which emanate all beings and forms of the Universe. This idea differs from the theistic concept of a God, more generally accepted, as Blavatsky puts it:

**ENQUIRER.** Do you believe in God?

**THEOSOPHIST.** That depends what you mean by the term.

**ENQUIRER.** I mean the God of the Christians, the Father of Jesus, and the Creator: the Biblical God of Moses, in short.

**THEOSOPHIST.** In such a God we do not believe. We reject the idea of a personal, or an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God, who is but the gigantic shadow of man, and not of man at his best, either. The God of theology, we say -and prove it- is a bundle of contradictions and a logical impossibility. Therefore, we will have nothing to do with him.

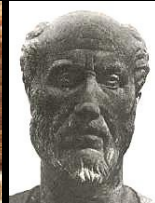
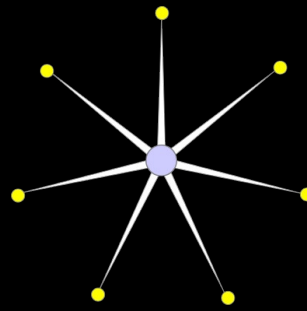
Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*

## Emanations

▪ Fundamental idea of the ageless wisdom, which is the basis of certain philosophies:

- Egypt, Osiris myth
- India: The Vedas
- Plato, Orpheus
- Neoplatonics

▪ It maintains that the matter and beings of the manifested Universe are **emanations**, not creations, of the unmanifest Principle One.



The idea of Emanations is not new, but is the basis of many ancient philosophies and religions. It is the fundamental basis of esoteric philosophy.

Plotinus, the great philosopher of the Theosophical Eclectic School at Alexandria, put it this way:

1. All things that exist do so by virtue of "unity" -- in so far as they exist in any ultimate sense and in so far as they may be said to be real. For what would anything be if it were not "one"? Without the unity of which we speak things do not exist. There can be no army which is not a unit, nor a chorus, nor herd, unless each is "one." Neither is there a household or ship without unity; for the house is a unit and the ship is a unit, and if one took away the unity the household would no longer be a household nor the ship a ship.

.....

2. Is it not true that in each particular being its essence and its unity are one and the same, as regards the whole of being and essence, the essence of the whole and the unity of the whole are also identical? Thus, it is enough to discover the being to discover its unity. Let us see: if, for example, the essence is the Intelligence, the One will also be the Intelligence, as the first being and the first unit that is, by which all other things participate in the being and, according to this, in the unit. What could be said of the One but that it is the Being itself? Because it is really identical to being.

Plotinus, *The One, Enneads*

## The sparks of fire

- The beings *emanate* of the One Life but *without leaving it*.

- The “fragments”, the **Monads** or *sparks* of the flame, are *connected* together.

- Each fragment is unique but is a reflection of the nature of the Whole.

- Hermetic axiom: “**As above is below**”

- How is it possible?

Fire → One Life  
Sparks → Monads



It is a paradox for reasoning

In the philosophy of the Emanations it is very important to understand that beings and matter do not stop being in the Unity despite being emanated. They do not cease to belong to the nature of the One Principle. This contradicts the common idea that something that emanates from something else comes out of it.

For this reason, the simile of the sparks that come out of the flame has been used to describe the fragments of life. The Monads that emanate from the One, but are *undetached* sparks that *never leave the Unit*, **only differ** and continue being part of Life One. In other words, the Oneness does not fragment with the emanation of the Universe, it only produces a new state.

... the Master is made to ask the pupil:

“Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?”

“I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it.”

“Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?”

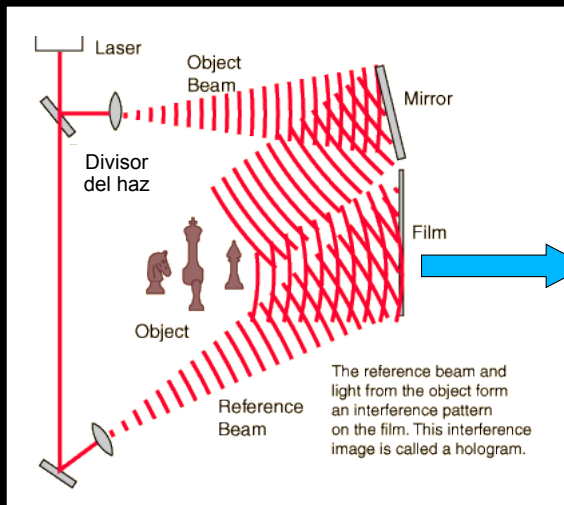
“It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, ‘Thy Soul and My Soul.’”

H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1

Every spark is a reflection of the whole. Not only does it share its nature but it is identical in essence since the whole is latent in it. The well-known axiom “As above, so below” expresses this identity between the parts and the whole.

Let us seek in the field of science and technology something that will help us to understand this paradox.

## What is a hologram?



Transmission hologram (Georgia State University)

- Non-lenses and coherent (laser) photography of an object that captures both the intensity and phase of reflected waves.
- It records 3D information.
- Transmission hologram.



In the film the image of the object is not seen with the naked eye but interference patterns

A **hologram** is a photograph of an object taken without a lens but with a special technique.

We all know the *reflection holograms*, like the bird that we find on some credit cards, that produces an image that seems to be three dimensional, because it changes as we move our point of view.

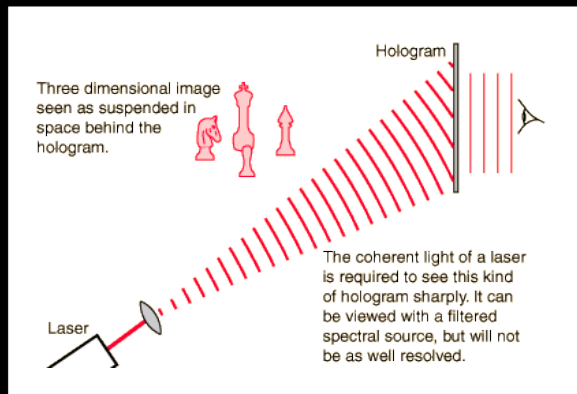
But there are other types of holograms that have a property that interests us. The first holograms that were made were *transmission holograms*. To achieve them, the light of a laser is divided into two beams that follow two different paths. In one of them, the light falls on the photographic film after being reflected in a mirror. In the other, the light of the laser is made to affect the object to be photographed and its reflections are those that hit upon the film. But this light reflected by the object meets the reference beam coming directly from the laser and then interferences occur. What the film records are interference patterns. Looking at the film obtained with the naked eye one does not see the object photographed. Only rings and interference bands are seen as a set of spots.

What has happened is that due to the interference between the beam that hits the object and the reference beam, three-dimensional information about the object is printed on the film. Not only does the intensity of light affect the film at each point of the object as in a conventional photograph, but the interference patterns also contain information on the phase of the reflected wave and therefore of the distance from the point from which it proceeds until it reaches the film.

So what do we do with this film? How do we get an image of the object photographed by this means?



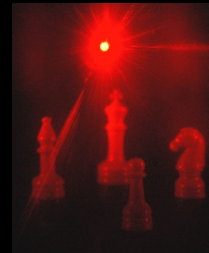
## Playing the hologram



Playing the hologram (Georgia State University)



The observed image depends on the position of the observer



- A 3D image of the photographed object is projected through the laser light.

- If we move we see the image from another angle....

To reproduce the image contained in a transmission hologram, it is necessary to have a laser similar to the one with which the hologram was obtained, and to pass the light of it through the film. A conveniently located observer will see the image of the object that seems to be floating in space in front of him, in three dimensions.

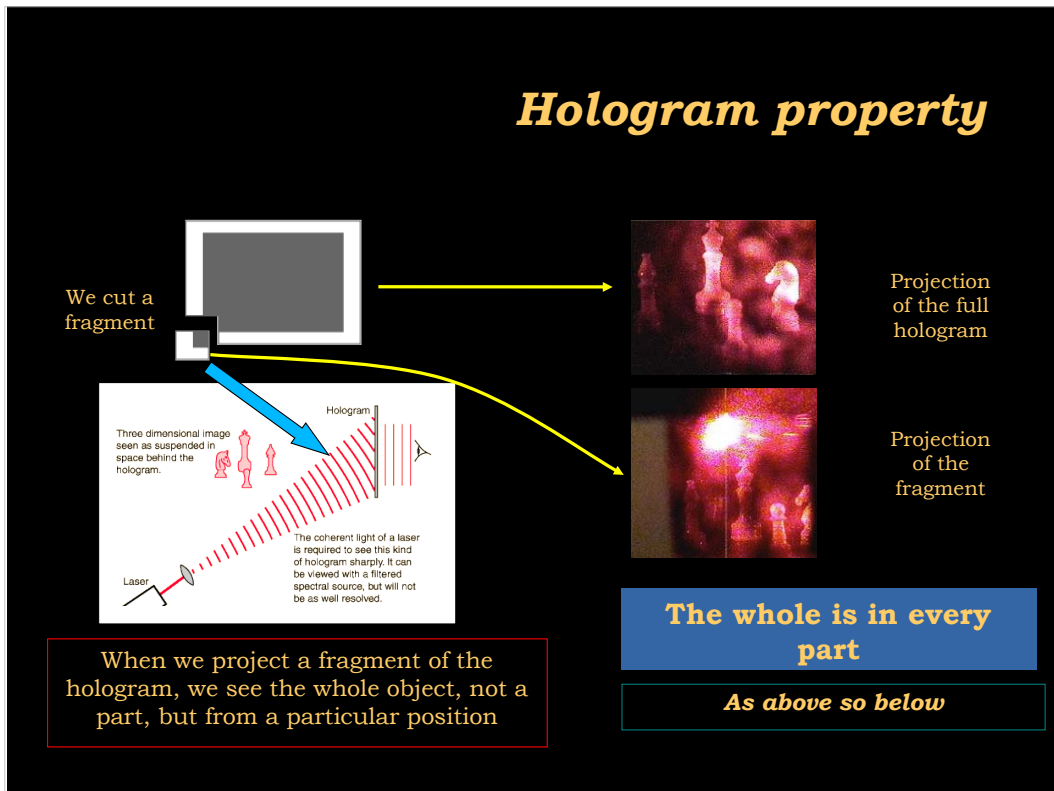
As the viewer moves, he will see the image slightly different, as if he were observing the solid object from different angles. This fact gives the observer the impression that he is seeing an object in 3D, and because binocular vision, one has the impression that the object is actually in front of the observer.

For a more detailed description of the holography you can see:

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hologram>

There is a very good explanation on the Georgia State University website:

<http://hyperphysics.phy-astr.gsu.edu/hbase/optmod/holog.html#c4>



The reason why we turn to holograms here is not the beauty of their 3D images but a very interesting property that transmission holograms have.

If we cut a fragment of the film of a transmission hologram and project it, we have the surprising fact that we do not see a fragment of the original object, as we would have if it were a conventional slide instead of a hologram, but we see the full object. It does not matter what fragment we take to project or the size of it, we always see *the whole object*, although from a particular position depending on the fragment chosen.

Therefore, this property of the hologram tells us that the image of the object is in each fragment. This is an analogy of the Principle of Unity that we are trying to explain as "**the whole is in each part**", or as expressed in the Hermetic philosophy with the aphorism: "**as above so below**". In this case *above* is a metaphor representing the Macrocosm, the Universe, and *below* represents the Microcosm, the domain of the individual and the subjective. There is no spatial separation because the universal is in each fragment, in each part and of course in ourselves.

## Holographic model of the Universe

- Model of the Universe created by some scientists, using the hologram metaphor to describe the oneness of the Universe.

- Created by David Bohm and Karl Pribram in the 50's.

- The *explicate order* is an expression of the *implicate order*, like one of the possible projections of the hologram.

- Controversial to most scientists but used and supported by a growing number of thinkers.

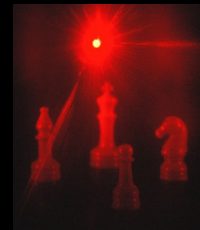
Implicate Order



David Bohm  
(1917-1992)



Explicate Order



Karl Pribram  
(1919-2015)

Fragmentation is an illusion of the mind:  
the true state of things is an indivisible whole.

*David Bohm*

We are part of Nature as a whole, whose order we follow.

Spinoza, *Ethics*, 1673

Reality can only be found in the one source, because of the interconnection of all things with others.

Leibniz, 1670

The feature of the holograms where the whole is in each part made sense to scientists and thinkers in general who saw with this model a clearer glimpse of the Reality in which everything is in each part. Several well-known figures, mainly the physicist *David Bohm* and the neurologist *Karl Pribram* created the name "**the holographic paradigm**" to talk about to this holistic model of the Universe.

The notion that all these fragments is separately existent is evidently an illusion, and this illusion cannot do other than lead to endless conflict and confusion. Indeed, the attempt to live according to the notion that the fragments are really separate is, in essence, what has led to the growing series of extremely urgent crises that is confronting us today. Thus, as is now well known, this way of life has brought about pollution, destruction of the balance of nature, over-population, world-wide economic and political disorder and the creation of an overall environment that is neither physically nor mentally healthy for most of the people who live in it. Individually there has developed a widespread feeling of helplessness and despair, in the face of what seems to be an overwhelming mass of disparate social forces, going beyond the control and even the comprehension of the human beings who are caught up in it.

David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980

To investigate more about the holographic universe:

- The Holographic Paradigm [Wilber, Bohm, Pribram, Keen, Ferguson, Capra et all]

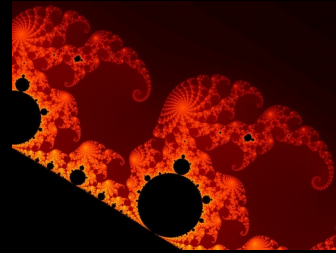
- The Holographic Universe [Michael Talbot]

<http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Physics-David-Bohm-Holographic-Universe.htm>

<http://www.slideshare.net/curentur/naturaleza-holografica-presentation/>

## Fractals: the whole is in everything

- Figures with multiple or infinite similarity (self-similar forms).
- Each part is similar to the whole on different scales.
- Fractals describe very well the forms of nature.



Mandelbrot sets



Fern



Romanesco broccoli

Koch triangles

The idea that the all is in everything also appears in other fields of thought.

In Mathematics, **fractals** are very well-known. They are geometric figures that have the characteristic of having infinite or at least multiple self-similarity. That is to say, their structure is repeated in different scales and therefore each part is similar to the whole.

The discovery of the fractals is mainly due to the mathematician *Benoît Mandelbrot* (1925-2010). Fractals have several fields of application, but perhaps the most interesting and suggestive is that they are widely found in nature. A fern or romanesco broccoli are clear examples of fractals. By varying very few parameters in equations, we get very different forms.

A tree is a fractal in itself as mathematical works on botany have shown [1]. The shape of the branches reflect that of the tree as a whole. But what is more remarkable is that in a forest that grows naturally, the distribution of trees also reflects the tree's own architecture and follows a fractal model [2].

Other interesting fields to explore in this sense are the *golden ratio* and the *Fibonacci series*, in which properties of self-similarity are also observed as expressed by the aforementioned Hermetic aphorism: "As above, so below."

Therefore, the idea that the whole is in each part arises forcefully the more we look at the world with attention and with an open mind. The underlying Unity of Life, as a whole, which is expressed in its manifold manifestations, is precisely the fundamental principle of Theosophy.

[1] Space occupation by tree crowns obeys fractals laws: evidence from 3D digitized plants, C. Godin, O. Puech, F. Boudon, H. Sinoquet

[http://amap.cirad.fr/workshop/FSPM04/proceedings/4thFSPM04\\_S2Godin.pdf](http://amap.cirad.fr/workshop/FSPM04/proceedings/4thFSPM04_S2Godin.pdf)

[2] The fractal forest: fractal geometry and applications in forest science

Lorimer, Nancy D.; Haight, Robert G.; Leary, Rolfe A.

<http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/viewpub.asp?key=234>



## Gaia theory

- All living beings and the inorganic environment of the Earth form a self-regulating and self-evolving organism called **Gaia**.
- It was formulated as hypothesis by the chemist-biologist James Lovelock in 1974.
- Is Gaia a *living being*?
- Gaia maintains the conditions of life on the planet.

What is a living being?

Another clue that Life is One is found in the interesting **Gaia** theory developed by environmental chemist *James Lovelock* (1919-), first published in his book "*Gaia: A New Vision of Life on Earth*." Others have also contributed to the theory, notably *Dr. Lynn Margulis*.

According to the Gaia theory, the Earth behaves like a superorganism in a homeostatic balance that is formed by all living beings and environmental matter such as rocks, atmosphere, water, salt, etc. When Lovelock first outlined his brilliant theory of Gaia in the 1970s, he received much criticism from the scientific community, but many people caught on to the idea and later Gaia, which was initially a hypothesis, moved to the level of a theory which is actively investigated.

Lovelock claims that Gaia self-regulates to try to maintain life on the planet. Many essential elements for organic life such as the composition of the atmosphere or the salinity of the seas are maintained in dynamic equilibrium, making the planet behave as a unit.

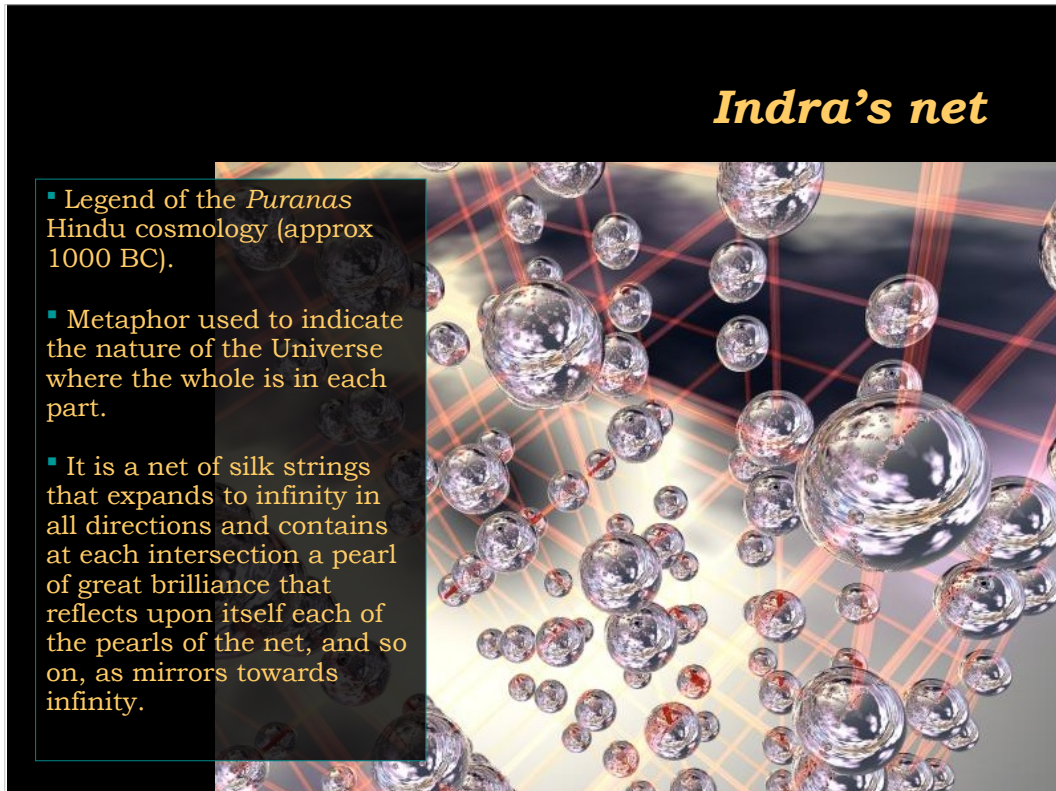
Self-regulation of chemical composition and climate is a process that arises from the intimate evolutionary relationship of rocks, air and sea (and living things). This intertwined self-regulation, though seldom optimal (thinking of the cold, warm, moist, and dry areas of the planet) nevertheless maintains the Earth as a place fit for life.

James Lovelock

To investigate further:

Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth [James Lovelock]

The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth Is Fighting Back – and How We Can Still Save Humanity [James Lovelock]



- Legend of the *Puranas* Hindu cosmology (approx 1000 BC).
- Metaphor used to indicate the nature of the Universe where the whole is in each part.
- It is a net of silk strings that expands to infinity in all directions and contains at each intersection a pearl of great brilliance that reflects upon itself each of the pearls of the net, and so on, as mirrors towards infinity.

The Hindu cosmogony contained in the Vedas talk about the god Indra whose palace on Mount Meru, the axis of the world according to the cosmogony, hangs a very curious net.

According to mythology it is a net that has in each node a pearl or jewel that reflects all the others.

"Imagine a multidimensional cobweb in the early morning, covered with drops of dew. And every drop of dew contains the reflection of all other drops of dew. And, in each reflected drop, the reflection of all other drops of dew in that reflection. And so on to infinity. That is the Buddhist conception of the universe in an image."

Alan Watts

This myth has been used by Mahayana Buddhism and other schools as a metaphor to symbolize two fundamental things:

The interconnection of each part in the Universe. All the jewels are interconnected with each other as all beings and matter in the Universe. Current studies on social networks show us that relationships between humans are very influential. In nature we find many things that work according to the network model.

The whole is contained in each part. Each jewel reflects in itself to the others and therefore the whole network is reflected in each jewel. The whole is in everything as in a fractal.

The Indra net is a metaphor that clearly shows us that the paradigm of the holographic universe is nothing new but it is present in the oldest esoteric traditions, although its meaning has been misunderstood by the majority. This is not surprising because for the mind that has drawn models from everyday sensory experience, it is very difficult to accept how two distant things can be so related and how any of them can contain a reflection of the whole Universe.

To know more:

- Wikipedia: "Indra's net"

## Synchronicity

- Concept defined by Carl G. Jung and Wolfgang Pauli although it has been present in many cultures and philosophies.
- It is the simultaneous occurrence of events that appear **significantly related** but are not causally related.
- Our consciousness is also reflected in the whole as the waves in the water. A modification immediately affects the whole.
- Synchronicity is a consequence of the Unity of Life.



Carl G. Jung  
(1875 - 1961)



Wolfgang Pauli  
(1900 - 1958)



**Synchronicity** is a concept defined by the psychologist *Carl Jung* and the physicist *Wolfgang Pauli* to explain the occurrence of events that are not related to each other by cause and effect. That is to say that one is not the cause of the other, but that they have a relevant meaning for the subject who observes or experiences them. It is more than just a coincidence.

Jung himself relates that a patient of his, who was resistant to change, told him that she had dreamt that she received a golden beetle as a gift. At the same time Jung heard a noise in the window and went to see what it produced. He saw that it was a golden insect, resembling a beetle. He caught it and showed it to the patient, who in the face of such a coincidence began to open her mind and see the world in another way. In Egyptian mythology the god Khepri is represented by a beetle and is a symbol of transformation of the individual.

What makes synchronicity possible? We must consider the unity of the universe not only from the point of view of matter, but also of consciousness. As in Indra's Net and the particles entanglement, a change in our consciousness immediately affects all other consciousness and may predispose us to observe facts that seem relevant to us as signs, premonitions or indications. All consciousness is related. The phenomenon is observed more when there is a certain psychological need for change or to make some decision and causing the conjunction of external events that would be very unlikely. "*Desire attracts opportunity*" says an adage and this also explains what we call "*good luck*".

To investigate further on the subject:

- Synchronicity [Deepak Chopra]
- Wikipedia: "Synchronicity"

## 1<sup>st</sup> Proposition

*I. An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable."*



Unity of Life

The Essence of the existence  
Causeless Cause

In the First Proposition of the Proem of the Secret Doctrine, HPB speaks of the Universal Principle of the Cosmos, expressing it as infinite, eternal, unlimited, and immutable. You can not assign attributes because this would imply limiting it. The mind cannot grasp its essence because it is beyond the capabilities of comparison and analysis.

This Universal Principle is referred to as the **Absolute**, the Absolute Be-ness, the Cause without cause, or **Parabrahman** (which is beyond Brahman) in the literature of the Vedas.

It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is "be-ness" rather than Being (in Sanskrit, Sat), and is beyond all thought or speculation.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, Proem*

... [Theosophy teaches] that the root of all nature, objective and subjective, and everything else in the universe, visible and invisible, is, was, and ever will be one absolute essence, from which all starts, and into which everything returns. This is Aryan philosophy, fully represented only by the Vedantins, and the Buddhist system.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*

Therefore the Unity of Life is a consequence of the Universe being a manifestation of the Absolute. It is only real to us when we experience it in our own consciousness, but we have seen many indications that can inspire us.

All Creation exists in you and everything that exists in you also exists in Creation. There is no division between you and an object that is very close to you, just as there is no distance between you and the distant objects. All things, the smallest and the greatest, the lowest and the highest, are in you and are of the same condition. A single atom contains all the elements of the Earth. A single movement of the spirit contains all the laws of life. In a single drop of water lies the secret of the immense ocean. A single manifestation of you contains all the manifestations of life.

Kahlil Gibran

In the next chapter we will see how diversity originates from Sat.



## *The illusion of separativity*

- We perceive the world as a set of things and beings separated from each other.
- It is actually a model developed by our mind interpreting the world experienced by the senses.
- But we have seen how Science gives us indications of the inter-relation of everything in the Universe.
- This illusion is known as **Maya** in the philosophies of India.
- The Whole is in the essence of each one of us and in the other beings.



We perceive the world around us as a set of objects and beings separated from each other. We realize that they are related, that they interact with each other and with us, that they are transformed and that they are in constant motion.

This forms the basis of our image of the world. It is a model developed by our mind based on sensations from the senses in an attempt to interpret the world we perceive. It is very important to realize that we do not perceive Reality as it is, but that in a continuous act of mental creation, we elaborate a model of the world, in our own mind. And of course, in this model of the world we include ourselves.

And how is this model? Fragmented, with many gaps, in which things and beings are separated, distanced from each other and only interact if we have any relationship through contact or exchange of some kind of energy. But we have seen how Quantum Physics presents us with entangled particles which are part of the same reality, even if they are physically separated in space. We have also seen that each particle is not reduced to a point, but has a dual reality, a singularity in a point and a wave that extends through space. We have also found other ideas that tell us about a world where everything is related, forming part of many intertwined systems, such as the system of our Earth, Gaia, and even in the psychological field with Synchronicity. In summary, Science gives us many hints of the holographic Universe, where there is a deeper Reality that we do not perceive with the senses, but which is the sustenance of everything we see and feel.

So our mental image of the world is an illusion. It has real aspects, it is not that the world does not exist, but that what our mind imagines is false, because there is a reality that we do not normally perceive directly and that escapes us. The philosophies of India call this illusion **Maya** because the world is not what we think. Its deeper reality escapes our mind.

An important consequence of this holographic view of the world, where the whole is in everything, is that in our own essence and in every fragment of our being lies the entire Universe in some way. Just as in every cell of our body is the DNA with the information of the whole body, as in Indra's net. The essence of each one of us is a reflection of the One. And this means that we have enormous potential in our interior and that other people, animals, plants or stones are equally sacred because each of them is a unique expression of the One Life.



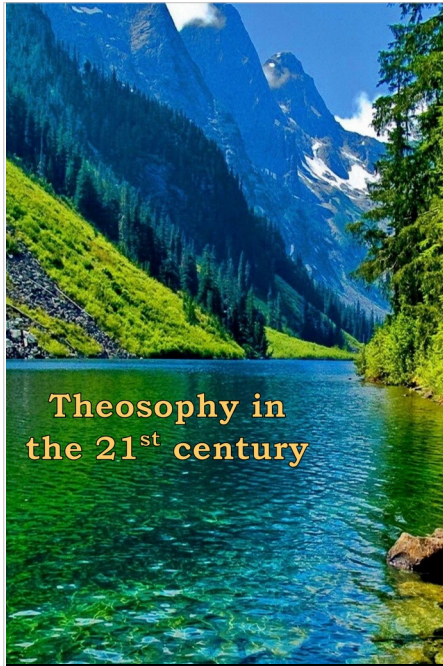
## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Cite some passages from someone who describes an experience of being aware of the Unity of Life.
- 2- What human qualities express more awareness of the Unity of Life?
- 3- If we act according to the principle of Unity of Life, how should this influence our attitude toward people and other life forms, like animals and plants?
- 4- Are we aware of the Unity of Life? If not, could we be?
- 5- What prevents us from being aware of the Unity of Life?
- 6- If we are part of the One Life, does it make sense to seek the Truth? Is it not already in us?





Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## ***4 The Manifestation***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## From Unity to Diversity

- We have seen:
  - Diversity
  - The Unity of Life
- But how does diversity arise in the heart of Unity?
- **Manifestation** is the process by which the universe passes from the integrated (latent) state to the differentiated state (manifested).

*Pralaya* = Latent state



*Manvantara* = Manifested state

We have seen how modern science gives us more and more clues to the underlying unity in the universe, to the point where many scientists support the idea that the universe is like a hologram where everything is in every part. This is exactly the fundamental principle of Theosophy that implies Reality is a Unity. Not simply as a set of beings and materials, but a **living reality**, a living structure or network, in which each fragment contains in itself a image of the whole.

The Universe is not static, but is dynamic, and according to the ageless wisdom has gone from a latent, potential or **unmanifested** state to an active or **manifested** one. This process is called the **Manifestation**. These two states of the Universe have been called in the philosophies of India as *Pralaya*, the latent state of unmanifestation, and *Manvantara*, the active state or manifestation.

Those who know that the day of Brahma lasts a thousand ages and the night another thousand, they know day and night. When the day dawns, everything manifested arises from the unmanifested and when night comes everything is absorbed in the unmanifested. This crowd of beings repeatedly produced, dissolves at night, and by divine ordination arises again, O Partha! At the dawning of the day.

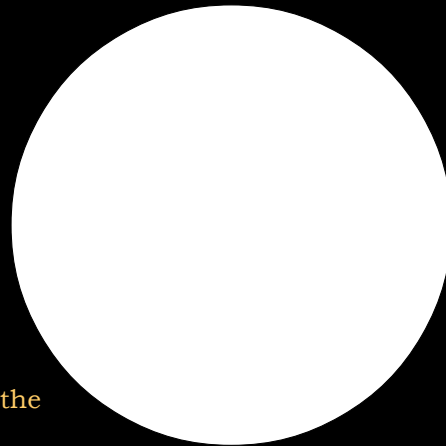
*Bhagavad Gita, 8.*

Later we will see that the process of manifestation is followed by an opposite process of absorption and that this process is not unique but is cyclical or periodic. But how does the Universe go from the latent state to the active state? Helena Blavatsky explains it in *The Secret Doctrine* when she comments on the contents of a strange book, called **The Book of Dzyan**, whose pages contain symbols that represent Cosmogony, the birth of a new Universe.

# Book of Dzyan - 1

## Pralaya

1. The ABSOLUTE; the Parabrahm of the Vedantins or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.



The Kosmos in the Eternity before Manifestation

HPB says:

An Archaic Manuscript —a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process — is before the writer's eye. On the first page is an immaculate white disk within a dull black ground.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, Proem*

This white circle on a black background represents the latent state of the Universe, the state of Pralaya, from which all speculation sheds little light because it transcends the logic of reasoning. In the Rig Veda this state is very poetically suggested:

Then even nothingness was not, nor existence,  
There was no air then, nor the heavens beyond it.  
What covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping?  
Was there then cosmic water, in depths unfathomed?

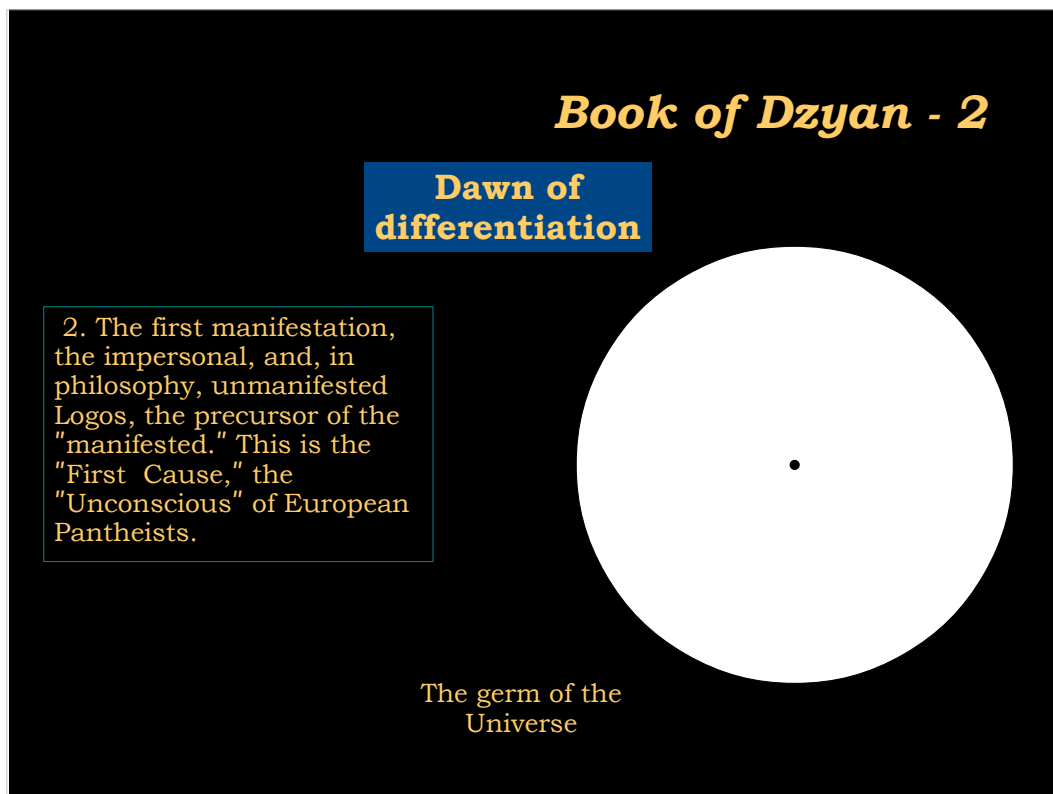
Then there was neither death nor immortality  
nor was there then the torch of night and day.  
The One breathed windlessly and self-sustaining.  
There was that One then, and there was no other.

At first there was only darkness wrapped in darkness.  
All this was only unillumined cosmic water.  
That One which came to be, enclosed in nothing,  
arose at last, born of the power of heat.

*Rig Veda, Nasadiya Sukta*

The latent state is not nothingness or annihilation, but the absence of manifestation.





HPB continues commenting on the Book of Dzyan:

On the following page, the same disk, but with a central point. The first, the student knows to represent Kosmos in Eternity, before the re-awakening of still slumbering Energy, the emanation of the Word in later systems. The point in the hitherto immaculate Disk, Space and Eternity in Pralaya, denotes the dawn of differentiation. It is the Point in the Mundane Egg (see Part II., "The Mundane Egg"), the germ within the latter which will become the Universe, the ALL, the boundless, periodical Kosmos, this germ being latent and active, periodically and by turns. The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns. Its circumference — a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind — indicates the abstract, ever incognisable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one. Only the face of the Disk being white and the ground all around black, shows clearly that its plane is the only knowledge, dim and hazy though it still is, that is attainable by man. It is on this plane that the Manvantaric manifestations begin; for it is in this SOUL that slumbers, during the Pralaya, the Divine Thought, wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony. ...

... the first differentiation in the periodical manifestations of the ever-eternal nature, sexless and infinite "Aditi in THAT" (Rig Veda), the point in the disc, or potential Space within abstract Space.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, Proem

According to HPB, the *Kosmos* is the primordial Universe, the Unknown Cause, *Aditi* is the root of matter, also called *Mulaprakriti*, the Mother Goddess, while the *Logos* is the manifested Reality, the effect of the *Unknown Cause*.

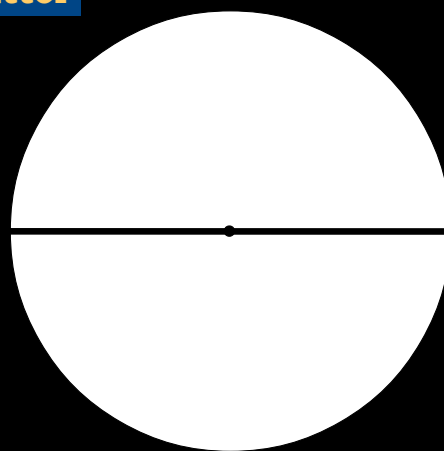
## Book of Dzyan - 3

### The duality Spirit-Matter

3. Spirit-matter, LIFE; the "Spirit of the Universe," the Purusha and Prakriti, or the second Logos.

*Purusha*: root of Spirit  
*Prakriti*: root of Matter

Yin and Yang,  
symbol of  
duality



Then there is the first great differentiation through which the fundamental **duality** of Spirit - Matter appears, or rather the root of the Spirit and the root of Matter.

In its third stage the point is transformed into a diameter. It now symbolizes a divine immaculate Mother-Nature within the all-embracing absolute Infinitude.

.....

Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, Proem*

In the philosophies of India, *Purusha* is the universal principle of the Spirit, symbolically masculine, whereas *Prakriti* represents the principle of matter, feminine, Nature itself. This is the basic duality that is present throughout the Universe as consciousness-matter, subject-object, and implies that there is no matter without consciousness or consciousness without matter. It is not an irreducible duality but the separation at opposite or complementary poles of what was previously neutral.

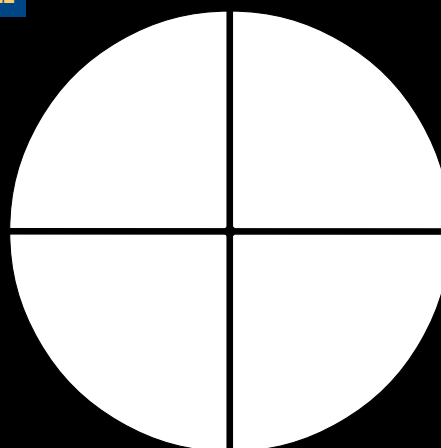
Therefore according to the esoteric philosophy Spirit and Matter are not two independent realities but they are inseparable parts of the same Reality. They are like the obverse and the reverse of a coin.

This approach can help us to better understand the reality and relationship of our consciousness with our own body and with the universe of which we are part, both in consciousness and in matter. Matter is not harmful or bad as some religions and philosophies maintain, but it is the necessary complement of the spirit. Matter is as sacred as the spirit. All active life is produced by the interaction between the two.

## Book of Dzyan - 4

### Cosmic Ideation

4. Cosmic Ideation, MAHAT or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called MAHA-BUDDHI.



*Mahat: The Universal Intelligence*

This is what Blavatsky explains to us with the following symbol of the Book of Dzyan.

Now a vertical line is added which represents the interaction between the two poles, between Purusha and Prakriti, which produces the appearance of the Third Aspect of Manifest Reality, or Third Logos (Reason) which is **Mahat**, Universal Intelligence. Although we speak of intelligence, we should not think that it is a cognitive principle like the human mind, but greater. It is something more universal, the intelligence that is embedded throughout the Universe. Later on we will dedicate a chapter of the course to this subject.

According to the tradition, Mahat produces the *Cosmic Ideation*, the design or plan of the Cosmos. But Mahat is not a god or an external being, but a principle that is present in everything, being the interaction of Consciousness and Matter. Design is produced from within each part, each part is involved in design and planning dynamically.

*The Secret Doctrine* tells us that a principle called **Fohat** is responsible for translating the Cosmic Idea into the Consciousness-Matter duality as Laws of Nature (*Logos*), thus beginning the production of Manifestation in infinite forms of life and matter.

The "Manifested Universe," therefore, is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as "manifestation." But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested Universe, there is "that" which links spirit to matter, subject to object.


This something, at present unknown to Western speculation, is called by the occultists Fohat. It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation, the "Thought Divine" transmitted and made manifest through the Dhyana Chohans, the Architects of the visible World. Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualised and attains to self - or reflective - consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life.


Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, Proem


We have thus arrived at the primordial trinity formed by Spirit, Matter and Intelligence as an interaction between the two.

## 1, 2 ... 3: The Trinity

### Example: Electricity

**1** Neutral:  
integrated  
state 

**2** Duality: (+), (-)  
Charges  
separation 

**3** Trinity: (+), (-) and  
the electric field 

Spirit and matter (Purusha and Prakriti)  
are the two differentiated aspects of  
Unity in Manifestation.

When differentiating, the third element  
appears: the interaction between the  
two.



We can get an idea of the First Differentiation, when there is the appearance of opposites and the consequent Trinity, thought about as electricity.

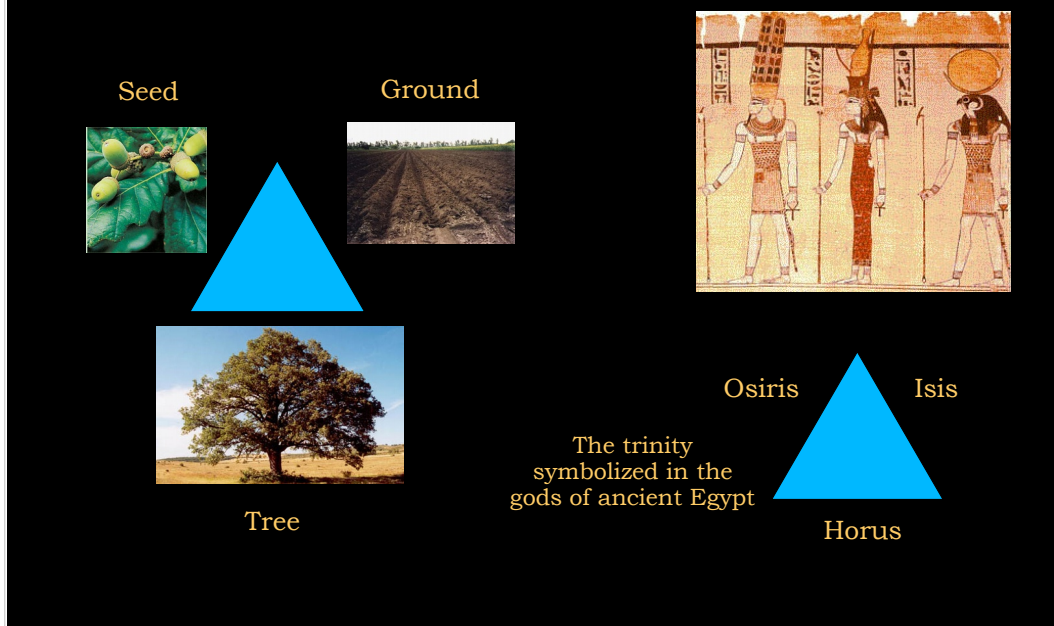
When a body is electrically neutral, it is in a state of electrostatic equilibrium. This state is like that of the integrated One prior to differentiation. Its electricity is *latent*.

If by means of some energy the electric charges are separated in its interior, as it happens in a generator or in a battery, we have the appearance of the two electric poles with positive and negative charges respectively. Thus we have the positive-negative duality in electricity which corresponds to the primordial duality of Purusha and Parakriti in the Manifestation of the Cosmos. Spirit and Matter are "divine" or universal just as the positive and negative charges are both electricity. The analogy is not complete because in the case of electricity, an external energy is required to separate the charges, while in the Manifestation there is nothing outside it but the germ that appeared from the bosom of the Absolute.

When the electric charges separate, an interaction between them takes place immediately: in the form of the electric field if the poles of the battery are separated, or of an electric current if we join them by means of a circuit. In the same way Universal Intelligence appears as the interaction between Purusha and Prakriti.

Thus we have a triad: positive, negative and interaction. This corresponds to the fundamental Trinity of the manifested universe.

## The Universe is triune



The Trinity is not just a metaphysical question. If we examine the world in which we live, we will see that in everything there seems to be three clearly defined elements. For example let's take the case of the birth of a tree. We have a seed that needs to be in the soil to provide the necessary nutrients. As a result of the interaction between seed and soil, a new tree emerges, the third element.

Ancient religions and myths recognized the value of the Trinity to explain the three basic principles in the manifested world. It was common for the three elements of the Trinity to be referred to as gods or personifications: the father or male element, the mother or female element, and the son that is the result of the interaction between the two.

In Egypt, the sacred trinity consisted of three gods: *Osiris*, the male principle, *Isis*, the feminine principle and *Horus*, the result of the union of the two. Isis and Osiris represent the fundamental duality of the manifested world, whereas Horus is the result of the interaction between the two principles. In a later topic we will study in more detail the myth of Osiris, his death and resurrection.

The Vedas, the sacred scriptures of India, speak to us of the three aspects of Reality through the sacred trinity of *Brahma*, the creative or generating principle of the Universe, *Vishnu*, the conservative or maintainer principle, and *Shiva*, the destructive or renovator

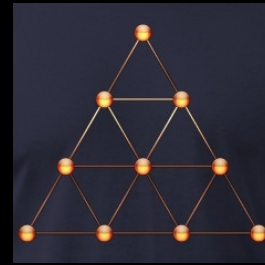


## The Manifestation according to Pythagoras

- For Pythagoras the Manifestation is symbolized in the sequence of the first natural numbers.
- 1 Unity
- 2 The Dyad: the dualism of all things
- 3 The Triad: the 3 levels of the world
- 4 The Quaternary: The 4 elements, the multiplicity of the material universe
- $10 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 \rightarrow 1 + 0 = 1$   
The Decade, the Whole, the perfect number



Pythagoras  
(-570 a -495)



Pythagorean  
**Tetraktys**

The Tetraktys in the emblems  
of Universities of  
Oviedo and Alcalá (Spain)



Pythagoras described the process of Manifestation by the sequence of the first natural numbers, starting from the manifested One, following with the Dyad or fundamental duality of Purusha and Prakriti, then giving way to the underlying Trinity.

The fundamental Triad is expressed according to Pythagoras through four other principles or aspects that the ancients associated with the 4 elements of Nature. Therefore one should add another state of manifestation that develops through a Quaternary, corresponding with the four natural elements of the ancient philosophers.

The sum of this sequence of 1, 2, 3 and 4 is equal to 10, which was considered the perfect number, which is why this sequence is called the *Decade*.

The Pythagoreans represented the Decade by means of a geometric symbol called the **Tetraktys** (tetrad in Greek) that has a triangle shape where it is staggered from the apex to the base. The Tetraktys was sacred to the Pythagoreans for representing the process of manifestation, and in their name made their most sacred oath.

Tetraktys has been widely used in various modern symbols, for example in the emblems of some Universities.

The Tetraktys were not only venerated for containing in itself all the symphonies, but because in it lies the nature of all things.

...

Therefore the monad as number is indivisible. But it is called a monad because it remains immutable or because it is distinguished and isolated from the remaining multiplicity of numbers

Theon of Smyrna, *Mathematics*

## Transcendent and Immanent

- In Reality there are two essential aspects:
- The **Immanent**
  - Manifested
  - Transitory, periodical
  - Diversified
- The **Transcendent**
  - Unmanifested
  - Permanent



*Krishna: "... I support this entire universal manifestation situated in but a fraction of Myself"*

*Bhagavad Gita, 10, 42*

In the process of manifestation, described in *The Secret Doctrine*, there are two essential aspects of the Reality to be taken into account: the Immanent aspect and the Transcendent aspect.

The **Immanent** is the aspect of One Reality present in the manifestation, it is the All that is in every fragment, in every form of life, in every material particle. There is nothing in the world that does not belong to the Unity in its immanent aspect. The Immanent is transient, perishable, periodic since it appears and disappears.

The **Transcendent** is what is beyond the Manifestation, which transcends the manifested universe, since the One Reality does not fragment or dilute with the Manifestation. The Transcendent is permanent, since it is as much in the periods of Inmanifestation or Pralaya as in the periods in which the Universe manifests itself, the Manvántaras. The Transcendent is the essence, the cause of the manifested Universe.

Krishna: "... I support this entire universal manifestation situated in but a fraction of Myself"

*Bhagavad Gita, 10, 42*

As the Bhagavad Gita expresses, the One Reality manifests itself, giving rise to the Universe we know, but does not lose its nature because of it. Its mysterious essence does not disappear but endures as the Transcendent aspect.

This metaphysical consideration is present in the oldest scriptures such as the Vedas and Puranas of India, but also in other sources of wisdom like the Hebrew Kabbalah, where the Supreme Principle or Supreme Sephirah is *Kether*, the Crown, symbolizing that it is not the head but what is on top of it.

The model of the Immanent and the Transcendent is not a simple metaphysical speculation without practical utility. Its importance lies in our way of seeing the reality of ourselves and of everything that surrounds us, since it can be said that this model is repeated in every corner of life and demonstrated everywhere.

## *The One is more than the sum*

- In **Pantheism** Reality is the sum of all beings, matter and energy of the Universe.
- The parts are similar but they are not necessarily united.
- In **Theosophy** the Universe is the manifestation of a transcendent Reality.
- The One is more than the sum of the parts.
- The parts are separated only in appearance.



Theosophy states that the Universe is more than the sum of the parts that compose it.

For Pantheism, Reality is the sum of all beings, all matter and energy that make up the Universe. Nature and its laws are absolute Reality. The set of the whole is an abstraction as when we refer to a population as the set of people in a region.

Ancient Wisdom or Theosophy has sustained a vision that goes beyond the integrative idea of Pantheism, since according to it, the manifested Universe, Nature, the world as a whole, is the immanent aspect of Reality. But Reality or the One Life does not fragment with manifestation. In other words, it does not dissolve or disappear with manifestation, but remains the transcendent aspect, as the Bhagavad Gita states.

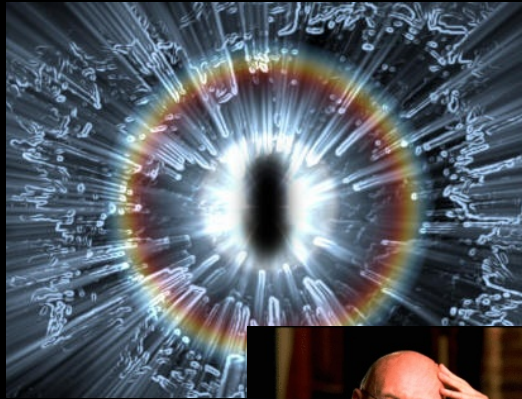
Pantheism focuses on the immanent aspect, but does not capture the mysterious essence of the transcendent aspect of Reality. This aspect is the *That*, the Principle described by HPB in the first proposition of the Secret Doctrine:

I. An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of Mandukya, "unthinkable and unspeakable."

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, Proem*

## The Transcendent Reality

- Modern thinkers also draw attention to the Transcendent Reality.
- Ken Wilber, one of the proponents of the holographic paradigm, clarifies that the whole world is not the same as the Absolute.



Ken Wilber  
(1949 - )



The Transcendent is the cause of the Manifestation

*Ken Wilber*

Modern thinkers draw attention to these two aspects, which is not a duality because one is the essence of the other. As we saw earlier, David Bohm speaks of the order implied in his holographic model to refer to the Reality that gives rise to the plan of the Universe. The psychologist and thinker Ken Wilber, qualifies this model saying that it represents more pantheism than the Transcendent Reality. In an interview he says the following:

RV: Do you mean that the whole is not the same as Brahman or the Absolute?

WILBER: Of course not. Brahman is in the world like everyone else, it is true but the whole world is not in and of itself exclusively Brahman, because theoretically the whole world could be destroyed but that would not destroy Brahman, nor the Buddha nature nor the Tao. In addition, Brahman himself destroys the entire world with Brahman, and the hologram is a good metaphor for the whole / part relationship.

RV: And it is not totally false, but only in part.

WILBER: Yes, it covers the immanent but not the transcendent aspects of the Absolute.

Wilber, Bohm, Pribram et al., *Holographic Paradigm*

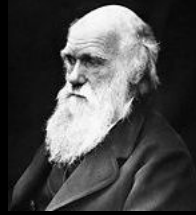
The Transcendent is the cause of the Immanent. The Manifested Universe cannot come out of nothingness but of the Transcendent. As Parmenides, Greek pre-Socratic philosopher put it,

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

(Nothing comes from nothing)

Parmenides, *On Nature*

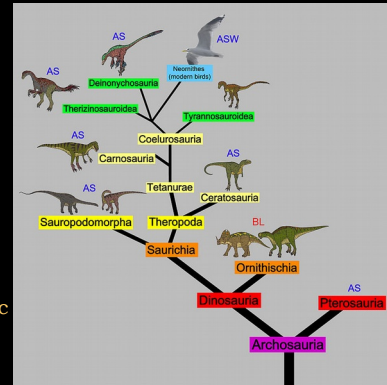
# The Evolution



Charles Darwin  
(1809-1892)

- Evolution in Biology explains the diversity of living beings through changes.
- Changes through successive generations in the inheritable characteristics of a population.
- It deals only with biological organisms, not with consciousness.
- Evolution is proven, but its mechanisms still have unknowns to discover.

Phylogenetic tree



Biology explains the process of evolution of living organisms on the planet. *Charles Darwin* (1809-1882), after patiently observing many species of animals and plants on his voyage through the world aboard the *Beagle* for five years, had the brilliant understanding of evolution in Nature. Darwin published his ideas in his famous book *The Origin of Species* (1859), which was an intellectual revolution in his day. In it he postulated that living organisms are not static but change over time, after many generations, to adapt to the environment.

Darwin said that these variations are produced by **natural selection**. Small changes occur that improve or worsen the body's ability to survive and adapt to changing environmental conditions or to a new environment. The fittest survive and have more offspring, thus perpetuating this change. As these changes become sharper and multiply, new species are derived. So that all biological species can be ordered in a tree of descent, the so-called phylogenetic tree, whose root is an ancestral species from which all others derive.

Subsequent research and modern genetics have only confirmed and specified this process. The changes are produced by mutations in the DNA that are transmitted thanks to the inheritance by those organisms that have been able to survive better thanks to the change. But why do changes occur?

We have many questions left. Is Evolution only about adapting to the changing environment by the method of trial and error? Or is it the expression of something else? How did life originate? Was it the fortuitous result of the aggregation of some molecules? Why is their organization so complex?



## The total Evolution

- Theosophy offers a broader perspective of Evolution.
- Everything manifested evolves: life, form, mind, consciousness, the Universe.
- Evolution does not proceed blindly entirely, it takes place according to a strategy, a Plan of Evolution.
- The Plan of Evolution is not an external ideation but internal in the Universe and is embedded as law in each part.



Despite showing the wonderful order of living organisms, Biology explains only the material aspect of Life. There is another aspect, the functional, that of the phenomenon of mind and consciousness. Did the mind of more developed organisms form as a result of a fortuitous chain of transformations in cells that specialized as neurons are currently? Did these transformations give origin to organisms with the capacity to reflect and wonder how everything works? From a philosophical point of view, it is difficult to accept that the surprising phenomenon of Life originated only by a casual combination of amino acids.

Theosophy also speaks of the other side of this process. There is the functional aspect, the *Purusha* or Spirit along with the material aspect or *Prakriti*. Both are inseparable, and both evolve at par. As the esoteric tradition tells us, the evolution of the *Purusha* is the gradual unfolding of its potentialities, the activation of its latent capacities. Being an inseparable part of the whole, *Purusha* and *Prakriti* act together in various ways to achieve that unfoldment which is Evolution.

The word **Evolution** means to develop, deploy, and to try to represent the changes that occur. Just as there is an evolution of forms, there must be an evolution of consciousness. Both are complementary. Forms evolve and generate better vehicles, better bodies for the expression of consciousness, which also evolves and develops its latent faculties.

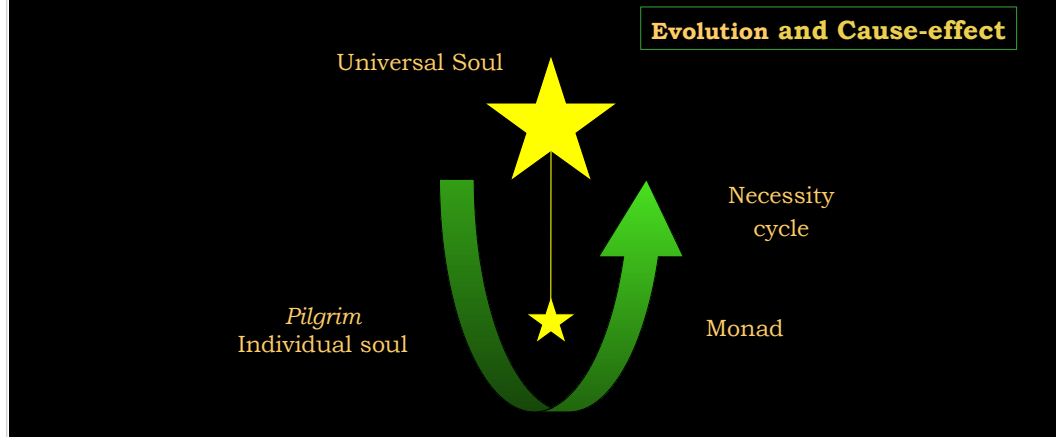
Evolution is one of the fundamental ideas of Theosophy. The whole Universe is in Evolution. It is a universal process.

Another difference in the Theosophical approach of Evolution is that it contemplates that changes in living beings do not occur entirely without purpose or fortuitously, but there is a plan. The **Evolution Plan** is not a kind of mold that determines everything in advance, but rather is a strategy drawn by Life itself from within each being which tries to seek and follow a direction to achieve the development of their potential.

We will study Evolution in more detail in a later chapter of the course.

## 3rd Proposition

III. *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.*



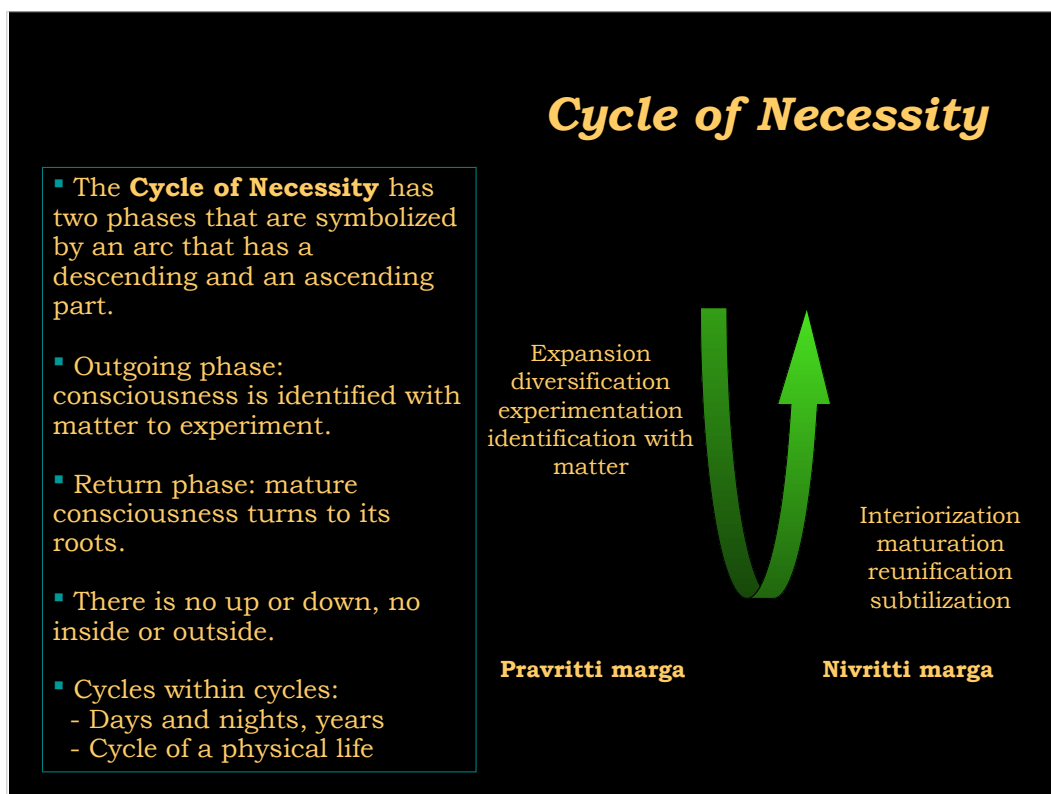
Let us return to what Helena P. Blavatsky told us in the Third Proposition of the Proem of the Secret Doctrine.

In it, the Evolution process is mentioned as a great cycle, symbolically known as *the Pilgrim's journey* and also called the *Cycle of Necessity* in the East.

Many allegories and myths such as that of Ulysses in Homer's *Odyssey* allude to the experience of a journey that makes the character mature and grow. The character leaves his home, embarks on a journey, knows places and people, is involved in adventure and new experiences, and finally, when he returns home is a new person because he has transformed.

In the same way Life needs to manifest and diversify to evolve, thus developing the capacities that are in it in latency, like the tree in the seed. These capacities become faculties developed and active thanks to the interaction with other entities and to the diversity of experiences. The One needs to leave the resting state or Pralaya to activate its faculties and evolve through Manifestation.

It is well known that the difficulties in our personal life make us grow if we are able to see them as a challenge and to accept the challenge of our own evolution. This is a reflection of what happens at a more universal level. The Monads or fragments are not detached from the Reality, but reflections of the Universal Soul, are immersed in the Cycle of Necessity to learn and develop their abilities.



The Third Proposition also tells us that Evolution takes place in a cyclical process that has two phases and is usually represented by the symbol of an arc that is first descending and then ascending. These two phases of the Cycle of Necessity are the outward way and the return way of the Pilgrim.

In the first phase, known as the outward path or Pravritti Marga, life is increasingly identified with matter, with sensations and consciousness expanding, diversifying, going outwards.

In the second phase of the process, known as the path of return or Nivritti Marga, consciousness is internalized, seeking its own roots, turning inward and culminating the development of its potential qualities in the cycle.

The terms descending and ascending, interior and exterior are only geometric references in the space that we make to represent the process, but we must think more deeply and realize that in Reality the above or the down, the inside or the outside are of no matter, since everything is part of Manifested Reality. The process has to do more with the way in which consciousness interacts with matter, in an expansive way in the descending part of the cycle and as an introspection in the ascending part.

Ancient Wisdom also tells us that Evolution does not proceed in a single cycle but in a series of cycles, and more precisely, in smaller cycles within other major cycles, as we shall see in a later chapter. An example of this is in our daily cycles of waking and dreaming. In the period of activity or wakefulness, we act, we learn, we experience. During the sleep period we assimilate the experiences and internalize them.

## Consequences

- Being aware of the Unity of Life and Evolution has consequences in our daily lives.
- Every person is our brother in the school of life.
- Animals are our younger siblings. We owe them respect and help.
- Every form of life deserves our reverence, because the Whole is in it.



Theosophy is not a mere exercise of speculation. If we are sincere students, philosophical ideas have to have a definite impact on our way of living, as it did with the ancient philosophers.

An immediate consequence of even intellectually understanding the Unity of All Life and the Law of Evolution is that our attitude towards all life around us must be very respectful.

All human beings are our companions in the school of life. They suffer the same concerns, they are learning like us, and although they are different in their physical aspect and in their way of thinking and feeling, possibly being more intelligent or less, they are an expression of the Whole in evolution.

The Evolution of Life as a whole also means that the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom are our younger brothers in evolution and therefore we owe them respect and help. From this point of view, the innumerable cruelties that humans commit with animals and the environment in general are out of place.

A common idea is that animals exist for human consumption. This is a selfish, petty and anthropocentric idea. Every form of life is an expression of the Whole. We ourselves are present in it, and it is present in us. It deserves our deep respect, reverence and help.

Man is the most foolish species: he venerates an invisible God and massacres a visible nature, without knowing that this nature that he slaughters is that invisible God that he venerates.

Hubert Reeves

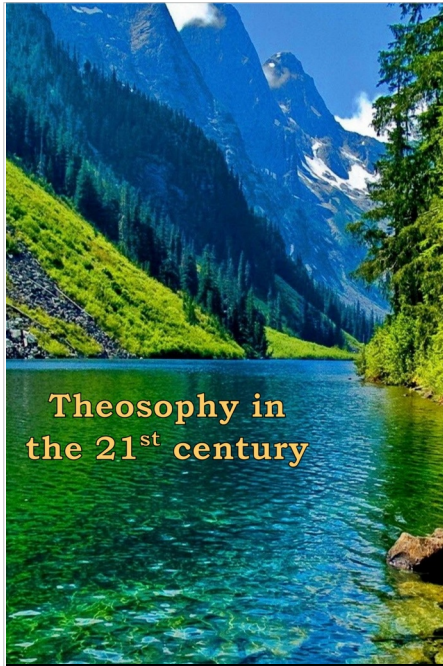
## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Think about the Transcendent and Immanent aspects of Reality. Identify these aspects in examples of the known world, as they might be *idea to convey* and *message transmitted* in a communication process.
- 2- Look for examples of everyday life in which the three factors exists and is evident. Such as in *seed-soil-tree*.
- 3- What is the meaning of the word *Logos*? Seek its root in the pre-Socratic philosophers.
- 4- Find examples of different aspects of life that show an evolution. Try to identify the great cycle in it.
- 5- Can something regress or step backwards in evolution?





Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## *5 Who are we?*

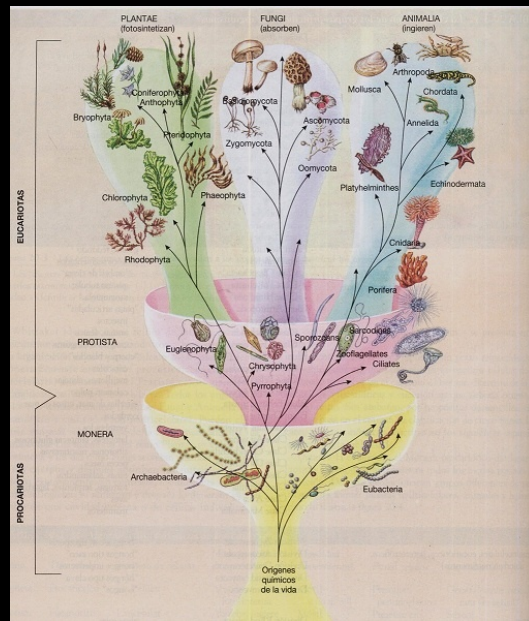
Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## The human being according to Biology

- Biology has discovered that all living beings have evolved from simpler to more complex forms.
- Biological evolution is produced by genetic changes and inheritance.
- It is not known how or why life arose (3,500 M years).
- Mammals descend from an ancestor that appeared 280 M years ago.
- Man does not descend from the monkey, but both have a common ancestor.

Phylogenetic tree of living beings



As we saw in the previous chapter, Biology has shown us the existence of the Evolution of the species, according to which all living beings belong to the same phylogenetic tree in which some species derive from others thanks to specializations, mutations and changes in general.

According to the archaeological remains found, the oldest life on Earth dates from about 3,500 million years ago and corresponds to a bacterium that lived without oxygen. From this primitive bacteria, increasingly complex forms of life were derived, with eukaryotic cells appearing first, those with a nucleus, as an improvement achieved by the symbiosis of two or more bacterial cells, and thus enabling the appearance of organisms multicellular increasingly complex. In this way plants, fungi and animals appeared.

Mammals descend from an ancestor that appeared 280 M years ago. However, the great expansion of mammals occurred 65 M years ago when the Yucatan meteorite caused a great extinction with the consequent disappearance of the great dinosaurs.

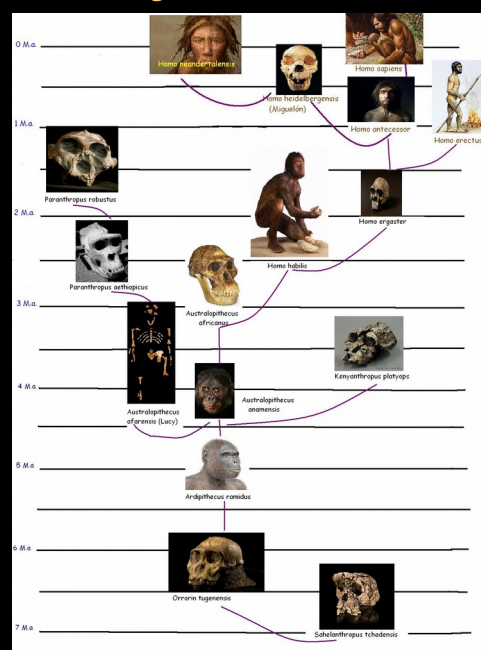
We also know thanks to genetics that man does not descend from the monkey, but that both have a common ancestor and that they are differentiated branches of the phylogenetic tree of the species.

## The evolution of hominids

- Hominids appeared at least 7 M years ago.
- The current human species is **Homo Sapiens** that appeared about 400,000 years ago in Africa.
- It is a social, intelligent species, capable of learning, using tools.



Probable phylogenetic tree of hominids



As discovered by Anthropology along with Biology through the fossil remains found, the current human being is biologically a species originated in Africa about 400,000 years ago, which has been transforming to this day.

Compared with other species, the human being is social and intelligent. The enhanced attributes of intelligence as well as the ability to learn and create, allowed him to develop tools, adapt and transform his habitat.

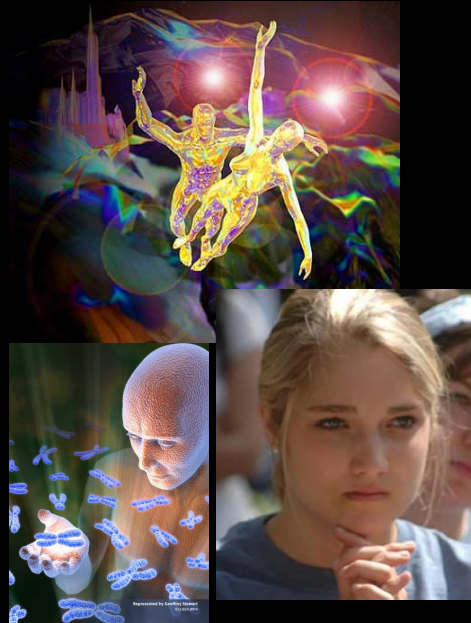
But in this, the human being has not been totally unique. It is known that there are other species of animals that are also capable of using tools, and species such as dolphins have created complex communication languages between them.

Researchers in the field of Anthropology and Biology develop a hominid tree which tracks our biological ancestors until almost 7 million years ago. This tree is not unique. There are several versions with certain differences because it tries to reconstruct the evolutionary history from the fossil remains found, as if it were a puzzle. When a new finding is made, it may fit into the tree or may indicate that it needs to be modified.

The evolutionary scheme gives us an idea of the struggle of the hominid species to survive and adapt to the changing conditions during their time, which included glaciations and interglacial periods, until reaching the **Homo Sapiens**, the current human species on the planet.

## *We are complex beings*

- In addition to our body and our senses, we have emotions, thoughts, fears, joys, pain, hope, affection, ...
- All are subjective aspects of what we call **consciousness**.
- Since ancient times man has intuited that his body is only a part of himself.



It is evident that we are complex beings. Not only do we have a complex, highly organized body, as Biology shows, but there are other factors of our nature that are difficult to understand.

Our senses allow us to receive impressions of the world and ourselves, but our inner reactions are a very diverse phenomena that we find difficult to observe with precision. We feel pleasure and disgust, and diverse emotions such as joy and happiness, but we also feel pain, fear, anguish or despair. Our life is full of thoughts, ideas, memories, desires, affections and endless contents of conscience.

Since ancient times, thinkers who tried to understand themselves realized that we are complex beings and that the body and physical nature are only the envelope, the part that we all see. But if we really want to know ourselves it is necessary to go beyond the outer shell.

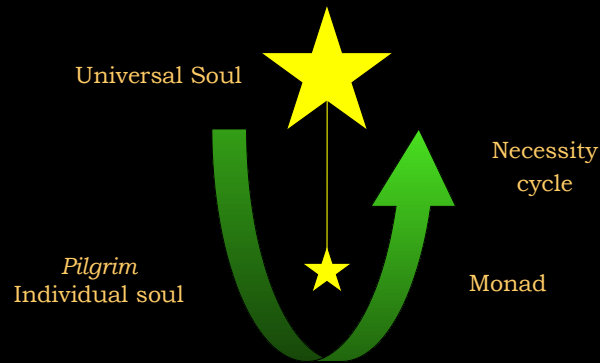
## Our essence

*III. 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.*

*Helena Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, Proem*

▪ Esoteric Philosophy tells us that we are an emanation of the Manifested One.

▪ We are in essence a Monad, Spirit, a "spark" not detached from the evolving fire.



As we have seen previously, many philosophers and thinkers have maintained since time immemorial that the human being is a fragment of the manifested One, an unattached spark of the cosmic fire that is the manifested Unity and has been given names like Spirit, Monad, Atman, etc.

As we saw in the holographic model, our essence is a reflection of the One and therefore has all its attributes in latency, as expressed by the hermetic axiom of the Emerald Tablet: "*As it is above, it is below*".

Esoteric Philosophy tells us that the Monad is emanated by the One to develop its latent attributes just as a seed develops into a functionally complete plant.

This identity of the Monad with the Whole and its development through the process of evolution is what Helena Blavatsky tells us in the third proposition of the Secret Doctrine when she refers to the identity of the Universal Soul with the individual Soul and its evolution through the so-called "*Cycle of necessity*".

In the East the great cycle of the Individual Soul, from its emanation as a seed until its development as an entity, which has developed its potential and has experienced the path of Life through innumerable stages, is called a **cycle of necessity**. The word "necessity" shows that this process is essential for the unfolding of the latent power that exists in the soul and only through experience and learning does the seed become a complete tree.



## *What is in between?*

- We know from our own experience that we are complex beings, so what is there between the physical body and the spirit?
- Consciousness expresses itself in different ways within us.
- It is not as objective as when we study the organs and cells of the body.
- Every philosopher or thinker from the most remote antiquity has asked himself who we are, what is our nature.



So, if on the one hand we have a very evolved and complex physical nature and, on the other, we are Spirits that reflect the Universal Spirit or One manifested, what is there between them? What is consciousness?

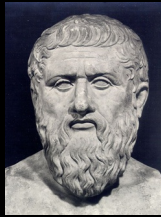
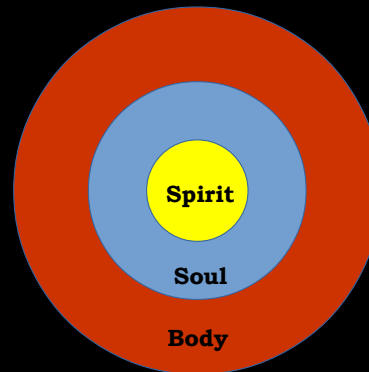
Our Consciousness expresses itself in different modalities in our interior: emotions, thoughts, feelings, ideas, joys, dislikes, fears, etc. We need to identify these aspects to understand what we are.

The task is difficult because as thinkers we are both subjects and objects of study. The phenomena of our consciousness is subjective, it cannot be seen or detected from outside completely. There may be physical signs such as facial expressions or brain images, and these thoughts and emotions may also determine a behavior, but we cannot really know what is happening in the consciousness of another human being.

This has been the same problem that has faced philosophers, scientists and thinkers of all kinds who have tried to discover what is the nature of the human being.

## The triune classification

- Plato and many ancient philosophers considered the triune man:
- **Spirit:** The immortal, the essential spark, the *heart*.
- **Soul:** *Psyche*, our psychological identity. Intellect, emotions, inspirations. It can be divided into animal soul and spiritual soul.
- **Body:** The material instrument for perception and action.



Plato  
(-427 to -347)

There are many criteria that have been used to describe man from an integral point of view.

The best known and simplest is that used by the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras in which man is considered as a being made up of three major components:

- An immortal part, the essential spark of life or the **Spirit**.
- The **Soul** or psyche, seat of the mind and emotions.
- The **physical body** or material vehicle of the whole human being, the organ of the senses and of the action.

To be more precise some have had to consider two aspects of the Soul:

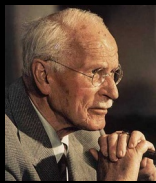
The **animal soul**: the psyche associated with the body and with the activities and material needs. It is personal in nature and self-centered.

The **spiritual soul**, associated with the spirit and transcendent needs. It is universal and integrative in nature.

However, this classification is too simple when we try to clarify the deepest aspects of our conscience, our behavior, our aspirations and conflicts.

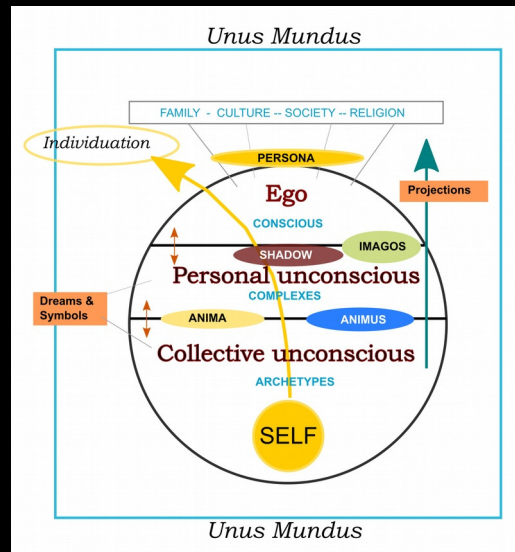
## What does Psychology tell us?

- Psychology is the science that tries to understand mental functions, perception, thought, emotions, cognitive processes, behavior, social behavior.
- There are many currents that have evolved.
- Jung's model includes personal and trans-personal structures and archetypes.



Carl Gustav Jung  
(1875 - 1961)

Jungian model of the psyche (Dr. Daniel Wilhelm)



Psychology is the branch of Science that studies the mental processes, thought, emotions, sensations, perceptions, cognitive processes and behavior of the human being, in relation to the physical and social environment.

There are several trends within psychology and there is no single model of conscience or of the psyche of the human being. Some psychologists did not settle for limited approaches drawn mainly from clinical practice. One of the psychologists who have been broader in trying to understand human nature has been the Swiss Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961).

Jung presents the psyche of the human being integrated by different elements and structures. We can mention very briefly:

- The *conscious*. It is the part of the psyche that we are aware of and that we are forming with experiences and interaction with the environment throughout life.
- The *ego* or personal self is the center of our individual psyche.
- The *personal unconscious* whose contents are complex. An important part of it is the *shadow*, those aspects of our psyche that we do not want and that we deny. The contents of the personal unconscious and of the shadow tend to manifest themselves in consciousness as dreams and symbols.
- The *mask* is the public aspect that we show to the outside assuming a role and that therefore it hides a part of our psyche leaving it in the intimate field.
- The *collective unconscious* that contains the universal inheritance of the human species or of a people. It is the cause of innate tendencies. Its contents are archetypes or models that try to manifest themselves in consciousness through inspirations, dreams and symbols.
- The *Self* is the Being, the transcendent Self, the goal of life.
- The *Unus Mundus* is the unified underlying Reality from which everything arises and to which everything returns. It is the One Life to which we have referred previously.

## The Theosophical Ideas

- Man is an emanation of the One Reality, manifested in **7 principles**.
- A principle is a functional aspect or differentiated expression of consciousness.
- The principles relate to each other and act together as a whole.
- The body is the physical vehicle of the entire structure.
- The human being is a Microcosm.
- There are many classifications.



Theosophical ideas about the nature of the human being have highlighted the great complexity that it contains. Both the ancient scriptures and the Vedas, the initiatory traditions of Egypt and the Orient, the classical philosophers, the Neoplatonic philosophers, the Kabalists and the Hermeticists tried to find an explanation for the complex nature of the human being.

Many of these schemes tell us that we are essentially a differentiated and unattached emanation of the One Reality, a **Monad** or **Atman** as it is called in the Vedas, which manifests or expresses itself through 7 principles. The **principles** are expressions or functions of consciousness, differentiated aspects of the One Reality that manifest as capabilities or attributes of consciousness.

Principles can be seen as fundamental aspects of the human being, centers or manifestations of their activity, which implement the complex functionality of consciousness. We must bear in mind that the principles *are not individual parts or components of the human being*, but even though they reflect different aspects, they act together to form a system, as a whole.

The whole structure of the human being has its seat in the physical body, which is the material support, the envelope or vehicle of consciousness. The principles of the human being are the reflection in the Microcosm (human scope) of the Universal Principles of the Macrocosm (universal scope).

There are many classifications of the principles, from the simplified one of the ancient philosophers consisting of Spirit, Soul and Body, to more sophisticated classifications, as those taught by H. P. Blavatsky, that speak to us of 7 principles. The Vedantists consider 5 principles, and it is common to find differences according to the adopted point of view.

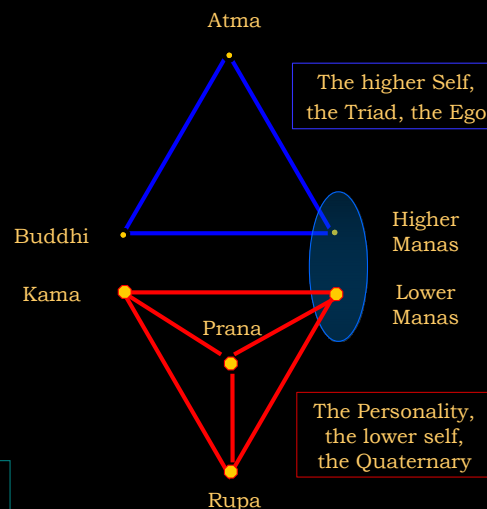
Despite the complexity of the classifications, we must not lose sight of the human being as a complete reality and beyond the names and symbols. We need to approach the knowledge of ourselves with an open mind and inner inspiration. As we have already said, one difficulty of this task is that we pretend to know the knower. The subject and the object of knowledge are the same, so it is necessary to go deeper and broader in our study.

## The principles of the human being

- **Atma:** The spirit, the Monad or Individuality
- **Buddhi:** Intuition, the light of consciousness
- **Higher Manas:** The abstract mind, the thinker
- **Lower Manas:** The concrete mind, the reasoning
- **Kama:** Desire, emotions, motivations
- **Prana:** The vital energy
- **Rupa:** The physical, the action, the material support of the entire structure

### Associations:

- Buddhi-Manas:** The spiritual soul
- Kama-Manas:** The animal soul



The following is a classification of the principles of the human being from a functional point of view, based on the ideas of Helena Blavatsky and the tradition of Vedanta:

**Atma:** The spirit, the Monad or Individuality.

**Buddhi:** Intuition, the light of consciousness.

**Higher Manas:** The abstract mind, the thinker.

**Lower Manas:** The concrete mind, the reasoning.

**Kama:** The desire, the emotions, the motivations.

**Prana:** The vital energy.

**Rupa:** The physical, the action, the material support of the whole structure

We can identify two large groups:

- The **higher Self**, the Triad or also called the **Ego** (spiritual, not to be confused with the ego of the psychology that is the center of the personal self). It is composed of Atma, Buddhi and higher Manas and is the most permanent part of human nature.
- The **personality**, the Quaternary or the lower self, which is composed of the Lower Manas, Kama, Prana and the physical. It is the most transient part of human nature.

Note that the mind is represented by two principles: the Lower Manas that comprises the functions of perception and reasoning, and the Higher Manas that refers to higher cognitive functions such as abstraction and discernment. This expresses the duality of the mind, capable of expressing the most sublime and the most perverse.

In addition the principles are associated with each other, as in the case of the dual mind or Manas, which works closely associated with other principles and thus we have:

- **Buddhi-Manas:** It is called the spiritual soul and the enlightened mind.
- **Kama-Manas:** It is the psychic soul. The frequent combination of thought and desire.



The constitution of the human being has also had presentations with different schemes in the history of modern Theosophy. HPB herself has used different schemes in her works or in different periods of her life as the following table shows, elaborated by William Doss McDavid in his work *An Introduction to Esoteric Principles*.

**Divisions of the Human Constitution  
Used by H.P. Blavatsky**

<b>Isis Unveiled (1877)</b>	<b>Mahatma Letters Esoteric Buddhism (1880-83)</b>	<b>Secret Doctrine Key to Theosophy (1888 &amp; 89)</b>	<b>H.P.B.'s Private "Papers" (1889-91)</b>	<b>Dialogues Between Two Editors (1888)</b>
Spirit	Atma	Atma	Atma	Atma
Soul	Buddhi	Buddhi	Auric Egg	Causal Body
			Buddhi	
	Manas	Manas a) higher b) lower	Manas EGO	Mayavi Rupa
			Kama Manas or Lower Manas	
	Kama Rupa	Kama Rupa	Kama-Prana	Protean Double
	Linga Sarira	Prana	Linga Sarira	
Prana	Linga Sarira			
Body	Body	Body	Living Body in Prana or Animal Life	Body

Extracted from:  
*An Introduction to Esoteric Principles*  
by William Doss McDavid

Later authors after HPB like Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater used another classification more oriented to the description of "subtle bodies", invisible bodies that would be formed by matter of worlds more subtle than the physical one. Every aspect of consciousness in a subtle world is expressed through a specialized body. But as this last classification is based on psychic observations, it is more subjective and by focusing on vehicles or material bodies leaves little room for student research and experimentation.

The functional scheme based on Principles, on the other hand, is more philosophical, and as it is centered on the *functions* of the human being rather than on its material expression or vehicles, it leaves more possibilities for research and application in practical life. Most of us are not aware of our emotional or astral body, but we are aware of our emotions and feelings and therefore we can investigate and experiment with the Kamas principle without having to imagine an emotional vehicle or body.

In any case, this shows that the human being is complex and that any scheme we make is just a model designed to study it with a certain correspondence with reality, but that is not reality itself.

Let's see how HPB presents the principles in *The Key to Theosophy*:

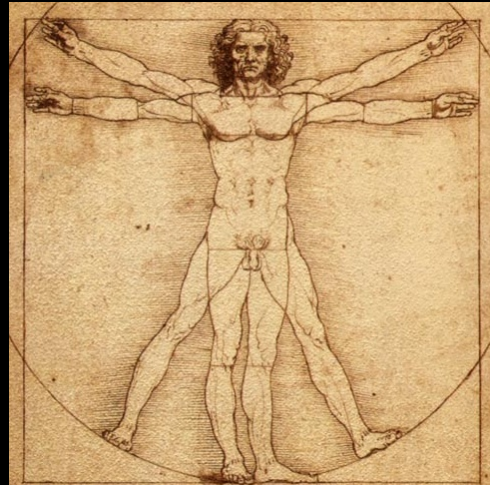
THEOSOPHICAL DIVISION.

	SANSKRIT TERMS.	EXOTERIC MEANING.	EXPLANATORY.
LOWER QUATERNARY.	(a) Rupa, or Sthula-Sarira.	(a) Physical body.	(a) Is the vehicle of all the other "principles" during life.
	(b) Prana.	(b) Life, or Vital principle.	(b) Necessary only to <i>a</i> , <i>c</i> , <i>d</i> , and the functions of the lower <i>Manas</i> , which embrace all those limited to the ( <i>physical</i> ) brain.
	(c) Linga Sharira.	(c) Astral body.	(c) The <i>Double</i> , the phantom body.
	(d) Kama rupa.	(d) The seat of animal desires and passions.	(d) This is the centre of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity.

	SANSKRIT TERMS.	EXOTERIC MEANING.	EXPLANATORY.
THE UPPER IMPERISHABLE TRIAD.	(e) <i>Manas</i> — a dual principle in its functions.	(e) Mind, Intelligence: which is the higher human mind, whose light, or radiation links the MONAD, for the lifetime, to the mortal man.	(e) The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether <i>Manas</i> gravitates more downward to <i>Kama rupa</i> , the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to <i>Buddhi</i> , the Spiritual <i>Ego</i> . In the latter case, the higher consciousness of the individual Spiritual aspirations of <i>mind</i> ( <i>Manas</i> ), assimilating <i>Buddhi</i> , are absorbed by it and form the <i>Ego</i> , which goes into Devachanic bliss.*
	(f) <i>Buddhi</i> .	(f) The Spiritual Soul.	(f) The vehicle of pure universal spirit.
	(g) <i>Atma</i> .	(g) Spirit.	(g) One with the Absolute, as its radiation.

## *Rupa: the physical body*

- It is the material seat of the entire structure of the human being.
- Through it we interact with the outside:
  - Organs of the senses
  - Organs of action
- It has a huge complexity and many systems:
  - Muscular
  - Respiratory
  - Circulatory
  - Hormonal
  - ...
- It's care and health is very important for the activity of conscience.



**Rupa**, which in Sanskrit means form, vehicle, is the principle corresponding to the expression of consciousness in the physical world through the material body that we all perceive. It is the seat of the complete structure of the human being.

Through the body we interact with the outside. The Vedas indicate that there are the organs of knowledge, the senses that allow us to perceive the external world, and the organs of action, the dynamic system of skeleton, muscles, tendons, nerves and auxiliary systems that allow us to act on the external world.

The physical body has enormous complexity as anatomy teaches us and it can be considered as composed of multiple coordinated systems: the skeleton, the muscles, the respiratory system, the circulatory system, the lymphatic system, the hormonal system, the nervous system, etc.

It is a paradox that we do not usually know our body thoroughly, nor the food that it needs and its care. The lack of any mineral or any vitamin alters the functioning of the psyche even temporarily. For example, a lack of iron can cause fatigue and asthenia blocking the intentions of performing a desired task. A magnesium deficiency can cause irritability and anxiety. Low blood pressure can cause poor irrigation in the brain and markedly decrease the ability to think clearly.

We should pay more attention to the care and health of our body because if it is not in good shape it can inhibit the expression of other faculties of consciousness.

## Prana, vitality

- **Prana** is a Sanskrit word that literally means breathing, but in this context it refers to the *breath of life*.
- According to HPB Prana is a part of **Jiva**, the Universal Life, which animates every living being.
- Prana is vitality, a kind of energy that makes the body function as a unit.
- “*When the body dies Prana returns to the ocean of cosmic life*” [HPB].



**Prana** is a Sanskrit word that literally means breathing, but that in the context of the constitution of man means something more: the vital breath, the energy of life.

According to HPB Prana is life, the active power that produces all vital phenomena.

HPB also states that Prana is a part of *Jiva*, the Universal Life, associated with a particular individual.

Prana is often spoken of as an energy or force. We are not talking about an energy from the physical point of view, but something more mysterious whose understanding is currently escaping us. Prana causes the body to function as a coordinated system, as a unit and not simply as a set of cells and organs.

This material envelope that is sustained by food [the physical body] seems to have a life of its own, but this is only because it is interpenetrated by the wrapping Prana (life force) and is governed by the five centers of the brain (Indriyas) that they control the activities of speech, hands, legs, organs of reproduction and excretion.

Shankara, *Viveka Chudamani*

According to this tradition when Prana is removed from the body, physical death ensues. The person stops breathing, their vital functions cease and the organism begins to disintegrate.



## Emotions

- **Kama** is the desire, the emotion, the force that motivates the human being based on attraction and repulsion.

- Love, hate, joy, sadness, security, fear, admiration, resentment, benevolence, cruelty, ...

- Emotions play an important role in practical life and in decision-making (I like or dislike).



The **Kama** principle is essentially desire, the root of emotions. Desire is an instinctive force of attraction or repulsion that manifests itself in liking or disliking something and leads us to seek or avoid that object.

The **emotion** [Latin: *emovere, emotum*] is the impulse that induces us to action, it is Kama in essence, and it is what motivates us the most. Emotions largely determine our behavior and we express them through gestures and physical signs.

There is a great range of emotions originated by the desire for attraction or repulsion depending on how we consider the object of desire or how we relate to it. Thus we find a variety of conflicting emotions such as love and hate, joy and sadness, security and fear, admiration and resentment, benevolence and cruelty, and so on. Kama is responsible, together with the mind, for the construction of the personal self in its multiple aspects.

Emotions have appeared throughout the evolution of organisms as a mechanism of rapid response to cope with danger, before thought starts and reaches some conclusion. In modern civilizations many of the dangers for which we are biologically "prepared" do not exist. Our emotions often activate our defenses excessively in situations that we consider hostile originating the state that we know as *stress*.

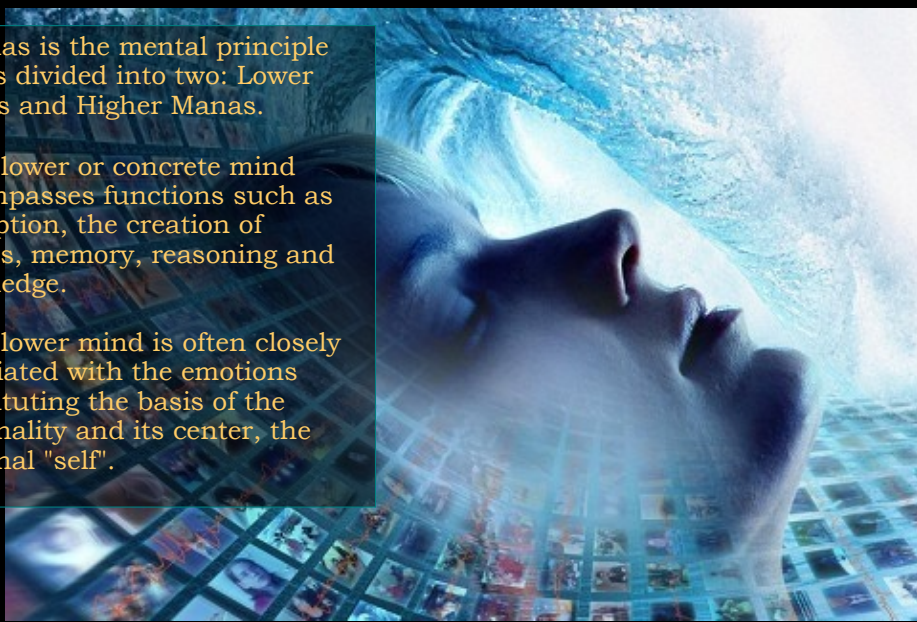
Desire and emotions are not bad in themselves as some believe. Kama is a principle of Nature that has its use if we take advantage of it.

Kama is the driving or impelling force in the human constitution; per se it is colorless, neither good nor bad, and is only such as the mind and soul direct its use. It is the seat of the living electric impulses, desires, aspirations, considered in their energetic aspect. Usually however, although there is a divine kama as well as an infernal one, this word is restricted, and wrongly so, to evil desire almost exclusively.

G. de Purucker, *Occult Glossary*

## The lower mind

- Manas is the mental principle that is divided into two: Lower Manas and Higher Manas.
- The lower or concrete mind encompasses functions such as perception, the creation of images, memory, reasoning and knowledge.
- The lower mind is often closely associated with the emotions constituting the basis of the personality and its center, the personal "self".



In the expositions of the Esoteric Philosophy about the constitution of the human being the function of the mind or **Manas** (which in Sanskrit literally means "the thinker") is presented as dual: the lower Manas or concrete mind and the higher Manas or abstract mind .

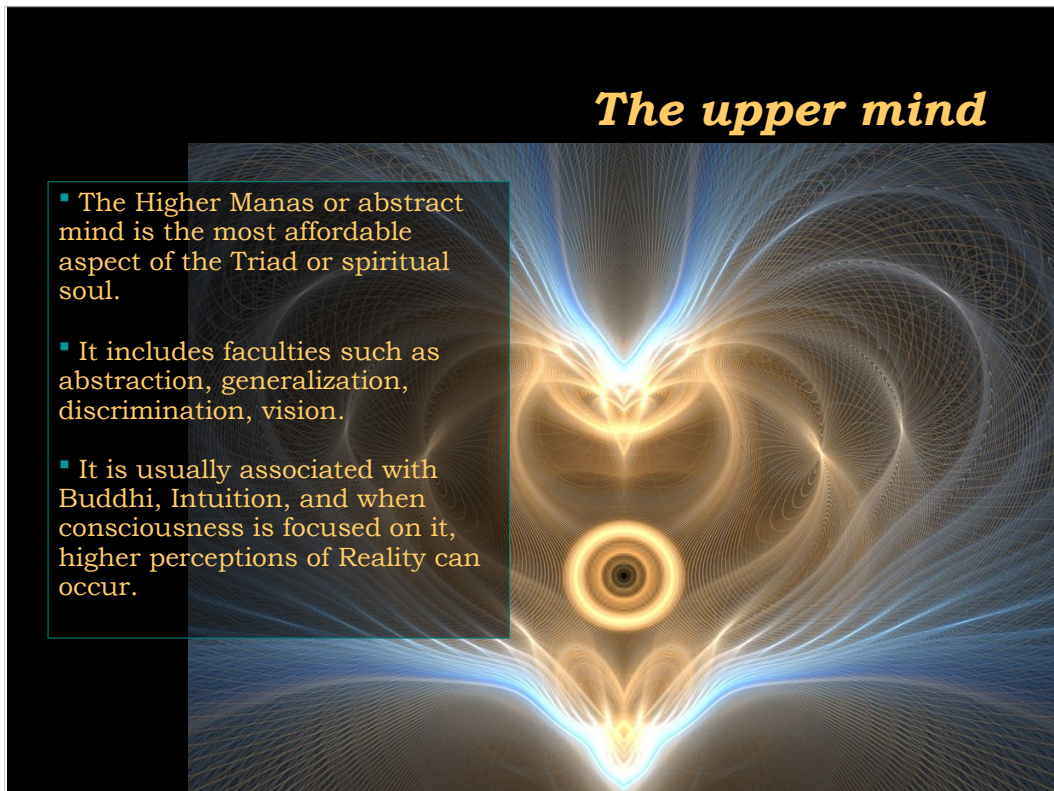
The lower mind is what groups the basic functions of the intellect:

- *Perception.* The ability to convert the impulses of the senses into images and recognize their origin in the outside world.
- *Creation of images.* The ability to create conceptual images, not only visual, from the senses and memory.
- *Memory.* The ability to structure memory in a useful way and integrated by associations, according to the impact, frequency of use, etc.
- *Reasoning:* The ability to establish relationships between ideas and deduce new ideas and rules.
- *Knowledge:* The ability to develop models and conjectures about the outside world. It is the coronation of intelligence based on the other faculties.

In another chapter of this course we will go deeper into the mind.

It is important to repeat that the lower mind is usually associated with the emotions around the center of the personality that is the **personal self**. We develop our psychic activities of desires and thoughts around our self: I want, I need, I remember, I think, I wait, etc. Memory and the anticipation of possible satisfaction are frequently in the genesis of desire. We remember something that pleased us in the past, we try to repeat the satisfaction, and that desire conditions our mental activity and our perceptions of reality.

The concrete mind is comparative, classifying and analytical. It points out the differences between two objects, whether physical or immaterial.



The higher **Manas** or abstract mind is the most affordable aspect of the upper Triad or spiritual Soul in our current state of evolution.

The higher mind comprises the advanced functions of intelligence:

- *Abstraction.* It is the ability to handle symbols in language and communications or to find common patterns in different events. It is the possibility of seeing the forest more than the individual trees.
- *Generalization.* It is the ability to apply abstract thinking to the resolution of problems, finding the way to solve similar problems with the same solution.
- *Discrimination.* It is the ability to discriminate the real from the illusory, the true from the false, the important from the accessory.
- *Vision.* It is the ability to plan at a higher level, to anticipate the effects of an action or a decision, to see beyond the apparent.

According to I.K. Taimni in his work *The Knowledge of Himself* the faculties of the higher mind are possible because they are a reflection of the Intuition since without it, we would be impossible to understand.

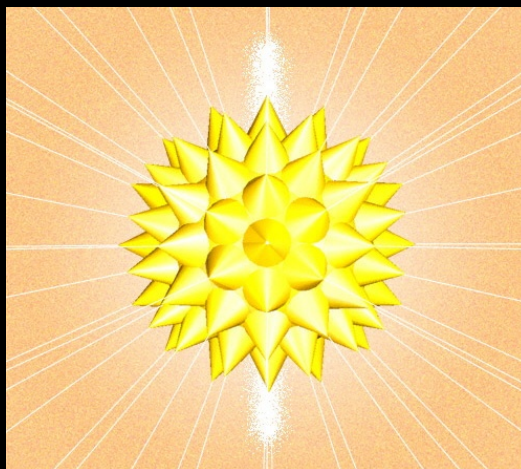
When we read a book there are several levels in which we can understand it. Going from the most concrete to the most abstract we have: the alphabet used, the words that belong to a language, the sentences that express an idea, the paragraphs that link the ideas, the chapter that develops a concept or an argument, the message of the book in general and finally the message of the author with his diverse works as a whole.

Therefore we see that we use the higher mind on a daily basis, with greater or lesser depth, without becoming aware of it. When the focus of attention is more on *Buddhi-Manas* than on the ups and downs of the personal self, we can get a clearer and deeper view of Reality.



## ***Buddhi, the intuition***

- **Buddhi** is the Intuition, the light of wisdom.
- Intuition is not "gut feeling" that could be an emotion.
- It is compared to a light by its characteristic of "illuminating" the thinker who is otherwise blind.
- The kingdom of Buddhi is of consciousness of the Unity of Life.
- It allows us to find unsuspected relationships.



**Buddhi** is a Sanskrit word that means the light of consciousness, deep understanding or wisdom, intuition, being awake. Many times this principle is mentioned as intuition, but the popular use of this word to designate a vague impulse, a hunch that may simply be an emotion, makes us prefer the use of the Sanskrit term Buddhi.

To get an idea of Buddhi we can use the metaphor of light. If we enter a room that is completely dark we can only know what is in it by groping, by touch, sequentially. We touch an object, we go through it and we see that it is a table. We touch another object and we perceive that it is a chair. But if we turn on the light and look, we will instantly see the entire contents of the room. For this reason Buddhi is integrative and its influence is like a flash of lucidity.

According to I.K. Taimni in the aforementioned work the main functions of Buddhi are:

- *Understanding.* Buddhi is reflected in the higher mind giving it the ability to understand.
- *Wisdom.* It is the superior intelligence relative to the essential things of life.
- *Discernment (Viveka).* It is the ability to distinguish the real from the illusory

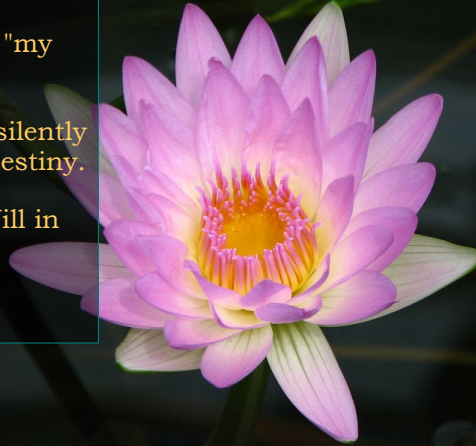
Buddhi is connected with both the higher mind and the emotions. Mystical experience or aesthetics are examples. If, when contemplating a painting or listening to a musical work, we feel transported and inspired, it is because consciousness connects with Buddhi.

Buddhi can influence decision-making if we are thoughtful. When we have to make a decision we try to analyze the pros and cons of the different options, but as it is generally impossible to know all the details, our emotions complete the picture and our pleasure or disgust for something usually make us decide. But if we are open and calm, Buddhi can provide us with a broad and integrating perspective to decide wisely, especially as regards the important issues of life.

The kingdom of Buddhi is one of the consciousness of the Unity of the Life and for that reason Buddhi is the deep root of Compassion towards all living being and the Love towards all the Universe.

## Atma, the will

- **Atma** means the Spirit, the essence of our being that is an undetached spark of the One.
- There is no such thing as "my Atma". It is one.
- It is the subtle force that silently drives us in search of our destiny.
- It manifests as the true Will in the field of conscience.



The innermost or essential principle is **Atma** or **Atman** (Atma in Sanskrit is the singular of Atman), which means the Spirit, the Monad, the essence of our Being, the breath, the unattached spark of the One manifested.

We must bear in mind that at this level we cannot speak of *an* Atma separated from others. The Atman is one even if it is singular for each being. Buddhism affirms that there is no such thing as an eternal Atman because like everything in the manifested Universe it is subject to the cycles of manifestation and unmanifestation.

Atma manifests as the spiritual Will, the subtle force that drives us in our life in search of our destiny. Atma is the Will in the field of internal conscience but we must differentiate it from what we often understand by will as a feature of the personality that makes us authoritarian, vehement, energetic and even hasty.

Action and understanding are united in the Will. An act of will that does not involve understanding is not will at all.

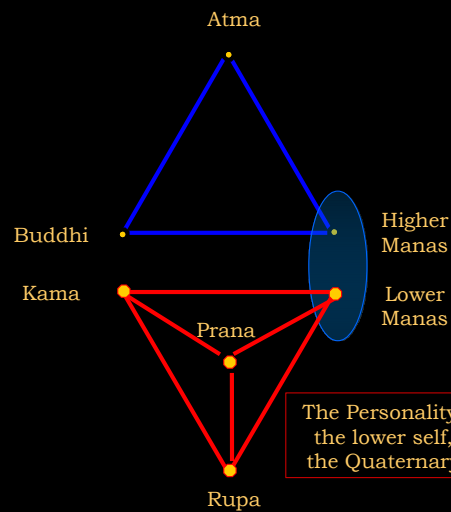
In the spiritual Will there is no coercion of a self lacking in will because the Will is one and moves as a whole.

N. Sri Ram, *Thoughts for Aspirants*



## The personality

- It is the set of lower Manas, Kama, Prana and Rupa.
- It is temporary, it is born and it dies.
- It is the seat of the self, its desires, memories, thoughts, fears, conditioning, etc.
- The focus of attention is usually centered on this psychic structure.



The **personality** is the structure composed of the 4 lower principles: lower Manas, Kama, Prana and Rupa or said in our language: the lower mind, emotions, vitality and the physical body.

The word personality comes from "person", and this one from "character", the mask used by the actors in the classical theater (*personare* = to make the voice sound through the mask). This gives us the idea of an envelope or means of expression of something more internal as the actor is about the character he plays.

The personality is temporary. The esoteric tradition says that when vitality is withdrawn and the physical body dies the emotions and the lower mind gradually cease to function and life retreats to the Spiritual Soul.

Personality is the seat of the self. In reality, the I is a center of attraction around which the activity of the personality is articulated ("I think", "I want"). We have built the self during our physical life and we have loaded it with conditioning, fears, desires, memories, frustrations, prejudices and preferences. It is so charged that it acts like a colored and dense glass that prevents us from seeing reality as it is because it distorts our perception.

Another characteristic of the personality is that the same ability to routinely act and react that makes life easier in many aspects (we do not have to decide how we go to work each day) also makes it difficult for us to be creative and improve or adapt when circumstances change (there is a traffic jam in our usual route). When we want to direct consciousness to the most essential levels we find the conditionings of the personality. We need to discover them, observe them and understand their origin in order to be able to transcend them.

## The 3 brains in one

- **Paleoencephalon** (reptile)
  - Brain stem, basal ganglia, reticle
  - Automatic functions
  - → **Physical body**
- **Mesocephalus** (mammal)
  - Limbic system: amygdala, thalamus, hypothalamus, olfactory bulbs, septal region, ...
  - → **Emotions**
- **Telencephalon** (human)
  - Neocortex
  - Higher intellectual functions: analysis, synthesis, language, ...
  - → **Mind**



They have been developed and differentiated through biological evolution

According to neurology, in the human being there are 3 brains in one, giving rise to what the neurobiologist Paul MacLean described as the **triune brain**. It is about 3 structures that have been developed at different times during biological evolution.

The oldest and most primitive brain is the **paleoencephalon**, composed of the brainstem, the basal ganglia and the reticular system. It is estimated that it has developed 500 million years ago and is present in reptiles. It deals with the basic functions of survival of the body, its automatic and instinctive functions.

The **mesocephalus** is another more modern system, implemented by the limbic system and includes the thalamus, amygdala, hypothalamus, olfactory bulbs, septal region and hippocampus. It is related to emotions, pleasure and pain, joy, depression, etc. It is incipient in birds and fully developed in mammals.

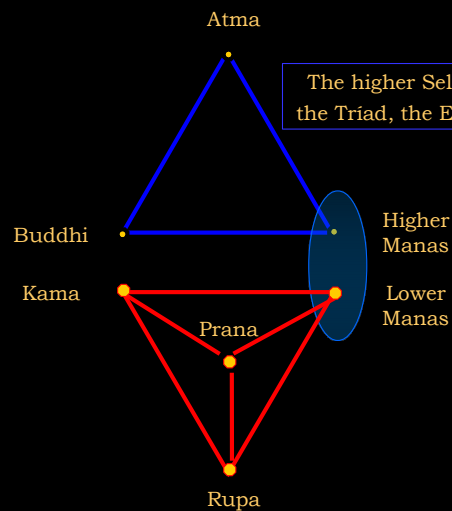
The third system, called **telencephalon** is the most modern layer in the evolution of the brain. It is estimated that it appeared about 40 million years ago and is present in higher mammals, such as cetaceans and primates but much more developed in humans. It is composed of the most peripheral area of the brain, the neocortex, and is related to higher intellectual functions such as analysis, synthesis, language functions, and the ability to relate the past-present and future, among others.

Notice that these 3 brain systems correspond to 3 principles of personality postulated by Theosophy: the brainstem with the physical, the limbic system with Kama or emotions and the neocortex with Manas or thought.

The mainstream within biology is *reductionism*, which assumes that consciousness is the product of biological activity. In a later chapter we will see that there are other positions and certainly the perennial wisdom affirms something different: that the brain is the vehicle of consciousness and that both work together but that consciousness cannot be reduced to a product of matter.

## The upper triad

- It is the set of Atma, Buddhi and higher Manas.
- It is the relatively permanent structure of the human being, the final repository of learning.
- In theosophical literature is usually mentioned as Ego, but in reality in his kingdom the self vanishes.
- The relationship between higher mind and lower mind is called *Antakarana* and is like a bridge between the upper triad and the personality.



The triad composed of Atma, Buddhi and Upper Manas is known in Theosophy as the spiritual Soul, the higher Self or the spiritual Ego or with their Sanskrit names as Atma-Buddhi-Manas.

It is the relatively permanent structure of the human being, the final repository of learning and the experiences of life. The spiritual soul does not act directly in the external world but through the personality.

In theosophical literature the triad is usually called the "Ego", clarifying that it is not the "personal self" of psychology. Even so, the name is unfortunate because it reinforces the idea of a separate self when in fact the principles of Buddhi and Atma act with awareness of the Unity of Life. The upper triad is our most permanent singular expression, with a style or color that depends on the experiences lived in multiple incarnations as we will see later.

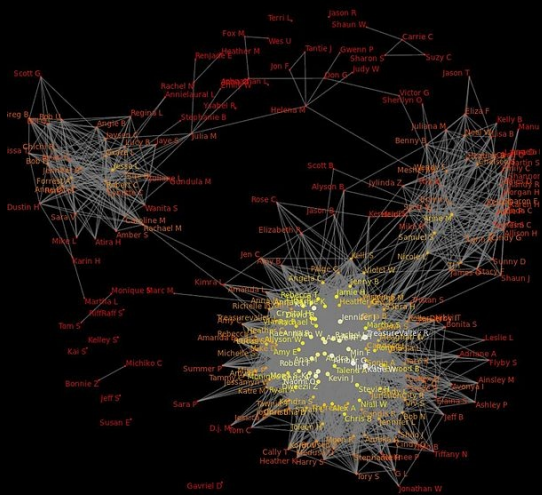
In the scheme the superior principles are "reflected" in the lower ones according to vertical lines. This means that there is a special relationship between higher Manas and lower Manas, which is easy to understand because they are the dual aspects of the mind. This relationship between them is called "the *Antakarana* bridge". There is also a relationship between Buddhi and emotions and between Will and Rupa, the physical body.

## We are social beings

- We participate in several networks: family, friends, colleagues, ...
- We communicate with others through various ways: personal contact, telephone, e-mail, etc.
- It has been found that each person has an average of 150 contacts but can influence up to a 3rd degrees of relationship.

Understanding how we relate is vital to understand ourselves.

The man is him and his circumstances  
*José Ortega y Gasset*



Example of relationships  
in a social network

We cannot understand ourselves if we do not also understand how we relate to others. The human being, like almost all beings in nature, is a sociable being that establishes relationships with its environment and especially with its peers.

In our time we try to understand these relationships through the study of **social networks**, the networks of natural relationships that we establish with other people. We participate in several networks or, better yet, we would say that our network is made up of diverse areas: family, friends, work or study colleagues, our neighbors, clients, etc.

We communicate with other members of the network through different means: personally, by phone, by email or by social networking platforms on the Internet such as Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApps or Twitter. We should not confuse the social network with the channel we use to communicate, although it has become popular to call these Internet platforms with the name of social networks.

Social networks have a great influence on us and we on it. On average, a person has about 150 contacts that change over time. Not only the number of contacts, but also the topology of the network, that is, its structure. We are happier when our network is more interconnected, that is, if our friends are also friends with each other.

James Fowler, a social networks specialist at the University of California, San Diego, United States, has drawn some conclusions from his studies:

- Our personal brand influences our environment. We influence up to 3 degrees of connection (friends of friends of our friends). Examples have been found with obesity and smoking cessation.
- We are influenced by the structure of our network. If two of our friends are not friends with each other, we are overwhelmed.
- Only 30% of people are married to someone who was not introduced to them.

So, in order to understand ourselves, we also need to know how we relate to each other since, as the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset said: "*Man is him and his circumstances*".

## Who am I?

- The important thing is to know ourselves.
- Only each of us can discover it for himself.
- We must find out by discarding:
  - Preconceived ideas
  - Beliefs
  - Compulsive tendencies
  - Contradictions
- It is the task of self-discovery and transformation.



All the above suggests that in us there is a reality, an activity of consciousness, that cannot be reduced to being merely the byproduct of the material. The material seems to be the necessary support of consciousness, but both are like the obverse and the reverse side of a coin.

So, who are we? This question can only be answered by each one of us individually. We can study about the biological reality of the human being, we can study about his psychology, we can know his works, his art, his history. But to discover ourselves we need something different, an introspection, to try to see and to listen inside ourselves, and outside, which is our reflection. The scheme of the Principles is only a scheme, a framework for study, but to really understand ourselves we must go further.

In order to achieve this goal we need to create the right conditions, clarifying our own instrument of knowledge, opening our mind and emotions towards that internal reality. For this we must discover and discard those things in our psychological nature that become obstacles because they deeply distort our vision of reality, such as preconceived ideas, beliefs, inclinations or compulsive tendencies, contradictions, and in short, everything that prevents us from being whole beings.

An inscription in the temple of Delphi said: "*Know yourself*". And this is as valid at that time as it is now.

We will talk about this introspection at the end of the course, when we have a broader idea of the foundations of the theosophical philosophy.

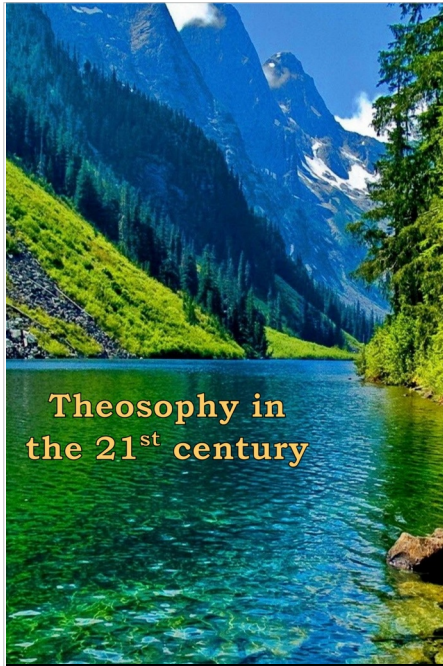


## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- How would you differentiate your biological part from your psychological part? How do they relate?
- 2- Why is a difference made between the spiritual soul and the animal soul?
- 3- Are the Principles attributes of the mind such as memory?
- 4- Why is the mind divided into superior and inferior?
- 5- Bring examples of concrete thoughts and abstract thoughts.
- 6- Try to express the ideas the expression "Buddhi is the light of consciousness" suggests.



**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## ***6 The cyclical evolution***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

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## The law of cycles

- Evolution does not proceed linearly but in **cycles**.
- Life expresses itself, creates forms, experiences and then retracts assimilating experience.
- Example: life expressing itself periodically on the tree, year after year.

Behind the cyclical manifestation there is always something that evolves.

One of the most clarifying observations of Theosophy is that there are cycles throughout the Universe and that Evolution proceeds in cycles.

Life expresses itself through forms, experiences through them, learns from interaction with the outside world. Then he retracts, abandons the forms and assimilates the experience to start another cycle again.

We can see for example life in a deciduous tree. During the spring, the tree seems to be born to life, grows its branches, unfolds its leaves, flowers, bears fruit, spreads its seeds and after summer, in the autumn, its sap begins to retract, its leaves dry and they fall, and life seems to have been removed from the tree. However, it is latent assimilating the substances and hoping to start a new cycle on next spring. So, year after year, the tree repeats the experience. It seems that it was always the same, but only it is in appearance. The tree grows through these cycles of expansion and retraction, and each summer is different, more grown, more robust and more adapted to its environment. The same thing we observe in the whole nature with the cycle of the seasons. And we ourselves are not oblivious to it.

In the same way life experiences and evolves through cyclical manifestations. Everything in the manifestation is subject to cycles.

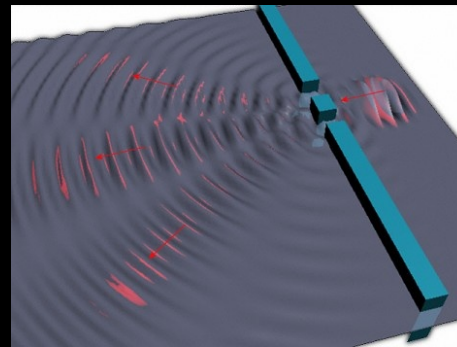
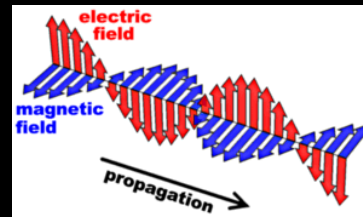
Intra-Cosmic motion is eternal and ceaseless; cosmic motion (the visible, or that which is subject to perception) is finite and periodical.

Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, Proem*

## Cycles in matter and energy

- Wave movements are common in nature.
- Orbits of planets, stars, ...
- Sound, light and electromagnetic radiation in general are waves.
- The particles of matter are particles and waves at the same time.
- The whole universe of matter and energy is cyclical.

Electromagnetic waves



Particle-wave duality

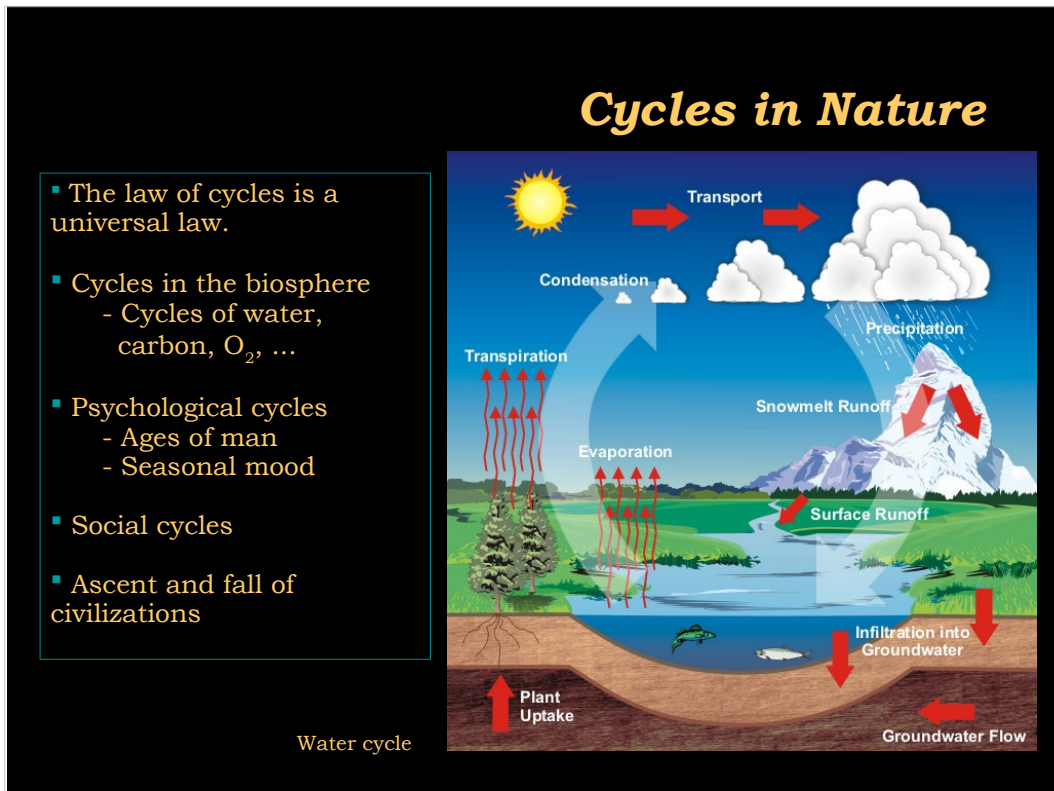
Wave phenomena is everywhere in physical nature.

Everything turns, everything beats, everything vibrates: the planets rotate on their axis and also revolve around their star, the stars revolve around the center of the galaxy, etc. The sound is a mechanical ripple that propagates in a medium. The light, the infrared rays, the radio and television signals, the signals that we use in mobile phones and in a Wi-Fi, all of them are electromagnetic waves, periodic variations of the electric field and its partner, the magnetic field that propagate in space or through a non-conductive medium. Our modern life is possible thanks to them.

The material objects are composed of molecules, these by atoms and these in turn by particles. But quantum physics has discovered that particles are not simply tiny fragments of matter but have a duality intrinsic to all matter. They are both wave and particle. As particles they are located at a point, but as waves they are distributed throughout space and interact with the waves of other particles, resulting in very small scales to quantum phenomena. Physicists Louis De Broglie, David Bohm and other successors described these waves as guiding waves because they guide the particle in its movement.

The French mathematician Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier (1768-1830) demonstrated how any mathematical function that expresses the variation of something in time can be decomposed into a sum of pure sine-wave basic functions of harmonic frequencies, creating the *Fourier series* and the *Fourier transform*, mathematical tools widely used in the field of mathematics, physics and engineering.

Then we see that the whole physical world of matter and energy is vibration and waves and therefore is composed of innumerable cyclic phenomena.



We can easily observe cycles in all areas of Nature. Perhaps because they are so obvious and because they are present everywhere, we do not usually notice them, but their existence is a universal law.

There are many cycles in living beings as described in Biology. There are the cycles of breathing, the heartbeat, the cycles of metabolism, the hormonal cycles in certain organisms, the circadian cycle that synchronizes our waking and sleep with day and night, brain waves, and of course, the cycle of birth and death.

In the ecosystem of the Earth we have innumerable cycles. There are cycles of astronomical origin such as day and night, year and seasons, and also glacial periods. In atmospheric phenomena we also have cycles with air circulation. Substances within the ecosystem are transported in cycles as is the case with water, CO<sub>2</sub>, oxygen, carbon and calcium, to name a few examples. They all form a wonderful combination and constitute the cycles of life.

On the other hand, we can all recognize that we are subject to psychological cycles, often influenced by external, seasonal cycles, such as post-holiday depression at the beginning of autumn, and other times due to phases of our own personal growth and maturation.

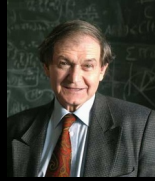
Society itself is subject to cycles and oscillations in politics, in opinions, in fashions, and many times we see the rebirth of things that seemed buried in the past.

Civilizations are also subject to a cycle of birth, expansion, splendor and decay. A new civilization is born from the remains of an earlier one, giving a new twist to the wheel of life.

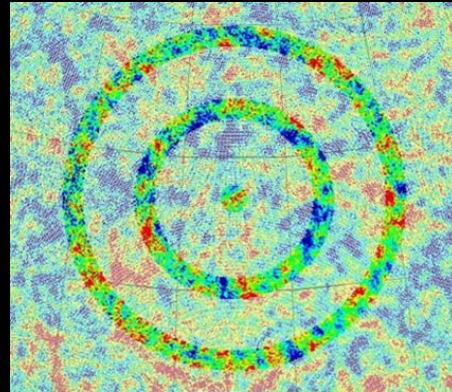


## Cyclic Cosmology

- The physicist and mathematician Roger Penrose proposes a cyclical succession of Universes.
- Each cycle is called an *eon* and it is estimated  $10^{100}$  years.
- Penrose says that on the map of the cosmic microwave background there is the trail of 2 big-bangs of universes before the present one
- Idea still in discussion



Roger Penrose  
(1931-)



Signs of 2 previous big-bangs

And what about the entire Universe? Astronomers have found that the Universe arose from a singular point 13.7 billion years ago and underwent a great expansion and transformation, which is known as the *Big Bang*. But what is the future of the Universe? This is something that is still under discussion.

Most astrophysicists think in our present time that the Universe is in an accelerated expansion and that it will end up cooling down, diluting, to put it metaphorically. Space and time will dilate so much that they will give rise to the night of the Universe and the end of the world.

But not all agree with the idea of a one time use and throw away Universe. It is philosophically unsustainable, it seems somewhat fortuitous and reminds us of the conceptions of the past about the world in which the human being, especially in its place and time, was the axis of the world. The one-time model of the Universe is an egocentric conception.

Other scientists propose models of **Cyclic Cosmologies** in which our Universe is only an instance in the succession of Universes that appear in a big-bang, but then contract, disappear (*big crunch*) and everything starts again, like a bounce (*big bounce*).

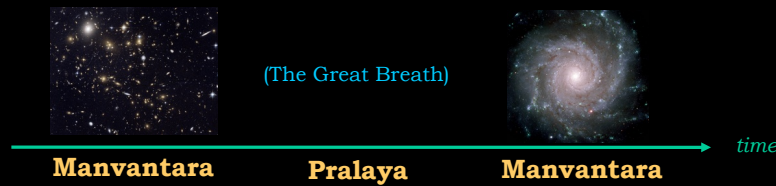
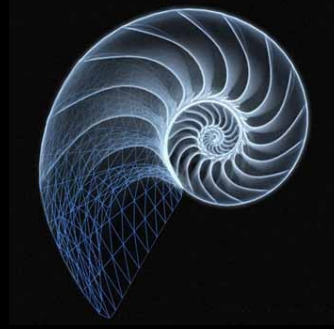
The British mathematician and physicist Roger Penrose has been more daring and proposes a theory on how this happens. According to Penrose each cycle, which he calls *Eon*, has a duration of about  $10^{100}$  Earth years, that is 10 multiplied 100 times by itself, which is a huge period of time.

Penrose has analyzed the radiation of the CMBR (Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation) captured by space probes. This radiation is the echo of the first radiation of matter after the Big-Bang. Penrose says that doing the corresponding analysis has found in the CMBR evidence of 2 violent events, two previous big-bangs, in the form of subtle concentric circles.

Although there is still controversy about whether or not there actually exist circles in the CMBR, this tells us where the leading scientists are currently pointing.

## Manvantara and Pralaya

- The Vedas say that the Universe manifests and retires periodically.
- There are consecutive periods of manifestation (**manvantaras**) and unmanifestation (**pralayas**).
- The essence (**noumenon**) that is behind the **phenomenon** evolves with each cycle of manifestation.



The ancient sacred scriptures of India, the Vedas, tell us from very old that the Universe is a cyclic manifestation, a succession of periods of manifestation and activity, called **Manvantara**, and periods of rest, latency or assimilation, called **Pralaya**. They say that the Absolute expresses itself by manifesting itself periodically, giving rise to the appearance of a Universe with beings and matter. They call these universal cycles "*the days and nights of Brahma*."

It is essential that we realize that behind the cyclical phenomenon there is always an essence that evolves thanks to its periodic expression.

We must understand then the difference between the *Noumenon*, the essence, the unmanifested that remains behind the cyclic expression, and the *Phenomenon*, its periodic expression, its manifestation. Plato introduced this idea in philosophy which was later criticized until the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) developed his critique of pure reason based on this distinction. For Kant, the knowable world is the phenomenon, the world of experience, but behind each phenomenon there is a noumenon, a structure that we cannot know through sensible experience.

The esoteric doctrine teaches, like Buddhism and Brahminism, and even the Kabala, that the one infinite and unknown Essence exists from all eternity, and in regular and harmonious successions is either passive or active. In the poetical phraseology of Manu these conditions are called the "Days" and the "Nights" of Brahmâ. The latter is either "awake" or "asleep."

Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, Proem

In short, everything is regulated by the law of cyclical manifestation, and the human being is not an exception.

## Cycles within cycles

- There are minor cycles within larger cycles.
- Eg: the fetus reproduces on a small scale the evolution of the form.
- Eg: nights and days, years, precession of the equinoxes, solar revolution in the galaxy, ...
- Similarity: as it is above, it is below.
  - In space: fractals
  - In time: cycles within cycles



A characteristic of cycles in Nature is the existence of smaller cycles within larger cycles.

The day and the night happen within the cycle of the year, and this cycle is within the cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, which is within the cycle of oscillations of the Earth's orbit responsible for the great glacial periods, which is within the cycle of rotations of the Sun around the center of the galaxy, and so on.

During its development cycle, the human fetus reproduces the evolutionary cycle of animal forms on a small scale.

We see then that there is a similarity between the major cycles and the minor ones, as the hermetic axiom says "*as it is above, it is below*". Small cycles reproduce on a smaller scale what happens in the major cycles.

In a previous chapter we mentioned fractal structures. they are figures that have the property of multiple similarity. A part is similar to the whole, as in a fern or a tree. They are an example of similarity in space. If we generalize this concept to the domain of time we can see that cycles within larger cycles are also relations of similarity but in time, therefore they are like *fractals in time*.

If we apply the law of cycles to the human being, we see that it is natural to think that the cycle of birth, physical life and death should not be unique, because if it were, it would be a great exception in nature.

## The reincarnation

- The human soul embodies in a succession of personalities

- In an incarnation:
  - It experiences, learns, grows
  - Gradual development

- Between incarnations:
  - It assimilates what it has learned
  - Experience → virtues

The cycle of an incarnation is not unique but is one more in a succession.



We thus come naturally to the idea of **reincarnation**.

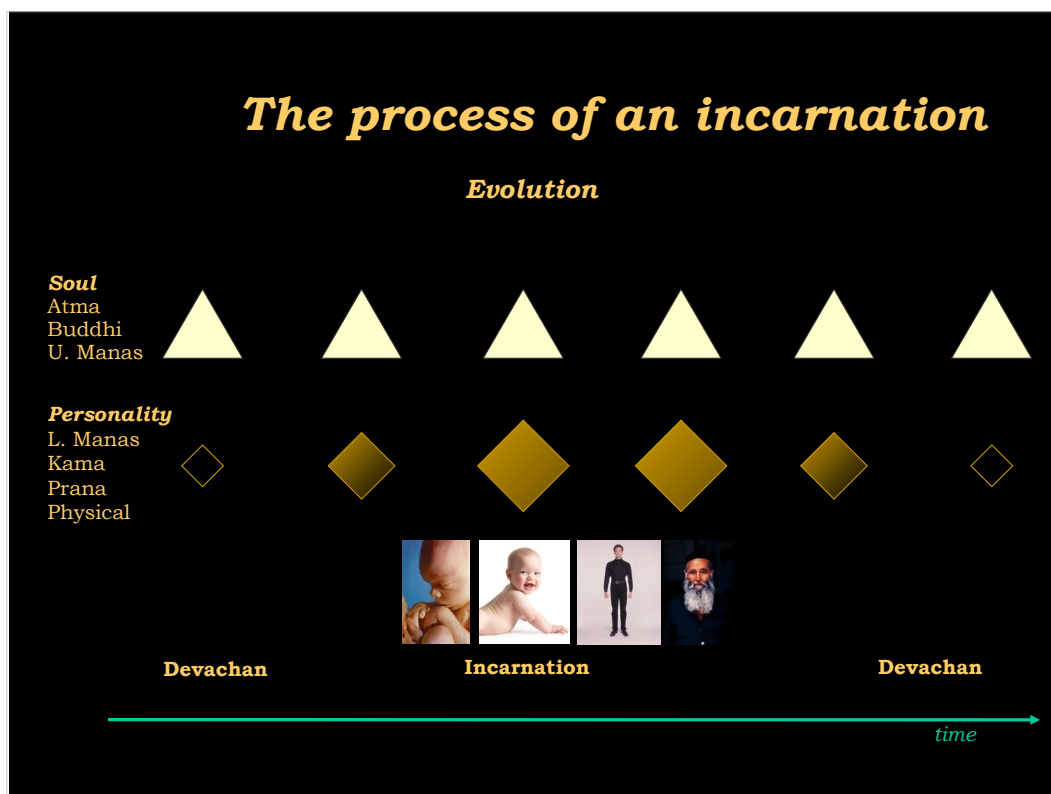
In the model of reincarnation, the spiritual soul, a relatively permanent core of the human being, does not manifest itself in a single body in its history, but takes different successive incarnations, in a succession of personalities with different bodies.

In each incarnation, the human being experiences through his personality, faces the challenges of life, loves, pursues ends, is filled with joy, suffers, thinks, remembers and desires. Through all this he learns from experiences and grows inwardly, grows in knowledge and everything seems to indicate that he is capable of distilling that knowledge into a broader, deeper and more true vision of life.

The esoteric philosophy tells us that in the period between two successive incarnations, the spiritual soul, or internal being, assimilates the experiences and what was learned in the last incarnation, converting experience and learning into qualities, in innate faculties that will be put into effect in the next incarnation.

Then the soul gradually develops its potentialities through the different incarnations, not being limited to a single opportunity. It would be a great failure in the economy of life that the evolutionary process provided only one chance. It is like if our physical life were limited to a single cycle, to a year, for instance, or if the Earth could revolve only once around the Sun, or as if the water on Earth evaporated and never returned.

If we look at how the water of a river flows to the sea and do not take into account the complete water cycle--how it evaporates and then returns in the form of rain and snow--we would think that the river will one day be exhausted. But in nature everything acts in cycles and the soul returns to incarnate after death, like water returns to the earth to pass through mountains and valleys to return again the bed of a river.



Each cycle of an incarnation comprises of the time of the incarnation itself. That is, the one that passes between birth and physical death, followed by a time known in Tibetan tradition as the **bardo** which takes place between physical death and the next birth in a new human body.

Helena Blavatsky tells us that the human soul, constituted by the higher principles Atma (Will), Buddhi (Intuition) and Higher Manas (Intelligence) is manifested through a new personality in each incarnation. She says that after physical death there is a time of dissolution of the personality in which a kind of wearing away of Kama, desire, occurs first. Then comes a time of rest and peace when the soul enters the state of **devachan**, a word that in Sanskrit literally means the abode of the gods.

Esoteric philosophy describes devachan as a dream state based on the ideas that the personality has generated in its earthly life, but now free of anguish, fear and suffering. Subsequently another transformation ensues and the soul is finally in a period of assimilation of the total experience of its last incarnation before undertaking the process of reincarnation.

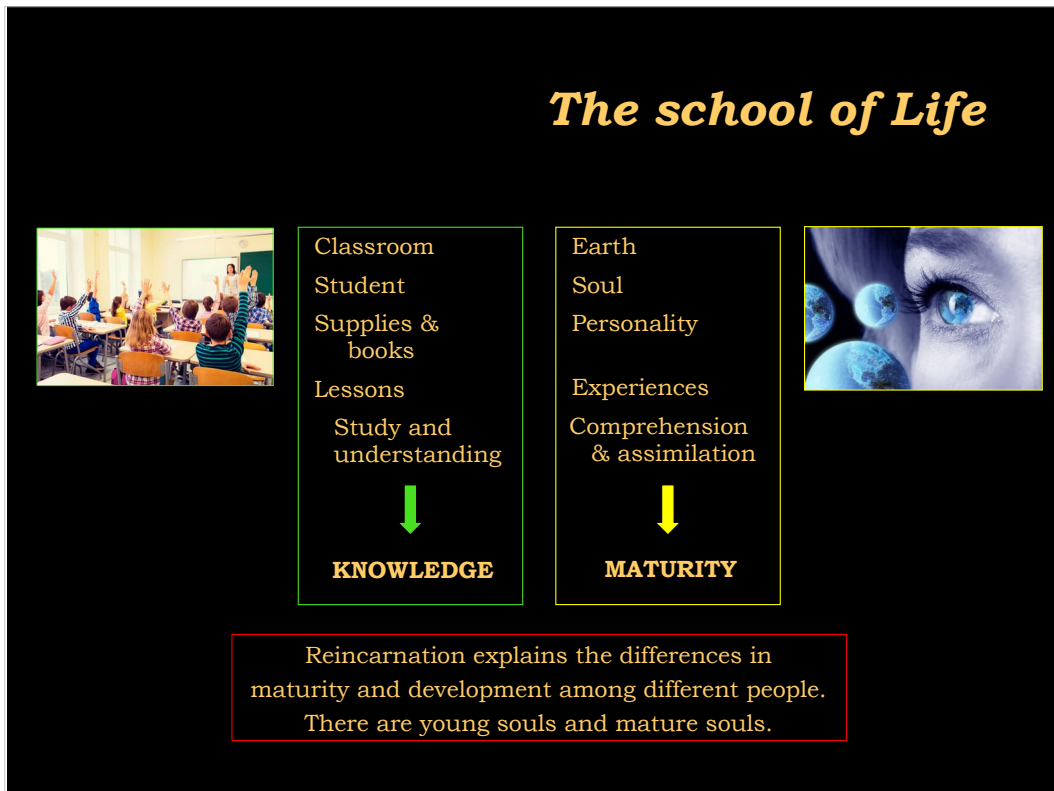
After this, the soul prepares a new personality constituted by the lower Mana (concrete Mind), Kama (desire-emotion), Prana (vitality) and incarnates in a new physical body, being born in the terrestrial world as a baby. The new personality has no memory of the previous incarnations, because such memories reside in the higher principles of the inner being, and must learn again to adapt to its environment. On the other hand, the new incarnation has the skills and maturity developed from the previous incarnations.

The soul evolves thanks to the experiences of the personality, that does not remember previous incarnations of the soul because the mind, emotions and body are new in each incarnation. This allows us to start the new life fresh but with innate qualities and wisdom from previous incarnations. This is similar to a student who begins a new year of studies with new notebooks and books. He has the opportunity to start over without making so many mistakes and learn new experiences in his new environment.

As a man discards old clothes and dresses in new ones, so the body-dweller leaves the old body and enters a new one.

*Bhagavad Gita, 2.22*





The process of reincarnation has often been compared to the education of a child in school.

At the school we have classrooms, students who attend class using pencils, papers and books for their study activities. In class they receive lessons that will be studied and assimilated at home with homework. The result of this process is the development of knowledge and diverse faculties of the personality of the student.

Similarly, on Earth there are souls that embody, they use personalities to express themselves, to interact and to experiment. In the period after death, the soul understands and assimilates experiences, developing faculties and maturing, and in this way, through many incarnations, we become increasingly aware of the potentiality of our inner Being.

We do not usually remember the circumstances in which we learned to multiply, but we have the ability to do so despite that. In the same way, we do not remember the circumstances in which we have developed faculties such as sympathy, courage and affection, but if we do have them, they arise naturally from the spiritual soul although their development has taken place in previous incarnations.

Reincarnation satisfactorily explains the differences between the abilities of people, since there will be more mature souls than others, just as in the school there are more advanced students than others. More mature souls better understand the nature of life, make better decisions and relate better to those around them. They can also manifest a very developed ability from an early age due to previous incarnations that makes them appear as innate geniuses in the eyes of the world. Consider the example of Mozart. Although it is true that he was born into a family of musicians and that his father educated him intensely, his precocious musical genius cannot be explained only by the favorable environment. Reincarnation tells us that the appearance of a genius like Mozart is not due to whims of Nature but to previous work developed by the spiritual soul in previous incarnations.

## Reincarnation, a universal idea

### RELIGIONS

Hinduism  
Buddhism  
Taoism  
Gnosticism  
Paganism  
Early Christian times

### POPULAR BELIEF

- 20% of adults in USA  
(Gallup Organization, 2005).  
- 22% of adults in Western Europe.

### SCIENCE

Ian Stevenson  
Erlendur Haraldsson  
Jim Tucker  
Satwant Pasricha



### OTHERS

Goethe  
Benjamin Franklin  
Henry Ford  
Winston Churchill  
Glen Ford

### PHILOSOPHERS

Pythagoras  
Socrates  
Plato  
Plotinus  
Giordano Bruno  
Voltaire  
Emerson  
Thomas Huxley

The idea of reincarnation is not strange in the world, but rather it is a concept universally recognized in different times and in different peoples. Several religions have it in their beliefs. It was also common in some thinkers in the early days of Christianity, as an inheritance of Paganism, until it was declared anathema at the Council of Constantinople in the year 553.

Many philosophers and notable people like Pythagoras considered it seriously because it offers a coherent explanation for the differences in maturity towards life among human beings that are in the world.

According to a survey conducted in 2005 on several issues by the Gallup Organization, 20% of adults in the United States of America and 22% in Europe believe in reincarnation. Another study conducted in Europe by Erlendur Haraldsson of the University of Iceland between 1999 and 2002 reveals similar figures, although with a lot of variation according to the countries. In Western Europe an average of 22% of the population believes in reincarnation. In Spain, 20% believe in it while in Switzerland 36% do with 41% in Iceland.

For a review of reincarnation in people and thinkers from different eras, read the following:

Article "Reincarnation definition, meaning, proof and evidence":  
<http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/r/reincarnation.html>

This Wikipedia article is also highly recommended:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation>

## *Is there any evidence?*

▪ There is no conclusive scientific evidence but there are very significant indications:

▪ Affections without apparent explanation

▪ Hypnotic regression

▪ Spontaneous or sought perceptions

▪ Testimony of children



However, the fact that reincarnation is a relatively popular belief or a hopeful and beautiful idea does not make reincarnation something true. Can it not be that we try to escape the fact of inevitable death? Could it not be a self-defense reaction to the destruction of the self?

Then we must ask ourselves legitimately: is there evidence that reincarnation really exists?

The challenge in answering this question is that according to the model, in each incarnation we have a fresh mind, and therefore although we have developed the skills we have learned in the past, we do not remember the events of the previous incarnations.

According to the rigorous method of scientific research, there is still no conclusive evidence for science to consider such a thing as a soul dissociated from the brain, but there are very important indications that can be classified into several categories and that we will analyze in depth:

- Unexplained affections
- Hypnotic regression
- Spontaneous or sought perceptions
- Testimony of children

## Unexplained affections

- Unexplained interest in a country or culture
- Recurring dreams or nightmares
- Apparently irrational fears or phobias
- Physical conditions not explained (somatization), perhaps chronic
- *Déjà vu*

They are very subjective impressions.  
They can be influenced by many factors.



One of the signs of having a past prior to our current birth is that of affections which cannot be explained by events of the present incarnation.

Most of the preferences and rejections that we have are due to experiences of the present incarnation. As it is well known by psychologists, the experiences of our childhood leave a deep imprint on our mind and our emotions even if we do not realize it. Many people unconsciously tend to look for a partner that resembles one of their parents, or try to continue or remedy situations in their new family that occurred in their family of origin.

But sometimes there are tendencies, likes for a certain style, interest in a strange country or an ancient culture that are not caused by childhood events or education, and that may be rooted in a previous incarnation. Sometimes these conditions manifest themselves in the form of dreams or recurrent nightmares without a clear meaning being noticed.

The shocking experiences suffered in a previous incarnation could be behind unexplained phobias such as the terror of water or fire, and of chronic diseases that have no apparent cause and occur rather through somatization.

Finally, the phenomenon known in popular culture as *déjà vu*, finding ourselves in a new place or circumstance while having the feeling of having already been in that place or having gone through that experience, may be due to a similar experience lived in another incarnation.

We must bear in mind that these conditions are entirely subjective impressions and that they may be generated by different causes and can become activated by multiple factors.

## Hypnotic regression

- Memory of past lives in a state of hypnotic trance.
- They can extend to several incarnations.
- Hypnotherapy.
- Very susceptible to fantasies and transposition.
- Very unreliable
- ... *but there are remarkable cases (i.e.: Jane Evans).*



Hypnotic regression is a therapeutic and research technique by which the subject is induced into a hypnotic trance state by a therapist. When in a trance state, the therapist asks him to try to remember and relate events from his previous incarnation.

During the hypnotic trance the subject is more open to the contents of the unconscious. In the same way that childhood experiences that seemed forgotten appear, the regression to a previous incarnation can reveal experiences that are not in the ordinary mind of the subject, but in his spiritual soul and that manage to pass to the current personality through the mental structure of the subconscious.

The subject thus develops a broader perspective that allows him to better understand his present incarnation and overcome some traumas or anguish due to facts incomprehensible to him. This is the foundation of *hypnotherapy*. In hypnotic regression stories can appear not only of the previous incarnation, but also of other incarnations that were significant for the soul.

The main driver of hypnotic regression is the American psychiatrist Dr. Brian Weiss (1944-), author of the book *Many lives, Many Masters*. In the book, Weiss tells the stories of one of his patients, whom he called Catherine, obtained through hypnotic regression. Weiss, who initially did not believe in reincarnation, verified many details of these stories that encouraged him to continue in this way.

The problem with hypnotic regression is that it is very unreliable since it is subject to the influence of the therapist, who is able to transmit his own beliefs and previous ideas. Also the own fantasy of the subject can distort or magnify these stories in such a way that they do not come from experiences of previous incarnations, but from desires or unconscious fears of the subject.

However, the fact that the hypnotic regression is unreliable and very subject to fantasies does not invalidate the evidence of reincarnation that some notable cases can provide.



One of these remarkable cases is the one of the nicknamed Jane Evans who was subjected to hypnotic regression by Dr. Arnell Bloxham and who was treated in a BBC documentary called "The Bloxham tapes".

Jane Evans, a Welsh housewife, agreed to be filmed for BBC television being regressed back to a past life by Arnell Bloxham, president of the British Society of Hypnotherapists and a respected practitioner. She had originally consulted him about rheumatism and under hypnosis, revealed seven past lives including one life - where the regression was televised - where she identified herself as a Jewish woman living in the city of York in 12th century England.

She described many details of Jewish life at the time and how she and the local Jews were forced to wear badges to identify themselves. She also spoke of a terrible massacre of the Jewish population by the local townspeople. During this event, she recalled taking shelter with her children in the crypt of a local church, but they were discovered by the mob and that is where she died.

Professor Barrie Dobson, an expert on Jewish history at York University, was called in to check the information from her memories. He found that her description of 12th century Jewish life was impressive with its accuracy and in fact he was convinced that some of the details would have only been known to professional historians. However it also seemed that some details appeared to be quite incorrect. Firstly, it was not until the 13th century (1215 to be precise) that the Church authorities in Rome decreed that Jews in Christian countries were to wear special identification. Secondly, from her description, the church had to have been St. Mary's Castlegate, but it did not have a crypt.

However further investigation revealed that the practice of making Jews wear identification was already widespread in England during the 12th century before the church decree. Then astonishingly several months later, during renovation of the church a sealed chamber was discovered below the floor which appeared to have been a crypt - a very rare phenomenon indeed for churches in the area.

So not only did her regression bring forth obscure details which were historically accurate, it also yielded historical information which should most definitely not have been available at that time.

From the web The Reincarnation FAQ, talking about the documentary "The Bloxham Tapes" by BBC:

<http://kuriakon00.tripod.com/reincarnation/faq.htm>

## Other perceptions

- Spontaneous fleeting memories (**flashbacks**).
- They can be activated by an event.
- They can appear with meditation
- They are very subjective and unreliable.



The experiences of previous incarnations can also manifest as bursts or spontaneous perceptions that appear in the mind triggered by an external or internal event. They are fleeting memories (*flashbacks*) that do not date from the present incarnation but from some circumstance lived in a previous incarnation.

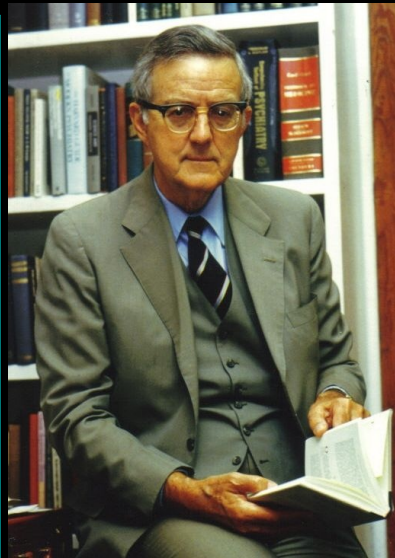
Meditation and all introspective activity that quiets the mind and tries to focus the consciousness deeper inside can trigger this type of sensation.

Fugitive memories may be messages from the unconscious that try to appear in the field of consciousness, perhaps in the form of allegories or symbols. But only a part of the unconscious is related to our inner being and our previous incarnations. The rest is populated by fears, desires, traumas, unconscious memories of childhood, etc.

So, like unexplained affections, fleeting perceptions are highly subjective, unreliable, and should be taken only as a slight clue, the cause of which could be very different from reminiscences of previous incarnations.

## *The past lives of children*

- Scientific research on the testimony of children who claim to remember a past life.
- **Dr. Ian Stevenson**, was Professor and Director of the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia.
- He researched 3,000 cases of children who said they remembered a previous life.
- A lot of scientific publications.
- Very methodical and rigorous research, in several countries and cultures.
- Study of birthmarks.
- Science does not yet have an explanation.



Dr. Ian Stevenson  
(1918 – 2007)

There are many researchers who have examined a large number of cases of children who claim to remember a previous incarnation and who have given details about it. We can quote Francis Story, a Buddhist writer, researcher of reincarnation cases in Sri Lanka, and Carol Bowman, a therapist who specializes in these cases and who maintains an interesting website: (<http://www.carolbowman.com/childrens-past-lives>) as well as Erlendur Haraldsson, doctor in psychiatry who worked on these cases for several universities, and many more researchers.

But the most impressive research work done in the academic field of science is undoubtedly the one carried out by **Dr. Ian Stevenson** (1918-2007) and his team at the University of Virginia, United States of America.

Dr. Ian Stevenson founded the Division of Perceptual Studies, a unit of the Department of Psychiatric Medicine at the University of Virginia, United States of America. He and his team have investigated more than 3,000 cases of children since 1961 who spontaneously had memories of a previous incarnation. Dr. Stevenson followed a rigorous protocol in these investigations, crossing testimonies, filtering the fraud and analyzing the most common hypothesis that could explain the cases. Then, with the data provided by each child, Dr. Stevenson has identified the family of his alleged previous incarnation, has investigated the events and has tested the child to verify his testimony and see if he could recognize the former relatives and its environment.

Using research methods of historians and crime scene investigation (CSI) specialists, he conducted a meticulous search, verifying many hundreds of cases as authentic and not explainable by other means.

Many of these cases have a common factor that in their previous incarnation there was a violent death. But Stevenson went further, finding that the children in these cases used to have birthmarks and somatizations that frequently corresponded to deadly damage or major problems present in their previous incarnations.

One of the striking cases studied by Stevenson is the so-called "Sweet Swarnlata", that of a girl in India who remembered with great detail her previous family and the place where she lived. This case is summarized in the following web:

<http://www.carolbowman.com/dr-ian-stevenson/sweet-swarnlata>

Stevenson only published scientific material, more than 300 works and 14 books directed entirely to the scientific community, leaving him questions that cannot be explained at present by means of the reductionist ideas commonly accepted by the main scientific currents.

Other researchers continue this work discovering and documenting cases all over the world. Many skeptics question this research saying that it is selective thinking, coincidences or things like that. However, these criticisms seem to be the product of prejudice because Stevenson's methodology has been unquestionable and the documented facts cannot be scientifically refuted although to date there is no scientific hypothesis to explain them.

Either Dr. Stevenson is making a colossal mistake, or he will be known as the Galileo of the twentieth century.

Dr Harold Lief, *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*

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## *Reincarnation explains life*

- Reincarnation explains many facts and certain contradictions of life.
- The evolving soul may be infantile or mature.
- The purpose of the incarnation for the inner being is to learn.
- It changes our perspective of life.
- Life makes its way like a lotus flower blooms even though its roots are in the mud.



Investigating memories of children's past lives is the most tangible and compelling evidence of reincarnation. It is not a mere fantasy or belief. There is very strong evidence that supports it. To the extent that people are willing to accept the facts found, the investigation will take a spectacular turn. One of the remarkable consequences of these cases of reincarnation is that they invalidate the reductionist assumptions of most biologists, that is, the belief that the phenomena of consciousness are a product of the biological phenomena of the brain. How did the new brain get the memories of the previous personality? If the brain were the only storage of memory, why weren't these memories destroyed when the person died?

Reincarnation satisfactorily explains many facts and apparent contradictions of life that cannot be explained simply by genetic inheritance and education received. How do early geniuses emerge? Why do some people go through life with great maturity and understanding while others make mistakes continuously that bring them pain and frustration?

Physical life is the great school of evolution. All beings are in it to learn and develop their potential. Some souls are inexperienced and others have learned more. The soul cannot realize its learning and development in the term of a single incarnation. A reboot is needed, like computers when they get stuck. The prejudices acquired, the fear of change and the narrowness of the personality makes it a very difficult moment for the inner being to continue learning through it. The assimilation in the period after death gives the internal being the necessary perspective to learn what happened in the last incarnation and in the previous ones and prepare for the next.

In research on near-death experiences, many people reported a well-known fact in psychology, the review of life when they are about to die. And most of them said that they saw their life pass quickly, without pain or sorrow, only as they watched how much they had loved and how much they had learned in it.

Being aware of reincarnation changes the perspective of life because instead of the most important thing being to have fun or conquer ephemeral achievements, we understand that it is a long-term project for the inner being and that in this incarnation we have the opportunity to bring a very important value to that project which is the evolution of the soul.

Reincarnation is not an idea to escape the pain of life or the loss caused by death, but it speaks to us about how our inner being makes its way as the lotus flower blooms although its roots are in the mud.

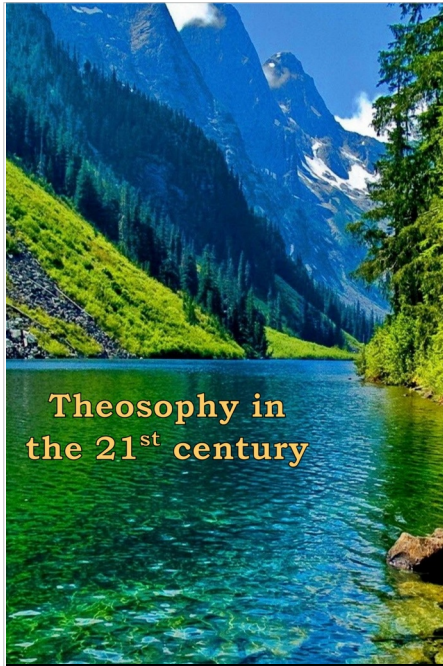


## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Mention some of the cycles that take place in the human being.
- 2- What are, in your opinion, the most important reasons for reincarnation? And reasons against?
- 3- Investigate and cite some evidence of the teaching of reincarnation in some ancient teaching.
- 4- Find the epitaph that Benjamin Franklin wrote for himself and comment on it.
- 5- Why is it so difficult to remember details of previous incarnations? How do we then learn throughout various incarnations?
- 6- How long do you think the inner being (Higher Atma-Buddhi-Manas) must reincarnate?



**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

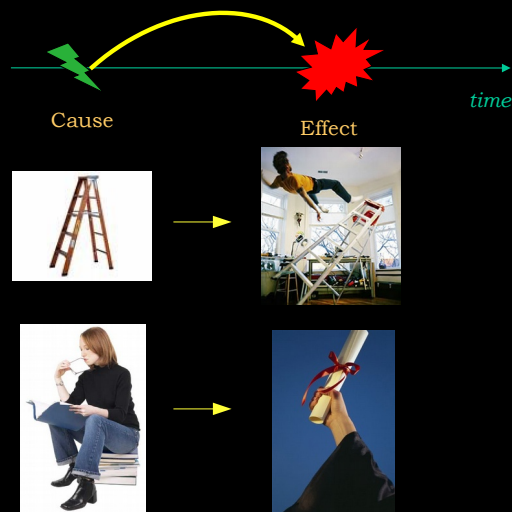
## ***7 Karma: the universal law of cause and effect***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## Cause and effect

- It is a universal Law.
- Relates two linked events that differ in time.
- The cause and effect may be more or less separated in time.
- They are two aspects of the same reality (the cause determines the effect).



Another universal law of great importance in the esoteric tradition is the law of cause and effect. According to it, every event has a cause that originates it and each action produces effects in the immediate or distant future. It is as universal as gravity or electromagnetism.

Cause and effect are two aspects of the same phenomenon, and they are only separated from one another by time.

The phenomena produced in the physical world can have effects that seem immediate, but they are also separated for a time, even if it is very small. When we turn on the light in a room, from the moment we activate the switch until the light goes on, a certain time elapses due to the speed of light and the length of the conductor cables. This time may be less than one microsecond, but it exists even though our perception seems to be immediate.

There are other phenomena that take longer to reveal their effect, such as the reaction of two chemicals to produce another.

In living organisms the effects may take much longer to occur. The ingestion of a toxic substance can take hours to take effect in a body, and bad eating habits can gradually damage an organ like the liver but the symptoms may appear only after several years.

In the same way, a psychological habit, a way of thinking, an attitude of resentment towards others, a prejudice, a conditioning, all these factors produce effects that can take a lifetime to manifest. Moreover, we probably never realize some of these cause-effect relationships in our psyche.

## Principle of causality

- It is the support of science.
- Principle of uniformity: *The same causes produce the same effects.*
- The combination of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom always produces one molecule of water.



We trust in causality in daily life

The law of cause and effect is known in Science as the **principle of causality**. This establishes that events do not occur capriciously but have a cause that creates them.

Some physicists interpret that causality cannot be applied in the field of quantum physics, but this is an interpretation of the basic fact that by observing something, we are altering it in some way due to the physical interaction between the observer and the observed.

We must also take into account the **principle of uniformity**, according to which, the same causes always produce the same effects. For example, if we combine two hydrogen atoms with one oxygen we will always have a water molecule. There is no possibility that we will get an ammonia molecule.

That is to say that the relation between the facts of cause and effect, being both aspects of the same phenomenon, does not depend on the time in which the cause is produced or the place of the space where it is carried out, nor on other circumstances. It is important to note that to achieve an effect we must take into account *all* the causes and their conditions that produce it, not just some of them.

Unconsciously we trust in the principle of causality in our daily life. We hope that if we activate the switch the light will turn on. If it does not happen we look for the cause of it, like the light bulb or the switch could be defective.

## Chain of causes and effects

The reaction to an effect becomes the cause of another event.



Automatic reactions make our behavior very predictable.



Causes and effects are linked together building a current of events or a chain of causation as it is called in Buddhism.

We perceive an event and we elaborate a reaction to it, putting in this way new causes into play.

The **reaction** is a response that involves making a decision. But this decision can be deliberate or it can be almost automatic like when we jump due to a scare.

Gautama Buddha defined the chain of causes that come from ignorance and lead to suffering as the twelve *nidanas*. Each *nidana* is the cause of the next, and in Buddhism the human being who wants to be liberated from Samsara, the wheel of births and deaths, must understand and break the chain of causation that leads to suffering.

If we react automatically, we do it based on the strategy of self-defense, preservation and the pursuit of our own interests. In this case, the new causes that we put into play are very predictable and we can say that we are chained to the circumstances. An example can be our reaction when someone points out a fault we have. We can feel this as an aggression, take it personally and attack the supposed aggressor with the strategy of "killing the messenger" who tells us something we don't like. Then we reaffirm our rights, our self, and we try to excuse ourselves by showing the part of the truth that suits us in that situation. The chain of actions and reactions has been very predictable in this example and perhaps another person who knows us would have predicted that we would react in that way.

But the important thing to realize is that in each moment we have the opportunity to decide differently and put new causes in motion, causes not conditioned to reactions, but fresh actions from our own free decision. The problem is whether we are really free of conditions in order to decide. The way we react can either spoil a relationship or keep it healthy thus being a source of learning and happiness.



## *Karma: action and reaction*

- **Karma:** (Sanskrit) **action.**
- It refers to both the process of the action and its outcome.
- The actions influence the environment, but also react on ourselves (Action and Reaction).
- The outcome of what we do sooner or later comes back to us.



"You reap what you sow"  
[S. Paul]

In the philosophies of India, there is the concept of **karma**, a Sanskrit word that literally means action, but refers to both the process of action and its effects, especially those that fall upon ourselves.

In literature and popular culture in the West, karma usually is thought of as the effects that are pending to manifest or are doing so right now. But karma designates both aspects of the process because cause and effect are separated only in time.

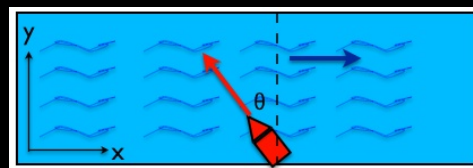
Our actions influence our surroundings, other beings, our family, our environment. This is easy to see. Today we know that the continual mistreatment our civilization has had on the environment--contaminating it, destroying its ecosystems, altering the balance, exhausting its natural resources--is producing an adverse effect by altering the climate of the planet and affecting all life negatively.

An important aspect of the law of karma is that actions also produce effects on ourselves, thus giving to law of karma a sense of action and also reaction on the originator of the action. For example, the habit of lying deceives others, but it also produces a state of confusion to the one who lies and makes him unable to distinguish the truth. The liar ends up thus entangled in his own lies.

What we do sooner or later affects us. Saint Paul expressed it as "you reap what you sow" and popular wisdom echoes this fact in many sayings.

## The fabric of Karma

- The actions are combined with each other.
- The effects of a negative action could be neutralized with another positive.
- Similar to how the impulse and water velocities of a boat that crosses a river combine to give a resulting trajectory.
- The ancient tradition says that every physical, emotional or mental action impregnates the **Akasha** (or *ākāśa*), the Space, the universal matter, the hologram of the Universe.



Analyzing cause and effect is not as simple as stating the law of karma. Actions are not usually isolated, but are combined with other actions which produce a different result. This is similar to way that forces and speeds are combined in a boat that is crossing a river. The speed of the boat in the direction of the other shore is combined with the speed with which the boat is dragged by the river current.

Each individual action produces an effect. But the events that occur on a daily basis are the result of the superposition of a huge number of causes, some from long ago, so it is sometimes difficult to know them, but they are also the result of other recent causes.

Pending effects do not fatally imply a future event. An action that produces an inconvenient effect can be neutralized with another action that produces an opposite effect. For example, if we awkwardly drop a glass tumbler to the ground, it will break when it crashes. But if we react quickly and manage to hold it in the air before it hits the ground, we will avoid the effect of the first cause with a second cause that neutralizes it.

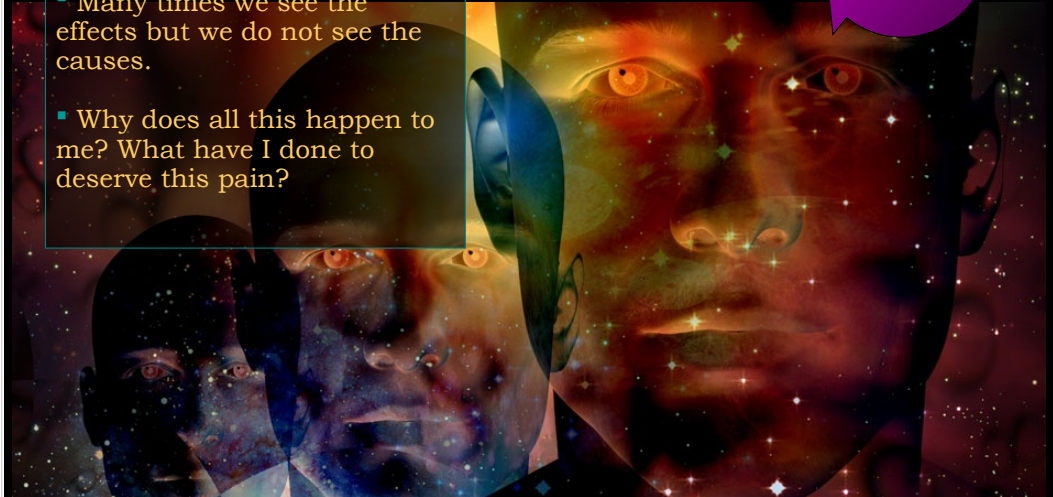
In the psychological or social world, the causes that are combined are numerous, but some of them dominate but through observation and understanding we can learn to understand why we act in a certain way.

Older traditions such as the Vedas claim that there is a primordial or universal essence that extends throughout the Universe called Akasha and that it is Space, the hologram of the Universe as some current scientists call it. Space is not a mere mathematical entity where we measure the objects it contains, but it has properties as Physics tells us. Electric and magnetic fields are modifications of space. Matter deforms the metric of space causing gravity.

According to this tradition, Akasha connects all matter and consciousness in one unit. Akasha is then the link between the internal or consciousness world and the external of matter. Any physical, emotional, mental or any action affects the Akasha and therefore to some extent affects all beings and the entire Universe. Everything is printed on the great hologram of the Akasha. The Akasha is Indra's net, like the analogy we saw in an earlier chapter, where everything is reflected in everything.

## *Karma and reincarnation*

- The results can be harvested in future incarnations.
- Many times we see the effects but we do not see the causes.
- Why does all this happen to me? What have I done to deserve this pain?



Cause and effect are separated by time. The Ancient Wisdom and logic tell us that this association can extend beyond the period of an incarnation. This means that in a future incarnation we can reap the results of causes that we are putting into play right now and that in the present incarnation we are receiving the effects of things that we have produced in some previous incarnation.

This separation in time causes us to often see the effects, things that happen to us, without finding its cause in the behavior we have had in our present life. One may ask why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this misfortune? It may happen that the cause actually comes from a previous incarnation.

The pending effects of the actions carried out in previous incarnations conditions us in the same way as the results of actions of the present incarnation, but with the aggravating fact that by not easily seeing the causes, our rational mind does not understand the association between what happens to us and what we have done.

When receiving the effects of causes performed in previous incarnations, we may think that we are receiving the consequences of actions put in place by another person at another time, but we are really the same being. Our Being incarnated with a personality in the past and now incarnates in a different one. Both are closely related and the Inner Being is ultimately responsible.

Then it is seen that the same ego that sowed karma, reaps it; that the same laborer who planted the seed harvests the fruit, even if he has changed his suit between planting and harvesting.

Annie Besant, *Karma*

## How do we receive the reaction?

- If we harm another being, we damage ourselves in part.
- The good that we do to another we also do to all others and to ourselves.
- We do not know how far the effects of our actions can have. What is the effect of a smile?



▪ **Theory of chaos:** complex interconnected systems. A small alteration can produce large changes in the result.

▪ **Butterfly effect:**  
*A butterfly beats its wings somewhere in the world and it rains on the antipodes.*



A very important question to understand the law of Karma is how do we receive the reaction? And more precisely, how is it that we can receive the effects of actions performed by an earlier incarnation, by *another person* in the past?

First, we have to look at the problem from the perspective of the Unity of Life. Being everything is a whole, whatever we do to a part of the whole we are doing to ourselves too. The idea of Akasha allows us to understand the logic that an action also has an impact on us. If we harm another being, we also harm ourselves because we are part of that being and that being is part of us.

In modern science, **Chaos Theory**, developed primarily by the American mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz (1917-2008), serves to describe systems that, although deterministic, are extremely complex, so that a small variation in one of the variables of the system causes a great variation in the system's subsequent state. An example of a chaotic system (which does not mean exempt from law but difficult to predict) is the weather. The central idea of Chaos theory is usually expressed through the butterfly effect, derived from an ancient Chinese proverb: "the flutter of a butterfly can be felt on the other side of the world." See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly\\_effect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect).

We can consider the system of all life with its parts interacting with each other, creating causes that generate effects, like a great chaotic system. That is why it is difficult for us to discern the causes from the observed effects. The effect that a smile and a kind gesture towards another person can have is difficult to predict. Perhaps the person who receives them makes better decisions that in turn positively affect many people.

The other important factor that can help us understand how we find the effects of our actions is that known in Buddhism as *skandhas*, aggregates or accumulated tendencies in different aspects.

## The Skandhas

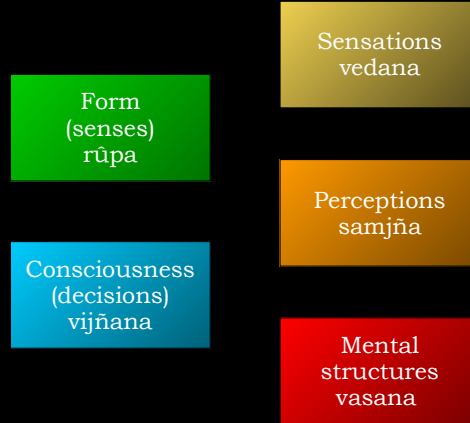
▪ **Skandha** (Sanskrit): aggregate, stack, trunk.

- These are tendencies acquired in previous incarnations that characterize and condition us.
- They are transferred to the new embodied personality.
- They make us receive the effects of the causes generated in previous lives and in the present.

Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the Ego re-emerges to assume a new incarnation.

HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*

The 5 Skandhas according to Buddhism



The Buddhist tradition uses the Sanskrit word **Skandha**, which literally means aggregate or set of attributes, to designate the psychological and even physical tendencies that characterize a person. This tradition tells us that somehow the skandhas are preserved after the death of the personality (surely in the hologram of the Universe or Akasha) and that when the Being reincarnates he meets the skandhas that he had developed in previous incarnations through his previous personalities.

Buddhism speaks of 5 kinds of skandhas that are defined by their scope: Form (related to the physical), Sensations (related to Kama), Perceptions, Mental Structures and Consciousness (decisions, discernment).

It is logical to see how, if this is so, the skandhas produce constraints, limitations and irresistible forces of attraction that will propel us into the circumstances where we face the effects of causes set in motion from the past.

After allowing the Soul, escaped from the pangs of personal life, a sufficient, aye, a hundredfold compensation, Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the Ego re-emerges to assume a new incarnation. It is at this moment that the future destiny of the now-rested Ego trembles in the scales of just Retribution, as it now falls once again under the sway of active Karmic law. It is in this rebirth which is ready for it, a rebirth selected and prepared by this mysterious, inexorable, but in the equity and wisdom of its decrees infallible LAW, that the sins of the previous life of the Ego are punished. Only it is into no imaginary Hell, with theatrical flames and ridiculous tailed and horned devils, that the Ego is cast, but verily on to this earth, the plane and region of his sins, where he will have to atone for every bad thought and deed. As he has sown, so will he reap. Reincarnation will gather around him all those other Egos who have suffered, whether directly or indirectly, at the hands, or even through the unconscious instrumentality, of the past personality. They will be thrown by Nemesis in the way of the new man, concealing the old, the eternal EGO, and . . . .

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*

Therefore, the spiritual soul is ultimately responsible, is the being who understands the chain of cause and their effects, and who learns from the experiences of every successive personality. It is the Observer.



## *Karmic ties*

- The ties that we have created with other beings endure.
- In the new incarnation, the Being is reunited with loved ones and also with enemies of the past.
- He can be born in families where he has strong ties.
- This explains the irresistible attraction of two people who meet again, "lifelong" friendships, "twin souls", falling in love, etc.



To understand Karma we must take into account that life is not only composed of facts, emotions and thoughts, but we also establish relationships with other people and with other beings in general. Modern science understands the importance of relationships and many scientists from different disciplines study social networks. A social network is the structure of relationships between individuals and defines the influences that the individual exerts and receives through it.

Our social network is made up of our closest family members, friends, study or work colleagues, the baker from whom we buy bread, neighbors, etc. With some of them we establish very strong links that are not merely circumstantial, but are an important part of our life.

Tradition and logic tell us that these relationships between Beings, between souls, is not broken by death and that thanks to Karma and reincarnation these relationships continue in successive lives, even if we have different roles in them. Our beloved son in another life may today be our beloved wife, and our soul friend may have been our mother.

Know, therefore, that from the most immense silence I will return. [...] Do not forget that I will return with you. [...] A few moments more, a moment of rest in the wind, and another woman will conceive me.

Kahlil Gibran

The deep and sudden love we feel for someone can be, in many cases, the recognition of a loved one from another incarnation, since such deep relationships cannot be explained by the attraction exerted by pheromones and hormonal chemistry.

Let us bear in mind that we have ties for both the relationships of love and affection, and for those of hate and antagonism with which we have pending karma. The esoteric tradition tells us that these relationships exert a powerful attraction for the Self when it is going to incarnate, guiding it to the bosom of a family so it can continue with its relationships, with its karma and with its learning.

## How do we sow?

- Each level of action will produce effects in its scope:
  - Physical execution → Provides the physical environment
  - Emotion-desire → Attract opportunities
  - Thought → Construct the character
- Act, intention and motivation are like dimensions of the action that determine the effect.

Aspirations and desires become aptitudes

Repeated thoughts become trends

The will to act becomes actions

Experiences become knowledge

Sufferings become consciousness

Annie Besant, *Karma*

We sow continuously, when thinking, feeling and acting. It seems logical to expect that each type of activity generates consequences of its own kind, in its own sphere.

A physical action generates effects in the environment and in those who execute it in the physical sphere itself. In the same way, desire and emotion generate the motivation, the impulse, the affections that move us and those around us, guiding us through the tangle of events to expose us to the adequate opportunities to satisfy our object of desire. This guide is partly conscious and partly unconscious. Many thinkers recognize that desire undoubtedly attracts opportunities.

When a person really wants something, the entire Universe conspires so that he can realize his dream. It is enough to learn to listen to the dictates of the heart to decipher a language that is beyond words, which shows what the eyes cannot see.

Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

The mind, through its functions of memory and thought, develops plans, seeks to know its surroundings and itself, and builds the elements of character and intellectual abilities that together with emotional and physical conditions will be the special seal that distinguish one person from others.

Sow an action and you will reap a habit, sow a habit and you will reap a character, sow a character and reap a destiny.

William James

The act, the intention and the motivation of a fact are like dimensions of the action that contribute to determine the nature of the effect. Thus, for example, the effect of the damage caused by someone ignorant that he is producing it, is very different from the effect produced by someone who knowingly does the same damage.

## How do we harvest?

### KARMA

As pending effects

- **Accumulated:** generated in the past
- **Mature:** ready to harvest
- **Future:** the one that is being planted now

According to the scope of the causative

- **Individual:** individual acts and decisions
- **Collective:** participation in group actions

In theosophical literature, we usually talk about the effects that we are receiving or have yet to receive and it is usually called karma, although we must bear in mind that the law of Karma is really the universal law that relates cause to effect.

Karma can be classified according to time as:

- **Cumulative:** The pending effects of causes generated in the past, in this one or in other incarnations.
- **Mature:** The effects that are ready to be picked up in the short term. It is the part of accumulated karma that is "ripe for harvest."
- **Future:** The effects of the causes that are currently being generated and that will be harvested in this or in a future incarnation. It is said that most of the effects we receive in our life as circumstances and events are due to causes brought into play in this same incarnation.

Karma can also be classified according to the scope of the causative:

- **Individual:** It is the set of effects generated by physical or psychological actions derived from one's own decisions. It is the karma for which we are directly responsible.
- **Collective:** The set of causes and their effects generated by a collective as a whole, with responsibility for them, as in the case of a family, a people, or a civilization.

On the collective karma, we can resort to the words of the Spanish philosopher *José Ortega y Gasset* (1883-1955):

I am me and my circumstance, and if I do not save her I do not save myself.

José Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations of Quixote*

## *Karma and responsibility*

- Responsibility means the ability to make decisions and face the consequences.
- Karma is a law of growth and responsibility, not of reward and punishment.
- Obeying only generates the karma of the action but does not exercise responsibility.
- Ignoring the effects of our actions on others is a cause of misery.
- Our destiny is to be responsible: decide wisely.



It has been pointed out that Karma, as a universal law, is a law that fosters responsibility and that is devoid of any personal sense of reward or punishment.

Being responsible means being able to decide, choosing among multiple available options to be able to act. If we only obey the order of another, we are responsible for whether we comply or not to the order, but not for the initiative of the action. So it is deduced that whoever generates the causes, and therefore will receive the consequences, is the one who has made the decision.

Karma implies responsibility, and responsibility implies growth thanks to the learning of natural laws including, among other things, cause and effect, the operation of karma. One of the greatest sources of misery is ignoring the effects our actions have on others. We tend to be self-centered and sometimes we lack sufficient empathy to measure the consequences of what we do, say, feel and think about the people we relate to.

The destiny of the human being is to become more and more responsible, more conscious. Learning from our successes and mistakes is very important to understand life and ourselves. If we are in difficulties and meditate on the possible causes, without systematically blaming others, we can understand each other better and make better decisions.

A distressing example of our ignorance is the damage that human activity has caused with the climate. As has been proven, carelessness, lack of foresight, and extreme selfishness in our activities have caused global warming that has created increasingly evident changes in the climate. This affects all beings on the planet, some fatally, leading species to extinction. But it also directly affects all human beings and especially our future generations, making our lives more miserable. The responsibility developed, thanks to the awareness of the effects we are generating, is the only thing that can definitively remedy the situation.

## Myths about Karma

- There is *good* karma and *bad* karma.
- Karma is a law of punishment and reward.
- Karma is dispensed (*they send it to us*).
- We have to be careful not to interfere in another's karma.
- *Everything* that happens to us is a consequence of our past actions.



There are many myths and misunderstandings about Karma that can be resolved by inquiring into the universal nature of the law. Let's explore some of them.

- *There is good karma and bad karma.* Karma is neither good nor bad, it is the accumulated effects of what we have done in the past that may be good or bad for us. Karma is a universal law of cause and effect, of action and reaction, and therefore is neutral. We must bear in mind that what is a serious difficulty for us can become a valuable experience if we learn from it. As an example Steve Jobs was thrown out of Apple, the company he had co-founded. Instead of collapsing, he founded another company and continued creating technology there until he triumphantly returned back to Apple and rescued it.

- *Karma is a law of punishment and reward.* Karma is not a moral law, but a universal law such as gravity or electricity. The notion of punishment or reward is only in our mind, in our fears fueled by the feeling of guilt and the myths of some religions. Religions, in general, have encouraged this idea of reward or divine punishment as a form of morals based on fear. Karma does not reward or punish but teaches.

- *Karma is dispensed (they send it to us).* A universal law cannot depend on the criteria and decision of other beings, however high their consciousness may be. How many millions of beings would be necessary to maintain balance and justice? The natural laws act from within matter and consciousness, since according to Blavatsky and the esoteric tradition, the Universal Mind (Mahat) is expressed as the Natural Laws of the Universe, calling Fohat to this relation or power. The law is reflected in every fragment of matter, in every consciousness. Nobody sends us difficulties or rewards as nobody moves the planets in their orbits around the Sun.

It is not the "Rector" or "Maharajah" who punishes or rewards, with or without "God's" permission or order, but man himself — his deeds or Karma, attracting individually and collectively (as in the case of whole nations sometimes), every kind of evil and calamity. We produce CAUSES, and these awaken the corresponding powers in the sidereal world; which powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to — and react upon — those who produced these causes; whether such persons are practically the evil-doers, or simply Thinkers who brood mischief.

Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1



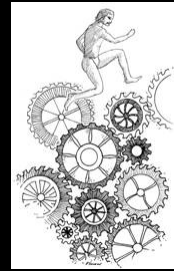
- *We have to be careful not to **interfere** in another's karma.* Again, we cannot interfere in a universal law. Interaction is the characteristic of the manifested Universe, and we are all part of the conditions that lead someone to meet the results of their actions. If we help another, we can be the “agent” that gives him relief and allows him to learn from the experience. In any case, we cannot force another person to follow a path that we believe is appropriate. Each one must make their own decisions. Good help is that which does not press but inspires and reveals that the one who receives it, improves in their understanding and choices.

- **Everything** *that happens to us is a consequence of past actions.* If we take into account again the interactive nature of the Manifested Universe, we see that there has to be spontaneous interaction, new causes and therefore "accidents", events that occur without being the effect of previous ones. These new causes will generate their own effects, of course, but we don't necessarily have to feel guilty for going through a difficulty. When a natural tragedy occurs like an earthquake, do we think that all those affected were guilty and received punishment? Was the karma a punishment for the inhabitants of Pompeii perished by the eruption of Vesuvius? This is again an idea of reward and punishment. We live on Earth, a planet in evolution, in constant motion and these misfortunes will normally be possible. We must therefore be open to the unexpected. Life has a component of uncertainty and if we accept and learn from it, it is the smartest thing we can do.

## Free will and predetermination

### The Universe can be:

- **Probabilistic**  
The causes only generate a probability that the effects will happen (there is no cause-effect relationship).
- **Predetermined**  
The chain of causation is determined from the beginning of the Universe (fatalism).
- **Deterministic**  
The events are determined by the causes, but we have free will to decide and create new causes.



The previous thought leads us to the philosophical discussion about whether there is free will or is all predetermined. There are 3 great positions about the nature of the Universe:

- **Probabilistic**. It maintains that it makes no sense to speak of cause-effect but of the probability of something happening. This vision has been fostered by some interpretations of quantum physics that say that in the small we can only know the probability of something happening. Here there is neither destiny nor free will.

- **Predetermined**. It affirms that there is cause-effect and that all events are a consequence of previous causes. According to this view, destiny exists and therefore we lack free will, since everything we do is simply one more link in the chain of causation. If every event were a consequence of a previous action, it would imply that there can be no new causes, and that the Universe is pre-determined. That is to say, that its only cause was put into play at the beginning of Manifestation and its development is mechanistic, as it happens with the balls of a pool table when giving them the initial blow. According to this approach, there is destiny and there is no free will.

- **Deterministic**. It maintains the existence of the cause-effect relationship, but at any time new causes may appear that are not the result of previous actions but of unconditioned decisions, making room for free will. But, in order to freely decide and exercise free will, it is necessary to discard the conditionings. Most of the time we simply react to external events and rarely have true initiative. The deterministic model is often confused with the predetermined.

This last model is the basis for thinking that the law is not contrary to the will, that we can evolve more consciously, and that it makes sense to try to understand Life and be happier.

## Fatality and precognition

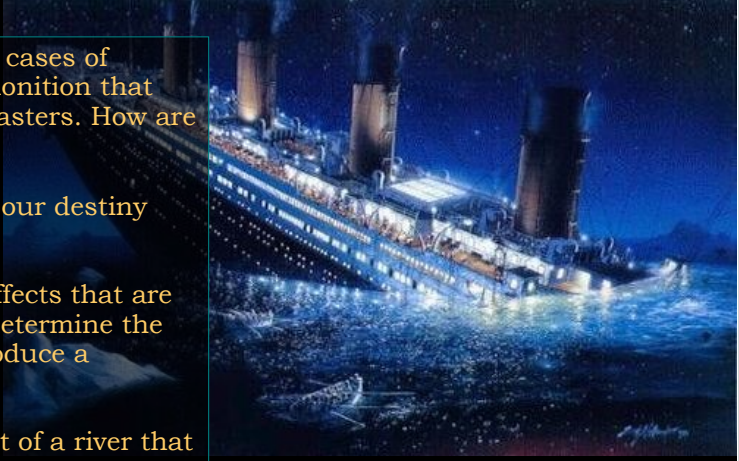
- There were notable cases of precognition or premonition that anticipated great disasters. How are they possible?

- Is there fatality? Is our destiny written?

- No, but there are effects that are so strong that they determine the circumstances to produce a significant event.

- It is like the current of a river that drags us although we swim.

- The premonitions are perceptions of the Akasha, the holographic Universe, of effects to come.



The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 was predicted by the writer Morgan Robertson in his 1898 novel called *Futility or the wreck of the Titan*.

In history there were notable cases of people who by means of **premonitions** (strong feelings of panic or that something bad is going to go happen) or **precognitions** (dreams or glimpses of what is going to happen) could anticipate major disasters and in many cases save themselves by avoiding them.

One of these cases is that of the writer Morgan Robertson who published in 1898 a novel called "*Futility or the shipwreck of the Titan*" where he described the shipwreck of a luxury ocean liner, the SS Titan, on its maiden trip when colliding with an iceberg in the North Sea. The SS Titanic was shipwrecked in 1912, fourteen years later, about 1,500 people perished. There are a lot of coincidences between the novel and the real event.

British businessman J. Cannon Middleton saved his life and that of his family by canceling his ticket at the last minute on the inaugural trip of the Titanic after dreaming two nights in a row about a shipwreck.

What does this mean? Is there fatality? Is our destiny written?

It does not seem to be the case, but what the logic indicates is that there are very strong effects that determine the circumstances for significant events to occur. The other causes put into play may contribute or mitigate the fact, but it seems that in these events there is a great force like the current of a river that drags us even though we swim.

Sometimes precognition is not exact in the details. It seems that these are defined by the decisions that are made as the events take place. This shows that Karma is not fatality but that the superposition of new causes is not enough to neutralize the stream of the great effects that are in course.

Many predictions are mere coincidences or reasoned forecasts, conscious or unconscious, of what will come in the future according to what we know in the present. But leaving aside these cases it is evident that there are people who have been able to perceive in the hologram of the universe or Akasha that stream of a future event, most likely when it can affect them or when they have something to learn from it.

## *Building our destiny*

- The most important teaching of the law of Karma is that each one is the architect of his own destiny.
- The limitations exist, but the reaction depends on us, and with it we build our future.
- Accept the inevitable.
- Correct the mistakes made.
- Live in the present because it is here and now where we are sowing.



The most important conclusion we reach when we examine the law of Karma is that each one of us is the architect of our own destiny. We will reap what we sow with our actions, with our desires and feelings and with our thoughts and ideas.

It is true that we have limitations that bind us and condition us. We can have social, economic and family duties. We may be going through an adverse period fighting against the current. But it is clear that the reaction we offer to external conditions and limitations depends entirely on us. And that is what we sow right now, in every moment. With this we build our future, miserable or beautiful. It just depends on ourselves.

We have to learn to accept the inevitable, whether it is the consequence of our actions or “an accident”—that of a new cause put into play by others that affects us—or even the fruit of the dynamics of the physical world. To what extent are we responsible for a flood or fire? Many times they are the product of bad decisions or lack of foresight. To what extent are we responsible for an earthquake or a natural disaster? We are probably not responsible, except for the very fact of living on Earth that at the same time welcomes us and gives us life. It does not matter if it is a consequence or of something we have not done. We cannot know it at the level of the mind. Probably the Being can know it at the time. But the important thing is that whatever happens to us, whatever the challenge and danger we face, we must accept the situation because it is an experience that is present and from which we have something to learn. We must also accept our mistakes without feelings of guilt but with the attitude of amending them and mitigating their consequences.

In short, we must live in the present because the past cannot be modified and the future will be as we build it now. **The present, the here and now** is where we are really building our destiny. We can do it blindly and learn by trial and error, or we can try to be aware of it and do it with intelligence.

## To think

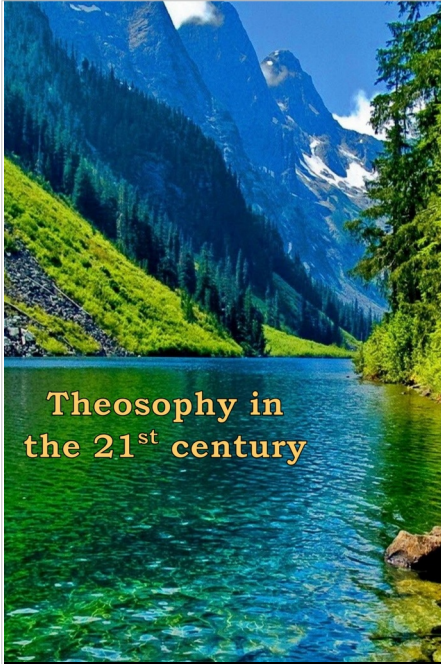


Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- How is a natural and universal law different from a human law?
- 2- Please present an example of how a natural law can be used to counteract the effect of another natural law.
- 3- According to your criterion, does *free will* exist or not?
- 4- If there are "accidents" or events that are not the consequence of previous actions, is there justice? What is popularly meant by the expression "*divine justice*"?
- 5- What is the meaning of the expression "freedom from karma" found in many books of theosophical authors? Please provide an interpretation.







**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## ***8 The mind and beyond***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

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## Why study the mind?

- The mind manifests itself subjectively as the stream of consciousness.
- The processes of the mind are private.
- The mind is different from the emotion but it is very linked to it.
- It is our organ of knowledge.



The mind is one of the mysteries of our being. We use it naturally. We realize its existence by the stream of consciousness, the constant flow of perceptions, ideas, memories and many kinds of mental contents.

One characteristic that makes it difficult to study the mind is that mental processes are private. They take place in our consciousness and are not perceived by others except by what we communicate or do. This makes mental processes subjective. We can say what we are thinking, but this is already an attempt of objectification, of translating into terms of language in order to communicate that thought which is a new process.

Mental processes are different from emotions, although they are closely related and are generally linked. It is not so easy to separate them when the two are mixed and there are neurologists who say that they are basically different graduations of the same. Our behavior is determined by our mind and our emotions.

But, above all, what makes the study of the mind important is that it is our instrument of knowledge. We know the world through it. And if we seek to know the deepest mysteries of life, we must pay attention to our own mystery.

The physicist and philosopher Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) emphasized the need to know our own instrument of knowledge with a parable. A man studied the fish on the shore of a lake by fishing with a net and pointed out his measurements and observations. His first conclusion was that there are no fish smaller than 5 cm. Then an observer, an epistemologist who studies how we know, told him that to reach that conclusion it was not necessary to throw the net into the water, since the size of the mesh determines the minimum size of the fish that can be fished. (Arthur Eddington, *Philosophy of physical science*). In other words, what we can know is conditioned by the limitations of our instrument.

But can the mind know itself? What do we know about it? We will study this problem.

## What is the mind?

▪ The mind is defined as the aspects of the intellect and consciousness:

- Perception
- Memory
- Thought
- Reasoning
- Imagination
- Emotion
- Will

...

▪ It is difficult to define its functions exactly.

▪ The processes can be conscious or unconscious.



Psychologists often define the mind as a set of aspects or functions of the intellect or consciousness such as perception, memory, thought, reasoning, imagination, emotions and even the will itself is sometimes included among its attributes.

It is really very difficult to define the mind because of its subjective nature. Science still knows little about it and although new discoveries are constantly being made, the mind remains elusive, like a mystery still to be conquered.

The processes of the mind can be **conscious** or **unconscious**, which makes our introspection even more difficult. We do not even know our own mind. We do not realize the unconscious processes but they are there, ready to emerge as unknown causes, although they also have their own laws and order.

Scholars have described some functions of the mind.

*Thought:* Faculty of making a model of the world (get models of our environment and ourselves).

*Cognition:* Idea, imagination, manipulation of information, formation of concepts, identification of rules, resolution of problems, reasoning, decision making.

*Memory:* Ability to store, retain and retrieve information.

*Imagination:* Ability to create, partially or completely, personal domains or models, that the mind derives from the perceptions of the world. Perceptions are recreated in the mind. The imagination can be: reproductive or constructive (inventive) and it is a mental simulation. However, the reproductive imagination is equally inventive because we re-create the world from our perceptions by building a model of it.

## The mind according to science

- Most scientists consider the mind as a resultant function, as a product of the brain.
- According to them, neurons *produce* thought.
- Different areas of the brain correspond to different mental activities.
- There is a close correspondence between mind and brain.



Positron emission tomography

Strictly speaking, it can not be said that the brain is the cause and the mind only the effect

Several scientific disciplines study the mind. From neurology to psychology, each one with different approaches and methods, sheds light on the enigma.

Advances in the study of the brain and the development of instruments to detect brain activity increase the interest in neurology that studies the physical system of mental phenomena. Positron emission tomography (PET) is a technique that allows us to know which area of the brain is working at a given time thanks to highlighting the metabolism of glucose, a substance that provides energy to neurons. It is known that there is an association between certain areas of the brain and activities of the mind such as the perception of a certain sense, speech, coordination or reasoning. With carefully designed experiments and these observation techniques, mental activity against external stimuli can be made a little more objective.

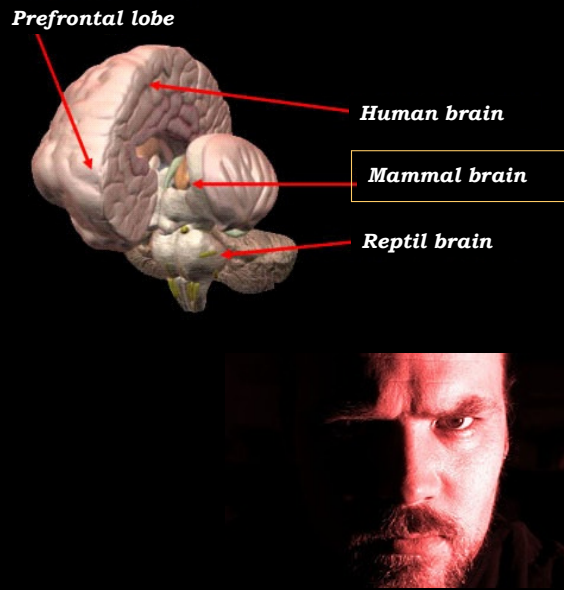
For most neurologists, the functions of the mind are the *product* of brain activity. The close association found between thought and neuronal activity induces most scientists to think in this way. This current of thought is called **reductionism**.

But strictly speaking, it is not something that is demonstrated and there are scientific works that collect a criterion opposed to reductionism, such as the remarkable book "*Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*" by Edward Kelly, Emily W. Kelly, Adam Crabtree and others, all researchers and professors in psychiatry. The authors empirically demonstrate the fallacy of reductionism by providing evidence of psychological phenomena that cannot be explained in this way, such as the placebo effect, the psi phenomenon, near-death experiences, the creativity of genius and mystical experiences.



## Emotions according to neurology

- Emotions are considered to *originate* in the limbic system.
- Emotions are a rapid response system.
- There is a direct connection to the thalamus.
- They allow us to react before the planning of the mind.



Recall that in a previous chapter we talked about the three brains in the human being, or triune brain, and that according to neurology, the limbic system of the brain is related to emotions. The limbic system consists of the thalamus, amygdala, hypothalamus, olfactory bulbs, septal region and hippocampus. It is related to emotions, pleasure and pain, joy, depression, etc.

The limbic system is a kind of primitive brain, predecessor in the evolution of the neocortex, which has a much simpler structure but which allows an immediate response to stimuli, much faster than that originated in the neocortex. This system of rapid response is appropriate for dangerous situations or those that need an instant decision. The rational mind is unable to do this because it needs to evaluate more and plan a strategy. This is explained very well in the well-known book *The Emotional Intelligence* of Daniel Golemann.

Actually, in practical life we could not make decisions without the help of emotions, since well reasoned decisions require much analysis. It was once believed that most of our decisions were the product of rational thinking, but now we know that, although we use the mind for certain decisions, most of them are based on emotions, according to what we like or dislike, and what attracts or repels us.

As we pointed out earlier regarding the mind, there is no evidence that emotions *originate* in the limbic system as the reductionists maintain. All that can be said is that there is a close relationship between emotions and the activity of this system.

A function of consciousness and the support or material vehicle that implements it are two differentiated but complementary aspects.

## The mind-brain relationship

▪ There are many theories that emphasize different aspects of the mind-brain relationship or more generally Consciousness and Matter.

▪ They are divided into dualists and monists.

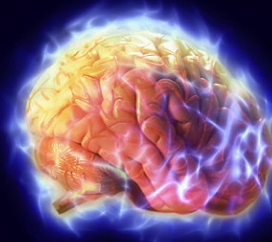
▪ Consciousness and Matter are two aspects of the same Reality.

▪ Matter acts on the mind but also the mind on the body (as in the **placebo effect**).



Is the material universe a projection of the mind?

Or is the mind a product of the brain?



What does philosophy tell us about the mind? Much, but there are so many theories about the mind and cognition in philosophy.

Philosophical theories focus mainly on the so-called **body-mind problem**, that is, in trying to clarify the relationship between consciousness and its material counterpart, the brain.

Theories can be roughly divided into **dualists**, who consider that there are two independent principles, consciousness and matter, and **monistic** theories in which consciousness and matter are considered only two aspects of a single reality.

**Dualism:** The mind and the body are different things (Plato, Aristotle, Sankya, Yoga, Descartes). At the same time there are varieties:

- Dualists of the substance: the mind is an independent substance
- Dualists of the property: The mind is a set of properties that emerge from the brain but can not be reduced to it.

**Monism:** The mind and the brain are not distinct entities (probably Parmenides, Spinoza, Vendanta Advaita.) There are also variants here:

- Theory of the dual aspect (Spinoza). The mind and the body are two aspects of the same underlying reality (Nature).
- Physicalism: Only physical entities exist and the mind can be explained in terms of them. In turn this trend can be divided into:
  - ✓ Reductive: All states and mental properties can be explained by the states and physiological processes. This is the reductionism followed by most neurologists.
  - ✓ Non-reductive: Although the brain is the origin, the vocabulary used to describe mental processes is necessary and cannot be reduced to the lower level physiological terms.
- Idealism: The mind is all that exists and the external world is a mental illusion created by the mind.

- Neutral Monism: The things perceived in the world can be considered physical or mental depending on whether one is interested in the relationship with other things or in the relationship with the perceiver. It does not postulate a fundamental substance of which mind and matter are its aspects.

As we see, there is something for everyone. Theosophy offers an integrated view, closer to the monism of the dual aspect, since it holds that there is a single Reality that manifests itself in different aspects as held by Spinoza. According to this, the human being is an entity emanated, not detached, from the Reality, and its principles are expressions of its essential nature or Atman. Manas, the mind, and Kama, the desire, are principles or aspects of the consciousness of the human being that are reflected and have a support in the physical body.

Is the Universe really a projection of the mind or is the mind an effect of matter? Many religions have tried to focus on the aspect of consciousness or spirit by denying the matter by qualifying it as perverse. But if we think of the Universe as a Unity, everything is absolutely sacred. It does not seem logical to think of such an asymmetry that only one aspect of Life is sacred and beneficial while the other is illusory or malignant. Consciousness and Matter are two aspects of the underlying Reality like the positive and negative charges of electricity. One cannot exist without the other. The interaction between the two, the third aspect of the Trinity, gives rise to the phenomenon of Life. They are like the front and back of a coin. There cannot be a coin with only one face.

The mind is a dual principle composed of the Higher Manas or abstract mind, and the lower Manas or concrete mind. It is an extraordinary characteristic that is more developed in the human being, and it is what allows us to know the world and try to know ourselves and the beings that accompany us through life.

## The mind according to the Vedanta

▪ **Chitta.** It is the ability to create mental images.

▪ **Manas.** The construction of the image stream.

▪ **Buddhi.** The light of intuition reflected in the mind.

▪ **Ahamkara.** The center of individuality.



The Vedanta philosophy, which is the philosophy of the Vedas that are the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, has given an analytical presentation of the functions of the mind. It is very remarkable that thousands of years ago there were wise men who got ahead of their civilization and worried about the detailed knowledge of the human mind.

Dr. I.K. Taimni has exposed it very didactically in a series of articles published in "*The Theosophist*" between 1970 and 1971 and compiled in the Spanish book "*Studies on the Mind and Consciousness according to Hindu psychology*" (Editor: Walter Ballesteros, Colombia). The first chapter is dedicated to examining the mind according to Vedanta.

According to the Vedanta philosophy, the mind has four aspects or functions which are involved in its functioning: *Chitta*, *Manas*, *Buddhi* and *Ahamkara*. These aspects work in coordination and give us the sense of unity of our mind.

The four aspects of the mind are usually compared to the radii of a wheel whose center is the Self, which does not make contact with the world but through them.

In ancient philosophies many times the different psychic components of the personality are not clearly differentiated and the word "mind" is usually used in a broad sense that encompasses the emotions and more internal aspects of consciousness. We have to take this fact into account when we study how Vedanta describes the mind. For this reason we continue to use the original Sanskrit words avoiding simplified translations that prevent us from capturing what the sages of the Vedas were trying to convey.

We will study in more detail these four aspects of the mind that are described by the Vedanta philosophy.

# Chitta

**Chitta** is the faculty to build mental images



- The images are not only visual, but are an aggregate of the impressions of the different senses.
- Reproductive imagination
- Inventive imagination

**Chitta** is the mind's ability to create images. We are not referring only to visual images. **Mental images** are an aggregate of the impressions received through the senses and the mechanism of perception that form an idea, a concept, a model of something.

The images can come from three different sources:

- Sensory perception
- The storage of memory
- Pure imagination

The Chitta function causes images originating through different senses to be combined as a single composite image. Taimni gives the example of our image of an orange. It combines color, flavor, aroma and texture. Chitta is the ability to combine all these sensory attributes into a single mental image associated with the orange.

Chitta also provides missing perceptions when we perceive an object, replacing them with those of its mental image or archetype. When we see a very good looking orange, we can imagine its flavor. This is of great importance in the source of desire, since the artificially completed image may result in us wishing to experience the missing sensation. That is to say that if we see a fresh orange, we may want to taste its sweetness and our mouth waters when we remember the past experience of its taste.

Imagination can be reproduced, as when we remember an object or an event, or creativity as when we are designing forms or ideas that we have not previously perceived with the senses. Artistic creation is an exponent of this ability.



## Manas

**Manas** is the faculty of creating a succession of mental images that flows uninterruptedly. Do not confuse it with Manas as principles (upper and lower).



Stream of images

- *Manas*: same root as latin *manare*: to flow, to spring
- The stream of Manas is guided by the law of association.
- We build a network of associations.
- Desires → possible paths → stream of Manas

**Manas** is the faculty of the mind to convert the images created by Chitta into a stream, a succession of images that flows uninterruptedly through the field of our consciousness, making up the flow of thought.

It is noteworthy that Manas is a Sanskrit word that means the mental principle, the thought in the human being, but in this context of the Vedanta refers only to a faculty of the mind. The root of the word Manas is the same as the latin word *manare* meaning to spring, to flow, and that suggests to us the continuous sprouting of ideas in the field of the mind.

The sequence of images is not random, but follows some laws of association. We build networks of association of ideas based on attributes, classifications, circumstances, deduction, reasoning, modeling, and other criteria, which creates a conditioning because we tend to connect ideas in the same way.

What will be the next idea in the field of the mind? Of the many possible courses, if we filter those that obey external stimuli, normally Kama, the sum of our desires present at that moment, is what decidedly, although very subtly, directs the flow of Manas through a network of associations.

Consciousness does not show itself in fragments. Words such as string or series are not enough to explain it. It is not articulated but fluid. A river or stream would be more appropriate metaphors. Henceforth, let us call it the flow of thought, of consciousness or of subjective life.

William James

## **Buddhi**

**Buddhi** is the light of consciousness that illuminates mental images, giving them meaning and sense

- Buddhi: light, illumination, understanding, modeling.
- Buddhi as property in the Manas is the reflection of true Buddhi or Intuition, which is the Wisdom principle of our higher Self or individuality.



**Buddhi** is the light of consciousness that illuminates and gives meaning to mental constructs. It is the faculty of knowing, of understanding the meaning of what we are perceiving. Buddhi as the faculty of the mind, as described by Vedanta, is the reflection in the mind of the Buddhi principle, which brings intuition, wisdom, integration and love.

We can read a book and understand the letters, the alphabet with which it is written, we can understand the words (the lexicon) and also understand the grammar, but if we do not understand the meaning (semantics), we will not understand the author's message. Still, we can continue to generalize and see that behind the message of a paragraph there is a message in the chapter, and behind it there is one in the whole book.

The more reflected in the mind the Buddhi principle (intuition) is, the deeper is the understanding of the perceptions and ideas that we handle. In this way Buddhi is integrative, it is the consciousness of Life as a whole. Its reflection in the mind allows us to find models, laws and meanings.

Buddhi is the power or faculty of knowing, which relates the subject to the object. The penetration of the object or mental image by the subject, or the illumination of the mind by consciousness, are the work of Buddhi. So that Buddhi participates in the nature of the subject; it is certainly that element of the Spirit that has been imprisoned within the mind. It will be seen therefore that Buddhi is a spiritual element in the constitution of the mind. It is related to the Spirit; it is indeed the projection of the Spirit in the field of the mind, which is also an expression of the Spirit below.

I. K. Taimni, *Studies on the Mind and Consciousness*

## Ahamkara

**Ahamkara** is the singular center from which the light of consciousness (buddhi) that illuminates the mind is projected



- Ahamkara: *Aham* (the Self) + *kara* (thing created by).
- It is the self of our mental life that remains behind the changing experiences but also creates the illusion of separateness.
- It is the center of individual consciousness, which makes us unique but at the same time integrated into the Universal Mind.

**Ahamkara** is the singular center from which the light of consciousness is projected, the Buddhi aspect which illuminates the mind. It is the intimate self of our mental life that we perceive as permanent after the changing experiences throughout our life.

Ahamkara is the faculty that makes us feel different, separate, but it is also the cause of our feelings of suffering and separation.

Ahamkara is closely associated with Chitta and with Manas. A very strong sense of self-consciousness obscures the light of Buddhi that is integrative. However, Ahamkara is also the expression of our identity as sparks of the fire of Life. Each spark is part of the Unity and is a reflection of the All, but expresses it in a unique way, different from all other sparks.

If we examine our mental life, we find that all the images that pass through our mind, and our experiences, congregate in a egoic center that relates them and coordinates them all in a harmonious and integrated set. Without such a center of consciousness there could be no meaningful and continuous mental life. All our experiences and mental images would remain scattered in a fortuitous way, with nothing to conglomerate them into a life singular and different from the lives of other individuals.

I. K. Taimni, *Studies on the Mind and Consciousness*

See also in Internet:

<http://www.swamij.com/fourfunctionsmind.htm>

## The fragmented mind

- The ego distorts our perception of reality.
- Our mind united with desire filters or hides what is feared and magnifies what is desired.
- Thus we generate a fragmented, partial, conditioned mind that prevents us from seeing the whole.
- The problem is the presence of the psychological ego that conditions the mind.



The ego distorts our perception of reality. We have limitations in our perception of reality due to the limitations of the senses. We do not perceive light of greater frequency than violet, we do not perceive high-pitched sounds higher than 20,000 Hz, and so on with all the senses. But to these limitations we must add another more important factor that distorts our perception and that is the self.

The self is the psychological entity that we have been creating over years of experiences and acts as a center that polarizes and colors relationships that surrounds us. The self directs the mind, united with desire, in such a way that it magnifies what we desire. The desire for a new car can make us exaggerate the problems of the one we currently have. And the self also defends itself by hiding what causes us fear or threatens our position. If we have a conflict that has been generated by our bad attitude, the ego will try to find fault in others or in circumstances, since otherwise it may be discovered and we may change our attitude and weaken it. Jung spoke of the *Shadow* as the psychological structure where the self hides those characteristics of itself that it does not want to accept.

In this way our mind acts in a fragmented, partial, conditioned manner, and therefore prevents us from seeing the whole. A typical example is when we talk to another person, perhaps a co-worker. We tend to interpret what he tells us as if he wanted something from us or as if he is subtly criticizing us for something we do, generating an attitude of defense on our part. And yet it is possible that our co-worker is so locked in his own problems that our perception is totally false.

Our mind conditioned by the self presents us with an imaginary world, which is not real. And with a fragmented mind we cannot understand ourselves or the world around us. We do not see the whole, we do not understand the whole process of Life.

## The renewal of the mind

### What to do?

- Empty the mind of confusing contents.
- Have a critical (philosophical) attitude.
- Accept uncertainty, deferred judgment.
- Do not obsess.
- Have a whole mind, not fractioned.
- To reflect the light of Buddhi the mind must be calm (not inactive).



To be useful to our essence,  
the mind must be renewed

Science shows us the physical structure of the brain and how it is related to emotions and physical activity. Vedanta shows us the functions of the mind from the point of view of consciousness. But as we have seen, the qualities of the mind make it useful, but if the mind is fragmented by the self, it is an obstacle to deeper knowledge.

For the mind to be a useful instrument for the internal Being, it must be renewed in content but above all in attitude. A few guidelines that we can take into account:

- Empty the mind of confusing content. We must clarify what we know from what we only suppose. And what we know, should be as clear and precise as possible. The confused contents of the mind will produce doubts and contradictions in our behavior.
- Have an attitude of critical thinking (philosophical). Do not accept ideas just because they are familiar or because they come from a supposed authority. We need to exercise our own judgment, review evidence. Assume as little as possible.
- Accept uncertainty. The world is changing and complex. There is uncertainty. It is preferable to accept that we do not know something and that perhaps we may know in the future than to contrive an explanation. The contrived explanation will cause us to lose the incentive to discover the true reality. It is what J. Krishnamurti has called *deferred judgment*. We need to eliminate the beliefs that color our mind and condition us to believe we see things with certainty.
- Avoid obsession A big concern will cause us to ruminate on a problem without finding new ideas. It is preferable to let the unconscious processes of the mind reorganize and allow us to find new perspectives. And maybe allow intuition to help us to see better.
- To reflect the light of Buddhi, the mind must be calm, like the surface of the water to reflect the sun. Not idle, but calm, without tensions or anxieties or distractions.



## Yoga

- Yoga is a philosophy and practices that seek to align the personality with the inner being.
- Patanjali defined it as the absence of disturbances of the mind.
- Yoga begins with a physical, moral and psychological preparation and uses meditation.



Yoga is the suppression of  
mind modifications  
Patanjali

The tranquility of the mind is one of the pillars of Yoga. Yoga is one of the ancient self-realization schools born in India. One of its aspects is well known in the West: Hatha Yoga, which focuses on performing a series of postural or Asana exercises to promote relaxation and health in the body, combined with breathing techniques. But Yoga is much more than that since its goal is not only physical well-being, but also self-realization.

True Yoga, Real Yoga or **Raja Yoga**, is a series of personal self-realization practices based on one of the philosophical schools of India, the Sankya. The great compiler of the teachings of Yoga, which until then were barely mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita and little else, was Patanjali, a sage born around the year 256 B.C. in Kashmir, in northern India. In his great work, **The Yoga Sutras**, Patanjali explains the practice of Yoga composed of eight stages or rather components since they are not a sequence but aspects to develop.

The purpose of Yoga is to produce an alignment of the personality with the inner Being, to make consciousness connect with our essential nature thus unleashing its enormous potential. Patanjali defined Yoga as follows:

Yoga is the suppression of the modifications (disturbances) of the mind.

Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras*, 2

For this, Yoga begins with a preparatory stage that aims to dilute the causes of the disturbances to our way of living, with desire, with the way we use the mind and with the way in which we relate to the rest of Life.

We cannot expand on the study of Yoga within the context of this course, but we can say that it is a very practical aspect of the philosophy of Theosophy.

The 8 steps defined by Patanjali are arranged so that each one is oriented to achieve calmness of mind and inspiration from the source that is the inner Being. It is not a passive process, in which the student expects to be inspired by something or someone outside, but an active process of transformation that leads him to the adventure of discovering and realizing the hidden nature of things and of himself.

These 8 steps can be stated as follows:

- *Yama*            The behavior to avoid.
- *Niyama*        The behavior that should be promoted.
- *Asana*           The right positions to meditate.
- *Pranayama*    The right breath.
- *Pratyahara*    Capacity of abstraction of the senses.
- *Dharana*        Concentration, the focus of the mind.
- *Dhyana*         Meditation, introspection.
- *Samadhi*        Contemplation, union.

The first two steps, Yama and Niyama prepare the student with a moral and psychological condition necessary to undertake the practice of the other steps.

Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara are aimed at eliminating the sources of disturbance of the mind in the process of meditation.

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are the 3 stages of meditation practice that begin with a concentration that is a focus of the mind on the object of practice. An introspection follows in search of deeper levels of understanding. The successful culmination of the process is obtained when the stage of Samadhi is reached in which the mind is in complete calm and reflects the light of Buddhi, the integrating light of intuition that implies the fusion of the knower and the known, or more properly said, Samadhi implies becoming aware of the Unity of Life eliminating the illusion of separativity.

The whole objective of the practice of Raja Yoga is to prepare the personality and especially the mind to achieve the state of Samadhi.

## 4 steps for meditation

- **Attention.** The full implication.
- **Concentration.** Focus of the mind on the object of thought.
- **Meditation.** Introspection. The consciousness turns inward.
- **Contemplation.** The conscience realizing the union.



The mind has a huge potential. But the true power of our nature is found when the focus of consciousness transcends the mind to sink into the depths of our being, our essence. Patanjali pointed out that to achieve realization, *Samadhi*, through Yoga we must do **meditation** work, an exercise with the mind that has four aspects.

**Attention.** The full involvement in what we think and what we do. Attention has several levels and not only requires attention to the obvious, but also to the different meanings and implications that underlie everyday events.

**Concentration.** It is the focus of the thoughts in the mind about a chosen object. This object can be a flower, a work of art, an inspiring phrase or an idea. It implies being attentive to the chains of associations and using them to see the object from different angles.

**Meditation.** It is a deep introspection in the object of thought. The consciousness turns inward, becomes absorbed in the object of thought, remaining exhausted, occupying all its field.

**Contemplation.** It is the coronation of the process in which the exhausted mind becomes quiet and the consciousness is fully open to the light of Buddhi. The analytical, comparative activity ceases and the consciousness realizes the unity with the object of thought. There is full attention. There is no difference between the thinker and the object. There is no me that observes. Consciousness works from the level at which the essential unity of Life is realized. It is the state of Samadhi.

These four steps summarize very briefly the technique of meditation. We will talk about this later. The important thing now is to realize that if we want the inner light to be expressed, the mind must be calm, and this can only be achieved if the entity that generates the conflict, our psychological self, ceases to act and to hold the reins of our lifetime.

To learn more see the following books:

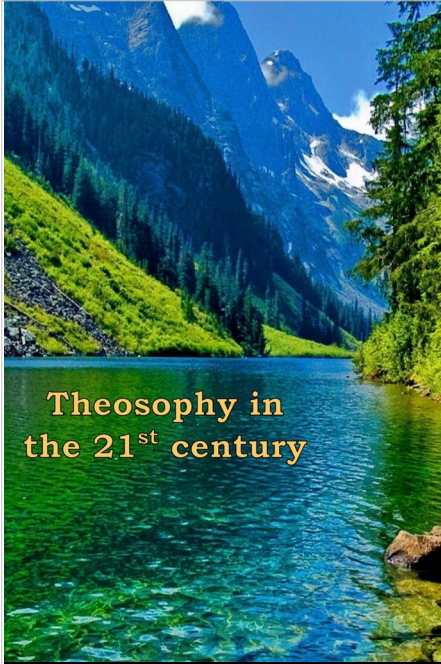
- Raja Yoga [V.W. Slater]
- The Science of Yoga [I.K. Taimni]

## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- What is the difference between sensation and perception?
- 2- Why is it important to have accurate images in our mind?
- 3- Do we usually use the abstract mind?
- 4- Can Buddhi or intuition reflect on the agitated mind? Contemplate the answer. Mention some factors of agitation of the mind, for example: fear.
- 5- What happens when we pay real attention to something? Is there only one level of attention?
- 6- Is it necessary to adopt a special posture of the body to meditate?



**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## **9 Symbolism and the esoteric tradition**

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

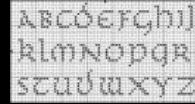


## Symbols

- All communication is done through symbols.

- Alphabets
- Numbers
- Mathematical symbols
- Icons
- Logos
- Emblems

...



It is interesting to note that every communication process is done through the use of *symbols*. Everything we can read and write, what we can say, count, represent, publish, we do it using a communication process that exchanges symbols such as letters of an alphabet, numbers, icons, special signs, emblems, and so on.

**Symbols** are an abstraction that allow us to communicate. The symbol is the vehicle of information, of the message we are addressing.

For communication to occur, the sender and receiver must have a *common meaning* for the symbols used. For example, the authority responsible for regulating traffic on the streets, puts a STOP signal when he wants to direct that a car stop to observe before moving. But this is possible only if the drivers know what they should do when they see that signal.

We are surrounded by symbols of different types that facilitate communication. Those that are a graphic representation such as icons, logos and emblems, are easier to perceive and decode at a glance.

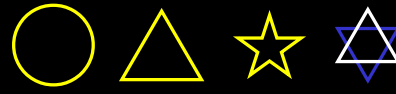
A word is another higher level symbol that is made up of several letters of the alphabet. This shows us that the symbols are associated with each other to form more complex ones with a special meaning.

The symbols have been used since ancient times in the esoteric tradition to convey ideas or rather archetypes about life, the Universe and humanity.

## Symbols and allegories

### Symbols

- Conceptual abstractions.
- Simple representations, usually geometric figures.



Geometric symbols

### Allegories

- Based on metaphors.
- They seek the representation of more elaborate and difficult to define concepts.



Dove of peace



Anubis



Psyche and Eros

Symbols and allegories are the key elements of **symbolism**, the study of them and their possible meanings.

**Symbols** are conceptual abstractions, usually represented by simple figures, often geometric. For example, the circle is the symbol of infinity because it is a geometrical figure with infinite sides. It also symbolizes eternity because its circumference has no beginning or end, as well as balance and harmony because all its points are at the same distance from the center.

**Allegories** are more complex representations of a concept based on a metaphor. A known figure is associated with an idea due to some attribute of the first. For example, the white dove is an allegory of peace, for its whiteness that represents purity and for its meekness.

The ancients used allegories to represent the gods as aspects of nature. For example for the Egyptians, *Anubis* was the jackal-headed god, in charge of guiding the dead in their transit through the other world. Its representation with the head of a jackal or dog seems to derive from the fact that it was common to find these animals in cemeteries.

Allegories can appear in the form of stories that facilitate oral transmission through many generations. An example of this are fables, in which animals play roles in a story that has a moral and psychological background applied to human life. From ancient times many allegories are known that symbolize laws of nature or universal archetypes observed by wise men. Thanks to the structure of allegories which makes them easy to remember, they have been transmitted from generation to generation and have been subject of various artwork. One of these allegories is for example the story of Eros and Psyche that we will see later.

Symbolism requires not only analysis, but a large dose of intuition to grasp its meaning and relevance.

## Interpretation of symbols

▪ The symbol, religious, mystical or esoteric, when more abstract:

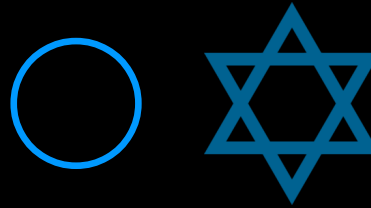
- Transcends cultural diversity
- It is more universal (Jung)
- It is not limited by language
- It is richer in interpretation

▪ There are several keys to interpret the symbols:

- Astronomic,
- Numerical, Geometric
- Cosmological, Terrestrial
- Human, psychological

...

▪ An **emblem** is a grouping of simpler symbols.



Emblem of the Theosophical Society

A quality of the symbol is that the more abstract it is, the more powerful is its meaning because it becomes independent of the cultural context, the time, language and other factors. That is, the symbol becomes universal.

The appearance of similar symbols in cultures that are distant and unknown from each other drew the attention of the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), founder of the School of Analytical Psychology. Jung came to postulate the existence of a **collective unconscious**, below the personal unconscious, which is a world of archetypes, of ideas shared by humanity. The psychological nature of the human being is then manifested through a universal language of common symbols.

The collective unconscious is anything but an isolated and personal system. It is objectivity, wide as the world and open to the world. I am the object of all subjects, in perfect inversion of my habitual consciousness, where I am always subject that *has* objects. There I am in the most immediate and intimate union with the world, united to such an extent that I forget too easily who I really am. "Lost in itself" is an adequate phrase to designate that state. But that "self" is the world, or a world when a consciousness can see it. That's why you have to know who you are.

Carl G. Jung, *On the archetypes of the collective unconscious*

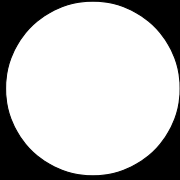
Associated with symbols are the **keys** to their interpretation, the ability to explain or decode their message. The keys of a symbol are multiple, offering the inquirer several dimensions for its comprehension.

The teaching is offered as it is understood; and as there are seven keys of interpretation to every symbol and allegory, that which may not fit a meaning, say from the psychological or astronomical aspect, will be found quite correct from the physical or metaphysical.

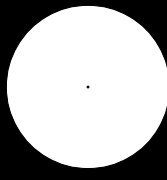
Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, Anthropogenesis*

## The circle and the cross

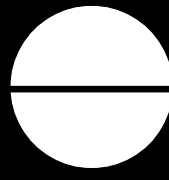
In the Proem of the Secret Doctrine, HP Blavatsky describes a sequence of symbols in an archaic manuscript.



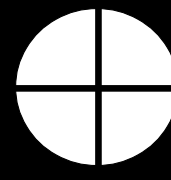
Pralaya



Dawn of the differentiation



Spirit-Matter



The Cosmic Ideation

They are symbols of the genesis of the Universe.

The sequence of manifestation




0 - 1 - 2 - 3





Separate the land from the fire, the subtle of the gross ... Ascend ... from earth to heaven and then go back down to earth

*Emerald Table*

One of the most universal and ancient symbols is the circle.

We have seen in previous chapters how HPB describes in the Proem of the *Secret Doctrine* the pages of a mysterious book that only contain a sequence of symbols describing the genesis of the Universe. The first of these symbols is a white circle representing the Universe in its unmanifested, undifferentiated state. Then a point appears, the dawn of manifestation, the One manifested. Next we have the circle with a horizontal line that symbolizes the appearance of the primordial Duality spirit-matter. The sequence ends with the circle having an inscribed cross that represents the fundamental Trinity of the Universe with spirit, matter and the interaction between the two as a third element.

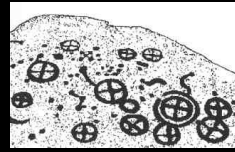
The first illustration being a plain disc  the second one in the Archaic symbol shows , a disc with a point in it — the first differentiation in the periodical manifestations of the ever-eternal nature, sexless and infinite “Aditi in THAT” (Rig Veda), the point in the disc, or potential Space within abstract Space. In its third stage the point is transformed into a diameter, thus . It now symbolises a divine immaculate Mother-Nature within the all-embracing absolute Infinitude.

When the diameter line is crossed by a vertical one , it becomes the mundane cross. Humanity has reached its third root-race; it is the sign for the origin of human life to begin. When the circumference disappears and leaves only the  it is a sign that the fall of man into matter is accomplished, and the FOURTH race begins. The Cross within a circle symbolises pure Pantheism; when the Cross was left uninscribed, it became phallic. It had the same and yet other meanings as a TAU inscribed within a circle  or as a “Thor’s hammer,” the Jaina cross, so-called, or simply Svastica within a circle .

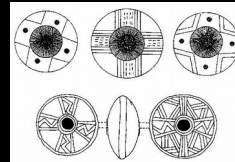
Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, Proem*

## From the solar disk to the cross

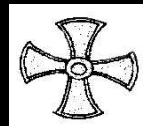
- The archaic origin of the cross is a representation of the solar disk with its rays.
- It was a symbol universally known before Christianity.
- Constantine the Great proclaimed it in the fourth century as a symbol of the new religion.
- It shows how symbols have different aspects and interpretations.



Engravings of the Bronze Age



Symbols found in the ruins of Troy



Cross the Assyrian king Shamash-Adad V (823-811BC) wore hanging from his neck



Greek cross

The cross is a symbol much older than Christianity.

Its origin is in the representation of the solar disk radiation. It has been found on engravings from the Bronze Age where the cross appears inscribed in a circle representing the Sun. In the ruins of Troy, more refined but similar representations have been found, until we arrive at the most well-known representations nowadays.

An Assyrian king who lived in the eighth century before the current era wore a cross with rounded edges on his neck, as if the part of the circle that was not within the rays or arms of the circle had been removed from the solar disk cross.

The evolution of this figure shows that the ancients wanted to represent the sun's rays through the arms of the cross. The cross has been then, as a solar symbol, a symbol of life and not of death as most people think today within Christianity.

The cross was used by Christianity because of the popularity it enjoyed in the ancient world. The emperor Constantine the Great (272-337), definitive promoter of Christianity in the Roman Empire, reported that in a dream he saw the cross with the legend "in hoc signo vinces" (IHSV, by this sign you will win). The phrase itself has earlier initiatory connotations, since as some point out IHS was a name of Bacchus.

A common characteristic of the symbols is that their meaning can vary according to the context, giving rise to different aspects.

There are many interpretations of the symbol of the cross, since as we said before, the symbol is an abstract language that serves to communicate a message that can have several contexts, dimensions of meaning or keys of interpretation.



## The emblem of the Theosophical Society

- It is a set of very old and universal symbols.
- The **uroboros**. The snake that bites its tail in a circle. The infinite cyclic law.
- The **swastika**. The igneous cross of Hinduism. It symbolizes the continuous power.
- The **AUM**. The sacred monosyllable. The One Life producing the manifestation.
- The **interlaced triangles**. Spirit and Matter, both trinities in correspondence.
- The **ankh** or ansata cross. It is the regeneration of Life.



The emblem of the Theosophical Society is composed of several symbols, which have been used since antiquity to express deep spiritual and philosophical concepts about man and the universe. Each symbol studied separately helps us to understand it. Studied together, as in this emblem, they suggest a vast evolutionary scheme that embraces all of nature, physical and spiritual, and its study can make the serious researcher come to contemplate some of the deepest mysteries of existence.

The **uroboros**. The snake that bites its tail in a circle. It is a symbol of eternity and of the infinite cyclic law. It is also a representation of wisdom because it transcends the opposites and the beginning and end of things.

The **swastika**. It is the cross of fire with arms of flames that turn (clockwise) to represent the powerful energies of nature that create and dissolve the forms through which the evolutionary process takes place. It is used in India as a symbol of bliss. Regrettably, it was adopted by Nazism and provokes certain prejudices.

The **AUM**. Aum or also OM is the sacred monosyllabic of Hinduism, in Sanskrit written in Devanagari. It represents the Principle of Universal Life manifesting itself and giving origin to the Universe.

The **interlaced triangles** symbolize on the one hand the essential duality of the manifested Universe: Spirit and Matter, and on the other hand the triune nature of both: Sat, Chit and Ananda in the Spirit and the 3 *Gunas* or properties in Matter: Tamas, Raja and Sattva. It also represents the hermetic principle of similarity in the Universe, the holographic universe: "As it is above it is below", the microcosm is similar to the macrocosm.

The **Ankh**. At the center of the two intertwined triangles is what is known as the Ankh or ansata cross which is composed of a circle superimposed on the Tau Cross (the type of cross that has the shape of the letter T). It symbolizes the process of regeneration of Life. The evolution of Being or "exit in the light of day" as the Egyptians called it.

Surrounding the emblem is the motto of the Theosophical Society: "There is no religion higher than truth".

## Ansata Cross or Ankh of Egypt

- Composed by a circle on a Tau.
- It is the attribute of Isis, symbol of Life.
- As a hieroglyphic symbol it means "life".
- It represents the sacred union of Spirit and Matter and the regeneration of Life.



Apis  
Alexandria Museum



Venus  
symbol



**Ru** = Mouth, door, place of birth of the Sun, circle, spirit

**Tau** = Matter, generation (Taurus)

One of the oldest and most emblematic crosses is the ansata cross or **ankh**, widely used in Egypt as we can see in its engravings and writings.

The ankh is the symbol of life. It was an attribute of Isis, meaning that she is the giver of life. It has historical continuity with the symbol of Venus, the most modern symbol of the feminine, as it is easy to see by the similarity of form. On the other hand Isis is the Egyptian equivalent of the pagan Venus, both representing the feminine aspect of life.

In Egypt, *Apis*, the ox or bull with the solar disk between its horns was represented as a symbol of fertility. Its silhouette seen from the front resembles Ankh.

The ansata cross is composed of two parts. The upper part is a circle, symbol of the spirit, of the infinite, while the lower part is a Tau, a T that symbolizes matter. In this way, with united spirit and matter, the Ankh represents the Life that is possible thanks to the interaction of both aspects of duality.

There is also a sexual interpretation of the ansata cross, the circle being the feminine element and the Tau the masculine, representing the sacred union that generates life.

But the ankh, as with many symbols, has a key to interpretation related to the inner process, to the transformation of the human being, the mystical union and expansion of consciousness that occurs after its awakening. In this process the internal nature of the human being takes possession of the functions of the mind, emotions and psyche, so that it acts as a unit and not as a fragmented being, as a set of tendencies.

In this way, the union symbolized by the ansata cross, in one of its most mystical interpretations, is a symbol of the union of the spiritual with the human, of the inner Being with the personal self, union that is the goal of Yoga and of the great initiatory traditions.

## Myths and legends

### Legends

- *Legenda* [LA]: what must be read.
- Real and fictional characters.
- Imaginary and real stories.
- Idealization.



The Cid



Romulus and Remus

### Myths

- *Mythos* [GR]: story.
- Fictitious characters and facts.
- Symbolic content, didactic, moral, religious, philosophical and sacred.



Thor



Isis and Osiris

The religions, the mystery schools and the literature of antiquity have been nourished by myths and legends.

The word **legend** comes from the Latin *legenda* and points out what must be read. It usually refers to stories about characters that may have been real, although the stories are a mixture of real and imaginary events, thus producing an idealization of the character.

Examples of legends are those of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the *Cid*, hero of the Spanish Reconquista. *Cid* feats, courage and extraordinary moral qualities are attributed to him, which may have been exaggerated to highlight the figure of the hero and convey an enthusiastic message to the people.

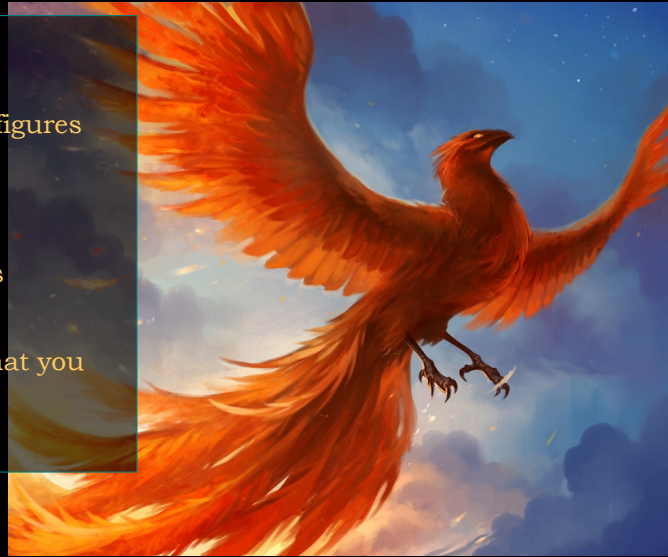
Another well-known legend is that of Romulus and Remus, the founding brothers of Rome, who according to it were nursed by a wolf. It seems likely that children were protected by a prostitute (popularly called *loupe* or wolf). The legend tries to highlight the value of the characters to overcome extreme difficulties.

The word **myth** comes from the Greek word *mythos* and means story. In it both the characters and the facts are fictitious and have been designed with a didactic purpose, to easily convey a message with a teaching that may have a moral, religious or philosophical purpose.

Examples of myths are the figures of mythologies. *Thor*, in Nordic mythology was the god of thunder, which influenced the climate, harvests, justice and other things. In ancient Egypt, the most revered myth was the myth of the death and resurrection of *Osiris*, which we will see in more detail in another chapter.

## Reasons for the myth

- Easy to transmit
  - Oral story
  - Awesome to remember
  - Easy to represent with figures and allegories
- Veiled teachings
  - They deter the curious
  - Mislead the persecutors
- They appeal to intuition
  - They have a message that you have to un-cover
  - They last in time



The Phoenix

The teachings transmitted through the myths have the advantage that they are easy to transmit from mouth to ear. In the ancient world, when the printing press did not exist and the books were not available to anyone, myths were an important vehicle for the transmission of ideas. As they were attractive oral stories, they impressed the listener, making it easy to remember them. For this reason they have been represented with figures and allegories and the art was commissioned to perpetuate them in the collective memory through the classic paintings and sculptures that we admire today.

But there is also another reason for the transmission of the deeper teaching in the myth format. The allegories, symbols and stories make the curious believe that it is simply a story to entertain, and they do not give them value but help to transmit it. The one who has eyes to see will see them. The myths mislead the persecutors and instead attract those interested.

What is more important to note is that when using symbolic and allegorical language, myths appeal to intuition. More than teaching, they suggest, they inspire. They contain a message that must be uncovered, that is to say that it must be found behind the veil of the characters and the events related, because that message is intended to evoke an answer that goes beyond ordinary thought. The message of the myths is directed to the depth of our consciousness and allows us to bring to consciousness the connection with the collective unconscious, with that deep level of Reality in which the laws and models described by the myth are evident.

An example of a myth is that of the Phoenix which is periodically consumed by fire but then resurfaces from its ashes. It is a symbol of cycles and continuous regeneration in Nature. It also suggests how in everyday life we can resurface from a state in which what we are used to has been destroyed if we let the strength of our being regenerate our life and emerge triumphant in new circumstances.

## The myth of Eros and Psyche

- Classical Greek origin, immortalized by Apuleius. Other ancient and modern myths correspond to it.

- Main characters:

- Eros: god son of Aphrodite
- Psyche: beautiful princess
- Aphrodite: mother of Eros
- Father of Psyche
- Relatives of Psyche

- Plot: mystical union and its difficulties



As an example we will try to interpret the myth of **Eros and Psyche**. It is a classic story of Greek origin that was immortalized by the Latin poet Apuleius as a story in his work "*The Metamorphosis*" also known as "*The Golden Ass*".

The main characters are:

- Eros: god of love, son of Aphrodite.
- Psyche: beautiful Anatolian princess, the youngest of 3 sisters.
- Aphrodite: goddess of beauty, desire and love.
- Father of Psyche: King of Anatolia
- Relatives of Psyche: especially her 2 sisters, jealous of her beauty

### **Eros and Psyche**

It tells the story that a long time ago there was a king and queen in Anatolia who had three daughters. The youngest, Psyche, had such dazzling beauty that she was adored by humans as a reincarnation of the goddess Aphrodite. The goddess was jealous of the beauty of the mortal Psyche as men were abandoning their altars to worship a simple woman instead. Then she ordered her son Eros to intercede to make the girl fall in love with the most horrendous and vile man that could exist.

For her part, beauty had not brought Psyche any happiness. Men idolized her in a thousand ways, but none dared approach her or ask for her hand. The concerned parents consulted the Oracle of Apollo to determine what fate would bring to their daughter. Far from finding comfort, the Oracle predicted that Psyche would marry at the top of the mountain with a monster from another world. Psyche accepted her fate bitterly, and obeying the Oracle, her parents took her to the top of the mountain followed by a long procession, where they left her in tears to face a certain death.



This is how Zephyrus, the West wind, found her, and raised her over the mountains until she was deposited in a valley full of flowers. Upon awakening, Psyche entered the nearby forest following the sound of the water. What she found was a beautiful palace, of indescribable luxury and beauty, and disembodied voices whispering that the palace belonged to her and that everyone was there to serve her. That night, while she lay in the darkness of her new bedroom a stranger, Eros, visited her to make her his wife. His voice was soft and gentle, but he didn't let himself be seen in the daylight, which aroused the curiosity of Psyche who wanted to know his face.

With the passage of time Psyche began to feel uneasiness, and suffered from feelings of loneliness. She missed her sisters, whom she had not seen in a while and this caused her sadness. She then implored her husband to allow her to receive the visit of her sisters, but he warned her that they would try to incite her curiosity and encourage her to try to reveal the identity of her husband. He warned her again and again not to be persuaded by her hypocritical sisters, since the day she saw his face she would not see him again and it would be the day when her happiness would end.

Finally, Eros yielded to the intense and passionate pleas of Psyche and asked the wind Zephyrus to bring the sisters to the palace. They, at the sight of so much luxury and beauty, burned with jealousy and envy at the good fortune that had touched her sister. Secretly, each of them began to depreciate their own luck, their elderly husbands with their great wealth. They left the palace planning how to punish their sister and on their return convinced Psyche that her husband was a huge and monstrous snake who was waiting on the prowl to devour her. They suggested a detailed plan of action, which was based on waiting for her husband to fall asleep and then approaching him with a lamp and a dagger and cutting off his snake head.

That same night, Psyche waited for her husband to fall asleep beside her and lit her lamp to observe him. Who she saw was the most beautiful of the gods, Eros himself. The knife fell from her hand as she watched ecstatic that glorious image, and a drop of oil from the lamp fell on Eros's shoulder. He woke up and disregarding Psyche's embrace and laments, expressed his disappointment at Psyche's betrayal of his love. He told her that he disobeyed his own mother's orders by falling in love with her, but that everything was already ruined. And so he spread his wings and left.

Psyche began a desperate search to find Eros that culminated in her arrival at the temple of Aphrodite. There, full of anger and desires for revenge, Aphrodite tears the clothes of Psyche and punishes her with impossible tasks such as classifying myriads of different seeds. Psyche receives help from different gods and forces of nature that make it possible to complete these challenges. Aphrodite then invents a new punishment for Psyche: she should go into Hades, the underworld, in search of Persephone, her queen, to beg him to give her the secret of her beauty inside a chest. Bypassing several difficulties, Psyche fulfills the task and begins her journey back to the light. Along the way, she falls prey again to curiosity. Attracted by the desire to please her beloved, adorning herself with divine beauty, she opens the chest and immediately falls into a morbid dream.

Meanwhile, Eros, newly recovered from his wound, goes out in search of his beloved wife to wake her from her sleep. Then he goes to visit Zeus to beg the god to have compassion on Psyche and make her immortal so that she could live with him in heaven. Zeus took pity on Eros and appeased Aphrodite by telling her that this would be a marriage worthy of her son. So he ordered the marriage of Eros and Psyche, which would last forever.

## Interpretations of the myth

- Which represent?:
  - Eros
  - Psyche
  - The sisters of Psyche
  - The curiosity of Psyche
  - The rescue of Eros
- The myth allows us to connect with an inner reality that transcends the world of ideas and the personal and everyday self.



Psyche reanimated by the kiss of Eros  
Sculpture by Antonio Canova (1793)

We are going to make an interpretation of the myth of Eros and Psyche.

Psyche represents the human personality, the psychological nature of mind and emotions with its expression in the physical body. Psyche is beautiful, like the developed mind, so captivating that it makes one forget about relationships and the loving aspect of life (Aphrodite).

Eros is the inner Being, the spiritual soul that "falls in love" with his personality, inspires it, attracts it to himself and in a state of stillness (in the night) achieves union with it.

An important element of the myth that is also found in one way or another in other similar myths is that Eros prevents Psyche from trying to look at him. This can be interpreted as that the Inner Being cannot be known with physical eyes or with emotions or with the ordinary mind. Introspection and trust in him, that is, self-confidence is required.

Psyche's sisters who sow doubt and distrust represent our known ideas and habits that will be displaced in the transformation process and therefore try to undo that mystical union. Let us observe that they are not strangers apart from Psyche, but are her older sisters. Psyche grew up with them, but now they become an obstacle.

When Psyche sees Eros with her own eyes despite warning, she is captivated by him. Free from the distrust of acquired habits and self, the Inner Self reveals itself with all its glory and beauty. But the union will not be easy. Psyche must fulfill a series of tasks imposed by Aphrodite, she must respond to her pending karma, and despite the love she feels for Eros she falls into the temptation to obtain more beauty from Persephone.

Eros, the inner Being, rescues Psyche, the personality. The rescue does not come from outside but from within. Our inner nature comes when the personality has "fainted" and we no longer know how to continue. When the mystical union is consummated it is forever and a new stage begins, it is the moment of *initiation*.

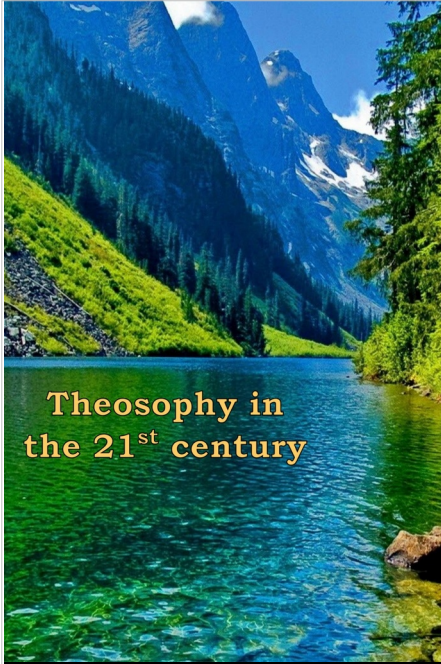
The important thing about the myth is that each one of us can find our own metaphors and interpretations that will be of inspiration helping us to understand the transformation of the human being.

## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Please investigate other myths about the mystical union such as that of Orpheus and Eurydice.
- 2- Why do we always have to overcome difficulties to achieve union?
- 3- What does Psyche's curiosity mean?
- 4- What does the rescue of Eros mean? Does Eros need Psyche as Psyche to Eros?



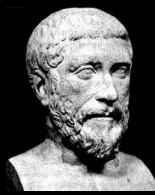
**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

# ***10 Theosophy through the ages***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## Theosophy through history



Pythagoras



Plato



Leonardo  
Da Vinci



Paracelsus



Giordano Bruno



Isaac Newton



- The essence of Theosophy flourished in different times and places.
- It was taught to the world by thinkers of all times.

And many more ...

From the most remote antiquity and in different regions of the world have emerged exceptional people, geniuses of their time, philosophers, spiritual leaders, remarkable and brilliant people who captured, lived and transmitted the foundations of Ageless Wisdom or Theosophy.

The fundamental ideas that we see in this course are not new, as we can find them in the legacy of these great thinkers.

These spiritual leaders left an important mark on the history of humankind and they are the foundation of a large part of our current culture. To communicate their knowledge, they founded schools, gathered disciples around them, wrote books, traveled, interviewed other people and undertook this activity because they were aware of the importance of this wisdom on Life we know today as Theosophy.

Theosophy is a universal knowledge, although it has not always had this name. There have been preachers of the Ageless Wisdom, who like leaves of a tree, have been nourished by the same sap of the tree as all the other leaves giving their particular focus, their personal message, but ultimately based on the same universal transcendent knowledge, Theosophy.



## Universal ideas

▪ There were some essential ideas about Life that appeared in different times and places:

- Egypt
- Mystery Schools
- Buddha
- Greek philosophers
- Neoplatonics
- Geniuses of the Renaissance
- Greats of Enlightenment
- Modern Theosophy
- Modern thinkers
- . . .



In this chapter we will take a look at some of the notable sources of Theosophy to show that it is not in any way an invention of Helena P. Blavatsky, her followers, or ideas that are occasionally in fashion, but that they are powerful currents of thought that have flourished at different times in humanity.

There were many outstanding thinkers in the history of humanity and all contributed something to the culture and knowledge of the world as well as who we are. But here we want to point out some that have stood out especially in their time, perhaps not for being geniuses in some specialty, but for their universal and profound vision of life and of the individual.

This summary does not intend to be an exhaustive study because it would be outside the limits and purpose of this course, but we will simply try to show that seekers of truth have existed and have always been noticed.

The ideas of the Ageless Wisdom can be traced back to ancient civilizations, such as parts of Mesopotamia and, notably, ancient Egypt and India. In Europe and the Middle East institutions called the Mystery Schools flourished, where through symbols and representations were taught the fundamental ideas of Life.

Over time, the teachings become rigid doctrines and dogmas, losing their freshness and original value. Reform movements then emerge headed by some instructor such as Gautama Buddha in the bosom of Hinduism or Jesus of Nazareth in the Hebrew world.

In ancient Greece and Asia Minor, notable philosophers flourished and with their ideas they built the foundation of modern civilization. In Alexandria, the Neoplatonists emerged and devised the term Theosophy to refer to this body of universal truths. Theosophy was also significant in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment movement.

## The initiatory tradition in Egypt

2500 bce

390 ce

### Myth of Osiris

**Osiris** is killed by his brother Seth, who cut him up and scattered his remains.  
**Isis** recovered them, united them and had a son with him, **Horus**.  
 Osiris became the god of the dead.





### Osiris

God of life and death, of the rebirth, of fertility. Redeemer. Judge of the dead.

### Isis

Goddess of matter, magic and regeneration.



Ancient Egypt was a land of myths and mysteries. Its pantheon of gods with animal heads and related legends is well-known. The stories were transmitted from mouth to ear and their magical and extraordinary character made them attractive and easy to remember. Although the people did not generally have the culture necessary to interpret the hidden aspects behind these stories, there were mystery and initiation schools that went beyond the apparent, and interpreted and applied the teaching behind them to solve the riddles of the life.

The most well-known and important Egyptian myth is the **Myth of Osiris**, which was narrated by Plutarch, although there are many versions and variants of it.


**Osiris** was king of Egypt and ruled with his wife and sister **Isis**. Through an artful trap, Osiris was killed by his brother Seth, who cut his body into fourteen pieces and scattered throughout Egypt. Isis lovingly recovered all the members, except the virile member, which had been eaten by a fish. With the help of her adopted son, Anubis, who embalmed Osiris, Isis, managed to breathe new life into the mummified corpse with her powerful magic. She became pregnant with their only son, **Horus**, who avenged Osiris' death by banishing Seth to the desert and reclaiming the throne of Egypt. Osiris remained as king of the dead in the fertile fields of Aaru.

Osiris thus became the god of the dead, the symbol of the resurrection, the redeemer, and the judge of the dead. In commemoration of this myth, the Mysteries of Osiris in Abydos were celebrated, where a funeral procession took place, a boat trip, the vigil and the most secret part of the mysteries, the resurrection on the third day with its regeneration and transfiguration. The Mysteries of Osiris are a predecessor of the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Jesus in Christianity.

## Meanings of the myth

2500 bce

390 ce



Book of Emerging Forth into the Light (Book of the dead)

Exoteric	Esoteric
<p>The life after death. The reincarnation of the soul. Cycles throughout nature.</p>	<p>The resurrection of the human soul. Regeneration and the start of a new life.</p>

As we have said before, myths have several interpretations. Some of them are more evident and popular, the external or exoteric interpretations, while other interpretations are deeper and linked to the student's own life that approaches the myth. These are the internal or esoteric interpretations.

The myth of Osiris represents the cycle of life, death, and resurrection in nature. Osiris is considered as the god of death and the symbol of reincarnation. After a cycle of activity from birth to death, Osiris or the human soul is in the underworld or Amenti where it is judged and remains until nature and the need for a new experience make it return to physical life. This is an exoteric interpretation. Many myths of the ancient world speak of the cycles in nature and the regeneration of life. Life flows in cycles.

But there is also an esoteric interpretation related to the awakening of consciousness and the transformation of the human being.

The death of Osiris at the hands of his brother Seth (who represents darkness, ignorance), symbolizes Life scattered in material forms. It is the diversity of manifestation seemingly fragmented into innumerable beings and atoms of matter. Dead Osiris represents consciousness identified with the external, with matter, and divided by ignorance.

Isis is the regenerating aspect of consciousness, the spiritual soul that is conscious in its level of the unity of life and that by perceiving the fragments as being part of a unity, unites them. For her consciousness, the veil of separateness has fallen and she perceives the unity of life. From the mystical union of the spiritual soul and the human soul is born Horus, the radiant spirit, the enlightened mind, the product of human evolution and one of the deepest mysteries of life.

Osiris, Isis and Horus thus are the sacred trinity father-mother-son, the fundamental principles in the manifestation of the Universe that we saw at the beginning of the course when we examined the Cosmogogenesis propositions discussed in the *Secret Doctrine* of H.P. Blavatsky.

## The tradition of the Mysteries

1500 bce

396 ce

- The Mysteries were initiatory systems of the ancient world.
- They spread from Egypt and Asia Minor to the Mediterranean.
- Its objective was to help awaken the candidate's inner conscience.
- His teachings were symbolic. Initiation: *new life*.
- Minor Mysteries (exoteric)  
Major Mysteries (esoteric)
- Mystery Schools: Orphic, Eleusis, Mithra, Samothrace, ...



Scene of the Mysteries of Eleusis

Myths were widely used in the initiatory systems of the ancient world.

The goal of these systems was to help interested people to produce an inner transformation that would allow them to better understand life, the Universe and our role in it. The candidates went through a process of preparation in which they had to purify their psychological nature, strengthen their morals and their character and, finally, following a ritual they were initiated into a new life.

The **Mystery Schools** were very popular in the ancient world. They spread from Egypt and Asia Minor to the countries of the Mediterranean Sea such as Greece and Rome where they had great success. The first recorded evidence dates back to Egypt, some 1,500 years before our era. The mystery schools lasted until the end of paganism, in 396 AD, when Emperor Diocletian put an end to them and their temples were looted.

Their external activity was related to the annual or five-year celebration of the Mysteries in which people attended ritual representations of the themes that constituted the myth worshiped, received certain teachings, and were in touch with sacred symbols.

There is almost no documentation of the activities of these schools, except for the story of a few who attended their events. From the Mysteries of Orpheus we know something about the written Orphic hymns that have survived and also thanks to the work of Pythagoras.

There were *Minor Mysteries* and *Major Mysteries*. The Minor Mysteries were fundamentally popular, exoteric representations. The Major Mysteries were esoteric, reserved for those who were preparing for the goal of undertaking a new life. Men and women were accepted who did not have crimes of blood, regardless of whether they were lords or slaves.



## The Orphic Mysteries

- Common theme in the mysteries: cycles, rebirth, regeneration.
- The Orphic mysteries were the basis of a kind of religion. Eurydice, wife of Orpheus, dies and he goes to rescue her at Hades. With his lyre he convinces the gods to allow her to return to the world of the living.
- Everything was spoiled when they left and Orpheus looked back even though he had been forbidden to do so.



Orpheus (Roman mosaic)

A recurring theme in the myths of the mysteries is that of cycles in nature and rebirth. This not only pointed out how the seasons work for the benefit of agriculture, but also to understand the deep mystery of the cycles and the rebirth of the human soul.

**Orphic Mysteries** celebrated the descent of Orpheus to Hades (the underworld, the world of the dead) to rescue his beloved Eurydice and his subsequent return. At the origins of the myth was also the death and resurrection of Dionysus, son of Zeus and Persephone (who descended to Hades every winter and returned every spring). The Orphic people followed a pure lifestyle, were vegetarians, did not kill animals and believed in reincarnation.

See more details in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphism\\_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphism_(religion))

The **Mysteries of Eleusis** were dedicated to the myth of Demeter and her daughter Persephone. The latter had been kidnapped by Hades and Demeter, goddess of agriculture, went to rescue her but neglected her tasks. Winter came until Persephone's return and with it the rebirth of life with spring.

See more on:

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian\\_Mysteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries)

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman\\_mysteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_mysteries)

Also see the interesting work of Edward Beach, *The Eleusinian Mysteries*:

[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary\\_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Pythagoras,%20Empedocles,%20Plato/The%20Ecole%20Initiative%20The%20Eleusinian%20Mysteries2.htm](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Pythagoras,%20Empedocles,%20Plato/The%20Ecole%20Initiative%20The%20Eleusinian%20Mysteries2.htm)



## Hermeticism

- The hermetic tradition has its origin in the teachings of **Hermes Trismegistus** and it is of Egyptian and Greek origin.
- The fundamental work of hermeticism is the **Corpus Hermeticum**, a set of 18 philosophical, mystical and moral treatises.
- Hermeticism is at the origin of esotericism in the West and has inspired innumerable seekers of truth.



Hermes Trismegistus

One of the most influential currents of thought in antiquity has been Hermeticism. It is about the teachings of an Egyptian priest, **Hermes Trismegisto** (the 3 times great or 3 times anointed) who had a great influence in the Hellenic world.

The ideas of hermeticism are contained mainly in his fundamental work: the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a recompilation of 18 treatises from different eras. Another work discovered later is the *Emerald Tablet*, highly symbolic and of alchemical value.

Hermeticism is a philosophy, not a dogma or a set of revelations. Its objective is for the student to become aware of one's spiritual nature through Gnosis, the supreme knowledge of life, or the interior illumination, thus transforming the human being.

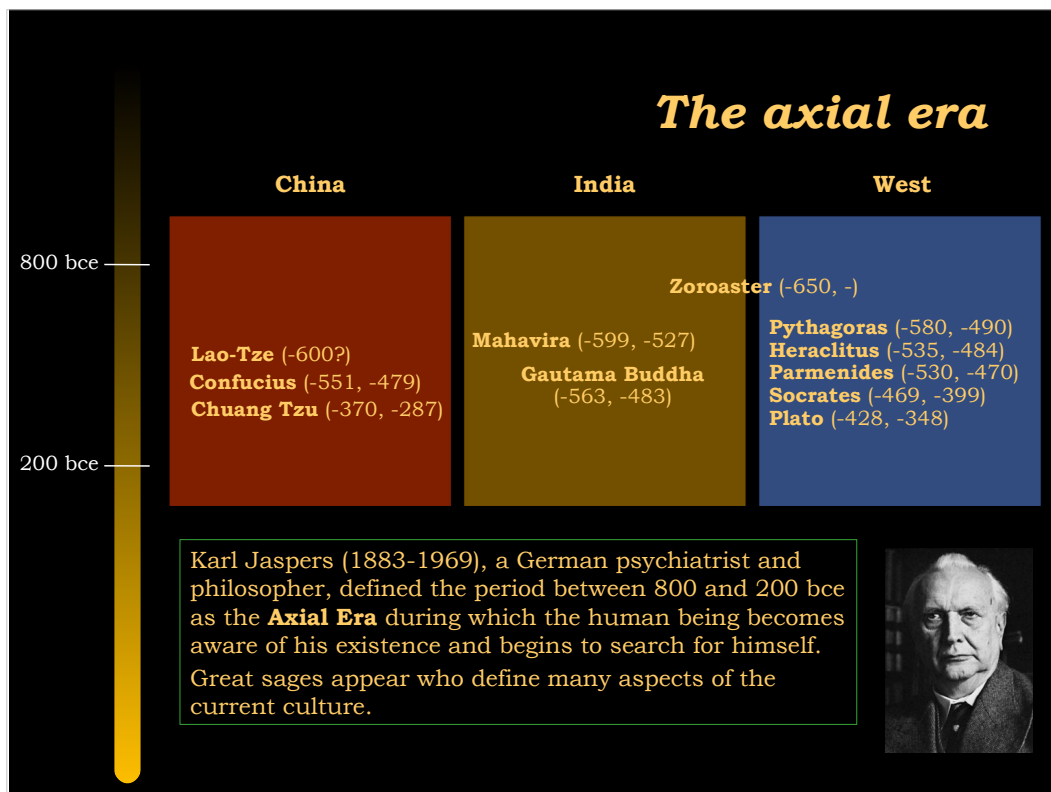
For hermeticism there is a correspondence, a oneness between the Macrocosm, the universal, and the Microcosm, the human being, as the Vedas and the modern proponents of the holographic model of the Universe affirm.

That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below to do the miracles of one Only Thing

And as all things have been and arose from One by the mediation of One: so all things have their birth from this One Thing by adaptation.

*Emerald Tablet*

Hermeticism has had a great influence on the philosophers of the Renaissance and on many thinkers and writers from different eras. The historian Frances Yates studied how hermeticism and esotericism along with Neoplatonism inspired the thinkers of the Renaissance.



The existence of a current of thought based on a deep wisdom in the world has not been overlooked for some thinkers. The German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) has defined what he has called the **axial age** or pivotal time. It is the period of history between 800 bce and 200 bce, which is revealed as the deepest dividing line in the history of humanity. During this period the same line of thought appeared in three regions of the world: China, India and the West.

In the blog called *Homo Homini Sacra Res*, an interesting article about Jaspers' postulate is published (in Spanish).

According to Jaspers, the most important thing of this time in the "three worlds", which correspond to the East, the Middle East and the Greek Hellade, is that man clearly perceives his own existence and impotence in such transcendental and unavoidable matters as the death. At the same time that it integrates its own vital limits, it also exercises itself in achieving the highest goals in the time it has to live, and more specifically, in the possibility of overcoming, in life, the suffering that its own conscience provokes. If reflection leads to such a state of anxiety, it is also reflection that allows you to seek solutions to your problems. Thought becomes the object of thought itself while accessing the universal.

<http://www.homohominisacrares.net/sec/historia/eraaxial/queestiempoje.htm>

It is evident that what Jaspers discovered is the emergence of Ageless Wisdom or Theosophy at a crucial period in history and the influence it has had on humanity.

So much was the strength and diffusion of these new philosophical-religious paradigms, which still maintain their validity throughout the world, and have defined many aspects the current civilizations. In this time and in a geographical line between the mentioned parallels 40 and 20 there are: the appearance of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and all possible philosophical tendencies, from skepticism to materialism, sophistry and nihilism, in addition to the doctrine of universal love of Mo zi or Mo ti; the Upanishads, which synthesize the vast and complex conglomeration of Hindu beliefs and the life doctrine of the Jain Mahavira; the doctrine of Zoroaster in Persia; the imprint of Elijah, first, and then Jeremiah and Isaiah later, in Judaism, and the so-called passage from Myth to the Logos in Magna Grecia from the Presocratics to Plato.

<http://www.homohominisacrares.net/sec/historia/eraaxial/queestiempoje.htm>

In this sense, Blavatsky also offers a look at this axial age of history:

The days of Constantine were the last turning-point in history, the period of the Supreme struggle that ended in the Western world throttling the old religions in favour of the new one, built on their bodies. From thence the vista into the far distant Past, beyond the “Deluge” and the Garden of Eden, began to be forcibly and relentlessly closed by every fair and unfair means against the indiscreet gaze of posterity. Every issue was blocked up, every record that hands could be laid upon, destroyed. Yet there remains enough, even among such mutilated records, to warrant us in saying that there is in them every possible evidence of the actual existence of a Parent Doctrine. Fragments have survived geological and political cataclysms to tell the story; and every survival shows evidence that the now Secret Wisdom was once the one fountain head, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets — the later religions of all nations — from the first down to the last. This period, beginning with Buddha and Pythagoras at the one end and the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics at the other, is the only focus left in History wherein converge for the last time the bright rays of light streaming from the aeons of time gone by, unobscured by the hand of bigotry and fanaticism.


Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, Introductory*

Next we will see some examples of how Theosophy was expressed by the great thinkers of humanity.

## Lao-Tzu

500 bce  
?

- Lao-Tzu = Lao Tze = Old master.
- Author of **Tao Te Ching**, fundamental work of Taoism.
- The **Tao**: the One, the essence, the way.
- Yin-Yang: dualism in Nature, Female-Male.
- Base of the ancient philosophy of China. Teaching by paradoxes.



I would like to possess the wisdom to be able to march on the great road without fear of deviating.  
The great road is flat but people love the trails.

Lao Tzu

Taoism is called the philosophical teachings of the great sage **Lao Tzu** who is credited with a small, very profound, book called the *Tao Te Ching* that uses a poetic language and paradoxes to move the reader beyond logical thinking.

The fundamental idea of Lao Tzu is the **Tao**. The Tao is the ultimate Reality that transcends all opposites and which is the fundamental principle of the Universe.

The Tao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Tao.  
 The name that can be named is not the eternal name.  
 The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.  
 The name is the mother of the ten thousand things.  
 Send your desires away and you will see the mystery.  
 Be filled with desire and you will see only the manifestation.  
 As these two come forth they differ in name.  
 Yet at their source they are the same.  
 This source is called a mystery.  
 Mystery of mysteries, the gateway to Secret of All Life.

Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

The expression of the Tao is necessarily cyclical since in Lao-Tzu's words "The return is the movement of the Tao". The Tao is also the path for the one who seeks to realize the nature of the Tao.


## Gautama Buddha

563 bce —

483 bce —

(aprox)

- Gautama Buddha was the great instructor of a spiritual reform movement in India.
- Buddhism is a philosophy rather than a religion.
- It focused on suffering, its causes and how to avoid it.
- The 4 **noble truths**:
  - The existence of suffering
  - Desire is the cause of suffering
  - The cessation of suffering
  - The noble eightfold path
- His influence reaches our days.



**Gautama the Buddha** was an instructor who taught the cause of suffering. Having experienced the wealth of his home as a prince, and then the deprivations of an ascetic life, he understood the middle path, attained enlightenment, saw the problem clearly and dedicated himself to traveling and teaching others.

His teachings are recorded in the notes of his sermons and his fundamental legacy is the 4 Noble Truths. These are the following:

- 1- The existence of suffering (*dukkha*).
- 2- The cause of suffering. It is desire, selfishness, attachment to impermanent things.
- 3- The cessation of suffering. Suffering is not inevitable, but a consequence of the condition of the mind. Suffering is eliminated if desire, selfishness and attachment ceases. Happiness is achieved by the liberation of suffering.
- 4- The path that leads to the cessation of suffering: the Noble Eightfold Path. There are 8 qualities that reflect the inegoistic state.

The Buddha acted like a doctor curing a sick person by showing the role of desire and self in the human mind as the cause of suffering and as an obstacle to being happy and living a full life.

But the Buddha did not want simple followers, he wanted people to think for themselves, he wanted free-thinkers and this was made clear in one of his sermons:

Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.'

Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,' abandon them.

**Be a Lamp Unto Yourself.**

Gautama Buddha, *Kalama Sutta*


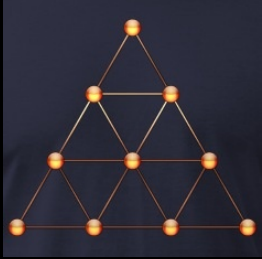


## Pythagoras

570 bce

475 bce

- Pythagoras was a Greek philosopher and mathematician.
- He studied in Egypt and defined himself as a lover of wisdom (philosopher).
- He founded his practical philosophical school in Crotona.
- The number is the abstract representation of the processes of manifestation, of the emanations of the Universe (Tetraktys).
- He was the most influential of the pre-Socratic philosophers.

Pythagorean Tetraktys

**Pythagoras** combined the science of mathematics, that he promoted with his developments, with the philosophy and spirituality that were the foundation of his School. The Pythagoreans were seekers of the truth and harmony of the Universe and had high standards of life. An example of this is found in the *Golden Verses* of Pythagoras.

Consult and deliberate before you act, that you may not commit foolish actions.  
 For it is the part of a miserable man to speak and to act without reflection.  
 But do the thing which will not afflict you afterwards, nor oblige you to repentance.  
 Never do anything which you do not understand.  
 But learn all you ought to know, and by that means you will lead a very pleasant life.  
 .....

Only do the things that cannot hurt you, and deliberate before you do them.  
 Never allow sleep to close your eyelids, after you went to bed,  
 Until you have examined all your actions of the day by your reason.  
 In what have I done wrong? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done?  
 If in this examination you find that you have done wrong, reprove yourself severely for it;  
 And if you have done any good, rejoice.

Practice thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well;  
 you ought to love them with all your heart.  
 It is those that will put you in the way of divine virtue.  
 I swear it by he who has transmitted into our souls the Tetraktys,  
 the source of nature, whose cause is eternal.

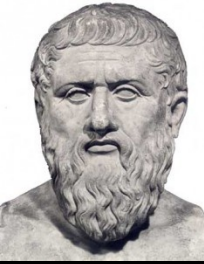
Pythagoras, *Golden Verses*

# Plato


427 bce —

347 bce —

- One of the great parents of Philosophy. Founder of the Academy of Athens. Disciple of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle.
- He wrote a large number of works dealing with topics such as morals, knowledge, politics, psychology, cosmogenesis, etc.
- He differentiated between:
  - The *sensitive*: transitory, perceived by the senses.
  - The *intelligible*: the real, eternal, the authentic being, the archetypes.
- Explained in the allegory of the cave, in "The Republic".



Allegory of the cave



One of the most notable thinkers of the ancient world whose influence extends to our civilization is, without a doubt, the Athenian philosopher Plato (427 BC - 347 BC). He is considered one of the great parents of Philosophy and one of the most dazzling writers of Western tradition. He was a disciple of Socrates and from him he learned the art of inquiring, the formulation of questions intended to prove the validity of any claim.

Plato traveled to places where he was in contact with important schools of thought. He was in Syracuse, Sicily, part of the "Magna Grecia". He had a close relationship with the Pythagoreans, from whom he adopted many ideas. He was also in Egypt studying with priests and sages.

Plato founded the *Academy*, a philosophical teaching institution that had great prestige, which was attended by notable characters. One of them was Aristotle, who later turned away.

This great thinker wrote a large number of works in which he dealt with a wide variety of topics such as morals, ethics, knowledge, the constitution of the human being, politics, cosmogenesis, and many other aspects of Philosophy. His writings are generally in the form of dialogues, firstly between Socrates and other characters and later between real or fictional characters.

In Plato's philosophy there is a differentiation between the sensible, the transient outside world that we perceive through the senses, and the intelligible, the permanent world of the real, of the authentic being and of the real nature of things.

This dual nature of the world was expressed in one of his best-known allegories, that of the cave, where there are some people who can only see the shadows cast on a wall in front of them. They believe that this is reality and they conceive nothing beyond. One of them manages to free himself from that limitation and looks toward the light. He sees the people who are causing the shadows and his perception changes completely. When this liberated person tries to transmit his perception to his companions, they do not understand him.

There are evidences that Plato had an esoteric knowledge from Egypt, the Pythagoreans and the Orphic Mysteries, which he did not write, since he recounts the following:

There is not and never will be a work of mine that deals with these [...] issues. Any serious person would be very careful not to trust serious questions in writing, exposing them to the malevolence of the people.

Plato, *Letter 7*

## The Neoplatonists of Alexandria

Philosophical school of great prestige founded by Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria called "Eclectic Theosophical School".

Its ideas are known today as **Neoplatonism** and is the convergence of Eastern thought with that of Pythagoras and Plato.

Fundamental ideas:

- The One
- Emanations
- The Soul of the World
- The intelligible world and the sensible world
- Theurgy

Ammonius Saccas

Plotinus

Porphyry

Iamblichus

Proclus

Hypatia



175 bce

485 ce

In the ancient city of Alexandria in Egypt, the Ptolemaic dynasty created and sustained the great Library that was an intellectual beacon in the ancient world, even more than its legendary lighthouse for navigation. There flourished geniuses of the sciences like Euclides, Archimedes or Eratosthenes. In this favorable environment, emerged a philosophical current that brought together teachings from Egypt and India as well as from Pythagoras and Plato.

To study and to teach these ideas **Ammonius Saccas** founded the Eclectic Theosophical School, coining the term Theosophy for ageless Wisdom. His teachings are known today as Neoplatonism and it had prominent philosophers such as Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus. The last great thinker of this school was a brave woman, Hypatia who died at the hands of the Christian hordes that destroyed what was left of the Library.

The teachings of Neoplatonism present a holistic vision of the Universe as we have outlined in this course. Its fundamental ideas are the existence of the "One", the Reality that does not divide with the manifestation but emanates from itself the "undetached sparks" that constitute the diverse beings.

All beings have their existence for the One, not only the beings so called in the first sense, but those who call themselves attributes of those beings. Because, what could exist that was not one? If we separate it from the unit, it immediately ceases to exist. Neither the army, nor the choir, nor the flock would have any reality if they were no longer an army, a choir or a flock. In the same way, the house and the ship lack existence if they do not possess unity; because both the one and the other are a unit and, if it is lost, they also cease to be a ship and a house.

Plotinus, *Enneads: About the good and the One*

## Middle Age



Kabbalists



Alchemists

**Great thinkers**

- Symbolic systems:
  - Hebrew Kabbalah
  - Alchemy
- They protected themselves from persecution of the Church.
- Various thinkers. E.g.:
  - Dante Alighieri



Dante Alighieri  
(1265-1321)

900 —

1300 —

During the Middle Ages in the West there were no favorable circumstances for free thought and philosophy. The power of the Catholic Church and that of the empires and absolutist kingdoms determined an atmosphere of dogma and rigidity in thought, persecuting those who defied the official religion. This state of affairs motivated the appearance of groups of thinkers who used symbolism and metaphors to hide the true substance of their elaborations from the eyes of the official religion, thus being able to communicate them in this way to those who possessed the keys to their interpretation.

One of the clearest examples has been the movement of **Alchemy**. Its origin is in ancient Egypt, but during the Middle Ages it had a resurgence in Europe. The alchemists used a symbolic system based on elements and chemical reactions to explain the transformation of the individual, the true transmutation into gold.

The **Kabbalah** is the esoteric system rooted in Judaism. Although its origins are supposedly in Babylon, the current Kabbalah emerged in the south of France with Isaac the Blind and in Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth century with Azrael de Gerona and many other notables such as Ponce de León. It explains the universe and man through a system of principles, the *Sephirot*, in a complex structure that have much correspondence with the ideas of Theosophy.

**Dante Alighieri** (1265-1321), the Italian poet who wrote *The Divine Comedy* and *The New Life*, was not only a great writer. When he was still a child he met Beatrice, a girl he fell deeply in love with. Although his family arranged a marriage with another woman, Dante always had Beatrice in his heart and he had to endure the pain when she died very young. In the *Divine Comedy* Dante recounts his journey in the afterlife through Hell and Purgatory, guided by Virgil, the Roman poet, to finally be rescued by Beatrice, the personification of pure love, who leads him to Paradise. In addition to being a theme similar to the myths of the Mystery Schools, *The Divine Comedy* is full of allegories. It is known that Dante belonged to a secret initiatory society of poets called *Fedeli d'Amore* (*Faithful of Love*), who inspired by supreme Love (Eros) worshiped ladies who, more than real women, represented the ideal Feminine, *Sapientia* or Divine Wisdom. Henry Corbin says that "The Fedeli d'Amore profess a secret religion [...], the union between the intellect attainable by the human soul and active Intelligence [...] the Angel of Knowledge or Wisdom-Sophia, is visualized and experienced as a loving union. " We see here the ideal of Divine Wisdom, Divine Sophia, Theos-Sophia or Theosophy.

## Renaissance

- Rediscovery of the ancient world.
- Revival of the philosophy independent of religion (natural philosophy, Neoplatonism).
- Persecution of the Church
- Featured thinkers:
  - Marsilio Ficino
  - Pico della Mirandola
  - Leonardo Da Vinci
  - Cornelio Agripa
  - Jacob Boehme
  - ...



Marsilio Ficino  
1433 - 1499



Pico della Mirandola  
1463 - 1494



Leonardo Da Vinci  
1452 - 1519



Cornelio Agripa  
1486 - 1535

1400 —

1600 —

The Renaissance was prodigious in characters that produced a revolution in European thought when they rediscovered the classical world that had been buried by the Church. There was a reevaluation of philosophy independent from religion. Many thinkers turned their eyes to natural philosophy and Neoplatonism, which earned them the persecution of the Church. Among the notable people we meet in the Renaissance, the following stand out.

**Marsilio Ficino** (1433-1499). Florentine philosopher, translator and commentator of Plato, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Hermes, Zoroaster, and many others; was the leader of the Florentine Platonic Academy and promoter of the rebirth of Neoplatonism.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsilio\\_Ficino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsilio_Ficino)

**Leonardo Da Vinci** (1452-1519). Genius par excellence of the Renaissance, inventor, engineer, artist. He used many hermetic themes in his works, even though they were religious commissions.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci)

**Pico della Mirandola** (1463-1494). Florentine philosopher, theologian, hermeticist and Kabbalist, disciple of Marsilio Ficino. In his main work, *Conclusions*, Pico reviews classical philosophy, interested in the process of union of the embodied soul with the spiritual portion of the soul.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni\\_Pico\\_della\\_Mirandola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Pico_della_Mirandola)

**Cornelius Agrippa** (1486-1535). German philosopher, Kabbalist, alchemist and writer. His main work, *The Three Books of Hidden Philosophy*, is a compendium of the occult doctrines of the time. His treatise *Hidden Numerology* is based on Pythagoras and the Jewish Kabbalah.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich\\_Cornelius\\_Agrippa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Cornelius_Agrippa)

**Jacob Boehme** (1575-1624). Philosopher and writer, nicknamed "The German Theosophist". He was a mystic who wrote about a spiritual interpretation of alchemy and about the origin of good and evil.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob\\_B%C3%B6hme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_B%C3%B6hme)



## Giordano Bruno

▪ Religious, philosopher, astronomer and Italian poet of the Renaissance.

▪ It was nourished by Platonism, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism.

▪ He had a relationship with other esotericists in the Church.

▪ Main ideas:

- Unity of the Cosmos
- Soul of the Universe
- Implicit infinity vs explicit infinity



Giordano Bruno  
1548 - 1600

1548

1600

▪ Burnt at the stake because of the Inquisition accused of being a heretic.

**Giordano Bruno** (1548-1600). He was an Italian philosopher, writer, religious, astronomer and poet of the Renaissance. He went through Calvinism, with which he had conflicts. Thanks to his travels through European cities, he established relationships with people from esoteric and hermetic circles. Giordano defended the Neoplatonic and universal ideas, coming to maintain that the Universe is infinite and that there could be other inhabited worlds (*Of the infinite universe and the worlds*), which earned him finally to be condemned by the Inquisition and to be burned at the stake. He published multiple works that are currently preserved.

... in short, well that there are innumerable individuals, everything is one, and knowing this unity is the object and term of all philosophy and natural contemplation.

Giordano Bruno, *Concerning Cause, Principle, and Unity*, IV

The English historian Frances Yates studied the relationship of Giordano Bruno with the esotericism of the Renaissance and especially with the hermetic philosophy.

Frances A. Yates (*Giordano Bruno and the hermetic tradition*) has highlighted the importance of the "hermetic tradition" in Bruno's thought. There is, according to Bruno, an "**ancient wisdom**", which the Egyptians already possessed; is that which is expressed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and was developed by Plato, the ancient Neoplatonists and the Neoplatonists on Renaissance. It is a magic that makes possible the communion of man with the powers of Nature. True religion is embodied in "hermetic" pantheism.

José Ferrater Mora, *Diccionario de Filosofía*

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giordano\\_Bruno](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giordano_Bruno)

## Spinoza

- Born in Amsterdam, of a Sephardic Jewish family.
- He had read Giordano Bruno.
- Great philosopher of the 17th century. Stream of rationalism.
- Pantheism: *Deus sive Natura* (God or Nature).
- Monistic vision of Reality, like the esoteric tradition.



Baruch Spinoza  
1632 - 1677

1632 —  
1677 —

**Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677) was a Dutch philosopher born into a family of Sephardic Jews. He read the work of Giordano Bruno and adhered to the stream of rationalism within philosophy, which opposed the consideration of ecclesiastical dogma, along with Descartes and Leibnitz.

One of his main ideas has been that of **pantheism**, according to which he considered that the sacred is in everything, contrary to the predominant ecclesiastical theism. For other rationalists there were different substances, but for Spinoza there is only one universal substance, a single Reality. Spinoza spoke of "*Deus sive Natura*" (God or Nature), as equivalent terms.

The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.

...

That which is itself and is conceived by itself; that is, that whose concept does not need the concept of something else, from which it must be formed.

...

Men deceive themselves by believing themselves free; and the reason for this opinion is that they are aware of their actions, but they ignore the reasons why they are determined; therefore, what constitutes their idea of freedom, is that they do not know any cause of their actions.

Spinoza, *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch\\_Spinoza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza)

## Modern Theosophy

- In 1875 the Theosophical Society was founded in order to investigate and promote the Ageless Wisdom again in the world.
- Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society rediscovered for the West the values of the Orient and its own classical tradition.
- HPB said that she did not make known something new but it was the knowledge accumulated during ages.



Helena P. Blavatsky  
and  
Henry S. Olcott

When Helena P. Blavatsky, Henry S. Olcott, William Judge and others founded the modern theosophical movement in 1875, what they did was to allow the Western world to rediscover the ideas of the East and of the ancient world.

The academics argued at that time that the thinking of the classical world and the ideas contained in the philosophies of India were mere myths without transcendence or were based on superstition and had only literary value, such as stories.

The work of the Theosophical Society had great influence on the rediscovery of oriental scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, the teachings of Yoga and Buddhism. Many thinkers from different branches understood the value of Ageless Wisdom to transform the life of the human being allowing him to be more aware of the fundamental truths of life.

For example, Mohandas Gandhi, the leader of India's independence through nonviolence, declared in his *Autobiography* that he discovered the values of the Bhagavad Gita and the Hindu tradition thanks to his participation in meetings at the Theosophical Society in London.

The founders and Theosophical writers made it clear that they were not giving any new philosophy or religion to the world, but the body of Theosophy is the fruit of knowledge accumulated for ages by great sages, initiates and Adepts and that therefore Theosophy is Ageless Wisdom.

## Modern influences

- Scientists making philosophy:
  - Albert Einstein
  - David Bohm
  - Karl Pribram
  - Carl Gustav Jung
  - Fritjof Capra
  - ...
- Modern Theosophy allowed the popular (though distorting) *New Age* movement.
- Modern freethinkers:
  - J. Krishnamurti
  - Ken Wilber
  - Eckhart Tolle
  - ...



Currently, the influence of Theosophy is very broad although the origin of the ideas it has inspired is popularly unknown.

Theosophy and the work of dissemination of Eastern teachings in the West is pointed out by many as the cause of the *New Age* movement, which although it is not defined and brings together ideas that in some cases are contradictory, has made concepts such as Karma, reincarnation and meditation popular in today's culture.

Many scientists reached the frontiers of what the scientific method allows, but they continue to wonder and move into the field of philosophy. Albert Einstein, the creator of the theory of relativity, had as a result of his conceptions about the laws of Physics, glimpses of the Universe closely related to Ancient Wisdom.

Other scientists previously mentioned as David Bohm and Karl Pribram have conceived of the holographic paradigm, a great confluence towards the fundamental idea of the philosophies of India, of the Pythagoreans and of Neoplatonism: the Universe is one, and in each part is the whole in power. Fritjof Capra, the physicist author of the best-selling *The Tao of Physics* expounds many ideas of Theosophy in his books. Capra left Physics to devote himself to systems theory and ecology.

In addition, freethinkers like Krishnamurti, Ken Wilber, Eckhart Tolle and many more, derive their teachings, consciously or unconsciously, from Theosophy.

In short, we can say that Theosophy is a living spring from which thinkers of all ages have drunk and continue to drink from. Its expression changes, it inspires ideas that transform with the times, but its essence is permanent and vital. Its value is its ability to transform the individual and the world.

When a person gets in touch with Theosophy in any of its manifestations, it is a clear indication that the Inner Being is inspiring the personality to undertake "the way of return," so that looking inwardly connects with the essence and develops one's magnificent potential. It is our challenge to seize the opportunity.

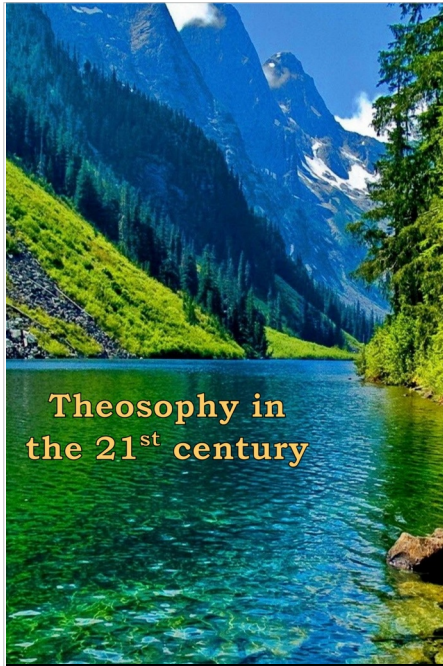
## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Find some quotation from the Renaissance philosophers that display the message of Ageless Wisdom in them.
- 2- Do you think that the appearance of the great instructors such as Lao Tzu and Buddha in different places at such a defined time has been coincidence?
- 3- Mention other philosophical currents that have not been cited in which the fundamental ideas of Theosophy are evident.
- 4- What modern authors do you know whose ideas can be said to be inspired by Theosophy?





**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

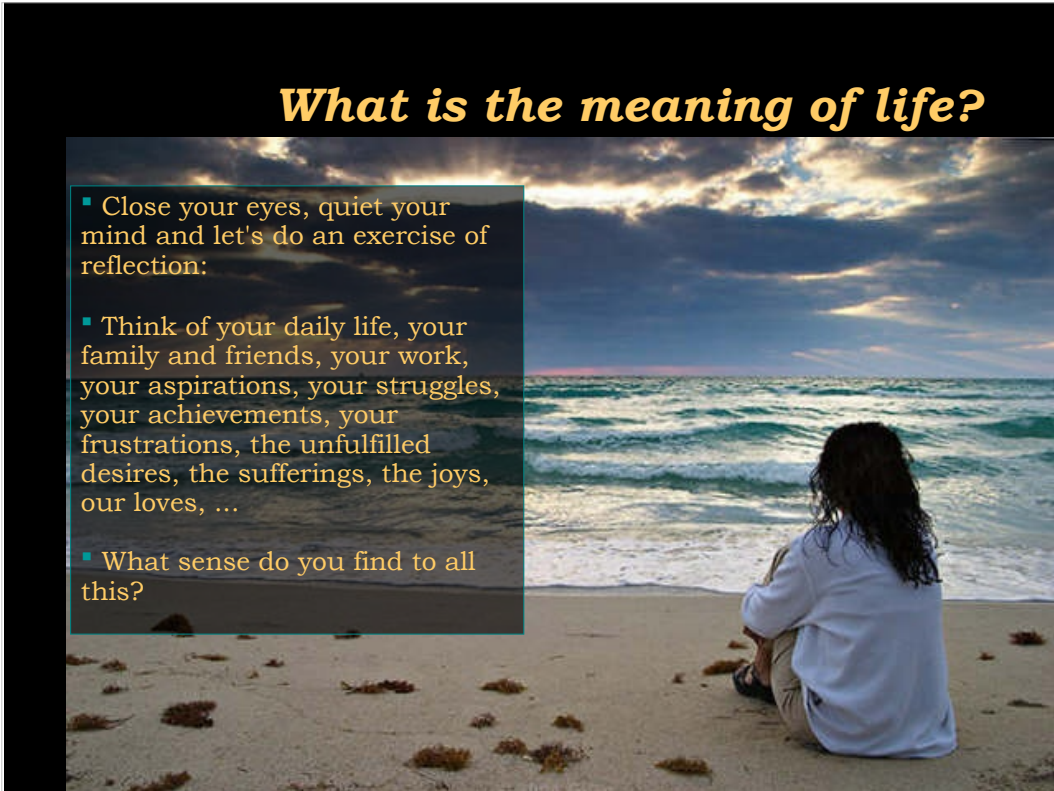
## ***11 The Evolution***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2019

## *What is the meaning of life?*

- Close your eyes, quiet your mind and let's do an exercise of reflection:
- Think of your daily life, your family and friends, your work, your aspirations, your struggles, your achievements, your frustrations, the unfulfilled desires, the sufferings, the joys, our loves, ...
- What sense do you find to all this?



To address the issue of evolution, let's first do a reflection exercise.

To do this relax, breathe gently and quiet your mind. Close your eyes if you want and think about the following:

Think about your daily life, your family, your friends ...

Think about your work or study, your daily routine, its obligations and challenges ...

Think about all your aspirations, your struggles, your achievements and also your frustrations, the unrealized desires.

Think about the sufferings but also the joys that life has brought you.

Think about your loves, the relationships that allow us to love and feel full.

What sense do we find to all this?

What meaning does life have for us?

What do we expect from life?



## What is the meaning of life for others?

- Think about people in your circle, their attitude towards life, their hopes, their struggle.
- Think about people we do not know but who we know have difficulties.
- See the struggle they to survive, the competition and cooperation, the happiness and misery.
- What meaning does life have for them?
- What meaning does life have for an offender?



Now think about the people in your circle, family, friends, people with whom you relate daily.

Think about how they see life. Try to put yourself in their place.

Think of their personal desires, their attitude to life. Some work to achieve their aspirations, others are reactive, some are optimistic and others are pessimistic.

Think about their hopes, as we think we know them.

Let's think now of people that we do not know directly, but whom we know to have difficulties. Victims of natural disasters, victims or relatives of accidents, victims of war and hatred, victims of hunger.

See their struggle to survive. Their fierce competition as well as their cooperation and help. Their happiness and misery.

What meaning does life have for them?

What meaning does life have for an offender?



## *What is the meaning of life in general?*

- What does life mean for a plant? For an insect? For an animal?
- Think of the magnificence of the Universe that we see in the countryside on a starry night ...
- Why do planets, stars, galaxies exist?
- **What is the meaning of the whole Life, as a whole?**

Now think about what life can mean for a plant. Growing, giving its flowers, reproducing, changing according to the cycles of the seasons and finally dying.

What does life mean to an insect?

What does life mean to an animal?

Now think of being in the countryside on a clear and serene night where we can see in the sky the magnificence of the Universe. See its extraordinary magnitude, the huge number of stars. See the fantastic galaxies, including the one we belong to, the Milky Way.

The Manifestation unfolds before our eyes or in our mind with a deep, unfathomable mystery.

Why do planets and stars exist? Why do galaxies exist?

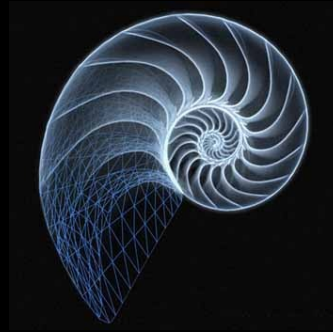
Finally we arrive at the deepest question we can ask ourselves:

**What is the meaning of all Life, as a whole?**



## The Law of Evolution

- The **Law of Evolution** is a fundamental axiom of Theosophy since it reveals to us the progressive development of all existence.
- Everything, from the smallest to the greatest, is in a gradual and cyclical process of development activating the latent faculties.



No more than Science, does esoteric philosophy admit design or “special creation.” It rejects every claim to the “miraculous,” and accepts nothing outside the uniform and immutable laws of Nature. But it teaches a cyclic law, a double stream of force (or spirit) and of matter, which, starting from the *neutral centre* of Being, develops in its cyclic progress and incessant transformations.

Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2

We have seen in Chapter 4 how Biology explains the evolution of living organisms. It is related to the constant adaptation of the forms, of the bodies of organisms, to the environment through natural selection.

The Ancient Wisdom or Theosophy tells us that **Evolution** is a general law, a characteristics of the entire Universe. All existence develops progressively through evolution. From the smallest to the largest, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, from the material to the consciousness, everything is evolving.

Evolution is then a gradual and cyclical process of unfolding that occurs in all aspects of Life as we will see below.

H.P. Blavatsky said that esoteric philosophy does not admit creationist ideas, special or miraculous designs, but the immutable laws of nature operating throughout existence.

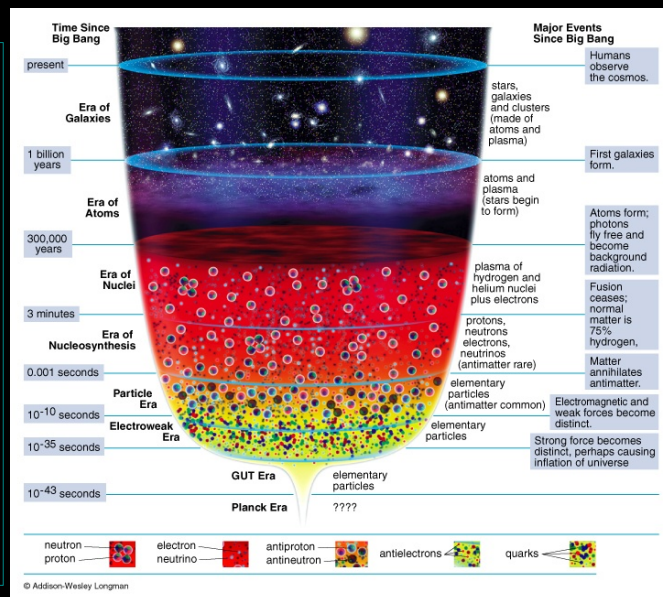
Through evolution, life activates the characteristics that are latent, in a potential state. This happens cyclically as we have seen when we have talked about cycles in nature. But it is not a mechanical deployment, something that is totally determined and then expressed. Life invents itself at every step of its constant effort.

And according to Theosophy this is the true meaning of life: **to evolve**.



## The evolution of matter

- Matter has not always been as we know it.
- The Big Bang happened 13,700 million years ago.
- A millisecond later the elementary particles appeared.
- Just after 3 minutes the hydrogen nuclei were formed.
- The atoms took more than 300,000 years to appear.



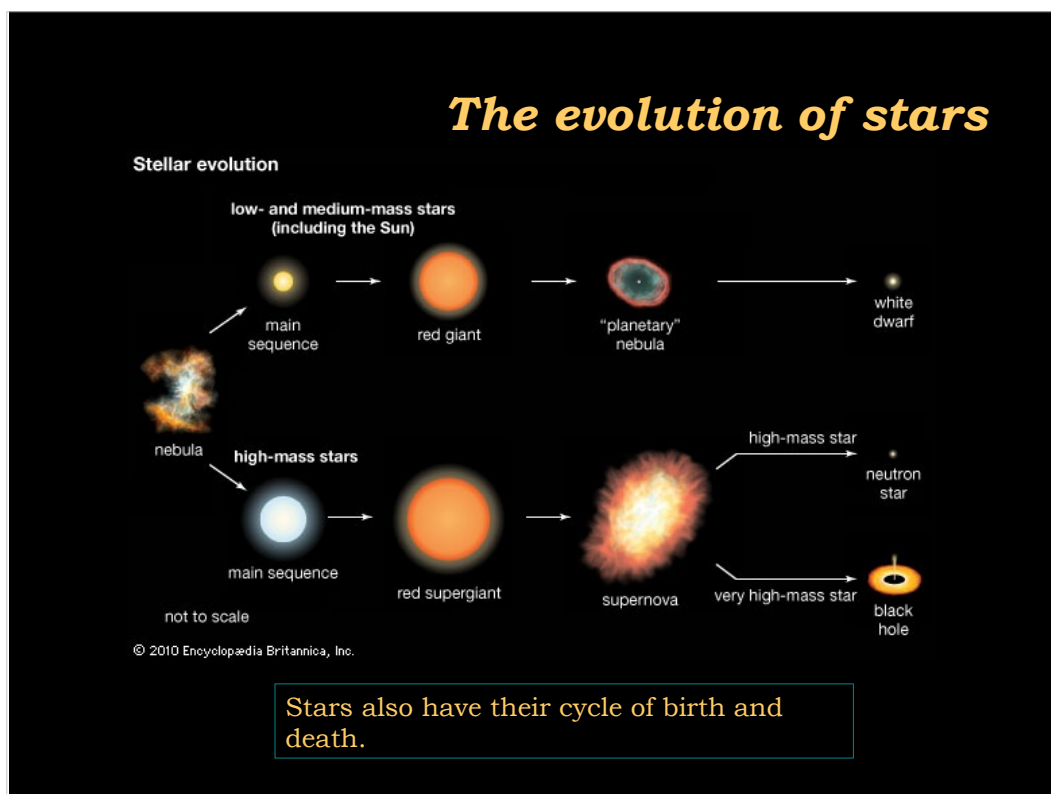
Many people will be surprised when we say that there is an evolution of matter. Astrophysicists show it to us because today we know that matter has not always been as we know it now.

According to the Big Bang theory, of which there are many indications and verifications, the material universe that we know began its existence 13,700 million years ago from a singularity usually called the big-bang. It was not an explosion, as we know them, but something much more mysterious. The universe was somehow concentrated at one point and began its manifestation with a great and sudden expansion, hence the comparison with an explosion.

The state of matter and energy in those moments was very different from what it is now. It is estimated that the elementary particles we know: electrons, protons, neutrons, were formed a millisecond after the big-bang.

But it is estimated that more than 300,000 years must have elapsed so that thanks to the expansion of the universe and its cooling, full atoms began to appear as they exist now. And from the existence of the atoms of hydrogen and helium, stars began to form, producing then other heavier atoms. And it is estimated that only at 1 billion years the first galaxies formed.

We see then that matter itself has had a series of transformations in the primitive history of the universe to reach its current state and serve as an elementary brick for the formation of life's scenarios. There is then an evolution of matter, although its time line is so great that in our daily life we view it as something static.



The stars populate the universe. A star is usually the center of a planetary system. Astronomers are discovering planets outside our solar system at an increasing rate, as allowed by the techniques used, since this is a very difficult task.

Stars are not static, but also have their evolution.

A star arises from the matter accumulated in a nebula. Due to its own gravity, it is concentrated and compressed, reaching a point where the pressure and temperature are so great, that they allow a fusion reaction where the hydrogen atoms unite to form helium releasing a large amount of energy and giving birth to a new star.

The diagram illustrates the different phases through which a star will pass depending on whether it is a star of normal mass, such as our Sun, in the upper branch, or it is a star of great mass, highly bright, in the lower branch.

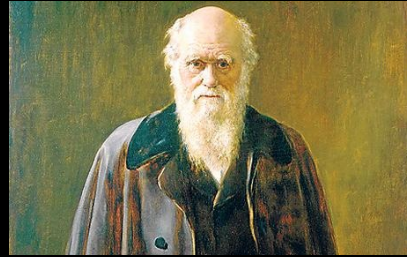
At the end of its main phase, the star will have exhausted its fuel and will have expanded and cooled to become a red giant. Then comes the death of the star. Normal stars produce a planetary nebula and eventually give rise to a white dwarf. On the other hand, high-mass stars die with an explosion producing a supernova which can end in a neutron star or a black hole.

From the material produced with the death of previous stars, new stars are formed and everything starts again. The atoms of heavy metals like iron and gold has been formed in the explosion when a star dies. Our own planet was formed by the contribution of the material from countless meteorites.

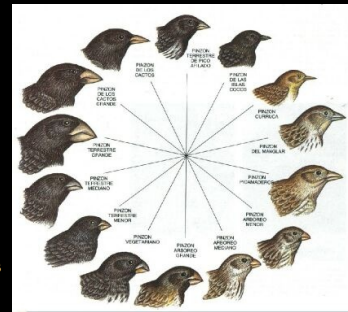
We see therefore that the stars also have their cycle of evolution and with their death they give rise to the regeneration of life.

## The evolution of the species

- Lamarck began to sketch the ideas of evolution in 1800.
- Darwin traveled in the HMS Beagle between 1831-1836 and published "The evolution of the species" in 1859.
- He formulated a scientific theory of evolution by means of:
  - Natural selection
  - Sexual selectionIt is the survival of the fittest.
- Mendel presented his work on genetic inheritance in 1866.



Charles Darwin (1809-1892)



Adaptation of the beak of the finches to available food

Biology explains the process of the evolution of living organisms on the planet. Formerly it was believed that all living beings had been "created" as they are now. Around 1800, Lamarck began to sketch the idea that there is an evolution. But the great discoverer of evolution was undoubtedly Charles Darwin (1809-1882).

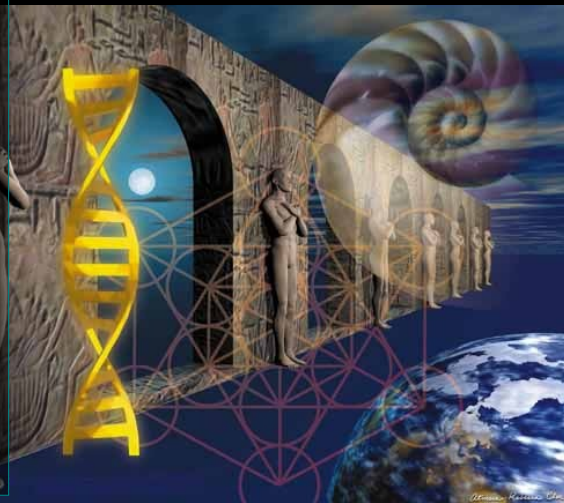
After patiently observing many species of animals and plants on his journey through the world aboard the HMS Beagle for five years, Darwin had the brilliant understanding of Evolution in Nature. He published his ideas in his famous book *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which was an intellectual revolution in his time. In it he postulated that living organisms are not static, but they change over time, after many generations, to adapt to the environment.

Darwin said that these variations occur through **natural selection**. Small changes or alterations occur that improve or worsen the body's ability to survive and adapt to changing environmental conditions or to a new environment. The fittest survive and have more offspring, thus perpetuating the successful change. As these changes become more acute and multiply, new species are derived.

Darwin changed the current idea that living beings are something static to present a new concept for the nascent Biology, that every living being evolves and that all species are related to each other because they were derived from each other. This change of paradigm found great resistance, even in our day, because it is opposed to the creationist idea of some religions.

## Biological evolution

- Organisms evolve from simple structures to more and more complex ones.
- In the DNA lies the biological information of the living being.
- The DNA determines the organic characteristics.
- Changes in DNA produce changes in the organism (mutations).
- Genetic characteristics are transmitted through inheritance.



Subsequent research and molecular biology have only confirmed and defined the process of evolution. Organisms evolve from simple structures to more and more complex ones.

The biological information of an organism is stored in a wonderful macro-molecule that is DNA. It is a memory that contains the instructions to build the organism. Each cell of the organism has a copy of the DNA. One of the wonders of DNA is its ability to replicate itself as Severo Ochoa and Arthur Kornberg discovered. Thanks to DNA and a complex chemical process, the cell can manufacture the proteins that the body needs.

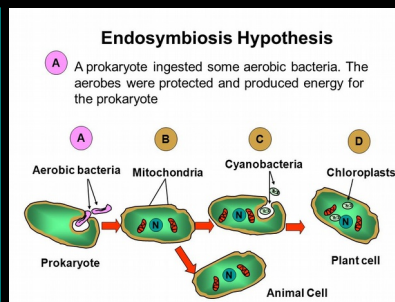
In DNA are genes, which are parts that contain information that determine the organic characteristics such as form and function of the organism. *Genetics* is the study of genes and what they determine. But another part of the DNA that is outside the genes has revealed itself to be equally important, making a gene to be expressed, that is to say, that the cell makes protein with its information, or not. They act as activation switches and are studied in *epigenetics*.

The changes are produced by mutations in the DNA that are transmitted through the inheritance by those organisms that have managed to survive and reproduce.

But in relation to evolution, how do these changes in DNA happen? Are they fortuitous and accidental or do they have any intentional direction? In other words, is evolution completely random, or is there an underlying intention, *teleological* evolution?

## The origin of eukaryotic cells

- Lynn Margulis postulated the theory, now accepted, of **endosymbiosis**, the association between simple organisms to form eukaryotic cells.
- The bacteria appeared 3,500 M years ago.
- Eukaryotic cells appeared 1,500 M years ago (perhaps much earlier).
- It was a transcendental step in biological evolution.



Lynn Margulis  
(1938 - 2011)

Lynn Margulis argued that symbiosis and reuse have a more important role than mutations

For the vast majority of current biologists, changes in DNA happen randomly, without any direction. Neo-Darwinists argue that the increasing complexity of life is simply due to the triumph of some changes in competition, in the struggle for life. According to them, evolution proceeds *completely* by the method of trial and error.

However, a growing number of evolutionary biologists do not agree with this concept. Among them we must highlight Dr. Lynn Margulis (1938-2011) who postulated the theory, now accepted, of **endosymbiosis**. It is estimated that bacteria appeared on Earth about 3,500 million years ago. According to the endosymbiosis about 1,500 million years ago something special happened between the primitive bacteria. Instead of a cell phagocytosing a bacterium, they bound together, giving rise to a more complex cell, a transcendental step that gave rise to the appearance of **eukaryotic cells** that make up plants, fungi and animals. For Lynn Margulis cooperation and reuse have a more important role than mutations.

The neo-Darwinists say that variation originates from random mutation, defining mutation as any genetic change. By randomness they mean that characters appear randomly in offspring with respect to selection: if an animal needs a tail, it doesn't develop this tail because it needs it; rather, the animal randomly develops all sorts of changes and those with tails survive to produce more offspring. H.J. Muller, in the 1920s, discovered that not only do X rays increase the fruit-fly mutation rate, but even if fruit flies are isolated completely from X rays, solar radiation, and other environmental perturbation, a spontaneous mutation rate can be measured. Inherited variants do appear spontaneously; they have nothing to do with whether or not they're good for the organism in which they appear. Mutation was then touted as the source of variation- -that upon which natural selection acted — and the neo-Darwinian theory was declared complete. The science remaining required filling in the gaps in a "theory" with very few holes.

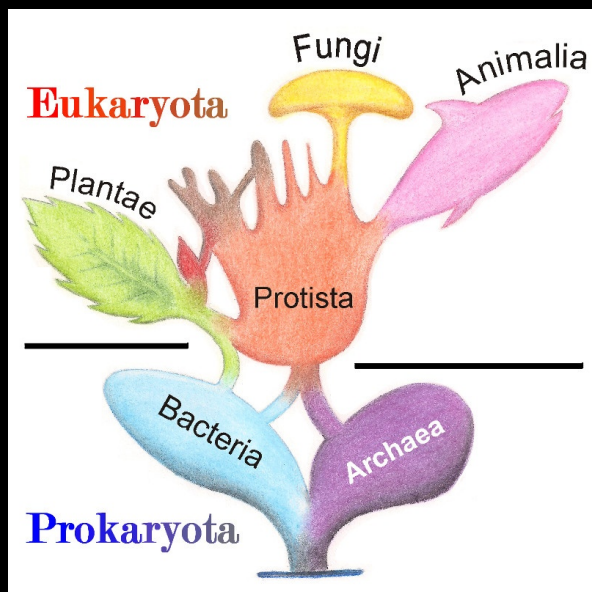
Lynn Margulis, *The Third Culture, Gaia is a tough bitch*



## Evolution in Biology

- It is produced through changes through successive generations in the inheritable characteristics of a population.
- It only deals with biological organisms, not with consciousness.
- Evolution is proven, but its mechanisms still have many unknowns to discover.

Phylogenetic tree starting from primitive organisms



From many experiments, it is known that if mutagens like X rays or certain chemicals are presented to fruit flies, sick and dead flies result. No new species of fly appears — that is the real rub. Everyone agrees that such mutagens produce inherited variation. Everyone agrees that natural selection acts on this variation. The question is, From where comes the useful variation upon which selection acts? This problem has not yet been solved. But I claim that most significant inherited variation comes from mergers ...

Lynn Margulis, *The Third Culture, Gaia is a tough bitch*

All biological species can be arranged in a tree of descent, the so-called *phylogenetic* tree at the root of which are bacteria and ancestral *archaea* from which eukaryotic cells derive and from them all plant, fungal and animal species, including the human organism.

We must highlight that biological evolution only deals with the evolution of the organism, but what about consciousness? Is not there also an evolution of consciousness?

So biological evolution is proven, but its mechanisms still have unknowns to discover. We have many questions left.

Is Evolution just about adaptation to the changing environment by trial and error, or is it the expression of something else?

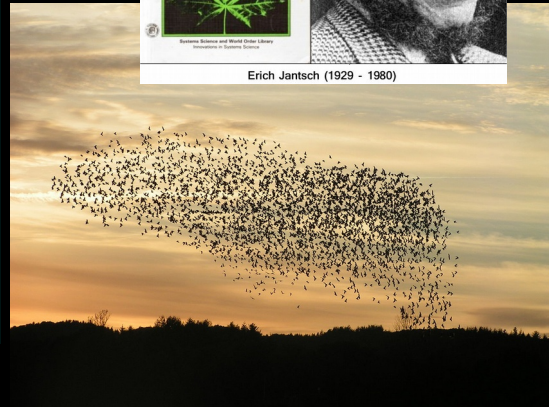
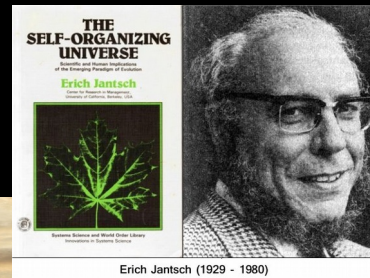
How did life originate?

Was it the fortuitous result of the aggregation of some molecules?

Why were they organized in such a complex way?

## Self-organizing systems

- New paradigm of evolution that rejects both creationism and reductionism (random mutations).
- Erich Jantsch exposed it in his work "*The Self-organizing Universe*".
- Applying systems theory to complex systems shows that they self-organize in an unstable equilibrium to evolve.
- General Evolution Theory (GET).



In recent years, a new paradigm of life and evolution is emerging in science. It is the concept of **self-organized systems** that provides a holistic view of life. It rejects both the creationism characteristic of theism and the reductionism that maintains that changes in organisms occur entirely randomly and that successful changes are due to the process of selection and inheritance. Self-organization is generically described as the process by which structural patterns emerge spontaneously from the interactions of the components of a system.

Erich Jantsch (1929-1980) was an astrophysicist who turned away from reductionism and mechanism by researching and writing a remarkable book: *The Self-Organizing Universe* that views evolution as something holistic and self-organized by Life. Jantsch applied systems theory to complex systems to show how they organize themselves in an unstable equilibrium that allows them to evolve. Jantsch was inspired by the precursor work of chemist Ilya Romanovich Prigogine (1917-2003, Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1977) on the theory of dissipative structures that are not in static equilibrium. Lynn Margulis, among others, read and helped to correct all or part of the manuscript of the book. Proposing cutting-edge ideas against the mainstream cost Erich Jantsch to be marginalized by most of his colleagues in the academic world.

But Jantsch was not the only one who explored the paradigm of self-organized systems. Fritjof Capra, the author of the famous book *The Tao of Physics* also left Physics and devoted himself to systems theory and ecology arguing that only from a holistic point of view can we understand life.

Erich Jantsch says in his book:

This new paradigm is the paradigm of self-organization. With it, an age-old vision is finding its scientific foundations.

In current theory, evolution is usually considered under the aspects of adaptation and survival.

The dire stereotypes of the "survival of the species" and of evolution as a "game in which the only reward is to stay in the game" exert their fateful influence even in the images we hold of ourselves and of human life in general. Such a "heroic pessimism" is further enhanced by theories which view the origin of life as a mere accident, so unlikely that it perhaps occurred only once in the whole universe.

But life is more than survival and the environment to which it adapts, itself evolves and adapts. To grasp this co-evolution in a non-dualistic perspective required the development of a paradigm capable of dealing with self-transcendence, the reaching out beyond the boundaries of one's own existence, the joy of creation. The emergent paradigm of self-organization permits the elaboration of a vision based on the interconnectedness of natural dynamics at all levels of evolving micro- and macrosystems. From such an interconnectedness of the human world with overall evolution springs a new sense of meaning.

Erich Jantsch, *The self-organizing Universe*

As we see this new scientific approach to evolution proposes that everything, beings and the environment, including physical elements, are integrated as a large system and that they seek to transform themselves and transcend their current state. That is, we are talking about an evolution that is not merely a process of adaptation to the changing environment.

The theory of Gaia formulated by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis is in line with this. Lovelock argues that the entire planet, including living beings, earth, water, air, minerals and gases, works as a large organism in a homeostatic equilibrium (not static) that manages to perpetuate life.

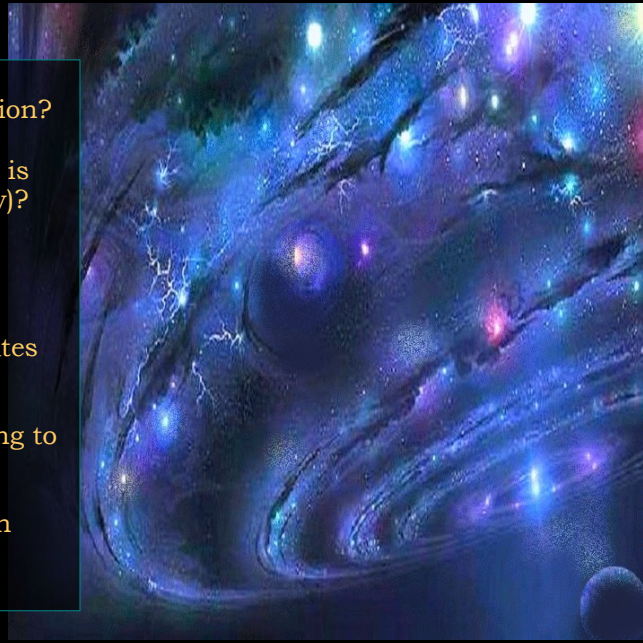
Lovelock and others demonstrated how there are many systems and cycles on Earth that are self-regulating causing the conditions of life to be maintained for their prosperity.

These holistic approaches based on theories of self-organized systems leads to a much deeper understanding of the evolutionary process of Life as a whole. According to these ideas, evolution has an intention, it is teleological. However, this intention does not come from any outside entity or god, but is embedded in the systems themselves. The evolutionary force of plants, of animals, of human society, of the universe in general, is within each evolving system.

Then we see that, little by little, Science is questioning the reductionist, neo-Darwinist concept that evolution proceeds randomly, entirely aimlessly and without meaning.

## Is there an intention in Evolution?

- Does Evolution proceed at random or is there an intention?
- Are the changes random or is there *teleology* (intentionality)?
- Does Life have a fortuitous origin?
- The esoteric philosophy states that:
  - Life evolves as a whole trying to unfold its potential.
  - Intelligence is distributed in everything.



Intentionality in evolution is an old idea as Erich Jantsch points out and, being a characteristic of the system itself, that is to say of Life itself, and not of an external god, it provides a transcendent meaning of life, responding to our initial question: What is the meaning of life?

Life as a whole evolves by unfolding its latent faculties, inventing at every step. The intelligence that carries this forward is distributed in Life itself, in every being, in every atom, in all natural laws. Let us remember the hermetic axiom regarding the holographic universe: “The whole is in everything. As above, so below.”

In this sense, Helena Blavatsky has clearly indicated that the intention behind the evolutionary process is that:

“Natural Selection” is no Entity; but a convenient phrase for describing the mode in which the survival of the fit and the elimination of the unfit among organisms is brought about in the struggle for existence. ... But Natural Selection, ... *as a Power*, is in reality a pure myth; especially when resorted to as an explanation of the origin of species. It is merely a representative term expressive of the manner in which “useful variations” are stereotyped when produced. Of itself, “it” can produce nothing, and only operates on the rough material presented to “it.”

The real question at issue is: what Cause — combined with other secondary causes — produces the “variations” in the organisms themselves. Many of these secondary causes are purely physical, climatic, dietary, etc., etc. Very well. But beyond the secondary aspects of organic evolution, a deeper principle has to be sought for. The materialist’s “spontaneous variations,” and “accidental divergencies” are ... powerless to account for the stupendous complexities and marvels of the human body for instance. ... The underlying physiological variation in species... is a sub-conscious intelligence pervading matter, ultimately traceable to a reflection of the Divine and Dhyan-Chohanian wisdom.

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2

## Evolution of Consciousness

- Consciousness evolves while the organism by which it expresses evolves.
- Evolution is essentially:
  - Learning
  - Development of latent capacities
- Psychological evolution.
- Evolution of the inner being, of the Monad.
- Everything is evolving.



The great ancient philosophers have postulated that consciousness has a process of evolution that goes hand in hand with the evolution of form, integrated into the great process of the Evolution of Life. The consciousness learns and models new forms, and these in turn allow a new learning and deployment of the faculties that are in potential state.

Evolution is a process of learning, of discovery, of unfolding the latent capabilities of consciousness to transform them into active attributes. Our mind and our emotions, our entire psyche, evolve. The experiences we have, happiness and suffering, learning, the conquest of knowledge, the development of sensitivity, vision, all this is a process of soul maturation, different in each one, but that exists equally in all.

Therefore, the destiny of the human consciousness or the spiritual soul is to **unfold its potential**, going from a wild, primitive state, to a state of lucidity, effective power, fullness, self-awareness and of perception of its own greatness.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit

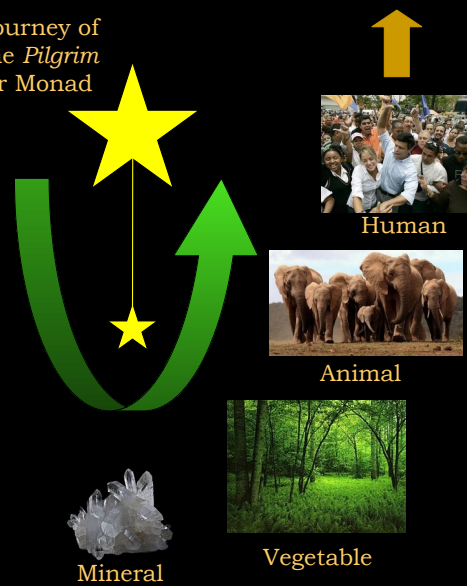
Mabel Collins, *The Idyll Of The White Lotus*



## Stages of consciousness

- The divine spark passes through various stages from its emanation until it blossoms awake and self-conscious.
- The Monad goes through stages for very long periods.
- The mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms are stages of the journey of the Monad, the *pilgrim*.
- The Monads did not emanate at once, but in waves.
- The vegetables and animals are our younger brothers.

Journey of the *Pilgrim* or Monad



Each Monad or spark emanated but undetached of the One performs a very large cycle of evolution through several stages. According to Blavatsky and other theosophical authors, the Monad makes a pilgrimage through increasingly complex material vehicles that allow it to experience, not directly, but through the structures or Principles it creates on its way. First it identifies with its vehicles and then little by little it acquires what we know as self-consciousness.

The passage of the Monad through each of these stages covers, according to these authors, a very large period of time during which it picks up the essence of the experiences. We know these stages as the Kingdoms of Nature: the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human, which are the manifestations of waves of Monads at different stages of their evolution.

The Monads did not emanate at the same time, and those in the vegetable kingdom are younger than those in the animal and human kingdoms.

Life sleeps on the stone,  
dreams on the plant, is awake in the animal  
and he knows that he is awake in man.

*Chinese proverb*

Darwin observed and explained the evolution of biological organisms producing increasingly complex and adapted forms. The esoteric tradition tells us about an evolution of Consciousness in which there is also an order. There are no beings that have been more or less favored in the Manifestation. Animals are no more miserable than humans or inferior to them. Their only misfortune is the cruelty with which the human race treats them when it should be more compassionate and condescending since it has a superior intelligence. Today's humanity emanated before those who are now animals, in the same way that in a school we see children of different ages, but each one in its course according to age. And all of us, all beings, we are part of the fire of Life and we are in the process of evolution. The fire evolves with us. We are the fire.



## Let's define good and evil

- When do we say that something is good or bad?
- Relationship with a subject.
  - ... It's good *for me*
  - ... it's bad *for our people*
- What happens when something is good or bad depending on how you look at it?
- Relativity of values:
  - If something is good for us, will it always be good, in all circumstances?



The glass  
half full / half empty

What is good, what is evil? This is the classic question of ethics, to which religions and philosophies have tried to answer. Since it is said that the human being must do good, it is essential to know what is right and what is wrong.

The problem is that the perception of good and bad varies with each individual. It is a problem that implies that we make a value judgment as subjects, and therefore it is subjective.

We say that something is good if it helps us in our purpose, if it causes us pleasure and joy. On the contrary, something is bad if it makes things difficult for us or causes us pain. We can say that a new job is good for us because we have a better salary and it is closer to our home. On the contrary we can say that a new highway is bad for our town because travelers will no longer go through it and trade will suffer. However, for many travelers the same highway will represent a something good because it will save them travel time.

In other words, we use the words good and bad in relation to us as individuals or as part of a group. The circumstances of life are not good or bad in themselves, but we value them as good or bad in relation to us.

Evil in many cultures is a broad term used to describe morally negative acts or thoughts that are cruel, unfair or selfish. Evil is usually contrasted with good, which describes acts that are kind, fair or altruistic. In some religions, evil is an active force, generally personified as an entity such as Satan in Christianity or Angra Mainyu in Zoroastrianism, being. *Mainyu* = mind, *Angra* = destructive, malignant, or *Ahriman* in Manichaeism.

The valuation of something as good or bad also depends on the breadth with which we look, both in relation to all beings and in relation to time. Something that seems good immediately can be bad when examined over a longer period of time.

For example, consider the case of parents who protect their young child by preventing him from climbing on things where he has some risk of falling and harming himself. In principle, it is a protection and seems a good thing without a doubt. But if we look more broadly, we see that perhaps this attitude prevents the child from learning to endure a fall, develop a certain ability to balance, and can even cause the child to grow up with a significant lack: that of trusting himself. Taking controlled risks is something we must learn in life to progress. From this other point of view, it seems that parents unknowingly do more harm than good.

Good and evil are relative, and what we consider good may not be in other circumstances; but purity of intention produces two direct results. The first is that it frees us from the internal conflict that torments the lives of all the unscrupulous and produces a sick mental state. The other is that it purifies the mind by degrees and allows the light of Intuition to enlighten it more and more. One of the most undesirable consequences of making compromises with evil is that very soon it envelops us in a vicious circle from which it is very difficult to get out. The acts, thoughts and impure emotions cloud more and more the Intuition, which diminishes our ability to see if a certain act is good or bad, and entangles us more in the bad. This is what happens to normal people who gradually slip into a bad life and do not even realize that they are doing improper things: their intuitional function of discernment has been quenched and interrupted.

I.K. Taimni, *Self Culture in the Light of the Ancient Wisdom*

Are there then good and evil as principles? Are there two universal principles always in conflict?

The subjectivity of what we consider good and bad makes us think that this duality is only an illusion that disappears when we see things from an integral point of view, encompassing life as a whole and understanding the whole process.

What then causes this illusion?

As we have a perception of good and evil that is subjective, this takes place in the subject, in our mind, and therefore it is the mind who creates the values of good and bad and assigns them to facts, circumstances and the people who produced them.

## The cause of evil

Evil has no existence *per se*  
and is but the absence of good  
and exists but for him  
who is made its victim.

*K.H.*

There is only one good, knowledge,  
and one evil, ignorance

*Socrates*

Ignorance is the root  
and mother of all evil

*Plato*



What did the philosophers tell us about this problem, since ethics is one of the great branches of philosophy?

At least two thirds of our miseries come from human stupidity, human bad intention and those great motivators and justifiers of bad intention and stupidity: Dogmatic idealism and the proselytizing stamp in the name of political and religious ideas.

*Aldous Huxley*

Most agree that evil is simply **ignorance**. Ignorance causes us to make mistakes, make bad decisions, and act in ways that harm others and ourselves, according to the law of Karma.

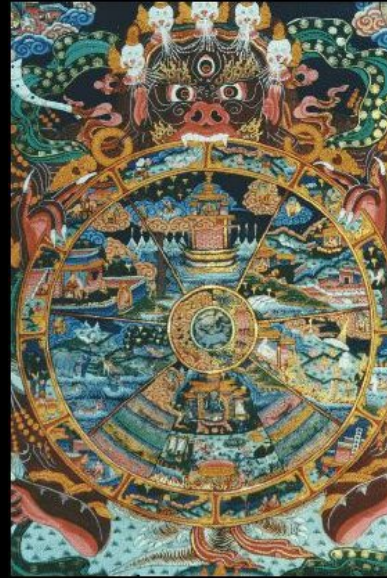
I wonder if there is such a thing as evil. Please pay attention, come with me, let's investigate together. We say that there is good and evil. There is envy and love, and we affirm that envy is bad and love is good. Why do we divide life by calling this "good" and "bad" that, thereby creating the conflict of opposites? It is not that there is no envy, hatred, brutality in the human mind and heart, absence of compassion, of love, but why do we divide life in the thing called "good" and the thing called "evil"? Is not there really only one thing, which is an inattentive mind?

*Jiddu Krishnamurti, The conflict of opposites*



## Avidya, ignorance

- *Avidya* is the essential ignorance about Life.
- It means error, illusion.
- It is to take the ephemeral as permanent.
- Separateness: the great illusion of the self.
- Evolution is to change to the state of **Vidya**, is to become conscious, wise.



Buddhist representation of Samsara,  
the wheel of life

The philosophies of India have called this ignorance **Avidya** (in Sanskrit *a* = without, *vidya* = wisdom). It is not ignorance about historical facts or details about life, but fundamental ignorance about the laws of the Universe and of Life. Avidya is an illusory state of the mind, in which we take a fragmented perception as if it were reality. We believe that the ephemeral is permanent, as when we believe that death is something that will happen to others but not to us. Avidya is the state of ignorance about the One Life, the belief in separate entities without seeing the whole process.

One of the most vibrant and clear expressions of the ideas of the Ancient Wisdom about evil can be found in one of the letters that the spiritual Master or *Mahatma* known as Koot Homi (also Kuthumi or K.H.) sent to Mr. Sinnet through Helena P. Blavatsky. K.H. says in letter number 10 (number 88 in chronological order):

Our ideas on Evil. Evil has no existence *per se* and is but the absence of good and exists but for him who is made its victim. It proceeds from two causes, and no more than good is it an independent cause in nature. Nature is destitute of goodness or malice; she follows only immutable laws when she either gives life and joy, or sends suffering [and] death, and destroys what she has created. Nature has an antidote for every poison and her laws a reward for every suffering. The butterfly devoured by a bird becomes that bird, and the little bird killed by an animal goes into a higher form. It is the blind law of necessity and the eternal fitness of things, and hence cannot be called Evil in Nature. The real evil proceeds from human intelligence and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. Humanity then alone is the true source of evil. Evil is the exaggeration of good, the progeny of human selfishness and greediness. Think profoundly and you will find that save death — which is no evil but a necessary law, and accidents which will always find their reward in a future life — the origin of every evil whether small or great is in human action, in man whose intelligence makes him the one free agent in Nature.



It is not nature that creates diseases, but man. The latter's mission and destiny in the economy of nature is to die his natural death brought by old age; save accident, neither a savage nor a wild (free) animal die of disease. Food, sexual relations, drink, are all natural necessities of life; yet excess in them brings on disease, misery, suffering, mental and physical, and the latter are transmitted as the greatest evils to future generations, the progeny of the culprits. Ambition, the desire of securing happiness and comfort for those we love, by obtaining honours and riches, are praiseworthy natural feelings but when they transform man into an ambitious cruel tyrant, a miser, a selfish egotist they bring untold misery on those around him; on nations as well as on individuals. All this then — food, wealth, ambition, and a thousand other things we have to leave unmentioned, becomes the source and cause of evil whether in its abundance or through its absence. Become a glutton, a debauchee, a tyrant, and you become the originator of diseases, of human suffering and misery. Lack all this and you starve, you are despised as a nobody and the majority of the herd, your fellow men, make of you a sufferer your whole life. Therefore it is neither nature nor an imaginary Deity that has to be blamed, but human nature made vile by selfishness. Think well over these few words; work out every cause of evil you can think of and trace it to its origin and you will have solved one-third of the problem of evil. And now, after making due allowance for evils that are natural and cannot be avoided, — and so few are they that I challenge the whole host of Western metaphysicians to call them evils or to trace them directly to an independent cause — I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his God or Gods demand the crime? Voluntary victim of an illusionary God, the abject slave of his crafty ministers, the Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope. For two thousand years India groaned under the weight of caste, Brahmins alone feeding on the fat of the land, and to-day the followers of Christ and those of Mahomet are cutting each other's throats in the names of and for the greater glory of their respective myths. Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.

Koot Hoomi, *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, Letter No 10, Chronological No 88*

## So what is the meaning of life?

- **Learning:** evolution is learning.
- **Love:** vivify the relationships that are part of Life.
- Everyone must discover what Life means to himself.
- It is an evolutionary understanding, it changes and becomes deeper as we mature.



Returning to our initial question, what is the meaning of Life?

We have seen that the whole Universe is in evolution, that the very process of Evolution is inherent to everything, from matter to human being.

Evolution implies learning, not only on the part of the individuals that make up a system but learning of the system itself. There is a collective intelligence and there is a collective memory. The neural networks of our brain self-organize as they learn. Neurons connect with each other in different ways with our learning.

If relationships are enormously important in life, what makes these relationships fresh, lasting, satisfying and enabling learning and happiness for all? Without a doubt, **love**. When we truly love, selflessly, we vivify the relationship, we experience the essential identity between the loved one and us. Love is therefore an essential quality of life.

People who have been on the verge of death have seen their lives go through their minds quickly, making a life review. And there is a general coincidence that at the moment they saw their lives two fundamental aspects were contemplated: how much they had learned and how much they had loved. Neither the power, nor wealth acquired, nor prestige, nor accumulated knowledge are relevant at the moment of the final balance of our incarnation. What really matters for the inner being is how much we have learned and how much we have loved.

We can say that the purpose of Life is to learn and love, to evolve, but what does this mean for each of us? It is something we have to discover for ourselves. If we keep in mind the essential meaning of life we will avoid ignorance about it, *Avidya*.

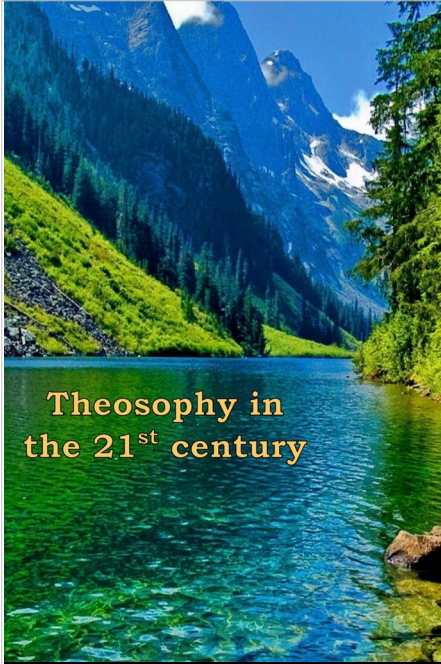
It does not matter so much what we do but how we do it. We can study, work like any other person but if we do it attentively, consciously, learning and loving the beings who are in contact with us, we will take advantage of our incarnation and this will open us up to increasingly wider perspectives on life and evolution. It is a gradual process of maturation and awareness

## To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- Think of examples of actions that seem "good" at first, but after being considered more broadly or over time, appear to be "bad".
- 2- Do good and evil correspond with Spirit (Purusha) and Matter (Prakriti)?
- 3- What examples can we find of collective intelligence?
- 4- Are we forced by evolution? Does it limit our freedom to choose?
- 5- Is human development a solitary process? Explain your answer.



**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

## ***12 The awakening of consciousness***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

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## *The flowers of human evolution*

- Not all beings evolve with the same speed.
- The natural result of human evolution are beings that have reached a great state of consciousness.
- They are called **Mahatmas**, Initiates or Adepts.
- They have appeared as Instructors of humanity on many occasions.
- According to HPB, two of them inspired the founding of the Theosophical Society.



As we have seen, the entire Universe is in evolution. And not only do we have to consider the evolution of matter and energy, but consciousness has an evolution that accompanies material evolution. Our psyche evolves, but the internal being also evolves thanks to the process of reincarnation.

All human beings have a great potential because our essence is a sparkle of the Universal Light, an undetached spark of the Flame as the Neoplatonists said. Through successive incarnations in different places and times we learn. The difficulties and the law of Karma allow us to mature, and the inner being thus manifests its potential. But not all of us evolve with the same "speed". There will be beings who learn more quickly than others, like children at school.

This leads us to the idea that there must be human beings who managed to evolve before the majority and who reached a deeper and broader level of consciousness. They are the early flowers of humanity. In history we recognize them as the great beings, generally instructors, sages, spiritual leaders such as Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, and many others. These beings have shone especially for their spiritual dimension, their intelligence and their love for Life and they have been Instructors for humanity. They found their way out of the illusions of ordinary life and taught others the existence of this possibility because they recognized that all human beings are in the same evolutionary process.

In the theosophical literature these advanced beings are called **Mahatmas**, from the Sanskrit *maha* = great, *atma* = spirit, although they are also known as *Masters of Wisdom*, *Initiates* or *Adepts*. And it would not be logical to think that they appeared incarnated on Earth only in the remote past. If they have been in the near past, they must also be in the present and will also be in the future.

Today, some people, including the founders of the Theosophical Society, say they are in contact with some of these Mahatmas, and have published works that claims to be inspired by them.

Helena Blavatsky was in connection with some Mahatmas of the East, who taught her and inspired her to establish the Theosophical Society in 1875. She saw in dreams the face of an Indian man who impressed her. When she was visiting the Great Universal Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, London, she recognized the face of a member of the Indian delegation. Helena tried to approach him but he signaled her to stay in her place. Later, while she was walking in Hyde Park the night of her twentieth birthday, she had an encounter with the same man who turned out to be the Mahatma known as Morya (M.). The Master required her collaboration for a project for which she would need to travel to Tibet.

With the consent of her father, Blavatsky made several trips, a remarkable effort for a woman at that time. In 1868 she spent a few months in the Kashmir region in northern India, which was known as "little Tibet." There she was with another of the Mahatmas, known as Koot Hoomi, or Kuthumi and abbreviated as K.H., who was training her at his home for the mission she would do after a few years.

At that time, contact with the Mahatmas was physical since the Mahatmas were incarnated, but later, the contact was psychic most of the time. Not only did Blavatsky have direct contact with these beings, but several people in her circle and as well as others were communicating with them. Some did it by correspondence, since they received letters of a very special writing that were sent by peculiar means. Notably, the book *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* is a very valuable collection of the correspondence that Mahatmas M. and K.H. sent to A. P. Sinnett, usually through Blavatsky. Alfred P. Sinnett was the editor of a famous Anglo-Indian newspaper. Although these letters were private, they were published after Sinnet's death and today are a great source of occult knowledge.

In our days there are a lot of people who claim to be teachers, instructors, gurus, channelers, yogis, ascetics and all kinds of spiritual guides. How can we discern the real ones --those who have wisdom and a legitimate teaching--from spurious, merchants, liars, egotists, harvesters and fantasists? Basically everyone must exercise the judgment of their purest intuition and discernment, but a clear signal to consider are their works and their message.

All teaching that is proclaimed as the only truth and its communicators the exclusive prophets who claim to possess it, are clearly a hoax. No great Instructor of humanity proclaims himself as the sole possessor of the Truth, but adopts the attitude of the philosopher in search of truth or that of the doctor trying to cure the ills of poor humanity. If, in addition, the supposed teacher does not give the disciple freedom, this is another indication that he is not a legitimate instructor.

Behind the desire to find a guru who tells us personally what needs to be done, there is a lack of confidence in one's internal abilities.

## The nature of a Mahatma

- He acts from a state of higher consciousness.
- He is much more aware of the essential Reality or the One Life and Atma-Buddhi-Manas shine in him.
- His life is dedicated to helping evolution.
- A proverb says:  

When the disciple is ready,  
the Master appears.
- How does the Master appear?



Let us try to imagine, since we cannot understand with the normal mind, what will be the consciousness of a being with the characteristics of a Mahatma. We must bear in mind that everything we say is only a very rough approximation of trying to grasp the essence of the idea, and that the true nature of such a being cannot be enclosed in a concept.

The Mahatmas describe themselves as human beings whose consciousness acts from higher principles. In other words, they possess a high development of Atma-Buddhi-Manas and are self-aware of these principles. When consciousness acts from these levels, the understanding of Life must be enormously profound and very different from that of an ordinary person.

[1] An adept — the highest as the lowest — is one only during the exercise of his occult powers.

[2] Whenever these powers are needed, the sovereign will unlock the door to the inner man [the adept] who can emerge and act freely but on condition that his jailor — the outer man will be either completely or partially paralyzed — as the case may require; viz: either (a) mentally and physically; (b) mentally, — but not physically; (c) physically but not entirely mentally; (d) neither, — but with an akasic film interposed between the outer and the inner man.

K.H., *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, letter 24b, chronological 85b

One of the most important qualities of the adept is the understanding of the Unity of Life, not at the intellectual level and with a sparkle of intuition but with a much fuller realization of it. The adept devotes his life and energies to promoting the spiritual progress of humanity.

According to the little we know of them, the Mahatmas accept *disciples*, whom they help in their work of awakening and growth. A Mahatma only accepts a disciple or *chela* if the disciple is going to serve the work that is silent, invisible, but of remarkable effects for the world, compensating in this way the Master dedication to the disciple.

An old adage says: "When the disciple is ready, the Master appears." But we have several important questions:

How can the Master know that a person is prepared to be a disciple? How does it appear in the life of the disciple? Where does the Master reside?

Esoteric philosophy and logic tell us that the Master appears within us, and that our spiritual nature is initially our own Master. Thus, the encounter of the Master is the encounter with our own essence of life, and fidelity to the Master is fidelity to our real nature. When we are prepared we will attract the attention of a Master who can consider us useful for his work for the good of the world.

I can come nearer to you, but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the adept follows his attractions.

K.H., *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, N.º 45, chronological N.º 47

There are a number of people who aspire to find their instructor or their guru by visiting monasteries, ashrams or by contacting instructors from different disciplines. This is surely enriching since the activity of traveling allows us to meet different people and places. But we can observe a certain childish attitude in it. The search submits to the desire to have an infallible reference, a spiritual father or an authority that tells us what to do and frees us from the responsibility of having to discover and decide for ourselves. Internal evolution is not a matter of following a path already drawn, but of activating the intelligence and divine capacities within us.

We never guide our chelas (the most advanced even); nor do we forewarn them leaving the effects produced by causes of their own creation to teach them better experience.

K.H., *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, N.º 72, chronological N.º 95

See the article of Joy Mills "Who is the Master?" in *The Theosophist*, June, 1978.

## *Evolving*

- Evolution exists in all aspects of the Manifestation.
- We evolve by learning and loving, being more aware of Life as a whole.
- It is a work of many incarnations.
- Suffering and "evil" in the world are caused by ignorance and immaturity.
- Is there any way to evolve more consciously?



Throughout the course we have seen some very important ideas that can help us understand who we are and what life is. We have talked about the Unity of Life, the cycles in nature, the law of Karma, reincarnation and recently we have investigated about the Evolution of all life, including ourselves.

Evolution drags us, pushes us forward because, according to the obstacles of life, we learn slowly. We make decisions, act or stop acting, and some decisions bring us joy and fulfillment, while others cause us problems and pain to us and to those around us. But most of the time we don't understand what happens and we miss the chance to learn. We simply resist or complain at how badly others do it, or about the misfortune that has fallen on us.

But even if we do not realize it, we evolve, learning and loving, making us more aware of Life as a whole. It is a patient work, of maturation through many incarnations. The inner being, the true human being, more than the personality, learns and helps its true potential to blossom.

We have also seen that evil and suffering in the world are due to ignorance about the fundamental things of life (Avidya). Because of ignorance, we damage each other and damage our environment including animals, vegetables, and the planet itself.

Then the natural question arises: is there any way to evolve more consciously? Is it possible to direct our life instead of simply reacting to what comes our way? Is it possible to awaken from this dream, from this illusion in which our mind is submerged?



## Can we improve?

- Is it possible to boost our evolution?
- Do we have the power to do it?
- Do we have the necessary time?
- Will it work?
- Is it a procedure or is it a transformation? Is it possible to follow a recipe?
- What has to be done?



In view of all the above, we can ask ourselves if it is in our power to improve and be active in the evolution of consciousness and not mere passive spectators.

Evolution is not only possible, but it is the way to get to our destiny, as is the destiny of Life as a whole. We are part of it, and that is why we have the power to develop universal potentialities. We do not need to acquire anything outside, or seek or expect certain circumstances to occur. It is not so much a problem of what we do, but of *how we do it*.

Evolution is a process that takes place over time, such as biological evolution. But the mere passage of time does not produce any change by itself. We are the ones who produce the changes as we learn.

When we realize that we are bound by habits and customs, it may seem that any progress we can make is very slow. But we must first consider that our consciousness is not limited to one incarnation only, and secondly, that our measurement of time may actually be irrelevant. Many people achieve a profound change of vision in their life in a moment, when their intuition dissipated the shadows of their mind and they understood the problems of life.

If we approach the task seriously, with attention, as Krishnamurti reminds us, the universal laws guarantee us success. If we make wrong decisions but are attentive and see the effect and its cause, observing without veils and as a whole, we will learn from the experience and mature.

Is this a procedure we can follow? Is it an objective such as a professional career or a business goal? Are there some practices that allow us to awaken and evolve? No way!

Evolution is not the fruit of a defined or mechanical process and has no recipes. It is above all a constant transformation of the mind, emotions and even our body in a way that allows an increasingly full expression of our inner being. What we must do in order to develop the consciousness only has very general common guidelines, but the circumstances and modality of each one makes defined recipes impossible. It is only possible to observe, discover, and learn.

## The awakening

- Consciousness is identified with the outside world.
- The mind generates illusion.
- Illusion leads to ignorance.
- Ignorance produces suffering.
- The resulting state is one of confusion and conflict.
- Can Theosophy help us to get out of this state of confusion, to **wake up**?



By identifying with the ideas and feelings produced by the mind, consciousness identifies with the objects of the outside world that motivate them. For example, a good new car will give us pleasure to see and drive. The mind and emotions will make us feel it as an extension of ourselves. Therefore the mind generated an illusion. Not because the car does not exist, but because the mind has distorted its nature and our relationship with it, not taking into account, for example, its ephemeral and utilitarian characteristic.

This illusion generated by the mind is the basis of ignorance, Avidya, which is not ignorance in the academic sense, but ignorance about the essential truths of Life and of oneself. Ignorance is what produces our perceptions and ideas about good and evil. The mind focused on the self qualifies and colors everything according to how it affects it.

The resulting state is one of confusion, disorientation and conflict. We do not understand why things are the way they are. Life can be painful for us. Satisfactory and pleasant things sooner or later are over. Many loved ones leave us in one way or another. We have conflicts of wishes. We have fears, frustrations and hopes.

Can Theosophy help us out of this state? Theosophy is not theoretical or practical, it is not a tool or a method, but the divine Wisdom in itself. Our attitude is what can make it just a collection of concepts or a conscious adventure of discovery, illuminating our life, and with it the life of the whole world. If we evolve, everything evolves to some extent. Everything we think, feel and do is reflected in everyone's consciousness. The ideas of individual "salvation" are blind, selfish and false.

Can the whole of life be understood through the part? Or is it that the whole must first be perceived and understood, and that only then can the parts be examined and remodeled in relation to the whole? Without understanding the whole, the mere concentration on the part does nothing but create more confusion and misery.

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries on living*

## Why wake up?

- If evolution happens, whether we like it or not, what reason is there for awakening?
- Freeing ourselves from the illusion.
- To cease conflict, confusion, suffering.
- Living implies experiencing joys and pains (inevitable).
- Suffering is a reaction to pain (avoidable). In Latin *suffere* = sustain, endure.
- Pain is a fact but suffering depends on us.



We can ask ourselves: if evolution pushes us even if we do not realize it, why wake up? Why undertake this challenge and why not simply let ourselves be carried away by life?

The more aware we are of what happens, the more we will see mistakes, injustices, and pain around us. Being unaware of all this apparently provides comfortable protection. Why then wake up from sleep?

Because the dream is a deception. We do not see the true nature of life. We only see our self at the center of everything and that ultimately leads to greater suffering for us and for all life. Awakening is a crucial point in evolution. Sooner or later we will come to it. It implies a change of attitude, a conscious collaboration with Life.

Life is interaction, and in interaction there is joy and there is pain. We can't avoid the pain. As J. Krishnamurti says, "there is no personal pain or yours, but pain." There is joy in the encounter and pain in the loss. It is part of the ephemeral character of the world. There is joy and pain like light and shadow and both are related to each other.

Either way your spine call, accept it; is partner of the rose.

Rabindranath Tagore

But suffering is different from pain. It is an affective experience that arises as a reaction to pain. It is a product of our mind. The word suffering derives from the Latin *suffere* which means to suffer, tolerate, endure. Faced with the experience of pain we can suffer or we can understand and accept.

## What can we do?

- We need a radical change of focus in our life.
- Holistic vision: be aware of the unity of Life.
- Understand the fundamental laws of Life in action.
- Live in the present. The opportunity is here and now.
- Dissolve our prejudices, beliefs, fears ...
- Undertake the adventure of discovering the Truth of Life.



The awakening of consciousness is the abandonment of the state of Avidya. What does this transcendent change imply in human nature?

First, the realization of the Unity of Life. To be increasingly aware that the Universe is One, that the All is in us and in all parts and that we are definitely like a great interconnected organism.

In light of this approach, the recognition of the fundamental laws of existence allows us to understand life and act intelligently, without causing more confusion. It is not about following certain rules. It is not necessary to cram the mind with ideas, but to be a good observer and understand the processes of Nature acting in harmony with them.

Another aspect we have already talked about is that we need to be attentive. And being attentive means being in the present, not being anchored in the past or anxiously waiting for something to happen in the future. Our opportunity to act and do something is here and now. There is nothing wrong with remembering old times as long as that does not give us a psychological bond. The bad thing about psychological memory is that it conditions us, prevents us from seeing the change that is taking place and does not allow us to be attentive.

The transformation of our personality consists in removing obstacles so that the energy of our inner being flows. We have prejudices, a multitude of beliefs and fears that we have created in this incarnation, since our early childhood. And not only in this incarnation, but the tendencies of previous incarnations accumulated as *skandas* strongly influence and condition us. How do we free ourselves from these conditioning? Being attentive, being honest, seeing how all these mechanisms of our psychology act, going to its root.

Expanding our consciousness, realizing the reality of the One Life and its entire process allows us to leave the small box of the self. Universal love and its fruit, compassion, are the state of consciousness in the realization of Unity.

Silence and space go together. The immensity of silence is the immensity of the mind in which there is no center.

J. Krishnamurti, *Meditations*

## Some travel guides

▪ Classical books regarding human development:

- At the feet of the Master
- Viveka Chudamani
- The voice of the Silence
- Light on the Path
- Raja Yoga

...

▪ There are many presentations of the "path" of internal development.

▪ They are not instructions. We ourselves must discover and understand.



The finger that points to the moon  
is not the moon.  
*Gautama Buddha*

Since ancient times some scholars have expressed in their teaching some guidelines related to the development of human consciousness. This teaching was transcribed and collected in books that have reached us. In them we can find some very good suggestions about the work of transformation.

There are many presentations on this subject and some are really very beautiful and profound. Without wishing to make a complete list we can mention the following works:

- At the Feet of the Master
- Viveka Chudamani (Crest Jewel of Discrimination)
- The Voice of Silence
- Light on the Path
- Raja Yoga (The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

But we must remember what Gautama the Buddha said "The finger pointing to the moon is not the moon" and also attributed to Confucius is "When the wise point to the moon, the fool looks at the finger". These works are like travel guides. They can anticipate to some extent what we can find in a certain place, but they cannot replace the experience of visiting the place. A Vienna travel guide is not the same as visiting Vienna. They are attempts to communicate something incommunicable, they are fragmented descriptions of something integral, as when we see the net of a cube in a plane paper. It is not enough to see the faces of the cube on the paper to understand it. It is necessary to see the real fact integrally. We need to know the cube itself in 3D.

That is why we say that the content of these self-realization works are not really instructions but only indications. It is our own task to discover and understand by acting intelligently in our lives, according to our own discernment.

Walker, your treads are the path and nothing more;  
walker, there is no path, the path is made when walking.  
When walking the path is made and when looking back  
you see the path that never has to be walked again.  
Walker, there is no path, but trails in the sea...

Antonio Machado, *Proverbios y Cantares*



## What is needed?

- What is needed to undertake this transformation?
- Give up our habit of self-centered thoughts.
- We need to regenerate our mind and emotions.
- Do we transform when we wake up or wake up if we transform?
- Awakening and transformation are two sides of the same coin.



What is needed to undertake this transformation? We can see that it is a true regeneration, a reconstruction of our mind, as pointed out by Radha Burnier in *Human Regeneration*.

We have lived so settled in our little self, in the partial vision, in the competence, in our own salvation, that we do not realize the process of Life and we need to regenerate our mind and our emotions. It is the only way to solve the root of the conflicts of the world, be it in our family, in our profession, in our country or be it the case of the great world problems.

How does this process begin? Do we transform when we wake up or wake up if we transform? It is the classic dilemma of the egg and the chicken. How can we transform if we have not changed our understanding before? We can only create those conditions when we are awakening and an inner impulse leads us to "open our eyes". And how are we going to have a better vision if our mind is dull and confused distorting our perception of reality?

Transformation and awakening are two sides of the same coin. They are two complementary aspects of something that happens continuously. In our life there may be times when we become aware of something new, when we wake up to a new reality and then understand. When this happens, we immediately act accordingly, according to that new understanding. We do not need to force behavior. There will be no conflict of interest because we have understood. A mother who loves her child and feeds him does not ask herself if she should do it or devote herself to something that interests her more. She does it from the heart, without conflict and without sorrow.

## The transformation

- It is initiated from the inside.
- Favorable outside circumstances can stimulate but cannot force.
- We do not need to change circumstances. We can undertake the adventure **here and now**.
- Full attention.
- We can prepare.

Man carving his own destiny [Albin Polasek]



The awakening of the higher consciousness produces the liberation of its potential. The essence of Life in us is imprisoned by the illusions that we have created with our mind and emotions, centered in the structure of the self.

Then the transformation takes place, which is not an improvement of our personal self, but something completely different, a universal experience. It is not about doing more of the same, of accumulating more knowledge, of knowing more people or changing careers. Plotinus described this trip as *the flight from the lonely to the ONLY*.

We do not need special circumstances in our life for this change. We do not need to wait for more free time. We do not need to live somewhere retired. Circumstances are part of life itself and are always changing, and the transformation is about the realization of Life in us regardless of the circumstances. If we accept our circumstances, even if these are not what we would like, and we are attentive to the here and now, we will be better able to learn and act more wisely.

Awakening and transformation cannot be induced or forced from the outside. Nothing can change one's inner understanding. You can only try to stimulate it. But if we have a glimpse of this reality, we can prepare ourselves, create favorable conditions for a greater understanding and the regeneration of our mind to take place.

Awakening means being attentive, mindful, and committed. It is attention to what we do, but it goes much further. There are different levels of attention. For example, if someone asks us for advice on a specific topic, we can be fully aware of the issue, but not grasp that perhaps our friend is implicitly asking us for some emotional support. We can also be inattentive to the consequences of our actions. Therefore attention at increasingly wide levels is fundamental, it is what makes us really awake. Attention is observation without judging ourselves or others, and trying to see beyond the usual image we have of ourselves and others.

## The preparation

- Our life must be aligned with our intention.
- Discernment and detachment.
- Behavior based on love and compassion:
  - Respect for life, not to injure
  - Absence of cruelty
  - Vegetarian or vegan diet
  - Veracity
  - Confidence in ourselves
  - Devotion to Being in everything
  - Peace of the mind
- Study, research, meditation, good relations, inspiration.



What is the preparation? Essentially, our daily life must be aligned with our intention. To discover the Truth, the aspirant must not settle for less. Our conduct must be based on love, respect and compassion.

One of the first requirements is **not to harm**, called *Ahimsa* in the literature of Raja Yoga. It is inevitable that we do some damage to Nature and others. Life is interaction and our actions will be good for some and bad for others. But outside of this, where we have a choice, we must take care to respect every manifestation of life. We cannot aspire to be aware of the Unity of Life and at the same time be cruel to other people and animals. The vegetarian diet has already been a requirement for aspirants in the time of the Pythagoreans, and it is so in Raja Yoga. The benefits of vegetarian and vegan food go beyond the animals that we do not kill. Today we know that one of the significant contributions to greenhouse gases that produce climate change is the contribution of methane due to livestock. The current world consumption of meat is unsustainable. Therefore it is a matter of compassion and responsibility.

Nothing will benefit health or increase chances of survival on earth as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.

Albert Einstein

In today's world, truthfulness is not a predominant attitude. But how can we discover the truth with a confused mind veiled in its own lies?

If we perceive to some extent the inner potential that we have, it will give us confidence in ourselves and in the inner being present in any other manifestation of life.

Some practices that can help us are study, open-minded research, meditation, cultivating good relationships and seeking inspiration from our purest intuition.

## Can we do it?

- Why not?
- Fervent desire to discover the Truth.
  - Do not settle for less
  - Zen story: how can I know the Truth?
  - It should not be another dream
- The power is in us.
- Experience does not consist in accumulating but in developing, flourishing.
- Do we have time to do it?



Can we face this transformation? Why not?

As it has been expressed in a Zen story, we need a fervent desire to discover the Truth, to realize the union with Life. In the story, a disciple and his teacher were on the banks of a river, and the disciple asks:

- Master, how can I know the Truth?

The master took the disciple's head and immersed it in the water of the river, preventing him from breathing. The disciple initially restrained himself but as time went by he began to worry about not being able to breathe. Finally, in a struggle with the master, he releases his head from the master's grip and breathes in despair. Then the master says:

- When you aspire to the Truth with as much need as the air that you lacked, you will be able to know it.

The search for realization should not be another dream or chimera that we add to our lives. It will be effective only if it is a real aspiration. The power to do it is in ourselves, since we are part of the Whole. Experience does not consist in accumulating wealth or even qualities or virtues, but in developing and making our real nature flourish.

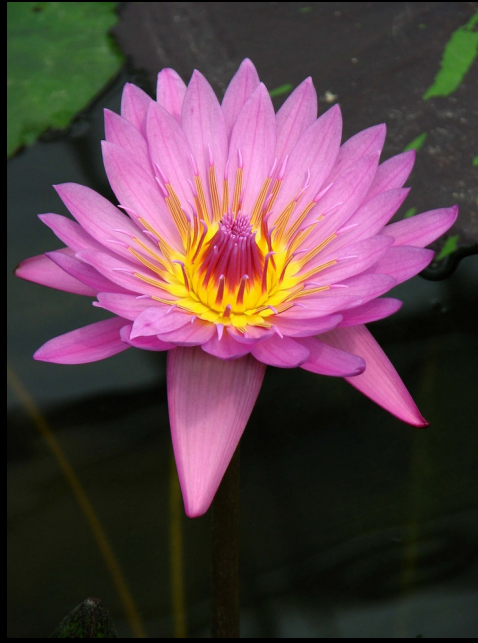
Do we have time? Time does not matter in this process. Evolution is a long process, but time alone does not produce the changes. We must do them ourselves. The sense of time and urgency or relaxation in this transformation is nothing more than an illusion.

Time is a river that drags me, but I am the river.  
Time is a tiger that devours me, but I am the tiger.  
It's a fire that consumes me, but I'm the fire

Jorge Luis Borges

## *The action must be now*

- Attention
- To be fresh
- To live on
- To participate
- To love
- To learn from joy and pain
- To aspire



We do not need anything from outside. We do not need to wait for any special circumstances. If we change internally, our circumstances will change. The desire to discover will put us in touch with the appropriate circumstances. We need inspiration and will.

The transformation of consciousness is not a bitter path. It is the only beautiful and true option that is presented to us. It requires of us full attention, being fresh, living authentically, participating with others in the process of life, loving widely and learning from both joy and pain.

It is said that the evolution of the common people is like a path that skirts the mountain to reach its peak while the occultist is someone who climbs a steep, direct path. But we need to keep in mind that there is no marked path or path to follow. The metaphor of the Path really means that this path is unique for each one of us, which is not traced and that, as Antonio Machado said, "when you look back, you can see the path that no one has to step on again".

Living fully is the product of intelligence and not imitation. It is no use wanting to imitate a hero or another person we consider a model. We need to educate our own unique characteristic, just as in an orchestra the oboe cannot imitate the violin, but must play its melody and not that of another instrument.

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*

You do not say, 'I have reached the end, this is enlightenment.' Enlightenment cannot be given by another; enlightenment comes when there is the understanding of confusion; and to understand confusion one must look at it.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, *The Flight of the Eagle*



17. The man who discriminates between the Real and the unreal, whose mind is turned away from the unreal, who possesses calmness and the allied virtues, and who is longing for Liberation, is alone considered qualified to enquire after Brahman.

18. Regarding this, sages have spoken of four means of attainment, which alone being present, the devotion to Brahman succeeds, and in the absence of which, it fails.

19. First is enumerated discrimination between the Real and the unreal; next comes aversion to the enjoyment of fruits (of one's actions) here and hereafter; (next is) the group of six attributes, viz. calmness and the rest; and (last) is clearly the yearning for Liberation.

Shankara, *Viveka Chudamani (The Crown Jewel of Discrimination)*

Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

Mabel Collins, *Light on the Path*

Saith the Great Law: "In order to become the knower of ALL SELF thou hast first of SELF to be the knower." To reach the knowledge of that SELF, thou hast to give up Self to Non-Self, Being to Non-Being, and then thou canst repose between the wings of the GREAT BIRD. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages.

Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou would'st know.

Helena Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*

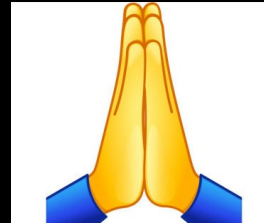
We are heirs of the most wonderful tradition that has ever existed in the world, the everlasting Wisdom. There have always been those who were his guardians and still are. They look for the hands of those few who are willing to take the torch, to become part of that guardian wall of humanity and that protects it from more sorrows and more pain. Only we can undertake the work of self-transformation. But for this we have to incarnate and we can participate in the great Cosmic Celebration that is life itself, without eating "the bread of adversity" or drinking "the waters of affliction" but sharing with all existence the blessings of light, love, understanding, peace and compassion.

Joy Mills, *From Inner to Outer Transformation: Lectures on the Voice of Silence*



## Theosophy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Thank you!**



Throughout this course we have tried to draw attention to the fundamental ideas of Theosophy and how if they resonate in us they allow us to live more intelligently, better understand the process of Life and better relate to other beings.

Theosophy is not studied, it is discovered. We can study what others have said about it and that can be useful for reflecting and for inspiring us, but that is only the beginning. To investigate, to observe, to understand, to act are coordinated aspects of the challenge of discovering the Truth and living intelligently.

There are many institutions, NGOs, that are dedicated to helping in different aspects to the needy in the world. They usually have good organizations, good means and a great will. They fight against hunger, disease, injustice, war, exploitation. In general, they do an excellent and necessary job. But the Theosophical Society fights against ignorance, Avidya, which is the cause of all the previous problems. If there is no real change of consciousness, external aid is like patches that, on the other hand, allow the current model of civilization to be perpetuated with its defects and corruption.

There is a corrupt, exhausted, conflictive, cruel world that survives and tries to endure. But there is a new world that is being born among the ruins of the previous one. Everywhere there are more and more people who see the problem, the need for a change and how that change should start by ourselves.

The challenge of the 21st century is to produce that real change and Theosophy is the divine Wisdom that produces that change, which allows us to perceive Life holistically and realize the happiness of living in harmony with it. Let's work together in this task.

If you want to share your questions, doubts or comments about this course, you can send an email to [carlosmprz\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:carlosmprz[at]gmail.com) (please replace [at] with @).

If you want to know more about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, you can contact a group close to you. You can find an international directory of the TS in:

<http://www.ts-adyar.org/directory>

**Thank you very much.  
PEACE TO ALL BEINGS**