

THE PLANETARY CHAIN

A STUDY FROM THE "SECRET DOCTRINE"

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As the present paper is little more than a compilation, it should be understood that it is simply put forward as a study from the first two volumes of the *Secret Doctrine*, and as such, is devoid of all merit in itself. The book referred to, however, is by no means meant to be a categorical exposition of the occult teachings on cosmogony, but rather a series of hints as to their general outlines, supported, however, by a wealth of evidence from antiquity and from the latest discoveries in Science, to prove that such a Doctrine has always existed, and has been the Central Sun from whence the rays of the world-religions, and the philosophies and sciences of antiquity, have shone forth. Yet these hints, few as they are when compared to the facts of the stupendous problems which have to be solved, are of so wide reaching, if not universal, a character, that they will be found to afford almost inexhaustible food for thought.

It is proposed in dealing with our planetary chain to treat first of all of the general evolution of a sidereal body, then of a planet, and finally of our own earth: but it must be remembered that the general evolution of a sidereal body is at a stage of growth far antedating the evolution of our own physical globe, and that if the two are brought into too great proximity in thought, great confusion will arise. It is, however, necessary to briefly run over the constitution of the solar system in order to localise in thought the position of a planet in the evolution of the Universe.

It is one of the postulates of ancient science that there is a Central Sun of the Universe, the heart of the great body of Cosmos. This may be called the nucleole of the universal germ-cell, and just as the germ-cell granulates and evolves into the perfect form of its type, so does the universe, on its own stupendous scale, differentiate and evolve into its component systems. Strange though it may seem, the study of the development of an insignificant germ-cell will teach the student of nature the genesis of a world or even of a universe: "As above so below". And just as the germ-cell requires a certain energy to develop into a plant, an animal or a man, so does every sidereal body require an energy to evolve it into its present stage of manifestation. This energy is called Fohat, the electro-vital force of the universe. Bearing then the facts of a Central Sun and Fohat in mind, we shall be able to understand the following from an ancient scripture.

"The Central Sun causes Fohat to collect primordial dust in the [Page 13] form of balls, to impel them to move in converging lines, and finally to approach each other and aggregate . . . Being scattered in Space, without order or system, the world-germs come into frequent collision until their final aggregation, after which they become wanderers (*i.e.*, comets). Then the battles and struggles begin. The older (bodies) attract the younger, while others repel them. Many perish, devoured by their stronger companions, those that escape become worlds." (I..201.)

Here we are introduced to a veritable "War in Heaven", in which the "Struggle for Existence" and the "Survival of the fittest", play their respective parts. These "Battles of the Gods" have been fabled in every mythology of antiquity, when the children of the past listened with awe to those grand allegories that veiled the truths of initiation. Whereas in this enlightened nineteenth century, our own less reverent age laughs at our Scandinavian forefathers, who sang of the "Battle of the Flames when the sons of Muspel fought on the Field of Wigred"; and while for six days in the week we treat with lofty scepticism the Revelation-Myth of Michael and his Hosts battling with the Dragon when a third of the stars were hurled from Heaven, we are content on the

seventh "to take it as read". These earlier stages of the manifestation of Cosmos at the beginning of a "Great Age" are graphically and symbolically represented by a ceremony at the Feast of Fires in India, which is thus described in the *Secret Doctrine* (1.203)

"Seven ascetics appear on the threshold of the temple with seven lighted sticks of incense. At the light of these the first row of pilgrims light their incense sticks. After which every ascetic begins whistling his stick round his head in space, and furnishes the rest with fire. Thus with the heavenly bodies. A laya-centre (that is to say, a world-germ) is lighted and awakened into life by the fires of another pilgrim, after which the new centre rushes into space and becomes a comet. It is only after losing its velocity and hence its fiery tail, that the 'Fiery Dragon' settles down into quiet and steady life as a regular respectable citizen of the sidereal family".

Let us, however, bear in mind that we are dealing with a metaphysical rather than with a physical universe, for the worlds we see are but the gross physical molecules of the outer shell of Cosmos, just as the physical body of man is but his outer "coat of skin", and not the real man.

Now the universe and everything in it is septenary, that is to say, is composed of seven interpenetrating States of *Substance*, — three of which are spiritual and four material. This one substance, if anything, is LIFE, and its constituent particles or atoms are the *Lives* which "live and have their being by consuming each other". Hence they are called the "Devourers" — these are the builders of everything in the Universe. (II 250.) Now the lowest, or outer, and most material state of this substance is that visible and objective universe which we cognise with our physical senses; its other [Page 14] states are therefore metaphysical and subjective, or outside the range of our normal and physical perception. We have, however, only to deal with the four lower and material planes of this substance, the three higher, or innermost, being of a spiritual nature, and entirely formless, and therefore, — as far as material consciousness is concerned, — ineffable. These are the seven great cosmic elements or "rudiments", which must not be confused with the elements of the ancients, much less with the elements of our modern science. For while even the elements of the ancient Grecian physicists were all on the lowest of these seven planes, or, in other words, were subdivisions of the seventh cosmic element; while even of these they only knew four, *viz.*, their so-called Earth, Water, Air and Fire, with a problematical fifth called the quintessence; — the gross elements of our present science are all on the lowest of these sub-divisions again in their turn. For the Earth, Water, Air and Fire even of the "Philosophers" were "subtle elements" compared to the modern molecular army which Professor Crooke's is fast sweeping into the scientific dustbin.

Remembering then that we are dealing with processes which, as far as our solar system is concerned, occurred thousands of millions of years ago, the genesis of a sidereal body can be traced along a line of evolution, which may be described as follows: "As soon as a nucleus of primordial substance in the Laya (*i.e.*, undifferentiated) state is informed by the freed principles of a just *deceased* sidereal body, it (the new centre) becomes first a comet, then a sun, to cool down into a habitable world." (I. 203.) We have now to deal with a planet, as a thing itself, independent of any connection with the other bodies in its system, and remembering that the term "Planetary Chain" has nothing whatever to do with the physical planets,

which are the "younger brothers" of the sun, but rather with the "six sisters" of each of them.

We have, therefore, to trace the evolution of a planet from its emergence from the *laya* or homogeneous state, through its various transformations, until it involves into the *laya* state again, " which is the eternal and the *normal* condition of substance, differentiating only periodically, and being during that differentiation in an *abnormal* state — in other words, a transitory illusion of the senses". (I. 567.) For just as the universe is out-breathed and in-breathed, so does the planet emerge from its world-germ to return again to its primordial state, after completing its spiral and cyclic path of evolution and involution.

Like everything else in the universe, this planetary cycle is of a septenary nature, consisting of seven root changes of state, which may, for convenience, be called "globes", but should not be imagined to occupy different places in space, but rather be thought of as images to represent changes of state caused by the information of the nebulous and ethereal [Page 15] planetary matter, which evolves from, and involves into, itself. These seven globes interpenetrate one another, although they are divided each from the other in degree, or state, just as the seven principles of man or the seven planes of consciousness, are separated. What is to be remembered, however, is that it is a separation of state and not of locality. In order to understand this idea more clearly, we may with advantage turn to the following passage (S. D., I. 605), where, treating of such interpenetrating and invisible worlds in general, it says:—

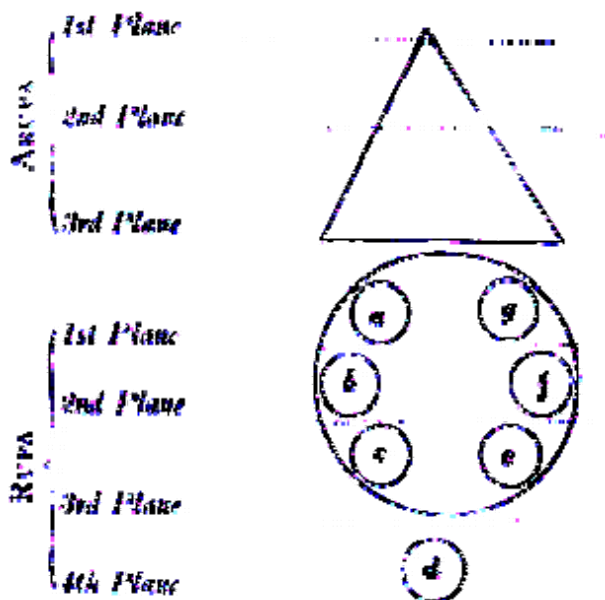
"Occultism refuses (as Science does in one sense) to use the words 'above' and 'below', 'higher' and 'lower', in reference to *invisible* spheres, as being without meaning. Even the terms 'East' and 'West' are merely conventional, necessary only to aid our human perceptions. For, though the earth has its two fixed points in the poles, north and south, yet both east and west are variable relatively to our own position on the earth's surface, and in consequence of its rotation west to east. Hence when '*other*' worlds are mentioned — whether better or worse, more spiritual or still more material, though both invisible — the occultist does not locate *these spheres* either *outside* or *inside* the earth, as the theologians and the poets do; for their location is nowhere in the space *known* to, and conceived by, the profane. They are as it were, blended with our world — interpenetrating it and interpenetrated by it. There are millions and millions of worlds and firmaments visible to us; there are still greater numbers beyond those visible to the telescopes, and many of the latter kind do not belong to our *objective* sphere of existence. Although as invisible as though they were millions of miles beyond our solar system, they are yet with us, near us, within our own world, as objective and material to their respective inhabitants as ours is to us. But, again, the relation of these worlds to ours is not that of a series of egg-shaped boxes enclosed one within the other, like toys called Chinese nests; each is entirely under its own special laws and conditions, having no direct relation to our sphere. The inhabitants of these, as already said, may be, for all we know, or feel, passing *through* and *around us* as if through empty space, their very habitations and countries being interblended with ours, though not disturbing our vision, because we have not yet the faculties necessary for discerning them. Yet, by spiritual sight, adepts, and even some seers and sensitives, are always able to discern, whether in a greater or smaller degree, the presence and close proximity to us of Beings pertaining to another sphere of life. Those of the (spiritually) higher worlds communicate if only with those terrestrial mortals who ascend to them, through

individual efforts, on to the higher plane they are occupying".

Thus, in dealing with the evolution of a planet, we have the conception [Page 16] of what is called a "Planetary Chain", or succession of seven globes each within the other, deploying on the four material planes of Cosmos. For convenience, and remembering that a figure is at best a very misleading guide, if not used judiciously, — we may represent this process by a diagram as follows: —

Let *a, b, c, d, e, f, g*, represent the seven globes. Then bearing in mind the idea of outbreathing and inbreathing, or evolution and involution, we shall be compelled to portray the cyclic manifestation of a planet on the four lower planes of Cosmos, represented on a plane surface, by a curve or circle. Thus we shall find that globes *a* and *g* are on the highest of the four planes; globes *b* and *f* on the second; globes *c* and *e* on the third; and globe *d* on the fourth, where it stands alone, for it is the balance or turning point between the descent into matter and the ascent into spirit.

These globes are further informed and their homogeneous matter differentiated and developed by a stream of life and consciousness, which cycles round the chain and produces all the manifold forms of all the kingdoms of nature. This "Monadical Host", as it is called, circles round the chain seven times, each of such cycles being called a *Round*. As the life-wave leaves one globe and passes to the next, the globe that has just been quitted remains in *statu quo*, or in a state called "obscuration", until the return of the Monadical Host on the next Round. Thus we have seven globes or material states through which the Monads pass seven times, making in all forty-nine stations. Further, there are on each globe seven kingdoms, owing to the life-wave being also septenary, or, in other words, there are seven Monads or seven classes of informing essences, one for each kingdom. For to the three visible kingdoms of nature known to science, — the mineral, the vegetable, and animal, — the occultist adds four, viz., the [Page 17] human and three invisible or elemental kingdoms preceding or below the mineral. Nor are we to stop in our septenary classification here, for each kingdom goes through seven transformations on each globe, and thus, in the human we find seven humanities succeeding each other on each globe. Each of these is called a *Root-Race*, which, after living thousands of thousands of years, transfers its life-principles into its successor. These Root-Races are again subdivided, and so the analysis proceeds almost *ad infinitum*.



It will be seen from the diagram that the fourth globe holds a unique position in the planetary chain, so also does the fourth Round, the fourth Kingdom and the fourth Race, etc. It is, as has been said, the point of balance of "Ezekiel's wheel", the battle-field on which the contending hosts of spirit and matter meet in almost equal conflict. We are told that this planet, of which our earth, its 4th globe, is the gross physical body, is in its fourth Round, and that its humanity is in its fifth Root-Race. We therefore see that we are just past the turning point of our cycle,

and that the involution into spirit is commencing.

With each Round the earth is said to have developed a new element. "Thus", we read (to quote again from the *Secret Doctrine*, I. 259, *et seq*), "the globe, having been built by the primitive fire-lives, *i.e.*, formed into a sphere, had no solidity, nor qualifications, save a cold brightness, nor form nor colour; it is only towards the end of the First Round that it developed one element, which from its inorganic, so to say, or simple Essence, became now in our Round, the fire we know throughout the system. . . .

"The Second Round brings into manifestation the second element — AIR, that element, the purity of which would ensure continuous life to him who would use it. . . . The ozone of the modern chemists is poison compared to the real universal solvent, which could never be thought of unless it existed in nature. *From the Second Round, Earth — hitherto a foetus in the matrix of Space — began its real existence: it had developed individual sentient life, its second principle.....*

"The Third Round developed the *third* principle — WATER; while the fourth transformed the gaseous fluids and plastic form of our globe into the hard, crusted, grossly material sphere we are living on. 'Bhumi' (the earth) had reached her *fourth* principle". As there are three more Rounds to come, it follows that there are three more elements to be developed, which are so far latent and non-existent for average humanity. It should be steadily borne in mind that these "Elements" are the substance of the cosmic planes of consciousness, and that our Fire, Air, Water and Earth are not even the reflections of their shadows.

We must now return again to the consideration of the theory that one sidereal body is born from another, or, in other words, that one planet [Page 18] transfers its life-principles to another and then dies. It, so to speak, reincarnates in its own progeny. What then is the mother of the earth; what planet has died to give life to the earth? Occult Science says that it is the moon, and thus joins issue with the accepted theories of the day. For just as it refuses to credit the birth of the planets to the sun, merely because they circle round it, so does it refuse to believe that the moon is the progeny of the earth, simply because the lunar orb circles round our globe. Moreover the theory that the moon has been thrown off by the earth has already been completely disposed of by the scientists themselves, and yet it is hardly correct to call the moon a dead planet: "she is not dead, but sleepeth", for "the moon is dead only as far as regards her *inner* 'principles' — *i.e.*, *psychically and spiritually*, however absurd the statement may seem. Physically, she is only as a semi-paralysed body may be. She is aptly referred to in Occultism as the 'insane mother'— the great sidereal lunatic." (S. D., I. 149.)

Moreover it is only the visible moon which we see, for the moon, like everything else, is septenary, and it is its visible reflection alone which is on the same plane as our visible earth.

Let us now follow the transference of the life-principles of the lunar to the terrestrial chain, as given in the volumes which have been already so often referred to. (S. D., I. 155.)

"Without attempting the very difficult task of giving out the whole process in all its cosmic details, enough may be said to give an approximate idea of it. When a

planetary chain is in its last Round, globe *a*, before finally *dying out*, sends all its energy and 'principles' into a neutral centre of latent force, a 'laya centre', and thereby informs a new nucleus of undifferentiated substance or matter, *i. e.*, calls it into activity or gives it life. Suppose such a process to have taken place in the lunar 'planetary' chain; suppose again, for argument's sake that the moon is far older than the earth. Imagine the six fellow-globes of the moon — aeons before the first globe of our seven was evolved just in the same position in relation to each other as the fellow-globes of our chain occupy in regard to our earth now. And now it will be easy to imagine further globe *a* of the lunar chain in forming globe *a* of the terrestrial chain, and dying; globe *b* of the former sending after that its energy into globe *b* of the new chain; then globe *c* of the lunar creating its progeny sphere *c* of the terrene chain; then the moon . . . pouring forth into the lowest globe our planetary ring-globe *d*, our earth — all its life, energy and powers; and, having transferred them to a new centre becoming virtually a *dead planet*, in which rotation has almost ceased since the birth of our globe. The 'moon is now the cold residual quantity, the shadow dragged after the new body into which her living powers and 'principles' are transfused. She now is doomed for long [Page 19] ages to be ever pursuing the earth, to be attracted by and to attract her progeny. Constantly *vamparised* by her child, she revenges herself on it by soaking it through and through with the nefarious, invisible, and poisoned influence which emanates from the occult side of her nature. For she is *dead*, yet a *living body*. The particles of her decaying corpse are full of active and destructive life, although the body which they had formed is soulless and lifeless. Therefore its emanations are at the same time beneficent and maleficent — this circumstance finding its parallel on earth in the fact that the grass and plants are nowhere more juicy and thriving than on the graves; while at the same time it is the graveyard and corpse emanations, which kill".

We thus see that as "the sun is the giver of life to the whole planetary system; the moon is the giver of life to our globe" (S. D., I. 386); and that "lunar magnetism generates life, preserves and destroys it, psychically as well as physically." (*Ibid*, I. 394.)

There is no space in the present paper to review even superficially the scientific evidence which goes to prove the enormous influence of the moon on the earth, much less to notice the countless volumes of occult science which make her influence one of the most potent factors in all their operations. It may, however, be mentioned that the occult properties and hidden influences of the moon are especially shown in. all processes of generation.

Thus it is found in, (a) Certain "physiological phenomena every lunar month of 28 days, or 4 weeks of 7 days each, so that 13 occurrences of the period should happen in 364 days, which is the solar year of 52 weeks of 7 days each, (b) The quickening of the foetus is marked by a period of 126 days, or 18 weeks of 7 days each, (c) That period which is called 'the period of viability ' is one of 210 days, or 30 weeks of 7 days each, (d) The period of parturition is accomplished in 280 days or a period of 40 weeks of 7 days each, or a lunar month of 28 days each, or of calendar months of 31 days each..... Thus the observed periods of time marking the workings of the birth function would naturally become a basis of astronomical calculation....." (S. D., I. 389). Moreover in antiquity, especially in Grecian mythology, the moon goddesses were the patronesses of child-birth, and the so-called pagan worship of *Sucona* has

been continued to the Queen of Heaven of the Roman Catholic Church, where the Virgin Mary has succeeded to all her prerogatives.

We have now, even from the cursory hints contained in this paper, a key that will unlock many of the mysteries of Solar and Lunar worship, and will justify the so-called superstition of the ancients who universally paid divine honours to the solar and lunar orbs. It would be too long to touch on the wealth of references available to show that the world-religions [Page 20] all speak of seven earths, worlds or spheres; it must suffice to state that this belief was the common property of antiquity: and that the earnest student will be amply repaid for a search throughout the world-bodies, by the collection of a striking body of evidence on this point.

One word before closing. You will notice that nothing has been said as to the other planets of the solar system, and indeed we have so far little information on the subject, for the mysteries of our own earth are quite sufficient for us at present. The reason for this silence is that, even on the other planets of our system, nature and life are entirely different from our own, and that even if we were told the facts, we should refuse to credit phenomena so foreign to our experience. Thus the speculations of astronomers, such as Flammarion, are all in terms of earth consciousness, and in the nature of things erroneous. We have, however, an isolated hint here and there which perhaps may help those who have thought over the problem. Thus one planet is said to be just coming out of obscurity, and one to be in its seventh Round, while Neptune and Uranus are said not to belong to our solar system, as evidenced by their rotating in a direction opposite to that of the rest of our planets.

Such is the bare sketch of a Planetary Chain, and the difficulty has been not so much to elaborate isolated facts, as to condense the wealth of information that can be drawn from the records of the past and present, both from religion, science and philosophy, as well from "superstitions" as from "enlightenment".