

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

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IN the first part of this article we have shown how HPB's original set of cryptic notes evolved into the polished philosophical explanation that appears in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*. In the following pages we continue showing how the process occurred.

Example 6.

HPB's Notebook:

Responding to "5. A MAN CAN CHOOSE WHAT HE SHALL THINK ABOUT, CAN THE ANALOGY BE APPLIED TO AH-HI?"
5. No; a man has free will and individual will. The Ah-hi have only a Collective one will among them, the original impulse of the Law that emanates from the Causeless Cause, periodically.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: "A man can choose what he shall think about, can the analogy be applied to Ah-hi?"

Mme Blavatsky: No, because a man has free will and the Ah-hi have no free will. They have collective will. They are obliged to act simultaneously. It is one law that

gives them the impulse and they have to act just according to that law. I do not call it free will. Free will can exist only in man, in a man who has a mind with consciousness, which acts and makes him perceive things not only within himself but outside himself also. These Ah-hi simply are forces; you don't take them to be men, do you?

Mr A. Keightley: No, but I take them to be conscious agents in the work.

Mme Blavatsky: Conscious in so far that they act within the universal consciousness. The Manasaputra is a different thing when they come on the third plane.
Mr Hall: Can the Ah-hi be said to be enjoying bliss?

Mme Blavatsky: Why should they enjoy bliss or non-bliss? What have they done to do so? I don't think they enjoy anything of the kind. They cannot smoke cigarettes even when they like. Why should they enjoy bliss? What extraordinary ideas you have! You can enjoy bliss only when you have known what suffering is.

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Mr Hall: I was making a distinction in my mind between bliss and happiness.

Mme Blavatsky: I thought it was the same thing; you can have neither happiness nor bliss if you have not known suffering.

Mr Hall: I was thinking of bliss as the state of the Absolute.

Mme Blavatsky: You suppose the Absolute is bliss? The Absolute can have no condition, no attribute, nothing at all. The Absolute is conditionless; that is the first thing to learn about the absolute. It is only that which is finite and differentiated which can have some attribute or something of the kind.

Dr Williams: How can they be said to be conscious intelligences in as much as intelligence is such a complex thing?

Mme Blavatsky: Because the English language does not furnish us with a better word . . .

Dr Williams: There may not be one word, but I think a collection of words would express Anything.

Mme Blavatsky: Oh, then try, if you please, to do so!

Published Transactions:

Q. *A man can choose what he will think about; can the analogy be applied to the Ah-hi?*

A. No; because a man has free will and the Ah-hi have none. They are obliged to act simultaneously, for the law under which they must act gives them the impulse. Free will can only exist in a Man who has both mind and consciousness, which act and make him perceive things both within and without himself. The "Ah-hi" are Forces, not human Beings.

Q. *But are they not conscious agents in the work?*

A. Conscious in as far as they act within the universal consciousness. But the consciousness of the Manasaputra on the third plane is quite different. It is only then that they become *Thinkers*. Besides, Occultism, unlike modern Science, maintains that every atom of matter, when once differentiated, becomes endowed with *its own* kind of Consciousness. Every *cell* in the human body (as in every animal) is endowed with its own peculiar discrimination, instinct, and, speaking relatively, with intelligence.

Q. *Can the Ah-hi be said to be enjoying bliss?*

A. How can they be subject to bliss or non-bliss? Bliss can only be appreciated, and becomes such when suffering is known.

Q. *But there is a distinction between happiness and bliss.*

A. Granting that there may be, still there can be neither happiness nor bliss without a contrasting experience of suffering and pain.

Q. *But we understand that bliss, as the state of the Absolute, was intended to be referred to.*

A. This is still more illogical. How can the ABSOLUTE be said to *feel*? The Absolute can have no condition nor attribute. It is only that which is finite and differentiated which can have any feeling or attitude predicated of it.

Q. *Then the Ah-hi cannot be said to be conscious intelligences, when intelligence is so complex?*

A. Perhaps the term is erroneous, but owing to the poverty of European languages there seems to be no other choice.

Q. *But perhaps a phrase would represent*

the idea more correctly? The term seems to mean a force which is a unity, not a complex action and reaction of several forces, which would be implied by the word "intelligence". The noumenal aspect of phenomenal force would per-haps better express the idea.

A. Or perhaps we may represent to ourselves the idea as a flame, a unity; the rays from this flame will be complex, each acting in its own straight line. the Ah-hi are the flame from which the rays stream forth, becoming more and more differentiated as they fall deeper into matter, until they finally reach this world of ours, with its teeming millions of inhabitants and sensuous beings, and then they become truly complex. . . . Are not the prismatic rays fundamentally one single white ray? From the one they become three; from the three, seven; from which seven primaries they fall into infinitude. Referring back to the so-called "consciousness" of the Ah-hi, that consciousness cannot be judged by the standard of human perceptions. It is on quite another plane.

Example 7.

HPB's Notebook:

Responding to "6. YOU SAY THAT DURING SLEEP 'MIND IS NOT' ON THE MATERIAL PLANE, BUT IT IS IMPLIED THAT DURING THIS PERIOD MIND IS ACTIVE ON ANOTHER PLANE. CAN YOU GIVE US A DEFINITION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DISTINGUISH MIND IN THE WAKING STATE FROM MIND DURING SLEEP OF THE BODY?"

6. The reasoning higher mind of the

physical man is not; his front brain or cerebrum sleeps; but his back brains or the cerebellum is wide awake. This human mind passes in sleep from the plane of the objective & illusionary Universe, to the astral & still more illusionary plane. I say still more because it is so full of these terrestrial emanations. Unless the Higher Ego helps it, it becomes more confused than ever.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Next question. You say that during deep sleep "mind is not" on the material plane; but it is implied that during this period mind is active on another plane. Can you give us a definition of the characteristics which distinguish mind in the waking state from mind during the sleep of the body?

Mme Blavatsky: Well, I suppose there is a great difference between the two. You see, the reason in higher minds sleeps, but the instinctual mind is awakened. That is the difference. The reason of the higher mind, in the physical man, is not always the same. Today I have been looking at a book and I learnt at last the great difference between cerebrum and cerebellum. I was always mixing them up in my mind, I was not sure of them, and this morning I on purpose went to look and I at last learnt that this is the cerebellum (pointing to the head) and this the cerebrum. The one sleeps when the other is awake.

Published Transactions:

Q. "During deep sleep, mind is not on the material plane"; is it therefore to be inferred that during this period mind is active on another plane? Is there any

definition of the characteristics which distinguish mind in the waking state from mind during the sleep of the body?

A. There is, of course; but I do not think that a discussion upon it would be pertinent or useful now; suffice to say that often the reasoning faculty of the higher mind may be asleep, and the instinctual mind be fully awake. It is the physiological distinction between the cerebrum and the cerebellum; the one sleeps and the other is awake. . . .

The instinctual mind finds expression through the cerebellum, and is also that of the animals. With man during sleep the functions of the cerebrum cease, and the cerebellum carries him on to the Astral plane, a still more unreal state than even the waking plane of illusion; for so we call this state which the majority of you think so real. And the Astral plane is still more deceptive, because it reflects indiscriminately the good and the bad, and is so chaotic.

Q. The fundamental conditions of the mind in the waking state are space and time: do these exist for the mind (Manas) during the sleep of the physical body?

A. Not as we know them. Moreover, the answer depends on which *Manas* you mean — the higher or the lower. It is only the latter which is susceptible of hallucinations about space and time; for instance, a man in the dreaming state may live in a few seconds the events of a lifetime. For the perceptions and apprehensions of the Higher Ego there is neither space nor time.

Example 8.

HPB's Notebook:

Responding to "7. IT HAS BEEN STATED THE MANAS (MIND) IS THE VEHICLE OF BUDDHI, BUT THE UNIVERSAL MIND HAS BEEN SPOKEN OF AS MAHA-BUDDHI. CAN YOU DEFINE FOR US THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN MANAS AND BUDDHI AS APPLIED IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE AND MANAS AND BUDDHI AS MANIFESTED IN MAN?"

7. Cosmic Buddhi is certainly the vehicle of the Universal Mahat, for in this sense Buddhi is Prakriti nature, in all its seven stages from Akasa down to Bhumi, Earth, or Malkuth, as it is called in the Kabala. But the human Buddhi derives its essence only from Akasa, the 2d principle, which is Mulaprakriti, the place of Atman being taken by Parabrahman. In man it is divine as man is in the higher triad, the posttype of the Higher never manifested Triad as Father Mother and Son (Manas).

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Next question: It has been stated that Manas (mind) is the vehicle of Buddhi, but the universal mind has been spoken of as Maha Buddhi. Can you define the difference between Manas and Buddhi as applied in a universal sense, and Manas and Buddhi as manifested in man?

Mme. Blavatsky: Well, cosmic Buddhi is the vehicle of Mahat, that is to say, in the sense of Buddhi being Prakriti and this is Prakriti; at least it descends in the seven planes, that is the difference, and the Buddhi of man proceeds from the highest Akasa. He does not go on the highest

plane until he comes to the most objective plane. Maha-Buddhi is used there in the same sense as Prakriti in its seven manifestations.

Mr B. Keightley: But is the vehicle of Mahat, the universal mind? Does the Manas in man proceed from the universal mind too?

Mme Blavatsky: Yes it proceeds from Akasa — Buddhi, I mean, or Manas on a lower plane. The Manasa-Dhyanis are the same Ah-hi I just told you of on a lower plane.

Mr B. Keightley: Because, of course, one would naturally think, as Mahat is the universal mind, that Manas in man proceeds from the universal mind.

Mme Blavatsky: It is just the same Prakriti in its last manifestation. It is what in the Kabbalah is called Malkuth, the Bride of Heavenly Man — well, earth, everything earthly, or atomic.

Mr B. Keightley: I.e., the plane of objective consciousness, in fact, waking consciousness.

Published Transactions:

Q. Manas is said to be the vehicle of Buddhi, but the universal mind has been spoken of as a Maha-Buddhi. What then is the distinction between the terms Manas and Buddhi, employed in a universal sense, and Manas and Buddhi as manifested in man?

A. Cosmic Buddhi, the emanation of the Spiritual Soul, *Alaya*, is the vehicle of Mahat only when that Buddhi corresponds to Prakriti. Then it is called Maha-Buddhi. This Buddhi differentiates through seven planes, whereas the Buddhi in man

is the vehicle of Atman, which vehicle is of the essence of the highest plane of Akasa and therefore does not differentiate. The difference between Manas and Buddhi in man is the same as the difference between the Manasaputra and the Ah-hi in Kosmos.

Example 9.

HPB's Notebook:

Responding to "8. CAN THERE BE CONSCIOUSNESS WITHOUT MIND?"

8. Consciousness is only a faculty of the mind, the quality of self-perception in the rational Ego. What is mind — in our understanding it is the Soul. Then you may just as well ask if a conscious Soul exists . . . which survives. To doubt that Consciousness can exist without mind is the same as saying that there is no Soul, no individual self-conscious soul, at any rate.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Question 8. "Can there be consciousness without mind?"

Mme Blavatsky: There we come to the great question. Consciousness — what is it not? It is only the faculty of the mind, is not it? It is that which permeates the mind or the Ego, and causes it to perceive that such a mind has action, that such a thing is so — is not that it? How do you explain it otherwise? Consciousness is not a thing per se. It is a faculty of the mind. That is what Hamilton will tell you and what all the Eastern idealists will tell you. They cannot tell you anything else. It is a thing inseparable from mind — unless it is the mind of an idiot, of course you won't have any consciousness.

Mr A. Keightley: You say the fashion

nowadays amongst philosophers is to speak slightly . . . of the idea of making mind an entity.

Mme Blavatsky: Of course, but mind is still the soul. It is perfectly synonymous with soul. Those who don't believe in soul certainly will tell you that there is no such thing as consciousness apart from brain, and once the brain is dead and the man is dead, there is no consciousness. The Nihilists, and Atheists, and the Materialists will tell you so. If you believe in mind, mind is the soul or the Ego. What kind of a soul is that if it has not any consciousness?

Mr A. Keightley: But they accept consciousness.

Mme Blavatsky: But not after the death of man, while we accept consciousness after death, and say the real consciousness and the real freedom of the Ego or the soul begins only after the physical death of man. It is then that it is no longer impeded by terrestrial matter that it is free, that it can perceive everything.

Mr A. Keightley: Because they confine their consciousness to sense of perception.

Mme Blavatsky: That is what they do, and we don't. That is the difference between us.

Published Transactions:

Q. Manas is mind, and the Ah-hi, it is said, can no more have any individual Mind, or that which we call mind, on this plane than Buddhi can. Can there be Consciousness without Mind?

A. Not on this plane of matter. But why not on some other and higher plane? Once we postulate a Universal Mind, both the brain, the mind's vehicle, and Conscious-

ness, its faculty, must be quite different on a higher plane from what they are here. They are nearer to the *Absolute ALL*, and must therefore be represented by a substance infinitely more homogeneous; something *sui generis*, and entirely beyond the reach of our intellectual perceptions. Let us call or imagine it an incipient and incognizable state of primeval differentiation. On that higher plane, as it seems to me, Mahat — the great *Manvantaric* Principle of Intelligence — acts as a Brain, through which the Universal and Eternal Mind radiates the Ah-hi, representing the resultant consciousness or ideation. As the shadow of this primordial *triangle* falls lower and lower through the descending planes, it becomes with every stage more material.

Q. It becomes the plane on which Consciousness perceives objective manifestations. Is it so?

A. Yes. But here we come face to face with the great problem of Consciousness, and shall have to fight Materialism. For what is Consciousness? According to modern Science it is a faculty of the Mind like volition. We say so too; but add that while Consciousness is not a thing *per se*, Mind is distinctly — in its Manvantaric functions at least — an Entity. Such is the opinion of all the Eastern Idealists.

Q. It is, however, the fashion nowadays to speak slightly of the idea that the mind is an entity.

A. Nevertheless, mind is a term perfectly synonymous with Soul. Those who deny the existence of the latter will of course contend that there is no such thing as

consciousness apart from brain, and at death consciousness ceases. Occultists, on the contrary, affirm that consciousness exists after death, and that then only the real consciousness and freedom of the Ego commences, when it is no longer impeded by terrestrial matter.

Q. *Perhaps the former view arises from limiting the meaning of the term “consciousness” to the faculty of perception?*

A. If so, occultism is entirely opposed to such a view.

Example 10.

HPB’s Notebook:

[Numbering of questions starts over.]

Responding to “1. WHAT ARE THE SEVEN WAYS TO BLISS?”

Sloka 4.

1. Practical faculty of which you may learn hereafter.

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Then we come to the fourth Sloka. “The seven ways to bliss were not. The great causes of misery (Nidana and Maya) were not.” The question, is what are the seven ways to bliss?

Mme Blavatsky: Well, they are practically faculties, of which you will know more later on, perhaps, if you go a little deeper into esotericism.

Mr A. Keightley: Then the seven ways are not mentioned?

Mme Blavatsky: No, they are not mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine* are they? They are not, I should say not.

Mr A. Keightley: I don’t think they are.

Published Transactions:

Q. *What are the seven ways to bliss?*

A. They are certain faculties of which the student will know more when he goes deeper into occultism.

Example 11.

HPB’s Notebook:

Responding to “2. ARE THE FOUR TRUTHS OF THE HIMALAYAN SCHOOL THE SAME AS THE FOUR TRUTHS MENTIONED BY EDWIN ARNOLD IN HIS BOOK *THE LIGHT OF ASIA*?”

2. Almost the same. Read them.

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

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: Then the question is: Are the four truths of the Hinayāna School the same as the four truths mentioned by Edwin Arnold in his book, *The Light of Asia*?

Mme Blavatsky: Almost the same. He mentions something which is somewhat different from it.

Mr A. Keightley: The first is of sorrow, the second is of sorrows’ cause, the third of sorrow’s ceasing, and the fourth is the way.

Mme Blavatsky: What do you understand by Edwin Arnold’s explanation?

Mr B. Keightley: Read the passage please, Arch.

(Mr A. Keightley then read the passage indicated in *The Light of Asia*.)

Mme Blavatsky: All this is theological and all this exoteric; this is what you can find in all the volumes that any Buddhist Priest will give you; but there is far more explanation, of course, in Arya-sanga’s works, though that is esoteric,

too. Arnold took it from the Singhalese Buddhism.

Published Transactions:

Q. *Are the Four Truths of the Hinayana school the same as those mentioned by Sir Edwin Arnold in "The Light of Asia"; the first of which is the Path of Sorrow; the second of Sorrow's cause; the third of Sorrow's ceasing; and the fourth is the WAY?*

A. All this is theological and exoteric, and to be found in all the Buddhist scriptures; and the above seems to be taken from Singhalese or Southern Buddhism. The subject, however, is far more fully treated of in the Aryasanga School. Still even there the four truths have one meaning for the regular priest of the Yellow Robe, and quite another for the real Mystics.

Example 12.

HPB's Notebook:

Responding to "4. ARE NIDANA AND MAYA (GREAT CAUSES OF MISERY) THE ASPECTS OF THE ABSOLUTE?"

4. They are the manifestations of the One Law, which acts universally.

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

Transcription of the meeting:

Mr A. Keightley: "Are Nidana and Maya the (great causes of misery) aspects of the Absolute?"

Mme Blavatsky: Is that number 4?

Mr A. Keightley: That is number 4.

Mme Blavatsky: Now what can Nidana,

I ask myself, and Maya have to do with each other? Nidana is the concatenation of cause and effect. The twelve Nidanas are the enumeration of the chief causes which produce material for Karma to strike you very heavily. Maya is simply an illusion. Now what has Nidana to do with Maya? I cannot understand what analogy, what idea one has in common with the other. If you take the universe as an illusion, a Maya, then certainly the Nidānas as being in the universe are included in the Maya, but apart from that, what has one thing to do with the other.

Mr B. Keightley: Then why do you class them together in that way?

Mme Blavatsky: They are two distinct things. Maya is an illusion. You think yourself a very grand fellow, that you can go and compete with any Ah-his. . . But you make a fool of yourself and then comes Nirvana and shows it to you. It is just then, I think that the man cannot take into his own head that he is not separate from the one and he goes and thinks himself a very great man in his own individuality, and he is nothing at all. He is still one in reality. It is nothing but Maya, an illusion; but taking this Maya it is illusion or ignorance that brings us to commit all the acts which awaken the Nidanas, which produce the first cause of Nidana; this cause having been produced, the effects follow and there is Karma. Of course Nidanas and the production of bad Karmic effects and Māyā are at the root of every evil. If we knew what we are, we would not do such things. Every one of us thinks he or she

is a unit and something very grand in the eyes of all the authorities upstairs that you may think of; we are simply a drop of water in the ocean not to be distinguished from another drop, that is all we are. This sense of separateness is at the root of all evil.

Published Transactions:

Q. *Are Nidana and Maya (the great causes of misery) aspects of the Absolute?*

A. Nidana means the concatenation of cause and effect; the twelve Nidanas are the enumeration of the chief causes which produce the severest reaction or effects under the Karmic law. Although there is no connection between the terms Nidana and Maya in themselves, Maya being simply illusion, yet if we consider the

universe as Maya, or illusion, then certainly the Nidanas, as being moral agents in the universe, are included in Maya. It is Maya, illusion or ignorance, which awakens Nidanas; and the cause or causes having been produced, the effects follow according to Karmic law. To take an instance: we all regard ourselves as Units, although essentially we are one indivisible Unit, drops in the ocean of Being, not to be distinguished from other drops. Having then produced this cause, the whole discord of life follows immediately as an effect; in reality it is the endeavor of Nature to restore harmony and maintain equilibrium. It is this sense of separateness which is the root of all evil. ✧

Acknowledgement: Thanks to Michele Sender for transcribing HPB's notes.

Woman's mission is to become the mother of future occultists — of those who will be born without sin. On the elevation of woman the world's redemption and salvation hinge. And not till woman bursts the bonds of her sexual slavery to which she has ever been subjected will the world obtain an inkling of what she really is and of her proper place in the economy of Nature.

Koot Hoomi
From "Eminent Occultist", notes on treatise by Eliphas Levi