

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MICROCOSM

**T. Subba Row**

(Continued from page 511)

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I shall now proceed with the continuation of my article on *The Constitution of the Microcosm*. Madame Blavatsky has sent a reply to the previous portion of my article for publication in this issue, and to avoid the necessity of writing another article on the subject, I find it necessary to take this reply also into consideration in this very article.

The real question at issue between us is after all a very simple one; but it has been obscured and unnecessarily complicated by the line of argument which Madame Blavatsky has chosen to adopt. I have nowhere denied the importance of number seven in the processes of natural evolution or the interpretation of cosmic phenomena. On the other hand it will be clearly seen from my first lecture that I fully admitted its importance while rejecting the seven-fold classification hitherto adopted as unsound and unscientific. I have not even denied the possibility of a seven-fold classification in the case of the microcosmic principles, or the existence of a seven-fold classification recognized by the ancient occult science. My remarks and criticism were strictly confined to the particular classification which has hitherto been explained and commented upon in Theosophical publications. It must further be noted in this connection that my criticism did not proceed from the necessity of maintaining any orthodox Brahminical dogma. I found it necessary to condemn this classification on account of its own inherent defects, and not because it emanated from a Trans-Himalayan source. I found fault, not with Madame H.P. Blavatsky, or her use of Sanskrit terms, or her exposition of Brahminical philosophy, but with the incorrect and misleading classification which has introduced so many contradictions and so much confusion into Theosophical writings. If these few facts are borne in mind, it will be found that a considerable portion of Madame H.P. Blavatsky's argument is altogether irrelevant to the real question at issue. The whole argument, from the commencement of page 452 to the end of the second paragraph on page 455, can only establish the fact that the number seven is of great importance in nature and the arrangements of occult symbology. Even if this fact is admitted, it does not necessarily follow that in every case we are bound to adopt a seven-fold classification. The only inference that can fairly be drawn from it is, that in all probability there are seven principles which enter into the composition of a human being. But this inference can by no means establish the correctness of the particular classification under consideration. Otherwise, the truth of any seven-fold classification we may choose to adopt can be equally proved by this process of reasoning. Any person can name any seven principles in the complex structure of man and claim the sanction of nature for his classification, as is now done by my critic.

It is pointed out in the reply that the seven-fold classification is essential for "practical demonstration in Occultism," and that the four-fold classification, though "metaphysically" and "theoretically" sound, is incapable of any practical application to "the phenomena of daily

and especially of *post-mortem* life.” The same argument is repeated in various forms throughout the reply. This is one of those vague general arguments which seem to mean a good deal, and which take easy possession of the minds of people who are not generally in the habit of scrutinizing or analyzing their own ideas. I fail to understand what kind of practical demonstration it is which necessitates the adoption of this classification. My critic is silent on the point. I know for certain that this seven-fold classification will be an obstacle in the way in a considerable number of occult process which an initiate has to pass through in seeking that final union with the Logos, which is to be the ultimate result of his labours. This inconvenience results from the fact that the mystic constitution of the Logos itself, as represented by the sacred Tetragram, has not a septenary basis. If the assertion, however, does not mean anything more than that the septenary classification is required for explaining the so-called spiritualistic phenomena, I am fully prepared to account for every one of these phenomena from the standpoint of the classification I have adopted. I have in fact dealt with the general aspects of spiritualism in my lectures from this very stand-point. The very fact that this four-fold classification was found sufficient for all practical purposes by occultists who investigated these phenomena for thousands of years and examined the workings of nature on all its planes of activity, will be an unanswerable reply to this argument. I am quite certain that Pisachas and Bhoots will never succeed in disproving my classification. I think that this defect is the result of a serious misapprehension in my critic's mind regarding the nature of this four-fold classification. At the end of page 450, Madame H.P. Blavatsky points out that the three *Upadhis* of the Rajayoga classification are Jagrata, Swapna and Sushupti, and continues as follows:— But then, in transcendental states of samadhi, the body with its *linga sarira*, the vehicle of the life principle, is entirely left out of consideration; the three states of consciousness are made to refer only to the three (with Atma the fourth) principles which remain after death. And here lies the real key to the septenary division of man, the three principles coming in as an addition only during his life.” This real key unfortunately breaks in our hands the moment we begin to apply it. The whole mistake has arisen from confounding *Upadhi*, with the state of Pragna associated with it. *Upadhi* is the physical organism. The first *Upadhi* is the physical body itself, and not merely Jagrata Avastha. And again how is Jagrath to be identified with the fourth principle? If, as my critic says, the three states of consciousness—Jagrath, Swapna and Sushupti—are made to refer only to the three principles which remain after death in addition to Atma, Jagrath must necessarily be identified with the fourth principle. But sure enough the fourth principle is not the physical body. The four principles of my classification can by no means be superadded to the first three principles of the seven-fold classification, seeing that the physical body is the first principle of the four-fold classification. Even if *Upadhi* is mistaken for a state of consciousness, the seven-fold classification cannot be deduced from the Raj-yog classification. Jagrath Avastha is not the condition of Pragna associated with the fourth principle. The whole argument thus ends in nothing; and yet on the basis of this argument Madame H.P. Blavatsky has thought it proper, in the fourth argument of her present reply, to pronounce an opinion to the effect that the Vedantins have denied the objective reality and the importance of the physical body, and overlooked its existence in their classification, which has thereby been rendered unfit for practical purposes. My critic would have done better if she had paused to ascertain the real meaning of *Upadhi* and of Jagrath before using such a worthless argument in defence of her own classification and giving expression to such an erroneous view regarding the Vedantic theory.

The whole argument about the comparative merits of the two classifications rests on a series of misconceptions, or arbitrary assumptions. The first Upadhi is identified with Jagrathavasta, and then it is assumed that the latter is the same as the fourth principle of the septenary classification. I must here call the reader's attention to another curious mistake in the reply. It is stated in the second paragraph on page 450 that the four-fold classification is "the Bhagavat Gita classification," "but not that of the *Vedanta*." This statement is apparently made for the purpose of somehow or other discrediting the four-fold classification. It has, however, no real foundation in fact, and is altogether misleading. Madame H.P. Blavatsky has probably ventured to make this assertion on account of the headings given to the five-fold and the four-fold classifications in my note on the "Septenary Division in different Indian Systems." I called the five-fold classification the Vedantic classification, and the four-fold classification the Raja Yoga classification, merely for convenience of reference and not because the two classifications refer to two different systems of philosophy. Though both the classifications are used in Vedantic philosophy, the four-fold classification is the one frequently referred to. Tharaka Raja Yoga is, as it were, the centre and the heart of Vedantic philosophy, as it is decidedly, in its higher aspects, the most important portion of the ancient wisdom religion. Very little of it is known at present in India. What is generally seen of it in the books ordinarily read, gives but a very inadequate idea of its scope or importance. In truth, however, it is one of the seven main branches into which the whole of the occult science is divided, and is derived according to all accounts from the "children of the fire-mist" of the mysterious land of Shamballah.

It is necessary to state further in this connection that the four-fold classification I have used is not the only classification to be found in this magnificent system of philosophy. It has also a seven-fold classification, which will hereafter be noticed.

Attention has been called to some of my former articles in *The Theosophist*, and it is argued that I have already admitted the truth and the correctness of the classification which I am now criticizing, and that I am now stopped from denying the same. This kind of argument is altogether out of place in the present case. The only article in which I had seriously considered the question, is the one referred to as the article on "Brahminism on the Seven-fold Principles in Man." I must explain the circumstances under which this so-called article was written. While yet an utter stranger to me, Madame H.P. Blavatsky, after seeing my article on the Zodiac, asked me certain questions by letter about the classification of the various powers and forces recognised by occultism, and further, calling my attention to the "Fragments of Occult Truth," enquired of me whether *as regards spiritualistic phenomena* my views harmonized with those put forward in the said article. I sent her a letter in reply, not having the slightest notion at the time of writing the same that it would ever be published as an article for the information of the public. This fact was acknowledged by the editor in her preface to the said article, when it was originally published in the columns of *The Theosophist*, and it was the editor who selected the title. It will be clearly seen that the article is divided into two parts. The first part is confined to the questions put regarding the classification of the "powers of nature," while the second part deals with the spiritualistic phenomena. Madame H.P. Blavatsky has, however, thought it proper to quote a passage from the first part, which has nothing to do with the classification of the microcosmic principles, or the spiritualistic phenomena, for the purpose of drawing an unwarranted inference in support of her contention, and for the purpose of making a disagreeable insinuation against the ancient occult science of India.

The passage in question is as follows:

“However that may be, the knowledge of the *occult powers of nature* (the italics are in the original, see p. 155, “Five Years of Theosophy”) possessed by the inhabitants of the lost Atlantis was learnt by the ancient adepts of India, and was appended by them to the esoteric doctrine taught by the residents of the sacred Island. The Tibetan adepts, however, have not accepted this addition to their esoteric doctrine; and it is in this respect that one should expect to find a difference between the two doctrines.”

There is nothing ambiguous in this passage. It clearly refers to the Tantras and Agamas which were originally cultivated and developed by the Atlanteans. In course of time their doctrines and ritual gradually crept into the Brahminical doctrine, as the Dugpa doctrines crept into Tibetan Buddhism before the time of Song-ka-pa. And just as the last named adept undertook to weed out these doctrines from the Tibetan religion, Sankara Charya attempted to purify the Brahminical faith. The assertion made in the article does not in the least justify the assumption that the ancient Brahminical occult science was derived from the Atlantean. Tantras and Agamas have little or nothing to do with the classification of the microcosmic principles; and the statement quoted has not the remotest reference to the seven-fold or the four-fold classification. My critic was more or less of the same opinion when she wrote her first article on the “Classification of Principles,” published in the April issue of this Journal. After quoting the above-mentioned paragraph from my article, she makes the following observation on p. 449:—“But this difference between the two doctrines does not include the septenary division...” But this opinion seems to have changed subsequently. For, in the present article, after citing the same passage, she makes the following remark: “Thus, the readers of *The Theosophist* were told from the first (in 1882) that they ‘should expect to find a difference between the two doctrines.’ One of the said ‘differences’ is found in the *Exoteric Exposition* or form of presentation of the seven-fold principle in man.” As might naturally be expected, this statement is a little obscure. This “Exoteric Exposition” cannot possibly refer to the seven-fold classification, because in her opinion this classification “was always esoteric” (p. 448). It must therefore refer to the four-fold classification which is looked upon as the exoteric form of the esoteric seven-fold classification. The statement now made amounts to this then. The seven-fold classification was esoteric and was derived by the Tibetan adepts from Shamballah; the four-fold classification was exoteric and was derived by the ancient adepts of India from the Atlanteans. This difference was noticed and admitted by the article on “Brahminism and the Seven-fold Principles in Man.”

This is the gist of the present argument. This argument is sufficiently refuted by what she herself wrote in the April article. She then thought that my statement did not refer to the classifications, and alleged that both the parties derived the seven-fold classification from the Atlanteans (see page 449). It will be a mere waste of time to dissect this argument any further. I can only regret that my critic should stoop to such arguments and insinuations for the purpose of defending her position.

The second part of my article deals with the seven-fold classification only *incidentally*. It was not necessary to discuss the merits of the seven-fold classification of the “Fragments [of Occult Truth]” in that article. And I did not think it proper to go out of my way and criticize the said classification. It would have been foolish on my part to have done so when my correspondent was a stranger to me, and when I was assured that in her opinion it was a correct

classification. I therefore followed the classification of the “Fragments [of Occult Truth]” as far as it was convenient, introducing such changes into it as were absolutely necessary. The following passage at the commencement of the second part of my article will show what I undertook to establish in the said article, and why I adopted the seven-fold classification:—” I have carefully examined it (The Fragments [of Occult Truth]) and find that the results arrived at do not differ much from the conclusions of our Aryan philosophy, though our mode of stating the arguments may differ in form. I shall now discuss the question from my own stand-point, *though following, for facility of comparison and convenience of discussion*, the sequence of classification of the seven-fold entities, or principles constituting man, which is adopted in The “Fragments [of Occult Truth].” The questions raised for discussion are—(1) whether the disembodied spirits of human beings appear in the seance rooms and elsewhere, and (2) whether the manifestations taking place are produced wholly or partly through their agency.” The conclusions referred to herein do not refer to the classification adopted, but to the views expressed on the questions raised. The reason given for following the seven-fold classification is clearly stated and cannot possibly mislead anybody. The so-called mathematical demonstration of the evolution of seven entities from three can only establish if correct the probability of a seven-fold classification, but is utterly insufficient to establish *the* truth of the seven-fold classification therein adopted. It will be further seen that the seven-fold classification I adopted in that article is different in many important respects, viz., the position of Prana and the nature and importance of the fifth and the sixty principles, from the classification of “The Fragments [of Occult Truth],” in which the so-called “original teachings” was embodied. Curiously enough my alterations were quietly accepted in subsequent expositions in spite of the “original teachings,” to which so much importance is now attached. I was not then pretending, and I have never pretended subsequently, that I was teaching occult wisdom to the members of The Theosophical Society. Under such circumstances it is altogether unreasonable to lay so much stress on the importance of my article in discussing the important question now formally raised for final decision. It is quite true that I refrained from pointing out fully the defects and the unsoundness of the seven-fold classification in my note on the various classifications while I was the acting editor of The Theosophist, though I stated that, in some respects, it would be more convenient to follow the four-fold classification. I did not then think it proper in the interests of theosophical investigation to raise an important issue about the correctness of the seven-fold classification, as I thought it would be pre-mature to do so. The seven-fold classification, though incorrect, was a step in advance. It did serve some purpose in its own way towards the investigation of the ancient systems of occult psychology. And I did not think it prudent to disturb it when matters were hardly ripe for taking another step in the right direction. My article on the “Personal and Impersonal God” does not, in fact, touch the question at issue. It does speak no doubt of seven states of matter, of seven principles in man, and seven aspects of Pragna. But the article does not adopt the seven-fold classification under consideration. It is based on Manduky-opanishad (sic) which enumerates seven phases of consciousness, while it accepts the four-fold classification. These articles therefore do not settle the point in dispute, and there cannot be a better proof of the weakness of my critic's position, than the fact that, instead of attempting to justify the seven-fold classification on its merits, she is trying to find a support for it in the articles above alluded to.

Madame H.P. Blavatsky says that she is certain that the classification in dispute is the real esoteric seven-fold classification. I am very sorry she is so positive in her statements. In my

humble opinion it is not the real esoteric classification. There is but one source from which all the various writers on occult science have derived their classifications. It is one of the oldest directions of the ancient Wisdom-religion that the macrocosm should be interpreted according to the plan revealed by *Malchuth*, and that *Shechinah* should be accepted as a guide to the interpretation of the constitution of the microcosm. I use the Kabbalistic names, though not precisely in the Kabbalistic sense, as I am not at liberty to use the Sanskrit equivalents. This *Shechinah* is an androgyne power, and is the *Thureeya Chaitanyam* of the cosmos. Its male form is the figure of man seen on the mysterious throne in the vision of Ezekiel. Its mystic constitution gives us, as it were, the equation to the microcosm. It is the eternal model of the perfected microcosm. The universal life copies this model in its work of evolutionary construction. This equation can be interpreted in nine ways, and it has been so interpreted by the ancient teachers. There are nine stand-points from which the microcosm can be looked at, and in nine ways has the constitution of the microcosm been explained. The real esoteric seven-fold classification is one of the most important, if not the most important classification, which has received its arrangement from the mysterious constitution of this eternal type. I may also mention in this connection that the four-fold classification claims the same origin. The light of life, as it were, seems to be refracted by the treble-faced prism of *Prakriti*, having the three *Gunams* for its three faces, and divided into seven rays, which develop in course of time the seven principles of this classification. The progress of development presents some points of similarity to the gradual development of the rays of the spectrum. While the four-fold classification is amply sufficient for all practical purposes, this real seven-fold classification is of great theoretical and scientific importance. It will be necessary to adopt it to explain certain classes of phenomena noticed by occultists; and it is perhaps better fitted to be the basis of a perfect system of psychology. It is not the peculiar property of "the Trans-Himalayan esoteric doctrine." In fact it has a closer connection with the Brahminical Logos than with the Buddhist Logos. In order to make my meaning clear I may point out here that the Logos has seven forms. In other words there are seven kinds of *Logoi* in the cosmos. Each of these has become the central figure of one of the seven main branches of the ancient Wisdom-religion. This classification is not the seven-fold classification we have adopted. I make this assertion without the slightest fear of contradiction. The real classification has all the requisites of a scientific classification. It has seven distinct principles, which correspond with seven distinct states of *Pragna* or consciousness. It bridges the gulf between the objective and subjective, and indicates the mysterious circuit through which ideation passes. The seven principles are allied to seven states of matter, and to seven forms of force. These principles are harmoniously arranged between two poles, which define the limits of *human* consciousness. It is abundantly clear from all that has been said in this controversy, that the classification we have adopted does not possess these requisites. It is admitted by Madame H.P. Blavatsky, that in her classification there are not *seven distinct seats* of consciousness (see p. 451). The arrangement of the principles also is not regular. The life principle, for instance, which is alleged to have for its vehicle the *linga sarira*, is made to precede the latter instead of following it. Such defects show that the classification we have hitherto used is not quite sound and scientific. It was to pave the way for the adoption of the real classification that I ventured to criticize the old classification, and I hardly expected that my remarks would give rise to such a controversy. It will be a mere waste of time at present to explain the real seven-fold classification. There is not the slightest chance of my being heard. Time will show whether I was justified in my criticism or not. Personally I am not in the least interested whether the members of the Theosophical Society

adhere to or reject the seven-fold classification. I have no desire of having a following of my own in the Society, or starting a separate branch for enforcing my own views on the matter. There is but one statement more in the reply to which it is necessary for me to advert. I have not held Madame H.P. Blavatsky responsible for the mistakes of “Man” and “Esoteric Buddhism,” as she and some of her friends seem to think. I merely grouped together all the various inconsistent statements found in prominent theosophical publications about the classification under enquiry, and in giving my quotations I referred to the various books and articles by name. I nowhere alleged or insinuated that Madame H.P. Blavatsky should be held responsible for the blunders committed by others. The scope of my argument will be clear if my article is carefully perused. But before the heat of advocacy subsides there is no chance of preventing people for raising unnecessary side issues for the purpose of quarrelling. I am extremely sorry that I have entered into this unpleasant controversy. I hope Madame H.P. Blavatsky will kindly excuse me if I have in any way wounded her feelings by my remarks or criticism.

T. SUBBA ROW.