

The Universal Over-Soul (v. 1)

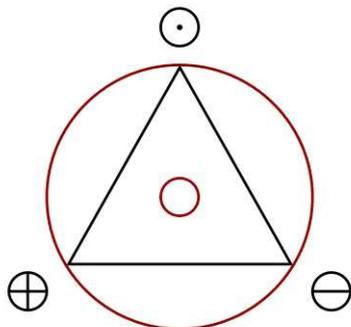
The third fundamental proposition of the secret doctrine (SD I, 17) postulates “the fundamental identity of all Souls with the **Universal Over-Soul**, the latter being an aspect of the Unknown Root”. We might ask ourselves, what exactly is this Over-Soul, and how can we relate it to other known concepts in the philosophy of *The Secret Doctrine*?

1. The Over-Soul

The term Over-Soul refers to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay *The Over-soul*, first published in 1841, in which he describes the Over-soul as the source of higher inspiration in man. From the essay:

The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission; that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents, and constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his character and not from his tongue, and which evermore tends to pass into our thought and hand and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE.

In the third fundamental proposition, it is stated that the Universal Over-Soul is “an aspect of the Unknown Root”. The Unknown Root is what we have identified with the Absolute, or space, symbolised by the plane or circumference of the circle, i.e. the circle without a central point, the immaculate white disk from the archaic palmleaf manuscript described in SD I, 1. An aspect of the Root will be one of three aspects. On the same page the Universal Over-Soul is described as the “pure Essence of the Universal Sixth **principle**”, while the seventh principle is the Root itself. The principles are counted here from “dense” to “fine”. On page 19 this sixth principle is identified with **brahmā**. On page 13 (footnote), a fifth universal principle is mentioned, under the name of **ākāśa**, “to which corresponds and from which proceeds human Manas”.



2. The Universal Soul

The statements on the Universal Soul in *The Secret Doctrine* are very confusing, to say the least. In the third fundamental proposition we find that the Over-Soul is the sixth universal principle. In another location in the Proem, SD I, 9-10 we find:

The Occultist [...] regards the Adi-Sakti [...], in her A'kasic form of the Universal Soul -- as philosophically a Maya, and cause of human Maya. But this view does not prevent him from believing in its existence so long as it lasts, to wit, for one Mahamanvantara; nor from applying Akasa, the radiation of Mulaprakriti, to practical purposes, connected as the World-Soul is with all natural phenomena, known or unknown to science.*

From this we can distill that the Universal Soul is not the First unmanifested Logos, but the Second. In SD I, 420 we find a more unequivocal statement on the Universal Soul:

UNIVERSAL SOUL is not the inert Cause of Creation or (Para) Brahma, but simply that which we call the sixth principle of intellectual Kosmos, on the manifested plane of being. It is Mahat, or Mahabuddhi, the great Soul, the vehicle of Spirit, the first primeval reflection of the formless CAUSE [...].

It is clear from this quotation that the Universal Soul is identical to the Second Logos, the sixth universal principle, Mahat, the "Universal Mind". This means that the Universal Soul is none other than the "Universal Over-Soul" of Emerson.

3. The Anima Mundi or World Soul

In SD I, 365 and the first footnote on that page, we find evidence that this principle, which we call here the Second Logos (here referred to as Brahma), is also identical with Anima Mundi or the World Soul:

In the Hindu Katakopanishad, Purusha, the divine spirit, already stands before the original matter, "from whose union springs the great soul of the world," Maha-Atma, Brahma, the Spirit of Life, etc., etc.**[...]*

** The latter appellations are all identical with Anima Mundi, or the "Universal Soul," the astral light of the Kabbalist and the Occultist, or the "Egg of Darkness."*

Then in SD I, 49 (and other locations), we find the statement that ālaya is the Universal Soul and Anima Mundi:

In the Yogacharya system of the contemplative Mahayana school, Alaya is both the Universal Soul (Anima Mundi) and the Self of a progressed adept.

Whenever HPB uses ālaya, she refers to the Second Logos (unless otherwise indicated), although on the same page (SD I, 49) she states that the word ālaya has "two or even three

meanings". In our discussion on *Ālaya in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra Pt. II*, we have argued what the two or three meanings might be, namely the jāti, pravṛtti and karman aspects of ālaya.

4. Corrections to Earlier Findings

So, we have to correct two errors in our earlier posts. Part of the table in *Ālaya in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra Pt. II* was:

Aspect of ālaya	1. jāti	2. pravṛtti
Corresponds to	remaining in its original nature	evolving
Cosmic	Universal Soul	Mahat [called Maha-Buddhi], Universal Mind [Universal Spiritual Soul], Emerson's Over-Soul, Anima Mundi

with the remark: "It may be noted that these conclusions do not in every respect meet the ones from *The Three Logoi*. The differences concern the terms Universal Soul and Anima Mundi. It will be necessary to clear up these differences in a later stage." We know now, that this part of the table should have looked like:

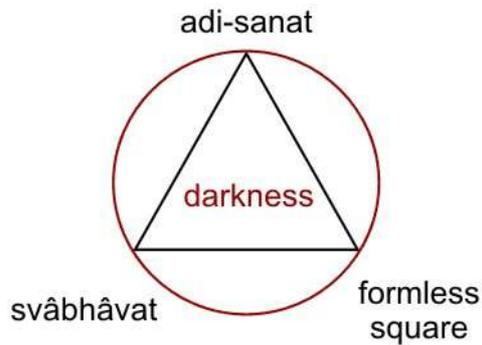
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In the post entitled *The Three Logoi (3)*, the Universal Soul is categorized under the Third Logos, while it should have been under the Second. The corrected text would be:

1. *First Logos, the One, the Ever Unmanifest, represented by Mūlaprakṛti, the Plotinic and Orphic Hen, Hyparxis, Universal Good, the Christian Father-aspect, Divine Will.*
2. *Second Logos, the manifested Logos, the Logos proper, the Verbum, the Plotinic Nous, the Demiurge, HPB's Anima Mundi, Creative Intelligence, Mahat, Universal Mind, Universal Soul, Universal Intelligence, Divine Mind, Divine Wisdom, the Son-aspect, the Christ, Brahmā, Īśvara, Avalokiteśvara (manifested).*
3. *Third Logos, the Light of the Logos, Fohat, Daiviprakṛti, the Plotinic Psuchē, ~~Universal Soul (the Plotinic Anima Mundi)~~, the Nous of Anaxagoras, Divine Activity, the Holy Ghost.*

5. The Sacred Four

In stanza IV, śloka 5 (SD I, 98) the four highest universal principles are described. Here, the seventh (first) principle is called darkness, the sixth (second) adi-sanat, the fifth (third) svābhāvat, the fourth (fourth) the formless square. The first three are “enclosed within the boundless circle”, and together they are called the **sacred four** or the **tetraktis**.



In the following table, the four highest Universal (“Cosmic”) principles are summarized, as described in various sources.

Principle	7th	6th	5th	4th
Proem to the SD	the ONE principle, the Absolute, THAT, Sat, Beingness, SPACE, the Root, Parabrahman, Brahman (neutrum)	Universal Over-Soul, Universal Soul, Brahmā	ākāśa	
SD I, 98 (st. IV śl. 5)	darkness	adi-sanat	svābhāvat	formless square
SD II, 596	The Unmanifested Logos	Universal (latent) Ideation	Universal (or Cosmic) active Intelligence	Cosmic (Chaotic) Energy
Cosmological Notes in BL p. 378; spelling cf. Blavatsky’s Secret Books, p. 64	svayambhuva	nārāyaṇa	yajña	vāc
	snyugs	dkon mchog	nam 'mkha (Skt. ākāśa)	'od (Skt. prabhā, āloka)
	Latent Spirit Ensoph	Universal Mind	Virāj, Universal Illusion	Cosmic Will
Additional terms	Mother-space, the Eternal Parent, Eternal Mother (1886 Ms), First Logos	Second Logos	Father-Mother, Fire-Mist	