

Helena P. Blavatsky on the Pythagorean Triangle

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Theosophy proceeds on broader lines. From the very beginning of *Æons* – in time and space in our Round and Globe – the Mysteries of Nature (at any rate, those which it is lawful for our races to know) were recorded by the pupils of those same now invisible “heavenly men,” in geometrical figures and symbols. The keys thereto passed from one generation of “wise men” to the other. Some of the symbols, thus passed from the east to the west, were brought therefrom by Pythagoras, who was not the inventor of his famous “Triangle.” The latter figure, along with the plane cube and circle, are more eloquent and scientific descriptions of the order of the evolution of the Universe, spiritual and psychic, as well as physical, than volumes of descriptive Cosmogonies and revealed “*Geneses*.” The *ten points* inscribed within that “Pythagorean *triangle*” are worth all the theogonies and angelologies ever emanated from the theological brain. For he who interprets them – on their very face, and in the order given – will find in these seventeen points (the seven Mathematical Points hidden) the uninterrupted series of the genealogies from the first *Heavenly* to *terrestrial* man. And, as they give the order of Beings, so they reveal the order in which were evolved the Kosmos, our earth, and the primordial elements by which the latter was generated. Begotten in the invisible *Depths*, and in the womb of the same “Mother” as its fellow-globes — he who will master the mysteries of our Earth, will have mastered those of all others.

Whatever ignorance, pride or fanaticism may suggest to the contrary, Esoteric Cosmology can be shown inseparably connected with both philosophy and modern science. The gods of the ancients, the monads – from Pythagoras down to Leibnitz – and the atoms of the present materialistic schools (as borrowed by them from the theories of the old Greek Atomists) are only a compound unit, or a graduated unity like the human frame, which begins with body and ends with spirit. In the occult sciences they can be studied separately, but never mastered unless viewed in their mutual correlations during their life-cycle, and as a Universal Unity during *Pralayas*...

Philosophy... could never have formed its conception of a logical, universal, and absolute Deity if it had no Mathematical Point within the Circle to base its speculations upon. It is only the manifested Point, lost to our senses after its pregenetic appearance in the infinitude and *incognizability* of the Circle, that made a reconciliation between philosophy and theology possible — on condition that the latter should abandon its crude materialistic dogmas. And it is because it has so unwisely rejected the Pythagorean Monad and geometrical figures, that Christian theology has evolved its self-created human and personal God, the monstrous Head from whence flow in two streams the dogmas of Salvation and Damnation. This is so true that even those clergymen who would be philosophers and who were masons, have, in their arbitrary interpretations, fathered upon the ancient sages the queer idea that “the Monad represented (with them) *the throne* of the Omnipotent Deity, placed in the centre of the Empyrean to indicate T.G.A.O.T.U.”(1) — read “the Great Architect of the Universe.” A curious explanation this, more Masonic than strictly Pythagorean.

Nor did the “hierogram within a Circle, or equilateral Triangle,” ever mean “the exemplification of the unity of the divine Essence”; for this was exemplified by the plane of the boundless Circle.

What it really meant was the triune co-equal Nature of the first differentiated Substance, or the *constitutivity* of the (manifested) Spirit, matter and the Universe — their “Son,” who proceeds from the Point (the real, esoteric LOGOS) or the Pythagorean MONAD. For the Greek Monas signifies “Unity” in its primary sense. Those unable to seize the difference between the monad — the Universal Unit — and the *Monads* or the manifested Unity, as also between the ever-hidden and the revealed LOGOS or the *Word*, ought never to meddle in philosophy, let alone the Esoteric Sciences. It is needless to remind the educated reader of Kant's *Thesis* to demonstrate his second *Antinomy*. Those who have read and understood it will see clearly the line we draw between the *absolutely Ideal* Universe and the invisible though manifested Kosmos. Our Gods and Monads are not the Elements of *extension* itself, but only those of the invisible reality which is the basis of the manifested Kosmos. Neither esoteric philosophy, nor Kant, nor Leibnitz would ever admit that extension can be composed of simple or unextended parts. But theologian-philosophers will not grasp this. The Circle and the Point, which latter retires into and merges with the former, after having emanated the first three points and connected them with lines, thus forming the first *noumenal* basis of the Second Triangle in the Manifested World, have ever been an insuperable obstacle to theological flights into dogmatic Empyreans. On the authority of this Archaic Symbol, a male, personal god, the *Creator* and *Father* of all, becomes a third-rate emanation, the Sephiroth standing *fourth* in descent, and on the left hand of En-Soph (see the *Kabalistic Tree of Life*). Hence, the Monad is degraded into a Vehicle — a “throne”!

The Monad — only the emanation and reflection of the Point (Logos) in the phenomenal World — becomes, as the *apex* of the manifested equilateral triangle, the “Father.” The left side or line is the *Duad*, the “Mother,” regarded as the evil, counteracting principle (Plutarch, *De Placitis Placitorum*); the right side represents the Son (“his Mother's husband” in every Cosmogony, as one with the *apex*); at the basic line is the Universal plane of productive Nature, unifying on the phenomenal plane Father-Mother-Son, as these were unified in the *apex*, in the supersensuous World. By mystic transmutation they became the Quaternary — the triangle became the TETRAKTIS.

This transcendental application of geometry to Cosmic and divine theogony — the Alpha and the Omega of mystical conception — became dwarfed after Pythagoras by Aristotle. By omitting the Point and the Circle, and taking no account of the apex, he reduced the metaphysical value of the idea, and thus limited the doctrine of magnitude to a simple TRIAD — the *line*, the *surface*, and the *body*. His modern heirs, who play at Idealism, have interpreted these three geometrical figures as Space, Force, and Matter — “the potencies of an interacting Unity.”(4) Materialistic Science, perceiving but the basic line of the *manifested* “triangle” — the plane of matter — translates it practically as (Father)-MATTER, (Mother)-MATTER, and (Son)-MATTER, and theoretically as Matter, Force, and Correlation.

But to the average physicist, as remarked by a Kabalist, “Space, Force, Matter, are, what signs in algebra are to the mathematician, merely conventional symbols;” or “Force as force, and Matter as matter, are as absolutely unknowable as is the assumed empty space in which they are held to interact.” As symbols representing abstractions, “the physicist bases reasoned hypotheses of the origin of things . . . and sees three needs in what he terms creation: (a) a place wherein to create; (b) a medium by which to create; (c) a material from which to create. And in giving a logical

expression to this hypothesis through the terms space, force, matter, he believes he has proved the existence of that which each of these represents *as he conceives it to be.*"(5)

The physicist who regards Space merely as a representation of our mind, or extension unrelated to things in it, which Locke defined as capable of neither resistance nor motion; the paradoxical materialist, who would have a *void* there, where he can see no matter, would reject with the utmost contempt the proposition that "Space is a substantial though (apparently) an absolutely unknowable living Entity." (*New Aspects*, p. 9.) Such is, nevertheless, the Kabalistic teaching, and it is that of Archaic philosophy. Space is the real world, while our world is an artificial one. It is the One Unity throughout its infinitude: in its bottomless depths as on its illusive surface; a surface studded with countless phenomenal Universes, systems and mirage-like worlds. Nevertheless, to the Eastern Occultist, who is an objective Idealist at the bottom, in the *real* world, which is a Unity of Forces, there is "a connection of all matter in the *plenum*," as Leibnitz would say. This is symbolized in the Pythagorean Triangle.

Footnotes:

(1) "Science of Numbers," by the Rev. G. Oliver (p. 36).

(2) See Kant's *Critique de la Raison pure* (Barni's transl., Vol. II., p. 54).

(3) In the Greek and Latin churches – which regard marriage as one of the sacraments – the officiating priest during the marriage ceremony represents the apex of the *triangle*; the bride its left feminine side and the bridegroom the right one, while the horizontal line is symbolised by the row of witness, the bridesmaids and best-men. But behind the priest there is the altar with its mysterious containments and symbolic meaning, inside of which no one but the consecrated priests ought to enter. In the early days of Christianity the marriage ceremony was a mystery and a true symbol. Now, however, even the churches have lost the true meaning of this symbolism.

(4) See Von Hartmann's and Herbert Spencer's works.

(5) "New Aspects of Life," by Henry Pratt, M.D.