

April 2013

A REFLECTION ON *THE SECRET DOCTRINE*, No. 16

Central to the metaphysics of *The Secret Doctrine* is the Logos doctrine. The word “logos” comes to us from the Greek, meaning *reason* or *word*. As an aside, one might speculate why Blavatsky chose such a uniquely Western term, as opposed to other options found in Eastern philosophy, in order to convey such a fundamental concept. Be that as it may, an excellent definition of *logos* is found in *Webster’s 3rd New International Dictionary*:

Logos: reason or the manifestation of reason conceived in ancient Greek philosophy as constituting the controlling principle in the universe; a moving and regulating principle in the universe together with an element in man by which according to Heraclitus this principle is perceived; a cosmic governing or generating principle according to the Stoics that is immanent and active in all reality and pervades all reality.

As an active principle, the Logos is impersonal and universal. The Greeks understood it to be a creative energy, not an entity or being. It later became personalized in Christian theology as the second Person (*verbum*) of the Trinity. A post-Blavatsky generation of Theosophists, including Besant and Leadbeater, also personalized the Logos in their writings. But you will not find this in *The Secret Doctrine*, where it is presented symbolically as the point within the circle, the circle representing the boundless ALL, the point representing “the first differentiation in the periodical manifestations” known poetically as the Days and Nights of Brahman. It’s an apt symbol, since a point is without size or dimension. *The Secret Doctrine* elaborates:

This Point is the First Cause, but THAT from which it emanates, or of which, rather, it is the expression, the Logos, is passed over in silence. In its turn, the universal symbol, the *point within the circle*, was not yet the Architect, but the cause of that Architect; and the latter stood to it in precisely the same relation as the point itself stood to the *circumference* of the Circle, which cannot be defined, according to Hermes Trismegistus.

Students of *The Secret Doctrine* are well advised to make the attempt at understanding the Logos doctrine, so vital and so central is it to the metaphysics of Theosophy.

David P. Bruce is the National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America.