

Second Logos

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

The Second *Logos* is the unmanifest-manifest *Logos*, the middle aspect in the Theosophical account of the three *Logoi*. It names the potentiality of differentiated Divine Thought, associated with the dual principle of Father-Mother. The teaching concerns a profound distinction: polarity can be present within unity before a differentiated cosmos has unfolded. For the student, it offers a way to contemplate the relation between spiritual source and creative expression, while questioning the habit of treating every difference as a separation.

The threefold account supplies its setting. The First *Logos* is unmanifested, the primordial radiation contemplated in relation to the Absolute. The Second is the potentiality through which manifestation becomes possible. The Third is *Mahat*, cosmic intelligence in its differentiated expression. Professor Iyer compares their awakening to the passage from midnight through dawn to day. These distinctions belong to metaphysical reflection. The dawn image helps us approach their relationship without assuming that ordinary time and measurable space already exist before the unfolding they describe.

Blavatsky's Proem in *The Secret Doctrine* identifies the Second *Logos* with spirit-matter, Life, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. She describes consciousness and matter as two aspects of one Reality, rather than independent realities. Within manifestation, neither can be understood adequately in isolation. Cosmic ideation requires substance through which individual consciousness can appear; substance requires ideation for a conscious world to emerge. The relationship is fundamental to what manifestation means in this account. It places the Second *Logos* within a living unity of apparently contrasting principles.

Father-Mother gives this unity a symbolic form. The expression concerns the potentiality of manifestation and the inseparability of its poles. It does not assign spiritual functions to the sexes or require us to imagine a celestial couple. In "Primeval Self-Generation — Lakshminarayana," Professor Iyer approaches Father-Mother as the noumenal unity of spirit-matter, force and life. Because the symbol can operate at more than one level, its meaning must be followed through the argument of the particular passage in which it appears.

"Mahat, Manu and the Avatar" makes the Second *Logos* more specific. Professor Iyer describes *Ishwara* as arising in pure potentiality on the plane of the eternal Mother-Father. It reflects the radiation of *Narayana* and holds the possibility from which manifested *Ishwara-Brahma* may emerge. His phrase "immaculate space not yet become the immaculate Mother" preserves the

distinction between potentiality and manifestation. The image asks for patient contemplation: a capacity can be real before its possibilities have received differentiated expression.

The same essay quotes Blavatsky on a field of latent consciousness coeval with the first and second unmanifested *Logoi*. Differentiated consciousness radiates as *Mahat* when the Third *Logos* appears. This guards against imagining the Second as an already operating cosmic mind. Yet the terminology remains flexible. A passage may call the Second manifested in relation to the First, while a fuller comparison describes it as unmanifest-manifest. The apparent variation becomes intelligible when we ask what contrast the author is making.

The relation to *Buddhi* provides a human correspondence. *Buddhi* is spiritual intuition and the vehicle of *Atman*, the universal Self; *Manas* is the thinking principle that can become receptive to its illumination. This offers an analogy of mediation between spiritual source and articulate understanding. It does not turn a human mood into a cosmic *Logos*. Its practical value lies in helping us consider how thought may receive a deeper quality of discernment before it becomes a judgment, a statement or an action.

We recognize the need for such mediation in learning. An unfamiliar idea may require time before we can state it fairly. If we force an immediate conclusion, we often repeat an older assumption under a new name. Patient attention allows the difficulty to work upon our understanding. We may discover that the question itself needs revising. The interval between receiving and expressing then becomes fruitful, because it gives a fresh meaning enough room to become distinguishable from what we already know.

The same patience matters when someone brings us a worry. An answer offered too quickly can close the conversation before the concern has been understood. Listening allows us to discover whether the person needs information, practical help, or simply a little company while something painful is faced. Receptivity is active attention. It requires us to suspend our preferred response long enough for the actual situation to become clearer. Helpful action can then emerge from a more accurate understanding of what is needed.

Polarity also needs careful ethical interpretation. The unity of spirit-matter does not imply that every pair of human positions is equally sound, or that harmful conduct should be accommodated indefinitely. Discernment still asks what is true and what serves life. We can seek a relationship between differing needs while maintaining a necessary boundary. The doctrine encourages patient understanding of differences; applying it well includes the courage to act when clarity has been reached and further delay would allow suffering to continue.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception begins when we consider the conditions that make growth possible. A child needs more than instruction; learning depends upon trust,

encouragement and opportunities to try again. A community needs more than good proposals; people need ways to contribute and sustain the work together. The larger view includes the receptive field around an action. It asks what relationships must be cared for if a worthy intention is to develop into something that can endure.

Human Solidarity becomes tangible through this recognition of dependence. No one learns a language, acquires a skill or survives a difficult season entirely alone. Much of what supports us was prepared by people we never meet. Remembering that inheritance can make reciprocity more natural. We can offer patience where someone is beginning, make knowledge accessible, and help maintain the shared conditions in which others can flourish. Universal Brotherhood acquires daily substance through this care for the relationships that sustain human life.

Nature also belongs within that concern. The teaching of spirit-matter invites reverence for the living processes through which forms arise and are renewed. In practice, attention to those processes can alter the pace and manner of our actions. A garden requires observation as well as effort; its needs cannot be replaced by the gardener's wishes. Care becomes wiser when we learn from the conditions before us. That modest lesson has wider applications wherever power is exercised within a shared environment.

Patience with potentiality therefore includes responsibility for expression. A good intention may need clarification, preparation and help, but eventually it asks to be tested in conduct. Professor Iyer connects the study of the *Logoi* with meditation and moral sensitivity. Quiet reflection can reveal a motive; attentive action can show whether our understanding was adequate. Each can inform the other. We become more trustworthy by allowing experience to correct us while keeping concern for the welfare of others at the centre of the effort.

The Second *Logos* leaves us with a contemplative image of potentiality held within unity. Its cosmic meaning exceeds the familiar intervals of human life, yet those intervals can become places of preparation. Before we answer, we can listen. Before we direct, we can learn what is already living in the situation. As understanding ripens, action can become both clearer and kinder. The teaching then gives patient attention a deeper purpose: to make the passage from insight to expression worthy of the life it will affect.

Glossary

Atman — The universal Self; the highest spiritual principle in the human constitution.

Brahma — The creative principle; related to the Second or Third *Logos* according to context and enumeration.

Buddhi — Spiritual intuition and the vehicle of *Atman*; a source of illumination for *Manas*.

Father-Mother — A symbol of the unity and dynamic potentiality of the principles through which manifestation becomes possible.

First Logos — The unmanifested *Logos*, contemplated as the first impersonal radiation.

Ishwara — Lord; used here for the Second or unmanifest-manifest *Logos*.

Ishwara-Brahma — A name for the manifested creative principle emerging from primordial potentiality.

Logoi — Plural of *Logos*; the aspects or principles distinguished in the doctrine of manifestation.

Mahat — Universal intelligence; in the account of the Third *Logos*, differentiated cosmic consciousness.

Manas — The human thinking principle, capable of receiving spiritual illumination.

Narayana — A designation of the Unmanifest *Logos* in the account used here.

Noumenal — Pertaining to the underlying reality or principle of an appearance.

Prakriti — Nature or substance; paired with *Purusha* in the Proem's description of the Second *Logos*.

Purusha — Spirit; paired with *Prakriti* as inseparable aspects of conditioned Being.

Second Logos — The unmanifest-manifest *Logos*; the potentiality of differentiated Divine Thought.

Third Logos — Cosmic intelligence in manifestation; the differentiated expression associated with *Mahat*.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 16.

“Spirit-matter, Life; the ‘Spirit of the Universe,’ the *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, or the second *Logos*.”

Meditation thought: Consider spirit and matter as inseparable aspects of a living unity. Let the definition open inquiry into relationship.

2. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 15.

“Just as pre-Cosmic Ideation is the root of all individual consciousness, so pre-Cosmic Substance is the substratum of matter in the various grades of its differentiation.”

Meditation thought: Hold the subjective and objective aspects together. Each has its function within the account of a manifested universe.

3. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 373.

“*Ishwara*, considered as the Second or Unmanifest-manifest *Logos*, arises as pure potentiality on the plane of the eternal Mother-Father. It represents the potentiality of the differentiation of latent Divine Thought.”

Meditation thought: Distinguish the reality of potentiality from its differentiated expression. Allow the distinction to remain more subtle than an image of an object waiting to act.

4. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 373.

“Still prior to the differentiation of time and space, it is inwardly the reflection of the radiation of *Narayana* and the latent matrix from which the manifested *Ishwara-Brahmā* may emerge. It is immaculate space not yet become the immaculate Mother.”

Meditation thought: The passage describes the Second *Logos*. Contemplate the difference between a latent matrix and the manifestation it makes possible.

5. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 373.

“Varying metaphors are given in *The Secret Doctrine* to convey something of the nature of the Unmanifest *Logos*, the Unmanifest-manifest *Logos* and the Manifested *Logos*.”

Meditation thought: Let several images illuminate one another. Ask what each contributes before trying to replace them with a single scheme.

6. R.N. Iyer — “Primeval Self-Generation — Lakshminarayana,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 91.

“The name 'Father-Mother' indicates its dynamic potential for cosmogonic creativity, and it is also known as the seven-vowelled sound, too sacred to pronounce, which must be seen as prior to all differentiation and which enshrines the ultimate mystery of all archetypal gestation.”

Meditation thought: This passage approaches Father-Mother in its primordial meaning. Let its breadth remind you that the symbol must be read at the level intended by its context.

7. R.N. Iyer — “Primeval Self-Generation — Lakshminarayana,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 92.

“This same dynamic applies at all levels of being, and, by analogy and correspondence, the principles operating in this core dynamic are central to the attempt to make meaningful, inward connections in consciousness, for example, between knowledge and virtue, or between insight and energy.”

Meditation thought: Consider one connection between understanding and conduct that needs strengthening. What would help an insight become a useful act?

8. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 15.

“Again, apart from Cosmic Ideation, Cosmic Substance would remain an empty abstraction, and no emergence of consciousness could ensue.”

Meditation thought: Reflect upon mutual dependence. Notice the limits of an account that treats one aspect as sufficient by itself.

9. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 16.

“But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested Universe, there is ‘that’ which links spirit to matter, subject to object.”

Meditation thought: Follow the movement from unity to differentiated relationship. Consider how the teaching preserves connection without erasing distinction.

10. R.N. Iyer — “Negation and Transcendence,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. II, p. 354.

“The First *Logos* exists as that which is, was and will be, or the uncreate power, the *Atman*, and from it is generated in the dark waters of Space — Chaos or undifferentiated substance, or in our human case what we call *Buddhi* — from or through the image of the Absolute reflected in those waters, the image of Him or It which moves on them.”

Meditation thought: Consider the human correspondence through *Buddhi* as an analogy of spiritual receptivity. Let it encourage discernment without reducing the cosmic teaching to human psychology.

11. R.N. Iyer — “The Logos and Man,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 61.

“Nonetheless, through patient persistence in thoughtful withdrawal, one will become more precise in the performance of duty and develop a depth in one's inner states of consciousness as well as one's spontaneous responses.”

Meditation thought: Try a brief interval of reflection before an ordinary duty. Judge its usefulness by the quality of attention you bring to the work.

12. R.N. Iyer — “The Logos and Man,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 61.

“Cultivating profound reverence and uttermost devotion, one may come into communion with the Spiritual Sun, seeing its Ray within oneself as the golden cord of one's being, inseparable from the Ray in every other being.”

Meditation thought: Let shared spiritual life become a reason for attentive care. Consider someone whose needs have been outside your immediate circle of concern.