

Third Logos

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

The Third *Logos* is cosmic intelligence in manifestation, the creative Word through which an ordered universe receives differentiated expression. In the Theosophical account of the three *Logoi*, it is associated with *Mahat*, the mind of a cosmos, and with the synthesis of the seven creative rays. The term concerns the emergence of intelligible relationships throughout Nature. It also carries a human correspondence: the capacity to understand, formulate and give expression to ideas brings with it responsibility for what our intelligence helps bring into the world.

The First and Second *Logoi* provide the necessary background. The First is unmanifested; the Second is the potentiality of differentiated Divine Thought. With the Third, that potentiality receives cosmic expression. In “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” Professor Iyer connects the emergence of *Brahma* with the beginning of differentiated manvantaric space and time. The sequence must be contemplated carefully. It describes the conditions of a manifested cosmos, including time itself, rather than a series of events that an ordinary clock could have measured in advance.

The language also varies with its context. Blavatsky, as quoted by Professor Iyer, explains that *Brahma* may be called the Second or even the Third *Logos* according to the enumeration adopted. *Mahat* likewise has several applications. In its primary sense it can indicate Universal Mind before cosmic differentiation; here it means the intelligence associated with the manifested cosmos. These distinctions help us read the sources accurately. A spiritual vocabulary becomes clearer when its terms are understood through their relationships within a passage.

Mahat is presented as a collectivity of spiritual intelligences, the *Dhyani Chohans*, rather than an isolated cosmic person. The seven creative rays express differentiated powers within a common order. This is the basis of the teaching's language of hierarchies: related degrees and functions of intelligence throughout manifestation. The word should not import human notions of social rank into the cosmos. The emphasis is upon the cooperation of intelligences and the transmission of ideation through different planes of existence.

Professor Iyer quotes Blavatsky's description of *Fohat* as the representative of this collectivity on the objective plane and the *Manasaputras* on the subjective. *Fohat* concerns the dynamic activity through which ideation becomes operative in Nature. The *Manasaputras* belong to the account of the awakening of thinking consciousness. These are complementary aspects of the larger

teaching. They connect cosmic intelligence with both the forms of a world and the inward capacities through which that world can become an object of conscious experience.

“Word made flesh,” in this metaphysical setting, means the emergence of creative expression. It reaches beyond audible speech and physical flesh. Concealed thought becomes articulate through manifested relationships. *The Secret Doctrine's* Proem describes cosmic ideation as the basis of the intelligent operations of Nature. Its account does not require an external craftsman imposing a plan upon lifeless material. Consciousness and substance belong together within manifestation, and their differentiated expressions are approached through the principles of law, analogy and correspondence.

The teaching also distinguishes cosmic intelligence from personal thinking. Blavatsky explains that cosmic ideation, focused through a vehicle or *upadhi*, appears as individual consciousness. Its manifestation varies with the vehicle. Through *Manas* it becomes mind-consciousness; through *Buddhi* it is associated with spiritual intuition. This gives a context for differences of awareness without reducing the universal principle to any one person's perceptions. It also encourages humility about the limits of our present experience and about forms of life whose experience differs from ours.

In “The Logos and Man,” Professor Iyer develops the human correspondence directly. The movement from concealed thought to expression can be reflected in the creative activity of intelligence. Human beings receive this capacity through a larger spiritual inheritance; it is not a private achievement of the personality. *Manas* can formulate and compare, while *Buddhi* can illumine its activity with a more comprehensive discernment. The correspondence becomes useful when it helps us ask how the powers of mind are being directed.

Professor Iyer places this question within ordinary life. He describes spiritual intelligence as a capacity to change perspective deliberately and choose constructively between currents of thought. This is more demanding than quick association or the accumulation of information. We may know many facts while remaining unable to reconsider an unfair judgment. Conversely, an honest change of view may release a difficulty that clever argument has prolonged. Intelligence matures as it becomes responsive to truth and capable of helping others understand.

The ethical problem is therefore expression that outruns discernment. An idea may be exciting, a phrase memorable, a plan efficient, yet its effects require examination. Who will be helped? What burden might fall upon someone who has not been consulted? Asking these questions gives creative power a more responsible direction. The pause is useful because it can change what we actually make or say. Thought becomes more trustworthy when concern for consequences enters before the work has hardened into an accomplished fact.

This applies to a promise as readily as to a large undertaking. A sincere intention needs a form that another person can depend upon. We may need to clarify what we can do, set aside time, or ask for help. Then we must carry it through and acknowledge any failure honestly. The analogy with the Word is modest but instructive: expression should be faithful to the understanding and purpose from which it proceeds. Integrity grows through such ordinary acts of correspondence.

Human Solidarity widens that responsibility beyond private conduct. Knowledge takes form in schools, tools, institutions and public language, shaping the conditions in which others live. Its benefits and burdens are shared unevenly, which makes careful judgment necessary. Theosophical brotherhood gives us a reason to consider whose capacities are being encouraged and whose needs are being neglected. Intelligence serves a common life when it makes participation more possible and directs its powers towards the welfare of people beyond the circle of immediate advantage.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception means including these consequences in our understanding of creativity. The finished object or published idea is only part of the work. We must also consider how it will be used, what habits it encourages, and whether it leaves others freer to develop their own understanding. A teacher's explanation can invite inquiry or close it down. A useful design can reduce a burden. In each case, the wider view helps us see expression as an ongoing relationship.

The same care extends to Nature. A living cosmos calls for more than admiration of its order. Our practical dealings with land, materials and other forms of life should reflect what we learn about their relationships. Responsible intelligence observes effects and changes course when needed. It can acknowledge that a convenient solution has created an unforeseen difficulty. Reverence becomes more substantial through this willingness to learn from consequences and to repair what our activity has disturbed.

Meditation supports this work by helping thought return to its purpose. Professor Iyer writes that it is "critically necessary to make these ideas come alive through meditation and moral sensitivity." Quiet attention and careful conduct belong together. We can examine a motive inwardly, then discover its quality through the action it produces. The Third *Logos* gives expression a profound setting within cosmic intelligence. Its daily invitation is accessible: let understanding become dependable action, and let what we create make room for more life and learning.

Glossary

Brahma — The creative principle; its designation as Second or Third *Logos* depends upon the enumeration.

Buddhi — Spiritual intuition, capable of illumining the activity of *Manas*.

Dhyan Chohans — Spiritual intelligences collectively associated with the transmission and manifestation of cosmic ideation.

First Logos — The unmanifested *Logos*, preceding differentiated cosmic expression in the metaphysical account.

Fohat — The dynamic energy of cosmic ideation, operating as its link with substance.

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

Maha-Buddhi — Great or universal intelligence; a term used in the Proem for cosmic ideation.

Mahat — Universal intelligence; here the differentiated cosmic consciousness associated with the Third *Logos*.

Manas — The human thinking principle and faculty of self-conscious understanding.

Manasaputras — Sons of Mind; intelligences associated with the subjective expression of *Mahat* and the awakening of human thought.

Manvantaric — Pertaining to a period of manifested cosmic activity.

Narayana-Ishwara — A combined designation used in contemplating the source and potentiality of manifestation.

Second Logos — The unmanifest-manifest *Logos*, associated with the potentiality of differentiated Divine Thought.

Third Logos — Cosmic intelligence in manifestation; the creative Word and synthesis of the seven creative rays.

Upadhi — A vehicle or basis through which consciousness manifests.

Verbum — Latin for Word; the *Logos* considered as expression of concealed thought.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. H.P. Blavatsky — *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 15; quoted in R.N. Iyer, “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 373.

“*Mahat*, in the Esoteric interpretations, is in reality the Third *Logos* or the Synthesis of the Seven creative rays, the Seven *Logoi*.”

Meditation thought: Consider the many creative powers as a synthesis. Let differentiation suggest related functions within a common order.

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

“Cosmic Ideation, *Mahat* or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called *Maha-Buddhi*.”

Meditation thought: Approach cosmic intelligence as the basis of an intelligible Nature. Keep its scope distinct from the thoughts of an individual person.

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

“The emergence of *Brahmā* at the culmination of the seventh eternity marks the emergence of the Word made flesh on the plane of the immaculate Mother, the commencement of differentiated manvantaric space and time.”

Meditation thought: Read the Word made flesh as cosmic expression. Remember that differentiated time belongs to the manifestation being described.

4. H.P. Blavatsky — *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, pp. 95–96; quoted in R.N. Iyer, “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 374.

“When the hour strikes for the Third *Logos* to appear, then from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is *Mahat*, or the entire collectivity of those *Dhyan Chohans* of sentient life of which *Fohat* is the representative on the objective plane and the *Manasaputras* on the subjective.”

Meditation thought: Consider the relation between the objective and subjective expressions of cosmic intelligence. Let the passage deepen the connection between world and consciousness.

5. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 375.

“Viewed from the standpoint of *Narayana-Ishwara*, *Mahat* is an illusion. Viewed from the standpoint of a participant in a world of manifestation, *Mahat* is the seed of all things, the root reality from which all archetypal ideas arise.”

Meditation thought: Notice how standpoint changes the description. Relative reality can be meaningful without being the unconditioned Absolute.

6. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 375.

“All occult teaching depends upon analogy and correspondence, the serene conviction that what applies in the small also applies in the large, that what is concretely true in the small circle has its archetypal origins in the boundless circle of eternity.”

Meditation thought: Use analogy to investigate relationships, while remaining attentive to differences of level and scale.

7. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 329.

“Cosmic Ideation focussed in a principle or *upadhi* (basis) results as the consciousness of the individual Ego. Its manifestation varies with the degree of *upadhi*, e.g., through that known as *Manas* it wells up as Mind-Consciousness; through the more finely differentiated fabric (sixth state of matter) of the *Buddhi* resting on the experience of *Manas* as its basis—as a stream of spiritual intuition.”

Meditation thought: Consider the vehicle through which awareness becomes expressed. How might the education of mind make it more receptive to spiritual discernment?

8. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 25.

“The esoteric meaning of the word *Logos* (speech or word, *Verbum*) is the rendering in objective expression, as in a photograph, of the concealed thought.”

Meditation thought: Recall a thought that became a useful action. What helped its expression remain faithful to its purpose?

9. R.N. Iyer — “The Logos and Man,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 56.

“Spiritual perspicacity is connected with the capacity to alter perspective deliberately, and sharply contrasts with psychic fixation, passivity and monotony.”

Meditation thought: Consider a difficulty from a perspective you have neglected. Let the change of view inform your next question.

10. R.N. Iyer — “The Logos and Man,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 56.

“Without the ability to move the mind at will, it is impossible to choose constructively between alternative currents of ideation.”

Meditation thought: Notice which current of thought you are strengthening. A deliberate redirection may make a more helpful response possible.

11. R.N. Iyer — “The Logos and Man,” *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 59.

“Ability inevitably grows with application, and with it the will to further application.”

Meditation thought: Choose one attainable act of learning or service. Allow steady use, rather than speculation about your capacity, to develop it.

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

“Thus, whilst it is important and instructive to grasp the doctrine of the three *Logoi* philosophically, it is critically necessary to make these ideas come alive through meditation and moral sensitivity.”

Meditation thought: Bring one idea from study into reflection and then into conduct. Let the effect upon others help you assess the quality of your understanding.