

Absolute Abstract Space

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

Absolute Abstract Space symbolizes the boundless, non-relational aspect of the One Reality, beyond every measurable distance or location. Its particular emphasis is the absence of limiting boundaries: nothing can stand outside it. Absolute Abstract Motion emphasizes Unconditioned Consciousness, while Duration emphasizes timeless continuity. These are inseparable symbolic approaches to the Absolute. Space here is neither astronomical emptiness nor the distance between objects; it represents what H.P. Blavatsky calls bare subjectivity, which the mind can neither exclude from its conceptions nor conceive by itself.

In the First Fundamental of *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky presents an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle beyond speculation, thought, and speech. This Be-ness is symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract Space and absolute Abstract Motion. Duration is inseparable from these. Thus Absolute Abstract Space belongs to the most primary symbolic language by which finite intelligence approaches the One Reality.

Professor Iyer emphasizes that in *Gupta Vidya*, Space is one of the foremost means of representing and seeking understanding of the Absolute. This is not relational space. It is Absolute Abstract Space, existing eternally and transcending all distinctions between manifest and unmanifest. Because it is beyond *manvantaras* and *pralayas*, it is equivalent to Eternal Duration; and it must also be thought together with Eternal Motion.

This triad — Space, Duration, Motion — is crucial. If Space is separated from Duration, it becomes merely empty extension. If it is separated from Motion, it becomes static abstraction. If Motion is separated from Space and Duration, it becomes mechanical activity. Theosophy holds these together as symbolic aspects of the Absolute, not as separate things.

Professor Iyer brings this conception into relation with *maha shunyata*, great Voidness, in his comparison of Vedantic and Buddhist approaches. This is a correspondence within his exposition of *Gupta Vidya*; it should not erase the differences between those traditions. The Void is no vacant container waiting to be filled. Every objectification falls short of it. The comparison directs attention toward freedom from limiting conceptions, rather than toward a picture of empty blackness or a claim that nothing matters.

Professor Iyer gives this doctrine a direct spiritual application. He says that if one could persist deeply and long enough in meditation on the supreme absolute Void, one could totally transform consciousness. Such meditation means voiding all objects and subjects, all worlds, all

periods of time, and all conceptions of possible worlds. It is not fantasy or visualization, but disciplined self-emptying.

This is why Absolute Abstract Space is inseparable from self-study. To ascend into pure noumenal substance and Absolute Abstract Space, one must come to terms with the ego. The ego consolidates, separates, appropriates, and clings. It makes subject and object into possessions of "I." Absolute Abstract Space reveals the narrowness of that centre and opens consciousness into a wider field.

The teaching becomes practical in daily life. When one is caught in anxiety, grievance, pride, possessiveness, or fear, consciousness has contracted around a narrow centre. Absolute Abstract Space invites the student to make inner space before speaking, judging, desiring, reacting, or defending. Such space is not passivity. It is the condition for wiser action.

Imagine a discussion in which several people must decide how a shared room will be used. One person speaks quickly and treats the first proposal as the only reasonable one. Another has scarcely had room to explain a need. The practical discipline of spaciousness begins when the first speaker loosens that claim, listens through the unfinished explanation, and lets the whole situation become visible. The room itself has not grown. The range of attention has widened, and a fairer decision becomes possible.

Such a pause does not realize Absolute Abstract Space; it prepares the habits of attention through which contemplation may become more honest. A mind can picture infinity while remaining intolerant of interruption. The discrepancy is useful material for self-study. Does the idea of the boundless make one more willing to hear what one has overlooked? Can another person's difficulty remain present without being immediately classified as an inconvenience? These questions give a modest, observable test of whether a great conception is beginning to influence conduct.

Absolute Abstract Space gives a metaphysical basis for humility. Every point in differentiated space is equally rooted in the boundless. No centre is ultimately privileged over another. This recognition supports Human Solidarity and Universal Brotherhood. Each being appears at a point, through karma and limitation, yet every point is silently held in the same immeasurable Space.

The doctrine also teaches reverent stewardship. The field of life is not raw material for private use. It is a sacred emergence within the unconditioned. To meditate on Space should make one less possessive, less reactive, and more careful with bodies, relationships, places, animals, plants, communities, teachings, and opportunities. Forms are temporary, but not meaningless.

Stewardship includes the inner atmosphere. A crowded mind crowds others. A possessive emotion narrows the space around a relationship. A harsh word can occupy a room long after it is spoken. A generous interpretation can open room for healing. The student of Absolute Abstract Space learns to ask what kind of space is being created through thought, speech, and presence.

Beauty can serve this awakening. A clear sky, a quiet room, a single flower, a spacious phrase, or a generous silence may momentarily free consciousness from its cramped centre. Beauty is not the Absolute, but it can train perception toward openness, proportion, and reverence.

Absolute Abstract Space is therefore not cold emptiness. It is the supreme openness in which worlds, beings, sorrows, hopes, and awakenings are held. It does not flatter the ego, but it excludes nothing. It is impartial, boundless, silent, and inexhaustible.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception means questioning the imagined boundary around the situation itself. The immediate disagreement may belong to a longer history of unequal participation, unspoken fatigue, or needs no one has asked about. Wider consideration still requires a definite choice; it simply gives that choice a more adequate basis. The contemplative principle is immeasurable, while the human task is quite concrete: leave enough room in thought for the lives affected by the decision. Space then remains a symbol that disciplines possession, rather than a grand word that decorates it.

Bare subjectivity needs particular care. In ordinary speech, subjective can mean a private preference opposed to an objective fact. That contrast already presupposes a person who perceives and something perceived. The symbolic use of Space reaches behind that division. It does not elevate personal opinion into ultimate truth. On the contrary, it challenges the claim that any particular standpoint could define the field of all possible experience. The word abstract asks the mind to release the familiar relations through which it pictures a thing, including shape, distance, direction, and an observer standing outside it.

The result cannot be retained as a completed mental picture. Whenever one imagines a boundary around the boundless, the exercise discloses its own limitation. Returning patiently to the distinction can deepen philosophical humility. The aim is to educate attention beyond its habitual enclosures, then bring that more generous attention back to a definite responsibility among other lives.

Absolute Abstract Space stands as a master-symbol of the Real beyond all grasping. It asks the mind to release its cramped centre and enter the vastness in which every being is silently held. In that vastness, *Manas* turns toward *Buddhi*, knowledge becomes humility, detachment

becomes compassion, and the soul learns to serve the world without forgetting the boundless Space from which all worlds arise.

Glossary

Absolute — Unconditioned reality, beyond the limitations and relations of manifested existence.

Absolute Abstract Motion — A metaphysical symbol of Unconditioned Consciousness and the source of change; distinguished from measurable movement or differentiated energy.

Absolute Abstract Space — The boundless, non-relational symbol of the Absolute; neither astronomical emptiness nor a container outside the things it contains.

Abstraction — The inward or intellectual movement beyond particular objects and their limiting conditions.

Attribute — A quality assigned to something; in these essays, any predicate that would limit the Absolute if applied literally.

Bare subjectivity — The symbolic emphasis of Absolute Abstract Space, prior to the ordinary opposition of a perceiving person and a perceived object.

Be-ness — Blavatsky's term for unconditioned Reality beyond the contrast of being and non-being as ordinary categories.

Buddhi — The spiritual soul or vehicle of *Atman*, associated with intuitive discernment and the illumination of *Manas*.

Conditioned — Dependent upon particular limits, relations, causes, or instruments of experience.

Correspondence — A meaningful relation between principles or levels, especially between human and cosmic constitution; resemblance alone does not establish identity.

Differentiation — The emergence of distinct forms, functions, or conditions within manifestation.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception — Widening the frame of understanding to include more relations, perspectives, and responsibilities.

Ego — A center of self-reference; personal appropriation is distinguished from the higher or spiritual Ego in the cited passages.

Eternal Duration — A metaphysical conception beyond measured time and successive events.

Eternal Motion — The ceaseless principle of activity associated with the Great Breath, distinguished from a particular physical movement.

Great Breath — A symbol of eternal motion and the rhythms of manifestation and withdrawal in Theosophical cosmology.

Gupta Vidya — Hidden or secret wisdom; Professor Iyer's designation for an integrated philosophy of spiritual knowledge and human perfectibility.

Human Solidarity — Shared human dignity and interdependence, expressed through considerate responsibility for others.

Karma — Action and the law of causation through which intentions and deeds have consequences.

Kosmos — A spelling of cosmos used in the sources for the ordered universe, especially in its ideal or metaphysical aspect.

Maha Shunyata — Great Voidness; Professor Iyer's Buddhist analogue for Absolute Abstract Space, beyond limited subject-object conceptions.

Mahayana — The Great Vehicle of Buddhism, emphasizing wisdom and the bodhisattva ideal of compassion for all beings.

Manas — The thinking principle or self-conscious mind; its higher individuality and lower personal ray are distinguished. Manasic means pertaining to *Manas*.

Mandukya — The *Mandukya Upanishad*, invoked in the quotation for the Reality beyond thought and expression.

Manifestation — The expression of reality through differentiated forms, relations, and conditions.

Manvantara — A period of manifested cosmic activity, contrasted with *pralaya*.

Metaphysics — Inquiry into the fundamental principles and relations of reality beyond immediate appearances.

Noumenon — An underlying reality or intelligible ground distinguished from its appearance; noumena is the plural, and noumenal the adjective.

Objectification — Treating something as a bounded object of thought or perception; the essays question applying this process to the Absolute.

Plane — A level or mode of being or consciousness; not necessarily a location in physical space.

Pralaya — Dissolution or a period of non-manifestation.

Relational — Defined through a relation to something else; contrasted with the unconditioned in these essays.

Rootless Root — A symbolic name for the Absolute as the ground of all manifestation without a prior source of its own.

Sat — Reality or Be-ness; in the *Gita's* practical teaching, also truth, goodness, and the inward steadfastness of consecrated action.

Subject and object — The perceiver and what is perceived; a central distinction within conditioned consciousness.

Triad — A grouping of three related principles or aspects; the particular terms of a triad must be identified from context.

Unconditioned Consciousness — Consciousness beyond the limiting subject-object relations of manifested experience; symbolized by Absolute Abstract Motion.

Universal Brotherhood — The spiritual kinship of beings, expressed ethically through care extending beyond personal or sectarian boundaries.

Vedanta — A family of Indian philosophical traditions drawing upon the *Upanishads*; the essays identify Professor Iyer's particular Theosophical interpretation.

Voidness — Freedom from limiting or separative conceptions in the quoted contemplative teaching; not merely vacant physical space.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I, p. 14.

"An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought – in the words of *Mandukya*, 'unthinkable and unspeakable.'"

Meditation thought: Let the idea of the boundless reveal a boundary your mind has imposed. What becomes possible when that boundary is treated as provisional?

2. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I, p. 14.

“To render these ideas clearer to the general reader, let him set out with the postulate that there is one absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being. This Infinite and Eternal Cause—dimly formulated in the ‘Unconscious’ and ‘Unknowable’ of current European philosophy – is the rootless root of ‘all that was, is, or ever shall be.’ It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is ‘Be-ness’ rather than Being (in Sanskrit, *Sat*), and is beyond all thought or speculation.”

Meditation thought: A larger object is still an object. Consider what changes in contemplation when Reality is no longer pictured as the largest thing imaginable.

3. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I, p. 14.

“This ‘Be-ness’ is symbolised in *the Secret Doctrine* under two aspects. On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, the one thing which no human mind can either exclude from any conception, or conceive of by itself. On the other, absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. Even our Western thinkers have shown that Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolises change, its essential characteristic.”

Meditation thought: Hold Space and Motion together without making either a separate substance. Notice how readily thought divides what the symbol asks it to contemplate as one.

4. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I, p. 43.

“The appearance and disappearance of the Universe are pictured as an outbreathing and inbreathing of ‘the Great Breath,’ which is eternal, and which, being Motion, is one of the three aspects of the Absolute — Abstract Space and Duration being the other two. When the ‘Great Breath’ is projected, it is called the Divine Breath, and is regarded as the breathing of the Unknowable Deity — the One Existence — which breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos.”

Meditation thought: Let the image of breathing suggest manifestation and withdrawal. Then release the imagined breather, whose outline would place a limit upon the Absolute.

5. R.N. Iyer, “The Seventh Principle”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 84.

“In *Gupta Vidya* Space is one of the foremost means of representing and seeking understanding of the Absolute. This is not space in any relational sense, but Absolute Abstract Space, which exists eternally and transcends all distinctions between the manifest and the unmanifest. Because it is beyond *manvantaras* and *pralayas*, it is equivalent to Eternal Duration.”

Meditation thought: Consider a spaciousness that does not depend upon whether worlds appear. Allow the distinction between a container and the unconditioned to become clearer.

6. R.N. Iyer, "The Seventh Principle", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 84.

"One cannot even begin to think upon this one Absolute Abstract Space, boundless and universal, without also thinking about Eternal Duration. In turn, both of these are related to Eternal Motion."

Meditation thought: Ask what a boundary in time would do to an allegedly boundless Space. Let the inquiry deepen the inseparability of these symbolic approaches.

7. R.N. Iyer, "The Seventh Principle", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 84.

"Eternal Motion linked to Absolute Abstract Space and Duration generates the possibility of conceiving a consciousness which is indistinguishable from unconsciousness, but which is characterizable as Absolute Consciousness. From this originates the entire realm of differentiated and individuated consciousness, the world of subjects and objects on seven different planes."

Meditation thought: The word unconscious can suggest a familiar lack of awareness. Here it points beyond that contrast; pause before importing the familiar meaning.

8. R.N. Iyer, "The Seventh Principle", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 85.

"The conception of Absolute Abstract Space is represented in Buddhist language by *maha shunyata*. This teaching may be found, for example, in the *Mantra of Voidness*, one of the great short sutras of *Mahayana* Buddhist literature and the basis of a remarkable commentary by the Tibetan Lama Geshe Rabten."

Meditation thought: A comparison between traditions can illuminate without making them identical. What does the analogy clarify, and what difference still deserves attention?

9. R.N. Iyer, "The Seventh Principle", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 85.

"This purifying property of space is a recurrent theme throughout the literature of *Gupta Vidya*. It suggests that if one really knew how to persist and to progress far enough and long enough through deep meditation in understanding the supreme absolute Void, one could totally transform one's consciousness."

Meditation thought: Patient contemplation asks more than a pleasing image of emptiness. Notice one attachment that keeps returning to occupy the whole field of attention.

10. R.N. Iyer, "Consciousness and Existence", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 39.

"To ascend in consciousness into the realm of pure noumenal substance and Absolute Abstract Space, one must come to terms with the problem of the ego. The ego, or the sense of 'I', is that which consolidates, separates and appropriates both subject and object, nurturing a sense of possession and self-protectiveness."

Meditation thought: Watch the moment when perception becomes possession. Could the situation be understood more accurately if the need to claim it were relaxed?

11. R.N. Iyer, "Consciousness and Existence", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I, p. 39.

"Each plane of consciousness can only be experienced by appropriate instruments that cast onto the screen of consciousness perceptions of objects and subjects in reference to a circumscribed set of variables. Given the postulate of Absolute Abstract Space, however, no set of instruments could exhaust the possibilities of growth or of absorption and annihilation."

Meditation thought: An instrument reveals within its range. Consider how humility grows when the limits of a way of knowing are acknowledged without denying its usefulness.

12. R.N. Iyer, "Enlightenment", *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume III, p. 237.

"If absolute abstract Space, unconditioned Consciousness and boundless Duration are the fundamental terms in the equation of manifestation, then they must also be the ultimate factors in any adequate conception of self-reference, self-regeneration and self-realization."

Meditation thought: Bring the widest conception back to one encounter today. Can a more generous field of attention make the response more precise and kind?