

From Blavatsky to Krishnamurti: Hindu Chronology, Biblical Eschatology, Physiology

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Introduction

A number of the published works of Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) carry a concise biographical statement of his guardianship as a youth by Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras. She and her colleague C.W. Leadbeater “believed that Krishnamurti was the vehicle for the Messiah whose coming the Theosophists had predicted.”¹ The Order of the Star in the East was formed in 1911, with its members dedicated to preparing mankind for the predicted coming of the new Messiah and World Teacher. However, Krishnamurti dissolved the Order in 1929 and resigned from the Society in 1930. Until his death on 17 February 1986, Krishnamurti travelled the world declaring that truth could not be found through any sect or religion, but only by freeing oneself from all forms of conditioning belief.

This article reveals that the notion of *prediction* promoted by Besant and Leadbeater concerning Krishnamurti’s role was their adaptation of an esoteric interpretation of extra-biblical and biblical eschatologies held by H.P. Blavatsky, co-founder of the Society. Two associated primary influences that pervade Krishnamurti’s teachings, which have gone unnoticed by supporters and detractors alike, are, firstly, the element of esoteric Christianity within the framework of the Path of Initiation that had been his training under Besant and Leadbeater. This is not to deny the fusion of esoteric Hinduism and Buddhism that went with that. The unnoticed second element is an occult practice that was a secret teaching of the Path of Initiation intended to bring about a direct consciousness of one’s divinity and the shortening of one’s cycle of incarnations.

Blavatsky’s Esoteric Eschatology

In his article in this volume, ‘Imagining Macrohistory? Madame Blavatsky from *Isis Unveiled* (1877) to *The Secret Doctrine* (1888)’, Garry W. Trompf pointed out that Blavatsky utilised four conceptual frameworks in her

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¹ Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti’s Journal* (Madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1998 [1982]), frontispiece.

macrohistorical metaphysic: progressive, regressive, cyclical and apocalyptic. In an earlier article, in commenting on her shift in focus from Egypt to India as the fount of all wisdom he warns: “I write of an apparently altered stress towards the Indic, however, because impressions can be deceptive, and the intricate ‘synthetism’ in the Blavatskian imaging of time and history can be passed over too quickly.”² I suggest that Blavatsky’s fusion of various philosophical, religious and esoteric traditions associated with those four conceptual frameworks, and her constant employment of Hindu and Buddhist terminology, camouflages her use of Hindu Age chronology and mythology as a vehicle for a reworked Jewish and Christian apocalyptic eschatology. Blavatsky’s literary and conceptual extravagance can act *largely as a blind*, and the centrality in her teachings of an esoteric eschatology remains unappreciated by the Theosophical Society.

In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky asserts that the astronomical and mathematical calculations of occultists are ‘exact’ and the age of humanity (in 1888) is “18,618,727 years, as the Brahmanical teachings and even some Hindu calendars declare.”³ She also considered the New Testament *Book of Revelation* to be a “masterpiece[s] of the occult sciences,” with its numbers also being “exact”⁴ it is “the key to all wisdom.”⁵ Further, Blavatsky bridged the ‘exact records’ of ancient Hindu chronology to her own historical period, and the “exact” numbers of the *Book of Revelation* by means of “another

² Garry W. Trompf, ‘Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guenon’, in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, eds Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), p. 276.

³ H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* (Chennai: Theosophical Publishing House, 2003 [1979]), vol. 1, p. 150 fn.

⁴ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 563.

⁵ H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press 1988 [1877]), vol. 2, p. 38. Blavatsky held that “Occultists believe in an *inherent law* of progressive development.” See Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 260. This tenet underwrites her seven-key hermeneutics. There are no seven keys. However, there are six, and in her metaphysic the recapitulative synthesis of six makes the seventh. This notion also indicates the value to her of the *Book of Revelation*, in which recapitulation and synthesis is a literary and thematic feature. See Al Boag, ‘From Being God to Being Human: Biblical Influences in the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti’ (unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Sydney, 2010), pp. 26-30, 56-62.

book.” In her commentary on the *Book of Dyzan*, Blavatsky refers to the last prophecy of which will be fulfilled “in about nine years hence,” that is, 1897:

[b]ut there exists another book. None of its possessors regard it as very ancient, as it was born with, and is only as old as the Black Age, namely, about 5,000 years. In about nine years hence, the first cycle of the first five millenniums that began with the great cycle of the Kali-yuga, will end. And then the last prophecy contained in that book will be accomplished, the first volume of the prophetic record for the Black Age. We have not long to wait and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle.⁶

Blavatsky also states in the introduction that Krishna had died in 3102 BCE, and elsewhere, “the year of the *Kaliyuga* is said to have begun between the 17th and 18th of February in the year 3102 BC.”⁷

Blavatsky has correlated the composition of this other book with the beginning of the *Kali Yuga*, with the beginning of the first of five, five-thousand year cycles, and with the death of Krishna in 3102 BCE. She has also correlated the end of that first five thousand year cycle in 1897, with the last prophecy of that other book. In following her hint in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*,⁸ that other book can be identified: it is the *Book of I Enoch*.

The *Book of I Enoch*

In her writings Blavatsky casts the figure of Enoch in many roles and with many qualities. She makes three points concerning Enoch, which are relevant here. Firstly, she insists that there can be only one truth concerning God, “an eternal truth that can never be destroyed”⁹ and the figure of Enoch expressed that. This phrase “never be destroyed” is lifted from *Daniel 2:44* where it refers to the Kingdom of God being set up, which would “stand forever.” In the context of Daniel’s dreams and visions this was to eventuate at the “time of the end,” along with the cleansing of the desolated Sanctuary of the Jerusalem Temple and the establishment of everlasting righteousness. Secondly, Enoch’s association with Christ and the prophet Elijah in their expected appearance at the “last advent and the destruction of Antichrist” means “*esoterically* that some of the great adepts will return in the Seventh Race, when all error will be made away with, and the advent of TRUTH will be heralded” by them.¹⁰ Thirdly, Enoch was a ‘sacred writer’ an ‘Initiator and Recorder’ of Occult and ancient Wisdom.

⁶ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, pp. xiii, xlv.

⁷ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 435.

⁸ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 535.

⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. 1, p. 560.

¹⁰ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 531.

Before the Deluge, Enoch had concealed underground the knowledge of writing, the arts and sciences, theology and philosophy that had been recorded from the oral traditions of the Fourth Root Race Atlanteans. This ancient wisdom had been passed on to the present Fifth Root Race, an assertion Blavatsky supports with the Midrash Pirqeh R. Eliezer: “Hanokh transmitted the knowledge of computing the seasons to Noah.”¹¹ Blavatsky had previously stated that Jesus and John the Baptist held the secret knowledge of “the duration of the cycles.”¹² However, the *Book of Enoch* that Blavatsky had at hand was, according to her, an incomplete copy of those ‘primitive records’, and this assertion allows her to supply her version of the eschatological outline in the *Book of Enoch*.¹³

Blavatsky claims that “the Secret Doctrine teaches that this ‘order of nature’ has been thus altered... and the series of earth’s humanities too,”¹⁴ (that is, the ‘Root Races’) and quotes from the *Book of Enoch* wherein the angel Uriel tells Enoch:

[b]ehold I have showed thee all things, O Enoch; and all things have I revealed to thee. Thou seest the Sun, the Moon, and *those which conduct the stars* in Heaven, which cause all their operations, seasons, and arrivals to return. In the *days of sinners* THE YEARS SHALL BE SHORTENED... the moon shall change its laws, etc.¹⁵

This was the case because, “the *earth* on its axis became *inclined*.” Blavatsky interprets *I Enoch* 65:1-6 as referring, not to Noah and the Biblical flood, but rather to the deluge which had destroyed the Fourth Root Race Atlanteans for their misuse of the occult knowledge and powers learnt from the angels.

A decree had come indeed; the decree of nature and the Law of Evolution, that the earth should change its race, and that the Fourth Race should be destroyed to make room for a better one. The Manvantara had reached its turning point of *three and a half* Rounds, and gigantic physical Humanity had reached the acme of gross materiality.¹⁶

¹¹ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 532.

¹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. 2, p. 144.

¹³ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, pp. 530, 532.

¹⁴ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 534.

¹⁵ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 553.

¹⁶ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 534.

Enoch's 'Last Days' are Blavatsky's 'These Days'

In a written article¹⁷ found in Blavatsky's desk following her death, of which Annie Besant took custody, Blavatsky asserts that the eschatological outline in the *Book of Enoch* represents her Root Race doctrine. She refers to *1 Enoch* 108:2, 3 which deals with the blotting out of sinners' names from the Book of Life, 'the astral records', and their destruction and the passing away of sin 'in the last days'. Blavatsky portrays this event as imminent 'in these days', and she provides further information on 'these days' in a series of articles¹⁸ published contemporaneously with *The Secret Doctrine*, in which she interprets the Matthean Apocalypse in Chapter 24 to present the coming of the Son of Man in three aspects: personal, historical, and universal.

The first situation concerning the universal coming of the Son of Man is the immanence of Christos the Divine Principle in a regenerated world, not the actual body of Jesus Christ coming at a second advent. Secondly, the personal coming of the Son of Man is through "the crucifixion of flesh and matter" to the Divine Principle within one's own "sanctuary," that is, the body, and she references *2 Corinthians* 6:16 without quoting it (that is, "we are the Temple of the living God"). This crucifixion of flesh and matter takes place in the initiatory process whereby the neophyte as *Chrestos* becomes *Christos* the initiate at the 'reunion' of the Soul with the Spirit; the Son with the Father. Thirdly, in her historical application of *Matthew* 24, Blavatsky implies her own role and status. She omits verses 21 and 22, which has the time of tribulation *shortened* for the Elect's sake, and considers verses 4-28 a "prophetic and very suggestive passage."¹⁹ She rhetorically asks when have nations been at war with each other more than the present time; when have famines "another name for destitute pauperism, and the famished multitudes of the proletariat" been more cruel; when have earthquakes been more prevalent and widespread simultaneously: "at no time since the Christian era, have the precursor signs described in *Matthew* applied so graphically and forcibly to any epoch as they do to our own times."²⁰

¹⁷ H.P. Blavatsky, 'The Book of Enoch, the Origin and Foundation of Christianity', in *H.P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, 14 vols, comps Boris de Zirkoff and Dara Eklund (Chennai: Theosophical Publishing House, 2003 [1950-1985]), vol. 14, pp. 76-86.

¹⁸ H.P. Blavatsky, 'The Esoteric Character of the Gospels', *Lucifer*, pt 1, vol. 1, no. 3, November 1887, pp. 173-180; pt 2, vol. 1, no. 4, December 1887, pp. 299-310; pt 3, vol. 6, no. 6, February 1888, pp. 490-496.

¹⁹ Blavatsky, 'Esoteric Character', pt 1, p. 173.

²⁰ Blavatsky, 'Esoteric Character', pt 1, p. 174.

At this point in her life Blavatsky held that every act, word and event of the New Testament composite biography of Jesus is an allegory “containing profound esoteric truths,” and which “is to be interpreted by the help of the seven keys”:

[e]very act of the Jesus of the New Testament, every word attributed to him, every event related of him during the three years of the mission he is said to have accomplished, rests on the programme of the Cycle of Initiation, a cycle founded on the Recession of the Equinoxes and the Signs of the Zodiac.²¹

She disparages the 1611 King James Version of the Bible which has the phrase “the end of the world” (*Matthew* 24:3) and prefers instead the more correct translation of the 1881 Revised Version, “the consummation of the age,” which “some” Theosophists understand the “hidden meaning” to be “the close of a cycle which is now fast approaching”:

[t]here are several remarkable cycles that come to a close at the end of this century. First the 5,000 years of the Kaliyuga cycle; again the Messianic cycle of the Samaritan (also Kabbalistic) Jews of the man connected with Pisces (Ichthys or “Fish-man” *Dag*). It is a cycle, historic and not very long, but very occult, lasting about 2,155 solar years, but having a true significance only when computed by lunar months. It occurred 2410 and 255 B.C., or when the equinox entered into the sign of the *Ram*, again in that of *Pisces*.²²

Blavatsky is dismissive of the editing of the Old and New Testaments, however:

[t]he texts themselves are mines of universal truths. But they were and still are like the mysterious characters traced by “the fingers of a man’s hand” on the wall of the Palace of Belshazzar: *they need a Daniel to read and understand them*.²³

She castigates the Christian clergy who she claims “forbid enquiry” into the “knowledge of the truth” while they use “names and words the very meaning of which is a sealed mystery to them.”

Blavatsky’s phrase ‘sealed mystery’ resonates not only with *Daniel* 12:9 but also with *Revelation* 10:3-7; a passage she interprets in terms of the correspondence of “the mysteries of the seven gnostic vowels,” the seven thunders, the seven Root Races and seven Rounds of this Earth Chain.²⁴ This is

²¹ H.P. Blavatsky, ‘Reply to the mistaken conceptions of the Abbe Roca concerning my observations on Christian Esotericism’, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 9, p. 225 and fn.

²² Blavatsky, ‘Esoteric Character’, p. 174, and fn. 2.

²³ Blavatsky, ‘Esoteric Character’, pt. 1, p. 178.

²⁴ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 565.

Blavatsky's interpretation of *Revelation* 10:3-7 in terms of *the end point of her macrohistorical metaphysic*. However, given the 'times', which she had allowed into the public domain, including the appearance of a new Master in 1975,²⁵ it is possible to construct a historical time-line for the Fifth Root Race.

The beginning of the Hindu *Kali Yuga*, and the beginning of the Fifth Root Race, both started in 3102 BCE the year of Krishna's death, as also the first of the five pente-millennial periods, which ended in 1897. The 'very occult' Messianic Cycle of 2,155 years had previously occurred in 2410 BCE and 255 BCE, with its present expression to end and a new cycle begin, logically it would seem, in 1900. The new Teacher was to arrive in 1975, and in "some few hundred years"²⁶ the Sixth Sub-Race is to appear and overlap the present Fifth Sub-Race. Approximately twenty-five thousand years later will see the beginning of the Seventh Sub-Race, and after an unspecified length of time of cataclysmic disruptions, the Sixth Root Race is to come into existence. Blavatsky also interprets the seven Kings of *Revelation* 17:9, 10 in terms of the seven Root Races. The future Sixth Root Race King is to "continue a short space."²⁷

Blavatsky has moved from the millions of years of Hindu chronological tradition and *Yuga* theory to her own historical period, by means of her interpretation of the eschatological outline in the *Book of 1 Enoch*, and the eschatological Chapter 24 of the *Gospel of Matthew*. She has also forecast the historical appearing of the Sixth and Seventh Sub-Races and interpreted the eschatology of *Revelation* 10:3-7 and the finishing of "the Mystery of God (of the Cycle)," in macrohistorical terms as the end of the Seventh Round and the start of the Planetary *pralaya*, or period of cosmic rest. However, Blavatsky interprets *Revelation* 10:6-7 also in an occult, personal, realised eschatological sense, as a return 'home' to God, which is brought about by means of a specific occult practice.

Blavatsky Returns 'Home'

In the context of a comment on the myth of Fallen Humanity and Fallen Angels, accompanied by a theory of Lucifer and the Serpent, Blavatsky conflates *Revelation* 8:1 and 10:7, and points to their "esoteric meaning":

²⁵ See "No Master of Wisdom from the East will himself appear or send anyone to Europe or America ... until the year 1975" in *Preliminary Memorandum of the Esoteric Section* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), p. 71. Cited in Gregory Tillet, *The Elder Brother: A Biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 107.

²⁶ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 444f.

²⁷ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 748, cf. p. 618.

[w]hat is the absolute and complete truth as well as the esoteric meaning of this universal myth? The whole essence of truth *cannot be transmitted from mouth to ear*. Nor can any pen describe it, not even that of the recording Angel, unless man finds the answer in the sanctuary of his own heart, in the innermost depths of his divine intuitions. It is the great SEVENTH MYSTERY of Creation, the first and the last; and those who read St John's *Apocalypse*, may find its shadow lurking under the *seventh seal*.²⁸

Blavatsky had interpreted *Revelation* 10:7 in terms of the end-point of her macrohistorical world-view when “the Mystery of God (of the Cycle) should be finished,” and “there should be time no longer” at the end of the Seventh Round. Here, she describes that “Mystery” as “the great SEVENTH MYSTERY of Creation,” and in esoteric and personal terms in equating silence in the heavenly sanctuary and the ending of time, with divine intimations in the sanctuary of one's heart. She elaborated on this divine realisation in secret teachings given to select pupils shortly before her death.

The Inner Group

In October 1888 Blavatsky founded the Esoteric Section of the Society, according to her, on order from her Master. In 1890 she formed a more exclusive Inner Group within the Esoteric Section composed of “Twelve Disciples” who pledged themselves to secrecy with regard to her teachings.²⁹ The original mouth to ear instructions of Blavatsky show themselves as a fusion of Eastern and Western anatomical, physiological, and psychological knowledge couched in Sanskrit terms, with an occasional correspondence to an esoteric interpretation of a significant biblical text. Blavatsky considered the Inner Group teachings as “practical occultism,”³⁰ in that through the power of concentration of the Will and Desire, developed by means of daily meditation,³¹ *kundalini* might be aroused by which a synthesis of the sevenfold correspondences of life might be effected within the body. The senses, organs, principles, the elements, colours and sounds, divine and terrestrial states, and levels of consciousness all cohere within the body.³²

Further, the atom, which is spiritual, contains the other six principles within itself and dwells in the molecule which is “the mirror of its universe,”³³

²⁸ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 516f.

²⁹ Henk J. Spierenburg (comp.), *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky to Her Personal Pupils 1890-91* (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1995).

³⁰ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 5.

³¹ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 182.

³² Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, pp. 54-55, 134-135.

³³ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 182.

Man; and the higher principles of *Atman*, *Buddhi*, *Manas* “can act in the body.”³⁴ Since *Buddhi* is the vehicle of *Atman*, and *Manas* absorbs the light of *Buddhi*, then when the Ego or Higher Self absorbs the light of *Manas* there is the fusion of Ego, *Atman*, and *Buddhi*: “This done, the full Adept is One spiritually, but has also a body; the fourfold path is finished and he is One.”³⁵ Here Blavatsky associates the word ‘finished’ with the attainment of Adeptship, which she also describes as the “*consummatum est* of the Universe... wherein the Yogi is truly joined with the All.”³⁶ This was to be achieved by the occult practice of a purposeful holding of the breath:

she had seen the chelas, mounting the seven steps of the spine, close the ears, nostrils, eyes, and lastly the mouth, holding the breath for a short time... [at this]... as she phrased it, she “went home.”³⁷

Blavatsky’s imagery of going ‘home’ through the voluntary holding of the breath for a short time corresponds with her other explanations of raising one’s consciousness to the Buddhic plane, from where “it goes to the ‘Father in Heaven’ (Atman).”³⁸

Prior to his arrest and crucifixion as portrayed in the New Testament, Jesus tells his disciples that he had “finished the work” and that he is returning to the Father and the glory and love they shared “before the foundation of the world” (*John* 17:5, 24). On the cross he says, “it is finished” (*John* 19:30). The crucifixion of Jesus is esoterically interpreted by Blavatsky as the crucifixion of the *Christos* within; the self-sacrifice of the Higher *Manas* or Ego, the Father, who sent his “only begotten son” for the purpose of the crucifixion of itself in its Lower Kamic expression.³⁹ This is “the true crucifixion of the Christos, the most abstruse, but yet the most important mystery of Occultism”⁴⁰ and “all the cycle of our lives hangs on it.”⁴¹ It corresponds to the voluntary “holding the breath for a short time” in order to return ‘home’.

Within a few months of her death Blavatsky instructs her ‘Twelve Disciples’ not only in Hindu and Buddhist terminology, but also in christological terms of Jesus’ crucifixion and ascension to the Father and the glory and love that they shared before the foundation of the world. This ascension is the Adept’s divinization in eschatological terms of “*consummatum*

³⁴ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 183.

³⁵ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 61.

³⁶ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 160.

³⁷ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 17.

³⁸ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, pp. 36, 137.

³⁹ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, pp. 77, 132.

⁴⁰ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 132.

⁴¹ Spierenberg, *The Inner Group*, p. 69.

est.” In physiological terms adeptship is achieved by the practice of “holding of the breath for a short time” and the experience of “being one with the Universe” is an indescribable sensation, a feeling located in the body:

the sense of being one with the Universe; the impossibility of imagining itself apart from it... For the Inner Group the effort should be to bring all things down to states of consciousness. Buddhi is one and indivisible really; it is a feeling within, absolutely inexpressible in words.⁴²

By the close of her life, Blavatsky had reworked a Judaeo-Christian eschatology concerning the cleansing of the Sanctuary of the Jerusalem Temple and the Kingdom of God into a realised eschatology as a somatic consummation of a divinization process through sustained effort and practise.

Besant and Leadbeater: The Two Witnesses

In the early days of the Society before their estrangement, Colonel H. S. Olcott and Blavatsky considered themselves as “theosophical twins.”⁴³ A few weeks before her death, Blavatsky passed on the ‘twin’ roles to Annie Besant and William Quan Judge. She appointed Besant, her star pupil, friend, and confidante as Chief Secretary of the Esoteric Section and Recorder of the Teachings,⁴⁴ a function she had previously attributed to Enoch. Blavatsky also indicated an Elijah/John the Baptist role for Judge. When the partnership with Judge floundered, Besant began her collaboration with Leadbeater in 1895,

⁴² Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 49.

⁴³ A.T. Barker (ed.), *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973), p. 119.

⁴⁴ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. xv. The figure of Enoch also expressed the one essential truth concerning God; “an eternal truth that can never be destroyed.” See *Isis Unveiled*, vol. 1, p. 560 (cf. *Daniel* 2:44). In its Danielic context, the phrase “never be destroyed” refers to the coming Kingdom of God at “the time of the end” (*Daniel* 6:26; 7:14; 11:35; 12:4, 9), and for Blavatsky and then Besant, the Kingdom of God is composed of initiates who awaken to their divinity, and reconcile Spirit and flesh, matter, within themselves. In a 1927 talk Krishnamurti says, “we all seek that happiness which cannot be destroyed.” He continues: “Every person touches it [i.e. ‘the Kingdom of Happiness’] in moments of ecstasy, every person enjoys it if only for a passing moment.” Besant follows his address with her own. She testifies that Krishnamurti’s “gospel of happiness” is the same message as that spoken by the “Being who said ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is within you...’” (cf. *Luke* 17:21). See ‘The Star Meeting’, *The Herald of the Star*, July 1927. For a series of examples from 1920s to 1980s of Krishnamurti’s reworked use of the Danielic phrase “never be destroyed” see Boag, ‘Biblical Influences’, Appendix E, pp. 193-195.

following which Leadbeater claims his Baptist-type prophetic role.⁴⁵ Judge died in 1896.

I suggest that along with other mouth to ear teachings, (holding the breath for a short time), Blavatsky passed on to her protégé Besant the secret knowledge of the computation of the cycles of time. Besant's birth in 1847 meant that her personal Jubilee year came in 1897, "the Dawn of the New Cycle." The Jubilee Year in Hebrew tradition was understood as a time of liberty and the regaining of one's inheritance, when indebted lands, possessions and people were set free (*Leviticus* 25:8-13). Within the Theosophical context, the regaining of one's inheritance was the awakening to one's divine nature. Besant's proclaiming the truth of Theosophy, one's inherent divinity, was to be accompanied with the proclamation of the coming of a new World Teacher, which, Mary Lutyens reports, Blavatsky told a group of her pupils had been the real purpose of establishing the Society: to prepare humanity to receive the Teacher.⁴⁶

While Leadbeater's birth certificate records his birth as 16 February 1854, he maintained the fiction throughout his life that he had been born on 17 February 1847. Tillett suggests that the symbolic impact of the partnership of Besant and Leadbeater was "reinforced with a temporal link."⁴⁷ That is indeed so. However, this "temporal link" held an occult significance. 17 February was the day in 1600 when Giordano Bruno, purported to have been Besant's major incarnation before her present life, had been martyred. In lying about his birth day, Leadbeater had linked himself with the idealised high-minded morality and martyrdom of Besant in her incarnation as Bruno. In lying about his birth year, his Jubilee was linked with Besant's in her present incarnation at a time of cosmic and historic significance: "the Dawn of the New Cycle." It is Leadbeater who manipulates his birth details in order to align himself with Besant, not vice-versa. He wanted to be closely associated with her status, knowledge and temporality.

Further, their occult and temporal twinning of 1847 was underwritten by an esoteric and historical fulfillment of *Daniel* 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." In the nineteenth century, one popular interpretation of the prophecies of the Book of Daniel considered prophetic days to signify actual years (see also: *Numbers* 14:33, 34; *Ezekiel* 4:4-6). With that notion, Leadbeater conjured his previous stay in

⁴⁵ Boag, 'Biblical Influences', pp. 82-86, 105-108; cf. C.W. Leadbeater, 'The King The Perfect Man', *Theosophy in Australasia*, vol. 36, no. 1 (April 1919).

⁴⁶ Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* (New York: Avon Books, 1976), p. 12.

⁴⁷ Tillett, *The Elder Brother*, pp. 16, 264.

Devachan or the Heaven World, before his present incarnation, as 2,301 years.⁴⁸ In his autobiography he describes this period as “just over 2,300.”⁴⁹ Blavatsky had stated that John the Baptist held the secret knowledge of “the duration of the cycles.” Along with his claim to be a channel to the Masters, Leadbeater provided Besant with a cohesive, computational and reincarnational basis for her Theosophical status, and his own. Within the sanction of “an inherent law of progressive development” and Blavatsky’s own hermeneutics, Besant and Leadbeater justified to themselves their roles of Enoch and Elijah, as the two witnesses of *Revelation* 11. They reworked Blavatsky’s Root Race time-line; proclaimed the coming of a new Messiah and World Teacher; offered a Path of Initiation, the *gnosis* of which promised the realisation of one’s divinity and the shortening of one’s cycle of incarnations.

Blavatsky had clearly stated that the Sixth Root Race would appear “on the stage of our Round” following the Sixth and Seventh Sub-Races, and the final cataclysms of the Seventh Sub-Race. For Besant and Leadbeater there is no Seventh Sub-Race, and the Sixth Root Race was to be a “new era” established by the “arrival and preaching of the Christ Himself... at the beginning of the twentieth century.”⁵⁰ The years had been shortened.

The Shortening of the Years

Blavatsky had denied anyone as having knowledge of the birth year of the historical Jesus,⁵¹ yet G. R. S. Mead, her secretary, set that event at 105 BCE, a date championed by Besant in *Esoteric Christianity*.⁵² If the Messianic Cycle followed its past pattern of 2,155 solar years, according to Mead’s findings, the new Messiah would not be born until 2050. Blavatsky had set a precedent by applying the shortening of the eschatological years of the *Book of Enoch* to the Fourth Root Race Atlanteans. She had also linked the last days of *Matthew* 24 and (by association) the shortening of the time of great tribulation for the

⁴⁸ For the last section of Leadbeater’s incarnational genealogy see Curuppumullage Jinarajadasa, *First Principles of Theosophy* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1921), p. 49. In Boag, ‘Biblical Influences’, pp. 102-105, I consider a number of possible explanations for the extra year.

⁴⁹ C.W. Leadbeater, *How Theosophy Came to Me* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 2001 [1930]), p. 4.

⁵⁰ Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, *Man: Whence, How And Whither* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, Fifth Reprint 1971 [1913]), p. 473.

⁵¹ Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 653f.

⁵² Annie Besant, *Esoteric Christianity or The Lesser Mysteries* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House 2002 [1901]), p. 96; G.R.S. Mead, *Did Jesus Live 100 BC?* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1903).

Elect's sake, to her own generation. According to that precedent, Besant and Leadbeater not only shortened the times of the Sub and Root Races, but also the years of the Messianic Cycle from 2,155 to 2,000, which Annie Besant announced in 1909.⁵³

Calculating 2,000 years from 105 BCE provided Besant with the year 1895 for the birth of the new vehicle. Duplicating the New Testament paradigm of Jesus' act, word and event, gave the year 1925 for the beginning of the public ministry of the new Messiah, since, as God's "beloved son" the New Testament Jesus "began to be about thirty" at the commencement of his public work.⁵⁴ If 1897, the year of "the Dawn of the New Cycle," was taken as the birth year of the new vehicle, then thirty years on came to 1927 for the start of the public ministry of the new Messiah and World Teacher. Besant and Leadbeater were on the lookout for likely vehicles born between 1895 and 1897. When first noticed by Leadbeater, Krishnamurti was believed to have been born in 1896, however, by the time of his Second Initiation he was known to have been born in 1895.⁵⁵ Besant shortened the years of Blavatsky's prediction of 1975 for the coming of the new Teacher. She covered herself with regard to the variant dates of 1925 and 1927, by committing "the coming of the next great Teacher" to a non-specific period of "perhaps half a century" earlier than Blavatsky.⁵⁶

The Veiling of the Teaching

Since "holding the breath for a short time" in the divinization process of the initiate was a secret mouth to ear teaching, it is not explicitly stated in the various outlines of the Path of Initiation as published by Besant and Leadbeater. It is, however, present in a veiled manner in their descriptions of meditation, adoration, and worship, and in the teaching of a purposeful and deliberate holding of thought in order to raise one's consciousness in order to penetrate the divine plane of unity. In a letter to Besant and Isabel Cooper, Blavatsky had stated: "'The Kingdom of God is taken *by violence*'... it does

⁵³ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, p. 12: "We look for Him to come in the Western world this time – not in the East as did Christ two thousand years ago."

⁵⁴ *Luke 3:23*. Both Besant and Leadbeater refer to the New Testament Jesus beginning his ministry "about the age of thirty." Annie Besant, *Seven Great Religions* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966 [1897]), p. 170; Leadbeater, 'The King the Perfect Man', p. 10.

⁵⁵ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, p. 63.

⁵⁶ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, p. 50.

not descend to the Chela; it is the disciple who has to ascend to it, and to penetrate its adamant walls.⁵⁷ In *Esoteric Christianity* Besant states:

[w]orship... rapt adoration... is... the easiest means – of union with God... the consciousness limited by the brain, contemplates in mute ecstasy the image it creates of Him... rapt by the intensity of his love beyond the limits of the intellect... the man feels and knows far more than on his return he can tell in words... Those who have seen “the King in his beauty” will remember and they will understand.⁵⁸

Besant urges the learning of how not to think, which is “even more difficult than thinking” and:

[i]t must be practised for very brief periods (see also: Blavatsky’s “holding the breath for a short time”) until the habit is established, for it means at first an expenditure of force in holding the mind still.⁵⁹

The Conditioning Manifests: 1922, 1925, 1927

The teenage Krishnamurti had been trained to be a fit vehicle for possession by the Maitreya/Christ, and he believed that such preparation was necessarily painful.⁶⁰ Believing it to be the way of the initiate to struggle and suffer to

⁵⁷ Spierenburg, *The Inner Group*, p. 218.

⁵⁸ Besant, *Esoteric Christianity*, p. 217f. Both Besant and Leadbeater acknowledge their use of *Isaiah* 33:17 as a description of the initiate’s penetration of the divine plane of unity and union with God.

⁵⁹ Annie Besant, *Thought Power: Its Control and Culture* (London and Benares: Theosophical Publishing House, 1979 [1903]), pp. 100-102. In a 1975 dialogue with David Bohm, Krishnamurti tells him that faced with either danger or beauty, thought is shocked and holds spontaneously. To perceive that thought itself is a danger “is a tremendous revelation. *And I stop there!*” He states, “I live in disorder. I see disorder, contradiction, and I also see the fact that thought brings about this disorder. I see the danger of it. When there is a perception of real danger, thought doesn’t act, it is a shock to thought. Just as beauty is a shock to thought, danger is a shock to thought. So thought holds. And in that holding of thought is order. Let’s put it this way. We go to Gstaad and we see all those marvellous mountains, and your thought is blown away. Just the beauty of it drives away all movement of thought. And it is the same when thought sees tremendous danger.” See: Krishnamurti and David Bohm, *The Limits of Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 64ff.

⁶⁰ In the ‘Editorial Notes’ of *The Herald of the Star*, December 1921, Krishnamurti had urged his readers to prepare themselves for the coming of the World Teacher, and states: “We must, even if it be painful and at times wearisome, apply the same process to ourselves. We have to keep in mind that this process, if it is to bring

achieve self-conscious divinity, at the age of twenty-seven Krishnamurti commenced his 'process' at Ojai in 1922. Shortly afterwards, Krishnamurti wrote the twelve thousand word composition 'The Path'.⁶¹ This piece is a slavish regurgitation of Theosophical doctrine in which he recounts his supposed millennia of effort, struggle and suffering involved in his evolutionary incarnations toward divinity. In it, he associates the state of breathlessness with his adoration of a feminised Path: "I am breathless in my adoration of her... many a time have I dwelt in breathless adoration,"⁶² and again, with his supposed divinity:

Suddenly the air has become still, breathless... the whole world is in profound adoration. There is a deep silence... tranquility... great peace... (Divinity is taking shape within me)... Divinity is taking shape within me.⁶³

He ends 'The Path' with the pronouncement: "I am God." However, in 1930 he would dismiss 'The Path' as having been written when he "still divided life in that world of delusion."⁶⁴

If Krishnamurti was to dismiss his understanding of life in 1922 as a delusion, then his messianic coming-out at the Star Congress on 28 December 1925 at Adyar was a contrivance.⁶⁵ His paraphrase of *Matthew* 5:17, "I come not to destroy but to build,"⁶⁶ was delivered in the thirtieth year of his life, and the first possible year date for the fulfillment of his role patterned on the every act, word and event of the New Testament Jesus (see also *Luke* 3:23). However, following his January 1927 experience, although not admitting to his contrivance of the 1925 event, he did acknowledge his uncertainty following it: "Last year I was not certain of my goal; I can speak of that now, because now I am certain."⁶⁷

about any fundamental change in us, must hurt, for through suffering alone can our eyes be opened to the great realities. It cannot be too often emphasised."

⁶¹ Partially completed by 16 September 1922, 'The Path' was published serially in the 1923 October, November, December issues of *The Herald of the Star*.

⁶² Krishnamurti, 'The Path', *The Herald of the Star*, 1 October 1923, p. 395f.

⁶³ Krishnamurti, 'The Path', *The Herald of the Star*, 1 December 1923, p. 482f.

⁶⁴ Krishnamurti, *Early Writings* (Bombay: Chetana, 1971), vol. 4, p. 184f.

⁶⁵ Radha Sloss indicates the contrived nature of the event. She relates how her mother, Rosalind, had that day noticed Krishnamurti's unusual care in the preparation of his talk, and her surprise when he suddenly said, "You watch! I'm going to show them something." See: Radha Rajagopal Sloss, *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), p. 81.

⁶⁶ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, p. 242.

⁶⁷ Krishnaji, 'The Star Council', *The Herald of the Star*, September 1927.

On 11 January 1927, Krishnamurti delivered a poem to his Theosophical colleagues at Ojai.⁶⁸ In it he claims of having had a vision of the Buddha when “[t]he early morning was still and breathless.” It was *then* that he had “grasped the infinite simplicity of truth,” and had “suddenly realised” that he was himself “the Truth... the Law... the Refuge... the Guide, the Companion and the Beloved.” This was an opportunistic and public taking on of his messianic role on the second possible date for the fulfillment of Besant’s prediction; thirty years on from 1897 “the Dawn of the New Cycle.” The day also corresponded to his First Initiation on 11 January 1910. Further, he uses the same turn of phrase, “still and breathless,” that he had used in his 1922 poem ‘The Path’, yet he does not subsequently dismiss the state of breathlessness as a delusion. Rather for the next sixty years Krishnamurti points to the state of *involuntary* breathlessness and the cessation of thought as *the* somatic indicator of a moment of truth, whether that be a moment of shock, danger, sexual ecstasy, or a sense of fullness and the unity and sanctity of life.⁶⁹

Following that “breathless” morning of January 1927, Krishnamurti took upon himself the role of World Teacher,⁷⁰ declared that he had arrived “where all religions, where all affections are consummated,”⁷¹ and described himself as “the flower of humanity.”⁷² He dissolved the Order of the Star in the East on 3 August 1929, and officially resigned from the Theosophical Society in 1930.⁷³ He told his audience at the Eerde Gathering of 1930, “[f]or the liberated man there is no time [see also: *Revelation* 10:6]; but to the man of sorrow [see also: *Isaiah* 53:3] there is time.”⁷⁴ He also told a reporter in 1931 that he was indeed the Christ “in the true sense of the word.”⁷⁵

In practical occult terms, Blavatsky’s *consummatum est*, the finishing of the Adept’s path, the finishing of one’s cycle of incarnations in conscious union with God on the divine plane of Adi; the foundation of the world, is through the practice of a *voluntary* holding of the breath. This is the penetration

⁶⁸ Krishnamurti, ‘I sat adreaming... / The early morning was still’, *The Theosophist*, April, 1927.

⁶⁹ Boag, ‘Biblical Influences’, pp. 146-166.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, ‘An Interview with Krishnaji’, *International Star Bulletin*, August 1928.

⁷¹ Krishnamurti, ‘Camp Fire Talk’, [11 August 1927] *By What Authority?: Ommen Camp Fire Talks 1927* (Eerde, Ommen: The Star Publishing Trust, 1927).

⁷² Krishnaji, ‘The World Teacher and the Order of the Star’, *International Star Bulletin*, August 1928.

⁷³ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, pp. 293, 298.

⁷⁴ Krishnamurti, *Early Writings*, vol. 4, p. 125.

⁷⁵ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, p. 302.

of the “adamantine walls” of the Kingdom of God, yet it is felt in the body on the physical plane. Krishnamurti imported Blavatsky’s reworking of millennia of Jewish and Christian expectations of the Kingdom of God (mediated to him by Besant and Leadbeater) into the natural, spontaneous physiological event of *involuntary* breathlessness.

The New Testament writers variously relate that the Kingdom of God, declared to be present by Jesus, had been hidden in God before the foundation of the world (*Matthew* 13:11, 35), in fact, finished from the foundation of the world (*Hebrews* 4:3, see also: 12:28). Compare the claim of *Isaiah* 46:9-10, that there is none like the Hebrew God who can declare “the end from the beginning.”⁷⁶ In his 1927 poem *The Search*, Krishnamurti in four instances uses the expression “From the foundation of the world/earth,” for example:

From the ancient of times,	So, from the ancient of times,
From the very foundation of the earth	From the very foundation of the earth
The end for all things	Have I gathered
Have I known.	The dust of experience,
	Life after life.
	For the consummation
	Of my heart’s desire. ⁷⁷

Having been immersed in the idea of the sacramental value of “words of power,”⁷⁸ Krishnamurti understood very well the import of his use of the words ‘consummation’ and ‘foundation’ within his esoteric and occult Theosophical context. For sixty years he spoke of a unique timeless quality in being human,⁷⁹ of the ending of time, of bringing time and thought to an end,⁸⁰ of a timeless insight,⁸¹ which he associated with the *involuntary* cessation of the breath and thought that is to be noticed, not practised. His reworking of the biblical eschatological “time of the end” (*Daniel* 12:9), to his “ending of time,” is a nuanced transfer from a quantitative, time-based, historical fulfilment in

⁷⁶ For the later Krishnamurti, the bottom-line challenge to his dialogue partners is can they say, “it is finished?” See: Pupul Jayakar, *Krishnamurti: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 385; Krishnamurti and Bohm, *The Ending of Time* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 83.

⁷⁷ J. Krishnamurti, *The Search* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927). The poem is formatted here as intended by the author.

⁷⁸ Besant, *Esoteric Christianity*, p. 224.

⁷⁹ Krishnamurti, *The Core of the Teachings*, in Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* (New York: Avon Books, 1983), p. 204f.

⁸⁰ Jayakar, *Krishnamurti: A Biography*, p. 8. Jayakar reports Krishnamurti saying to her in 1948, “[t]he new approach is to bring time to an end.”

⁸¹ *The Core of the Teachings*, in Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment*, p. 204f.

himself as the new Messiah, to a qualitative, psychological, timeless state of well-being, able to be noticed immediately in the present by others.

“breathless... timeless... deathless”

Krishnamurti’s descriptions of the involuntary state of breathless attention appear predominately in *Commentaries on Living*, *Krishnamurti’s Notebook* and in his two *Journals*. In his diary entry for 23 April 1975, he states:

All things are waiting, breathless for the sun, in adoration...
[everything is]... still in the mystery of that moment of meditation...
[his mind]... is timeless... [he is]... the world, the cosmos, the
deathless beauty, and the joy of compassion.⁸²

It is in *Revelation* 10:6, 7 when there “should be time no longer” that “the Mystery of God should be finished.” Blavatsky had interpreted the finishing of “the Mystery of God” in both macrohistorical and personal terms. Her “great SEVENTH MYSTERY of Creation” was the personal fulfillment of the divinization process of the initiate. Here, Krishnamurti associates mystery with a recognisable human experience, which he describes in terms of meditation, adoration, compassion and beauty. Further, this state is breathless, also a recognisable human condition in response to great beauty, to which Krishnamurti attaches the notions that it is also timeless and deathless. These notions resonate with Blavatsky’s “most important mystery of occultism”: the ending of the initiate’s cycle of incarnations and ascension to the “Father in Heaven (Atman).”

The post-Theosophical Society Krishnamurti recorded real life moments of involuntary breathless attention without reference to his appropriated biblical sources. Other human beings are therefore able to verify for themselves whether or not such moments reveal the non-verbal ground state of a fullness of being experienced as breathless, timeless, deathless. I close with an example where Krishnamurti refers in a public talk, to the state of involuntary breathless attention and its significance for the individual:

I don’t know if it has ever happened to you. It may happen occasionally when you are walking in a beautiful lane, in a wood of trees and birds and flowers, and the beauty of a sunset, or a morning dawn, then for a second or two you are quiet, breathless, watching the beauty of the world. But that is external. But when the brain is quiet, though it has its own activity, quiet in the sense thought is not functioning, so time and thought come to an end where there is deep attention. And then in that silence there is that which is nameless, which is beyond all time. Such a mind is a religious mind. And it is

⁸² Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti’s Journal*, p. 97.

only such minds that can bring about a new culture, a new society.
And because that is eternal it has immense significance in life.⁸³

In conclusion, certain questions arise: Is The Theosophical Society doing justice to the importance of esoteric Christianity within Blavatsky's macrohistorical metaphysic? Why is the Society silent on the occult practice of a voluntary holding of the breath, as a means to a direct conscious union with God in an esoteric *consummatum est*? Concerning Krishnamurti, where is the acknowledgement by his supporters that his teachings are derivative of the redemptive categories of New Testament eschatology, christology and soteriology? Where is the admission that for decades he pointed to the involuntary physiological event of breathless, thoughtless attention, as *the* somatic indicator of "a religious mind" from which "a new culture, a new society" can be brought about? These and other questions, though they remain unanswered at present, point toward a new and fruitful direction for research into the Theosophical Society and its religio-spiritual legacy in the West.

⁸³ Krishnamurti, 'Second Public Talk', [10 April 1983, New York] *The Krishnamurti Text Collection & Index: The Complete Published Works 1933-1986* (England: The Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, 1991), paras 31, 32, CD Rom.