

## H. P. B. Articles vol. II

PSYCHOLOGY - THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

Vol. II p. 1-6

THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

vol. II p. 28-37

OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS

vol. II p. 100-109

ELEMENTALS

vol. II p, 127--163

DIALOGUE ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

vol. II 194-205

TRANSMIGRATION OF THE LIFE ATOMS

Vol. II p. 249-256

LIFE AND DEATH

Vol. II ppgs. 264-273

PSYCHIC AND NOËTIC ACTION

Vol. II p. 7-27

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

vol. II p. 91-99

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

vol. II p. 110-114

KOSMIC MIND

vol. II pp.179-193

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

vol. II, pps. 207-216

THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

Vol. II. pps. 257-263

## PSYCHOLOGY - THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

Vol. II pps. 1-6

ETHICS and law are, so far, only in the phases where there are as yet no theories, and barely systems, and even these, based as we find them upon *à priori* ideas instead of observations, are quite irreconcilable with one another. What remains then outside of physical science? We are told, "Psychology, the Science of the Soul, of the Conscious Self or Ego."

Alas, and thrice alas! Soul, the Self, or Ego, is studied by modern psychology as inductively as a piece of decayed matter by a physicist. Psychology and its mother-plant metaphysics have fared worse than any other sciences. These twin sciences have long been so separated in Europe as to have become in their ignorance mortal enemies. After faring poorly enough at the hands of mediæval scholasticism they have been liberated therefrom only to fall into modern sophistry. Psychology in its present garb is simply a mask covering a ghastly, grimacing skeleton's head, a deadly and beautiful upas flower growing in a soil of most hopeless materialism. "Thought is to the psychologist metamorphosed sensation, and man a helpless automaton, wire-pulled by heredity and environment"--writes a half-disgusted hylo-idealist, now happily a Theosophist. "And yet men like Huxley preach this man automatism and morality in the same breath.... Monists <sup>1</sup> to a man, annihilationists who would stamp out intuition with iron heel, if they could." . . . Those are our modern western psychologists!

Everyone sees that metaphysics instead of being a science of first principles has now broken up into a number of more or less materialistic schools of every shade and color, from Schopenhauer's pessimism down to agnosticism, monism, idealism, hylo-idealism, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Monism is a word which admits of more than one interpretation The "monism" of Lewes, Bain and others, which endeavors so vainly to compress all mental and material phenomena into the unity of One Substance, is in no way the transcendental monism of esoteric philosophy. The current "Single-Substance Theory" of mind and matter necessarily involves the doctrine of annihilation, and is hence untrue. Occultism, on the other hand, recognizes that in the ultimate analysis even the Logos and Mulaprakriti are one; and that there is but One Reality

behind the Maya of the universe But in the manvantaric circuit, in the realm of *manifested* being, the Logos (spirit), and Mulaprakriti (matter or its noumenon), are the dual contrasted poles or bases of all phenomena-subjective and objective. The duality of spirit and matter is a fact, so long as the Great Manvantara lasts. Beyond that looms the darkness of the "Great Unknown," the one Parabrahman.

2

H. P. BLAVATSKY

every "ism" with the exception of psychism--not to speak of true psychology. What Mr. Huxley said of Positivism, namely that it was Roman Catholicism *minus* Christianity, ought to be paraphrased and applied to our modern psychological philosophy. It is psychology, *minus* soul; psyche being dragged down to mere sensation; a solar system *minus* a sun; *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark not entirely cast out of the play, but in some vague way suspected of being probably somewhere behind the scenes.

When a humble David seeks to conquer the enemy it is not the small fry of their army whom he attacks, but Goliath, their great leader. Thus it is one of Mr. Herbert Spencer's statements which, at the risk of repetition, must be analyzed to prove the accusation here adduced. It is thus that "the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century" speaks:

"The mental state in which self is known implies, like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If then the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives? or if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? <sup>2</sup> Clearly a true cognition of self implies a self in which the knowing and the known are one--in which subject and object are one; and this Mr. Mansel *rightly holds to be the annihilation of both!* So that the personality of which each is conscious, and of which the existence is to each a fact beyond all others the most certain, is yet a thing which cannot truly be known at all; *the knowledge of it is forbidden by the very nature of thought.*" <sup>3</sup>

The italics are ours to show the point under discussion. Does this not remind one of an argument in favor of the undulatory theory, namely, that "the meeting of two rays whose waves interlock produces darkness." For Mr. Mansel's assertion that when self thinks of self, and is simultaneously the subject and object, it is "the annihilation of both"--means just this, and the psychological argument is therefore placed on the same basis as the physical phenomenon of light waves. Moreover, Mr. Herbert Spencer confessing that Mr. Mansel is right and basing thereupon his conclusion that the knowledge of self or soul is thus "forbidden by the very nature

of thought"

---

<sup>2</sup> The Higher Self or Buddhi-Manas, which in the act of self-analysis or highest abstract thinking, partially reveals its presence and holds the subservient brain-consciousness in review.

<sup>3</sup> *First Principles*, pp. 65, 66.

3

### THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

is a proof that the "father of modern psychology" (in England) proceeds on no better psychological principles than Messrs. Huxley or Tyndall have done.<sup>4</sup>

We do not contemplate in the least the impertinence of criticizing such a giant of thought as Mr. H. Spencer is rightly considered to be by his friends and admirers. We mention this simply to prove our point and show modern psychology to be a misnomer, even though it is claimed that Mr. Spencer has "reached conclusions of great generality and truth, regarding all that can be known of man." We have one determined object in view, and we will not deviate from the straight line, and our object is to show that occultism and, its philosophy have not the least chance of being even understood, still less accepted in this century, and by the present generations of men of science. We would impress on the minds of our Theosophists and mystics that to search for sympathy and recognition in the region of "science" is to court defeat. Psychology seemed a natural ally at first, and now having examined it, we come to the conclusion that it is a *suggestio falsi* and no more. It is as misleading a term, as taught at present, as that of the Antarctic Pole with its ever arid and barren frigid zone, called southern merely from geographical considerations. For the modern psychologist, dealing as he does only with the superficial brain-consciousness, is in truth more hopelessly materialistic than all-denying materialism itself, the latter, at any rate, being more honest and sincere. Materialism shows no pretensions to fathom human thought, least of all the human spirit-soul, which it deliberately and coolly but sincerely denies and throws altogether out of its catalogue. But the psychologist devotes to soul his whole time and leisure. He is ever boring artesian wells into the very depths of human consciousness. The materialist or the frank atheist is content to make of himself, as Jeremy Collier puts it, "a very despicable mortal . . . no better than a heap of organized dust, a talking machine, a speaking head without a soul in it . . . whose thoughts are bound by the law of motion." But the psychologist is not even a mortal, or even a man; he is a mere aggregate of

---

<sup>4</sup> We do not even notice some very pointed criticisms in which it is shown that Mr. Spencer's postulate that "consciousness cannot be in two distinct states at the same time," is flatly contradicted by himself when he affirms that it is possible for us to be conscious of more states than one. "To be known as unlike," he says, "conscious states must be known in succession" (see *The Philosophy of Mr. H. Spencer Examined*, by James Iverach, M.A.).

4

H. P. BLAVATSKY

sensations.<sup>5</sup>

The universe and all in it is only an aggregate of grouped sensations, or "an integration of sensations." It is all relations of subject and object, relations of universal and individual, of absolute and finite. But when it comes to dealing with the problems of the origin of space and time, and to the summing-up of all those inter-and co-relations of ideas and matter, of ego and non-ego, then all the proof vouchsafed to an opponent is the contemptuous epithet of "ontologist." After which modern psychology having demolished the object of its sensation in the person of the contradictor, turns round against itself and commits hari-kari by showing sensation itself to be no better than hallucination.

This is even more hopeless for the cause of truth than the harmless paradoxes of the materialistic automatists. The assertion that "the physical processes in the brain are complete in themselves" concerns after all only the registrative function of the material brain; and unable to explain satisfactorily psychic processes thereby, the automatists are thus harmless to do permanent mischief. But the psychologists, into whose hands the science of soul has now so unfortunately fallen, can do great harm, inasmuch as they pretend to be earnest seekers after truth, and remain withal content to represent Coleridge's "Owlet," which—

Sailing on obscene wings across the noon,  
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and shuts them close,  
And, hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,  
Cries out, "Where is it?" . . .

—and who more blind than he who does not want to see?

We have sought far and wide for scientific corroboration as to the question of spirit, and spirit alone (in its septenary aspect) being the cause of consciousness and thought, as taught in esoteric philosophy. We have found both physical and psychical sciences denying the fact point-blank, and maintaining their two contradictory and clashing theories. The former, moreover, in its latest development is half inclined to believe itself quite transcendental owing to the latest departure from the too brutal teachings of the Büchners and Moleschotts. But when one comes to analyze the difference between

---

<sup>5</sup> According to John Stuart Mill neither the so-called objective universe nor the domain of mind-object, subject-corresponds with any absolute reality beyond "sensation." Objects, the whole paraphernalia of sense, are "sensation objectively viewed," and mental states "sensation subjectively viewed." The "Ego" is as entire an illusion as matter; the One Reality, groups of feelings bound together by the rigid laws of association.

5

## THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

the two, it appears so imperceptible that they almost merge into one.

Indeed, the champions of science now say that the belief that sensation and thought are but movements of matter—Büchner's and Moleschott's theory—is, as a well-known English annihilationist remarks, "unworthy of the name of philosophy." Not one man of science of any eminence, we are indignantly told, neither Tyndall, Huxley, Maudsley, Bain, Clifford, Spencer, Lewes, Virchow, Hæckel nor Du Bois Raymond has ever gone so far as to say that "thought *is* a molecular motion, but that it is the *concomitant* (not the *cause* as believers in a soul maintain) of certain physical processes in the brain." . . . They never--the true scientists as opposed to the false, the sciolists--the monists as opposed to the materialists--say that thought and nervous motion are the *same*, but that they are the "subjective and objective faces of the same thing."

Now it may be due to a defective training which has not enabled us to frame ideas on a subject other than those which answer to the words in which it is expressed, but we plead guilty to seeing no such marked difference between Büchner's and the new monistic theories. "Thought is not a motion of molecules, but it is the concomitant of certain physical processes in the brain." Now what is a concomitant, and what is a process? A concomitant, according to the best definitions, is a thing that accompanies, or is collaterally connected with another—a concurrent and simultaneous companion. A process is an act of proceeding, an

advance or motion, whether temporary or continuous, or a series of motions. Thus the concomitant of physical processes, being naturally a bird of the same feather, whether subjective or objective, and being due to motion, which both monists and materialists say is physical—what difference is there between their definition and that of Büchner, except perhaps that it is in words a little more scientifically expressed?

Three scientific views are laid before us with regard to changes in thought by present-day philosophers:

Postulate. "Every mental change is signaled by a molecular change in the brain substance." To this:

1. Materialism says: the mental changes are caused by the molecular changes.
2. Spiritualism (believers in a soul): the molecular changes are caused by the mental changes. [Thought acts on the brain matter

6

H. P. BLAVATSKY

through the medium of Fohat focused through one of the principles.]

3. Monism: there is no causal relation between the two sets of phenomena; the mental and the physical being the two sides of the same thing [a verbal evasion].

To this occultism replies that the first view is out of court entirely. It would Inquire of No. 2: And what is it that presides so judicially over the mental changes? What is the *noumenon* of those mental phenomena which make up the external consciousness of the physical man? What is it which we recognize as the terrestrial "self" and which—monists and materialists notwithstanding—does control and regulate the flow of its own mental states. No occultist would for a moment deny that the materialistic theory as to the relations of mind and brain is in its way expressive of the truth that the *superficial* brain-consciousness or "phenomenal self" is bound up for all practical purposes with the integrity of the cerebral matter. This brain consciousness or personality is mortal, being but a distorted reflection through a physical basis of the *mânasic* self. It is an instrument for harvesting experience for the Buddhi-Manas or monad, and saturating it with the aroma of consciously-acquired experience. But for all that the "brain-self" is real while it lasts, and weaves its Karma as a responsible entity. Esoterically explained it is the

consciousness inhering in that lower portion of the Manas which is correlated with the physical brain.

*Lucifer*, October, 1896

## PSYCHIC AND NOËTIC ACTION

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

Vol. II pp. 7-27

### I

". . . I made man just and right, Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall, Such I created all th' ethereal powers And spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd, Truly, they stood who stood, and fell who fell . . . --MILTON

A NEW influence, a breath, a sound--"as of a rushing mighty wind"--has suddenly swept over a few Theosophical heads. An idea, vague at first, grew in time into a very definite form, and now seems to be working very busily in the minds of some of our members. It is this: if we would make converts the few ex-occult teachings, which are destined to see the light of publicity, should be made, henceforward, *more subservient to, if not entirely at one with modern science*. It is urged that the so called *esoteric*<sup>1</sup> (or *late esoteric*) cosmogony, anthropology, ethnology, geology--psychology and, foremost of all, metaphysics--having been *adapted into* making obeisance to modern (hence *materialistic*) thought, should never henceforth be allowed to contradict (not *openly*, at all events) "scientific philosophy." The latter, we suppose, means the fundamental and accepted views of the great German schools, or of Mr. Herbert Spencer and some other English stars of lesser magnitude; and not only these, but also the deductions that may be drawn from them by their more or less instructed disciples.

A large undertaking this, truly; and one, moreover, in perfect conformity with the policy of the medieval Casuists, who distorted truth and even suppressed it, if it clashed with *divine Revelation*. Useless to say that we decline the compromise. It is quite possible--nay, probable and almost unavoidable--that "the mistakes made" in the rendering of such abstruse

metaphysical tenets as those contained in

-----

<sup>1</sup> We say "so-called," because nothing of what has been given out publicly or in print can any longer be termed esoteric.

p.8

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Eastern Occultism, should be "frequent and often important." But then all such have to be traced back to the interpreters, not to the system itself. They have to be corrected on the authority of the same Doctrine, checked by the teachings grown on the rich and steady soil of *Gupta Vidya*, not by the speculations that blossom forth today, to die tomorrow--on the shifting sands of modern scientific guesswork, especially in all that relates to psychology and mental phenomena. Holding to our motto, "There is no religion higher than truth," we refuse most decidedly to pander to *physical* science. Yet, we may say this: If the so-called *exact* sciences limited their activity only to the physical realm of nature; if they concerned themselves strictly with surgery, chemistry--up to its legitimate boundaries, and with physiology--so far as the latter relates to the structure of our corporeal frame, then the Occultists would be the first to seek help in modern sciences, however many their blunders and mistakes. But once that overstepping material Nature the physiologists of the modern "animalistic"<sup>2</sup> school pretend to meddle with, and deliver *ex cathedrâ dicta on*, the higher functions and phenomena of the mind, saying that a careful analysis brings them to a firm conviction that no more than the animal is man a *free-agent*, far less a responsible one--then the Occultist has a far greater right than the average modern "Idealist" to protest. And the Occultist asserts that no materialist--a prejudiced and one-sided witness at best--can claim any authority in the question of mental physiology, or that which is now called by him the *physiology of the soul*. No such noun can be applied to the word "soul," unless, indeed, by soul only the lower, *psychic* mind is meant, or that which develops in man proportionally with the perfection of his brain) into *intellect*, and in the animal into a *higher* instinct. But since the great Charles Darwin taught that "our *ideas* are animal motions of the organ of sense" everything becomes possible to the modern physiologist.

Thus, to the great distress of our scientifically inclined Fellows, it is once more *Lucifer's* duty to show how far we are at loggerheads

-----

<sup>2</sup> "Animalism" is quite an appropriate word to use (whoever invented it) as a contrast to Mr. Tylor's term "Animalism," which he applied to all the "Lower Races" of mankind who believe the soul a distinct entity. He finds that the words psyche, pneuma animus, spiritus, etc., all belong to the same cycle of superstition in "the lower stages of culture," Professor A. Bain dubbing all these distinctions, moreover, as a "plurality of souls" and a "double materialism." This is the more curious as the learned author of "Mind and Body" speaks as disparagingly of Darwin's "materialism" in *Zoonomia*, wherein the founder of modern Evolution defines the word idea as "contracting a motion, or configuration of the fibres which constitute the immediate organ of Sense" (*Mind and Body*, p. 190. Note).

p.9

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

with exact science, or shall we say, how far the conclusions of that science are drifting away from truth and fact. By "science" we mean, of course, the majority of the men of science; the best minority, we are happy to say, is on our side, at least as far as free-will in man and the materiality of the mind are concerned. The study of the "Physiology" of the Soul, of the Will in man and of his *higher Consciousness* from the standpoint of genius and its manifesting faculties, can never be summarized into a system of general ideas represented by brief formulae; no more than the *psychology of material nature* can have its manifold mysteries solved by the mere analysis of its physical phenomena. *There is no special organ of will, any more than there is a physical basis for the activities of self-consciousness.*

"If the question is pressed as to the *physical basis* for the activities of self-consciousness, no answer can be given or suggested. . . From its very nature, that marvelous verifying *actus* of mind in which it recognizes the states as its own, can have no analogous or corresponding material substratum. It is impossible to specify any physiological process representing this unifying *actus*; it is even impossible to imagine how the description of any such process could be brought into intelligible relation with this unique mental power."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the whole conclave of psycho-physiologists may be challenged to correctly define Consciousness, and they are sure to fail, because Self-consciousness belongs alone to man and proceeds from the SELF, the higher Manas. Only, whereas the psychic element (or *Kama-manas*)<sup>4</sup> is common to both the animal and the human being--the far higher degree of its development in the latter resting merely on the greater perfection and sensitiveness of his cerebral cells--no physiologist, not even the cleverest, will ever be able to solve the mystery of the human mind, in its highest spiritual manifestation, or in its dual aspect of the *psychic* and the *noetic* or the *manasic*,<sup>5</sup> or even to comprehend the intricacies of the former on the purely material plane--unless he knows something of, and is prepared to admit the presence of this dual element. This means that he would have to admit a lower (animal), and a higher (or divine) mind in man, or what is known in Occultism as the "personal" and the "impersonal" *Egos*.

-----

<sup>3</sup>Psychological Psychology. etc., p. 545, by George T. Ladd, Professor of Philosophy in Yale University.

<sup>4</sup> Or what the Kabalists call Nephesh, the "breath of life."

<sup>5</sup>The Sanskrit word Manas (Mind) is wed by us in preference to the Greek Nous (noëtic) because the latter word having been so imperfectly understood in philosophy, suggests no definite meaning.

p.10

H. P. BLAVATSKY

For, between the *psychic* and the *noëtic*, between the *personality* and the *individuality*, there exists the same abyss as between a "Jack the Ripper," and a holy Buddha. Unless the physiologist accepts all this, we say, he will ever be led into a quagmire. We intend to prove it.

As all know, the great majority of our learned "Didymi" reject the idea of free-will. Now this question is a problem that has occupied the minds of thinkers for ages; every school of thought having taken it up in turn and left it as far from solution as ever. And yet, placed as it is in the foremost ranks of philosophical quandaries, the modern "psycho-physiologists" claim in the coolest and most bumptious way to have cut the Gordian knot forever. For

them the feeling of personal free agency is an error, an illusion, "the collective hallucination of mankind." This conviction starts from the principle that no mental activity is possible without a brain, and that there can be no brain without a body. As the latter is, moreover, subject to the general laws of a material world where all is based on necessity, and where there is no spontaneity, our modern psycho-physiologist has *nolens volens* to repudiate any self-spontaneity in human action. Here we have, for instance, a Lausanne professor of physiology, A. A. Herzen, to whom the claim of free-will in man appears as the most *unscientific* absurdity. Says this oracle:--

"In the boundless physical and chemical laboratory that surrounds man, organic life represents quite an unimportant group of phenomena; and amongst the latter, the place occupied by life having reached to the stage of consciousness, is so minute that it is absurd to exclude man from the sphere of action of a general law, in order to allow in him the existence of a subjective spontaneity or a free will standing outside of that law"--  
(*Psychophysiologie Générale.*)

For the Occultist who knows the difference between the psychic and the noëtic elements in man, this is pure trash, notwithstanding its sound scientific basis. For when the author puts the question--if psychic phenomena do not represent the results of an action of a molecular character whither then does motion disappear after reaching the sensory centers?--we answer that we never denied the fact. But what has this to do with a free-will? That every phenomenon in the visible Universe has its genesis in motion, is an old axiom in Occultism; nor do we doubt that the psycho-physiologist would place himself at logger-heads with the whole conclave of exact scientists were he to allow the idea that at a given moment a whole series of physical phenomena may disappear in the vacuum.

p.11

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

Therefore, when the author of the work cited maintains that the said force does not disappear upon reaching the highest nervous centers, but that it is forthwith transformed into another series, viz., that of psychic manifestations, into thought, feeling, and consciousness, just as this same psychic force when applied to produce some work of a

physical (e.g., muscular) character gets transformed into the latter--Occultism supports him, for it is the first to say that all psychic activity, from its lowest to its highest manifestations is "nothing but--motion."

Yes; it *is* MOTION; but not all "molecular" motion, as the writer means us to infer. Motion as the GREAT BREATH (*vide* "Secret Doctrine," vol, i. *sub voce*)--*ergo* "sound" at the same time--is the substratum of Kosmic-Motion. It is beginningless and endless, the one *eternal life*, the basis and genesis of the subjective and the objective universe; for LIFE (or Be-ness) is the *fons et origo* of existence or being. But molecular motion is the lowest and most material of its finite manifestations. And if the general law of the conservation of energy leads modern science to the conclusion that psychic activity only represents a special form of motion, this same law, guiding the Occultists, leads them also to the same conviction--and to something else besides, which psycho-physiology leaves entirely out of all consideration. If the latter has discovered only in this century that psychic (we say even spiritual) action is subject to the same general and immutable laws of motion as any other phenomenon manifested in the objective realm of Kosmos, and that in both the organic and the inorganic (?) worlds every manifestation, whether conscious or unconscious, represents but the result of a collective causes, then in Occult philosophy this represents merely the A,B,C, of its science. "All the world is in the *Swara*; *Swara* is the Spirit itself--the ONE LIFE or *motion*, say the old books of Hindu Occult philosophy. "The proper translation of the word *Swara* is the *current of the life wave*," says the author of "Nature's Finer Forces,"<sup>6</sup> and he goes on to explain:

---

<sup>6</sup>The Theosophist, Feb. 1888, p. 275, by Rama Prasad, President of the Meerut Theosophical Society. As the Occult book cited by him says: "It is the *Swara* that has given form to the first accumulations of the divisions of the universe; the *Swara* causes evolution and involution; the *Swara* is God. or more properly the Great Power itself (*Maheshwara*). The *Swara* is the manifestation of the impression on matter of that power which in man is known to us as the power which knows itself (mental and psychic consciousness). It is to be understood that the action of this power never ceases.... It is unchangeable existence"--and this is the "Motion" of the Scientists and the universal Breath of Life of the Occultists.

"It is that wavy motion which is the cause of the evolution of cosmic undifferentiated matter into the differentiated universe. . . . From whence does this motion come? This motion is the spirit itself. The word *atma* (universal soul) used in the book (*vide infra*), itself carries the idea of eternal motion, coming as it does from the root, AT, or eternal motion; and it may be significantly remarked, that the root AT is connected with, is in fact simply another form of, the roots AH, breath, and AS, being. All these roots have for their origin the sound produced by the breath of animals (living beings)... The primeval current of the life-wave is then the same which assumes in man the form of inspiratory and expiatory motion of the lungs, and this is the all-pervading source of the evolution and involution of the universe...."

So much about *motion* and the "conservation of energy" from old *books on magic* written and taught ages before the birth of inductive and exact modern science. For what does the latter say more than these books in speaking, for instance, about animal *mechanism*, when it says:--

"From the visible atom to the celestial body lost in space, *everything is subject to motion* . . . kept at a definite distance one from the other, in proportion to the motion which animates them, the molecules present constant relations, which they lose only by the addition or the subtraction of a certain quantity of motion."<sup>7</sup>

But Occultism says more than this. While making of motion on *the material plane* and of the conservation of energy, two fundamental laws, or rather two aspects of the same omnipresent law-- *Swara*, it denies point blank that these have anything to do with the *free-will* of man which belongs to quite a different plane. The author of "Psychophysiologie Générale," treating of his *discovery* that psychic action is but motion, and the result of a collective causes--remarks that as it is so, there cannot be any further discussion upon spontaneity--in the sense of any native internal proneness created by the human organism; and adds that the above puts an end to all claim for *free-will!* The Occultist denies the conclusion. The actual fact of man's psychic (we say *manasic* or noëtic) *individuality is a sufficient warrant* against the assumption; for in the case of this conclusion being correct, or being indeed,

as the author expresses it, the *collective hallucination of the whole mankind throughout the ages*, there would be an end also to psychic individuality.

Now by "psychic" individuality we mean that self-determining power which enables man to override circumstances. Place half a

-----  
<sup>7</sup> "Animal Mechanism," a treatise on terrestrial and aerial locomotion. By E. J. Marey, Prof. at the College of France, and Member of the Academy of Medicine.

p.13

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

dozen animals of the same species under the same circumstances, and their actions while not identical, will be closely similar; place half a dozen men under the same circumstances and their actions will be as different as their characters, i.e., their *psychic individuality*.

But if instead of "psychic" we call it the higher Self-conscious Will, then having been shown by the science of psycho-physiology itself that will *has no special organ*, how will the materialists connect it with "molecular" motion at all? As Professor George T. Ladd says:

*"The phenomena of human consciousness must be regarded as activities of some other form of Real Being than the moving molecules of the brain. They require a subject or ground which is in its nature unlike the phosphorized fats of the central masses, the aggregated nerve-fibres of nerve-cells of the cerebral cortex. This Real Being thus manifested immediately to itself in the phenomena of consciousness, and indirectly to others through the bodily changes, is the Mind (manas). To it the mental phenomena are to be attributed as showing what it is by what it does. The so-called mental 'faculties' are only the modes of the behavior in consciousness of this real being. We actually find, by the only method available, that this real being called Mind believes in certain perpetually recurring modes: therefore, we attribute to it certain faculties.... Mental faculties are not entities that have an existence of themselves.... They are the modes of the behavior in consciousness of the mind. And the very nature of the classifying acts which lead to their being distinguished, is explicable only upon the assumption that a Real being called Mind exists, and is to be distinguished from the real beings known as the*

physical molecules of the brain's nervous mass."<sup>8</sup>

And having shown that we have to regard consciousness *as a unit* (another occult proposition) the author adds:

"We conclude, then, from the previous considerations: *the subject of all the states of consciousness is a real unit-being, called Mind; which is of non-material nature, and acts and develops according to laws of its own, but is specially correlated with certain material molecules and masses forming the substance of the Brain.*"<sup>9</sup>

This "Mind" is *manas*, or rather its lower reflection, which whenever it disconnects itself, for the time being, with *kama*, becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties, and is the organ of the free-will in physical man. Therefore, this assumption of the newest psychophysiology is uncalled for, and the apparent impossibility of reconciling

-----

<sup>8</sup> "The higher manas" or Ego( Kshetrajna) is the " Silent Spectator," and the voluntary " sacrificaicial victim" : the lower manas, its representative—a tyrannical despot, truly.

<sup>9</sup> Elements of Physiological Psychology. A treatise of the activities ant nature of the I mind, from the Physical ant Experimental Point of View, pp. 606 and 613,

p.14

H. P. BLAVATSKY

the existence of free-will with the law of the conservation of energy is--a pure fallacy. This was well shown in the "Scientific Letters" of "Elpay" in a criticism of the work. But to prove it finally and set the whole question definitely at rest, does not even require so high an interference (high for us, at any rate) as the Occult laws, but simply a little common sense. Let us analyze the question dispassionately.

It is postulated by one man, presumably a scientist, that because "psychic action is found subject to the general and immutable laws of motion, there is, therefore, *no free will in man.*" The "analytical method of exact sciences" has demonstrated it, and materialistic scientists have decreed to "pass the resolution" that the fact should be so accepted by their followers. But there are other and far greater scientists who thought differently. For instance, Sir William Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, declared in his lectures<sup>10</sup> that:--

The philosophical doctrine of the soul, and its separate existence, has nothing to do with this physiological question, but rests on a species of proof altogether different. These sublime dogmas could never have been brought to light by the labors of the anatomist and physiologist. An immaterial and spiritual being could not have been discovered amid the blood and filth of the dissecting room.

Now, let us examine on the testimony of the materialist how this universal solvent called the "analytical method" is applied in this special case. The author of the *Psychophysiologie* decomposes psychic activity into its compound elements, traces them back to motion, and, failing to find in them the slightest trace of free-will or spontaneity, jumps at the conclusion that the latter have no existence in general; nor are they to be found in that psychic activity which he has just decomposed. "Are not the fallacy and error of such an unscientific proceeding self-evident?" asks his critic; and then argues very correctly that:--

"At this rate, and starting from the standpoint of this analytical method, one would have an equal right to deny every phenomenon in nature from first to last. For, do not sound and light, heat and electricity, like all other chemical processes, once decomposed into their respective elements, lead the experimenter back to the same motion, wherein All the peculiarities of the given elements disappear leaving behind them only 'the vibrations of molecules'? But does it necessarily follow that for All that, heat, light, electricity--are but illusions instead of the actual manifestations

---

<sup>10</sup> W. Lawrence, Lectures on Comparative Anatomy, Physiology. Zoology, and the Natural History of Man. 8vo. London, 1848, p. 6.

of the peculiarities of our real world? Such peculiarities are not, of course, to be found in compound elements, simply because we cannot expect that a part should contain, from first to last, the properties of the whole. What should we say of a chemist, who, having decomposed water into its compounds, hydrogen and oxygen, without finding in them the special characteristics of water, would maintain that such did not exist at All nor

could they be found in water? What of an antiquary who upon examining distributed type and finding no sense in every separate letter, should assert that there was no such thing as sense to be found in any printed document? And does not the author of "Psycho-physiology" act just in this way when he denies the existence of free-will or self-spontaneity in man, on the grounds that this distinctive faculty of the highest psychic activity is absent from those compounded elements which he has analyzed?"

Most undeniably no separate piece of brick, of wood, or iron, each of which has once been a part of a building now in ruins, can be expected to preserve the smallest trace of the architecture of that building--in the hands of the chemist, at any rate; though it would in those of a *psychometer*, a faculty by the bye, which demonstrates far more powerfully the law of the conservation of energy than any physical science does, and shows it acting as much in the subjective or psychic worlds as on the objective and material planes. The genesis of sound, on this plane, has to be traced back to the same motion, and the same correlation of forces is at play during the phenomenon as in the case of every other manifestation. Shall the physicist, then, who decomposes sound into its compound element of vibrations and fails to find in them any harmony or special melody, deny the existence of the latter? And does not this prove that the analytical method having to deal exclusively with the elements, and nothing to do with their *combinations*, leads the physicist to talk very glibly about motion, vibration, and what not, and to make him entirely lose sight of *the harmony produced by certain combinations of that motion* or the "harmony of vibrations"? Criticism, then, is right in accusing Materialistic psycho-physiology of neglecting these all-important distinctions; in maintaining that if a careful observation of facts is a duty in the simplest physical phenomena, how much more should it be so when applied to such complex and important questions as psychic force and faculties? And yet in most cases all such essential differences are overlooked, and the analytical method is applied in a most arbitrary and prejudiced way. What wonder, then, if, in carrying back psychic action to its basic elements of motion, the psychophysicologist

depriving it during the process of all its essential characteristics, should destroy it; and having destroyed it, it only stands *to* reason that he is unable to find that which exists in it no longer. He forgets, in short, or rather purposely ignores the fact, that though, like all other phenomena on the material plane, psychic manifestations *must* be related in their final analysis to the world of vibration ("*sound*" being the substratum of universal Akasa), yet, in their origin, they belong to a different and a higher World of HARMONY. Elpay has a few severe sentences against the assumptions of those he calls "physico-biologists" which are worthy of note.

Unconscious of their error, the psycho-physiologists identify the compound elements of psychic activity with that activity itself: hence the conclusion from the standpoint of the analytical method, that the highest, distinctive specialty of the human soul--free-will, spontaneity--is an illusion, and no psychic reality. But as we have just shown, such identification not only has nothing in common with exact science, but is simply impermissible, as it clashes with all the fundamental laws of logic, in consequence of which all these so-called deductions emanating from the said identification vanish into thin air. Thus to trace psychic action primarily to motion, means in no way to prove the "illusion of free-will." And, as in the case of water, whose specific qualities cannot be deprived of their reality although they are not to be found in its compound gases, so with regard to the specific property of psychic action: its spontaneity

cannot be refused to psychic reality, though this property is not contained in those finite elements into which the psycho-physiologist dismembers the activity in question under his mental scalpel.

This method is "a distinctive feature of modern science in its endeavor to satisfy inquiry into the nature of the objects of its investigation by a detailed description of their development," says G. T. Ladd. And the author of *The Elements of Physiological Psychology* adds:-- The universal process of "Becoming" has been almost personified and deified so as to make it the true ground of all finite and concrete existence.... The attempt is made to refer all the so called development of the mind to the evolution of the substance of the brain, under purely physical and mechanical causes. This attempt, then,

denies that any real unit-being called the Mind needs to be assumed as undergoing a process of development according to laws of its own.... On the other hand, all attempts to account for the orderly increase in complexity and comprehensiveness of the mental phenomena by tracing the physical

p.17

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

evolution of the brain are wholly unsatisfactory to many minds. We have no hesitation in classing ourselves among this number. Those facts of experience which show a correspondence in the order of the development of the body and the mind, and even a certain necessary dependence of the latter upon the former, are, of course, to be admitted; but they are equally compatible with another view of the mind's development. This other view has the additional advantages that it makes room for many other facts of experience which are very difficult of reconciliation with any materialistic theory. On the whole, *the history of each individual's experiences is such as requires the assumption that a real unit-being (a Mind) is undergoing a process of development, in relation to the changing condition or evolution of the brain, and yet in accordance with a nature and laws of its own" (p. 616).*

How closely this last "assumption" of science approaches the teachings of the Occult philosophy will be shown in Part II of this article. Meanwhile, we may close with an answer to the latest materialistic fallacy, which may be summarized in a few words. As every psychic action has for its substratum the nervous elements whose existence it postulates, and outside which it cannot act; as the activity of the nervous elements are only molecular motion, there is therefore no need to invent a special and psychic Force for the explanation of our brain work. *Free Will would force Science to postulate an invisible Free-Willer, a creator of that special Force.*

We agree: "not the slightest need," of a creator of "that special" or any other Force. Nor has any one ever claimed such an absurdity. But between *creating* and *guiding*, there is a difference, and the latter implies in no way any creation of the energy of motion, or, indeed, of any special energy. *Psychic* mind (in contradistinction to manasic or noëtic mind) only transforms this energy of the "unit-being" according to "a nature and laws of its own"--to use Ladd's felicitous expression. The "unit-being" creates

nothing, but only causes a natural correlation in accordance with both the physical laws and laws *of its own*; having to use the Force, it guides its direction, choosing the paths along which it will proceed, and stimulating it to action. And, as its activity is *sui generis*, and independent, it carries this energy from this world of disharmony into its own sphere of harmony. Were it not *independent* it could not do so. As it is, the freedom of man's will is beyond doubt or cavil. Therefore, as already observed, there no question of creation, but simply of *guidance*. Because the sailor at the wheel does not create the steam in the engine, shall we say that he does not direct the vessel?

p.18

H. P. BLAVATSKY

And, because we refuse to accept the fallacies of some psychophysicologists as the *last* word of science, do we furnish thereby a new proof that free-will is an *hallucination*? We deride the *animalistic* idea. How far more scientific and logical, besides being as poetical as it is grand, is the teaching in the *Kathopanishad*, which, in a beautiful and descriptive metaphor, says that: "The senses are the horses, body is the chariot, mind (*kama-manas*) is the reins, and intellect (or *free-will*) the charioteer." Verily, there is more *exact* science in the less important of the *Upanishads*, composed thousands of years ago, than in all the materialistic ravings of modern "physico-biology" and "psychophysiology" put together!

-----

## II

". . . The knowledge of the past, present, and future, *is* embodied in Kshetrajna (the 'Self')." --*Occult Axioms*

Having explained in what particulars, and why, as Occultists, we disagree with materialistic physiological psychology, we may now proceed to point out the difference between psychic and noetic mental functions, the noëtic not being recognized by official science.

Moreover, we, Theosophists, understand the terms "psychic" and "psychism" somewhat differently from the average public, science, and even

theology, the latter giving it a significance which both science and Theosophy reject, and the public in general remaining with a very hazy conception of what is really meant by the terms. For many, there is little, if any, difference between "psychic" and "psychological," both words relating in some way to the *human soul*. Some modern metaphysicians have wisely agreed to disconnect the word Mind (*pneuma*) from Soul (*psyche*), the one being the rational, spiritual part, the other--*psyche*--the living principle in man, the breath that *animates* him (from *anima*, soul). Yet, if this is so, how in this case refuse a soul to *animals*? These are, no less than man, informed with the same principle of sentient life, the *nephesh* of the 2nd chapter of *Genesis*. The Soul is by no means the Mind, nor can an idiot, bereft of the latter, be called a "soul-less" being. To describe, as the physiologists do, the human Soul in its relations to senses and appetites, desires and passions, common to man and the brute, and then endow it with God-like intellect, with spiritual and

p.19

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

rational faculties which can take their source but in a *supersensible* world--is to throw for ever the veil of an impenetrable mystery over the subject. Yet in modern science, "psychology" and "psychism" relate only to conditions of the nervous system, mental phenomena being traced solely to molecular action. The higher *noëtic* character of the Mind-Principle is entirely ignored, and even rejected as a "superstition" by both physiologists and psychologists. Psychology, in fact, has become a synonym in many cases for the science of psychiatry. Therefore, students of Theosophy being compelled to differ from all these, have adopted the doctrine that underlies the time-honored philosophies of the East. What it is, may be found further on.

To better understand the foregoing arguments and those which follow, the reader is asked to turn to the editorial in the September *Lucifer* ("The Dual Aspect of Wisdom," p. 3), and acquaint himself with the double aspect of that which is termed by St. James in his Third Epistle at once--the *devilish, terrestrial* wisdom, and the "wisdom from above." In another editorial, "Kosmic Mind" (April, 1890), it is also stated, that the ancient Hindus endowed every cell in the human body with consciousness, giving each the

name of a God or Goddess. Speaking of atoms in the name of science and philosophy, Professor Ladd calls them in his work *us upersensible beings*." Occultism regards every atom<sup>1</sup> as an "independent entity" and every cell as a "conscious unit." It explains that no sooner do such atoms group to form cells, than the latter become endowed with consciousness, each of its own kind, and with *free-will to act within* the limits of law. Nor are we entirely deprived of scientific evidence for such statements as the two above-named editorials well prove. More than one learned physiologist of the golden minority, in our own day, moreover, is rapidly coming to the conviction, that memory has no *seat*, no special organ of its own in the human brain, but that it has seats in every organ of the body.

"No good ground exists for speaking of any special organ, or seat of memory," writes Professor G. T. Ladd.<sup>2</sup> "Every organ indeed, every area, and every limit of the nervous system has its own memory" (p. 553 loc. cit.).

The seat of memory, then, is assuredly neither here nor there, but everywhere throughout the human body. To locate its organ in the brain is to limit and

---

<sup>1</sup>One of the names of Brahma is anu or "atom."

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Philosophy at Yale University.

p.20

H. P. BLAVATSKY

dwarf the Universal Mind and its countless Rays (the *Manasa putra*) which inform every rational mortal. As we write for Theosophists, first of all, we care little for the psychophobic prejudices of the Materialists who may read this and sniff contemptuously at the mention of "Universal Mind" and the Higher *noëtic* souls of men. But, what is memory, we ask. "Both presentation of sense and image of memory, are transitory phases of consciousness," we are answered. But what is Consciousness itself?--we ask again. "*We cannot define Consciousness,*" Professor Ladd tells us.<sup>3</sup> Thus, that which we are asked to do by physiological psychology is, to content ourselves with converting the various states of Consciousness by other people's private and unverifiable hypotheses; and this, on "questions of cerebral physiology *where*

*experts and novices are alike ignorant,"* to use the pointed remark of the said author. Hypothesis for hypothesis, then, we may as well hold to the teachings of our Seers, as to the conjectures of those who deny both such Seers and their wisdom. The more so, as we are told by the same honest man of science, that "if metaphysics and ethics cannot properly dictate their facts and conclusions to the science of physiological psychology . . . in turn this science cannot properly dictate to metaphysics and ethics the conclusions which they shall draw from facts of Consciousness, by giving out its myths and fables in the garb of well ascertained history of the cerebral processes" (p. 544).

Now, since the metaphysics of Occult physiology and psychology postulate within mortal man an immortal entity, "divine Mind," or *Nous*, whose pale and too often distorted reflection is that which we call "Mind" and intellect in men--virtually an entity apart from the former during the period of every incarnation--we say that the two sources of "memory" are in these two "principles." These two we distinguish as the Higher *Manas* (Mind or Ego), and the *Kama-Manas*, i.e., the rational, but earthly or physical intellect of man, in cased in, and bound by, matter, therefore subject to the influence of the latter: the all-conscious SELF, that which reincarnates periodically--verily the WORD made flesh!--and which is always the same, while its reflected "Double," changing with every new incarnation and personality, is, therefore, conscious but for a life-period. The latter "principle" is the *Lower Self*, or that, which manifesting through our *organic* system, acting on this plane of illusion, imagines itself the Ego Sum, and thus falls into what Buddhist philosophy brands as the "heresy of separateness."

-----

<sup>3</sup> Elements of Physiological Psychology.

The former, we term INDIVIDUALITY, the latter *Personality*. From the first proceeds all the *noëtic* element, from the second, the *psychic*, i.e., "terrestrial wisdom" at best, as it is influenced by all the chaotic stimuli of the human or rather *animal passions* of the living body.

The "Higher Ego" cannot act directly on the body, as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane and planes of ideation: the "lower" Self does: and its action and behavior *depend on its free will and choice* as to whether it will gravitate more towards its parent ("the Father in Heaven") or the "animal" which it informs, the man of flesh. The "Higher Ego," as part of the essence of the UNIVERSAL MIND, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere, as it has to act solely through its *alter ego*--the Personal Self. Now, although the former is the vehicle of all knowledge of the past, the present, and the future, and although it is from this fountain-head that its "double" catches occasional glimpses of that which is beyond the senses of man, and transmits them to certain brain cells (unknown to science in their functions), thus making of man a *Seer*, a soothsayer, and a prophet; yet the memory of bygone events--especially of the earth earthy--has its seat in the Personal Ego alone. No memory of a purely daily-life function, of a physical, egotistical, or of a lower mental nature--such as, e.g., eating and drinking, enjoying personal sensual pleasures, transacting business to the detriment of one's neighbor, etc., etc., has ought to do with the "Higher" Mind or Ego. Nor has it any direct dealings on this physical plane with either our brain or our heart--for these two are the organs of a power higher than the *Personality*--but only with our passional organs, such as the liver, the stomach, the spleen, etc. Thus it only stands to reason that the memory of such-like events must be first awakened in that organ which was the first to induce the action remembered afterwards, and conveyed it to our "sense-thought," which is entirely *distinct from the "super-sensuous" thought*. It is only the higher forms of the latter, the super-conscious mental experiences, that can correlate with the cerebral and cardiac centres. The memories of physical and selfish (or personal) deeds, on the other hand, together with the mental experiences of a terrestrial nature, and of earthly biological functions, can, of necessity, only be correlated with the molecular constitution of various Kamic organs, and the "dynamic associations" of the elements of the nervous system in each particular organ.

Therefore, when Professor Ladd, after showing that every element of the nervous system has a memory of its own, adds:--"This view belongs to the very essence of every theory which considers conscious mental reproduction as only one form or phase of the biological fact of organic memory"--he must include among such theories the Occult teaching. For no Occultist could express such teaching more correctly than the Professor, who says, in winding up his argument: "We might properly speak, then, of the memory of the end-organ of vision or of hearing, of the memory of the spinal cord and of the different so-called 'centres' of reflex action belonging to the chords of the memory of the medulla oblongata, the cerebellum, etc." This is the essence of Occult teaching--even in the Tantra works. Indeed, every organ in our body has its own memory. For if it is endowed with a consciousness "of its own kind," every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own psychic and noëtic action. Responding to the touch of both a physical and a metaphysical Force,<sup>4</sup> the impulse given by the psychic (or psychomolecular) Force will act from without within; while that of the noëtic (shall we call it Spiritual-dynamical?) Force works from within without. For, as our body is the covering of the inner "principles," soul, mind, life, etc., so the molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its "principles," the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell's activity and behavior are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly, by the noëtic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the physical cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms--being psycho-spiritual, not physical units--act under laws of their own, just as Professor Ladd's "Unit-Being," which is our "Mind-Ego," does, in his very philosophical and scientific hypothesis. Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds. Every key contains the potentiality of good or bad, of producing harmony or disharmony. This depends on the impulse given and the combinations produced; on the force of the touch of the artist at work, a "double-faced Unity," indeed. And it is the action of this or the other "Face" of the Unity that determines the nature and the dynamic character of the manifested

phenomena as a

---

\* We fondly trust this very unscientific

p.23

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

resulting action, and this whether they be physical or mental. For the whole of man is guided by this double-faced Entity. If the impulse comes from the "Wisdom above," the Force applied being noëtic or spiritual, the results will be actions worthy of the divine propeller; if from the "terrestrial, devilish wisdom" (psychic power), man's activities will be selfish, based solely on the exigencies of his physical, hence animal, nature. The above may sound to the average reader as pure nonsense; but every Theosophist must understand when told that there are Manasic as well as Kamic organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulses. <sup>4</sup> We fondly trust this very unscientific term will throw no "Animalist" into hysterics beyond recovery.

Verily that body, so desecrated by Materialism and man himself, is the temple of the Holy Grail, the Adytum of the grandest, nay, of all, the mysteries of nature in our solar universe. That body is an Æolian harp, chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut. When the breath from the divine Fiat brushes softly over the former, man becomes like unto his God--but the other set feels it not. It needs the breeze of a strong terrestrial wind impregnated with animal effluvia, to set its animal chords vibrating. It is the function of the physical, lower mind to act upon the physical organs and their cells; but, it is the higher mind alone which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, viâ the spinal "centre" cord, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane. The phenomena of divine consciousness have to be regarded as activities of our mind on another and a higher plane, working through something less substantial than the moving molecules of the brain. They cannot be explained as the simple resultant of the cerebral physiological process, as indeed the latter only condition them or give them a final form for purposes of concrete manifestation. Occultism teaches that the liver and

the spleen-cells are the most subservient to the action of our "personal" mind, the heart being the organ par excellence through which the "Higher" Ego acts--through the Lower Self.

Nor can the visions or memory of purely terrestrial events be transmitted directly through the mental perceptions of the brain--the direct recipient of the impressions of the heart. All such recollections have to be first stimulated by and awakened in the organs which were the originators, as already stated, of the various causes that led to the results, or, the direct recipients and participators of the latter.

p.24

H. P. BLAVATSKY

In other words, if what is called "association of ideas" has much to do with the awakening of memory, the mutual interaction and consistent interrelation between the personal "Mind-Entity" and the organs of the human body have far more so. A hungry stomach evokes the vision of a past banquet, because its action is reflected and repeated in the personal mind. But even before the memory of the personal Self radiates the vision from the tablets wherein are stored the experiences of one's daily life--even to the minutes details--the memory of the stomach has already evoked the same. And so with all the organs of the body. It is they which originate according to their animal needs and desires the electro-vital sparks that illuminate the field of consciousness in the Lower Ego; and it is these sparks which in their turn awaken to function the reminiscences in it. The whole human body is, as said, a vast sounding board, in which each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, or call it instinct if you will. These impressions are, according to the nature of the organ, physical, psychic, or mental, as they relate to this or another plane. They may be called "states of consciousness" only for the want of a better expression--as there are states of instinctual, mental, and purely abstract, or spiritual consciousness. If we trace all such "psychic" actions to brain-work, it is only because in that mansion called the human body the brain is the front-door, and the only one which opens out into Space. All the others are inner doors, openings in the private building, through which travel incessantly the transmitting agents of

memory and sensation. The clearness, the vividness, and intensity of these depend on the state of health and the organic soundness of the transmitters. But their reality, in the sense of trueness or correctness, is due to the "principle" they originate from, and the preponderance in the Lower Manas of the noëtic or of the phrenic ("Kamic," terrestrial) element.

For, as Occultism teaches, if the Higher Mind-Entity--the permanent and the immortal--is of the divine homogeneous essence of "Alaya-Akasa,"<sup>5</sup> or Mahat,--its reflection, the Personal Mind, is, as a temporary "Principle," of the Substance of the Astral Light. As a pure ray of the "Son of the Universal Mind," it could perform no functions in the body, and would remain powerless over the turbulent organs of Matter. Thus, while its inner constitution is Manasic, its "body," or rather functioning essence, is heterogeneous, and leavened with the Astral Light, the

-----  
<sup>5</sup> Another name for the universal mind.

lowest element of Ether. It is a part of the mission of the Manasic Ray, to get gradually rid of the blind, deceptive element which, though it makes of it an active spiritual entity on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions. This leads us to see the difference between the pure noëtic and the terrestrial psychic visions of seership and mediumship. The former can be obtained by one of two means; (a) on the condition of paralyzing at will the *memory* and the instinctual, independent action of all the material organs and even cells in the body of flesh, an act which, once that the light of the Higher Ego has consumed and subjected for ever the passional nature of the personal, lower Ego, is easy, but requires an adept; and (b) of being a reincarnation of one, who, in a previous birth, had attained through extreme purity of life and efforts in the right direction almost to a *Yogi*-state of holiness and saint-ship. There is also a third possibility of reaching in mystic visions the plane of the higher Manas; but it is only occasional and does not depend on the will of the Seer, but on the extreme weakness and exhaustion of the material body through illness and suffering. The Seeress of Prevorst

was an instance of the latter case; and Jacob Boëhme of our second category. In all other cases of abnormal seer-ship, of so-called clairaudience, clairvoyance and trances, it is simply--*mediumship*. Now what is a medium? The term medium, when not applied simply to things and objects, is supposed to be a person through whom the action of another person or being is either manifested or transmitted. Spiritualists believing in communications with disembodied spirits, and that these can manifest through, or impress sensitiveness to transmit "messages" from them, regard mediumship as a blessing and a great privilege. We Theosophists, on the other hand, who do not believe in the "communion of spirits" as Spiritualists do, regard the gift as one of the most dangerous of abnormal nervous diseases. A medium is simply one in whose personal Ego, or terrestrial mind, (*psyche*), the percentage of "astral" light so preponderates as to impregnate with it their whole physical constitution. Every organ and cell thereby is attuned, so to speak, and subjected to an enormous and abnormal tension. The mind is ever on the plane of, and quite immersed in, that deceptive light whose soul is divine, but whose body--the light waves on the lower planes, infernal; for they are but the black and disfigured reflections of the earth's memories.

p.26

H. P. BLAVATSKY

The untrained eye of the poor sensitive cannot pierce the dark mist, the dense fog of the terrestrial emanations, to see beyond in the radiant field of the eternal truths. His vision is out of focus. His senses, accustomed from his birth, like those of a native of the London slums, to stench and filth, to the unnatural distortions of sights and images tossed on the kaleidoscopic waves of the astral plane--are unable to discern the true from the false. And thus, the pale soulless corpses moving in the trackless fields of "Kama loka," appear to him the living images of the "dear departed" ones; the broken echoes of once human voices, passing through his mind, suggest to him well coordinated phrases, which he repeats, in ignorance that their final form and polish were received in the innermost depths of his own brain-factory. And hence the sight and the hearing of that which if seen in its true nature would have struck the medium's heart cold with horror, now fills him with a sense

of beatitude and confidence. He really believes that the immeasurable vistas displayed before him are the real spiritual world, the abode of the blessed disembodied angels.

We describe the broad main features and facts of mediumship, there being no room in such an article for exceptional cases. We maintain--having unfortunately passed at one period of life *personally* through such experiences--that on the whole, mediumship is most dangerous; and *psychic* experiences when accepted indiscriminately lead only to honestly deceiving others, because the medium is the first self-deceived victim. Moreover, a too close association with the "Old Terrestrial Serpent" is infectious. The odic and magnetic currents of the Astral Light often incite to murder, drunkenness, immorality, and, as Eliphas Lévi expresses it, the not altogether pure natures "can be driven headlong by the blind forces set in motion in the *Light*"--by the errors and sins imposed on its waves.

And this is how the great Mage of the XIXth century corroborates the foregoing when speaking of the Astral Light:

"We have said that to acquire magical power, two things are necessary: to disengage the will from all servitude, and to exercise it in control.

"The sovereign will (of the adept) is represented in our symbols by the woman who crushes the serpent's head, and by the resplendent angel who represses the dragon, and holds him under his foot and spear; the great magical agent, the dual current of light, the living and astral *fire* of the earth, has been represented in the ancient theogonies by the serpent with the head of a bull, a

p.27

#### PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION

ram, or a dog. It is the double serpent of the *caduceus*, it is the Old Serpent of *Genesis*, but it is also the *brazen serpent of Moses* entwined around the *tau*, that is to say, the generative lingha. It is also the goat of the witch-sabbath, and the Baphomet of the Templars; it is the *Hylé* of the Gnostics; it is the double-tailed serpent which forms the legs of the solar cock of the Abraxas: finally, it is the Devil of M. Eudes de Mirville. But in very fact it is the blind force which souls (i.e., the lower Manas or Nephesh) have to conquer to liberate themselves from the bonds of the earth; for if their will does not free

them from this *fatal attraction*, they will be absorbed in the current by the force which has produced them, and *will return to the central and eternal fire*'."6

The "central and eternal fire" is that disintegrating Force, that gradually consumes and burns out the *Kama-rupa*, or "personality," in the Kama-loka, whither it goes after death. And verily, the Mediums are attracted by the astral light, it is the direct cause of their personal "souls" being absorbed "by the force which has produced" their terrestrial elements. And, therefore, as the same Occultist tells us:

"All the magical operations consist in *freeing* one's self from the coils of the Ancient Serpent; then to place the foot on its head, and lead it according to the operator's will. 'I will give unto thee,' says the Serpent, in the Gospel myth, 'all the kingdoms of the earth, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The initiated should reply to him, 'I will not fall down, but thou shalt crouch at my feet; thou wilt give me nothing, but I will make use of thee and take whatever I wish. For *I am thy Lord and Master!*' "

And as such, the Personal Ego, becoming at one with its divine parent, shares in the immortality of the latter. Otherwise....

Enough, however. Blessed is he who has acquainted himself with the dual powers at work in the ASTRAL Light; thrice blessed he who has learned to discern the *Noëtic* from the *Psychic* action of the "Double-Faced" God in him, and who knows the potency of his own Spirit--or "Soul Dynamics."

*Lucifer*, October, November, 1890

-----

<sup>6</sup> Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie, quoted in Isis Unveiled.

## THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

Article by H. P. Blavatsky  
vol. II pps. 28-37

IT is the privilege—as also occasionally the curse—of editors to receive numerous letters of advice, and the conductors of *Lucifer* have not escaped the common lot. Reared in the aphorisms of the ages they are aware that "he who can take advice is superior to him who gives it," and are therefore ready to accept with gratitude any sound and practical suggestions offered by friends; but the last letter received does not fulfill the condition. It is not even his own wisdom, but that of the age we live in, which is asserted by our adviser, who thus seriously risks his reputation for keen observation by such acts of devotion on the altar of modern pretensions. It is in defense of the "wisdom" of our century that we are taken to task, and charged with "preferring barbarous antiquity to our modern civilization and its inestimable boons," with forgetting that "our own-day wisdom compared with the awakening instincts of the Past is in no way inferior in *philosophic wisdom* even to the age of Plato." We are lastly told that we, Theosophists, are "too fond of the dim yesterday, and as unjust to our glorious (?) present-day, the bright noon-hour of the highest civilization and culture"!!

Well, all this is a question of taste. Our correspondent is welcome to his own views, but so are we to ours. Let him imagine that the Eiffel Tower dwarfs the Pyramid of Ghizeh into a mole-hill, and the Crystal Palace grounds transform the hanging gardens of Semiramis into a kitchen-garden—if he likes. But if we are seriously "challenged" by him to show "in what respect our age of hourly progress and gigantic thought"—a progress a trifle marred, however, by our Huxleys being denounced by our Surgeons, and the University ladies, senior classics and wranglers, by the "hallelujah lasses"—is inferior to the ages of, say, a hen-pecked "Socrates and a cross-legged Buddha," then we will answer him, giving him, of course, our own personal opinion.

29

THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

Our age, we say, is inferior in Wisdom to any other, because it professes, more visibly every day, *contempt for truth and justice, without which there can be no Wisdom*. Because our civilization, built up of shams and appearances, is at best like a beautiful green morass, a bog, spread over a deadly quagmire. Because this century of culture and worship of matter, while offering prizes and premiums for every "*best thing*" under the Sun, from the biggest baby and the largest orchid down to the strongest pugilist and the fattest pig, has no encouragement to offer to morality; no prize to give for any moral virtue. Because it has Societies for the prevention of physical cruelty to animals, and none with the object of preventing the moral cruelty practiced on human beings. Because it encourages, legally and

tacitly, vice under every form, from the sale of whiskey down to forced prostitution and theft brought on by starvation wages, Shylock-like exaction, rents and other comforts of our cultured period. Because, finally, this is the age which, although proclaimed as one of physical and moral freedom, is in truth the age of the most ferocious moral and mental slavery, the like of which was never known before. Slavery to State and *men* has disappeared only to make room for slavery to *things* and *Self*, to one's own vices and idiotic social customs and ways. Rapid civilization, adapted to the needs of the higher and middle classes, has doomed by contrast to only greater wretchedness the starving masses. Having leveled the two former it has made them the more to disregard the substance in favor of form and appearance, thus forcing modern man into duress vile, a slavish dependence on things inanimate, to use and to serve which is the first bounded duty of every *cultured* man.

Where then is the Wisdom of our modern age?

In truth, it requires but a very few lines to show why we bow before ancient Wisdom, while refusing absolutely to see any in our modern civilization. But to begin with, what does our critic mean by the word "wisdom"? Though we have never too unreasonably admired Lactantius, yet we must recognize that even that innocent Church Father, with all his cutting insults anent the heliocentric system, defined the term very correctly when saying that "the first point of Wisdom is to discern that which is false, and the second, to know that which is true." And if so, what chance is there for our century of falsification,

30

H. P. BLAVATSKY

from the revised Bible texts down to natural butter, to put forth a claim to "Wisdom"? But before we cross lances on this subject we may do well, perchance, to define the term ourselves.

Let us premise by saying that Wisdom is, at best, an elastic word --at any rate as used in European tongues. That it yields no clear idea of its meaning, unless preceded or followed by some qualifying adjective. In the Bible, indeed, the Hebrew equivalent *Chokmah* (in Greek, *Sophia*) is applied to the most dissimilar things--abstract and concrete. Thus we find "Wisdom" as the characteristic both of divine inspiration and also of terrestrial cunning and craft; as meaning the Secret Knowledge of the Esoteric Sciences, and also blind faith; the "fear of the Lord," and Pharaoh's magicians. The noun is indifferently applied to Christ and to sorcery, for the witch Sedecla is also referred to as the "*wise woman* of En-Dor." From the earliest Christian antiquity, beginning with St. James (iii, 13-17), down to the last Calvinist preacher, who sees in hell and eternal damnation a proof of "the

Almighty's *wisdom*," the term has been used with the most varied meanings. But St. James teaches two kinds of wisdom; a teaching with which we fully concur. He draws a strong line of separation between the divine or *noëtic* "Sophia"--the Wisdom from above--and the terrestrial, psychic, and devilish wisdom (iii, 15). For the true Theosophist there is no wisdom save the former. Would that such an one could declare with Paul, that he speaks that wisdom exclusively only among them "that are perfect," *i.e.*, those initiated into its mysteries, or familiar, at least, with the A B C of the sacred sciences. But, however great was his mistake, however premature his attempt to sow the seeds of *the true and eternal gnosis* on unprepared soil, his motives were yet good and his intention unselfish, and *therefore* has he been stoned. For had he only attempted to preach some particular fiction of his own, or done it for gain, who would have ever singled him out or tried to crush him, amid the hundreds of other false sects, daily "collections" and crazy "societies"? But his case was different. However cautiously, still he spoke "not the wisdom of this world" but *truth* or the "hidden wisdom . . . which none of the Princes of this World know (I Corinth. ii.) least of all the *archons* of our modern science. With regard to "psychic" wisdom, however, which James defines as terrestrial and devilish, it has existed in all ages, from the days of Pythagoras and Plato, when for one *philosophus* there were nine *sophistae*, down to our modern era. To such wisdom our century is welcome, and indeed fully entitled, to lay

31

#### THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

a claim. Moreover, it is an attire easy to put on; there never was a period when crows refused to array themselves in peacock's feathers, if the opportunity was offered.

But now as then, we have a right to analyze the terms used and inquire in the words of the book of Job, that suggestive allegory of Karmic purification and initiation rites: "Where shall (true) wisdom be found? Where is the place of understanding?" and to answer again in his words: "With the ancient *is* wisdom and in the length of days understanding" (Job xxviii, 12 and xii, 12) .

Here we have to qualify once more a dubious term, *viz*: the word "ancient," and to explain it. As interpreted by the orthodox churches, it has in the mouth of Job one meaning; but with the Kabbalist, quite another; while in the Gnosis of the Occultist and Theosophist it has distinctly a third signification, the same which it had in the original *Book of Job*, a pre-Mosaic work and a recognized treatise on Initiation. Thus, the Kabbalist applies the adjective "ancient" to the Manifested WORD or LOGOS (*Dabar*) of the forever concealed and unrecognizable deity. Daniel, in one of his visions, also uses it when speaking of Jahve--the androgynous Adam Kadmon. The Church man connects it with his anthropomorphic Jehovah, the "Lord God"

of the *translated* Bible. But the Eastern Occultist employs the mystic term only when referring to the reincarnating higher Ego. For, divine Wisdom being diffused throughout the infinite Universe, and our impersonal HIGHER SELF being an integral part of it, the *atmic* light of the latter can be centered only in that which though eternal is still individualized--*i.e.*, the noëtic Principle, the manifested God within each rational being, or our Higher *Manas* at one with *Buddhi*. It is this collective light which is the "Wisdom that is from above," and which whenever it descends on the personal Ego, is found "pure, peaceable, gentle." Hence, Job's assertion that "Wisdom is with the Ancient," or *Buddhi-Manas*. For the Divine Spiritual "I," is alone eternal, and the same throughout all births; whereas<sup>5</sup> the "personalities" it informs in succession are evanescent, changing like the shadows of a kaleidoscopic series of forms in a magic lantern. It is the "Ancient," because, whether it be called Sophia, Krishna, *Buddhi-Manas* or Christos, it is ever the "first-born" of *Alaya-Mahat*, the Universal Soul and the Intelligence of the Universe. Esoterically then, Job's statement must read: "With the Ancient (man's Higher Ego) is Wisdom, and in the length of days (or number of its re-incarnations) is understanding." No man can

32

H. P. BLAVATSKY

learn true and final Wisdom in one birth; and every new rebirth, whether we be reincarnated for weal or for woe, is one more lesson we receive at the hands of the stern yet ever just schoolmaster-- KARMIC LIFE.

But the world--the Western world, at any rate--knows nothing of this, and refuses to learn anything. For it, any notion of the Divine Ego or the plurality of its births is "heathen foolishness." The Western world rejects these truths, and will recognize no *wise* men except those of its own making, created in its own image, born within its own Christian era and teachings. The only "wisdom" it understands and practices is the psychic, the "terrestrial and devilish" wisdom spoken of by James, thus making of the *real* Wisdom a misnomer and a degradation. Yet, without considering her multiplied varieties, there are two kinds of even "terrestrial" wisdom on our globe of mud--the real and the apparent. Between the two, there is even for the superficial observer of this busy wicked world, a wide chasm, and yet how very few people will consent to see it! The reason for this is quite natural. So strong is human selfishness, that wherever there is the smallest personal interest at stake, there men become deaf and blind to the truth, as often consciously as not. Nor are many people capable of recognizing as speedily as is advisable the difference between men who are wise and those who only *seem* wise, the latter being chiefly regarded as such because they are very clever at blowing their own trumpet. So much for "wisdom" in the profane world.

As to the world of the students in mystic lore, it is almost worse. Things have strangely altered since the days of antiquity, when the truly wise made it their first duty to conceal their knowledge, deeming it too sacred to even mention before the *hoi polloi*. While the mediæval *Rosecroix*, the true philosopher, keeping old Socrates in mind, repeated daily that all he knew was that he knew nothing, his modern self-styled successor announces in our day, through press and public, that those mysteries in Nature and her Occult laws of which he knows nothing, have never existed at all. There was a time when the acquirement of Divine Wisdom (*Sapientia*) required the sacrifice and devotion of a man's whole life. It depended on such things as the purity of the candidate's motives, on his fearlessness and independence of spirit; but now, to receive a patent for wisdom and adept-ship requires only unblushing impudence. A certificate of divine wisdom is now decreed, and delivered to a self-styled "*Adeptus*" by a regular majority of votes of profane and easily

33

### THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

caught gulls, while a host of magpies driven away from the roof of the Temple of Science will herald it to the world in every marketplace and fair. Tell the public that now, even as of old, the genuine and sincere observer of life and its underlying phenomena, the intelligent co-worker with nature, may, by becoming an expert in her mysteries thereby become a "wise" man, in the terrestrial sense of the word, but that never will a *materialist* wrench from nature any secret on a higher plane--and you will be laughed to scorn. Add, that no "wisdom from above" descends on any one save on the *sine quâ non* condition of leaving at the threshold of the Occult every atom of selfishness, or desire for personal ends and benefit--and you will be speedily declared by your audience a candidate for the lunatic asylum. Nevertheless, this is an old, very old truism. Nature gives up her innermost secrets and imparts *true wisdom only* to him, who seeks truth for its own sake, and who craves for knowledge in order to confer benefits on others, not on his own unimportant personality. And, as it is precisely to this *personal benefit* that nearly every candidate for adept-ship and magic looks, and that few are they, who consent to learn at such a heavy price and so small a benefit for themselves in prospect--the really wise Occultists become with every century fewer and rarer. How many are there, indeed, who would not prefer the will-o'-the-wisp of even passing fame to the steady and ever-growing light of eternal, *divine* knowledge, if the latter has to remain, for all but oneself--a light under the bushel?

The same is the case in the world of materialistic science, where we see a great paucity of really learned men and a host of skin-deep scientists, who yet demand each and all to be regarded as Archimedes and Newtons. As above so below. Scholars who pursue knowledge for the sake of truth and fact, and give these out,

however unpalatable, and not for the dubious glory of enforcing on the world their respective personal hobbies--may be counted on the fingers of one hand: while legion is the name of the pretenders. In our day, reputations for learning seem to be built by suggestion on the hypnotic principle, rather than by real merit. The masses cower before him who imposes himself upon them: hence such a galaxy of men regarded as eminent in science, arts and literature; and if they are so easily accepted, it is precisely because of the gigantic self-opinionated and self-assertion of, at any rate, the majority of them. Once thoroughly analyzed, however, how many of such would remain who truly deserve the appellation of "wise" even in terrestrial wisdom?

34

H. P. BLAVATSKY

How many, we ask, of the so-called authorities" and "leaders of men" would prove much better than those of whom it was said--by one "wise" indeed--"they be blind leaders of the blind"? That the teachings of neither our modern teachers nor preachers are "wisdom from above" is fully demonstrated. It is proved not by any personal incorrectness in their statements or mistakes in life, for "to err is but human," but by incontrovertible facts. *Wisdom* and *Truth* are synonymous terms, and that which is false or well-known representative of the Church of England, that the *Sermon of the Mount* would, in its practical application, mean utter ruin for his country less than three weeks; and if it is no less true, as asserted by a literary critic of science, that "the knell of Charles Darwinism is rung in Mr. A.R. Wallace's present book,"<sup>1</sup> an event already predicted by Quatrefages--then we are left to choose between two courses. We have either to take both Theology and Science on blind faith and trust; or, to proclaim both untrue and untrustworthy there is however, a third course open: *to pretend that we believe in both at the same time*, and say nothing, as many do; but this would be sinning against Theosophy and pandering to the prejudices of Society--and that we refuse to do. More than this: we declare openly, *quand même*, that not one of the two, neither Theologist nor Scientist, has the right in the face of this to claim, the one that he preaches that which is divine inspiration, and the other--exact science; since the former enforces that, which is on his own recognition, pernicious to men and states--i.e. the ethics of Christ; and the other (in the person of the eminent naturalist, Mr. A. R. Wallace, as shown by Mr. Samuel Butler) teaches Darwinian evolution, in which he believes no longer; a scheme, moreover, *which has never existed in nature*, if the opponents of Darwinism are correct.

Nevertheless, if anyone would presume to call "unwise" or "false" the world-chosen authorities, or declare their respective policies dishonest, he would find himself promptly reduced to silence. To doubt the exalted wisdom of the religion of the late Cardinal Newman, of the Church of England, or again of our great

modern scientists, is to sin against the Holy Ghost and Culture. Woe unto him who refuses to recognize the World's "Elect." He has to bow before one or the other, though, if one *is* true, the other *must* be false; and if the "wisdom"

35

#### THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM

of neither Bishop nor Scientist is "from above"--which is pretty fairly demonstrated by this time--then their "wisdom" is at best--"terrestrial, psychic, devilish."

Now our readers have to bear in mind that note of the above is meant as a sign of disrespect for the *true* teachings of Christ, or *true* science: nor do we judge personalities but only the systems of our civilized world. Valuing freedom of thought above all things as the only way of reaching at some future time that Wisdom, of which every Theosophist ought to be enamored, we recognize the right to the same freedom in our foes as in our friends. All we contend for is their claim to Wisdom--as we understand this term. Nor do we blame, but rather pity, in our innermost heart, the "wise men" of our age for trying to carry out the only policy that will keep them on the pinnacle of their "authority"; as they could not, if even they would, act otherwise and preserve their *prestige* with the masses, or escape from being speedily outcast by their colleagues. The party spirit is so strong with regard to the old tracks and ruts, that to turn on a side path means deliberate treachery to it. Thus, to be regarded now-a-days as an authority in some particular subject, the scientist has to reject *nolens volens* the metaphysical, and the theologian to show contempt for the materialistic teachings. All this is worldly policy and practical common sense, but it is not the *Wisdom* of either Job or James.

Shall it be then regarded as too far fetched, if, basing our words on a life-long observation and experience, we venture to offer our ideas as to the quickest and most efficient means of obtaining our present World's universal respect and becoming an "authority"? Show the tender regard for the horns of every party's hobbies, and offer yourself as the chief executioner, the hangman, of the reputations of men and things regarded as unpopular. Learn, that the great secret of power consists in the art of pandering to popular prejudices, to the World's likes and dislikes. Once this principal condition complied with, he who practices it is certain of attracting to himself the educated and their satellites--the less educated--they whose rule it is to place themselves invariably on the safe side of public opinion. This will lead to a perfect harmony or simultaneous action. For, while the favorite attitude of the cultured is to hide behind the intellectual bulwarks of the favorite leaders of scientific thought, and *jurare in verba magistri*, that of the less cultured is to transform themselves into the faithful, mechanical telephones of their superiors,

36

H. P. BLAVATSKY

and to repeat like well-trained parrots the *dicta* of their immediate leaders The now aphoristical precept of Mr. Artemus Ward, the showman of famous memory--"Scratch my back, Mr. Editor, and I will scratch yours"--proves immortally true. The "rising Star," whether he be a theologian, a politician, an author, a scientist, or a journalist--has to begin scratching the back of public tastes and prejudices--a hypnotic method as old as human vanity. Gradually the hypnotized masses begin to purr, they are ready for "suggestion." Suggest whatever you want them to believe, and forthwith they will begin to return your caresses, and purr now to your hobbies, and pander in their turn to anything suggested by theologian, politician, author, scientist, or journalist. Such is the simple secret of blossoming into an "authority" or a "leader of men"; and such is the secret of our modern-day wisdom.

And this is also the "secret" and the true reason of the *unpopularity* of *Lucifer* and of the ostracism practiced by this same modern world on the Theosophical Society: for neither *Lucifer*, nor the Society it belongs to, has ever followed Mr. Artemus Ward's golden precept. No true Theosophist, in fact, would consent to become the fetish of a fashionable doctrine, any more than he would make himself the slave of a decaying dead-letter system, the spirit from which has disappeared for ever. Neither would he pander to anyone or anything, and therefore would always decline to show belief in that in which he does not, nor can he believe, which is lying to his own soul. Therefore there, where others see "the beauty and graces of modern culture," the Theosophist sees only moral ugliness and the somersaults of the clowns of the so-called cultured centres. For him nothing applies better to modern fashionable society than Sydney Smith's description of Popish ritualism: "Posture and imposture, flections and genuflections, bowing to the right, curtsying to the left, and an immense amount of male (and especially female) millinery." There may be, no doubt, for some worldly minds, a great charm in modern civilization; but for the Theosophist all its bounties can hardly repay for the evils it has brought on the world. These are so many, that it is not within the limits of this article to enumerate these offspring of culture and of the progress of physical science, whose latest achievements begin with vivisection and end in improved murder by electricity.

Our answer, we have no doubt, is not calculated to make us more friends than enemies, but this can be hardly helped. Our magazine

may be looked upon as "pessimistic," but no one can charge it with publishing slanders or lies, or, in fact, anything but that which we honestly believe to be true. Be it as it may, however, we hope never to lack moral courage in the expression of

our opinions or in defense of Theosophy and its Society. Let then nine-tenths of every population arise in arms against the Theosophical Society wherever it appears--they will never be able to suppress the truths it utters. Let the masses of growing Materialism, the hosts of Spiritualism, all the Church-going congregations, bigots and iconoclasts, Grundy-worshippers, aping-followers and blind disciples, let them slander, abuse, lie, denounce, and publish every falsehood about us under the sun-- they will not uproot Theosophy, nor even upset her Society, if only its members hold together. Let even such friends and *advisers* as he who is now answered, turn away in disgust from those whom he addresses in vain--it matters not, for our two paths in life run diametrically opposite. Let him keep to his "terrestrial" wisdom: we will keep to that pure ray "that comes from above," from the light of the "Ancient."

What indeed, has WISDOM, *Theosophia*--the Wisdom "full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling or partiality and without hypocrisy" (James iii, 17)--to do with our cruel, selfish, crafty, and hypocritical world? What is there in common between divine Sophia and the improvements of modern civilization and science; between spirit and the letter that killeth? The more so as at this stage of evolution the wisest man on earth, according to the wise Carlyle, is but a clever infant spelling letters from a hieroglyphical, prophetic book, the lexicon of which lies in *eternity*."

*Lucifer*, September, 1890

---

<sup>1</sup> See "The Deadlock of Darwinism," by Samuel Butler, in the *Universal Review* for April, 1890.

## PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

vol. II p. 91-99

### IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS

AS some of the letters in the CORRESPONDENCE of this month show, there are many people who are looking for practical instruction in Occultism. It becomes necessary, therefore, to state once for all:—

(a) The essential difference between theoretical and practical Occultism; or what is generally known as Theosophy on the one hand, and Occult science on the other, and: —

(b) The nature of the difficulties involved in the study of the latter.

It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the meta-physical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer—is a Theosophist.

But it is quite another matter to put oneself upon the path which leads to the knowledge of what is good to do, as to the right discrimination of good from evil; a path which also leads a man to that power through which he can do the good he desires, often without even apparently lifting a finger.

Moreover, there is one important fact with which the student should be made acquainted. Namely, the enormous, almost limitless, responsibility assumed by the teacher for the sake of the pupil. From the Gurus of the East who teach openly or secretly, down to the few Kabalists in Western lands who undertake to teach the rudiments of the Sacred Science to their disciples—those western Hierophants being often themselves ignorant of the danger they incur—one and all of these "Teachers" are subject to the same inviolable law. From the moment they begin *really* to teach, from the instant they confer *any* power—whether psychic, mental or physical—on their pupils, they take upon themselves *all* the sins of that pupil, in connection with the Occult Sciences, whether of omission or commission, until the moment when initiation makes the pupil a Master and responsible in his turn. There is a weird and mystic religious law, greatly

reverenced and acted upon in the Greek, half-forgotten in the Roman Catholic, and absolutely extinct in the Protestant Church. It dates from the earliest days of Christianity and has its basis in the law just stated, of which it was a symbol and an expression. This is the dogma of the absolute sacredness of the relation between the god-parents who stand sponsors for a child.<sup>1</sup> These tacitly take upon themselves all the sins of the newly baptised child—(anointed, as at the initiation, a mystery truly!) —until the day when the child becomes a responsible unit, knowing good and evil. Thus it is clear why the "Teachers" are so reticent, and

why "Chelas" are required to serve a seven years probation to prove their fitness, and develop the qualities necessary to the security of both Master and pupil.

Occultism is not magic. It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic—*Sorcery*. For it is the motive, *and the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart—and this is DIVINE MAGIC.

What are then the conditions required to become a student of the "Divine Sapientia"? For let it be known that no such instruction can possibly be given unless these certain conditions are complied with, and rigorously carried out during the years of study. This is a *sine quâ non*. No man can swim unless he enters deep water. No bird can fly unless its wings are grown, and it has space before it and courage to trust itself to the air. A man who will wield a two edged sword, must be a thorough master of the blunt weapon, if he would not injure himself—or what is worse—others, at the first attempt.

-----  
<sup>1</sup> So holy is the connection thus formed deemed in the Greek Church, that a marriage between god-parents of the same child is regarded as the worst kind of incest, is considered illegal and is dissolved by law; and this absolute prohibition extends even to the children of one of the sponsors as regards those of the other.

To give an approximate idea of the conditions under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety, that is without danger that Divine will give place to Black Magic, a page is given from the "private rules," with which every instructor in the East is furnished. The few passages which follow are chosen from a great number and explained in brackets.

---

1. The place selected for receiving instruction must be a spot calculated not to distract the mind, and filled with "influence-evolving" (magnetic) objects. The five sacred colours gathered in a circle must be there among other things. The place must be free from any malignant influences hanging about in the air.

[The place must be set apart, and used for no other purpose. The five "sacred colours" are the prismatic hues arranged in a certain way, as these colours are very magnetic. By "malignant influences" are meant any disturbances through strife, quarrels, bad feelings, etc., as these are said to impress themselves immediately on the astral light, *i.e.*, in the atmosphere of the place, and to hang "about in the air." This first condition seems easy enough to accomplish, yet—on further consideration, it is one of the most difficult ones to obtain.]

2. Before the disciple shall be permitted to study "face to face," he has to acquire preliminary understanding in a select company of other *lay upasaka* (disciples), the number of whom must be odd.

["Face to face," means in this instance a study independent or apart from others, when the disciple gets his instruction *face to face* either with himself (his higher, Divine Self) or—his guru. It is then only that each receives *his due* of information, according to the use he has made of his knowledge. This can happen only toward the end of the cycle of instruction.]

3. Before thou (the teacher) shalt impart to thy *Lanoo* (disciple) the good (holy) words of LAMRIN, or shall permit him "to make ready" for *Dubjed*, thou shalt take care that his mind is thoroughly purified and at peace with all, especially *with his other Selves*. Other wise the words of Wisdom and of the good Law, shall scatter and be picked up by the winds.

["Lamrin" is a work of practical instructions, by Tson-kha-pa, in two portions, one for ecclesiastical and esoteric purposes, the other for esoteric use. "To make ready" for *Dubjed*, is to prepare the vessels used for seership, such as mirrors and crystals. The "other selves." refers to the fellow students. Unless the

greatest harmony reigns among the learners, *no* success is possible. It is the teacher who makes the selections according to the magnetic and electric natures of the students, bringing together and adjusting most carefully the positive and the negative elements.]

4. The *upasaka* while studying must take care to be united as the fingers on one hand. Thou shalt impress upon their minds that whatever hurts one should hurt the others, and if the rejoicing of one finds no echo in the breasts of the others, then the required conditions are absent, and it is useless to proceed.

[This can hardly happen if the preliminary choice made was consistent with the magnetic requirements. It is known that chelas otherwise promising and fit for the reception of truth, had to wait for years on account of their temper and the impossibility they felt to put themselves *in tune* with their companions. For—]

5. The co-disciples must be tuned by the guru as the strings of a lute (*vina*), each different from the others, yet each emitting sounds in harmony with all. Collectively they must form a key-board answering in all its parts to thy lightest touch (the touch of the Master). Thus their minds shall open for the harmonies of Wisdom, to vibrate as knowledge through each and all, resulting in effects pleasing to the presiding gods (tutelary or patron-angels) and useful to the Lanoo. So shall Wisdom be impressed forever on their hearts and the harmony of the law shall never be broken.

6. Those who desire to acquire the knowledge leading to the *Siddhis* (occult powers) have to renounce all the vanities of life and of the world (here follows enumeration of the *Siddhis*).

7. None can feel the difference between himself and his fellow-students, such as "I am the wisest," "I am more holy and pleasing to the teacher, or in my community, than my brother," etc.,—and remain an *upasaka*. His thoughts must be predominantly fixed upon his heart, chasing therefrom every hostile thought to any living being. It (the heart) must be full of the feeling of its non-separateness from the rest of beings as from all in Nature; otherwise no success can follow.

8. A *Lanoo* (disciple) has to dread external living influence alone (magnetic emanations from living creatures). For this reason while at one with all, in his *inner nature*, he must take care to separate his outer (external) body from every foreign influence: none must drink out of, or eat in his cup but himself. He must avoid bodily

contact (*i.e.* being touched or touch) with human, as with animal being.

[No pet animals are permitted and it is forbidden even to touch certain trees and plants. A disciple has to live, so to say, in his own atmosphere in order to individualize it for occult purposes.]

9. The mind must remain blunt to all but the universal truths in nature, lest the "Doctrine of the Heart" should become only the "Doctrine of the Eye," (*i.e.*, empty esoteric ritualism).

10. No animal food of whatever kind, nothing that has life in it, should be taken by the disciple. No wine, no spirits, or opium should be used: for these are like the *Lhamayin* (evil spirits), who fasten upon the unwary, they devour the understanding.

[Wine and Spirits are supposed to contain and preserve the bad magnetism of all the men who helped in their fabrication; the meat of each animal, to preserve the psychic characteristics of its kind.]

11. Meditation, abstinence in all, the observation of moral duties, gentle thoughts, good deeds and kind words, as good will to all and entire oblivion of Self, are the most efficacious means of obtaining knowledge and preparing for the reception of higher wisdom.

12. It is only by virtue of a strict observance of the foregoing rules that a Lanoo can hope to acquire in good time the Siddhis of the Arhats, the growth which makes him become gradually One with the UNIVERSAL ALL.

---

These twelve extracts are taken from amongst some seventy-three rules, to enumerate which would be useless, as they would be meaningless in Europe. But even these few are enough to show the immensity of the difficulties which beset the path of the would-be "Upasaka," who has been born and bred in Western lands.<sup>2</sup>

All Western, and especially English, education is instinct with the principle of emulation and strife; each boy is urged to learn more quickly, to outstrip his companions, and to surpass them in every possible way. What is mis-called "friendly rivalry" is assiduously cultivated, and the same spirit is fostered and strengthened in every detail of life.

With such ideas "educated into" him from his childhood, how

---

<sup>2</sup> Be it remembered that *all* "Chelas," even lay disciples, are called Upasaka until after their first initiation, when they become *lanoo-Upasaka*. To that day, even those who belong to Lamaseries and are *set apart*, are considered as "laymen."

96

H. P. BLAVATSKY

can a Westerner bring himself to feel towards his co-students "as the fingers on one hand"? Those co-students, too, are not of his *own selection*, or chosen by himself from personal sympathy and appreciation. They are chosen by his teacher on far other grounds, and he who would be a student must *first* be strong enough to kill out in his heart all feelings of dislike and antipathy to others. How many Westerners are ready even to attempt this in earnest?

And then the details of daily life, the command not to touch even the hand of one's nearest and dearest. How contrary to Western notions of affection and good feeling! How cold and hard it seems. Egotistical too, people would say, to abstain from giving pleasure to others for the sake of one's own development. Well, let those who think so defer, till another lifetime, the attempt to enter the path in real earnest. But let them not glory in their own fancied unselfishness. For, in reality, it is only the seeming appearances which they allow to deceive them, the conventional notions, based on emotionalism and gush, or so-called courtesy, things of the unreal life, not the dictates of Truth.

But even putting aside these difficulties, which may be considered "external," though their importance is none the less great, how are students in the West to "attune themselves" to harmony as here required of them? So strong has personality grown in Europe and America, that there is no school of artists even whose members do not hate and are not jealous of each other. "Professional" hatred and envy have become proverbial; men seek each to benefit himself at all costs, and even the so-called courtesies of life are but a hollow mask covering these demons of hatred and jealousy.

In the East the spirit of "non-separateness" is inculcated as steadily from childhood up, as in the West the spirit of rivalry. Personal ambition, personal feelings and desires, are not encouraged to grow so rampant there. When the soil is naturally good, it is cultivated in the right way, and the child grows into a man in whom the habit of subordination of one's lower to one's higher Self is strong and powerful.

In the West men think that their own likes and dislikes of other men and things are guiding principles for them to act upon, even when they do not make of them the law of their lives and seek to impose them upon others.

Let those who complain that they have learned little in the Theosophical Society lay to heart the words written in an article in the

97

## PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

*Path* for last February: "The key in each degree is the *aspirant himself*." It is not "the fear of God" which is "the beginning of Wisdom," but the knowledge of SELF which is WISDOM ITSELF.

How grand and true appears, thus, to the student of Occultism who has commenced to realise some of the foregoing truths, the answer given by the Delphic Oracle to all who came seeking after Occult Wisdom—words repeated and enforced again and again by the wise Socrates:—MAN KNOW THYSELF. . .

---

## SOME CORRESPONDENCE PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

"In a very interesting article in last month's number entitled 'Practical Occultism' it is stated that from the moment a 'Master' begins to teach a 'chela' he takes on himself all the sins of that chela in connection with the occult sciences until the moment when initiation makes the chela a master and responsible in his turn.

"For the Western mind, steeped as it has been for generations in 'Individualism,' it is very difficult to recognize the justice and consequently the truth of this statement, and it is very much to be desired that some further explanation should be given for a fact which some few may feel intuitively but for which they are quite unable to give any logical reason." —S. E.

EDITORS' REPLY. The best logical reason for it is the fact that even in common daily life, parents, nurses, tutors and instructors are generally held responsible for the habits and future ethics of a child. The little unfortunate wretch who is trained by his parents to pick pockets in the streets is not responsible for the sin, but the effects of it fall heavily on those who have impressed on his mind that it was the right thing to do. Let us hope that the Western Mind, although being steeped in Individualism," has not become so dulled thereby as not to perceive that there would be neither logic nor justice were it otherwise. And if the moulders of the

plastic mind of the yet unreasoning child must be held responsible, in this world of effects, for his sins of omission and commission during his childhood and for the effects produced by their early training in after life, how much more the "Spiritual Guru"? The latter taking the student by the hand leads him into, and introduces him to a world entirely

98

H. P. BLAVATSKY

unknown to the pupil. For this world is that of the invisible but ever potent CAUSALITY, the subtle, yet never-breaking thread that is the action, agent and power of Karma, and Karma itself in the field of divine mind. Once acquainted with this no adept can any longer plead ignorance in the event of even an action, good and meritorious in its *motive*, producing evil as its result; since acquaintance with this mysterious realm gives the means to the Occultist of foreseeing the two paths opening before every premeditated as unpremeditated action, and thus puts him in a position to know with certainty what will be the results in one or the other case. So long, then, as the pupil acts upon this principle, but is too ignorant to be sure of his vision and powers of discrimination, is it not natural that it is the *guide* who should be responsible for the sins of him whom he has led into those dangerous regions?

---

#### IS THERE NO HOPE?

I think, after reading the conditions necessary for Occult study given in the April number of LUCIFER, that it would be as well for the readers of this magazine to give up all hopes of becoming Occultists. In Britain, except inside a monastery, I hardly think it possible that such conditions could ever be realised. In my future capacity of medical doctor (if the gods are so benign) the eighth condition would be quite exclusive; this is most unfortunate, as it seems to me that the study of Occultism is peculiarly essential for a successful practice of the medical profession.<sup>3</sup>

I have the following question to ask you, and will be glad to be favoured with a reply through the medium of LUCIFER. IS it possible to study Occultism in Britain?

Before concluding, I feel compelled to inform you that, I admire your magazine as a scientific production, and that I really and truly classify it along with the "Imitation of Christ" among my text books of religion.

DAVID CRICHTON.  
Marischall College, Aberdeen.

EDITORS' REPLY. —This is a too pessimistic view to entertain. One may study with profit the Occult Sciences without rushing into the higher Occultism. In the case of our correspondent especially, and in his future capacity of medical doctor, "the Occult knowledge

---

<sup>3</sup> By "successful practice" I mean, successful to everybody concerned.

99

#### PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

of simples and minerals, and the curative powers of certain things in Nature," is far more important and useful than metaphysical and psychological Occultism or *Theophany*. And this he can do better by studying and trying to understand Paracelsus and the two Van Helmonts, than by assimilating Patanjali and the methods of Taraka Raja Yoga.

It is possible to study "Occultism" (the Occult sciences or arts is more correct) in Britain, as on any other point of the globe; though owing to the tremendously adverse conditions created by the intense selfishness that prevails in the country, and a magnetism which is repellent to a free manifestation of Spirituality—solitude is the best condition for study.

---

#### A SUBSEQUENT NOTE

[In *Lucifer* for June, 1889, H.P.B. printed a letter questioning the "practicality" of certain of the requirements of chelaship, as given in "Practical Occultism." She made the following reply in a footnote:]

Chelaship has nothing *whatever* to do with means of subsistence or anything of the kind, for a man can isolate his mind entirely from his body and its surroundings. Chelaship is a *state of mind*, rather than a life according to hard and fast rules on the physical plane. This applies especially to the earlier, probationary period, while the rules given in *Lucifer* for April last pertain properly to a later stage, that of actual occult training and the development of occult powers and insight. These rules indicate, however, the mode of life which ought to be followed by all aspirants *so far as practicable*, since it is the most helpful to them in their aspirations.

It should never be forgotten that Occultism is concerned with the *inner man* who must be strengthened and freed from the dominion of the physical body and its surroundings, which must become his servants. Hence the *first* and chief necessity of Chelaship is a spirit of absolute unselfishness and devotion to Truth; then follow self-knowledge and self-mastery. These are all-important; while outward observance of fixed rules of life is a matter of secondary moment.

*Lucifer*, April, May, 1888

June, 1889

## OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

vol. II 100-109

I oft have heard, but ne'er  
believed till now,  
There are, who can by potent spells  
Bend to their crooked purpose Nature's laws.  
— MILTON —

IN this month's "Correspondence" several letters testify to the strong impression produced on some minds by our last month's article "Practical Occultism." Such letters go far to prove and strengthen two logical conclusions.

(a) There are more well-educated and thoughtful men who believe in the existence of Occultism and Magic (the two differing vastly) than the modern materialist dreams of; and

(b) That most of the believers (comprising many theosophists) have no definite idea of the nature of Occultism and confuse it with the Occult sciences in general, the "Black art" included.

Their representations of the powers it confers upon man, and of the means to be used to acquire them are as varied as they are fanciful. Some imagine that a master in the art, to show the way, is all that is needed to become a Zanon. Others, that one has but to cross the Canal of Suez and go to India to bloom forth as a Roger Bacon or even a Count St. Germain. Many take for their ideal Margrave with his ever-renewing youth, and care little for the soul as the price paid for it. Not a few, mistaking "Witch-of-Endorism" pure and simple, for Occultism—"through the

yawning Earth from Stygian gloom, call up the meagre ghost to walks of light," and want, on the strength of this feat, to be regarded as full blown Adepts. "Ceremonial Magic" according to the rules mockingly laid down by Eliphas Levi, is another imagined *alter-ego* of the philosophy of the Arhats of old. In short, the prisms through which Occultism appears, to those innocent of the philosophy, are as multicoloured and varied as human fancy can make them.

Will these candidates to Wisdom and Power feel very indignant if told the plain truth? It is not only useful, but it has now become *necessary* to disabuse most of them and before it is too late. This truth may be said in a few words: There are not in the West half-a dozen among the fervent hundreds who call themselves "Occultists," who have even an approximately correct idea of the nature of the

Science they seek to master. With a few exceptions, they are all on the highway to Sorcery. Let them restore some order in the chaos that reigns in their minds, before they protest against this statement. Let them first learn the true relation in which the Occult Sciences stand to Occultism, and the difference between the two, and then feel wrathful if they still think themselves right. Meanwhile, let them learn that Occultism differs from Magic and other secret Sciences as the glorious sun does from a rush-light, as the immutable and immortal Spirit of Man reflection of the absolute, causeless and unknowable ALL—differs from the mortal clay—the human body.

In our highly civilized West, where modern languages have been formed, and words coined, in the wake of ideas and thoughts—as happened with every tongue—the more the latter became materialized in the cold atmosphere of Western selfishness and its incessant chase after the goods of this world, the less was there any need felt for the production of new terms to express that which was tacitly regarded as absolute and exploded "superstition." Such words could answer only to ideas which a cultured man was scarcely supposed to harbour in his mind. "Magic," a synonym for jugglery; "Sorcery," an equivalent for crass ignorance; and "Occultism," the sorry relic of crack-brained, mediæval Fire-philosophers, of the Jacob Boehmes and the St. Martins, are expressions believed more than amply sufficient to cover the whole field of "thimble-rigging." They are terms of contempt, and used generally only in reference to the dross and residues of the dark ages and its preceding æons of paganism. There fore have we no terms in the English tongue to define and shade the difference between such abnormal powers, or the sciences that lead to the acquisition of them, with the nicety possible

in the Eastern languages—pre-eminently the Sanskrit. What do the words "miracle" and "enchantment" (words identical in meaning after all, as both express the idea of producing wonderful things by *breaking the laws of nature* (!!)) as explained by the accepted authorities) convey to the minds of those who hear, or who pronounce them? A Christian—*breaking* "of the laws of nature," notwithstanding—while believing firmly in the *miracles*, because said to have been produced by God through Moses, will either scout the enchantments performed by Pharaoh's magicians, or attribute them to the devil. It is the latter whom our pious enemies connect with Occultism, while their impious foes, the infidels, laugh at Moses, Magicians, and Occultists, and would blush to give one serious thought to such

102

H. P. BLAVATSKY

"superstitions." This, because there is no term in existence to show the difference; no words to express the lights and shadows and draw the line of demarcation between the sublime and the true, the absurd and the ridiculous. The latter are the theological interpretations which teach the "breaking of the laws of Nature" by man, God, or devil; the former—the *scientific* "miracles" and enchantments of Moses and the Magicians *in accordance with natural laws*, both having been learned in all the Wisdom of the Sanctuaries, which were the "Royal Societies" of those days—and in true OCCULTISM. This last word is certainly misleading, translated as it stands from the compound word *Gupta-Vidya*, "Secret Knowledge." But the knowledge of what? Some of the Sanskrit terms may help us.

There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the esoteric Purânas. There is (1) *Yajna-Vidya*,<sup>1</sup> knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Maha-vidya*, the "great knowledge," the magic of the Kabalists and of the *Tantrika* worship, often Sorcery of the worst description. (3) *Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) ATMA-VIDYA, a term which is translated simply "knowledge of the Soul," *true Wisdom* by the Orientalists, but which means far more.

This last is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires *Light on the Path*, and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. All the rest is some branch of the "Occult Sciences," *i.e.*, arts based on the knowledge of the

ultimate essence of all things in the Kingdoms of Nature—such as minerals, plants and animals—hence of things pertaining to the realm of *material* nature,

-----

<sup>1</sup> "The *Yajna*," say the Brahmans, "exists from eternity, for it proceeded forth from the Supreme One. . . in whom it lay dormant from 'no beginning.' It is the key to TRIVIDYA, the thrice sacred science contained in the Rig verses, which teaches the Yagus or sacrificial mysteries. 'The Yajna' exists as an invisible thing at all times; it is like the latent power of electricity in an electrifying machine, requiring only the operation of a suitable apparatus in order to be elicited. It is supposed to extend from the *Ahavaniya* or sacrificial fire to the heavens, forming a bridge or ladder by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend when alive to their abodes." —Martin Hauge's *Aitareya Brahmana*.

"This *Yajna* is again one of the forms of the Akasa; and the mystic word calling it into existence and pronounced mentally by the initiated Priest is the *Lost Word* receiving impulse through WILL-POWER." *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, Intr. See *Aitareya Brahmana*, Hauge.

however invisible that essence may be, and howsoever much it has hitherto eluded the grasp of Science. Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature and the *exact* Sciences—perhaps so called, because they are found in this age of paradoxical philosophies the reverse—have already discovered not a few of the secrets of the above *arts*. But clairvoyance, symbolised in India as the "Eye of Siva," called in Japan, "Infinite Vision," is *not* Hypnotism, the illegitimate son of Mesmerism, and is not to be acquired by such arts. All the others may be mastered and results obtained, whether good, bad or indifferent; but *Atma-Vidya* sets small value on them. It includes them all and may even use them occasionally, but it does so after purifying them of their dross, for beneficent purposes, and taking care to deprive them of every element of selfish motive. Let us explain: Any man or woman can set himself or herself to study one or all of the above specified "Occult Arts" without any great previous preparation, and even without adopting any too restraining mode of life. One could even dispense with any lofty standard of morality. In the last case, of course, ten to one the student would blossom into a very decent kind of sorcerer, and tumble down headlong into black magic. But what can this matter? The *Voodoos* and the *Dugpas* eat, drink and are merry over heca-tombs of victims of their infernal arts. And so do the amiable gentlemen vivisectionists and the *diploma-ed* "Hypnotizers" of the Faculties of Medicine; the only difference between the two classes being that the *Voodoos* and *Dugpas* are

*conscious*, and the Charcot-Richet crew *unconscious*, Sorcerers. Thus, since both have to reap the fruits of their labours and achievements in the black art, the Western practitioners should not have the punishment and reputation without the profits and enjoyments they may get therefrom. For we say it again, *hypnotism* and *vivisection* as practiced in such schools, are schools, are *Sorcery* pure and simple, *minus* a knowledge that the Voodoos and Dugpas enjoy, and which no Charcot-Richet can procure for himself in fifty years of hard study and experimental observation. Let then those who will dabble in magic, whether they understand its nature or not, but who find the rules imposed upon students too hard, and who, therefore lay *Atma-Vidya* or Occultism aside—go without it. Let them become magicians by all means, even though they do become *Voodoos* and *Dugpas* for the next ten incarnations.

But the interest of our readers will probably centre on those who

104

H. P. BLAVATSKY

are invincibly attracted towards the "Occult," yet who neither realise the true nature of what they aspire towards, nor have they become passion-proof, far less truly unselfish.

How about these unfortunates, we shall be asked, who are thus rent in twain by conflicting forces? For it has been said too often to need repetition, and the fact itself is patent to any observer, that when once the desire for Occultism has really awakened in a man's heart, there remains for him no hope of peace, no place of rest and comfort in all the world. He is driven out into the wild and desolate spaces of life by an ever-gnawing unrest he cannot quell. His heart is too full of passion and selfish desire to permit him to pass the Golden Gate; he cannot find rest or peace in ordinary life. Must he then inevitably fall into sorcery and black magic, and through many incarnations heap up for himself a terrible Karma? Is there no other road for him?

Indeed there is, we answer. Let him aspire to no higher than he feels able to accomplish. Let him not take a burden upon himself too heavy for him to carry. Without ever becoming a "Mahatma," a Buddha or a Great Saint, let him study the philosophy and the "Science of Soul," and he can become one of the modest benefactors of humanity, without any superhuman powers. *Siddhis* (or the Arhat powers) are only for those who are able to "lead the life," to comply with the terrible sacrifices required for such a training, and to comply with them *to the very letter*. Let them know at once and remember always, that *true Occultism* or

*Theosophy* is the "Great Renunciation of SELF," unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. It is ALTRUISM, and it throws him who practises it out of calculation of the ranks of the living altogether. "Not for himself, but for the world, he lives," as soon as he has pledged himself to the work. Much is forgiven during the first years of probation. But, no sooner is he "accepted" than his personality must disappear, and he has to become *a mere beneficent force in Nature*. There are two poles for him after that, two paths, and no midward place of rest. He has either to ascend laboriously, step by step, often through numerous incarnations and *no Devachanic break*, the golden ladder leading to Mahatmaship (the *Arhat* or *Bodhisatva* condition), or—he will let himself slide down the ladder at the first false step, and roll down into *Dugpaship*. . . .

All this is either unknown or left out of sight altogether. Indeed, one who is able to follow the silent evolution of the preliminary

aspirations of the candidates, often finds strange ideas quietly taking possession of their minds. There are those whose reasoning powers have been so distorted by foreign influences that they imagine that animal passions can be so sublimated and elevated that their fury, force, and fire can, so to speak, be turned inwards; that they can be stored and shut up in one's breast, until their energy is, not expanded, but turned toward higher and more holy purposes: namely, until *their collective and unexpanded strength enables their possessor to enter the true Sanctuary of the Soul* and stand therein in the presence of the *Master*—the HIGHER SELF! For this purpose they will not struggle with their passions nor slay them. They will simply, by a strong effort of will put down the fierce flames and keep them at bay within their natures, allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. They submit joyfully to the torture of the Spartan boy who allowed the fox to devour his entrails rather than part with it. Oh, poor blind visionaries!

As well hope that a band of drunken chimney-sweeps, hot and greasy from their work, may be shut up in a Sanctuary hung with pure white linen, and that instead of soiling and turning it by their presence into a heap of dirty shreds, they will become masters in and of the sacred recess, and finally emerge from it as immaculate as that recess. Why not imagine that a dozen of skunks imprisoned in the pure atmosphere of a *Dgon-pa* (a monastery) can issue out of it impregnated with all the perfumes of the incenses used? . . . Strange aberration of the human mind. Can it be so? Let us argue.

The "Master" in the Sanctuary of our souls is "the Higher Self"—the divine spirit whose consciousness is based upon and derived solely (at any rate during the mortal life of the man in whom it is captive) from the Mind, which we have agreed to call the *Human Soul* (the "Spiritual Soul" being the vehicle of the Spirit). In its turn the former (the *personal* or human soul) is a compound in its highest form, of spiritual aspirations, volition, and divine love; and in its lower aspect, of animal desires and terrestrial passions imparted to it by its associations with its vehicle, the seat of all these. It thus stands as a link and a medium between the animal nature of man which its higher reason seeks to subdue, and his divine spiritual nature to which it gravitates, whenever it has the upper hand in its struggle with the *inner animal*. The latter is the instinctual "animal Soul" and is the hotbed of those passions, which, as just shown, are lulled instead of being killed, and locked up in their breasts by some

imprudent enthusiasts. Do they still hope to turn thereby the muddy stream of the animal sewer into the crystalline waters of life? And where, on what neutral ground can they be imprisoned so as not to affect man? The fierce passions of love and lust are still alive and they are allowed to still remain in the place of their birth—*that same animal soul*; for both the higher and the lower portions of the "Human Soul" or Mind reject such inmates, though they cannot avoid being tainted with them as neighbours. The "Higher Self" or Spirit is as unable to assimilate such feelings as water to get mixed with oil or unclean liquid tallow. It is thus the mind alone, the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self—that is the only sufferer, and which is in the incessant danger of being dragged down by those passions that may be re-awakened at any moment, and perish in the abyss of matter. And how can it ever attune itself to the divine harmony of the highest Principle, when that harmony is destroyed by the mere presence, within the Sanctuary in preparation, of such animal passions? How can harmony prevail and conquer, when the soul is stained and distracted with the turmoil of passions and the terrestrial desires of the bodily senses, or even of the "Astral man"?

For this "Astral"—the shadowy "double" (in the animal as in man) is not the companion of the *divine* Ego but of the *earthly body*. It is the link between the personal SELF, the lower consciousness of *Manas* and the Body, and is the vehicle of *transitory, not of immortal life*. Like the shadow projected by man, it follows his movements and impulses slavishly and mechanically, and leans therefore to matter without ever ascending to Spirit. It is only when the power of the passions

is dead altogether, and when they have been crushed and annihilated in the retort of an unflinching will; when not only all the lusts and longings of the flesh are dead, but also the recognition of the personal Self is killed out and the "astral" has been reduced in consequence to a cipher, that the Union with the "Higher Self" can take place. Then when the "Astral" reflects only the conquered man, the still living but no more the longing, selfish personality, then the brilliant *Augoeides*, the divine SELF, can vibrate in conscious harmony with both the poles of the human Entity—the man of matter purified, and the ever pure Spiritual Soul—and stand in the presence of the MASTER SELF, the Christos of the mystic Gnostic, blended, merged into, and one with IT forever.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Those who would feel inclined to see three *Egos* in one man will show themselves unable to perceive the metaphysical meaning. Man is a trinity composed of Body, Soul and Spirit; but *man* is nevertheless *one*, and is surely not his body. It is the latter which is the property, the transitory clothing of the man. The three "Egos" are MAN in his three aspects on the astral, intellectual or psychic, and the Spiritual planes, or states.

How then can it be thought possible for a man to enter the "straight gate" of occultism when his daily and hourly thoughts are bound up with worldly things, desires of possession and power, with lust, ambition and duties, which, however honourable, are still of the earth earthy? Even the love for wife and family—the purest as the most unselfish of human affections—is a barrier to *real* occultism. For whether we take as an example the holy love of a mother for her child, or that of a husband for his wife, even in these feelings, when analyzed to the very bottom, and thoroughly sifted, there is still *selfishness* in the first, and an *égoïsme à deux* in the second instance. What mother would not sacrifice without a moment's hesitation hundreds of thousands of lives for that of the child of her heart? and what lover or true husband would not break the happiness of every other man and woman around him to satisfy the desire of one whom he loves? This is but natural, we shall be told. Quite so; in the light of the code of human affections; less so, in that of divine universal love. For, while the heart is full of thoughts for a little group of *selves*, near and dear to us, how shall the rest of mankind fare in our souls? What percentage of love and care will there remain to bestow on the "great orphan"? And how shall the "still small voice" make itself heard in a soul entirely occupied with its own privileged tenants? What room is there left for the needs of Humanity *en bloc* to impress themselves upon, or even receive a speedy response? And yet he who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it

through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status. It is *altruism*, not *ego-ism* even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self in the Universal Selves. It is to *these* needs and to this work that the true disciple of true Occultism has to devote himself, if he would obtain *theo-sophy*, divine Wisdom and Knowledge.

The aspirant has to choose absolutely between the life of the world and the life of Occultism. It is useless and vain to endeavour to unite the two, for no one can serve two masters and satisfy both. No one can serve his body and the higher Soul, and do his family duty and his universal duty, without depriving either one or the other of its rights; for he will either lend his ear to the "still small

108

H. P. BLAVATSKY

voice" and fail to hear the cries of his little ones, or, he will listen but to the wants of the latter and remain deaf to the voice of Humanity. It would be a ceaseless, a maddening struggle for almost any married man, who would pursue *true* practical Occultism, instead of its *theoretical* philosophy. For he would find himself ever hesitating between the voice of the impersonal divine love of Humanity, and that of the personal, terrestrial love. And this could only lead him to fail in one or the other, or perhaps in both his duties. Worse than this. For, *whoever indulges after having pledged himself to OCCULTISM in the gratification of a terrestrial love or lust*, must feel an almost immediate result; that of being irresistibly dragged from the impersonal divine state down to the lower plane of matter. Sensual, or even mental self-gratification, involves the immediate loss of the powers of spiritual discernment; the voice of the MASTER can no longer be distinguished from that of one's passions *or even that of a Dugpa*; the right from wrong; sound morality from mere casuistry. The Dead Sea fruit assumes the most glorious mystic appearance, only to turn to ashes on the lips, and to gall in the heart resulting in: —

Depth ever deepening,  
darkness darkening still;  
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;  
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair.

And once being mistaken and having acted on their mistakes, most men shrink from realizing their error, and thus descend deeper and deeper into the mire. And, although it is the intention that decides primarily whether *white* or *black* magic is exercised, yet the results even of involuntary, unconscious sorcery cannot fail to be productive of bad Karma. Enough has been said to show that *sorcery is any kind of evil influence exercised upon other persons, who suffer, or make other persons suffer, in*

*consequence*. Karma is a heavy stone splashed in the quiet waters of Life; and it must produce ever widening circles of ripples, carried wider and wider, almost *ad infinitum*. Such causes produced have to call forth effects, and these are evidenced in the just laws of Retribution.

Much of this may be avoided if people will only abstain from rushing into practices neither the nature nor importance of which they understand. No one is expected to carry a burden beyond his strength and powers. There are "natural-born magicians"; Mystics and Occultists by birth, and by right of direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and æons of suffering and failures. These are passion-proof, so to say. No fires of earthly origin can fan into a

flame any of their senses or desires; no human voice can find response in their souls, except the great cry of Humanity. These only may be certain of success. But they can be met only far and wide, and they pass through the narrow gates of Occultism because they carry no personal luggage of human transitory sentiments along with them. They have got rid of the feeling of the lower personality, paralyzed thereby the "astral" animal, and the golden, but narrow gate is thrown open before them. Not so with those who have to carry yet for several incarnations the burden of sins committed in previous lives, and even in their present existence. For such, unless they proceed with great caution, the golden gate of Wisdom may get transformed into the wide gate and the broad way "that leadeth unto destruction," and therefore "many be they that enter in thereby." This is the Gate of the Occult arts, practised for selfish motives and in the absence of the restraining and beneficent influence of ATMA-VIDYA. We are in the Kali Yuga and its fatal influence is a thousand-fold more powerful in the West than it is in the East; hence the easy preys made by the Powers of the Age of Darkness in this cyclic struggle, and the many delusions under which the world is now labouring. One of these is the relative facility with which men fancy they can get at the "Gate" and cross the threshold of Occultism without any great sacrifice. It is the dream of most Theosophists, one inspired by desire for Power and personal selfishness, and it is not such feelings that can ever lead them to the coveted goal. For, as well said by one believed to have sacrificed himself for Humanity—"narrow is the gate and straightened the way that leadeth unto life" eternal, and therefore "few be they that find it." So straight indeed, that at the bare mention of some of the preliminary difficulties the affrighted Western candidates turn back and retreat with a shudder. . . .

Let them stop here and attempt no more in their great weakness. For if, while turning their backs on the narrow gate, they are dragged by their desire for the Occult one step in the direction of the broad and more inviting Gates of that golden mystery which glitters in the light of illusion, woe to them! It can lead only to Dugpa-ship, and they will be sure to find themselves very soon landed on that *Via Fatale* of the *Inferno*, over whose portal Dante read the words: —

*Per me si va nella  
citta dolente  
Per me si va nell'eterno dolore  
Per me si va tra la perduta gente. . . .*

*Lucifer*, May, 1888

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS  
Article by H. P. Blavatsky  
vol. II pps. 110-114

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI's well-known lines:

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Does the journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

are like an epitome of the life of those who are truly treading the path which leads to higher things. Whatever differences are to be found in the various presentations of the Esoteric Doctrine, as in every age it donned a fresh garment, different both in hue and texture to that which preceded; yet in every one of them we find the fullest agreement upon one point--the road to spiritual development. One only inflexible rule has been ever binding upon the neophyte, as it is binding now--the *complete* subjugation of the lower nature by the higher. From the Vedas and Upanishads to the recently published *Light on the Path*, search as we may through the bibles of every race and cult, we find but one only way,--hard, painful, troublesome, by which men can gain the true spiritual insight. And how can it be otherwise, since all religions and all philosophies are but the variants of the first teachings of the One Wisdom, imparted to men at the beginning of the cycle by the Planetary Spirit?

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, become--he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent, and not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change; and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again, the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption: the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical but mental and intellectual.

111

## SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives. The trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen--it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescence, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg, but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime--every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much, they are not content to leave well alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce karma to be worked out in a future birth.

One of the subtlest forms of this evil is the hope and desire of reward. Many there are who, albeit often unconsciously, are yet spoiling all their efforts by entertaining this idea of reward, and allowing it to become an active factor in their lives, and so leaving the door open to anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency--failure.

The goal of the aspirant for spiritual wisdom is entrance upon a higher plane of existence; he is to become a new man, more perfect in every way than he is at

present, and if he succeeds, his capabilities and faculties will receive a corresponding increase of range and power, just as in the visible world we find that each stage in the evolutionary scale is marked by increase of capacity. This is how it is that the Adept becomes endowed with marvellous powers that have been so often described, but the main point to be remembered is, that these powers are the natural accompaniments of existence on a higher plane of evolution, just as the ordinary human faculties are the natural accompaniments of existence on the ordinary human plane.

Many persons seem to think that adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man, who, by going through a certain plainly defined course of training, consisting of minute attention

112

H. P. BLAVATSKY

to a set of arbitrary rules, acquires first one power and then another; and, when he has attained a certain number of these powers is forthwith dubbed an adept. Acting on this mistaken idea, they fancy that the first thing to be done towards attaining adeptship is to acquire "powers"--clairvoyance and the power of leaving the physical body and travelling to a distance are among those which fascinate the most.

To those who wish to acquire such powers for their own private advantage, we have nothing to say; they fall under the condemnation of all who act for purely selfish ends. But there are others, who, mistaking effect for cause, honestly think that the acquirement of abnormal powers is the only road to spiritual advancement. These look upon our Society as merely the readiest means to enable them to gain knowledge in this direction, considering it as a sort of occult academy, an institution established to afford facilities for the instruction of would-be miracle-workers. In spite of repeated protests and warnings, there are some minds in whom this notion seems ineradicably fixed, and they are loud in their expressions of disappointment when they find that what had been previously told them is perfectly true; that the Society was founded to teach no new and easy paths to the acquisition of "powers"; and that its only mission is to rekindle the torch of truth, so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth alive by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind, the only soil in which the good seed can grow. The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient Rishis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism; it is no

dispenser of patent nostrums composed of violent remedies which no honest dealer would dare to use.

In this connection we would warn all our members, and others who are seeking spiritual knowledge, to beware of persons offering to teach them easy methods of acquiring psychic gifts; such gifts (*laukika*) are indeed comparatively easy of acquirement by artificial means, but fade out as soon as the nerve-stimulus exhausts itself. The real seership and adeptship which is accompanied by true psychic development (*lokothra*), once reached, is never lost.

It appears that various societies have sprung into existence since the foundation of the Theosophical Society, profiting by the interest the latter has awakened in matters of psychic research, and endeavouring to gain members by promising them easy acquirement of psychic

powers. In India we have long been familiar with the existence of hosts of sham ascetics of all descriptions, and we fear that there is fresh danger in this direction, here, as well as in Europe and America. We only hope that none of our members, dazzled by brilliant promises, will allow themselves to be taken in by self-deluded dreamers, or, it may be, wilful deceivers.

To show that some real necessity exists for our protests and warnings, we may mention that we have recently seen, enclosed in a letter from Benares, copies of an advertisement put forth by a so-called "Mahatma." He calls for "eight men and women who know English and any of the Indian vernaculars well"; and concludes by saying that "those who want to know particulars of the work and *the amount of pay*" should apply to his address, with enclosed postage stamps! Upon the table before us lies a reprint of "The Divine Pymander," published in England last year, and which contains a notice to "*Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDOO MAHATMAS*"; cordially inviting them to send in their names to the Editor, who will see them, "after a short probation," admitted into an Occult Brotherhood who "teach *freely* and WITHOUT RESERVE all they find worthy to receive." Strangely enough, we find in the very volume in question Hermes Trismegistus saying:

"Herein is the only way which leads to Truth, which, indeed, our ancestors trod, and by which they arrived at the attainment of the Good. This way is beautiful and even; nevertheless, it is difficult for the soul to walk therein so long as she is

immured within the prison of the body. . . . *Therefore, abstain from the crowd, so that by means of ignorance the vulgar may be kept within bounds, even through fear of the unknown.*"

It is perfectly true that some Theosophists have been (through nobody's fault but their own) greatly disappointed because we have offered them no short cut to Yoga Vidya, and there are others who wish for practical work. And, significantly enough, those who have done least for the Society are loudest in fault-finding. Now, why do not these persons and all our members who are able to do so, take up the serious study of mesmerism? Mesmerism has been called the Key to the Occult Sciences, and it has this advantage that it offers peculiar opportunities for doing good to mankind. If in each of our branches we were able to establish a homeopathic dispensary with the addition of mesmeric healing, such as has already been done with

114

H. P. BLAVATSKY

great success in Bombay, we might contribute towards putting the science of medicine in this country on a sounder basis, and be the means of incalculable benefit to the people at large.

There are others of our branches, besides the one at Bombay, that have done good work in this direction, but there is room for infinitely more to be done than has yet been attempted. And the same is the case in the various other departments of the Society's work. It would be a good thing if the members of each branch would put their heads together and seriously consult as to what tangible steps they can take to further the declared objects of the Society. In too many cases the members of the Theosophical Society content themselves with a somewhat superficial study of its books, without making any real contribution to its active work. If the Society is to be a power for good in this and other lands, it can only bring about this result by the active cooperation of every one of its members, and we would earnestly appeal to each of them to consider carefully what possibilities of work are within his power, and then to *earnestly set about carrying them into effect*. Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action. There is not a single member in the Society who is not able to do *something* to aid the cause of truth and universal brotherhood; it only depends on his own will, to make that *something* an accomplished fact.

Above all we would reiterate the fact that the Society is no nursery for incipient adepts; teachers cannot be provided to go round and give instruction to various

branches on the different subjects which come within the Society's work of investigation; the branches must study for themselves; books are to be had, and the knowledge there put forth must be practically applied by the various members: thus will be developed self-reliance and reasoning powers. We urge this strongly; for appeals have reached us that any lecturer sent to branches must be practically versed in experimental psychology and clairvoyance (*i.e.*, looking into magic mirrors and reading the future, etc., etc.). Now we consider that such experiments should originate amongst members themselves to be of any value in the development of the individual or to enable him to make progress in his "uphill" path, and therefore earnestly recommend our members to *try* for themselves.

*Theosophist*, May, 1885

## ELEMENTALS

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

vol. II p, 127--163

I II III Elementals R

THE Universal Æther was not, in the eyes of the ancients, simply a tenantless something, stretching throughout the expanse of heaven; it was for them a boundless ocean, peopled like our familiar earthly seas, with Gods, Planetary Spirits, monstrous and minor creatures, and having in its every molecule the germs of life from the potential up to the most developed. Like the finny tribes which swarm in our oceans and familiar bodies of water, each kind having its *habitat* in some spot to which it is curiously adapted, some friendly, and some inimical to man, some pleasant and some frightful to behold, some seeking the refuge of quiet nooks and land-locked harbours, and some traversing great areas of water; so the various races of the Planetary, Elemental, and other Spirits, were believed by them to inhabit the different portions of the great ethereal ocean, and to be exactly adapted to their respective conditions.

According to the ancient doctrines, every member of this varied ethereal population, from the highest "Gods" down to the soulless Elementals, was evolved by the ceaseless motion inherent in the astral light. Light is force, and the latter is produced by the *will*. As this will proceeds from an intelligence which cannot err, for it is absolute and

immutable and has nothing of the material organs of *human* thought in it, being the superfine pure emanation of the ONE LIFE itself, it proceeds from the beginning of time, according to immutable laws, to evolve the elementary fabric requisite for subsequent generations of what we term human races. All of the latter, whether belonging to this planet or to some other of the myriads in space, have their earthly bodies evolved in this matrix out of the bodies of a certain class of these elemental beings--the primordial germ of Gods and men--which have passed away into the visible worlds. In the Ancient Philosophy there was no

128

H. P. BLAVATSKY

missing link to be supplied by what Tyndall calls an "educated imagination"; no hiatus to be filled with volumes of materialistic speculations made necessary by the absurd attempt to solve an equation with but one set of quantities; our "ignorant" ancestors traced the law of evolution throughout the whole universe. As by gradual progression from the star-cloudlet to the development of the physical body of man, the rule holds good, so from the Universal Æther to the incarnate human spirit, they traced one uninterrupted series of entities. These evolutions were from the world of Spirit into the world of gross Matter: and through that back again to the source of all things. The "descent of species" was to them a descent from the Spirit, primal source of all, to the "degradation of Matter." In this complete chain of unfoldings the elementary, spiritual beings had as distinct a place, midway between the extremes, as Mr. Darwin's missing-link between the ape and man.

No author in the world of literature ever gave a more truthful or more poetical description of these beings than Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton, the author of *Zanoni*. Now, himself "a thing not of matter" but an "idea of joy and light," his words sound more like the faithful echo of memory than the exuberant outflow of mere imagination. He makes the wise Mejnour say to Glyndon:

Man is arrogant in proportion of his ignorance. For several ages he saw in the countless worlds that sparkle through space like the bubbles of a shoreless ocean, only the petty candles . . . that Providence has been pleased to light for no other purpose but to make the night more

agreeable to man. . . . Astronomy has corrected this delusion of human vanity, and man now reluctantly confesses that the stars are worlds, larger and more glorious than his own. . . . Everywhere, in this immense design, science brings new life to light. . . . Reasoning, then, by evident analogy, if not a leaf, if not a drop of water, but is, no less than yonder star, a habitable and breathing world--nay, if even man himself is a world to other lives, and millions and myriads dwell in the rivers of his blood, and inhabit man's frame, as man inhabits earth--common sense (if our schoolmen had it) would suffice to teach that the circumfluent infinite which you call space--the boundless impalpable which divides earth from the moon and stars--is filled also with its correspondent and appropriate life. Is it not a visible absurdity to suppose that being is crowded upon every leaf, and yet absent from the immensities of space! The law of the great system forbids the waste even of an atom; it knows no spot where something of life does not breathe. . . . Well, then, can you conceive that

129

#### ELEMENTALS

space, which is the infinite itself, is alone a waste, is alone lifeless, is less useful to the one design of universal being . . . than the peopled leaf, than the swarming globule? The microscope shows you the creatures on the leaf; *no mechanical tube is yet invented to discover the nobler and more gifted things that hover in the illimitable air.* Yet between these last and man is a mysterious *and terrible affinity.* . . . But first, to penetrate this barrier, the soul with which you listen must be sharpened by intense enthusiasm, purified from all earthly desires. . . . When thus prepared, science can be brought to aid it; the sight itself may be rendered more subtile, the nerves more acute, the spirit more alive and outward, and the element itself--the air, the space--may be made, by certain secrets of the higher chemistry, more palpable and clear. And this, too, is not *Magic* as the credulous call it; as I have so often said before, *Magic* (a science that violates Nature) exists not; it is *but the science by which Nature can be controlled.* Now, in space there are millions of beings, *not literally spiritual,* for they have all, like the animalculæ unseen by the naked eye, certain forms of matter, though matter so delicate, air-drawn, and subtile, that it is, as it were, but a film, a gossamer, that clothes the spirit. . . . Yet, in truth, these races

differ most widely . . . *some of surpassing wisdom, some of horrible malignity; some hostile as fiends to men, others gentle as messengers between earth and heaven.*<sup>1</sup>

Such is the insufficient sketch of Elemental Beings void of Divine Spirit, given by one whom many with reason believed to know more than he was prepared to admit in the face of an incredulous public. We have underlined the few lines than *which nothing can be more graphically descriptive*. An Initiate, having a personal knowledge of these creatures, could do no better.

We may pass now to the "Gods," or Daimons, of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and from these to the Devas and Pitris of the still more ancient Hindû Âryans.

Who or what were the Gods, or Daimonia, of the Greeks and Romans? The name has since then been monopolized and disfigured to their own use by the Christian Fathers. Ever following in the footsteps of old Pagan Philosophers on the well-trodden highway of their speculations, while, as ever, trying to pass these off as new tracks on virgin soil, and themselves as the first pioneers in a hitherto pathless forest of eternal truths--they repeated the Zoroastrian ruse: to make a clean sweep of all the Hindû Gods and Deities, Zoroaster had called them all Devs, and adopted the name as designating only evil powers. *So did the Christian*

---

1- Bulwer-Lytton, Zanoni

*Fathers*. They applied the sacred name of Daimonia--the divine Egos of man--to their devils, a fiction of diseased brains, and thus dishonoured the anthropomorphized symbols of the natural sciences of wise antiquity, and made them all loathesome in the sight of the ignorant and the unlearned.

What the Gods and Daimonia, or Daimons, really were, we may learn from Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, and many other renowned Sages and

Philosophers of pre-Christian, as well as post-Christian days. We will give some of their views.

Xenocrates, who expounded many of the unwritten theories and teachings of his master, and who surpassed Plato in his definition of the doctrine of invisible magnitudes, taught that the Daimons are intermediate beings between the divine perfection and human sinfulness,<sup>2</sup> and he divides them into classes, each subdivided into many others. But he states expressly that the individual or personal Soul is the leading guardian Daimon of every man, and that no Daimon has more power over us than our own. Thus the Daimonion of Socrates is the God or Divine Entity which inspired him all his life. It depends on man either to open or close his perceptions to the Divine voice.

Heracleides, who adopted fully the Pythagorean and Platonic views of the human Soul, its nature and faculties, speaking of Spirits, calls them "Daimons with airy and vaporous bodies," and affirms that *Souls* inhabit the Milky Way before descending "into generation" or sublunary existence.

Again, when the author of *Epinomis* locates between the highest and lowest Gods (embodied Souls) three classes of Daimons, and peoples the universe with invisible beings, he is more rational than either our modern Scientists, who make between the two extremes one vast hiatus of being, the playground of blind forces, or the Christian Theologians, who call every pagan God, a *dæmon*, or devil. Of these three classes the first two are invisible; their bodies are pure ether and fire (Planetary Spirits); the Daimons of the third class are clothed with vapoury bodies; they are usually invisible, but sometimes, making themselves concrete, become visible for a few seconds. These are the earthly spirits, or our astral souls.

The fact is, that the word Daimon was given by the ancients, and especially by the Philosophers of the Alexandrian school, to all kinds of spirits, whether good or bad, human or otherwise, but

---

<sup>1</sup> Bulwer-Lytton, *Zanoni*.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *De Isid.*, ch. xxv, p. 360.

the appellation was often synonymous with that of Gods or angels. For instance, the "Samothraces" was a designation of the Fane-gods; worshipped at Samothracia in the Mysteries. They are considered as identical with the Cabeiri, Dioscuri, and Corybantes. Their names were mystical--denoting Pluto, Ceres or Proserpina, Bacchus, and Æsculapius or Hermes, and they were all referred to as Daimons.

Apuleius, speaking in the same symbolical and veiled language, of the *two Souls*, the human and the divine, says:

The human soul is a demon that our language may name genius. She is an *immortal god*, though in a certain sense she is born at the same time as the man in whom she is. Consequently, we may say that she dies in the same way that she is born.

Eminent men were also called Gods by the ancients. Deified during life, even their "shells" were revered during a part of the Mysteries. Belief in Gods, in Larvæ and Umbræ, was a universal belief then, as it is fast becoming--*now*. Even the greatest Philosophers, men who have passed to posterity as the hardest Materialists and Atheists--only because they rejected the grotesque idea of a personal *extra-cosmic* God--such as Epicurus, for instance, believed in Gods and invisible beings. Going far back into antiquity, out of the great body of Philosophers of the pre-Christian ages, we may mention Cicero, as one who can least be accused of superstition and credulity. Speaking of those whom he calls Gods and who are either human or atmospheric spirits, he says:

We know that of all livings beings man is the best formed, and, as the gods belong to this number, they must have a human form. . . . I do not mean to say that the gods have body and blood in them; but I say that they *seem* as if they had bodies with blood in them. . . . Epicurus, for whom hidden things were as tangible as if he had touched them with his finger, teaches us that gods are not generally visible, but that they

are *intelligible*; that they are not bodies having a certain solidity . . . but that we can recognize them by their *passing* images; that as there are *atoms* enough in the infinite space to *produce such images*, these are produced before us . . . and make us realize what are these happy, immortal beings.<sup>3</sup>

If, turning from Greece and Egypt to the cradle of universal civilization, India, we interrogate the Brâhmans and their most admirable Philosophies, we find them calling their Gods and their

---

<sup>3</sup> De Natura Deorum, lib. i. Cap. xviii.

Daimonia by such a number and variety of appellations, that the thirty-three millions of these Deities would require a whole library to contain only their names and attributes. We will choose for the present time only two names out of the Pantheon. These groups are the most important as well as the least understood by the Orientalists--their true nature having been all along wrapped in obscurity by the unwillingness of the Brâhmans to divulge their philosophical secrets. We will speak of but the Devas and the Pitris.

The former aerial beings are some of them superior, others inferior, to man. The term means literally the Shining Ones, the resplendent; and it covers spiritual beings of various degrees, including entities from previous planetary periods, who take active part in the formation of new solar systems and the training of infant humanities, as well as unprogressed Planetary Spirits, who will, at spiritualistic *séances*, simulate human deities and even characters on the stage of human history.

As to the Deva Yonis, they are Elementals of a lower kind in comparison with the Kosmic "Gods," and are subjected to the will of even the sorcerer. To this class belong the gnomes, sylphs, fairies, djins, etc. They are the Soul of the elements, the capricious forces in Nature, acting under one immutable Law, inherent in these Centres of Force, with

undeveloped consciousness and bodies of plastic mould, which can be shaped according to the conscious or unconscious will of the human being who puts himself *en rapport* with them. It is by attracting some of the beings of this class that our modern spiritualistic mediums invest the fading shells of deceased human beings with a kind of individual force. These beings have never been, but will, in myriads of ages hence, be evolved into men. *They belong to the three lower kingdoms*, and pertain to the Mysteries on account of their dangerous nature.

We have found a very erroneous opinion gaining ground not only among Spiritualists--who see the spirits of their disembodied fellow creatures everywhere--but even among several Orientalists who ought to know better. It is generally believed by them that the Sanskrit term Pitris means the spirits of our direct ancestors; of disembodied people. Hence the argument of some Spiritualists that fakirs, and other Eastern wonder-workers, are *mediums*; that they themselves confess to being unable to produce anything without the help of the Pitris, of whom they are the obedient instruments.

133

#### ELEMENTALS

This is in more than one sense erroneous, the error being first started, we believe, by M. L. Jacolliot, in his *Spiritisme dans le Monde*, and Govinda Swami; or, as he spells it, "the fakir Kovindasami's" phenomena. The Pitris are not the ancestors of the present living men, but those of the human kind or primitive race; the spirits of *human* races which, on the great scale of descending evolution, preceded our races of men, and were physically, as well as spiritually, far superior to our modern pigmies. In *Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra* they are called the Lunar Ancestors. The Hindû--least of all the proud Brâhman--has no such great longing to return to this land of exile after he has shaken off his mortal coil, as has the average Spiritualist; nor has death for him any of the great terrors it has for the Christian. Thus, the most highly developed minds in India will always take care to declare, while in the act of leaving their tenements of clay, "Nachapunarâvarti," "I shall not come back," and by this very declaration is placed beyond the reach of any living man or medium. But, it may be asked, what then is meant by the Pitris? They are

Devas, lunar and solar, closely connected with human evolution, for the Lunar Pitris are they who gave their Chhâyâs as the models of the First Race in the Fourth Round, while the Solar Pitris endowed mankind with intellect. Not only so, but these Lunar Devas passed through all the kingdoms of the terrestrial Chain in the First Round, and during the Second and Third Rounds "lead and represent the human element."<sup>4</sup>

A brief examination of the part they play will prevent all future confusion in the student's mind between the Pitris and the Elementals. In the *Rig Veda*, Vishnu (or the *pervading* Fire, Æther) is shown first striding through the seven regions of the World in *three* steps, being a manifestation of the *Central* Sun. Later on, he becomes a manifestation of *our* solar energy, and is connected with the septenary form and with the Gods, Agni, Indra and other solar deities. Therefore, while the "Sons of Fire," the primeval Seven of our System, emanate from the primordial Flame, the "Seven Builders" of our Planetary Chain are the "Mind-born Sons" of the latter, and--*their instructors likewise*. For, though in one sense they are all Gods and are all called Pitris (Pitara, Patres, Fathers), a great though very subtle distinction (*quite Occult*) is made which must be noticed. In the *Rig Veda*

-----  
<sup>4</sup>Let the student consult *The Secret Doctrine* on this matter, and he will there find full explanations.

they are divided into two classes--the Pitris Agni-dagdha ("Fire-givers"), and the pitris Anagni-dagdha ("*non*-Fire-givers")<sup>5</sup>

*i.e.*, as explained *exoterically*--Pitris who sacrificed to the Gods and those who refused to do so at the "fire-sacrifice." But the Esoteric and true meaning is the following. The first or primordial Pitris, the "Seven Sons of Fire" or of the Flame, are distinguished or divided into seven classes (like the Seven Sephiroth, and others, see *Vâyu Purâna* and *Harivamsha*, also *Rig Veda*); three of which classes are Arûpa, formless, "composed of intellectual not elementary substance," and four are corporeal. The first are pure Agni (fire) or Saptajiva ("seven lives," now become Saptajihva, seven-tongued, as Agni is represented with seven tongues and seven winds as the wheels of his

car). As a formless, purely spiritual essence, in the first degree of evolution, they *could not create that, the prototypical form of which was not in their minds*, as this is the first requisite. They could only give birth to "mind-born" beings, their "Sons," the second class of Pitris (or Prajâpati, or Rishis, etc.), one degree more material; these, to the third--the last of the Arûpa class. It is only this last class that was enabled with the help of the Fourth principle of the Universal Soul (Aditi, Âkâsha) to produce beings that became objective and having a form.<sup>6</sup>

But when these came to existence, they were found to possess such a small proportion of the divine immortal Soul or Fire in them, that they were considered failures. "The third appealed to the second, the second to the first, and the Three had to become Four (the perfect square or cube representing the 'Circle Squared' or immersion of pure Spirit), before the first could be instructed" (Sansk. *Comment.*). Then only, could perfect Beings--intellectually

---

<sup>5</sup> In order to create a blind, or throw a veil upon the mystery of primordial evolution, the later Brâhmans, with a view also to serve orthodoxy, explained the two, by an invented fable; the first Pitris were "sons of God" and offended Brahmâ by refusing to sacrifice to him, for which crime, the Creator cursed *them to become fools*, a curse they could escape only by accepting their own sons as instructors and addressing them as their Fathers--*Pitris*. This is the *exoteric* version.

<sup>6</sup> We find an echo of this in the *Codex Nazaræus*. Bahak-Zivo, the "father of Genii" (the seven) is ordered to construct creatures. But, as he is "ignorant of Orcus" and unacquainted with "the consuming fire which is wanting in light," he fails to do so and calls in Fetahil, a still purer spirit, to his aid, who fails still worse and sits in the *mud* (Ilus, Chaos, Matter) and wonders why the *living fire* is so changed. It is only when the "Spirit" (Soul) steps on the stage of creation (the feminine Anima Mundi of the Nazarenes and Gnostics) and awakens Karabtanos--the spirit of matter and concupiscence--who consents to *help* his mother, that the "Spiritus" conceives and bring forth "Seven Figures," and again "Seven" and once more "Seven" (the Seven Virtues, Seven Sins and Seven Worlds). Then Fetahil dips his hand in the Chaos and creates *our* planet. (See *Isis Unveiled*, vol. i. 298-300 *et seq.*)

and physically--be shaped. This, though more philosophical, is still an

allegory. But its meaning is plain, however absurd may seem the explanation from a scientific standpoint. The Doctrine teaches the Presence of a Universal Life (or motion) *within which all is*, and nothing *outside* of it can be. This is pure Spirit. Its manifested aspect is cosmic primordial Matter coeval with, since it is, *itself*. Semi-spiritual in comparison to the first, this vehicle of the Spirit-Life is what Science calls Ether, which fills the boundless space, and it is in this substance, the world-stuff, that germinates all the atoms and molecules of what is called matter. However homogeneous in its eternal origin, this Universal Element, once that its radiations were thrown into the space of the (to be) *manifested* Universe, the centripetal and centrifugal forces of perpetual motion, of attraction and repulsion, would soon polarize its scattered particles, endowing them with peculiar properties now regarded by Science as various elements distinct from each other. As a homogeneous whole, the world-stuff in its primordial state is perfect; disintegrated, it loses its property of *conditionless* creative power; it has to associate with its *contraries*. Thus, the first worlds and Cosmic Beings, save the "Self-Existent"--a mystery no one could attempt to touch upon seriously, as it is a mystery perceived by the divine eye of the highest Initiates, but one that no human language could explain to the children of our age--the first worlds and Beings were *failures*; inasmuch as the former lacked that inherent creative force in them necessary for their further and independent evolution, and that the first orders of Beings lacked the immortal soul. Part and parcel of Anima Mundi in its Prâkritic aspect, the Purusha element in them was too weak to allow of any consciousness in the intervals (*entr' actes*) between their existences during the evolutionary period and the cycle of Life. The three orders of Beings, the Pitri-Rishis, the Sons of Flame, had to merge and blend together their three higher principles with the Fourth (the Circle), and the Fifth (the *microcosmic*) principle before the necessary union could be obtained and result therefrom achieved. "There were old worlds, which perished as soon as they came into existence; were formless, as they were called sparks. These sparks are the primordial worlds which could not continue because the Sacred Aged had not as yet assumed the form"<sup>7</sup> (of perfect contraries not only in opposite sexes but of cosmical polarity).

"Why were these primordial worlds destroyed? Because,"

---

<sup>7</sup> *Idra Suta, Zohar, iii. 292b.*

136

H. P. BLAVATSKY

answers the *Zohar*, "the man represented by the ten Sephiroth was not as yet. The human form contains everything {spirit, soul and body}, and as it did not as yet exist the worlds were destroyed."

Far removed from the Pitris, then, it will readily be seen are all the various feats of Indian fakirs, jugglers and others, phenomena a hundred times more various and astounding than are ever seen in civilized Europe and America. The Pitris have naught to do with such public exhibitions, nor are the "spirits of the departed" concerned in them. We have but to consult the lists of the principal Daimons or Elemental Spirits to find that their very names indicate their professions, or, to express it clearly, the tricks for which each variety is best adapted. So we have the Mâdan, a generic name indicating wicked elemental spirits, half brutes, half monsters, for Mâdan signifies one that looks like a cow. He is the friend of the malicious sorcerers and helps them to effect their evil purposes of revenge by striking men and cattle with sudden illness and death.

The Shudâla-Mâdan, or graveyard fiend, answers to our ghouls. He delights where crime and murder were committed, near burial-spots and places of execution. He helps the juggler in all the fire phenomena as well as Kutti Shâttan, the little juggling imps. Shudâla, they say, is a half-fire, half-water demon, for he received from Shiva permission to assume any shape he chose, to transform one thing into another; and when he is not in fire, he is in water. It is he who blinds people "to see that which *they do not see.*" Shûla Mâdan is another mischievous spook. He is the *furnace-demon*, skilled in pottery and baking. If you keep friends with him, he will not injure you; but woe to him who incurs his wrath. Shûla likes compliments and flattery, and as he generally keeps underground it is to him that a juggler must look to help him raise a tree from a seed in a quarter of an hour and ripen its fruit.

Kumil-Mâdan, is the undine proper. He is an Elemental Spirit of the water, and his name means *blowing like a bubble*. He is a very merry imp, and will help a friend in anything relative to his department; he will shower rain and show the future and the present to those who will resort to hydromancy or divination by water.

Poruthû Mâdan is the "wrestling" demon; he is the strongest of all; and whenever there are feats shown in which physical force

137

#### ELEMENTALS

is required, such as levitations, or taming of wild animals, he will help the performer by keeping him above the soil, or will over-power a wild beast before the tamer has time to utter his incantation. So, every "physical manifestation" has its own class of Elemental Spirits to superintend it. Besides these there are in India the Pisâchas, Daimons of the races of the gnomes, the giants and the vampires; the Gandharvas, good Daimons, celestial seraphs, singers; and Asuras and Nâgas, the Titanic spirits and the dragon or serpent-headed spirits.

These must not be confused with Elementaries, the souls and shells of departed human beings; and here again we have to distinguish between what has been called the astral soul, *i.e.*, the lower part of the dual Fifth Principle, joined to the animal, and the true Ego. For the doctrine of the Initiates is that no astral soul, even that of a pure, good, and virtuous man, is immortal in the strictest sense, "from elements it was formed--to elements it must return." We may stop here and say no more: every learned Brâhman, every Chelâ and thoughtful Theosophist will understand why. For he *knows* that while the soul of the wicked vanishes, and is absorbed without redemption, that of every other person, even moderately pure, simply changes its ethereal particles for still more ethereal ones; and, while there remains in it a spark of the *Divine*, the *god-like* man, or rather, his individual Ego, cannot die. Says Proclus:

After death, the soul (the spirit) continueth to linger in the aërial body (astral form), till it is entirely purified from all angry and voluptuous passions . . . then doth it put off by a second dying the aërial body as it did the earthly one. Whereupon, the ancients say that there is a celestial body always joined with the

soul, which is immortal, luminous, and star-like-- while the purely human soul or the lower part of the Fifth Principle *is not*. The above explanations and the meaning and the *real* attributes and mission of the Pitris, may help to better understand this passage of Plutarch:

And of these souls *the moon is the element, because souls resolve into her*, as the bodies of the deceased do into earth. Those, indeed, who have been virtuous and honest, living a quiet and philosophical life, without embroiling themselves in troublesome affairs, are quickly resolved; being left by the nous (understanding) and no longer using the corporeal passions, they

138

H. P. BLAVATSKY

incontinently vanish away.<sup>8</sup>

The ancient Egyptians, who derived their knowledge from the Âryans of India, pushed their researches far into the kingdoms of the "elemental" and "elementary" beings. Modern archæologists have decided that the figures found depicted on the various papyri of *The Book of the Dead*, or other symbols relating to other subjects painted upon their mummy cases, the walls of their subterranean temples and sculptured on their buildings, are merely fanciful representations of their Gods on the one hand, and on the other, a proof of the worship by the Egyptians of cats, dogs, and all manner of creeping things. This modern idea is wholly wrong, and arises from ignorance of the astral world and its strange denizens.

There are many distinct classes of "Elementaries" and "Elementals." The highest of the former in intelligence and cunning are the so-called "terrestrial spirits." Of these it must suffice to say, for the present, that they are the Larvæ, or shadows of those who have lived on earth, alike of the good and of the bad. They are the lower principles of all disembodied beings, and may be divided into three general groups. The first are they who having refused all spiritual light, have died deeply immersed in the mire of matter, and from whose sinful Souls the immortal Spirit has gradually separated itself. These are, properly, the disembodied Souls of the depraved; these Souls having at some time prior to death separated themselves from their divine Spirits, and so lost their chance of

immortality. Eliphas Levi and some other Kabalists make little, if any, distinction between Elementary Spirits who have been men, and those beings which people the elements, and are the blind forces of nature. Once divorced from their bodies, these Souls (also called "astral bodies"), especially those of purely materialistic persons, are irresistibly attracted to the earth, where they live a temporary and finite life amid elements congenial to their gross natures. From having never, during their natural lives, cultivated their spirituality, but subordinated it to the material and gross, they are now unfitted for the lofty career of the pure, disembodied being, for whom the atmosphere of earth is stifling and

---

<sup>8</sup> Of late, some narrow-minded critics--unable to understand the high philosophy of the above doctrine, the Esoteric meaning of which reveals when solved the widest horizons in astro-physical as well as in psychological sciences--chuckled over and pooh-poohed the idea of the eighth sphere, that could discover to their minds, befogged with old and mouldy dogmas of an unscientific faith, nothing better than *our* "moon in the shape of a dust-bin to collect the sins of men!"

139

#### ELEMENTALS

mephitic. Its attractions are not only away from earth, but it cannot, even if it would, owing to its Devachanic condition, have aught to do with earth and its denizens *consciously*. Exceptions to this rule will be pointed out later on. After a more or less prolonged period of time these material souls will begin to disintegrate, and finally, like a column of mist, be dissolved, atom by atom, in the surrounding elements.

These are the "shells" which remain the longest period in the Kâma Loka; all saturated with terrestrial effluvia, their Kâma Rûpa (body of desire) thick with sensuality and made impenetrable to the spiritualizing influence of their higher principles, endures longer and fades out with difficulty. We are taught that these remain for centuries sometimes, before the final disintegration into their respective elements.

The second group includes all those, who, having had their common share of spirituality, have yet been more or less attached to things earthly and terrestrial life, having their aspirations and affections more centred on earth than in heaven; the stay in Kâma Loka of the *reliquiæ* of this class

or group of men, who belonged to the average human being, is of a far shorter duration, yet long in itself and proportionate to the intensity of their desire for life.

Remains, as a third class, the disembodied souls of those whose bodies have perished by violence, and these are men in all save the physical body, till their life-span is complete.

Among Elementaries are also reckoned by Kabalists what we have called psychic embryos, the "privation" of the form of the child that *is to be*. According to Aristotle's doctrine there are three principles of natural bodies: privation, matter, and form. These principles may be applied in this particular case. The "privation" of the child which is to be, we locate in the invisible mind of the Universal Soul, in which all types and forms exist from eternity--privation not being considered in the Aristotelic philosophy as a principle in the composition of bodies, but as an external property in their production; for the production is a change by which the matter passes from the shape it has not to that which it assumes. Though the privation of the unborn child's form, as well as of the future form of the unmade watch, is that which is neither substance nor extension nor quality as yet, nor any kind of existence, it is still something which is, though its outlines, in order to be, must acquire an objective form--the abstract must become concrete,

140

H. P. BLAVATSKY

in short. Thus, as soon as this privation of matter is transmitted by energy to universal Æther, it becomes a material form, however sublimated. If modern Science teaches that *human* thought "affects the matter of another universe simultaneously with this," how can he who believes in a Universal Mind deny that the divine thought is equally transmitted, by the same law of energy, to our common mediator, the universal Æther--the lower World-Soul? Very true, Occult Philosophy denies it intelligence and consciousness in relation to the finite and conditioned manifestations of this phenomenal world of matter. But the Vedântin and Buddhist Philosophies alike, speaking of it as of *Absolute* Consciousness, show thereby that the form and progress of every atom of the conditioned universe must have existed in it throughout the infinite cycles of Eternity.

And, if so, then it must follow that once there, the Divine Thought manifests itself objectively, energy faithfully reproducing the outlines of that whose "privation" is already in the divine mind. Only it must not be understood that this Thought *creates* matter, or even the privations. No; it develops from its latent outline but the design for the future form; the matter which serves to make this design having always been in existence, and having been prepared to form a human body, through a series of progressive transformations, as the result of evolution. Forms pass; ideas that created them and the material which gave them objectiveness, remain. These models, as yet devoid of immortal spirits, are "Elementals"--better yet, *psychic embryos*--which, when their time arrives, die out of the invisible world, and are born into this visible one as human infants, receiving *in transitu* that Divine Breath called Spirit which completes the perfect man. This class cannot communicate, either subjectively or objectively, with men.

The essential difference between the body of such an embryo and an Elemental proper is that the embryo--the future man--contains in himself a portion of each of the four great kingdoms, to wit: fire, air, earth and water; while the Elemental has but a portion of one of such kingdoms. As for instance, the salamander, or the fire Elemental, which has but a portion of the primordial fire and none other. Man, being higher than they, the law of evolution finds its illustration of all four in him. It results therefore, that the Elementals of the fire are not found in water, nor those of air in the fire kingdom. And yet, inasmuch as a portion of water

141

## ELEMENTALS

is found not only in man but also in other bodies, Elementals exist really in and among each other in every substance just as the spiritual world exists and is in the material. But the last are the Elementals in their most primordial and latent state.

## II

Another class are those elemental beings which will never evolve into human beings in the present Manvantara, but occupy, as it were, a specific step of the ladder of being, and, by comparison with the others,

may properly be called nature-spirits, or cosmic agents of nature, each being confined to its own element and never transgressing the bounds of others. These are what Tertullian called the "princes of the powers of the air."

In the teachings of Eastern Kabalists, and of the Western Rosicrucians and Alchemists, they are spoken of as the creatures evolved in and from the four kingdoms of earth, air, fire and water, and are respectively called gnomes, sylphs, salamanders and undines. Forces of nature, they will either operate effects as the servile agents of general law, or may be employed, as shown above, by the disembodied spirits--whether pure or impure--and by living adepts of magic and sorcery, to produce desired phenomenal results. Such beings never become men.<sup>9</sup>

Under the general designation of fairies, and fays, these spirits of the elements appear in the myths, fables, traditions, or poetry of all nations, ancient and modern. Their names are legion--peris, devs, djins, sylvans, satyrs, fauns, elves, dwarfs, trolls, norns, nisses, kobolds, brownies, necks, stromkarls, undines, nixies, goblins, ponkes, banshees, kelpies, pixies, moss people, good people, good neighbours, wild women, men of peace, white ladies--and many more. They have been seen, feared, blessed, banned, and invoked in every quarter of the globe and in every age. Shall we then concede that *all* who have met them were hallucinated?

These Elementals are the principal agents of disembodied but *never visible* "shells" taken for spirits at *séances*, and are, as shown

---

<sup>9</sup> Persons who believe in clairvoyant power, but are disposed to discredit the existing of any other spirits in nature than disembodied human spirits, will be interested in an account of certain clairvoyant observations which appeared in the London *Spiritualist* of June 29th, 1877. A thunderstorm approaching, the seeress saw "a bright spirit emerge from a dark cloud and pass with lightning speed across the sky, and, a few minutes after, a diagonal line of dark spirits in the clouds." These are the Maruts of the Vedas.

The well-known lecturer, author, and clairvoyant, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, has published accounts of her frequent experiences with these elemental spirits. If

Spiritualists will accept her "spiritual" experience they can hardly reject her evidence in favour of the occult theories.

142

H. P. BLAVATSKY

above, the producers of all the phenomena except the subjective.

In the course of this article we will adopt the term "Elemental" to designate only these nature-spirits, attaching it to no other spirit or monad that has been embodied in human form. Elementals, as said already, have no form, and in trying to describe what they are, it is better to say that they are "*centres of force*" having instinctive desires, but no consciousness, as we understand it. Hence their acts may be good or bad indifferently.

This class is believed to possess but one of the three chief attributes of man. They have neither immortal spirits nor tangible bodies; only astral forms, which partake, to a distinguishing degree, of the element to which they belong and also of the ether. They are a combination of sublimated matter and a rudimental mind. Some remain throughout several cycles changeless, but still have no separate individuality, acting collectively, so to say. Others, of certain elements and species, change form under a fixed law which Kabalists explain. The most solid of their bodies is ordinarily just immaterial enough to escape perception by our physical eyesight, but not so unsubstantial but that they can be perfectly recognized by the inner or clairvoyant vision. They not only exist and can all live in ether, but can handle and direct it for the production of physical effects, as readily as we can compress air or water for the same purpose by pneumatic and hydraulic apparatus; in which occupation they are readily helped by the "human elementaries," or the "shells." More than this; they can so condense it as to make for themselves tangible bodies, which by their Protean powers they can cause to assume such likeness as they choose, by taking as their models the portraits they find stamped in the memory of the persons present. It is not necessary that the sitter should be thinking at the moment of the one represented. His image may have faded many years before. The mind receives indelible impression even from chance acquaintances or persons encountered but once. As a few seconds' exposure of the sensitized photograph plate is all that is

requisite to preserve indefinitely the image of the sitter, so is it with the mind.

According to the doctrine of Proclus, the uppermost regions from the Zenith of the Universe to the Moon belonged to the Gods or Planetary Spirits, according to their hierarchies and classes. The highest among them were the twelve Huper-ouranioi, or

143

#### ELEMENTALS

Super-celestial Gods, with whole legions of subordinate Daimons at their command. They are followed next in rank and power by the Egkosmioi, the Inter-cosmic Gods, each of these presiding over a great number of Daimons, to whom they impart their power and change it from one to another at will. These are evidently the personified forces of nature in their mutual correlation, the latter being represented by the third class, or the Elementals we have just described.

Further on he shows, on the principle of the Hermetic axiom--of types, and prototypes--that the lower spheres have their subdivisions and classes of beings as well as the upper celestial ones, the former being always subordinate to the higher ones. He held that the four elements are all filled with Daimons, maintaining with Aristotle that the universe is full, and that there is no void in nature. The Daimons of the earth, air, fire, and water are of an elastic, ethereal, semi-corporeal essence. It is these classes which officiate as intermediate agents between the Gods and men. Although lower in intelligence than the *sixth* order of the higher Daimons, these beings preside directly over the elements and organic life. They direct the growth, the inflorescence, the properties, and various changes of plants. They are the personified ideas or virtues shed from the heavenly Hylê into the inorganic matter; and, as the vegetable kingdom is one remove higher than the mineral, these emanations from the celestial Gods take form and being in the plant, they become its *soul*. It is that which Aristotle's doctrine terms the *form* in the three principles of natural bodies, classified by him as privation, matter, and form. His philosophy teaches that besides the original matter, another principle is necessary to complete the triune nature of every particle, and this is form; an invisible, but still, in an ontological sense of the word, a substantial

being, really distinct from matter proper. Thus, in an animal or a plant--besides the bones, the flesh, the nerves, the brains, and the blood, in the former; and besides the pulpy matter, tissues, fibres, and juice in the latter, which blood and juice, by circulating' through the veins and fibres, nourishes all parts of both animal and plant; and besides the animal spirits, which are the principles of motion, and the chemical energy which is transformed into vital force in the green leaf--there must be a substantial form, which Aristotle called in the horse, the horse's *soul*; Proclus, the *daimon* of every mineral, plant, or animal, and the mediæval philosophers, the *elementary spirits* of the four kingdoms.

144

H. P. BLAVATSKY

All this is held in our century as "poetical metaphysics" and gross superstition. Still on strictly ontological principles, there is, in these old hypotheses, some shadow of probability, some clue to the perplexing missing links of exact science. The latter has become so dogmatic of late, that all that lies beyond the ken of *inductive* science is termed imaginary; and we find Professor Joseph Le Conte stating that some of the best scientists "ridicule the use of the term 'vital force,' or vitality, as a *remnant of superstition*."<sup>10</sup>

De Candolle suggests the term "vital movement," instead of vital force;<sup>11</sup>

thus preparing for a final scientific leap which will transform the immortal, thinking man, into an automaton with clock-work inside him. "But," objects Le Conte, "can we conceive of movement without force? And if the movement is peculiar, so also is the *form of force*."

In the Jewish Kabbalah, the nature-spirits were known under the general name of Shedim, and divided into four classes. The Hindûs call them Bhûtas and Devas, and the Persians called them all Devs; the Greeks indistinctly designated them as Daimons; the Egyptians knew them as Afrites. The ancient Mexicans, says Kaiser, believed in numerous spirit-abodes, into one of which the shades of innocent children were placed until final disposal; into another, situated in the sun, ascended the valiant souls of heroes; while the hideous spectres of incorrigible sinner were

sentenced to wander and despair in subterranean caves, held in the bonds of the earth-atmosphere, unwilling and unable to liberate themselves. This proves pretty clearly that the "ancient" Mexicans knew something of the doctrines of Kâma Loka. These passed their time in communicating with mortals, and frightening those who could see them. Some of the African tribes know them as Yowahoos. In the Indian Pantheon, as we have often remarked, there are no less than 330,000,000 of various kinds of spirits, including Elementals, some of which were termed by the Brâhmans, Daityas. These beings are known by the adepts to be attracted toward certain quarters of the heavens by something of the same mysterious property which makes the magnetic needle turn toward the north, and certain plants to obey the same attraction. If we will only bear in mind the fact that the rushing of planets through space must create as absolute a disturbance in the plastic and attenuated medium of the ether, as the passage of a cannon shot does in the

---

<sup>10</sup> *Correlation of Vital with Chemical and Physical Forces*, by J. Le Conte.

<sup>11</sup> *Archives des Sciences*, xiv. 345, December, 1872.

air, or that of a steamer in the water, and on a cosmic scale, we can understand that certain planetary aspects, admitting our premises to be true, may produce much more violent agitation and cause much stronger currents to flow in a given direction than others. We can also see why, by such various aspects of the stars, shoals of friendly or hostile Elementals might be poured in upon our atmosphere, or some particular portion of it, and make the fact appreciable by the effects which ensue. If our royal astronomers are able, at times, to predict cataclysms, such as earthquakes and inundations, the Indian astrologers and mathematicians can do so, and have so done, with far more precision and correctness, though they act on lines which to the modern sceptic appear ridiculously absurd. The various races of spirits are also believed to have a special sympathy with certain human temperaments, and to more readily exert power over such than others. Thus, a bilious, lymphatic, nervous, or sanguine person would be affected favourably or otherwise by conditions of the astral

light, resulting from the different aspects of the planetary bodies. Having reached this general principle, after recorded observations extending over an indefinite series of years, or ages, the adept astrologer would require only to know what the planetary aspects were at a given anterior date, and to apply his knowledge of the succeeding changes in the heavenly bodies, to be able to trace, with approximate accuracy, the varying fortunes of the personage whose horoscope was required, and even to predict the future. The accuracy of the horoscope would depend, of course, no less upon the astrologer's astronomical erudition than upon his knowledge of the occult forces and races of nature.

Pythagoras taught that the entire universe is one vast series of mathematically correct combinations. Plato shows the Deity geometrizing. The world is sustained by the same law of equilibrium and harmony upon which it was built. The centripetal force could not manifest itself without the centrifugal in the harmonious revolutions of the spheres; all forms are the product of this dual force in nature. Thus, to illustrate our case, we may designate the spirit as the centrifugal, and the soul as the centripetal, spiritual energies. When in perfect harmony, both forces produce one result; break or damage the centripetal motion of the earthly soul tending toward the center which attracts it; arrest its progress by clogging it with a heavier weight of matter than it can bear, and the harmony of the whole, which was its life, is

146

H. P. BLAVATSKY

destroyed. Individual life can only be continued if sustained by this two-fold force. The least deviation from harmony damages it; when it is destroyed beyond redemption, the forces separate and the form is gradually annihilated. After the death of the depraved and the wicked, arrives the critical moment. If during life the ultimate and desperate effort of the inner self to reunite itself with the faintly-glimmering ray of its divine monad is neglected; if this ray is allowed to be more and more shut out by the thickening crust of matter, the soul, once freed from the body, follows its earthly attractions, and is magnetically drawn into and held within the dense fogs of the material atmosphere of the Kâma Loka. Then it begins to sink lower and lower, until it finds itself, when returned

to consciousness, in what the ancients termed Hades, and we--Avichî. The annihilation of such a soul is never instantaneous; it may last centuries, perhaps; for nature never proceeds by jumps and starts, and the astral soul of the personality being formed of elements, the law of evolution must bide its time. Then begins the fearful law of compensation, the Yin-youan of the Buddhist initiates.

This class of spirits are called the "terrestrial," or "*earthly* elementaries," in contradistinction to the other classes, as we have shown in the beginning. But there is another and still more dangerous class. In the East, they are known as the "Brothers of the Shadow," living men possessed by the earth-bound elementaries; at times--their *masters*, but ever in the long run falling victims to these terrible beings. In Sikkhim and Tibet they are called Dugpas (red-caps), in contradistinction to the Geluk-pas (yellow-caps), to which latter most of the adepts belong. And here we must beg the reader not to misunderstand us. For though the whole of Bûtan and Sikkhim belongs to the old religion of the Bhons, now known generally as the Dug-pas, we do not mean to have it understood that the whole of the population is possessed, *en masse*, or that they are all sorcerers. Among them are found as good men as anywhere else, and we speak above only of the *élite* of their Lamaseries, of a nucleus of priests, "devil-dancers," and fetish worshippers, whose dreadful and mysterious rites are utterly unknown to the greater part of the population. Thus there are two classes of these terrible "Brothers of the Shadow"--the *living* and the *dead*. Both cunning, low, vindictive, and seeking to retaliate their sufferings upon humanity, they become, until final annihilation, vampires, ghouls, and prominent actors at *séances*. These are the leading "stars," on the great spiritual stage of "materialization,"

which phenomenon they perform with the help of the more intelligent of the genuine-born "elemental" creatures, which hover around and welcome them with delight in their own spheres. Henry Kunrath, the great German Kabalist, in his rare work, *Amphitheatrum Sapientæ Æternæ* has a plate with representations of the four classes of these human "elementary spirits." Once past the threshold of the sanctuary of

initiation, once that an adept has lifted the "Veil of Isis," the mysterious and jealous Goddess, he has nothing to fear; but till then he is in constant danger.

Magi and theurgic philosophers objected most severely to the "evocation of souls." "Bring her (the soul) not forth, lest in departing she retain something," says Psellus. "It becomes you not to behold them *before your body is initiated*, since, by always alluring, they seduce the souls of the uninitiated"--says the same philosopher, in another passage.

They objected to it for several good reasons. 1. "It is extremely difficult to distinguish a good Daimon from a bad one," says Iamblichus. 2. If the shell of a good man succeeds in penetrating the density of the earth's atmosphere--always oppressive to it, Often hateful--still there is a danger that it cannot avoid; the soul is unable to come into proximity with the material world without that on "departing, she *retains* something," that is to say, she contaminates her purity, for which she has to suffer more or less after her departure. Therefore, the true theurgist will avoid causing any more suffering to this pure denizen of the higher sphere than is absolutely required by the interests of humanity. It is only the practitioners of black magic--such as the Dugpas of Bhûtan and Sikkhim--who compel the presence, by the powerful incantations of necromancy, of the tainted souls of such as have lived bad lives, and are ready to aid their selfish designs.

Of intercourse with the Augœides, through the mediumistic powers of *subjective* mediums, we elsewhere speak.

The theurgists employed chemicals and mineral substances to chase away evil spirits. Of the latter, a stone called Mnizurin was one of the most powerful agents. "When you shall see a *terrestrial* Daimon approaching, exclaim, and sacrifice the stone Mnizurin"--exclaims a Zoroastrian Oracle (Psel., 40).

These "Daimons" seek to introduce themselves into the bodies of the simple-minded and idiots, and remain there until dislodged therefrom

by a powerful and *pure* will. Jesus, Apollonius,  
148

H. P. BLAVATSKY

and some of the apostles, had the power to cast out "devils," by purifying the atmosphere *within* and *without* the patient, so as to force the unwelcome tenant to flight. Certain volatile salts are particularly obnoxious to them; Zoroaster is corroborated in this by Mr. C. F. Varley, and ancient science is justified by modern. The effect of some chemicals used in a saucer and placed under the bed, by Mr. Varley, of London,<sup>12</sup> for the purpose of keeping away some disagreeable physical phenomena at night, are corroborative of this great truth. Pure or even simply inoffensive human spirits fear nothing, for having rid themselves of *terrestrial* matter, terrestrial compounds can affect them in no wise; such spirits are like a *breath*. Not so with the earth-bound souls and the nature-spirits.

It is for these carnal terrestrial Larvæ, degraded human spirits, that the ancient Kabalists entertained a hope of *reïncarnation*. But when, or how? At a fitting moment, and if helped by a sincere desire for his amendment and repentance by some strong, sympathizing person, or the will of an adept, or even a desire emanating from the erring spirit himself, provided it is powerful enough to make him throw off the burden of sinful matter. Losing all consciousness, the once bright monad is caught once more into the vortex of our terrestrial evolution, and repasses the subordinate kingdoms, and again breathes as a living child. To compute the time necessary for the completion of this process would be impossible. Since there is no perception of time in eternity, the attempt would be a mere waste of labour.

Speaking of the elementary, Porphyry says:

These invisible beings have been receiving from men honours as gods; . . . a universal belief makes them capable of becoming very malevolent; it proves that their wrath is kindled against those who neglect to offer them a legitimate worship.<sup>13</sup>

Homer describes them in the following terms:

Our gods appear to us when we offer them sacrifice . . . *sitting themselves at our tables, they partake of our festival*

---

<sup>12</sup> Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, the well-known electrician of the Atlantic Cable Company, communicates the result of his observations, in the course of a debate at the Psychological Society of Great Britain, which is reported in the *Spiritualist* (London, April 14th, 1876, pp. 174, 175).

He thought that the effect of free nitric acid in the atmosphere was able to drive away what he calls "unpleasant spirits." He thought that those who were troubled by unpleasant spirits at home, would find relief by pouring one ounce of vitriol upon two ounces of finely-powdered nitre in a saucer and putting the mixture under the bed. Here is a scientist, whose reputation extends over two continents, who gives a recipe to drive away bad spirits! And yet the general public mocks at as a "superstition" the herbs and incenses employed by Hindus, Chinese, Africans, and other races to accomplish the self-same purpose!

<sup>13</sup> "Of Sacrifices to Gods and Daimons," chap. ii.

149

#### ELEMENTALS

*meals*. Whenever they meet on his travels a solitary Phœnician, they *serve to him as guides*, and otherwise manifest their presence. We can say that *our piety* approaches us to them as much as crime and bloodshed unite the Cyclopes and the ferocious race of Giants.<sup>14</sup>

The latter proves that these Gods were kind and beneficent Daimons, and that, whether they were *disembodied* spirits or elemental beings, they were no "devils."

The language of Porphyry, who was himself a direct disciple of Plotinus, is still more explicit as to the nature of these spirits.

Daimons are invisible; but they know *how to clothe themselves* with forms and configurations subjected to numerous variations, which can be explained by their nature *having much of the corporeal in itself*. Their abode is in the neighbourhood of the earth . . . and *when they can escape the vigilance of the good Daimons, there is no mischief they will not dare commit*. One day they will employ brute force; another, *cunning*.<sup>15</sup>

Further, he says:

It is a child's play for them to arouse in us vile passions, to impart to societies and nations turbulent doctrines, provoking wars, seditions, and other public calamities, and then tell you "that all of these are the work of the gods." . . . These spirits pass their time in cheating and deceiving mortals, creating around them illusions and prodigies; *their greatest ambition* is to pass as *gods* and *souls* (disembodied spirits).<sup>16</sup>

Iamblichus, the great theurgist of the Neoplatonic school, a man skilled in sacred magic, teaches that:

Good Daimons appear to us *in reality*, while the bad ones can manifest themselves but under the *shadowy forms of phantoms*.

Further, he corroborates Porphyry, and tells how that:

The *good ones* fear not the light, while the *wicked ones* require darkness . . . The sensations they excite in us make us believe in the presence and reality of things they show, though these things be absent.<sup>17</sup>

Even the most practised theurgists sometimes found danger in their dealings with certain elementaries, and we have Iamblichus stating that:

The gods, the angels, and the Daimons, as well as the *souls*, may be summoned through evocation and prayer . . .

---

<sup>14</sup> *Odyssey*, vii.

<sup>15</sup> Porphyry, "Of Sacrifices to Gods and Daimons," chap. ii

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis Egyptorum*.

But when, during theurgic operations, a mistake is made, beware! Do not imagine that you are communicating with beneficent divinities, who have answered your earnest prayer; no, for they are bad Daimons, only under the guise of good ones! For the elementaries often clothe themselves with the similitude of the good, and

assume a rank very much superior to that they really occupy. Their boasting betrays them.<sup>18</sup>

The ancients, who named but four elements, made of ether a fifth. On account of its essence being made divine by the unseen presence, it was considered as a medium between this world and the next. They held that when the directing intelligences retired from any portion of ether, one of the four kingdoms which they are bound to superintend, the space was left in possession of *evil*. An adept who prepared to converse with the "invisibles," had to know his ritual well, and be perfectly acquainted with the conditions required for the perfect equilibrium of the four elements in the astral light. First of all, he must purify the essence, and within the circle in which he sought to attract the pure spirits, equilibrate the elements, so as to prevent the ingress of the Elementals into their respective spheres. But woe to the imprudent enquirer who ignorantly trespasses upon forbidden ground; danger will beset him at every step. He evokes powers that he cannot control; he arouses sentries which allow only their masters to pass. For, in the words of the immortal Rosicrucian:

Once that thou hast resolved to become a coöperator with the spirit of the *living* God, take care not to hinder Him in His work; for, if thy heat exceeds the natural proportion, thou hast stirr'd the wrath of the *moyst*<sup>19</sup> *natures*, and they will stand up against the *central fire*, and the central fire against them, and there will be a terrible division in the *chaos*.<sup>20</sup>

The spirit of harmony and union will depart from the elements,

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, "On the Difference between the Daimons, the Souls," etc.

<sup>19</sup> We give the spelling and words of this Kabalist, who lived and published his works in the seventeenth century. Generally he is considered as one of the most famous alchemists among the Hermetic philosophers.

<sup>20</sup> The most positive of materialistic philosophers agree that all that exists was evolved from ether; hence, air, water, earth, and fire, the four primordial elements must also proceed from ether and chaos the first *duad*; all the imponderables, whether now known or unknown, proceed from the same source. Now, if there is

a spiritual essence in matter, and that essence forces it to shape itself into millions of individual forms, why is it illogical to assert that each of these spiritual kingdoms in nature is peopled with beings evolved out of its own material? Chemistry teaches us that in man's body there are air, water, earth, and heat, or fire--*air* is present in its components; *water* in the secretions; *earth* in the inorganic constituents; and *fire* in the animal heat. The Kabalist knows by experience that an elemental spirit contains only one of these, and that each one of the four kingdoms has its own peculiar elemental spirits; man being higher than they, the law of evolution finds its illustration in the combination of all four in him.

151

### ELEMENTALS

disturbed by the imprudent hand; and the currents of blind forces will become immediately infested by numberless creatures of matter and instinct--the bad demons of the theurgists, the devils of theology; the gnomes, salamanders, sylphs, and undines will assail the rash performer under multifarious aërial forms. Unable to invent anything, they will search your memory to its very depths; hence the nervous exhaustion and mental oppression of certain sensitive natures at spiritual circles. The Elementals will bring to light long-forgotten remembrances of the past; forms, images, sweet mementoes, and familiar sentences, long since faded from our own remembrance, but vividly preserved in the inscrutable depths of our memory and on the astral tablets of the imperishable "Book of Life." Magnus, the Great God, Ether.

The author of the Homoiomerian system of philosophy, Anaxagoras of Clazomene, firmly believed that the spiritual prototypes of all things, as well as their elements, were to be found in the boundless ether, where they were generated, whence they evolved, and whither they returned from earth. In common with the Hindûs who had personified their Âkâsha, and made of it a deific entity, the Greeks and Latins had deified Æther. Virgil calls Zeus, Pater Omnipotens Æther.<sup>21</sup> These beings, the elemental spirits of the Kabalists,<sup>22</sup> are those whom the Christian clergy denounce as "devils," the enemies of mankind!

### III

Every organized thing in this world, visible as well as invisible, has an element appropriate to itself. The fish lives and breathes in

---

<sup>21</sup> Virgil, *Georgica*. book ii.

<sup>22</sup> Porphyry and other philosophers explain the nature of the *dwellers* They are mischievous and deceitful, though some of them are perfectly gentle and harmless, but so weak as to have the greatest difficulty in communicating with mortals whose company they seek incessantly. The former are not wicked through intelligent malice. The law of spiritual evolution not having yet developed their instinct into intelligence, whose highest light belongs but to immortal spirits, their powers of reasoning are in a latent state, and, therefore, they themselves, irresponsible.

But the Latin Church contradicts the Kabalists. St. Augustine has even a discussion on that account with Porphyry, the Neoplatonist. "These spirits," he says, "are deceitful, *not by their nature*, as Porphyry, the theurgist, will have it, but through malice. They pass themselves off for *gods* and for the *souls of the defunct*" (*Civit. Det*, x. 2). So far Porphyry agrees with him; "but they do not claim to be *demons* [read devils], for they are such in reality!"--adds the Bishop of Hippo. So far, so good, and he is right there, But then, under what class should we place the men *without heads*, whom Augustine wishes us to believe he saw himself; or the satyrs of St. Jerome, which he asserts were exhibited for a considerable length of time at Alexandria? They were, he tells us, "men with the legs and tails of goats"; and, if we may believe him, one of these satyrs was actually *pickled* and sent in a cask to the Emperor Constantine!!!

152

H. P. BLAVATSKY

the water; the plant consumes carbonic acid, which for animals and men produces death; some beings are fitted for rarefied strata of air, others exist only in the densest. Life to some is dependent on sunlight, to others, upon darkness; and so the wise economy of nature adapts to each existing condition some living form. These analogies warrant the conclusion that, not only is there no unoccupied portion of universal nature, but also that for each thing that has life, special conditions are furnished, and, being furnished, they are necessary. Now, assuming that there is an invisible side to the universe, the fixed habit of nature warrants the conclusion that this half is occupied, like the other half; and that each group of its occupants is supplied with the indispensable conditions of existence. It is as illogical to imagine that identical conditions are furnished to all, as it would be to maintain such a theory respecting the inhabitants of the domain of visible nature. That there are "spirits" implies that there is a

diversity of "spirits"; for men differ, and human "spirits" are but disembodied men.

To say that all "spirits" are alike, or fitted to the same atmosphere, or possessed of like powers, or governed by the same attractions--electric, magnetic, odic, astral, it matters not which--is as absurd as though one should say that all planets have the same nature, or that all animals are amphibious, or that all men can be nourished on the same food. To begin with, neither the elementals, nor the elementaries themselves, can be called "spirits" at all. It accords with reason to suppose that the grossest natures among them will sink to the lowest depths of the spiritual atmosphere--in other words, be found nearest to the earth. Inversely, the purest will be farthest away. In what, were we to coin a word, we should call the "psychomatics" of Occultism, it is as unwarrantable to assume that either of these grades of ethereal beings can occupy the place, or subsist in the conditions, of the other, as it would be in hydraulics to expect that two liquids of different densities could exchange their markings on the scale of Beaume's hydrometer.

Görres, describing a conversation he had with some Hindûs of the Malabar coast, reports that upon asking them whether they had ghosts among them, they replied:

Yes, but we know them to be *bad bhûts* [spirits, or rather, the "empty" ones, the "shells"], . . . good ones can hardly ever appear at all. They are principally the *spirits of suicides and murderers*, or of those who die violent deaths. They constantly

153

#### ELEMENTALS

flutter about and appear as phantoms. Night-time is favourable to them, they seduce the feeble-minded and tempt others in a thousand different ways.<sup>23</sup>

Porphyry presents to us some hideous facts whose verity is substantiated in the experience of every student of magic. He writes:

<sup>24</sup> The ancients called the spirits of bad people "souls"; the soul was the

"larva" and "lemure." Good human spirits became "gods" having even after death a certain affection for its body, an affinity proportioned to the violence with which their union was broken, we see many spirits hovering in despair about their earthly remains; we even see them eagerly seeking the putrid remains of other bodies, but above all freshly-spilled blood, which seems to impart to them for the moment some of the faculties of life.<sup>25</sup>

Though spiritualists discredit them ever so much, these nature-spirits--as much as the "elementaries," the "empty shells," as the Hindus call them--are realities. If the gnomes, sylphs, salamanders and undines of the Rosicrucians existed in their days, they must exist now. Bulwer Lytton's "Dweller on the Threshold" is a modern conception, modelled on the ancient type of the Sulanuth of the Hebrews and Egyptians, which is mentioned in the *Book of Jasher*.<sup>26</sup>

The Christians are very wrong to treat them indiscriminately, as "devils," "imps of Satan," and to give them like characteristics names. The elementals are nothing of the kind, but simply creatures of ethereal matter, irresponsible, and neither good nor bad, unless influenced by a superior intelligence. It is very extraordinary to hear devout Catholics abuse and misrepresent the nature-spirits, when one of their greatest authorities, Clement the Alexandrian, has described these creatures as they really are. Clement, who perhaps had been a theurgist as well as a Neoplatonist, and thus argued upon good authority, remarks, that it is absurd to call them devils,<sup>27</sup> for they are only *inferior* angels, "the powers which inhabit elements, move the winds and distribute showers, and as such are agents and subject to God."<sup>28</sup> Origen, who before he became a

---

<sup>23</sup> Görres, *Mystique*, iii; 63.

<sup>24</sup> The *soul*.

<sup>25</sup> Porphyry, *De Sacrificiis*. Chapter on the true Cultus.

<sup>26</sup> Chap. lxxx. vv. 19, 20. "And when the Egyptians hid themselves on account of the swarm [one of the plagues alleged to have been brought on by Moses] . . . they

locked their doors after them, and God ordered the Sulanuth . . . [*a sea-monster*, naively explains the translator, in a foot-note] which was then in the sea, to come up and go into Egypt . . . and she had long arms, ten cubits in length . . . and she went upon the roofs and uncovered the rafting and cut them . . . and stretched forth her arm into the house and removed the lock and the bolt and opened the houses of Egypt . . . and the swarm of animals destroyed the Egyptians, and it grieved them exceedingly."

<sup>27</sup> *Strom.*, vi. 17, § 159.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 3, §30.

154

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Christian also belonged to the Platonic school, is of the same opinion. Porphyry, as we have seen, describes these daimons more carefully than anyone else.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that man, if he wins immortality, will remain for ever the *septenary* trinity that he is in life, and will continue so throughout all the spheres. The astral body, which in this life is covered by a gross physical envelope, becomes--when relieved of that covering by the process of corporeal death--in its turn the shell of another and more ethereal body. This begins developing from the moment of death, and becomes perfected when the astral body of the earthly form finally separates from it. This process, they say, is repeated at every new transition from sphere to sphere of life. But the immortal soul, the "silvery spark," observed by Dr. Fenwick in Margrave's brain (in Bulwer Lytton's *Strange Story*), and not found by him in the animals, never changes, but remains indestructible "by aught that shatters its tabernacle." The descriptions by Porphyry and Iamblichus and others, of the spirits of animals, which inhabit the astral light, are corroborated by those of many of the most trustworthy and intelligent clairvoyants. Sometimes the animal forms are even made visible to every person at a spiritual circle, by being materialized. In his *People from the Other World*, Colonel H. S. Olcott describes a materialized squirrel which followed a spirit-woman into the view of the spectators, disappeared and reappeared before their eyes several times, and finally followed the spirit

into the cabinet. The facts given in modern spiritualistic literature are numerous and many of them are trustworthy.

As to the *human* spirit, the notions of the older philosophers and mediæval Kabalists while differing in some particulars, agreed on the whole; so that the doctrine of one may be viewed as the doctrine of the other. The most substantial difference consisted in the location of the immortal or divine spirit of man. While the ancient Neoplatonists held that the Augœides never descends hypostatically into the living man, but only more or less sheds its radiance on the inner man--the astral soul--the Kabalists of the middle ages maintained that the spirit, detaching itself from the ocean of light and spirit, entered into man's soul, where it remained through life imprisoned in the astral capsule. This difference was the result of the belief of Christian Kabalists, more or less, in the dead letter of the allegory of the fall of man. The soul, they said, became, through the "fall of Adam," contaminated

155

#### ELEMENTALS

with the world of matter, or Satan. Before it could appear with its enclosed divine spirit in the presence of the Eternal, it had to purify itself of the impurities of darkness. They compared--

The spirit imprisoned within the soul to a drop of water enclosed within a capsule of gelatine and thrown in the ocean; so long as the capsule remains whole the drop of water remains isolated; break the envelope and the drop becomes a part of the ocean--its individual existence has ceased. So it is with the spirit. As long as it is enclosed in its plastic mediator, or soul, it has an individual existence. Destroy the capsule, a result which may occur from the agonies of withered conscience, crime, and moral disease, and the spirit returns back to its original abode. Its individuality is gone.

On the other hand, the philosophers who explained the "fall into generation" in their own way, viewed spirit as something wholly distinct from the soul. They allowed its presence in the astral capsule only so far as the spiritual emanations or rays of the "shining one" were concerned. Man and his spiritual soul or the monad--*i.e.*, spirit and its vehicle--had to conquer their immortality by ascending toward the unity with which, if successful, they were finally linked, and into which they were absorbed, so to say. The individualization of man after death depended

on the spirit, not on his astral or human soul--Manas and *its* vehicle Kâma Rûpa--and body. Although the word "personality," in the sense in which it is usually understood, is an absurdity, if applied literally to our immortal essence, still the latter is a distinct entity, immortal and eternal, *per se*; and when (as in the case of criminals beyond redemption) the shining thread which links the spirit to the soul, from the moment of the birth of a child, is violently snapped, and the disembodied personal entity is left to share the fate of the lower animals, to gradually dissolve into ether, fall into the terrible *state* of Âvîchi, or disappear entirely in the eighth sphere and have its complete personality annihilated--even then the spirit remains a distinct being. It becomes a planetary spirit, an angel; for the gods of the Pagan or the archangels of the Christian, the direct emanations of the One Cause, notwithstanding the hazardous statement of Swedenborg, *never were nor will they be men*, on our planet, at least.

This specialization has been in all ages the stumbling-block of metaphysicians. The whole esotericism of the Buddhistic philosophy is based on this mysterious teaching, understood by so few persons, and so totally misrepresented by many of the most learned

156

H. P. BLAVATSKY

scholars. Even metaphysicians are too inclined to confound the effect with the cause. A person may have won his immortal life, and remain the same *inner self* he was on earth, throughout eternity; but this does not imply necessarily that he must either remain the Mr. Smith or Brown he was on earth, or lose his individuality. Therefore, the astral soul, *i.e.*, the personality, like the terrestrial body and the lower portion of the *human* soul of man, may, in the dark hereafter, be absorbed into the cosmical ocean of sublimated elements, and cease to feel its personal individuality, if it did not deserve to soar higher, and the divine spirit, or spiritual individuality, still remain an unchanged entity, though this terrestrial experience of his emanations may be totally obliterated at the instant of separation from the unworthy vehicle.

If the "spirit," or the divine portion of the soul, is preëxistent as a distinct being from all eternity, as Origen, Synesius, and other Christian fathers and philosophers taught, and if it is the same, and nothing more

than the metaphysically-objective soul, how can it be otherwise than eternal? And what matters it in such a case, whether man leads an animal or a pure life, if, do what he may, he can never lose his *personality*? This doctrine is as pernicious in its consequences as that of vicarious atonement. Had the latter dogma, in company with the false idea that we are all personally immortal, been demonstrated to the world in its true light, humanity would have been bettered by its propagation. Crime and sin would be avoided, not for fear of earthly punishment, or of a ridiculous hell, but for the sake of that which lies the most deeply rooted in our nature--the desire of a personal and distinct life in the hereafter, the positive assurance that we cannot win it unless we "take the kingdom of heaven by violence," and the conviction that neither human prayers nor the blood of another man will save us from personal destruction after death, unless we firmly link ourselves during our terrestrial life with our own immortal spirit--our *only* personal God.

Pythagoras, Plato, Timæus of Locris, and the whole Alexandrian School derived the soul from the universal World-Soul; and a portion of the latter was, according to their own teachings--ether; something of such a fine nature as to be perceived only by our inner sight. Therefore, it cannot be the essence of the Monas, or Cause,<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> As says Krishna--who is at the same time Purusha and Prakriti in its totality, and the *seventh* principle, the divine spirit in man--in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I am the *Cause*. I am the production and dissolution of the whole of Nature. On me is all the Universe suspended as pearls upon a string." (Ch. vii.) "Even though myself unborn, of changeless essence, and the Lord of all existence, yet in presiding over Nature (Prakriti) which is mine, I am born but through my own Mâyâ [the mystic power of Self-ideation, the Eternal Thought in the Eternal Mind]." (Ch. iv.)

because the Anima Mundi is but the effect, the objective emanation of the former. Both the divine spiritual soul and the human soul are preëxistent. But, while the former exists as a distinct entity, an individualization, the soul (the vehicle of the former) exists only as preëxisting matter, an unscient portion of an intelligent whole. Both were originally formed from the Eternal Ocean of Light; but as the Theosophists expressed it,

there is a visible as well as invisible spirit in fire. They made a difference between the Anima Bruta and the Anima Divina. Empedocles firmly believed all men and animals to possess two souls; and in Aristotle we find that he calls one the reasoning soul, *Nous*, and the other, the animal soul, *Psuche*. According to these philosophers, the reasoning soul comes from *without* the Universal Soul (*i.e.*, from a source higher than the Universal Soul--in its cosmic sense; it is the Universal Spirit, the seventh principle of the Universe in its totality), and the other from *within*. This divine and superior region, in which they located the invisible and supreme deity, was considered by them (by Aristotle himself, who was not an initiate) as a fifth element--whereas it is the *seventh* in the Esoteric Philosophy, or *Mûlaprakriti*--purely spiritual and divine, whereas the Anima Mundi proper was considered as composed of a fine, igneous, and ethereal nature spread throughout the Universe, in short--Ether.<sup>30</sup>

The Stoics, the greatest materialists of ancient days, excepted the Divine Principle and Divine Soul from any such a corporeal nature. Their modern commentators and admirers, greedily seizing the opportunity, built on this ground the supposition that the Stoics believed in neither God nor soul, the essence of matter. Most certainly Epicurus did not believe in God or soul as understood by either ancient or modern theists. But Epicurus, whose doctrine (militating directly against the agency of a Supreme Being and Gods, in the formation or government of the world) placed him far above the Stoics in atheism and materialism, nevertheless taught that the soul is of a fine, tender essence formed from the smoothest, roundest, and finest atoms--which description still brings us to the same sublimated ether. He further believed in the Gods. Arnobius, Tertullian, Irenæus, and Origen,

---

<sup>30</sup> Ether is the *Âkâsha* of the Hindus. *Âkâsha* is *Prakriti*, or the totality of the manifested Universe, while *Purusha* is the Universal Spirit, higher than the Universal Soul.

Spinoza and Hobbes, that the soul was corporeal, though of a very fine nature--an anthropomorphic and personal something, *i.e.*, corporeal, finite and conditioned. Can it under such conditions become immortal? Can the mutable become the immutable?

This doctrine of the possibility of losing one's soul and, hence, individuality, militates with the ideal theories and progressive ideas of some spiritualists, though Swedenborg fully adopts it. They will never accept the kabalistic doctrine which teaches that it is only through observing the law of harmony that individual life hereafter can be obtained; and that the farther the inner and outer man deviate from this fount of harmony, whose source lies in our divine spirit, the more difficult it is to regain the ground.

But while the spiritualists and other adherents of Christianity have little, if any, perception of this fact of the possible death and obliteration of the human personality by the separation of the immortal part from the perishable, some Swedenborgians--those, at least, who follow the spirit of a philosophy, not merely the dead letter of a teaching--fully comprehend it. One of the most respected ministers of the New Church, the Rev. Chauncey Giles, D.D., of New York, recently elucidated the subject in a public discourse as follows. Physical death, or the death of the body, was a provision of the divine economy for the benefit of man, a provision by means of which he attained the higher ends of his being. But there is another death which is the interruption of the divine order and the destruction of every human element in man's nature, and every possibility of human happiness. This is the spiritual death which takes place before the dissolution of the body. "There may be a vast development of man's natural mind without that development being accompanied by a particle of the divine love, or of unselfish love of man." When one falls into a love of self and love of the world, with its pleasures, losing the divine love of God and of the neighbour, he falls from life to death. The higher principles which constitute the essential elements of his humanity perish, and he lives only on the natural plane of his faculties. Physically he exists, spiritually he is dead. To all that pertains to the higher and the only enduring phase of existence he is as much dead

as his body becomes dead to all the activities, delights, and sensations of the world when the spirit has left it. This spiritual death results from disobedience of the laws of spiritual life, which is followed by the same penalty as the disobedience of the laws of the natural life. But the spiritually dead have still

159

#### ELEMENTALS

their delights; they have their intellectual endowments, and power, and intense activities. All the animal delights are theirs, and to multitudes of men and women these constitute the highest ideal of human happiness. The tireless pursuit of riches, of the amusements and entertainments of social life; the cultivation of graces of manner, of taste in dress, of social preferment, of scientific distinction, intoxicate and enrapture these dead-alive; but, the eloquent preacher remarks, "these creatures, with all their graces, rich attire, and brilliant accomplishments, are dead in the eye of the Lord and the angels, and when measured by the only true and immutable standard have no more genuine life than skeletons whose flesh has turned to dust."

Although we do not believe in "the Lord and the angels"--not, at any rate, in the sense given to these terms by Swedenborg and his followers, we nevertheless admire these feelings and fully agree with the reverend gentleman's opinions.

A high development of the intellectual faculties does not imply spiritual and true life. The presence in one of a highly developed human, intellectual soul (the fifth principle, or Manas), is quite compatible with the absence of Buddhi, or the spiritual soul. Unless the former evolves from and develops under the beneficent and vivifying rays of the latter, it will remain forever but a direct progeny of the terrestrial, lower principles, sterile in spiritual perceptions; a magnificent, luxurious sepulchre, full of the dry bones of decaying matter within. Many of our greatest scientists are but animate corpses--they have no spiritual sight because their spirits have left them, or, rather, cannot reach them. So we might go through all ages, examine all occupations, weigh all human attainments, and investigate all forms of society, and we would find these *spiritually* dead everywhere.

Although Aristotle himself, anticipating the modern physiologists, regarded the human mind as a material substance, and ridiculed the hylozoists, nevertheless he fully believed in the existence of a "double" soul, or soul *plus* spirit, as one can see in his *De Generat. et Corrupt.* (Lib. ii.). He laughed at Strabo for believing that any particles of matter, *per se*, could have life and intellect in themselves sufficient to fashion by degrees such a multiform world as ours.<sup>31</sup>

Aristotle is indebted for the sublime morality of his Nichomachean Ethics to a thorough study of the Pythagorean

---

<sup>31</sup> *De Part.*, i. 1.

Ethical Fragments; for the latter can be easily shown to have been the source at which he gathered his ideas, though he might not have sworn "by him who the Tetraktys found."<sup>32</sup>

But indeed our men of science know nothing certain about Aristotle. His philosophy is so abstruse that he constantly leaves his reader to supply by the imagination the missing links of his logical deductions. Moreover, we know that before his works ever reached our scholars, who delight in his seemingly atheistical arguments in support of his doctrine of fate, they passed through too many hands to have remained immaculate. From Theophrastus, his legator, they passed to Neleus, whose heirs kept them mouldering in subterranean caves for nearly 150 years; after which, we learn that his manuscripts were copied and much augmented by Appelicon of Theos, who supplied such paragraphs as had become illegible, by conjectures of his own, probably many of these drawn from the depths of his inner consciousness. Our scholars of the nineteenth as anxious to imitate him practically as they are to throw his inductive method and materialistic theories at the heads of the Platonists. We invite them to collect *facts* as carefully as he did, instead of denying those they know nothing about.

What we have said here and elsewhere of the variety of "spirits" and other invisible beings evolved in the astral light, and what we now mean

to say of mediums and the tendency of their mediumship, is not based upon conjecture, but upon actual experience and observation. There is scarcely one phase of mediumship, of either kind, that we have not seen exemplified during the past thirty-five years, in various countries. India, Tibet, Borneo, Siam, Egypt, Asia Minor, America (North and South), and other parts of the world, have each displayed to us its peculiar phase of mediumistic phenomena and magical power. Our varied experience has fully corroborated the teachings of our Masters and of *The Secret Doctrine*, and has taught us two important truths, viz., that for the exercise of "mediumship" personal purity and the exercise of a trained and indomitable will-power are indispensable; and that spiritualists can never assure themselves of the genuineness of mediumistic manifestations unless they occur in the light and under such reasonable test conditions as would make an attempted fraud instantly noticed.

---

<sup>32</sup> A Pythagorean oath. The Pythagoreans swore by their Master.

For fear of being misunderstood, we would remark that while, as a rule, physical phenomena are produced by the nature-spirits, of their own motion and under the impulse of the elementaries, still genuine disembodied human spirits, may, under *exceptional* circumstances--such as the aspiration of a pure, loving heart, or under the influence of some intense thought or unsatisfied desire, at the moment of death--manifest their presence, either in dream, or vision, or even bring about their objective appearance--if very soon after physical death. Direct writing may be produced in the genuine handwriting of the "spirit," the medium being influenced by a process unknown as much to himself as to the modern spiritualists, we fear. But what we maintain and shall maintain to the last is, that no genuine *human* spirit can *materialize*, *i.e.*, clothe his monad with an objective form. Even for the rest it must be a mighty attraction indeed to draw a pure, disembodied spirit from its radiant, Devachanic state--its home--into the foul atmosphere from which it escaped upon leaving its earthly body.

When the possible nature of the manifesting intelligences, which science believes to be a "psychic force," and spiritualists the identical "spirits of the dead," is better known, then will academicians and believers turn to the old philosophers for information. They may in their indomitable pride, that becomes so often stubbornness and arrogance, do as Dr. Charcot, of the Salpêtrière of Paris, has done: deny for years the existence of Mesmerism and its phenomena, to accept and finally preach it in public lectures--only under the assumed name, Hypnotism.

We have found in spiritualistic journals many instances where apparitions of departed pet dogs and other animals have been seen. Therefore, upon spiritualistic testimony, we must think that such animal "spirits" do appear although we reserve the right of concurring with the ancients that the forms are but tricks of the elementals. Notwithstanding every proof and probability the spiritualists will, nevertheless, maintain that it is the "spirits" of the departed human beings that are at work even in the "materialization" of animals. We will now examine with their permission the *pro* and *con* of the mooted question. Let us for a moment imagine an intelligent or some African anthropoid ape disembodied, *i.e.*, deprived of its physical and in possession of an astral, if not an immortal body. Once open the door of communication between the terrestrial and the spiritual world, what prevents the ape from producing physical phenomena such as he sees human

162

H. P. BLAVATSKY

spirits produce? And why may not these excel in cleverness and ingenuity many of those which have been witnessed in spiritualistic circles? Let spiritualists answer. The orangutan of Borneo is little, if any, inferior to the savage man in intelligence. Mr. Wallace and other great naturalists give instances of its wonderful acuteness, although its brains are inferior in cubic capacity to the most undeveloped of savages. These apes lack but speech to be men of low grade. The sentinels placed by monkeys; the sleeping chambers selected and built by orangutans; their prevision of danger and calculations, which show more than instinct; their choice of leaders whom they obey; and the exercise of many of their faculties, certainly entitle them to a place at least on a level with many a

flat-headed Australian. Says Mr. Wallace, "The mental requirements of savages, and the faculties actually exercised by them, are very little above those of the animals."

Now, people assume that there can be no apes in the other world, because apes have no "souls." But apes have as much intelligence, it appears, as some men; why, then, should these men, in no way superior to the apes, have immortal spirits, and the apes none? The materialists will answer that neither the one nor the other has a spirit, but that annihilation overtakes each at physical death. But the spiritual philosophers of all times have agreed that man occupies a step one degree higher than the animal, and is possessed of that something which it lacks, be he the most untutored of savages or the wisest of philosophers. The ancients, as we have seen, taught that while man is a septenary trinity of body, astral spirit, and immortal soul, the animal is but a duality--*i.e.*, having but five instead of *seven* principles in him, a being having a physical body with its astral body and life-principle, and its animal soul and vehicle animating it. Scientists can distinguish no difference in the elements composing the bodies of men and brutes; and the Kabalists agree with them so far as to say that the astral bodies (or, as the physicists would call it, the "life-principle") of animals and men are *identical* in essence. Physical man is but the highest development of animal life. If, as the scientists tell us, even *thought* is matter, and every sensation of pain or pleasure, every transient desire is accompanied by a disturbance of ether; and those bold speculators, the authors of the *Unseen Universe* believe that thought is conceived "to affect the matter of another universe simultaneously with this"; why, then, should not the gross, brutish thought of an orangutan, or a dog, impressing itself on the

163

#### ELEMENTALS

ethereal waves of the astral light, as well as that of man, assure the animal a continuity of life after death, or a "future state"?

The Kabalists held, and now hold, that it is unphilosophical to admit that the astral body of man can survive corporeal death, and at the same time assert that the astral body of the ape is resolved into independent molecules. That which survives as an individuality after the death of the

body is the *astral soul*, which Plato, in the *Timæus* and *Gorgias*, calls the *mortal soul*, for, according to the Hermetic doctrine, it throws off its more material particles at every progressive change into a higher sphere.

Let us advance another step in our argument. If there is such a thing as existence in the spiritual world after corporeal death, then it must occur in accordance with the law of evolution. It takes man from his place at the apex of the pyramid of matter, and lifts him into a sphere of existence where the same inexorable law follows him. And if it follows him, why not everything else in nature? Why not animals and plants, which have all a life-principle, and whose gross forms decay like his, when that life-principle leaves them? If his astral body becomes more ethereal upon attaining the other sphere, why not theirs? \*

-----  
\*The article here comes to an abrupt termination--whether it was ever finished or whether some of the MS. was lost, it is impossible to say.-- EDS. [*Lucifer*].

*Lucifer*, August, 1893

### Elementals

*The universe is worked and guided from within outwards. As above so it is below, as in heaven so on earth; and man -- the microcosm and miniature copy of the macrocosm -- is the living witness to this Universal Law and to the mode of its action. We see that every external motion, act, gesture, whether voluntary or mechanical, organic or mental, is produced and preceded by internal feeling or emotion, will or volition, and thought or mind. . . . The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who -- whether we give to them one name or another, and call them Dhyan-Chohans or Angels -- are 'messengers' in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws. They vary infinitely in their respective degrees of consciousness and intelligence. . . . Man . . . being a compound of the essences of all those celestial*

*Hierarchies may succeed in making himself, as such, superior, in one sense, to any hierarchy or class, or even combination of them.*

*The Secret Doctrine i, 274-276*

The metaphysical basis of the doctrine of elementals is essential to understanding the relationship of man to the world. Both Man and Nature are composed of a complex congeries of elemental entities endowed with character and perceptible form by continuous streams of ideation originating in Universal Mind. Virtually everything perceived by man, virtually every faculty of action, is such an aggregate of elementals. All the various modes and modulations of active and passive intelligence in man exist and subsist within these fields of elementals, and no aspect of human life is comprehensible without some grasp of elemental existence. Sensation, for example, which is ordinarily thought of in a purely external way, has another side to it when seen from the standpoint of the immortal soul, and this involves the intimate presence of hosts of elementals composing the very organs of sensation and mind. The entire quest for enlightenment and self-conscious immortality cannot be understood without careful examination of the relationship of human beings to elementals. It is necessary to know where elementals reside and how their inherent modes of activity relate to the different principles in man. Sometimes people who speculate about the hidden side of Nature and human life, either inspired by folklore or a dabbling in the occult, develop a fascination with elementals and inadequately theorize about them. Usually they do not see any significance to elementals beyond their connection with the *prana* principle; this, however, is grossly inadequate and unhelpful, if not downright dangerous, particularly when coupled with lower yogic practices or mediumistic tendencies.

An authentic approach to the doctrine of elementals must be motivated by a desire to regenerate oneself on behalf of all. Both wisdom and compassion are needed if one would master the ways in which a human being may work upon elementals and also be acted upon by them. In practice, this is an extremely intimate and detailed enquiry involving all the most basic activities of daily life. The real nature of home and possessions, of eating and sleeping, and of every other aspect of life is

bound up with elementals. Naturally, this includes questions of physical and psychological disease and health, with all the fads and fancies, popular and private, that accompany them. Problems of drugs and depression, along with the other ailments of the age for which there are no available remedies, are bound up with the interactions of the human and elemental worlds. No amount of mechanistic manipulation by doctors, therapists, specialists or religious counsellors will be of any avail in curing these ills of individuals and society; all ignore the fundamental nature of human malaise.

Real human welfare and well-being proceed from within without, beginning in the mind and heart and enacted through responsibility in thought and speech before they are reflected in outward action. The collective regeneration of society, therefore, depends upon the efforts of individuals to regenerate themselves fundamentally -- first at the level of their basic self-consciousness, and later in relation to their vestures. Working outward from what one thinks of oneself, this regeneration must involve existing elementals in one's own being and will have definite effects upon everything with which one has contact and relationship. One must do this without falling into increasing self-obsession. One must sustain a universal motive. Merely building a fortress around one's own virtue is incompatible with teaching elementals and giving them the sort of beneficial impress that makes them a healing force in society. To avoid this moralistic delusion and still carry out the work of self-regeneration, one must insert the effort to overcome one's own sins and failings into the most universal context of human suffering. One must feel one's own pain as inseparable from the pain of every atom, every elemental and every human being involved in the collective human pilgrimage. Instead of hiding in fear or withdrawing from it, one must remain sensitive to that universal pain and so become as wide awake as Buddha.

Metaphysically, the doctrine of elementals encompasses the wide range of *devas* and *devatas*, gods and demigods, on seven different planes of differentiated cosmic substance. Extending far beyond medieval lore about gnomes, sylphs, salamanders and undines, the true teaching of elementals begins with the root processes by which thought impresses

matter with form through *fohat*. Much of this teaching is secret, but any aspirant seeking aid in the acquisition of self-mastery will find considerable help in the sacred texts of all the authentic spiritual traditions of the world. These, however, must be approached from the standpoint of the philosophy of perfectibility and the science of spirituality, with no quarter given to blind superstition and stale dogmatism. At the most fundamental philosophical level, the doctrine of elementals is indeed magical and mystical, but this magic is noetic and akashic. It has nothing to do with the morass of grey psychic practices that pass for magic among pseudo-occultists. Instead, one must begin with meditation upon the abstract Point and the Zero Principle. (See *Hermes*, February 1986.) Without a firmer grasp of principles and without a true mental confrontation with fundamental ideas, it is impossible to understand and use the teaching of elementals for the benefit of the world. Without these rigorous basics, one can only fall prey to secondary and tertiary emanations and so become coiled in nefarious practices and sorcery.

A secure beginning can be found in the recognition that a fully self-conscious sevenfold being is unique. Such a being is the crown of creation, the full embodiment of the macrocosm in the microcosm. In a very specific sense man is, at the essential core of his being, a pure and immaculate crystallized ray of light-energy. This light ultimately represents the radiation of universal self-consciousness, the light that brings together all the gods and all the hierarchies. It goes beyond all colours and numbers to the one clear white light, the secondless light hidden in the divine darkness and silence. Thus man is one with the rootless root of the cosmos, a differentiated being compounded of every conceivable element in every one of the kingdoms of Nature. All the seven kingdoms are in a human being. This, of course, involves not only the physical body, but a series of vestures or *upadhis* on several different planes. In all the vestures of the human being, there is not a single element of any of the kingdoms of Nature, or any of the elemental forces, that is not already present.

This complexity in human nature, spanning the unmanifest and the manifest, is the basis of the paradox that man is both the potential crown

of creation and its curse. In the whole of creation, sevenfold man is the unique possessor of the pristine light which precedes, differentiates and integrates, but also transcends, the entire spectrum of colours, sounds, forces, energies and vibrations. At the very core, man is deific and divine. Yet this does not make man sublime or spiritual in a way that stones and animals are not, for the deific breath and the divine afflatus of the One Life is everywhere and in everything. What is crucial about Man is that he is the possessor of self-consciousness through the gift of the Manasas and Agnishvatta Pitris, a particular class of the highest gods involving the second and third of the four classes below the first. Man is thus able to synthesize and transcend all the elementals.

Since man at the core possesses a thread of self-consciousness antedating embodied life, man is the integrator of all life. This is, in a sense, what contemporary astronomy and cosmology have come to recognize in studying the hosts of stars and galaxies. They have begun to speak of an anthropic principle in Nature. This is not to be confused with the outdated and parochial notion of an anthropocentric universe. Rather, it is the recognition that one cannot understand life, even at the level of physical chemistry, or in reference to primordial matter on distant planets, without seeing it as part of a vast chain that must ultimately culminate in what we call the human being. Naturally, what is called 'human' on this earth is not necessarily the only possible mode of human being. There could be examples of other, vastly more developed, types of human being on other planets. Indeed, when one takes into account the possible variations in consciousness connected with the possible modes of human existence, there could be human beings existing not only on other planets, but on other planes of matter, perhaps even now invisibly present on this earth.

To say that man is the microcosm of the macrocosm, whilst having the power of integration that accommodates the maximum diversity of elements throughout Nature, means that man is in fact a cosmos. Whilst that cosmos is deific at the core, it is also so vast that it would be hardly surprising if, at some stage, that cosmos were mostly chaotic. Man is a victim of his inability to master this cosmic complexity within himself. This task demands so high a degree of dignity, integrity, fidelity and

control rooted in self-conscious awareness that most people flee at the mere thought of it. They would rather go to sleep or forget about it, exchanging their human prerogative for daydreams, contributing tamasic elementals to hapless rocks and stones. Hence the paradox of the human condition. When man resigns from the difficult work of self-mastery, he abandons his essential place in Nature. The illustrious Pico della Mirandola called man the pivot of Nature. This idea, sadly neglected or falsely interpreted since then, was central to the seven-century cycle of the Theosophical Movement initiated by Tsong-Kha-Pa in Tibet. That cycle has now returned to its original point, and the future unfoldment of spiritual humanity rests upon the restoration of the true dignity of man.

If man, who is the pivot of Nature, abdicates his role, he becomes a curse upon creation, more hellish and demonic than anything that exists in the external realms of Nature, or anything depicted by Hieronymus Bosch and the *tankas* of Tibet. Even the most ghastly tales of goblins, monsters, giants and fiends cannot compare with the actual evil that can exist within a human being. Certainly, one will never find anything in visible and invisible Nature that outdoes the terrifying evil of which human beings are capable. This does not, however, make man into a weak, miserable worm; it makes him into a depraved being, damned of human evolution, and a veritable devil. Deific at the core, man inhabits a cosmos which all too easily becomes a chaos. The most appalling aspects of the demonic side of man have to do with the larger story of lost continents and vanished races, eras when spiritual powers were deliberately misused. Every time a failed human being becomes an elementary, he becomes, as a disembodied entity, an agent responsible for more harm on earth than anything else that exists. This is an invisible but real and terrifying fact of modern civilization, involving all the victims of wars and all the bitter, frustrated victims of accidents, murders, executions and suicides.

If this is metaphysically true, however frightening, it is important to understand what will stimulate and give incentive and motive to a human being to rediscover divinity and dignity. What will strengthen a person, so that he will not abdicate responsibility? First of all, he must

relinquish one of the greatest fictions besetting contemporary human beings: the Cartesian belief in an abyss between mind and matter. *Brahma Vidya* teaches that spirit is sublimated matter and matter is condensed spirit. There is no point in space where there is not a spark of universal spirit, and there is not a set of particles derived from primordial substance which is not alive with divine intelligence. The seeming gap between mind and matter is an illusion created by the sensorium. In one sense, this illusion is the cost of physical incarnation: human beings are imprisoned, and indeed self-entombed, in a body, according to the old Orphic and Platonic accounts. To some degree, this is an inevitable result of taking birth in a limited body, even though the best available in natural evolution. Nonetheless, it is not required by the programme of Nature that human beings become so inextricably caught up in the sensorium that they succumb to a fragmentation of themselves and the world. It is not necessary that their minds become so cluttered with nouns that they forget verbs, and lose through language all sense of their spiritual vitality. This corruption of thought through language has led most human beings to create a false sense of identity which is actually a dominant elemental. This offspring of pseudo self-consciousness is made up of the lower four elements -- earth, air, fire and water, both gross and astral -- and it goes by the name of Mr. X or Ms. Y. The tragedy is that the souls who have conjured these elementals out of their identification with the sensorium mistake them for their own real natures, and confuse the elemental apparitions created by other souls for real human beings.

It is difficult for souls to wake up from this collectively reinforced delusion and recognize these elemental projections for what they are. It is especially hard at this time, when people have nothing but a fugitive sense of clinging to a personality and when the once-compelling names and forms of the past mean so little. The elementals people mistake for themselves know only one law and one language -- that of survival at any cost and of self before all else. When one adds to this the competitiveness and callousness of modern society, one gets an elemental of truly monstrous proportions. No amount of external makeup will hide the hideousness of that elemental. It is part of the humbug of our time that behind the so-called 'beautiful people' lie some of the ugliest specimens

of inhumanity and pseudo-humanity that have ever walked this earth. Most cities and centres of modern 'civilization' really amount to central places for manufacturing and cloning these monstrous elementals.

Such an elemental form, as Buddha taught, is ultimately a composite entity that must be broken up. It has no enduring existence but belongs to the false, parasitic and derivative 'I'. Only by denying a sense of 'I' to this elemental can one release the true sense of 'I-am-I' consciousness in the universal light, at the same time releasing these elementals from the torture of bondage to the delusions and modes of selfishness. Even though human beings may torture elementals for a while, they cannot do so indefinitely. In the long run, they are stronger and more powerful than their captor, who is actually the weak pseudo-man or pseudo-'I', full of sound and fury and signifying nothing. Such a nature lacks the strength of genuine human thought. It is inherently cowardly, unable to do anything against the elementals; the elementals will get their revenge over a period of time. All elementals are themselves specialized completely within one or other of the elements. This fact, which could work to the advantage of the higher sovereign spirit in man as the integrator of all the elements, becomes the exact opposite in the case of the delusive ego struggling for self-perpetuation. Such a being falls prey to a pathetic and impotent enslavement to elementals that are more intelligent, precise and concentrated than itself. Because these elementals are pure in their fiery, watery, airy or earthy nature, they have an integrity of action that cannot be diverted for long by the twisted deceptions of the false ego. They will eventually wreak their revenge for having been misappropriated on behalf of separative delusions through one form or another of ill health, mental sickness or depression.

Whilst the insecure will fixate on this predicament merely as it applies to them, the rectification of wrongs involving the elemental kingdoms is actually an enormous process encompassing the globe. At this time, owing to the Avataric impulse, all the hosts of elementals have been immensely stirred up and hastened in precipitating their revenge on their torturers. The object is to get these people off the face of the earth, so that there will no longer be such a preponderance of selfish beings. This may be the only alternative to nuclear annihilation if the earth is to be

repopulated by real human beings, beings who know how to breathe gratefully just for the privilege of the air. This is an extraordinary time, calling for the reversal of long ages of degradation of the idea of Man and the freeing of Nature from an intolerable regime of domination by selfishness. Put in Christian terms, this means the reversal of the corrupt doctrines of original sin and vicarious atonement, which have obscured the true teaching of Jesus about the perfectibility of man. To understand this reversing process, one has to bring in the invisible world of devils and demons, the idea of a personal god and much else. This is a much older story than the brief history of Christianity and it has happened to every religion.

To come into line with the forward movement of spiritual humanity, individuals must bring about in themselves a fundamental transformation of mind. Through an irreversible metanoia, they must calmly and surely overcome the dichotomy between mind and matter, rooting their consciousness in that which is beyond all differentiation. That is why meditation is no longer a luxury, but has become a necessity for survival. Simply recognizing this, however, does not mean that it will be easy or that it will work. If the only meditation one knows is on one's lower self -- the elemental -- how can one expect that elemental to forget itself? That is impossible. For such beings it is not merely difficult to meditate; it is actually to ask for too much too soon in cases that are too far gone. But even though they seem to be many, they are still a microscopic minority of the whole of the human family. They are powerful because their poisonous pollution can spread fast and wide, weakening lukewarm, irresolute people in the middle who are not really doing any thinking. They can fool themselves for a while, fudging the issue of choice and responsibility, but they are eventually going to be sucked into the vortex of the times and go one way or the other.

All of this should be understood as following from the metaphysical basis of the doctrine of elementals. It is a crucial, if painful, part of its practical application to the psychological and meta-psychological life of incarnated human souls. Yet there is much more to the teaching of elementals than its application to the lower principles of human nature. Elementals, at the highest level, are the most etheric, divine elements that

exist. They are sparks of divine flame. This is a part of the secret teachings that is only comprehensible through initiation. Yet one can understand theoretically that the Sons of Agni, the divine flame, are the highest beings in evolution, and that they released myriads of sparks of fiery intelligence which then, *pari passu* with the differentiation of primordial substance, became the elemental world of Nature. This process included the creation of a kind of elemental prototype of the human being, but one that will not consolidate or become self-conscious by itself. This must await the descent of the Manasas. Still other elementals remain permanently in the rarefied realm of *akasha*, higher than the ether, let alone the lower astral light. It is these hosts that Shelley intimated in his poetry. They are invulnerable, all-powerful and omnipresent.

Elementals reach out to the highest aspects of existence, which is why it is extremely misleading to link elementals merely to one principle, such as *prana*, in sevenfold man. All life-energy works through all life-atoms; there is, therefore, a life-current existing in human nature which may be called *prana*. It is a sort of sum-total or quantum of life-energy within the metabolic system of the human body or, more correctly, within the astral body. It flows in that body like a fluidic current, and one might say that the elementals participate actively in it, as if swimming in an ocean of pranic life-energy. This is where they get their life. They are repeatedly refreshed by it, especially during sleep, and this is how they regenerate themselves. Nonetheless, the elementals belong to each and every one of the human principles except the *atman*.

Only if one understands this can one appreciate the enormous breadth of the doctrine of elementals. At the highest end, it includes what are called the gods in exoteric theologies, hosts of the finest beings in existence, though they are not self-conscious human beings. If they were self-conscious human beings in a previous *manvantara*, they have gone beyond that and only have a collective function, like that ascribed to the *dhyani buddhas* and archangels. At the same time, elementals include the three kingdoms below the mineral kingdom. Paracelsus gave, perhaps, the best summation of the metaphysics of elementals and their connection with man when he said, "Man lives in the exterior elements, and the Elementals live in the interior elements." Through the mind

turning outward, man becomes fragmented and abdicates his throne. Becoming totally caught up in the external details of life, man is living, so to speak, outside his own true home. In this sense he is an exile. His body is no longer his temple, for he has cast himself out of it. In truth all the elementals live within that temple, in the interior elements.

Looked at in this way, elementals may be seen to be close to the essential aspects of a human being, in every one of the senses, on every plane and in every vesture. The human mind has its own elementals, which one may call mental elementals if one likes, though in fact they are airy elementals. On the physical plane, man has mostly earthy elementals. Within each principle, there are further subdivisions, so that there are earthy-fire elementals, airy-fire elementals and so on. Even this traditional language of the elements is awkward and misleading at best, since the true meanings of these divisions and subdivisions cannot be correlated with merely visual data, much less with the ever-changing atomic language of modern science. Whatever the linguistic problem, however, there should be no difficulty in seeing that one is really speaking of a vast, shoreless, boundless etheric field populated by billions of elementals. This is the true population of the cosmos, far more numerous than human beings or any other organic beings in any of the kingdoms of Nature. This being so, there is no way that one can even begin to understand human life apart from elementals. All daily activities of human life thus take on a fresh colouration and vitality, a magical potency involved with invisible, interior kingdoms. Every thought, every breath, every feeling and especially every word is filled with magic. Every instant, one either blesses or curses, elevates or degrades, hosts of elementals; every moment, one either sinks downward towards the demonic or soars upward towards the company and presence of the Blessed.

*If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils. Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fullness of the seeming void. O fearless Aspirant, look deep within the well of thine own heart, and answer. Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows?*

## **The Healing of Elementals**

### **R**

---

*"How did you come here, O King, on foot or in a chariot?"*

*"I did not come, sir, on foot. I came in a chariot. "*

*"If you came in a chariot, explain to me what that is.*

*Is it the pole that is the chariot?"*

*"Certainly not."*

*"Is it the wheels, or the frame, or the ropes, or the yoke,  
or the spokes or the goad that is the chariot?"*

*To all of these King Milinda still answered no.*

*"Then is it all these parts that is the chariot?"*

*"No, Nagasena."*

*"But is there anything outside them that is the chariot?"*

*And still he answered no.*

*"Then, ask as I may, I can discover no chariot. 'Chariot' is a mere empty sound. What, then, is this 'chariot' you say you came in? Your Majesty has spoken a falsehood, an untruth! There is no such thing as a 'chariot'! You are king over all India, a mighty monarch. Of whom, then, are you afraid that you speak untruth?"*

*Questions of King Milinda*

Human beings commonly conceive of themselves as privileged subjects active in an outer world of objects, and acted upon by a host of forces and pressures. Though they assign a stable reality to themselves as subjects and to these objects, they are generally confused about the dynamic connection between the two. Typically, they picture objects as having a sort of mechanistic persistence and variability, markedly different from the kind of vital energy they ascribe to themselves. No such sharp distinction can succeed, however, in accounting for the essential facts of human life. Much that is deemed to be subjective displays the same inveterate and stark routinization held to characterize

the so-called external world of mechanical objects. And supposedly inert objects often reveal dynamic qualities ranging from the perverse to the poetic. The nexus or network of this perplexing condition is centred in the human body itself, which is continually affected alike by seemingly subjective and objective forces.

The arcane mystery surrounding embodied consciousness has been the fertile source of much philosophical speculation, largely bound up with Cartesian dualism and the so-called 'mind-body problem'. Having severed form and consciousness from each other at a fundamental level, most thinkers, like "all the king's horses and all the king's men", have been unable to put them back together again. Nor does radical objective materialism or extreme subjective idealism yield a consistent resolution of the problem. This philosophical quandary reflects a broader malaise in human understanding and self-consciousness with vital implications in arenas such as medicine and health, education and therapy, and the crucial connection of individual moral choices with the collective social and political order. Notions like 'psychosomatic illness', 'ego-transference' and 'political charisma' point to lacunae in our basic categories, and provide more heat than light, with few, if any, clues to responsible action. As a result, the well-intentioned find themselves unable to instantiate their ideals, and it is small compensation that the perverse and malicious are also rather impotent in imposing on the world their malign schemes for universal degradation.

From the standpoint of *Gupta Vidya*, this entire dualistic approach is rooted in a fundamental philosophical error. Instead of viewing differentiated form and consciousness as two radically separate modes of being, it sees them only as manifesting aspects of a single undifferentiated substance-principle. That rootless root is pre-cosmic ideation as well as pre-cosmic matter, both absolute consciousness and absolute unconsciousness, it being impossible to attribute any finite or formal character to this primordial, pre-genetic Ground. Thus the common-sense distinctions between mind and matter, between body and soul, are merely relative and conceptual, helpful in characterizing different functions and faculties within living beings, but systematically misleading if taken as suggesting any strict dichotomy in the ontological

bases of these diverse powers and principles. Further, this singular and sole origin of all consciousness and form implies that there is no unbridgeable gap between modes of manifestation of form and consciousness in various kingdoms of Nature, ranging from the least and lowest to the most metaphysically exalted. All alike are ensouled by one universal and ramifying divine Intelligence, and all are equally embodiments of one supreme and homogeneous light-essence.

These two aspects -- *mahat* and *daiviprakriti* -- unfold and enfold all the possibilities of differentiated existence throughout the complex realms of visible and invisible Nature, from the highest radiations of Logoic or cosmic intelligence to the sub-physical species of elementals -- the salamanders, sylphs, undines and gnomes of alchemical and popular folklore. At every successive level, grosser emanations mirror the specific modes of activity and intelligence of their more subtle 'parents' but with diminishing ranges of action on every descending plane of existence, until finally the extreme limit of differentiation in a particular cycle of manifestation is reached. The entire web of Nature vibrates and resonates with the pulsations of the Logoic heart, expressing the One Life in myriad modes of manifest sensitivity and action. Throughout, the law of universal harmony reigns unbroken, continually adjusting the relations of all the parts within the impartite sovereign presence and provenance of the One. Its intelligence is behind their intelligence, and as they are drawn together or driven apart in successive communities and aggregations, as they suffer various transformations and transmutations of capability, all this is directly and immediately an expression of the infinite potential inherent in the Logoic root.

Seen in this light, embodied human existence is no different from any other mode of existence, subhuman or superhuman. Indeed, the worlds of *devas*, men and gods are alike guided by one identical Law. Yet each type in Nature carries the potency of its specific divine antetype, one of the seven primal Dhyan Chohanian radiations that make up the living body of the Logos. Each ray represents a fundamental note in the scale of specialized possibilities in Nature. From a certain perspective, it could be said that the human kingdom is specifically connected with the ray that expresses itself in man as the creative and synthesizing power of *manas* or

self-consciousness. At the same time, all the seven rays have their scintillating expressions in all the kingdoms of Nature above, below and in man. Furthermore, within the human family there are complex cycles of evolutionary development wherein all the seven rays and their subdivisions predominate for periods of illusory 'time' in the manvantaric pilgrimage. Consequently, human life is continually immersed in a vast ocean of life populated by hosts of greater and lesser beings, all of whom share the same archetypal set of potentialities, though clearly exhibiting very different actualized potencies.

Every human activity, each breath and thought, affects and is affected by this universal kinship. The energies of man *qua* man may be manasic in essence, but they are as subject to the laws of universal harmony as any other energies, both in origin and in their effect. Depending upon the quality of man's inspiration, motive and aspiration, his noetic and psychic activities draw to a greater or lesser degree upon the pure divine Intelligence of his Manasa ancestors. In the same proportion, all his conscious and semi-conscious activity exerts influence for good or ill on every aggregate of subhuman lives that comes within the scope and influence of human action, individual and collective.

The ceaseless interaction of man with subhuman Nature is ordinarily understood only at the level of gross interaction with animal and vegetable life, but even at this mundane level man clearly carries a sacred responsibility for the preservation and extinction of the hosts of species cohabiting the earth with him. Yet, partly because human beings fail to comprehend the nature of their own noetic individuality as manasic beings -- and thus tend to ascribe a spurious pseudo-individuality to animals and plants -- human beings are largely unaware of their far more intimate and decisive relationship to the hosts of the sub-mineral elemental kingdoms. If lack of self-knowledge blinds human perception to the ubiquitous presence of these denizens of the fourfold elements, this itself is only a consequence of past misuse and abuse of human energies. Affecting the elemental make-up of the astral and physical body, this blindness and deafness to Nature's invisible sprites is the inevitable karmic compensation for past failures to treat these lesser modes of evolving life with the compassion and respect they deserve.

Whether man is aware of it or not, nonetheless every exertion of his *psyche*, every thought, feeling, word or breath, attracts and repels specific classes of elementals, charging and magnetizing them with an unerring exactitude on an incredible scale. One may compare this to the action of a magnet upon iron filings, though the number of elementals polarized and impressed by even seemingly trivial thoughts is surprisingly vast. Once these congeries of elementals have been impressed, they either lodge in one's vestures or move on. They themselves are really moving under certain infallible laws of attraction and repulsion. These laws are integral aspects of the universal forces of attraction and repulsion, ultimately the most fundamental laws of all evolution and existence.

'Attraction' and 'repulsion' should not be thought of perfunctorily here, either in a narrow Newtonian sense or in an anthropomorphic and romantically indulgent manner. 'Positive' and 'negative' are meant in senses that far transcend the myriad examples one could freely take from the external world. These laws are so basic to the cosmic process that there is no way the Seven Sons of the Flame could, by a progressive descent through a second class of mind-born sons and a third class of Builders, give rise to the whole cosmos without becoming both agents as well as victims of the process of differentiation, which subsequently acquires an inexorable logic of its own. Through centripetal and centrifugal patterns and by polar movements, it breathes in and out, swelling from within without and from without within, back and forth ceaselessly forever, until the time comes for the great sleep of the whole cosmos -- the *pralaya* that succeeds each *manvantara*.

Until that awesome moment is reached, nothing can still or sway the process or prevent it from going on "without let or hindrance". This is the metaphysical sense in which karma is supreme as to cause but not as to effect. From this it follows that there can be no quick remedy or simple panacea to the long-standing problems of human life and spiritual evolution. Certainly, all pseudo-doctrines of vicarious atonement, instant *sator ior* deathbed *moksha* - deceiving the docile and fearful into thinking they could be saved by proxy or by doing nothing -- were costly death-traps for human beings over thousands of years. Equally, modern

notions of self-reliance and the self-made man are disastrous evasions, deluding people into thinking that the entire globe is here merely to be exploited for private pleasure or personal profit. The hollow pretensions of the typical self-made man are all too evident to his spouse, children and parents, and the same could be said for the self-made woman. It is truly sad that so many are caught up to such an extent in clutching the costly illusion that one has "done it all myself". This standpoint simply will not wash, any more than a desperate immersion in the Ganges, and it is too late in human evolution for souls to be so apathetically forgetful of the time-honoured laws of continuity and transmission, much less the primordial facts of origin and cessation as taught by Buddha.

Anything which takes attention away from these primary facts and the primary obligations they entail is a disastrous mistake. No human being can incarnate on earth without complex, inexorable chains of causation requiring myriads of lives over millions of years to work out. To think that one can mix up fantasy with fact, day-dreaming with spiritual mountain climbing, just because one has received pristine Teachings from those at the summit of evolution, is fatal. That is why there will be recurring as well as instantaneous ethical examinations in the Aquarian Age into which all humanity is entering. No more fooling and kidding will be allowed. Even if one were to screen a collection of people, carefully selecting those who do not have these simian tendencies, chaos would result if one were to put them in a room.

This happens everywhere in contemporary society -- in all institutions, offices, committees and classrooms -- unless one can keep people quiet. The Quakers tried this in America, but they largely gave up about twenty-five years ago, not because they did not believe in their sovereign method of silence, but because they were not finding enough patient practitioners in America who were willing to come and sit quietly for three hours. What worked in England for the Quakers could not work in contemporary America, but this is only a minor incident in a global malaise caused by Dostoievskian hyper-consciousness which is going to take a radical Tolstoyan shift before it is resolved. That is why the Avatar is pioneering, among small groups of responsive and courageous souls, the creation of a new modulus of the ancient *sanghas* so that, within a

hundred years, it will actually be safe for three human beings to be in the same room -- safe for them to sit quietly, be wide awake and say something meaningful. This is going to take some time, and long beforehand it will be necessary to handle a number of hard cases in the seats of pseudo-government and the dens of pseudo-revolution, severely traumatised by inane ideologies, ethnic terrorism, ersatz religion, pseudo-psychiatry and behaviouristic nonsense.

The immense difficulty of bringing about such seemingly simple reforms points to the enormity of the gap between disintegrating societies and the ageless Teachings of Divine Wisdom. Yet, if any Aquarian pioneer wishes to begin to learn how to exercise a calming, controlling influence over masses of disturbed elementals -- while eating, sleeping and going about the daily round -- the first thing to focus upon is silence. A simple rule would be to talk little, if at all, during meals. Whether or not one mutters words of grace, it is most important to eat food calmly and gratefully without words. That would be a definite step forward for most people. Indeed, most health problems arise not because of what people eat, but because of the way they eat it. Whether people pick trash from bins, like homeless tramps or pseudo-hippies, or are given the finest foods on outrageous expense accounts, they are often the worst enemies of their own health so long as they chatter and character-assassinate during meals. To recommend silence at meals may seem a hard measure, but without silence there will be no gratitude, no thinking of the forgotten persons who planted the seeds and took trouble to raise the food, much less any thought of sun and soil, winds or rain. Long before one can sanctify eating, there must be silence during meals.

Similarly, silence as preparation for sleep is important, and so too is silence upon awakening. This must be internal, not merely external, silence. Most people have great difficulty in winding down at the end of the day. They have got to find a way to stop it, whether by music, by yogurt, by telling a nursery tale, by humming or by listening to white noise. One has to find a way to calm down so that one can enter into sleep cheerfully and calmly. One must enter sleep as if one is ready to commune with the divine, to seek true refreshment and the richest spiritual privacy. One should go into sleep as if it were a very great

privilege, and then come out of it with as much gratitude and quiet alertness as possible.

It is precisely such simple moves that will do the most good. Telling people to sanctify breathing and eating is too much too soon, especially in an age in which one grows up thoughtlessly, misuses every object, and is totally utilitarian, whilst fudging ethical and even economic accounting. This goes on everywhere all the time, and the massacre of elementals is horrendous, shaming even the Herods of our time. People use all sorts of aids and gadgets in their work and jobs, and when they are finished and do not need these tools any more, they discard them or leave them lying about. This is cruelty and carelessness to the elementals involved, and it negates whatever good intentions one might have had and whatever value and dignity there might have been in one's labours. It is better to spend half an hour clearing up, and then three hours working, than to spend eight hours working and not one second clearing up. That way, one shows no gratitude to the elementals which have made it possible to accomplish anything. But most people leave messes after themselves and do not even thank those who come along and clean up later. Nobody ever taught them to be grateful, and now it is too late to learn because the habits are too entrenched. Thus, people constantly undo the good they do, since it never occurs to them that they themselves are largely collections of elementals, surrounded by oceans of elementals, for which they are trustees and which they must treat gently. To toss a simple paper clip aside is to incur the wrath of Nature. It is better to have human beings arrayed against one in a court of law than to confront the fury of a cast-off paper clip.

The wisest people in any community are often those who collect the garbage. They are the overlooked toilers who pick up the stuff contemptuously thrown away by others. Cheerful and wise, they help in Nature's work. Incredible though it may be from a middle-class perspective, high beings may well come into this society in the future by entering the families of these people and taking jobs gathering garbage. This is the best protection for high beings because it gives one quiet, privacy and the chance to assist Nature. But what of the people who thoughtlessly create the garbage? Their future is too awful to

contemplate. Some are rebellious souls who have lived as the most inconsiderately uncouth beings in villages and towns all over the world for scores of lives, but that is no excuse for an incurably discontented life, coupled with an ingrained contempt for what they use.

Clearly, this Teaching is too difficult for such people, who have good reasons for believing in only one life (as the ads proclaim), and it is definitely not given for their own sake. True Spiritual Teachers do not make such mistakes. It is given for the sake of the millions of elementals which are constantly passing through such people. The more restless they are, the more elementals are affected. They come and go like grey storm clouds, symbolic of the breakdown in society, amidst the dark purple of the night and soft light of dawn. Once impressed, one can count on them to go on doing their irresistible magic, not just once, but again and again. Repetition is the law of life for all classes of elementals, ranging from nature spirits to the presiding constituents of the four elements, as well as the whole host of three hundred and thirty million *devas* and *devatas*, the 'nerves of Nature', whose impresses are indelibly recorded upon 'Nature's infinite negative'. Once they are graciously given that which will benefit them, they will endlessly give it back, such is the richness and generosity of Nature. But once one violates the laws of gratitude and misuses elementals, no amount of hocus-pocus will prevent one from getting retributive karma life after life.

That is why Buddha came to teach the Law, which is meta-mathematical and inexorable. The greatest beings are those who work with and appreciate that Law. They are fearful of nothing, because they know that there is nothing stronger on earth than the power of concentrated benevolence. There is nothing more beautiful than a man who casts no shadow and leaves no footprints. Above all, they know the sacred mark of the twice-born, the truly initiated exemplars and helpers of all humanity. Therefore, they are constantly hoping that human beings will emerge out of the great mass who can procreate with great reverence, humility and gratitude -- using a sacred pair of temples and making them one even if for a few moments -- for the purpose of aiding these high beings to come into this world. Even if hiding as garbage collectors, they can start to take over the earth and spell out the ethics of the new

Aquarian Age, which will be an age of sacred speech, quiet and honest work, effortless cooperation and spontaneous solidarity.

That will mark a tremendously different time from the present, and in this raucous transition one cannot expect one's home to become what it really should be -- a centre of light, warmth and love. In fact, one is more in danger at home than one will ever be in the outside world. One must rid oneself of the illusion that hiding behind a set of walls is the same as being alone. On the contrary, that is exactly when one is closest to all the invisible residents of the invisible world. When one is out at the office and working, by contrast, one has more protection, because one is among a lot of human beings who are keeping busy. The privacy of one's own home -- be it an apartment, condominium or family residence -- is an illusion.

It is perfectly true that the abode of the authentic homeless wanderer, the *sannyasin*, is the sphere of light around him. But one can emulate this only if one can find the true centre of one's consciousness in the divine ray that is prior to the prism. Within that sphere, one will have a home without walls and there will be no problem of separation. This home is open on every side to every entity and elemental. The moment anything comes closer to it, it behaves like the marvellous dogs found outside Tibetan monasteries which, even today after all the horrors of what has happened there, behave as calmly as monks, if not more so. Such animals most easily reflect and mirror what is real in the states of consciousness of cheerfully self-disciplined human beings around them. In the presence of the divine Teachings, even a cat may come forward to receive them, feeling he or she deserves them more than many of the human beings present. At that level, Nature never fails.

If individuals who are faced with numerous stresses and are affected by the surrounding atmosphere of breakdown, gloom and doom would begin to reflect deeply upon these Teachings, they would soon see that there is no trick they can use to avoid depression. No drug or pill, potion or panacea, will help. Instead, they must come to see the central meaning of the Zero Principle (*Hermes*, February 1986) for their lives; everything they need already exists in abundance within their own sphere of light, and no external aids are needed. There is nothing which one does not

already have, if one can centre oneself. Thus the moment one grasps an adventitious aid, one is running away from the problem. External aids may work temporarily as a palliative, but they will not, as the best doctors and psychologists know, effect a cure. Instead, one must look calmly at what one is depressed about, and consider the plight of beings worse off than oneself. One should think through what one proposes to do about the problem -- and the less one passes it on to others, the better.

Depressed elementals that have come into one's vestures must be welcomed and treated with compassion. They must be told that they are taking themselves too seriously. They should not be ridiculed, but should be put in place and sent off, cleansed, out into the world. This can be done by sitting calmly in a chair and facing the problem honestly. Anything that prevents one from taking responsibility will never get one out of the woods, but will only plunge one much more deeply into difficulty after death. Anyone who sees this clearly will want to take responsibility promptly, without depending upon external aids. This is not to say that one cannot use common sense. If one has a lot of bad habits, one can improve them or replace them with better ones. If one has eaten a lot of junk, one can find an herb shop and get some good herbs. In the end, however, one must not depend upon what is outside. Even if one takes a healing herb, one's mental relation to it, one's faith in it and one's love and gratitude towards it make all the difference in the world. Unless one breathes these subjectively from within without into the herb, it will not release its healing essence.

Nothing, in fact, works automatically or mechanically in living Nature. At most, as in Christian Science, certain semi-occult techniques can work on the physical plane to push problems onto the astral plane, where they will get back at one much more viciously in the future. Rather than ensuring that one's problems bear such compound interest, it is much better to come to terms with them, catching them the moment they start. If one was kept quiet as a child and not encouraged to move one's hands around, and if one has been loved, not so much as a mutable object, but as an immortal soul, one will find it easier to quieten one's elementals. But even if one has become nervous and insecure, and is stuck with a persistent restlessness, one does not want to pass this along to one's

elementals all the time. If one does, there will be no place to hide. As an adolescent, one may have gotten away from one's parents, but there is no way one will ever get away from one's elementals.

As the camel insinuated its nose under the edge of the Arab's tent before claiming sole ownership, one will discover, rather unexpectedly, that one's whole vesture is taken over. One will even, alas, become so soulless that no amount of make-up or posturing will hide the fact that the soul is gone. There will merely be one more mediumistic victim for the evil magicians of this earth, caught in the holocaust they instigate. Tragically, there has never been a better time for them to do this, because there are so many people compulsively repudiating the ABCs of living. Too few are willing, when they have enough to eat and enough to live on, to insert themselves into Nature and proceed quietly from middle age to death. In the name of pseudo-democracy, everyone has started using his tongue endlessly in the cause of ego aggrandizement.

The inevitable massacre of innocents has been horrendous. Universal unhappiness, ubiquitous rudeness and pervasive misanthropy, universal ill health, widespread pollution and collective depression have been engendered to a degree that passes beyond belief and all understanding. The elementals are having their riot of rapacious vengeance. They will continue to do so, and be welcome to do so, until the balance of Nature is restored. Indeed, like wise physicians who recognize that a disease must reach and pass through a crisis before there can be healing, those who truly care for the future of humanity look forward to the worsening symptoms with secretly cherished and consecrated hope. On the other hand, those courageous souls who are willing to forget themselves even a little bit, insert themselves into the whole a little bit, and begin to develop the powers of listening and silence will flourish.

There are many fine souls in our society and throughout the world who still know what it is to live quietly, humbly and responsibly. They may be unimportant, but they have learnt how to live in accordance with Nature. Nor are they purchasing the notion that they are useless because they did not go to college and did not study pseudo-psychology or an ethnically and sexually biased mixture of sociology and anthropology. Though many such people exist, others, despite their miseducation and

their misanthropy, must go back to the basics (the eternal verities) and learn to speak the language of responsibility and practise the etiquette of silence and reverence. Ultimately, the soul must learn the sacred language of cosmic and theurgic sacrifice, which is the basis of all spiritual alchemy and noetic magic in Nature. In essence and at the root, nothing else exists but intelligent or involuntary participation in *universal cosmic sacrifice*. This is the Teaching of *adhiyajna*, the secret and sovereign remedy hidden, as if inside a series of Chinese boxes, within the words of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is the noblest teaching, and the most difficult. There is no way to jump to it from the realm of moral and mental chaos, for there are many necessary steps in between.

That is why *Light on the Path* says that one must first learn to observe sensation, and learn from it the true laws of life. Then one can set one's foot on the first rung of the ladder. The moment a person goes back to the ABCs, to the fundamentals of the perennial philosophy of *Gupta Vidya*, and learns what it is to set one's foot on the first step of the ladder, one will attract cheerful, learning elementals. There are plenty of them, actually, millions more than the perverse and malicious elementals, but they will not be attracted unless one is childlike, grateful and wide-eyed. If one does not mean what one says, or does not do what one says one will do, they will be repelled. They are characterized by utter fidelity, and are so chaste, virginal and faithful that they can never be attracted to someone who is unfaithful, fickle or anxious. There is no getting away from the basics -- from fidelity, honesty with oneself, internal credibility, chastity of thought, chastity of feeling and conduct, boundless compassion, unconditional love, impeccable integrity and inextinguishable courage. So long as these are present, vast numbers of learning elementals will be attracted, especially during the still hours of the night and at sunrise and sunset.

Sadly, the very times which are most auspicious for the arrival and congregation of these elementals are also the times when people make the most raucous noise, pretending to go to work or come home. To reverse all this radically requires extraordinary patience and mountainous firmness, because one must invite and invoke enough elementals responsive to the basics of the divine art of being human to

counter the perverse elementals. It is to be hoped, hoping against all hope, that they will come as a wondrous host, under the same laws of attraction and repulsion, when one is sufficiently armed with the good elementals to engage in the healing of all tortured elementals. Typically, the way people live, they become wide open to the raucous bad elementals, and they create mental walls and barriers before the good pixie-like elementals, either in the name of pseudo-sophistication or some other pretentious nonsense that is altogether against Nature and life. This actually creates walls between them and the Avataric light, between them and the Mahatmas, as well as between them and their companions. Self-immured, they finally become virtual zombies succumbing before the astral light and its noxious pollution.

If one is tough enough to attempt a decisive change in the tonality and tangible quality of one's way of living, one must appreciate the wisdom of considering the arcane and accredited Teachings about elementals. In them one will find the seeds needed for planting fresh resolves in clean soil. Fundamentally, one must learn to see the universal and undivided diffusion of life in all of cosmic Nature, invisible and visible. This means understanding that there is nothing more powerful on earth than the *paramatman*, the Highest Self, and its perpetual buddhic radiance, the Holy Ghost, the light of *daiviprakriti*, the voice of *Brahma Vach*. The Father-*Atman*, the Mother-*Buddhi* and the Son-*Manas* in man, as in the cosmos, are omnipotent. No demon, no illness, no malicious entity, no paranoidism or ideology, can touch the man or woman who truly lives in the atman. Many lazy, shallow and worldly neo-Vedantins thought that they could skip the ladder of growth by saying "I am *brahman*", but they were only fooling themselves so vainly that Gautama Buddha came and told them to be quiet, to become monks and to observe rules of gentleness and honesty. This is an old story, and it is happening all over again.

What needs to be done can be done, but it will only be done when one feels that it is the single most important thing in one's life. High seriousness immediately arouses and attracts the higher classes of elementals. When one is serious and concentrated -- what Emerson termed "man thinking" -- and in earnest, one attracts refined grades of

elementals. When one is vacillating, loquacious, weak-willed or contradictory, the worst elementals are inexorably drawn to one. Put simply, one must clean out one's house and temple. Turn to the God within and lock the doors to the demons without. Open your eyes to the stars, your ears to the music of the divine spheres, and your heart to the pulse-beat of humanity. Then, very quietly, walk alone in a new direction.

## KOSMIC MIND

Article by H. P. Blavatsky  
vol. II pp.179-193

Whatsoever quits the *Laya* (homogeneous) state, becomes active conscious life. Individual consciousness emanates from, and returns into Absolute consciousness, which is eternal MOTION. (*Esoteric Axioms.*)

Whatever that be which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and upon that account must necessarily be eternal.

--CICERO

EDISON'S conception of matter was quoted in our March editorial article. The great American electrician is reported by Mr. G. Parsons Lathrop in *Harper's Magazine* as giving out his personal belief about the atoms being "possessed by a certain amount of intelligence," and shown indulging in other reveries of this kind. For this flight of fancy the February *Review of Reviews* takes the inventor of the phonograph to task and critically remarks that "Edison is much given to dreaming," his "scientific imagination" being constantly at work.

Would to goodness the men of science exercised their "scientific imagination" a little more and their dogmatic and cold negations a little less. Dreams differ. In that strange state of being which, as Byron has it, puts us in a position "with seal'd eyes to see," one often perceives more real facts than when awake. Imagination is, again, one of the strongest elements in human nature, or in the words of Dugald Stewart it "is the great spring of human activity, and the principal source of human improvement. . . . Destroy the faculty, and the condition of men will become as

stationary as that of brutes." It is the best guide of our blind senses, without which the latter could never lead us beyond matter and its illusions. The greatest discoveries of modern science are due to the imaginative faculty of the discoverers. But when has anything new been postulated, when a theory clashing with and contradicting a comfortably settled predecessor put forth, without orthodox science first sitting on it, and trying to crush it out of

180

H. P. BLAVATSKY

existence? Harvey was also regarded at first as a "dreamer and a madman to boot. Finally, the whole of modern science is formed of "working hypotheses," the fruits of "scientific imagination" as Mr. Tyndall felicitously called it.

Is it then, because consciousness in every universal atom and the possibility of a complete control over the cells and atoms of his body by man, have not been honored so far with the *imprimatur* of the Popes of exact science, that the idea is to be dismissed as a dream? Occultism gives the same teaching. Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe in itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers. The idea of Universal Life composed of individual atomic lives is one of the oldest teachings of esoteric philosophy, and the very modern hypothesis of modern science, that of *crystalline life*, is the first ray from the ancient luminary of knowledge that has reached our scholars. If plants can be shown to have nerves and sensations and instinct (but another word for consciousness), why not allow the same in the cells of the human body? Science divides matter into organic and inorganic bodies, only because it rejects the idea of *absolute life* and a life-principle as an entity: otherwise it would be the first to see that *absolute life* cannot produce even a geometrical point, or an atom inorganic in its essence. But Occultism, you see, "teaches mysteries" they say; and mystery is *the negation of common sense*, just as again metaphysics is but a kind of poetry, according to Mr. Tyndall. There is no such thing for science as mystery; and therefore, as a Life Principle is, and must remain for the intellects of our civilized races for ever a mystery *on physical lines*--they who deal in this question have to be of necessity either fools or knaves.

*Dixit.* Nevertheless, we may repeat with a French preacher: "mystery is the fatality of science." Official science is surrounded on every side and hedged in by unapproachable, for ever impenetrable mysteries. And why? Simply because physical science is self-doomed to a squirrel-like progress around a wheel of matter limited by our five senses. And though it is as confessedly ignorant of the formation of matter, as of the generation of a simple cell; though it is as powerless to explain what is this, that, or the other, it will yet dogmatize and insist on what

life, matter and the rest are not. It comes to this: the words of Father Felix addressed fifty

181

## KOSMIC MIND

years ago to the French academicians have nearly become immortal as a truism. "Gentlemen," he said, "you throw into our teeth the reproach that we teach mysteries. But imagine whatever science you will; follow the magnificent sweep of its deductions. . . . and when you arrive at its parent source you come face to face with the unknown!"

Now to lay at rest once for all in the minds of Theosophists this vexed question, we intend to prove that modern science, owing to physiology, is itself on the eve of discovering that consciousness is universal--thus justifying Edison's "dreams." But before we do this, we mean also to show that though many a man of science is soaked through and through with such belief, very few are brave enough to openly admit it, as the late Dr. Pirogoff of St. Petersburg has done in his posthumous *Memoirs*. Indeed that great surgeon and pathologist raised by their publication quite a howl of indignation among his colleagues. How then? the public asked: He, Dr. Pirogoff, whom we regarded as almost the embodiment of European learning, believing in the superstitions of crazy alchemists? He, who in the words of a contemporary:--

was the very incarnation of exact science and methods of thought; who had dissected hundreds and thousands of human organs, making himself as acquainted with all the mysteries of surgery and anatomy as we are with our familiar furniture; the savant for whom physiology had no secrets and who, above all men was one to whom Voltaire might have ironically asked whether he had not found immortal soul between the bladder and the blind gut,--that same Pirogoff is found after his death devoting whole chapters in his literary Will to the scientific demonstration. . . . *Novoye Vremya* of 1887.

--Of what? Why, of the existence in every organism of a distinct "VITAL FORCE" independent of any physical or chemical process. Like Liebig he accepted the derided and tabooed homogeneity of nature--a Life Principle--that persecuted and hapless teleology, or the science of the final causes of things, which is as philosophical as it is *unscientific*, if we have to believe imperial and royal academies. His unpardonable sin in the eyes of dogmatic modern science, however, was this: The great anatomist and surgeon, had the "hardihood" to declare in his *Memoirs*, that:--

We have no cause to reject the possibility of the existence of organisms endowed with such properties that would make of them--*the direct embodiment of the universal mind*--a perfection

inaccessible to our own (human) mind. . . . Because, we have no right to maintain that man is the last expression of the divine creative thought.

Such are the chief features of the heresy of one, who ranked high among the men of exact science of this age. His *Memoirs* show plainly that not only he believed in Universal Deity, divine Ideation, or the Hermetic "Thought divine," and a Vital Principle, but taught all this, and tried to demonstrate it scientifically. Thus he argues that Universal Mind needs no physico-chemical, or mechanical brain as an organ of transmission. He even goes so far as to admit it in these suggestive words:--

Our reason must accept *in all necessity* an infinite and eternal Mind which rules and governs the ocean of life. . . . *Thought and creative ideation, in full agreement with the laws of unity and causation, manifest themselves plainly enough in universal life without the participation of brain-slush. . . .* Directing the forces and elements toward the formation of organisms, this *organizing life-principle* becomes *self-sentient, self-conscious, racial or individual*. Substance, ruled and directed by the *life-principle*, is organised *according to a general defined plan into certain types. . . .*

He explains this belief by confessing that never, during his long life so full of study, observation, and experiments, could he--

acquire the conviction, that our brain could be the only organ of thought in the whole universe, that everything in this world, save *that* organ, should be unconditioned and senseless, and that human thought alone should impart to the universe a meaning and a reasonable harmony in its integrity.

And he adds *à propos* of Moleschott's materialism:--

Howsoever much fish and peas I may eat, never shall I consent to give away my *Ego* into durance vile of a product casually extracted by modern *alchemy* from the urine. If, in our conceptions of the Universe it be our fate to fall into illusions, then my "illusion" has, at least, the advantage of being very consoling. For, it shows to me an intelligent Universe and the activity of Forces working in it harmoniously and intelligently; and that my "I" is not the product of chemical and histological elements but *an embodiment of a common universal Mind*. The latter, I sense and represent to myself as acting in free will and consciousness in accordance with the same laws which are traced for the guidance of my own mind, but only exempt from that restraint which trammels our human conscious individuality.

For, as remarks elsewhere this great and philosophic man of Science:--

*The limitless and the eternal, is not only a postulate of our mind and reason, but also a gigantic fact, in itself.* What would become of our ethical or moral principle were not the everlasting and integral truth to serve it as a foundation!

The above selections translated *verbatim* from the confessions of one who was during his long life a star of the first magnitude in the fields of pathology and surgery, show him imbued and soaked through with the philosophy of a reasoned and scientific mysticism. In reading the *Memoirs* of that man of scientific fame, we feel proud of finding him accepting, almost wholesale, the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of Theosophy. With such an exceptionally scientific mind in the ranks of mystics, the idiotic grins, the cheap satires and flings at our great Philosophy by some European and American "Freethinkers," become almost a compliment. More than ever do they appear to us like the frightened discordant cry of the night-owl hurrying to hide in its dark ruins before the light of the morning Sun.

The progress of physiology itself, as we have just said, is a sure warrant that the dawn of that day when a full recognition of a universally diffused mind will be an accomplished fact, is not far off. It is *only* a question of time.

For, notwithstanding the boast of physiology, that the aim of its researches is only the summing up of every vital function in order to bring them into a definite order by showing their mutual relations to, and connection with, the laws of physics and chemistry, hence, in their final form with mechanical laws--we fear there is a good deal of contradiction between the confessed object and the speculations of some of the best of our modern physiologists. While few of them would dare to return as openly as did Dr. Pirogoff to the "exploded superstition" of *vitalism* and the severely exiled life principle, the *principium vitæ* of Paracelsus--yet physiology stands sorely perplexed in the face of its ablest representatives before certain facts. Unfortunately for us, this age of ours is not conducive to the development of moral courage. The time for most to act on the noble idea of "*principia non homines*," has not yet come. And yet there are exceptions to the general rule, and physiology--whose destiny it is to become the hand-maiden of Occult truths--has not let the latter remain without their witnesses. There are those who

are already stoutly protesting against certain hitherto favorite propositions. For instance, some physiologists are already denying that it is the forces and substances of so-called "inanimate" nature, which are acting exclusively in living beings. For, as they well argue:-

The fact that we reject the interference of other forces in living things, *depends entirely on the limitations of our senses*. We use, indeed, the same organs for our observations of both animate and inanimate nature; and these organs can receive manifestations of only a limited realm of motion. Vibrations passed along the fibres of our optic nerves to the brain reach our perceptions through our consciousness as sensations of light and color; vibrations affecting our consciousness through our auditory organs strike us as sounds; all our feelings, through whichever of our senses, are due to nothing but motions.

Such are the teachings of physical Science, and such were in their roughest outlines those of Occultism, æons and millenniums back. The difference, however, and most vital distinction between the two teachings, is this: official science sees in motion simply a blind, unreasoning force or law; Occultism, tracing motion to its origin, identifies it with the Universal Deity, and calls this eternal ceaseless motion--the "Great Breath."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, however limited the conception of Modern Science about the said Force, still it is suggestive enough to have forced the following remark from a great Scientist, the present professor of physiology at the University of Basle,<sup>2</sup> who speaks like an Occultist.

It would be folly in us to expect to be ever able to discover, with the assistance only of our external senses, in animate nature that something which we are unable to find in the inanimate.

And forthwith the lecturer adds that man being endowed "in addition to his physical senses with an *inner sense*," a perception which gives him the possibility of observing the states and phenomena of his own consciousness, "he has to use *that* in dealing with animate nature"--a profession of faith verging suspiciously on the borders of Occultism. He denies, moreover, the assumption, that the states and phenomena of consciousness represent in substance the same manifestations of motion as in the external world, and bases his denial by the reminder that not all of such states and manifestations have necessarily a spatial extension. According to

---

1- Vide "Secret Doctrine," vol. 1 pp. 2 and 3

2- From a paper read by him some time ago at a public lecture.

him that only is connected with our conception of space which has reached our consciousness through sight, touch, and the muscular sense, while all the other

senses, all the *effects*, tendencies, as all the interminable series of representations, have no extension in space but only in time.

Thus he asks:--

Where then is there room in this for a mechanical theory? Objectors might argue that this is so only in appearance, while in reality all these have a spatial extension. But such an argument would be entirely erroneous. Our sole reason for believing that objects perceived by the senses have such extension in the external world, rests on the idea that they seem to do so, as far as they can be watched and observed through the senses of sight and touch. With regard, however, to the realm of our *inner* senses even that supposed foundation loses its force and there is no ground for admitting it.

The winding up argument of the lecturer is most interesting to Theosophists. Says this physiologist of the modern school of Materialism--

Thus, a deeper and more direct acquaintance with *our inner nature* unveils to us a world *entirely unlike the world represented to us by our external senses*, and reveals the most heterogeneous faculties, shows objects having nought to do with spatial extension, and phenomena absolutely disconnected with those that fall under mechanical laws.

Hitherto the opponents of vitalism and "life-principle," as well as the followers of the mechanical theory of life, based their views on the supposed fact, that, as physiology was progressing forward, its students succeeded more and more in connecting its functions with the laws of *blind matter*. All those manifestations that used to be attributed to a "mystical life-force," they said, may be brought now under physical and chemical laws. And they were, and still are loudly clamoring for the recognition of the fact that it is only a question of time when it will be triumphantly demonstrated that the whole vital process, in its grand totality, represents nothing more mysterious than a very complicated phenomenon of motion, exclusively governed by the forces of inanimate nature.

But here we have a professor of physiology who asserts that the history of physiology proves, unfortunately for them, quite the contrary; and he pronounces these ominous words:--

I maintain that the more our experiments and observations are

186

H. P. BLAVATSKY

exact and many-sided, the deeper we penetrate into facts, the more we try to fathom and speculate on the phenomena of life, the more we acquire the conviction, that even those phenomena that we had hoped to be already able to explain by physical and chemical

laws, are in reality unfathomable. They are vastly more complicated, in fact; and as we stand at present, they will not yield to any mechanical explanation.

This is a terrible blow at the puffed-up bladder known as Materialism, which is as empty as it is dilated. A Judas in the camp of the apostles of negation--the "animalists"! But the Basle professor is no solitary exception, as we have just shown; and there are several physiologists who are of his way of thinking; indeed some of them going so far as to almost accept *free-will* and *consciousness*, in the simplest monadic protoplasms!

One discovery after the other tends in this direction. The works of some German physiologists are especially interesting with regard to cases of consciousness and positive discrimination--one is almost inclined to say *thought*--in the *Amœbas*. Now the *Amœbas* or animalculæ are, as all know, microscopical protoplasms--as the *Vampyrella Sirogyra* for instance, a most simple elementary cell, a protoplasmic drop, formless and almost structureless. And yet it shows in its behavior something for which zoologists, if they do not call it mind and power of reasoning, will have to find some other qualification, and coin a new term. For see what Cienkowsky<sup>3</sup> says of it. Speaking of this microscopical, bare, reddish cell he describes the way in which it hunts for and finds among a number of other aquatic plants one called *Spirogyra*, rejecting every other food. Examining its peregrinations under a powerful microscope, he found it when moved by hunger, first projecting its *pseudopodiæ* (false feet) by the help of which it crawls. Then it commences moving about until among a great variety of plants it comes across a *Spirogyra*, after which it proceeds toward the cellulated portion of one of the cells of the latter, and placing itself on it, it bursts the tissue, sucks the contents of one cell and then passes on to another, repeating the same process. This naturalist never saw it take any other food, and it never touched any of the numerous plants placed by Cienkowsky in its way. Mentioning another *Amœba*--the *Colpadella Pugnax*--he says that he found it showing the same predilection for the *Chlamydomonas* on which it feeds exclusively; "having

---

3- L. Cienkowsky See his work Beitræge zur Keniniss der Monaden, Archiv f. mikroskop, Anatomie.

made a puncture in the body of the *Chlamydomonas* it sucks its chlorophyl and then goes away," he writes, adding these significant *words*: "The way of acting of these monads during their search for and reception of food, is so amazing that one is almost inclined to see in them *consciously acting beings!*"

Not less suggestive are the observations of Th. W. Engelman (*Beitraege zur Physiologie des Protoplasm*), on the *Arcella*, another unicellular organism only a trifle more complex than the *Vampyrella*. He shows them in a drop of water under a microscope on a piece of glass, lying so to speak, on their backs, *i.e.*, on their convex side, so that the *pseudopodia*, projected from the edge of the shell, find no hold in space and leave the Amœba helpless. Under these circumstances the following curious fact is observed. Under the very edge of one of the sides of the protoplasm gas-bubbles begin immediately to form, which, making that side lighter, allow it to be raised, bringing at the same time the opposite side of the creature into contact with the glass, thus furnishing its *pseudo* or false feet means to get hold of the surface and thereby turning over its body to raise itself on all its *pseudopodia*. After this, the Amœba proceeds to suck back into itself the gas-bubbles and begins to move. If a like drop of water is placed on the lower extremity of the glass, then, following the law of gravity the Amœbæ will find themselves at first at the lower end of the drop of water. Failing to find there a point of support, they proceed to generate large bubbles of gas, when, becoming lighter than the water, they are raised up to the surface of the drop.

In the words of Engelman:--

If having reached the surface of the glass they find no more support for their feet than before, forthwith one sees the gas-globules diminishing on one side and increasing in size and number on the other, or both, until the creatures touch with the edge of their shell the surface of the glass, and are enabled to turn over. No sooner is this done than the gas-globules disappear and the *Arcellæ* begin crawling. Detach them carefully by means of a fine needle from the surface of the glass and thus bring them down once more to the lower surface of the drop of water; and forthwith they will repeat the same process, varying its details according to necessity and devising new means to reach their desired aim. Try as much as you will to place them in uncomfortable positions, and they find means to extricate themselves from them, each time, by one device or the other; and no sooner have they succeeded than the gas-bubbles disappear! It is

188

H. P. BLAVATSKY

impossible not to admit that such facts as these *point to the presence of some PSYCHIC process in the protoplasm*.<sup>4</sup>

Among hundreds of accusations against Asiatic nations of degrading *superstitions*, based on "crass ignorance," there exists no more serious denunciation than that which accuses and convicts them of personifying and *even deifying* the chief organs *of, and in,* the human body. Indeed, do not we hear these "benighted fools" of Hindus speaking of the small-pox as a goddess--thus personifying the microbes of the variolic virus? Do we not read about *Tantrikas*, a sect of mystics, giving proper

names to nerves, cells and arteries, connecting and identifying various parts of the body with deities, endowing functions and physiological processes with intelligence, and what not? The vertebræ, fibers, ganglia, the cord, etc., of the spinal column; the heart, its four chambers, auricle and ventricle, valves and the rest; stomach, liver, lungs and spleen, everything has its special deific name, is believed to *act consciously* and to act under the potent will of the Yogi, whose head and heart are the seats of Brahmâ and the various parts of whose body are all the pleasure grounds of this or another deity!

This is indeed *ignorance*. Especially when we think that the said organs, and the whole body of man are composed of cells, and these cells are now being recognised as individual organisms and--*quien sabe*--will come perhaps to be recognized some day as *an independent race of thinkers* inhabiting the globe, called man! It really looks like it. For was it not hitherto believed that all the phenomena of assimilation and sucking in of food by the intestinal canal, could be explained by the laws of diffusion and endosmosis? And now, alas, physiologists have come to learn that the action of the intestinal canal during the act of absorbing, is not identical with the action of the non-living membrane in the dialyser. It is now well demonstrated that--

this wall is covered with epithelium cells, each of which is an organism *per se*, a living being, and with very complex functions. We know further, that such a cell assimilates food--by means of active contractions of its protoplasmic body--in a manner as mysterious as that which we notice in the independent Amœba and animalcules. We can observe on the intestinal epithelium of the cold-blooded animals how these cells project shoots--*pseudopodiæ*--out of their contractive, bare, protoplasmic bodies--which *pseudopodiæ*, or false feet, fish out of the food

-----  
4- Loc, cit, Pfluger's Archiv. Bd. II, S. 387.

drops of fat, suck them into their protoplasm and send it further, toward the lymph-duct. . . . The lymphatic cells issuing from the nests of the adipose tissue, and squeezing themselves through the epithelium cells up to the surface of the intestines, absorb therein the drops of fat and loaded with their prey, travel homeward to the lymphatic canals. So long as this active work of the cells remained unknown to us, the fact that while the globules of fat penetrated through the walls of the intestines into lymphatic channels, the smallest of pigmental grains introduced into the intestines did not do so,--remained unexplained. But to-day we know, that this faculty of selecting their special food--of assimilating the useful and rejecting the useless and the harmful--is common to all the unicellular organisms.<sup>5</sup>

And the lecturer queries, why, if this *discrimination* in the selection of food exists in the simplest and most elementary of the cells, in the formless and structureless protoplasmic *drops*--why it should not exist also in the epithelium cells of our intestinal canal. Indeed, if the *Vampyrella* recognises its much beloved *Spirogyra*, among hundreds of other plants as shown above, why should not the epithelium cell, *sense, choose* and *select* its favorite drop of fat from a pigmental grain? But we will be told that "sensing, choosing, and selecting" pertain only to reasoning beings, at least to the *instinct* of more structural animals than is the protoplasmic cell outside or inside man. Agreed; but as we translate from the lecture of a learned physiologist and the works of other learned naturalists, we can only say, that these learned gentlemen must know what they are talking about; though they are probably ignorant of the fact that their *scientific* prose is but one degree removed from the *ignorant, superstitious*, but rather poetical "twaddle" of the Hindu Yogis and Tantrikas.

Anyhow, our professor of physiology falls foul of the materialistic theories of diffusion and endosmosis. Armed with the facts of the evident discrimination and *a mind* in the cells, he demonstrates by numerous instances the fallacy of trying to explain certain physiological processes by mechanical theories; such for instance as the passing of sugar from the liver (where it is transformed into glucose) into the blood. Physiologists find great difficulty in explaining this process, and *regard it as an impossibility to bring it under the endosmotic laws*. In all probability the lymphatic cells play just as active a part during the absorption of

-----  
5- From the paper read by the Professor at the University of Basle, previously quoted.

190

H. P. BLAVATSKY

alimentary substances dissolved in water, as the peptics do, a process well demonstrated by F. Hofmeister.<sup>6</sup> Generally speaking, poor convenient endosmose is dethroned and exiled from among the active functionaries of the human body as a useless sinecurist. It has lost its voice in the matter of glands and other agents of secretion, in the action of which the same epithelium cells have replaced it. The mysterious faculties of selection, of extracting from the blood one kind of substance and rejecting another, of transforming the former by means of decomposition and synthesis, of directing some of the products into passages which will throw them out of the body and redirecting others into lymphatic and blood vessels--such is the work of the cells. "*It is evident that in all this there is not the slightest hint at diffusion or endosmose,*" says the Basle physiologist. "*It becomes entirely useless to try and explain these phenomena by chemical laws.*"

But perhaps physiology is luckier in some other department? Failing in the laws of alimentation, it may have found some consolation for its mechanical theories in the question of the activity of muscles and nerves, which it sought to explain by electric laws? Alas, save in a few fishes--in no other living organisms, least of all in the human body, could it find any possibility of pointing out electric currents as the chief ruling agency. Electrobiology on the lines of pure dynamic electricity has egregiously failed. Ignorant of "Fohat" no electrical currents suffice to explain to it either muscular or nervous activity!

But there is such a thing as the physiology of external sensations. Here we are no longer on *terra incognita*, and all such phenomena have already found purely *physical* explanations. No doubt, there is the phenomenon of sight, the eye with its optical apparatus, its camera obscura. But the fact of the sameness of the reproduction of things in the eye, according to the same laws of refraction as on the plate of a photographic machine, is *no vital phenomenon*. The same may be reproduced *on a dead eye*. The phenomenon of life consists *in the evolution and development of the eye itself*. How is this marvellous and complicated work produced? To this physiology replies, "We do not know"; for, toward the solution of this great problem--

-----  
Untersuchungen ueber Resorption u. Assimilation der Naehrstoffe (Archiv . f Experimentalle Pathologie und Pharmakologie, Bd. XIX, 1885 ).

191

#### KOSMIC MIND

Physiology has not yet made one single step. True, we can follow the sequence of the stages of the development and formation of the eye, but *why* it is so and *what* is the causal connection, we have absolutely no idea. The second vital phenomenon of the eye is its accommodating activity. And here we are again face to face with the functions of nerves and muscles--our old insoluble riddles. The same may be said of all the organs of sense. The same also relates to other departments of physiology. We had hoped to explain the phenomena of the circulation of the blood by the laws of hydrostatics or hydrodynamics. Of course the blood moves in accordance with the hydrodynamical laws: but its relation to them remains utterly *passive*. As to the *active* functions of the heart and the muscles of its vessels, *no one, so far, has ever been able to explain them by physical laws*.

The underlined words in the concluding portion of the able Professor's lecture are worthy of an Occultist. Indeed, he seems to be repeating an aphorism from the "Elementary Instructions" of the esoteric physiology of *practical* Occultism:--

*The riddle of life is found in the active functions of a living organism,<sup>7</sup> the real perception of which activity we can get only through self-observation, and not owing to our external senses; by observations on our will, so far as it penetrates our consciousness, thus revealing itself to*

our inner sense. Therefore, when the same phenomenon acts only on our external senses, we recognize it no longer. We see everything that takes place around and near the phenomenon of motion, but the essence of that phenomenon we do not see at all, because we lack for it a special organ of receptivity. We can accept that *esse* in a mere hypothetical way, and do so, in fact, when we speak of "active functions." Thus does every physiologist, for he cannot go on without such hypothesis; and this is a first experiment of a *psychological explanation* of all vital phenomena. . . . And if it is demonstrated to us that we are unable with the help only of physics and chemistry to explain the phenomena of life, what may we expect from other adjuncts of physiology, from the sciences of morphology, anatomy, and histology? I maintain that these can never help us to unriddle the problem of any of the mysterious phenomena of life. For, after we have succeeded with the help of scalpel and microscope in dividing the organisms into their most elementary compounds, and reached the simplest of cells, it is just here that we find ourselves face to face with the greatest problem of all. The simplest monad, a microscopical point of protoplasm, formless

-----  
7-Life and activity are but two different names for one and the same idea, or, what is still more correct, they are two words with which the men of science connect no definite idea whatever. Nevertheless, and perhaps just for that, they are obliged to use them, for they contain the point of contact between the most difficult problems over which, in fact, the greatest thinkers of the materialistic school have ever tripped.

192

H. P. BLAVATSKY

and structureless, exhibits yet all the essential vital functions, alimentation, growth, breeding, motion, feeling and sensuous perception, and even such functions which replace "consciousness"--the soul of the higher animals!

The problem--for Materialism--is a terrible one, indeed! Shall our cells, and infinitesimal monads in nature, do for us that which the arguments of the greatest Pantheistic philosophers have hitherto failed to do? Let us hope so. And if they do, then the "superstitious and ignorant" Eastern Yogis, and even their exoteric followers, will find themselves vindicated. For we hear from the same physiologist that--

A large number of poisons are prevented by the epithelium *cells* from penetrating into lymphatic spaces, though we know that they are easily decomposed in the abdominal and intestinal juices. More than this. Physiology is aware that by injecting these poisons directly into the blood, they will separate from, and reappear through the intestinal walls, and that in this process the *lymphatic cells* take a most active part.

If the reader turns to Webster's *Dictionary* he will find therein a curious explanation at the words "lymphatic" and "Lymph." Etymologists think that the Latin word

*lympa* is derived from the Greek *nymphē*, "a nymph or inferior Goddess," they say. "The Muses were sometimes called *nymphs* by the poets. Hence (according to Webster) all persons in a state of rapture, as seers, poets, madmen, etc., were said to be caught by the nymphs."

The Goddess of Moisture (the Greek and Latin *nymph* or *lymph*, then) is fabled in India as being born from the *pores* of one of the Gods, whether the Ocean God, Varuna, or a minor "River God" is left to the particular sect and fancy of the believers. But the main question is, that the ancient Greeks and Latins are thus admittedly known to have shared in the same "superstitions" as the Hindus. This superstition is shown in their maintaining to this day that every atom of matter in the four (or five) Elements is an emanation from an inferior God or Goddess, himself or herself an earlier emanation from a superior deity; and, moreover, that each of these atoms--being Brahmâ, one of whose names is *Anu*, or atom--no sooner is it emanated than it *becomes endowed with consciousness*, each of its kind, and free-will, acting within the limits of law. Now, he who knows that the *kosmic trimurti* (trinity) composed of Brahmâ, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer, is a most magnificent and scientific symbol of the *material Universe*

193

#### KOSMIC MIND

and its gradual evolution; and who finds a proof of this, in the etymology of the names of these deities,<sup>8</sup> plus the doctrines of *Gupta Vidya*, or esoteric knowledge--knows also how to correctly understand this "superstition." The five fundamental titles of Vishnu--added to that of *Anu* (atom) common to all the trimurtic personages--which are, *Bhutâtman*, one with the created or emanated materials of the world; *Pradhanâtman*, "one with the senses;" *Paramâtman*, "Supreme Soul"; and *Atman*, Kosmic Soul, or the Universal Mind--show sufficiently what the ancient Hindus meant by endowing with mind and consciousness every atom and giving it a distinct name of a God or a Goddess. Place their Pantheon, composed of 30 crores (or 300 millions) of deities within the macrocosm (the Universe), or inside the microcosm (man), and the number will not be found overrated, since they relate to the atoms, cells, and molecules of everything that is.

This, no doubt, is too poetical and abstruse for our generation, but it seems decidedly as scientific, if not more so, than the teachings derived from the latest discoveries of *Physiology and Natural History*.

*Lucifer*, April, 1890

---

<sup>8</sup> *Brahmâ* comes from the root *brih*, "to expand," to "scatter"; *Vishnu* from the root *vis* or *vish*

(phonetically) "to enter into," "to pervade" the universe, of matter. As to Siva--the patron of the Yogis, the etymology of his name would remain *incomprehensible* to the casual reader.

## DIALOGUE ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

Article by H. P. Blavatsky

vol. II 194-205

### ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INNER MAN AND ITS DIVISION

M. Of course it is most difficult, and, as you say, "puzzling" to understand correctly and distinguish between the various *aspects*, called by us the "principles" of the real EGO. It is the more so as there exists a notable difference in the numbering of those principles by various Eastern schools, though at the bottom there is the same identical substratum of teaching in all of them.

X. Are you thinking of the Vedantins. They divide our seven "principles" into five only, I believe?

M. They do; but though I would not presume to dispute the point with a learned Vedantin, I may yet state as my private opinion that they have an obvious reason for it. With them it is only that compound spiritual aggregate which consists of various mental aspects that is called *Man* at all, the physical body being in their view something beneath contempt, and merely an *illusion*. Nor is the Vedanta the only philosophy to reckon in this manner. Lao-Tze in his *Tao-te-King*, mentions only five principles, because he, like the Vedantins, omits to include two principles, namely, the spirit (Atma) and the physical body, the latter of which, moreover, he calls "the cadaver." Then there is the *Taraka Rajà Yogà* School. Its teaching recognizes only three "principles" in fact; but then, in reality, their *Sthulopadhi*, or the physical body in its *jagrata* or waking conscious state, their *Sukshmopadhi*, the same body in *svapna* or the dreaming state, and their *Karanopadhi* or "causal body," or that which passes from one incarnation to another, are all dual in their aspects, and thus make six. Add to this Atma, the impersonal divine principle or the immortal element in Man, undistinguished from the Universal Spirit, and you have the same seven, again, as in the esoteric division.<sup>1</sup>

X. Then it seems almost the same as the division made by mystic Christians: body, soul and spirit?

M. Just the same. We could easily make of the body the vehicle of the "vital Double"; of the latter the vehicle of Life or *Prana*

---

<sup>1</sup> See "Secret Doctrine" for a clearer explanation.

195

THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

of *Kamarupa* or (animal) soul, the vehicle of the *higher* and the *lower* mind, and make of this six principles, crowning the whole with the one immortal spirit. In Occultism, every qualificative change in the state of our consciousness goes to man a new aspect, and if it prevails and becomes part of the living and acting EGO, it must be (and is) given a special name, to distinguish the man in that particular state from the man he is when he places himself in another state.

X. It is just that which is so difficult to understand.

M. It seems to me very easy, on the contrary, once that you have seized the main idea, *i.e.*, that man acts on this, or another plane of consciousness, in strict accordance with his mental and spiritual condition. But such is the materialism of the age that the more we explain, the less people seem capable of understanding what we say. Divide the terrestrial being called man into three chief aspects, if you like; but, unless you make of him a pure animal, you cannot do less. Take his objective *body*; the feeling principle in him—which is only a little higher than the *instinctual* element in the animal—or the vital elementary soul; and that which places him so immeasurably beyond and higher than the animal—*i.e.*, his *reasoning* soul or "spirit." Well, if we take these three groups or representative entities, and subdivide them, according to the occult teaching, what do we get?

First of all Spirit (in the sense of the Absolute, and therefore indivisible ALL) or Atma. As this can neither be located nor conditioned in philosophy, being simply that which IS, in Eternity, and as the ALL cannot be absent from even the tiniest geometrical or mathematical point of the universe of matter or substance, it ought not to be called, in truth, a "human" principle at all. Rather, and at best, it is that point in metaphysical Space which the human Monad and its vehicle man, occupy for the period of every life. Now that point is as imaginary as man himself, and in reality is an illusion, a *maya*; but then for ourselves as for other personal Egos, we are a reality during that fit of illusion called life, and we have to take ourselves into account—in our own fancy at any rate if no one else does. To make it more conceivable to the human intellect, when first attempting the study of Occultism, and to solve the ABC of the mystery of man, Occultism calls it the *seventh* principle, the synthesis of the six, and gives it for vehicle the *Spiritual Soul, Buddhi*. Now the latter conceals a mystery, which is never given to anyone with

the exception of irrevocably pledged *chelas*, those at any rate, who can be safely trusted. Of course there would be less confusion, could it only be told; but, as this is directly concerned with the power of projecting one's double consciously and at will, and as this gift like the "ring of Gyges" might prove very fatal to men at large and to the possessor of that faculty in particular, it is carefully guarded. Alone the adepts, who have been tried and can never be found wanting, have the key of the mystery fully divulged to them . . . Let us avoid side issues, however, and hold to the "principles." This divine soul or Buddhi, then, is the Vehicle of the Spirit. In conjunction, these two are one, impersonal, and without any attributes (on this plane, of course), and make two spiritual "principles." If we pass on to the *Human Soul* (*manas*, the *mens*) everyone will agree that the intelligence of man is *dual* to say the least: *e.g.*, the high-minded man can hardly become low-minded; the very intellectual and spiritual-minded man is separated by an abyss from the obtuse, dull and material, if not animal-minded man. Why then should not these men be represented by two "principles" or two aspects rather? Every man has these two principles in him, one more active than the other, and in rare cases, one of these is entirely stunted in its growth; so to say paralysed by the strength and predominance of the other *aspect*, during the life of man. These, then, are what we call the two principles or aspects of *Manas*, the higher and the lower; the former, the higher Manas, or the thinking, conscious EGO gravitating toward the Spiritual Soul (Buddhi); and the latter, or its instinctual principle attracted to *Kama*, the seat of animal desires and passions in man. Thus, we have *four* "principles" justified; the last three being (1) the "Double" which we have agreed to call Protean, or Plastic Soul; the vehicle of (2) the life *principle*; and (3) the physical body. Of course no Physiologist or Biologist will accept these principles, nor can he make head or tail of them. And this is why, perhaps, none of them understand to this day either the functions of the spleen, the physical vehicle of the Protean Double, or those of a certain organ on the right side of man, the seat of the above mentioned desires, nor yet does he know anything of the pineal gland, which he describes as a horny gland with a little sand in it, and which is the very key to the highest and divinest consciousness in man—his omniscient, spiritual and all embracing mind. This seemingly useless appendage is the pendulum which, once the clock-work of the *inner* man is wound up,

carries the spiritual vision of the EGO to the highest planes of perception, where the horizon open before it becomes almost infinite. . . .

X. But the scientific materialists assert that after the death of man nothing remains; that the human body simply disintegrates into its component elements, and that

what we call soul is merely a temporary self-consciousness produced as a by-product of organic action, which will evaporate like steam. Is not theirs a strange state of mind?

M. Not strange at all, that I see. If they say that self-consciousness ceases with the body, then in *their* case they simply utter an unconscious prophecy. For once that they are firmly convinced of what they assert, no conscious after-life is possible for them.

X. But if human self-consciousness survives death as a rule, why should there be exceptions?

M. In the fundamental laws of the spiritual world which are immutable, no exception is possible. But there are rules for those who see, and rules for those who prefer to remain blind.

X. Quite so, I understand. It is an aberration of a blind man, who denies the existence of the sun because he does not see it. But after death his spiritual eyes will certainly compel him to see?

M. They will not compel him, nor will he see anything. Having persistently denied an after-life during this life, he will be unable to sense it. His spiritual senses having been stunted, they cannot develop after death, and he will remain blind. By insisting that he *must* see it, you evidently mean one thing and I another. You speak of the spirit from the Spirit, or the flame from the Flame—of Atma in short—and you confuse it with the human soul—Manas. . . . You do not understand me, let me try to make it clear. The whole gist of your question is to know whether, in the case of a downright materialist, the complete loss of self-consciousness and self-perception after death is possible? Isn't it so? I say: It is possible. Because, believing firmly in our Esoteric Doctrine, which refers to the *Post-mortem* period, or the interval between two lives or births as merely a transitory state, I say:—Whether that interval between two acts of the illusionary drama of life lasts one year or a million, that *post-mortem* state may, without any breach of the fundamental law, prove to be just the same state as that of a man who is in a dead swoon.

X. But since you have just said that the fundamental laws of the after-death state admit of no exceptions, how can this be?

M. Nor do I say now that they admit of exceptions. But the spiritual law of

continuity applies only to things which are truly real. To one who has read and understood Mundakya Upanishad and Vedanta-Sara all this becomes very clear. I will say more: it is sufficient to understand what we mean by Buddhi and the duality of Manas to have a very clear perception why the materialist may not have a self-conscious survival after death: because Manas, in its lower aspect, is the seat of the terrestrial mind, and, therefore, can give only that perception of the Universe which is based on the evidence of that mind, and not on our spiritual vision. It is said in our Esoteric school that between Buddhi and Manas, or Iswara and Pragna,<sup>2</sup> there is in reality no more difference than *between a forest and its trees, a lake and its waters*, just as Mundakya teaches. One or hundreds of trees dead from loss of vitality, or uprooted, are yet incapable of preventing the forest from being still a forest. The destruction or *post-mortem* death of one personality dropped out of the long series, will not cause the smallest change in the Spiritual divine Ego, and it will ever remain the same EGO. Only, instead of experiencing *Devachan* it will have to immediately reincarnate.

X. But as I understand it, Ego-Buddhi represents in this simile the forest and the personal minds the trees. And if Buddhi is immortal, how can that which is similar to it, *i.e.*, Manas-taijasi,<sup>3</sup> lose entirely its consciousness till the day of its new incarnation? I cannot understand it.

M. You cannot, because you will mix up an abstract representation of the whole with its casual changes of form; and because you confuse *Manas-taijasi*, the *Buddhi*-lit human soul, with the latter, animalized. Remember that if it can be said of Buddhi that it is unconditionally immortal, the same cannot be said of Manas, still less of taijasi, which is an attribute. No *post-mortem* consciousness or Manas-Taijasi, can exist apart from Buddhi, the divine soul, because the first (*Manas*) is, in its lower aspect, a qualificative attribute of the terrestrial personality, and the second (*taijasi*) is identical with the first, and that it is the same Manas only with the light of

---

<sup>2</sup> Iswara is the collective consciousness of the manifested deity, Brahmâ, *i.e.*, the collective consciousness of the Host of Dhyam Chohans; and Pragna is their individual wisdom.

<sup>3</sup> *Taijasi* means the radiant in consequence of the union with Buddhi of Manas, the human, illuminated by the radiance of the divine soul. Therefore Manas-taijasi may be described as radiant mind; the *human* reason lit by the light of the spirit; and Buddhi-Manas is the representation of the divine *plus* the human intellect and self-consciousness.

Buddhi reflected on it. In its turn, Buddhi would remain only an impersonal spirit without this element which it borrows from the human soul, which conditions and makes of it, in this illusive Universe, *as it were something separate* from the universal soul for the whole period of the cycle of incarnation. Say rather that *Buddhi-Manas* can neither die nor lose its compound self-consciousness in Eternity, nor the recollection of its previous incarnations in which the two—*i.e.*, the spiritual and the human soul, had been closely linked together. But it is not so in the case of a materialist, whose human soul not only receives nothing from the divine soul, but even refuses to recognize its existence. You can hardly apply this axiom to the attributes and qualifications of the human soul, for it would be like saying that because your divine soul is immortal, therefore the bloom on your cheek must also be immortal; whereas this bloom, like taijasi, or spiritual radiance, is simply a transitory phenomenon.

X. Do I understand you to say that we must not mix in our minds the noumenon with the phenomenon, the cause with its effect?

M. I do say so, and repeat that, limited to Manas or the human soul alone, the radiance of Taijasi itself becomes a mere question of time; because both immortality and consciousness after death become for the terrestrial personality of man simply conditioned attributes, as they depend entirely on conditions and beliefs created by the human soul itself during the life of its body. Karma acts incessantly; we reap *in our after-life* only the fruit of that which we have ourselves sown, or rather created, in our terrestrial existence.

X. But if my Ego can, after the destruction of my body, become plunged in a state of entire unconsciousness, then where can be the punishment for the sins of my past life?

M. Our philosophy teaches that Karmic punishment reaches the Ego only in the next incarnation. After death it receives only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its just past existence.<sup>4</sup> The whole punishment after death, even for the materialist,

---

<sup>4</sup> Some Theosophists have taken exception to this phrase, but the words are those of the Masters, and the meaning attached to the word "unmerited" is that given above. In the T.P.S. pamphlet No. 6, a phrase, criticised subsequently in *Lucifer* was used, which was intended to convey the same idea. In form however it was awkward and open to the criticism directed against it; but the essential idea was that men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which

thus do not strictly belong to their own Karma, but to that of other people—and for these sufferings they of course deserve compensation. If it is true to say that nothing that happens to us can be anything else than Karma—or the direct or indirect effect of a cause—it would be a great error to think that every evil or good which befalls us is due *only* to *our* personal Karma. (*Vide* further on.)

200

H. P. BLAVATSKY

consists therefore in the absence of any reward and the utter loss of the consciousness of one's bliss and rest. Karma—is the child of the terrestrial Ego, the fruit of the actions of the tree which is the objective personality visible to all, as much as the fruit of all the thoughts and even motives of the spiritual "I"; but Karma is also the tender mother, who heals the wounds inflicted by her during the preceding life, before she will begin to torture this Ego by inflicting upon him new ones. If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal, which is not the fruit and consequence of some sin in this, or a preceding existence, on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, but believes sincerely he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is quite sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death comes to our spiritual selves ever as a deliverer and friend. For the materialist, who, notwithstanding his materialism, was not a bad man, the interval between the two lives will be like the unbroken and placid sleep of a child; either entirely dreamless, or with pictures of which he will have no definite perception. For the believer it will be a dream as vivid as life and full of realistic bliss and visions. As for the bad and cruel man, whether materialist or otherwise, he will be immediately reborn and suffer his hell on earth. To enter *Avitchi* is an exceptional and rare occurrence.

X. As far as I remember, the periodical incarnations of Sutratma<sup>5</sup> are likened in some Upanishad to the life of a mortal which oscillates periodically between sleep and waking. This does not seem to me very clear, and I will tell you why. For the man who awakes, another day commences, but that man is the same in soul and body as he was the day before; whereas at every new incarnation a full change takes place not only in his external envelope, sex and personality, but even in his mental and psychic capacities. Thus the simile does not seem to me quite correct. The man who arises from sleep remembers quite clearly what he has done yesterday, the day before, and even months and years ago. But none of us has the

---

<sup>5</sup> Our immortal and reincarnating principle in conjunction with the Manasic recollections of the preceding lives is called Sutratma, which means literally the Thread-Soul; because like the pearls on a thread so is the long series of human lives

strung together on that one thread. Manas must become *taijasi*, the radiant, before it can hang on the Sutratma as a pearl on its thread, and so have full and absolute perception of itself in the Eternity. As said before, too close association with the terrestrial mind of the human soul alone causes this radiance to be entirely lost.

201

#### THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

slightest recollection of a preceding life or any fact or event concerning it. . . . I may forget in the morning what I have dreamed during the night, still I know that I have slept and have the certainty that I lived during sleep; but what recollection have I of my past incarnation? How do you reconcile this?

M. Yet some people do recollect their past incarnations. This is what the Arhats call Samma-Sambuddha—or the knowledge of the whole series of one's past incarnations.

X. But we ordinary mortals who have not reached Samma-Sambuddha, how can we be expected to realize this simile?

M. By studying it and trying to understand more correctly the characteristics of the three states of sleep. Sleep is a general and immutable law for man as for beast, but there are different kinds of sleep and still more different dreams and visions.

X. Just so. But this takes us from our subject. Let us return to the materialist who, while not denying dreams, which he could hardly do, yet denies immortality in general and the survival of his own individuality especially.

M. And the materialist is right for once, at least; since for one who has no inner perception and faith, there is no immortality possible. In order to live in the world to come a conscious life, one has to believe first of all in that life during one's terrestrial existence. On these two aphorisms of the Secret Science all the philosophy about the *post-mortem* consciousness and the immortality of the soul is built. The Ego receives always according to its deserts. After the dissolution of the body, there commences for it either a period of full clear consciousness, a state of chaotic dreams, or an utterly dreamless sleep indistinguishable from annihilation; and these are the three states of consciousness. Our physiologists find the cause of dreams and visions in an unconscious preparation for them during the waking hours; why cannot the same be admitted for the *post-mortem* dreams? I repeat it, *death is sleep*. After death begins, before the spiritual eyes of the soul, a performance according to a programme learnt and very often composed unconsciously by ourselves; the practical carrying out of *correct* beliefs or of illusions which have been created by ourselves. A Methodist, will be Methodist, a Mussulman, a

Mussulman, of course, just for a time—in a perfect fool's paradise of each man's creation and making These are the *post-mortem* fruits of the tree of life. Naturally, our belief or unbelief in the fact of conscious immortality is unable to  
202

H. P. BLAVATSKY

influence the unconditioned reality of the fact itself, once that it exists; but the belief or unbelief in that immortality, as the continuation or annihilation of separate entities, cannot fail to give colour to that fact in its application to each of these entities. Now do you begin to understand it?

X. I think I do. The materialist, disbelieving in everything that cannot be proven to him by his five senses or by scientific reasoning, and rejecting every spiritual manifestation, accepts life as the only conscious existence. Therefore, according to their beliefs so will it be unto them. They will lose their personal Ego, and will plunge into a dreamless sleep until a new awakening. Is it so?

M. Almost so. Remember the universal esoteric teaching of the two kinds of conscious existence: the terrestrial and the spiritual. The latter must be considered real from the very fact that it is the region of the eternal, changeless, immortal cause of all; whereas the incarnating Ego dresses itself up in new garments entirely different from those of its previous incarnations, and in which all except its spiritual prototype is doomed to a change so radical as to leave no trace behind.

X. Stop! . . . Can the consciousness of my terrestrial *Egos* perish not only for a time, like the consciousness of the materialist, but in any case so entirely as to leave no trace behind?

M. According to the teaching, it must so perish and in its fulness, all except that principle which, having united itself with the Monad, has thereby become a purely spiritual and indestructible essence, one with it in the Eternity. But in the case of an out and out materialist, in whose personal "I" no Buddhi has ever reflected itself, how can the latter carry away into the infinitudes one particle of that terrestrial personality? Your spiritual "I" is immortal; but from your present Self it can carry away into after life but that which has become worthy of immortality, namely, the aroma alone of the flower that has been mown by death.

X. Well, and the flower, the terrestrial "I"?

M. The flower, as all past and future flowers which blossomed and died, and will blossom again on the mother bough, the *Sutratma*, all children of one root of Buddhi, will return to dust. Your present "I," as you yourself know, is not the body

now sitting before me, nor yet is it what I would call Manas-Sutratma—but Sutratma Buddhi.

203

#### THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

X. But this does not explain to me at all, why you call life after death immortal, infinite, and real, and the terrestrial life a simple phantom or illusion; since even that *post-mortem* life has limits, however much wider they may be than those of terrestrial life.

M. No doubt. The spiritual Ego of man moves in Eternity like a pendulum between the hours of life and death. But if these hours marking the periods of terrestrial and spiritual life are limited in their duration, and if the very number of such stages in Eternity between sleep and awakening, illusion and reality, has its beginning and its end, on the other hand the spiritual "Pilgrim" is eternal. Therefore are the hours of his *post-mortem* life—when, disembodied he stands face to face with truth and not the mirages of his transitory earthly existences during the period of that pilgrimage which we call "the cycle of rebirths"—the only reality in our conception. Such intervals, their limitation notwithstanding, do not prevent the Ego, while ever perfecting itself, to be following undeviatingly, though gradually and slowly, the path to its last transformation, when that Ego having reached its goal becomes the divine ALL. These intervals and stages help towards this final result instead of hindering it; and without such limited intervals the divine Ego could never reach its ultimate goal. This Ego is the actor, and its numerous and various incarnations the parts it plays. Shall you call these parts with their costumes the individuality of the actor himself? Like that actor, the Ego is forced to play during the Cycle of Necessity up to the very threshold of *Para-nirvana*, many parts such as may be unpleasant to it. But as the bee collects its honey from every flower, leaving the rest as food for the earthly worms, so does our spiritual individuality, whether we call it Sutratma or Ego. It collects from every terrestrial personality into which Karma forces it to incarnate, the nectar alone of the spiritual qualities and self-consciousness, and uniting all these into one whole it emerges from its chrysalis as the glorified Dhyān Chohan. So much the worse for those terrestrial personalities from which it could collect nothing. Such personalities cannot assuredly outlive consciously their terrestrial existence.

X. Thus then it seems, that for the terrestrial personality, immortality is still conditional. Is then immortality itself *not* unconditional?

M. Not at all. But it cannot touch the *non-existent*. For all that which exists as SAT, ever aspiring to SAT, immortality and

204

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Eternity are absolute. Matter is the opposite pole of spirit and yet the two are one. The essence of all this, *i.e.*, Spirit, Force and Matter, or the three in one, is as endless as it is beginningless; but the form acquired by this triple unity during its incarnations, the externality, is certainly only the illusion of our personal conceptions. Therefore do we call the after-life alone a reality, while relegating the terrestrial life, its terrestrial personality included, to the phantom realm of illusion.

X. But why in such a case not call sleep the reality, and waking the illusion, instead of the reverse?

M. Because we use an expression made to facilitate the grasping of the subject, and from the standpoint of terrestrial conceptions it is a very correct one.

X. Nevertheless, I cannot understand. If the life to come is based on justice and the merited retribution for all our terrestrial suffering, how, in the case of materialists many of whom are ideally honest and charitable men, should there remain of their personality nothing but the refuse of a faded flower!

M. No one ever said such a thing. No materialist, if a good man, however unbelieving, can die forever in the fulness of his spiritual individuality. What was said is, that the consciousness of one life can disappear either fully or partially; in the case of a thorough materialist, no vestige of that personality which disbelieved remains in the series of lives.

X. But is this not annihilation to the Ego?

M. Certainly not. One can sleep a dead sleep during a long railway journey, miss one or several stations without the slightest recollection or consciousness of it, awake at another station and continue the journey recollecting other halting places, till the end of that journey, when the goal is reached. Three kinds of sleep were mentioned to you: the dreamless, the chaotic, and the one so real, that to the sleeping man his dreams become full realities. If you believe in the latter why can't you believe in the former? According to what one has believed in and expected after death, such is the state one will have. He who expected no life to come will have an absolute blank amounting to annihilation in the interval between the two rebirths. This is just the carrying out of the programme we spoke of, and which is created by the materialist himself. But there are various kinds of materialists, as you say. A selfish wicked Egoist, one who

never shed a tear for anyone but himself, thus adding entire indifference the whole

world to his unbelief, must drop at the threshold of death his personality forever. This personality having no tendrils of sympathy for the world around, and hence nothing to hook on to the string of the Sutratma, every connection between the two is broken with last breath. There being no Devachan for such a materialists, the Sutratma will re-incarnate almost immediately. But those materialists who erred in nothing but their disbelief, will oversleep but one station. Moreover, the time will come when the ex-material perceive himself in the Eternity and perhaps repent that he lost even one day, or station, from the life eternal.

X. Still would it not be more correct to say that death is birth new Life or a return once more to the threshold of eternity?

M. You may if you like. Only remember that births differ, and that there are births of "still-born" beings, which are *failures*. More-over with your fixed Western ideas about material life, the words "living" and "being" are quite inapplicable to the pure subjective *post-mortem* existence. It is just because of such ideas—a few philosophers who are not read by the many and who lives are too confused to present a distinct picture of it—that all your conceptions of life and death have finally become so narrow. On the one hand, they have led to crass materialism, and on the to the still more material conception of the other life which ritualists have formulated in their Summer-land. There the souls of men eat, drink and marry, and live in a Paradise quite as sensual as that of Mohammed, but even less philosophical. Nor are average conceptions of the uneducated Christians any better, but are still more material, if possible. What between truncated Angels, brass trumpets, golden harps, streets in paradisiacal cities with jewels, and hell-fires, it seems like a scene at a Christmas pantomime. It is because of these narrow conceptions that you such difficulty in understanding. And, it is also just because the life of the disembodied soul, while possessing all the vividness of reality, as in certain dreams, is devoid of every grossly objective form of terrestrial life, that the Eastern philosophers have compared it with visions during sleep.

*Lucifer*, January, 1889

## THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

Articles, by H. P. Blavatsky

vol. II, 207-216

WHAT is Life? Hundreds of the most philosophical minds, scores of learned well-skilled physicians, have asked themselves the question, but to little purpose. The veil thrown over primordial Kosmos and the mysterious beginnings of life upon

it, has never been withdrawn to the satisfaction of earnest, honest science. The more the men of official learning try to penetrate through its dark folds, the more intense becomes that darkness, and the less they see, for they are like the treasure-hunter, who went across the wide seas to look for that which lay buried in his own garden.

What is then this Science? Is it biology, or the study of life in its general aspect? No. Is it physiology, or the science of organic function? Neither; for the former leaves the problem as much the riddle of the Sphinx as ever; and the latter is the science of death far more than that of life. Physiology is based upon the study of the different organic functions and the organs necessary to the manifestations of life, but that which science calls living matter, is, in sober truth, *dead matter*. Every molecule of the living organs contains the germ of death in itself, and begins dying as soon as born, in order that its successor-molecule should live only to die in its turn. An organ, a natural part of every living being, is but the medium for some special function in life, and is a combination of such molecules. The vital organ, the *whole*, puts the mask of life on, and thus conceals the constant decay and death of its parts. Thus, neither biology nor physiology are the science, nor even branches of the *Science of Life*, but only that of the *appearances* of life. While true philosophy stands Oedipus-like before the Sphinx of life, hardly daring to utter the paradox contained in the answer to the riddle propounded, materialistic science, as arrogant as ever, never doubting its own wisdom for one moment, biologises itself and many others into the belief that it has solved the awful problem of existence. In truth, however, has it even so much as approached its threshold? It is not, surely, by attempting to deceive itself and the unwary in saying that life is but the result of molecular complexity, that it can ever

208

#### THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

hope to promote the truth. Is vital force, indeed, only a "phantom," as Du-Bois Reymond calls it? For his taunt that "life," as something independent, is but the *asylum ignorantiae* of those who seek refuge in abstractions, when direct explanation is impossible, applies with far more force and justice to those materialists who would blind people to the reality of facts, by substituting bombast and jaw-breaking words in their place. Have any of the five divisions of the functions of life, so pretentiously named — Archebiosis, Biocrosis, Biodiæresis, Biocænosis and Bioparodosis <sup>1</sup>, ever helped a Huxley or a Haeckel to probe more fully the mystery of the generations of the humblest ant — let alone of man? Most certainly not. For life, and everything pertaining to it, belongs to the lawful domain of the *metaphysician* and psychologist, and physical science has no claim upon it. "That which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which hath been is named already — and it is known that it is MAN" — is the answer to the riddle of the

Sphinx. But "man" here, does not refer to *physical* man—not in its esoteric meaning, at any rate. Scalpels and microscopes may solve the mystery of the material parts of *the shell of man*: they can never cut a window into his soul to open the smallest vista on any of the wider horizons of being.

It is those thinkers alone, who, following the Delphic injunction, have cognized life in their *inner* selves, those who have studied it thoroughly in themselves, before attempting to trace and analyze its reflection in their outer shells, who are the only ones rewarded with some measure of success. Like the fire-philosophers of the Middle Ages, they have skipped over the *appearances* of light and fire in the world of effects, and centred their whole attention upon the producing arcane agencies. Thence, tracing these to the one abstract cause, they have attempted to fathom the MYSTERY, each as far as his intellectual capacities permitted him. Thus they have ascertained that (1) the *seemingly* living mechanism called physical man, is but the fuel, the material, upon which life feeds, in order to manifest itself; and (2) that thereby the inner man receives as his wage and reward the possibility of accumulating additional experiences of the terrestrial illusions called lives.

One of such philosophers is now undeniably the great Russian novelist and reformer, Count Lef N. Tolstoi. How near his views are to the esoteric and philosophical teachings of higher Theosophy

-----  
<sup>1</sup> Or Life-origination, Life-fusion, Life-division, Life-renewal and Life transmission.

209

H. P. BLAVATSKY

will be found on the perusal of a few fragments from a lecture delivered by him at Moscow before the local Psychological Society.

Discussing the problem of life, the Count asks his audience to admit, for the sake of argument, *an impossibility*. Says the lecturer:

Let us grant for a moment that all that which modern science longs to learn of life, it has learnt, and now knows; that the problem has become as clear as day; that it is clear how organic matter has, by simple adaptation, come to be originated from inorganic material; that it is as clear how natural forces may be transformed into feelings, will, thought, and that finally, all this is known, not only to the city student, but to every village schoolboy, as well.

I am aware, then, that such and such thoughts and feelings originate from such and such motions. Well, and what then? Can I, or cannot I, produce and guide

such motions, in order to excite within my brain corresponding thoughts? The question—what are the thoughts and feelings I ought to generate in myself and others, remains still, not only unsolved, but even untouched.

Yet it is precisely this question which is the *one* fundamental question of the central idea of life.

Science has chosen as its object a few manifestations that accompany life; and *mistaking*<sup>2</sup> the part for the whole, called these manifestations the integral total of life. . . .

The question inseparable from the idea of life is not *whence* life, but *how one should live* that life: and it is only by first starting with this question that one can hope to approach some solution in the problem of existence.

The answer to the query "How are we to live?" appears so simple to man that he esteems it hardly worth his while to touch upon it.

. . . One must live the best way one can—that's all. This seems at first sight very simple and well known to all, but it is by far neither as simple nor as well known as one may imagine. . . .

The idea of life appears to man in the beginning as a most simple and self-evident business. First of all, it seems to him that life is in himself, in his own body. No sooner, however, does one commence his search after that life, in any one given *spot* of the said body,

<sup>2</sup> "Mistaking" is an erroneous term to use. The men of science know but too well that what they teach concerning life is a materialistic fiction contradicted at every step by logic and fact. In this particular question science is abused, and made to serve personal hobbies and a determined policy of crushing in humanity every spiritual aspiration and thought. "*Pretending to mistake*" would be more correct. —H.P.B

than one meets with difficulties. Life is not in the hair, nor in the nails; neither is it in the foot nor the arm, which may both be amputated; it is not in the blood, it is not in the heart, and it is not in the brain. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It comes to this: Life cannot be found in any of its dwelling-places. Then man begins to look for life in Time; and that, too, appears at first a very easy matter. . . . Yet again, no sooner has he started on his chase than he perceives that here also the

business is more complicated than he had thought. Now, I have *lived* fifty-eight years, so says my baptismal church record. But I know that out of these fifty-eight years I slept over twenty. How then? have I lived all these years, or have I not? Deduct the months of my gestation, and those I passed in the arms of my nurse, and shall we call this life, also? Again, out of the remaining thirty-eight years, I know that a good half of that time I slept while moving about; and thus, I could no more say in this case, whether I lived during that time or not. I may have lived a little, and vegetated a little. Here again, one finds that in time, as in the body, life is everywhere, yet nowhere. And now the question naturally arises, whence, then, that life which I can trace to nowhere? Now--will I learn. . . . But it so happens that in this direction also, what seemed to me so easy at first, now seems impossible. I must have been searching for something else, not for my life, assuredly. Therefore, once we have to go in search of the whereabouts of life—if search we have to—then it should be neither in space nor in time, neither as cause nor effect, but as a something which I cognize within myself as quite independent from Space, time and causality.

That which remains to do now is to study *self*. But how do I cognize life in myself?

This is how I cognize it. I know, to begin with, that I live; and that I live wishing for myself everything that is good, wishing this since I can remember myself, to this day, and from morn till night. All that lives outside of myself is important in my eyes, but only in so far as it co-operates with the creation of that which is productive of *my* welfare. The Universe is important in my sight only because it can give me, pleasure.

Meanwhile, something else is bound up with this knowledge in me of my existence. Inseparable from the life I feel, is another cognition allied to it; namely, that besides myself, I am surrounded with a whole world of living creatures, possessed, as I am myself,

211

H. P. BLAVATSKY

of the same instinctive realization of their exclusive lives; and that all these creatures live for their own objects, which objects are foreign to me; that those creatures do not know, nor do they care to know, anything of my pretensions to an exclusive life, and that all these creatures, in order to achieve success in their objects, are ready to annihilate me at any moment. But this is not all. While watching the destruction of creatures similar in all to myself, I also know that for me too, for that precious ME in whom alone life is represented, a very speedy and inevitable destruction is lying in wait.

It is as if there were two "I's" in man; it is as if they could never live in peace together; it is as if they were eternally struggling, and ever trying to expel each other.

One "I" says, "I alone am living as one should live, all the rest only seems to live. Therefore, the whole *raison d'être* for the universe is in that *I* may be made comfortable."

The other "I" replies, "The universe is not for thee at all, but for its own aims and purposes, and it cares little to know whether thou art happy or unhappy."

Life becomes a dreadful thing after this!

One "I" says, "I only want the gratification of all my wants and desires, and that is why I need the universe."

The other "I" replies, "All animal life lives only for the gratification of its wants and desires. It is the wants and desires of animals alone that are gratified at the expense and detriment of other animals; hence the ceaseless struggle between the animal species. Thou art an animal, and therefore thou hast to struggle. Yet, however successful in thy struggle, the rest of the struggling creatures must sooner or later crush thee."

Still worse! life becomes still more dreadful. . . .

But the most terrible of all, that which includes in itself the whole of the foregoing, is that: —

One "I" says, "I want to live, to live for ever."

And that the other "I" replies, "Thou shalt surely, perhaps in a few minutes, die; as also shall die all those thou lovest, for thou and they are destroying with every motion your lives, and thus approaching ever nearer suffering, death, all that which thou so hatest, and which thou fearest above anything else."

This is the worst of all. . . .

212

#### THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

To change this condition is impossible. . . . One can avoid moving, sleeping, eating, even breathing, but one cannot escape from thinking. One thinks, and that thought, *my* thought, is poisoning every step in my life, as a personality.

No sooner has man commenced a conscious life than that consciousness repeats to him incessantly without respite, over and over the same thing again. "To live such life as you feel and see in your past, the life lived by animals and many men too, lived in *that* way, which made you become what you are now—is no longer possible. Were you to attempt doing so, you could never escape thereby the struggle with all the world of creatures which live as you do—for their personal objects; and then those creatures will inevitably destroy you." . . .

To change this situation is impossible. There remains but one thing to do, and that is always done by him who, beginning to live, transfers his objects in life outside of himself, and aims to reach them. . . . But, however far he places them outside his personality, as his mind gets clearer, none of these objects will satisfy him.

Bismarck, having united Germany, and now ruling Europe—if his reason has only thrown any light upon the results of his activity—must perceive, as much as his own cook does who prepares a dinner that will be devoured in an hour's time, the same unsolved contradiction between the vanity and foolishness of all he has done, and the eternity and reasonableness of that which exists for ever. If they only think of it, each will see as clearly as the other; *firstly*, that the preservation of the integrity of Prince Bismarck's dinner, as well as that of powerful Germany, is solely due: the preservation of the former—to the police, and the preservation of the latter—to the army; and that, so long only as both keep a good watch. Because there are famished people who would willingly eat the dinner, and nations which would fain be as powerful as Germany. Secondly, that neither Prince Bismarck's dinner, nor the might of the German Empire, coincide with the aims and purposes of universal life, but that they are in flagrant contradiction with them. And thirdly, that as he who cooked the dinner, so also the might of Germany, will both very soon die, and that so shall perish, and as soon, both the dinner and Germany. That which shall survive alone is the Universe, which will never give one thought to either dinner or Germany, least of all to those who have cooked them.

As the intellectual condition of man increases, he comes to the

213

H. P. BLAVATSKY

idea that no happiness connected with his personality is an achievement, but only a necessity. Personality is only that incipient state from which begins life, and the ultimate limit of life. . . .

Where, then, does life begin, and where does it end, I may be asked? Where ends the night, and where does day commence? Where, on the shore, ends the domain of the sea, and where does the domain of land begin?

There is day and there is night; there is land and there is sea; there is life and there is *no* life.

Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between two limits.

One limit is, an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only toward the gratification of one's own personality.

The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of the infinite Universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite Universe and all the creatures outside of us.<sup>3</sup>

The nearer to the first limit, the less life and bliss, the closer to the second, the more life and bliss. Therefore, man is ever moving from one end to the other; i.e., he lives. THIS MOTION IS LIFE ITSELF.

And when I speak of life know that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life, nor can it be known to anyone else.

We call life, the life of animals, organic life. But this is no life at all, only a certain state or condition of life manifesting to us.

But what is this consciousness or mind, the exigencies of which exclude personality and transfer the energy of man outside of him and into that state which is conceived by us as the blissful state of love?

What is conscious mind? Whatsoever we may be defining, we have to define it with our conscious mind. Therefore, with what shall we define mind? . . .

If we have to define all with our mind, it follows that conscious mind cannot be defined. Yet all of us, we not only know it, but it is

---

<sup>3</sup> This is what the Theosophists call "living *the* life"—in a nut-shell. —H.P.B.

It is the same law as the law of life, of everything organic, animal or vegetable, with that one difference that we *see* the consummation of an intelligent law in the

life of a plant. But the law of conscious mind, to which we are subjected, as the tree is subjected to its law, we *see* it not, but fulfil it. . . .

We have settled that life is that which is not our life. It is herein that lies hidden the root of error. Instead of studying that life of which we are conscious within ourselves, absolutely and exclusively—since we can know of nothing else—in order to study it, we observe that which is devoid of the most important factor and faculty of our life namely, intelligent consciousness. By so doing, we act as a man who attempts to study an object by its shadow or reflection does.

If we know that substantial particles are subjected during their transformation to the activity of the organism; we know it not because we have observed or studied it, but simply because we possess a certain familiar organism united to us, namely the organism of our animal, which is but too well known to us as the material of our life; *i.e.* that upon which we are called to work and to rule by subjecting it to the law of reason. . . . No sooner has man lost faith in life, no sooner has he transferred that life into that which is no life, than he becomes wretched, and sees death. . . . A man who conceives life such as he finds it in his consciousness, knows neither misery, nor death: for all the good in life for him is in the subjection of his animal to the law of reason, to do which is not only in his power, but takes place unavoidably in him. The death of particles in the animal being, we know. The death of animals and of man, as an animal, we know; but we know nought about the death of conscious mind, nor can we know anything of it, *just because that conscious mind is the very life itself.* And *Life can never be Death.* . . .

The animal lives an existence of bliss, neither seeing nor knowing death, and dies without cognizing it. Why then should man have received the gift of seeing and knowing it, and why should death be so terrible to him that it actually tortures his soul, often forcing him to kill himself out of sheer fear of death? Why should it be so? Because the man who sees death is a sick man, one who has broken the law of his life, and lives no longer a conscious existence. He has become an animal himself, an animal which also has broken the law of life.

215

H. P. BLAVATSKY

The life of man is an aspiration to bliss, and that which he aspires to is given to him. The light lit in the soul of man is bliss and life, and that light can never be darkness, as there exists—verily there exists for man—only this solitary light which burns within his soul.

---

We have translated this rather lengthy fragment from the Report of Count Tolstoi's superb lecture, because it reads like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true theosophy. His definition of life in its abstract sense, and of the life every earnest Theosophist ought to follow, each according to, and in the measure of, his *natural* capacities—is the summary and the Alpha and the Omega of practical psychic, if not spiritual life. There are sentences in the lecture which, to the average theosophist, will seem too hazy, and perhaps incomplete. Not one will he find, however, which could be objected to by the most exacting, practical occultist. It may be called a treatise on the Alchemy of Soul. For that "solitary" light in man, which burns for ever, and can never be darkness in its intrinsic nature, though the "animal" outside us may remain blind to it—is that "Light" upon which the Neo-Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rosecroix and especially the Alchemists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a dark mystery to most men.

True, Count Tolstoi is neither an Alexandrian nor a modern theosophist; still less is he a Rosecroix or an Alchemist. But that which the latter have concealed under the peculiar phraseology of the Fire-philosophers, purposely confusing cosmic transmutations with Spiritual Alchemy, all that is transferred by the great Russian thinker from the realm of the metaphysical unto the field of practical life. That which Schelling would define as a realization of the identity of subject and object in the man's inner Ego, that which mites and blends the latter with the universal Soul—which is but the identity of subject and object on a higher plane, or the unknown Deity—all that Count Tolstoi has blended together without quitting the terrestrial plane. He is one of those few *elect* who begin with intuition and end with *quasi*-omniscience. It is the transmutation of the baser metals—the *animal mass*—into gold and silver, or the philosopher's stone, the development and manifestation of man's higher SELF which the Count has achieved. The *alcahest* of the inferior Alchemist is the *All-geist*, the all-pervading Divine Spirit

216

#### THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

of the higher Initiate; for Alchemy was, and is, as very few know to this day, as much a spiritual philosophy as it is a physical science. He who knows nought of one, will never know much of the other. Aristotle told it in so many words to his pupil, Alexander: "It is not a stone," he said, of the philosopher's stone. "*It is in every man and in every place, and at all seasons, and is called the end of all philosophers,*" as the *Vedanta* is *the end* of all philosophies.

To wind up this essay *on the Science of Life*, a few words may be said of the eternal riddle propounded to mortals by the Sphinx. To fail to solve the problem contained in it, was to be doomed to sure death, as the Sphinx of life devoured the

unintuitional, who would live only in their "animal." He who lives for Self, and only for *Self*, will surely die, as the higher "I" tells the lower "animal" in the Lecture. The riddle has seven keys to it, and the Count opens the mystery with one of the highest. For, as the author on "Hermetic Philosophy" beautifully expressed it: "The real mystery most familiar and, at the same time, most unfamiliar to every man, *into which he must be initiated or perish as an atheist, is himself*. For him is the elixir of life, to quaff which, before the discovery of the philosopher's stone, is to drink the beverage of death, while it confers on the adept and the *epopt*, the true immortality. He may know truth as it really is—*Aletheia*, the breath of God, or Life, the conscious mind in man."

This is "the Alcahest which dissolves all things," and Count Tolstoi has well understood the riddle.

*Lucifer*, November, 1887

---

#### TRANSMIGRATION OF THE LIFE ATOMS

H. P. Blavatsky Articles,  
Vol. II p. 249-256

[In an article titled "Hierosophy and Theosophy" which appeared in the *Theosophist* for July, 1883, William Oxley, F.T.S., referred briefly to the mummification practiced by the ancient Egyptians in order to support his speculation about "atoms" and "souls." To this passage H.P.B. appended a critical footnote. Then, in the succeeding August issue, a correspondent, "N.D.K.," asked some questions about statements made by H.P.B. in this footnote. Here we print the July footnote, followed by a summary of N.D.K.'s questions, and then the article of the above title, which gave H.P.B.'s replies.--Editors.]

MR. Oxley will permit us to correct him. He looks at the objective terrestrial and *empty* shell--the "mummy," and forgets that there may be hidden under the crude allegory a great scientific and occult truth. We are taught that for 3,000 years at least the "mummy" notwithstanding all the chemical preparations goes on throwing off to the last invisible atoms, which from the hour of death re-entering the various *vortices* of being go indeed "through

every variety of organized life forms." But it is not the soul, the 5th, least of all the 6th, principle, but the *life atoms* of the *jiva* the 2nd principle. At the end of the 3,000 years, sometimes more, and sometimes less, after endless transmigrations all these atoms are once more drawn together, and are made to form the new outer clothing or the body of the same monad (the real soul) which had already been clothed with two or three thousands of years before. Even in the worst case that of the annihilation of the conscious *personal* principle the monad or individual soul is ever the same as are also the atoms of the lower principles which regenerated and renewed in this ever flowing river of being are magnetically drawn together owing to their affinity, and are once more re-incarnated together. Such was the true occult theory of the Egyptians.

[In his letter to the Editor, N.D.K. remarks that H.P.B.'s footnote constitutes "a new installment of occult teaching" suggesting a basis of truth in the doctrine of transmigration. "What then," he asks, "is meant by the *life atoms*, and their going

250

H. P. BLAVATSKY

through endless transmigrations?" Also, do "both the invisible atoms of the Jiva after going through various life-atoms return again to re-form the physical body, and the Jiva of the entity that has reached the end of its Devachanic state and is ready to be re-incarnated again?" Further, "does the term 'lower principles' include the 'Kama rupa' also, or only the lower triad of body, Jiva, and Linga sarira?" Finally, "do the atoms of the 4th principle (Kama rupa) and lower portion of the 5th, which cannot be assimilated by the 6th . . . also re-form--after going through various transmigrations, to constitute over again the 4th and lower 5th of the next incarnation?"]

We would, to begin with, draw our correspondent's attention to the closing sentence of the foot-note under his review. "Such was the true occult theory of the Egyptians"--the word "true" being used there in the sense of its being the doctrine they really believed in, as distinct from both the tenets fathered upon them by some Orientalists and quoted by Mr. Oxley, and that which the modern occultists may be now teaching. It does not stand to reason that,

outside those occult truths that were known to, and revealed by, the great Hierophants during the final initiation, we should accept *all* that either the Egyptians or any other people may have regarded as true. The Priests of Isis were the only true initiates, and their occult teachings were still more veiled than those of the Chaldeans. There was the true doctrine of the Hierophants of the *inner* Temple; then the half-veiled Hieratic tenets of the Priest of the *outer* Temple; and finally, the vulgar popular religion of the great body of the ignorant who were allowed to reverence animals as divine. As shown correctly by Sir Gardner Wilkinson, the initiated priests taught that--"dissolution is only the cause of reproduction . . . nothing perishes which has once existed, but things which appear to be destroyed only change their natures and pass into another form." In the present case, however, the Egyptian doctrine of atoms coincides with our own occult teachings.

The just criticism of our observing brother, who takes naturally enough the sentence--"The life-atoms of the Jiva" in its literal sense, reminds us at the same time, more than ever, of that most important fact that one can never take too much care to express clearly new ideas while writing on metaphysical subjects. In penning the words under review, no thought was given in fact, that the idea was "a new installment," and, therefore, its incompleteness gave rise to a fresh misunderstanding. Without any doubt

251

#### TRANSMIGRATION OF THE LIFE ATOMS

*Jiva* or *Prana* is quite distinct from the atoms it animates. The latter belong to the lowest or grossest state of matter--the *objectively* conditioned; the former--to its highest state: that state which the uninitiated, ignorant of its nature, would call the "objectively finite," but which, to avoid any future misunderstanding, we may, perhaps, be permitted to call the *Subjectively Eternal*, though at the same time, and in one sense the subsistent existence--however paradoxical and unscientific the term may appear.<sup>1</sup> ---

Life, the occultist says, is the eternal uncreated energy, and it alone represents in the infinite universe, that which the physicists have agreed to name the principle? or the law of continuity, though they apply it only to the endless development of the conditioned. But since modern science admits through her most learned professors that "energy has as much claim to be

regarded as an objective reality as matter itself,"<sup>2</sup> and that life, according to the occult doctrine,--is the *one* energy acting Proteus-like under the most varied forms, the occultists have a certain right to use such a phraseology. Life is ever present in the atom or matter, whether organic or inorganic, conditioned or unconditioned--a difference that the occultists do not accept. Their doctrine is that life is as much present in the inorganic as in the organic matter: when life-energy is active in the atom, that atom is organic; when dormant or latent, then the atom is inorganic. Therefore, the expression "life-atom" though apt in one sense to mislead the reader, is not incorrect after all, since occultists do not recognise that anything in nature can be inorganic and know of no "dead atoms," whatever meaning science may give to the adjective.

The alleged *law* of Biogenesis is the result of the ignorance of the man of science of *occult* physics. It is accepted because the man of science was hitherto unable to find the necessary means to awaken into activity dormant life in what he terms an inorganic atom: hence the fallacy that a living thing can only be produced from a living thing, as though there ever was such a thing as *dead* matter in Nature! At this rate, and to be consistent, a mule ought to be

---

**1:** Though there is a distinct term for it in the language of the adepts, how can one translate it into a European language? What name can be given to that which is *objective yet immaterial* in its finite manifestations, *subjective yet substantive* (though not in our sense of *substance*) in its eternal existence? Having explained it the best way we can, we leave the task of finding a more appropriate term for it to our learned English occultists. -Ed.

**[ 2: *Unseen Universe***

252

H. P. BLAVATSKY

also classed with inorganic matter, since it is unable to reproduce itself, and generate life.

We lay so much stress upon the above to answer at once any future objection to the idea that a mummy several thousand years old, can be throwing off atoms. Nevertheless the sentence may perhaps have been more clearly

expressed by saying instead of the "life-atoms of Jiva," the atoms "animated by dormant Jiva or life energy." Again, the sentence quoted by our correspondent from Fragment No. 1,\* though quite correct on the whole, might be more fully, if not more clearly, expressed. The "Jiva," or life principle which animates man, beast, plant or even a mineral, certainly *is* "a form of force, indestructible," since this force is the one life, or *anima mundi*, the universal living soul, and that the various modes in which the various objective things appear to us in nature in their atomic aggregations, such as minerals, plants, animals, etc., are all the different forms or states in which this force manifests itself. Were it to become, we will not say absent, for this is impossible, since it is omnipresent, but for one single instant inactive, say in a stone, the particles of the latter would lose instantly their cohesive property and disintegrate as suddenly--though the force would still remain in each of its particles, but in a dormant state. Thus the continuation of the sentence which states that, when this indestructible force is "disconnected with one set of atoms, it becomes attracted immediately by others" does not imply that it abandons entirely the first set, but only that it transfers its *vis viva* or living power, the energy of motion, to another set. But because it manifests itself in the next set as what is called Kinetic energy, it does not follow that the first set is deprived of it altogether; for it is still in it, as potential energy, or life latent.<sup>3</sup> This is a cardinal and basic truth of occultism, on the perfect knowledge of which depends the production of every phenomenon. Unless we admit this point, we should have to give up all the other truths

---

[\*: From "Fragments of Occult Truth -1" (*Theosophist* III, 18; see *Theosophy* 2:100). The full sentence reads: "The Vital principle (or *Jiva-atma*, a form of force, indestructible, and when disconnected with one set of atoms, becoming attracted immediately by others.")] -

[ 3: We feel constrained to make use of terms that have become technical in modern science-though they do not always fully express the idea to be conveyed-for want of better words. It is useless to hope that the occult doctrine may be ever thoroughly understood-even the few tenets that can be safely given to the world at large-unless a glossary of such words is edited; and, what is of a still more primary importance-util the full and correct meaning of the terms therein taught is thoroughly mastered. -Ed.] -

of occultism. Thus what is "meant by the life-atom going through endless transmigration" is simply this: we regard and call in our occult phraseology those atoms that are moved by Kinetic energy as "life-atoms," while those that are for the time being passive, containing but *invisible* potential energy, we call "sleeping atoms," regarding at the same time those two forms of energy as produced by the one and same force, or life. We have to beg our readers' indulgence: we are neither a man of science, nor an English scholar. Forced by circumstances to give out the little we know, we do the best we can and explain matters to the best of our ability. Ignorant of Newton's laws, we claim to know something only of the *Occult Laws* of motion. And now to the Hindu doctrine of Metempsychosis.

It has a basis of truth; and, in fact, it is an axiomatic truth--but only in reference to human atoms and emanations, and that not only after a man's death, but during the whole period of his life. The esoteric meaning of the Laws of Manu (Sec. XII, 3, and XII, 54 and 55), of the verses that state that "every act, either mental, verbal or corporeal, bears good or evil fruit (Karma), the various transmigrations of *men* (not souls) through the highest, middle, and lowest stages, are produced by his actions"; and again that "A Brahman-killer enters the body of a dog, bear, ass, camel, goat, sheep, bird, etc.," bears no reference to the human Ego, but only to the atoms of his body, of his lower triad, and his fluidic emanations.

It is all very well for the Brahmins to distort in their own interest, the real meaning contained in these laws, but the words as quoted never meant what they were made to yield from the above verses later on. The Brahmins applied them selfishly to themselves, whereas by "Brahman," man's seventh principle, his immortal monad and the essence of the personal Ego were allegorically meant. He who kills or extinguishes in himself the light of Parabrahm, i.e., severs his personal Ego from the Atman and thus kills the future Devachanee, becomes a "Brahman-killer." Instead of facilitating, through a virtuous life and spiritual aspirations the mutual union of the *Buddhi* and the *Manas*, he condemns by his own evil acts every atom of his lower principles to become attracted and drawn, in virtue of the magnetic

affinity thus created by his passions, into the forming bodies of lower animals or brutes.

254

H. P. BLAVATSKY

This is the real meaning of the doctrine of Metempsychosis. It is not that such amalgamation of human particles with animal or even vegetable atoms can carry in it any idea of personal punishment *per se*, for of course it does not. But it is a cause created, the effects of which may manifest themselves throughout the next rebirths--unless the personality is annihilated. Otherwise, from cause to effect, every effect becoming in its turn a cause, they will run along the cycle of rebirths, the once-given impulse expending itself only at the threshold of Pralaya. But of this anon.

Notwithstanding their esoteric meaning, even the words of the grandest and noblest of all the adepts, Gautama Buddha, are misunderstood, distorted and ridiculed in the same way. The *Hina-yana*, the lowest form of transmigration of the Buddhist, is as little comprehended as the *Maha-yana*, its highest form, and, because Sakya Muni is shown to have once remarked to his Bhikkus, while pointing out to them a broom, that "it had formerly been a novice who neglected to sweep out" the Council room, hence was reborn as a broom (!), therefore, the wisest of all of the world's sages stands accused of idiotic superstition. Why not try and find out, before accusing, the true meaning of the figurative statement? Why should we scoff before we understand?

Is or is not that which is called magnetic effluvia a something, a stuff, or substance, invisible, and imponderable though it be? If the learned authors of "The Unseen Universe" object to light, heat and electricity being regarded merely as imponderables, and show that each of these phenomena has as much claim to be recognized as an objective reality as matter itself--our right to regard the mesmeric or magnetic fluid which emanates from man to man or even from man to what is termed an *inanimate* object, is far greater. It is not enough to say that this fluid is a species of molecular energy like heat, for instance, for it is vastly more. Heat is produced whenever visible energy is transformed into molecular energy, we are told, and it may be thrown out by any material composed of sleeping atoms or inorganic matter as it is

called: whereas the magnetic fluid projected by a living human body *is life itself*. "Indeed it is life-atoms" that a man in a blind passion throws off, unconsciously, and though he does it quite as effectively as a mesmeriser who transfers them from himself to any object consciously and under the guidance of his will. Let any man give way to any

255

#### TRANSMIGRATION OF THE LIFE ATOMS

intense feeling, such as anger, grief, etc., under or near a tree, or in direct contact with a stone; and many thousands of years after that any tolerable Psychometer will see the man and sense his feelings, from one single fragment of that tree or stone that he had touched. Hold any object in your hand, and it will become impregnated with your life atoms, indrawn and outdrawn, changed and transferred in us at every instant of our lives. Animal heat is but so many life atoms in molecular motion. It requires no adept knowledge, but simply the natural gift of a good clairvoyant subject to see them passing to and fro, from man to objects and *vice versa* like a bluish lambent flame.

Why then should not a broom, made of a shrub, which grew most likely in the vicinity of the building where the lazy novice lived, a shrub, perhaps, repeatedly touched by him while in a state of anger, provoked by his laziness and distaste to his duty,--why should not a quantity of his life atoms have passed into the materials of the future besom and therein have been recognised by Buddha, owing to his superhuman (not *supernatural*) powers? The processes of nature are acts of incessant borrowing and giving back. The materialistic sceptic, however, will not take anything in any, save in a literal, dead-letter sense. We would invite those Christian Orientalists who chuckle at this record of Buddha's teachings to compare it with a certain passage in the Gospels--a teaching of Christ. To his disciples' query "who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"--the answer they received was--"neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John ix. 2-3.)

Now Gautama's statement has a scientific and philosophic meaning for every occultist at least, if it lacks a clear meaning for the profane; while the answer put (probably centuries later<sup>4</sup>) into the mouth of the founder of

Christianity by his over-zealous and ignorant biographers has not even that esoteric meaning, which so many of the sayings of Jesus are pregnant with. This alleged teaching is an uncalled-for and blasphemous insult to their own God, implying, as it clearly does, that for the pleasure of manifesting his power, the Deity had foredoomed an innocent man to the torture

-----

[ 4: And probably by, or under, the inspiration of Irenaeus since the sentence is found in the 4th Gospel, that of John, that did not exist yet at the time of his quarrels with the Gnostics.-Ed.] ----

256

H. P. BLAVATSKY

of a life-long blindness. As well accuse Christ of being the author of the 39 Articles!

To conclude our too long answer, the "lower principles" mentioned in the foot-note are--the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. They cannot include the *Kamarupa*, for this "rupa" belongs to the middle, not the lower principles. And, to our correspondent's further query, "do the atoms of these (the 4th and the 5th) also re-form after going through various transmigrations to constitute over again the 4th and the lower 5th of the next incarnation"--we answer--"they do." The reason why we have tried to explain the doctrine of the "life atoms" at such length, is precisely in connection with this last question, and with the object of throwing out one more valuable hint. We do not feel at liberty at present, however, to give any further details.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

*Theosophist*, July, August, 1883

### THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

H. P. Blavatsky Articles,

Vol. II. pps. 257-263

A FEW years back a very interesting controversy raged between several scientists of reputation. Some of these held that spontaneous generation was a fact in nature, whilst others proved the contrary; to the effect that, as far as

experiments went, there was found to be biogenesis, or generation of life from previously existing life, and never the production of any form of life from non-living matter.

An erroneous assumption was made in the first instance that heat, equal to the boiling point of water, destroyed all life organisms; but by taking hermetically sealed vessels containing infusions, and subjecting them to such or a greater degree of heat, it was shown that living organisms did appear even after the application of so much heat. By more careful experiments, the following fact was brought to light, that spores of Bacteria, and other animalculae, which generally float in the air, can, when dry, withstand a greater degree of heat, and that when the experiments are made in optically pure air, no life ever appears, and the infusions never putrefy.

Along with the fact of biogenesis, we must note, however, Mr. Huxley's caution, when he says, "that with organic chemistry, molecular physics, and physiology yet in their infancy, and every day making prodigious strides, it would be the height of presumption for any man to say that the conditions under which matter assumes the qualities called vital, may not some day be artificially brought together"; and, again, "that as a matter not of proof, but of probability, if it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time, to the still more remote period, when the earth was passing through chemical and physical conditions which it can never see again, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasms from non-living matter."

Tracing inorganic matter upwards to the form which approaches most nearly to vital organisms, we come to those complex substances called "colloids," which are something like the white of an egg, and form the last stage of the ascending line from inorganic matter to organic life.

258

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Tracing life downwards we ultimately reach "protoplasm," called by Huxley "the physical basis of life," a colourless, jelly-like substance, absolutely homogeneous without parts or structure. Protoplasm is evidently the nearest approach of life to matter; and if life ever originated from atomic and molecular combinations, it was in this form.

Protoplasm in its substance is a nitrogenous carbon compound, differing only from other similar compounds of the albuminous family of colloid by the extremely complex composition of its atoms. Its peculiar qualities, including life, are not the result of any new and peculiar atom added to the known chemical compounds of the same family, but of the manner of grouping and motions of these elements.<sup>1</sup>

Life in its essence is manifested by the faculties of nutrition, sensation, movement, and reproduction, and every speck of protoplasm develops organisms which possess these faculties. The question has been asked whether this primitive speck of protoplasm can be artificially manufactured by chemical processes. Science has answered in the negative, as it knows as yet of no process by which any combination of inorganic matter could be vivified.

The law of evolution has now been satisfactorily proved to pervade the whole of the Universe, but there are several missing links, and, doubtless, the discoveries of modern science will in course of time bring many new facts to light on these obscure points which at present defy all search. Far more important than the question of the origin of species is the great problem of the development of life from what is looked upon as the inanimate mineral kingdom.

Every discovery of science, however limited it may be, affords food for thought, and enables us to understand how far we are to believe on the ground of observation and experiment, and how far we theorize in the right direction.

Science has not been able to prove the fact of "spontaneous generation" by experiment, but the best of scientists think it safe to believe that there must have been spontaneous generation<sup>2</sup> at one time. Thus far, scientific thought is in accord with esoteric teachings.

---

1. *Vide* Mr. Samud Laing's new book "A Modern Zoroastrian." The whole of the work is well worth study, as it is as interesting as it is scientific. Several quotations have been made in this article from that excellent volume.--N.D.K.

Notwithstanding its excellency, it is a *very* materialistic work.--(ED.)

2. Esoteric Science, holding that nothing in nature is inorganic, but that every atom is a "life," does not agree with "Modern Science" as to the meaning attached to "Spontaneous

Generation." We may deal with this later.--(ED.)

259

## THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

Occult philosophy has it, that motion, cosmic matter, duration, space, are everywhere. Motion is the imperishable life, and is conscious or unconscious, as the case may be. It exists as much during the active period of the Universe, as during Pralaya, or dissolution, when the unconscious life still maintains the matter<sup>3</sup> it animates in sleepless and unceasing motion.

Life is ever present in the atom or matter, whether organic or inorganic--a difference that occultists do not accept. When the life energy is active in the atom, that atom is organic; when dormant or latent, the atom is inorganic. The *Jiva*, or life principle, which animates man, beast, plant, and even a mineral, is a form of force indestructible since this force is the one life, or *anima mundi*, the universal living soul, and since the various modes in which objective things appear to us in nature in their atomic aggregations, such as minerals, plants, animals, etc., are all the different forms or states in which this force manifests itself. Were it to become for one single instant inactive, say in a stone, the particles of the latter would lose instantly their cohesive property, and disintegrate as suddenly, though the force would *still* remain in each of its particles, but in a dormant state.<sup>4</sup> When the life force is disconnected with one set of atoms it becomes immediately attracted by others; but in doing so, it does not abandon entirely the first set, but only transfers its *vis viva*, or living power--the energy of motion--to another set. But because it manifests itself in the next set as what is called Kinetic energy, it does not follow that the first set is deprived of it altogether; for it is still in it, as potential energy, or life latent.

More than any other, the life principle in man is one with which we are most familiar, and yet are so hopelessly ignorant as to its nature. Matter and force are ever found allied. Matter without force, and force without matter, are inconceivable. In the mineral kingdom the universal life energy is one and unindividualized; it begins imperceptibly to differentiate in the vegetable kingdom, and from the lower animals to the higher animals, and man, the differentiation increases at every step in complex progression.

When once the life-principle has commenced to differentiate, and has become sufficiently individualized, does it keep to organisms of the same

kind, or does it after the death of one organism go and vivify an organism of another kind? For instance, after the death of a man, does the Kinetic energy which kept him alive up to a certain

---

3. Esoteric Science does not admit of the "existence" of "matter," as such, in Pralaya. In its noumenal state, dissolved in the "Great Breath," or its "laya" condition, it can exist only potentially. Occult philosophy, on the contrary, teaches that, during Pralaya, "Naught is. All is ceaseless eternal Breath."--(ED.)

4. "Five Years of Theosophy," page 535.

260

H. P. BLAVATSKY

time go after death and attach itself to a protoplasmic speck of the human kind, or does it go and vivify some animal or vegetable germ?<sup>5</sup>

After the death of a man, the energy of motion which vitalized his frame is said to be partly left in the particles of the dead body in a dormant state, while the main energy goes and unites itself with another set of atoms. Here a distinction is drawn between the dormant life left in the particles of the dead body and the remaining Kinetic energy, which passes off elsewhere to vivify another set of atoms. Is not the energy that becomes dormant<sup>6</sup> life in the particles of the dead body a lower form of energy than the Kinetic energy, which passes off elsewhere; and although during the life of a man they appear mixed up together, are they not two distinct forms of energy, united only for the time being?

A student of occultism writes as follows:

Jiva, or the life-principle, is subtle super-sensuous matter, permeating the entire physical structure of the living being, and when it is separated from such structure life is said to be extinct. A particular set of conditions is necessary for its connection with an animal structure, and when those conditions are disturbed it is attracted by other bodies presenting suitable conditions.<sup>7</sup>

---

5. As far as the writer knows, Occultism does not teach that the LIFE-PRINCIPLE--which is *per se* immutable, eternal, and as indestructible as the one *causeless cause*, for it is THAT in one of its aspects--can ever differentiate individually. The expression in *Five Years of Theosophy* must be misleading, if it led to such an inference. It is only each body--whether

man, beast, plant, insect, bird, or mineral--which, in assimilating more or less the life principle, *differentiates it in its own special atoms*, and adapts it to this or another combination of particles, which combination determines the differentiation. The monad partaking in its universal aspect of the Parabrahmic nature, unites with its *monas* on the plane of differentiation to constitute an individual. This individual, being in its essence inseparable from Parabrahm, also partakes of the Life-Principle in its Parabrahmic or Universal Aspect. Therefore, at the death of a man or an animal, the manifestation of life or the evidences of Kinetic energy are only withdrawn to one of those subjective planes of existence which are not ordinarily objective to us. The amount of Kinetic energy to be expended during life by one particular set of physiological cells is allotted by Karma--another aspect of the Universal Principle--consequently when this is expended the conscious activity of man or animal is no longer manifested on the plane of those cells, and the chemical forces which they represent are disengaged and left free to act in the physical plane of *their* manifestation. *Jiva*--in its universal aspect--has, like *Prakriti*, its seven forms, or what we have agreed to call "principles." Its action begins on the plane of the Universal Mind (*Mahat*) and ends in the grossest of the *Tanmatric* five planes--the last one, which is ours. Thus though we may, repeating after *Sankhya* philosophy, speak of the *seven prakritis* (or "productive productions") or after the phraseology of the Occultists of the seven *jivas*--yet, *both Prakriti and Jiva are indivisible abstractions*, to be divided only out of condescension for the weakness of our human intellect. Therefore, also, whether we divide it into four, five or seven principles matters in reality very little. --(ED.)

6. A dormant energy is no energy.

7. "Five Years of Theosophy," page 512.

261

## THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

Every atom has contained within it its own life, or force, and the various atoms which make up the physical frame always carry with them their own life wherever they travel. The human or animal life principle, however, which vitalizes the whole being, appears to be a progressed, differentiated, and individualized energy of motion, which seems to travel from organism to organism at each successive death. Is it really, as quoted above, "subtle super-sensuous matter," which is something distinct from the atoms that form the physical body? (1)

If so, it becomes a sort of a monad, and would be something akin to the higher human soul which transmigrates from body to body.

Another and more important question is:--Is the life-principle, or Jiva, something different from the higher or spiritual soul? Some Hindoo Philosophers hold that these two principles are not distinct, but one and the same. (2)

To make the question plainer, it may be enquired whether occultism knows of cases in which human beings have been known to live quite separated from their spiritual soul? (3)

A correct comprehension of the nature, qualities, and mode of action of the principle, called "Jiva," is very essential for a proper understanding of the very first principles of Esoteric Science, and it is with a view to elicit further information from those who have kindly promised to give help to the Editors of LUCIFER on deep questions of the science, that this feeble attempt has been made to formulate a few questions which have been puzzling almost every student of Theosophy.

*Ahmedabad*

N.D.K.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

(1) Modern Science, tracing all vital phenomena to the molecular forces of the original protoplasm, disbelieves in a *Vital Principle*, and in its materialistic negation laughs, of course, at the idea. Ancient Science, or Occultism, disregarding the laugh of ignorance, asserts it as a fact. THE ONE LIFE--is deity itself, immutable, omnipresent, eternal. It is "subtle, supersensuous matter" on this lower plane of ours, whether we call it one thing or the other; whether we trace it to the "Sun-force"--a theory by B. W. Richardson, F.R.S.--or call it this, that, or the other. The learned Dr. Richardson--an eminent authority--goes further than words, for 262

H. P. BLAVATSKY

he speaks of the life-principle as of "a form of MATTER"(!!) Says the great man of science: "I speak only of a veritable material agent, refined, but actual and substantial, an agent having quality of weight and of volume; an agent susceptible of chemical combination, and thereby of change of physical state and condition; an agent passive in its action, moved always, *i.e.*, by influences apart from itself, obeying other influences; an agent possessing no initiative power, no *vis* or *energia naturæ*, but still playing a most

important, if not a primary part in the production of the phenomena resulting from the action of the *energia* upon visible matter" (p. 379). As one sees, the Doctor plays at blind man's buff with occultism, and describes admirably the passive, "life elementals" used--say--by great sorcerers to animate their *homunculi*. Still the F.R.S. describes one of the countless aspects of our "subtle, super-sensuous-matter-life-principle."

(2) And the Hindu philosophers are right. It is here that we have real need of the divisions of everything--Prakriti, Jiva, etc.--into principles to enable us to explain the action of *Jiva* on our low planes without degrading it. Thence, while the Vedantin philosopher may be content with four principles in his universal Kosmogony, we occultists need at least *seven* to enable ourselves to understand the difference of the Protean nature of the life-principle once it acts on the five lower spheres or planes.

Our readers, enamoured with Modern Science, at the same time as with the occult doctrines--have to choose between the two views of the nature of the Life Principle, which are the most accepted now, and--the third view--that of the occult doctrines. The three may be described as follows:--

I. That of the scientific "molecularists" who assert that life is the resultant of *the interplay of ordinary molecular forces*.

II. That which regards "living organisms" as animated by an independent "vital principle," and declares "inorganic" matter to be lacking this.

III. The Occultist or Esoteric standpoint, which looks upon the distinction between organic and inorganic matter as fallacious and nonexistent in nature. For it says that matter in all its phases being merely a vehicle for the manifestation *through it* of LIFE--The Parabrahmic Breath--in its physically pantheistic aspect (as Dr. Richardson would say, we suppose)

263

#### THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

it is a super-sensuous state of matter *itself* the vehicle of the ONE LIFE, the unconscious purposiveness of Parabrahm.

(3) It is just this. A human being *can* "live" quite separated from his Spiritual Soul--the 7th and 6th principles of the ONE LIFE or "Atma-Buddhi"; but no being--whether human or animal --can live separated from its *physical* Soul, *Nepshesh* or the *Breath of Life* (in *genesis*). These "*seven souls*" or *lives* (that which we call Principles), are admirably described in the Egyptian *Ritual* and the

oldest papyri. Chabas has unearthed curious papyri and Mr. Gerald Massey has collected priceless information upon this doctrine; and though his conclusions are not ours, we may yet in a future number quote the facts he gives, and thus show how the oldest philosophy known to Europe--the Egyptian--corroborates our esoteric teachings.

H.P. Blavatsky

*Lucifer*, March, 1888

## LIFE AND DEATH

Vol. II ppgs. 264-273

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A GREAT EASTERN TEACHER, H. P. B., COLONEL OLCOTT AND AN INDIAN REPORTED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY MASTER," said Narayan to Thakur, in the midst of a very hot dispute with the poor Babu, "what is it he is saying, and can one listen to him without being disgusted? He says that nothing remains of the man after he is dead, but that the body of the man simply resolves itself into its component elements, and that what we call the soul, and he calls the temporary consciousness, separates itself, disappearing like the steam of hot water as it cools."

"Do you find this so very astonishing?" said the Master. "The Babu is a Chârvâka <sup>1</sup>. and he tells you only that which every other Chârvâka would have told you."

"But the Chârvâkas are mistaken. There are many people who believe that the real man is not his physical covering, but dwells in the mind, in the seat of consciousness. Do you mean to say that in any case the consciousness may leave the soul after death?"

"In *his* case it may," answered Thakur quietly: "because he firmly believes in what he says."

Narayan cast an astonished and even frightened look at Thakur, and the Babu--who always felt some restraint in the presence of the latter--looked at us with a victorious smile.

"But how is this?" went on Narayan. "The Vedânta teaches us that the spirit of the spirit is immortal, and that the human soul does not die in Parabrahman. Are there any exceptions?"

"In the fundamental laws of the spiritual world there can be no exceptions; but there are laws for the blind and laws for those who see."

"I understand this, but in this case, as I have told him already, his full and final disappearance of consciousness is nothing but the aberration of a blind man, who, not seeing the sun, denies its existence, but all the same he will see the sun with his spiritual sight after he is dead."

"He will not see anything," said the Master. "Denying the existence of the sun now, he could not see it on the other side of the grave."

-----

1. A sect of Bengali Materialists.

265

## LIFE AND DEATH

Seeing that Narayan looked rather upset, and that even we, the Colonel and myself, stared at him in the expectation of a more definite answer, Thakur went on reluctantly:

"You speak about the spirit of the spirit, that is to say about the Atmâ, confusing this spirit with the soul of the mortal, with Manas. No doubt the spirit is immortal, because being without beginning it is without end; but it is not the spirit that is concerned in the present conversation. It is the human, self-conscious soul. You confuse it with the former, and the Babu denies the one and the other, soul and spirit, and so you do not understand each other."

"I understand him," said Narayan.

"But you do not understand me," interrupted the Master. "I will try to speak more clearly. What you want to know is this. Whether the full loss of consciousness and self-feeling is possible after death, even in the case of a confirmed Materialist. Is that it?"

Narayan answered: "Yes; because he fully denies everything that is an undoubted truth for us, that in which we firmly believe."

"All right," said the Master. "To this I will answer positively as follows, which, mind you, does not prevent me from believing as firmly as you do in our teaching, which designates the period between two lives as only temporary. Whether it is one year or a million that this *entr'acte* lasts between

the two acts of the illusion life, the posthumous state may be perfectly similar to the state of a man in a very deep fainting-fit, without any breaking of the fundamental rules. Therefore the Babu in his personal case is perfectly right." "But how is this?" said Colonel Olcott; "since the rule of immortality does not admit of any exceptions, as you said."

"Of course it does not admit of any exceptions, but only in the case of things that really exist. One who like yourself has studied *Mândukya Upanishad* and *Vedânta-sara* ought not to ask such questions," said the Master with a reproachful smile.

"But it is precisely *Mândukya Upanishad*," timidly observed Narayan, "which teaches us that between the Buddhi and the Manas, as between the Îshvara and Prajnâ, there is no more difference in reality than between a forest and its trees, between a lake and its waters."

"Perfectly right," said the Master, "because one or even a hundred trees which have lost their vital sap, or are even uprooted,

266

H. P. BLAVATSKY

cannot prevent the forest from remaining a forest."

"Yes," said Narayan, "but in this comparison, Buddhi is the forest, and Manas Taijasi the trees, and if the former be immortal, then how is it possible for the Manas Taijasi, which is the same as Buddhi, to lose its consciousness before a new incarnation? That is where my difficulty lies."

"You have no business to have any difficulties," said the Master, "if you take the trouble not to confuse the abstract idea of the whole with its casual change of form. Remember that if in talking about Buddhi we may say that it is unconditionally immortal, we cannot say the same either about Manas, or about Taijasi. Neither the former nor the latter have any existence separated from the Divine Soul, because the one is an attribute of the terrestrial personality, and the second is identically the same as the first, only with the additional reflection in it of the Buddhi. In its turn, Buddhi would be an impersonal spirit without this element, which it borrows from the human soul, and which conditions it and makes out of it something which has the appearance of being separate from the Universal Soul, during all the cycle of the man's incarnations. If you say therefore that Buddhi-Manas cannot die, and cannot lose consciousness either in eternity or during the

temporary periods of suspension, you would be perfectly right; but to apply this axiom to the qualities of Buddhi-Manas is the same as if you were arguing that as the soul of Colonel Olcott is immortal the red on his cheeks is also immortal. And so it is evident you have mixed up the reality, Sat, with its manifestation. You have forgotten that united to the Manas only, the luminosity of Taijasi becomes a question of time, as the immortality and the posthumous consciousness of the terrestrial personality of the man become conditional qualities, depending on the conditions and beliefs created by itself during its lifetime. Karma acts unceasingly, and we reap in the next world the fruit of that which we ourselves have sown in this life."

"But if my Ego may find itself after the destruction of my body in a state of complete unconsciousness, then where is the punishment for the sins committed by me in my lifetime?" asked the Colonel, pensively stroking his beard.

"Our Philosophy teaches us," answered Thakur, "that the punishment reaches the Ego only in its next incarnation, and that immediately after our death we meet only the rewards for the sufferings of the terrestrial life, sufferings that were not deserved by us.

267

## LIFE AND DEATH

So, as you may see, the whole of the punishment *consists in the absence of reward, in the complete loss of the consciousness of happiness and rest*. Karma is the child of the terrestrial Ego, the fruit of the acts of his visible personality, even of the thoughts and intentions of the spiritual I. But at the same time it is a tender mother, who heals the wounds given in the preceding life before striking this Ego and giving him new ones. In the life of a mortal there is no mishap or sorrow which is not a fruit and direct consequence of a sin committed in his preceding incarnation; but not having preserved the slightest recollection of it in his present life, and not feeling himself guilty, and therefore suffering unjustly, the man deserves consolation and full rest on the other side of the grave. For our spiritual Ego Death is always a redeemer and a friend. It is either the peaceful sleep of a baby, or a sleep full of blissful dreams and reveries."

"As far as I remember, the periodical incarnations of Sûtrâtmâ **2** are compared in the Upanishads to the terrestrial life which is spent, term by

term, in sleeping and waking. Is that so?" I asked, wishing to renew the first question of Narayan.

"Yes, it is so; that is a very good comparison."

"I do not doubt it is good," I said, "but I hardly understand it. After the awakening, the man merely begins a new day, but his soul, as well as his body, are the same as they were yesterday; whereas in every new incarnation not only his exterior, sex, and even personality, but, as it seems to me, all his moral qualities, are changed completely. And then, again, how can this comparison be called true, when people, after their awakening, remember very well not only what they were doing yesterday, but many days, months, and even years ago, whereas, in their present incarnations, they do not preserve the slightest recollection about any past life, whatever it was. Of course a man, after he is awakened, may forget what he has seen in his dreams, but still he knows that he was sleeping and that during his sleep he lived. But about our previous life we cannot say even that we lived. What do you say to this?"

"There are some people who do remember some things," enigmatically

-----  
**2.** In the Vedânta, Buddhi, in its combinations with the moral qualities, consciousness, and the notions of the personalities in which it was incarnated, is called Sûtrâtmâ, which literally means the "thread soul," because a whole long row of human lives is strung on this thread like the pearls of a necklace. The Manas must become Taijasi in order to reach and to see itself in eternity, when united to Sûtrâtmâ. But often, owing to sin and associations with the purely terrestrial reason, this very luminosity disappears completely.

268

H. P. BLAVATSKY

answered Thakur, without giving a straight answer to my question.

"I have some suspicions on this point," I answered, laughingly, "but it cannot be said about ordinary mortals. Then how are we, who have not reached as yet the Samma Sambuddha, **3** to understand this comparison?"

"You can understand it when you better understand the characteristics of the three kinds of what we call sleep."

"This is not an easy task you propose to us," said the Colonel, laughingly. "The greatest of our physiologists got so entangled in this question that it became only more confused."

"It is because they have undertaken what they had no business to undertake, the answering of this question being the duty of the psychologist, of whom there are hardly any among your European scientists. A Western psychologist is only another name for a physiologist, with the difference that they work on principles still more material. I have recently read a book by Maudsley which showed me clearly that they try to cure mental diseases without believing in the existence of the soul."

"All this is very interesting," I said, "but it leads us away from the original object of our questions, which you seem reluctant to clear for us, Thakur Sahib. It looks as if you were confirming and even encouraging the theories of the Babu. Remember that he says he disbelieves the posthumous life, the life after death, and denies the possibility of any kind of consciousness exactly on the grounds of our not remembering anything of our past terrestrial life."

"I repeat again that the Babu is a Chârvâka, who only repeats what he was taught. It is not the system of the Materialists that I confirm and encourage, but the truth of the Babu's opinions in what concerns his personal state after death."

"Then do you mean to say that such people as the Babu are to be excepted from the general rule?"

"Not at all. Sleep is a general and unchangeable law for man as well as for every other terrestrial creature, but there are various sleeps and still more various dreams."

"But it is not only the life after death and its dreams that he denies. He denies the immortal life altogether, as well as the

---

3. The knowledge of one's past incarnations. Only Yogis and Adepts of the Occult Sciences possess this knowledge, by the aid of the most ascetic life.

"In the first instance he acts according to the canons of modern European Science, founded on the experience of our five senses. In this he is guilty only with respect to those people who do not hold his opinions. In the second instance again he is perfectly right. Without the previous interior consciousness and the belief in the immortality of the soul, the soul cannot become Buddhi Taijasi. It will remain Manas. <sup>4</sup> But for the Manas alone there is no immortality. *In order to live a conscious life in the world on the other side of the grave, the man must have acquired belief in that world, in this terrestrial life.* These are the two aphorisms of the Occult Science, on which is constructed all our Philosophy in respect to the posthumous consciousness and immortality of the Soul. Sûtrâtmâ gets only what it deserves. After the destruction of the body there begins for the Sûtrâtmâ either a period of full awakening, or a chaotic sleep, or a sleep without reveries or dreams. Following your physiologists who found the causality of dreams in the unconscious preparation for them. in the waking state, why should not we acknowledge the same with respect to the posthumous dreams? I repeat what Vedânta Sara teaches us: *Death is sleep.* After death, there begins before our spiritual eyes a representation of a programme that was learned by heart by us in our lifetime, and was sometimes invented by us, the practical realization of our true beliefs, or of illusions created by ourselves. These are the posthumous fruit of the tree of life. Of course the belief or disbelief in the fact of conscious immortality cannot influence the unconditioned actuality of the fact itself once it exists. But the belief or disbelief of separate personalities cannot but condition the influence of this fact in its effect on such personalities. Now I hope you understand."

"I begin to understand. The Materialists, disbelieving everything that cannot be controlled by their five senses and their so-called scientific reason and denying every spiritual phenomenon, point to the terrestrial as the only conscious existence. Accordingly

---

<sup>4</sup>. Without the full assimilation with the Divine Soul, the terrestrial soul, or Manas, cannot live in eternity a conscious life. It will become Buddhi-Taijasi, or Buddhi-Manas, only in case its general tendencies during its lifetime lead it towards the spiritual world. Then

full of the essence and penetrated by the light of its Divine Soul, the Manas will disappear in Buddhi, will assimilate itself with Buddhi, still preserving a spiritual consciousness of its terrestrial personality; otherwise Manas, that is to say, the human mind, founded on the five physical senses, our terrestrial or our personal soul, will be plunged into a deep sleep without awakening, without dreams, without consciousness, till a new reincarnation. [In this article Sûtrâtmâ is used for the principle later called the Higher Manas, and Manas for that later called the Lower Manas, or Kama-Manas.--EDS.

270

H. P. BLAVATSKY

they will get only what they have deserved. They will lose their personal I; they will sleep the unconscious sleep until a new awakening. Have I understood rightly?"

"Nearly. You may add to that that the Vedântins, acknowledging two kinds of conscious existence, the terrestrial and the spiritual, point only to the latter as an undoubted actuality. As to the terrestrial life, owing to its changeability and shortness, it is nothing but an illusion of our senses. Our life in the spiritual spheres must be thought an actuality because it is there that lives our endless, never-changing immortal I, the Sûtrâtmâ. Whereas in every new incarnation it clothes itself in a perfectly different personality, a temporary and short-lived one, in which everything except its spiritual prototype is doomed to traceless destruction."

"But excuse me, Thakur. Is it possible that my personality, my terrestrial conscious I, is to perish tracelessly?"

"According to our teachings, not only is it to perish, but it must perish in all its fullness, except this principle in it which, united to Buddhi, has become purely spiritual and now forms an inseparable whole. But in the case of a hardened Materialist it may happen that neither consciously nor unconsciously has anything of its personal I ever penetrated into Buddhi. The latter will not take away into eternity any atom of such a terrestrial personality. Your spiritual I is immortal, but from your present personality it will carry away only that which has deserved immortality, that is to say only the aroma of the flowers mowed down by death."

"But the flower itself, the terrestrial I?"

"The flower itself, as all the past and future flowers which have blossomed and will blossom after them on the same maternal branch, Sûtrâtmâ, children of the same root, Buddhi, will become dust. Your real I is not, as

you ought to know yourself, your body that now sits before me, nor your Manas Sûtrâtmâ, but your Sûtrâtmâ -Buddhi."

"But this does not explain to me why you call our posthumous life immortal, endless, and real, and the terrestrial one a mere shadow. As far as I understand, according to your teaching, even our posthumous life has its limits, and being longer than the terrestrial life, still has its end."

"Most decidedly. The spiritual Ego of the man moves in eternity like a pendulum between the hours of life and death, but if these

271

## LIFE AND DEATH

hours, the periods of life terrestrial and life posthumous, are limited in their continuation, and even the very number of such breaks in eternity between sleep and waking, between illusion and reality, have their beginning as well as their end, the spiritual Pilgrim himself is eternal. Therefore the hours of his posthumous life, when unveiled he stands face to face with truth and the short-lived mirages of his terrestrial existences are far from him, compose or make up, in our ideas, the only reality. Such breaks, in spite of the fact that they are finite, do double service to the Sûtrâtmâ, which, perfecting itself constantly, follows without vacillation, though very slowly, the road leading to its last transformation, when, reaching its aim at last, it becomes a Divine Being. They not only contribute to the reaching of this goal, but without these finite breaks Sûtrâtmâ-Buddhi could never reach it. Sûtrâtmâ is the actor, and its numerous and different incarnations are the actor's parts. I suppose you would not apply to these parts, and so much the less to their costumes, the term of personality. Like an actor the soul is bound to play, during the cycle of births up to the very threshold of Paranirvâna, many such parts, which often are disagreeable to it, but like a bee, collecting its honey from every flower, and leaving the rest to feed the worms of the earth, our spiritual individuality, the Sûtrâtmâ, collecting only the nectar of moral qualities and consciousness from every terrestrial personality in which it has to clothe itself, forced by Karma, unites at last all these qualities in one, having then become a perfect being, a Dhyân Chohan. So much the worse for such terrestrial personalities from whom it could not gather anything. Of course, such personalities cannot outlive consciously their terrestrial existence."

"Then the immortality of the terrestrial personality still remains an open question, and even the very immortality is not unconditioned?"

"Oh no, you misunderstand me," said the Master. "What I mean is that immortality does not cover the *non-existing*; for everything that exists in Sat, or has its origin in Sat, immortality as well as infinity, are unconditioned. Mulaprakriti is the reverse of Parabrahman, but they are both one and the same. The very essence of all this, that is to say, spirit, force and matter, have neither end nor beginning, but the shape acquired by this triple unity during its incarnations, their exterior so to speak, is nothing but a mere illusion of personal conceptions. This is why we call the posthumous

272

H. P. BLAVATSKY

life the only reality, and the terrestrial one, including the personality itself, only imaginary."

"Why in this case should we call the reality sleep, and the phantasm waking?"

"This comparison was made by me to facilitate your comprehension. From the standpoint of your terrestrial notions it is perfectly accurate."

"You say that the posthumous life is founded on a basis of perfect justice, on the merited recompense for all the terrestrial sorrows. You say that Sûtrâtmâ is sure to seize the smallest opportunity of using the spiritual qualities in each of its incarnations. Then how can you admit that the spiritual personality of our Babu, the personality of this boy, who is so ideally honest and noble, so perfectly kind, in spite of all his disbeliefs, will not reach immortality, and will perish like the dust of a dried flower?"

"Who, except himself," answered the Master, "ever doomed him to such a fate? I have known the Babu from the time he was a small boy, and I am perfectly sure that the harvest of the Sûtrâtmâ in his case will be very abundant. Though his Atheism and Materialism are far from being feigned, still he *cannot* die for ever in the whole fullness of his individuality."

"But, Thakur Sahib, did not you yourself confirm the rectitude of his notions as to his personal state on the other side of the grave, and do not these notions consist in his firm belief that after his death every trace of consciousness will disappear?"

"I confirmed them, and I confirm them again. When travelling in a railway train you may fall asleep and sleep all the time, while the train stops at many stations; but surely there will be a station where you will awake, and the aim of your journey will be reached in full consciousness. You say you are dissatisfied with my comparison of death to sleep, but remember, the most ordinary of mortals knows three different kinds of sleep--dreamless sleep, a sleep with vague chaotic dreams, and at last a sleep with dreams so very vivid and clear that for the time being they become a perfect reality for the sleeper. Why should not you admit that exactly the analogous case happens to the soul freed from its body? After their parting there begins for the soul, according to its deserts, and chiefly to its faith, either a perfectly conscious life, a life of semi-consciousness, or a dreamless sleep which is equal to the state of non-being. This is the realization of the programme of which I spoke, a programme

273

#### LIFE AND DEATH

previously invented and prepared by the Materialist. But there are Materialists and Materialists. A bad man, or simply a great egotist, who adds to his full disbelief a perfect indifference to his fellow beings, must unquestionably leave his personality for ever at the threshold of death. He has no means of linking himself to the Sûtrâtmâ, and the connection between them is broken for ever with his last sigh; but such Materialists as our Babu will sleep only one station. There will be a time when he will recognize himself in eternity, and will be sorry he has lost a single day of the life eternal. I see your objections--I see you are going to say that hundreds and thousands of human lives, lived through by the Sûtrâtmâ, correspond in our Vedântin notions to a perfect disappearance of every personality. This is my answer. Take a comparison of eternity with a single life of a man, which is composed of so many days, weeks, months, and years. If a man has preserved a good memory in his old age he may easily recall every important day or year of his past life, but even in case he has forgotten some of them, is not his personality one and the same through all his life? For the Ego every separate life is what every separate day is in the life of a man."

"Then, would it not be better to say that death is nothing but a birth for a new life, or, still better, a going back to eternity?"

"This is how it really is, and I have nothing to say against such a way of putting it. Only with our accepted views of material life the words 'live' and 'exist' are not applicable to the purely subjective condition after death; and were they employed in our Philosophy without a rigid definition of their meanings, the Vedântins would soon arrive at the ideas which are common in our times among the American Spiritualists, who preach about spirits marrying among themselves and with mortals. As amongst the true, not nominal Christians, so amongst the Vedântins--the life on the other side of the grave is the land where there are no tears, no sighs, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, and where the just realize their full perfection."

H. P. Blavatsky

*Lucifer*, October, 1892