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## REGENERATION.

The Self, son of Bharata, is a river whose fords are righteousness, whose waters are truth, whose banks are conduct, whose waves are compassion. Let thy baptism be in the Self, son of Pandu, for not by water is the inner Self washed clean.

Every attachment is to be given up by the Self; but if thou art not able to give it up, then let thy attachment be with the good, for attachment to the good is healing.

Every desire is to be abandoned by the Self, but if thou art not able to abandon it, then let thy desire be towards freedom, for this is the healing of desire.

## THEOSOPHY AND EVOLUTION.

The etymological significance of the word evolution implies an unfolding—a gradual development—by successive steps, from the simple or rudimentary to the complex or completè. In all forms of organic life the beginning of the development of the individual is in the germ which as now known and demonstrated, pre-exists in the parent, and which contains within itself all the possibilities of the future fully formed organism.

From this it follows that the thing evolving or unfolding must be contained in that which is evolved. And further, as all evolution is made possible by the co-existence of life and consciousness, therefore the substance which is made to contribute to an unfoldment must also be endowed with vitality and consciousness.

In the growth and development of all organisms every kingdom of Nature takes part. The plant draws from the mineral kingdom the elements needed and, with the aid of heat and moisture, synthesizes them into chemical compounds which it builds into its own organic structure. In like manner does the animal kingdom derive the material for growth from both the vegetable and mineral world. This is only a portion of the idea, conveyed by the word evolution, but it will serve as a starting point.

If then, all things can be and are made contributory to the manifestations of life and consciousness, all things must possess a life and consciousness of their own—and this postulate carries us at once into the domain of the Universal, and the fact is at once recognized that evolution cannot be limited to any one form or specialization of existence. This is the Theosophical teaching as given in the Bhagavad Gita: "Whenever anything, whether animate or inanimate is produced, it is due to the union of body and soul. He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed. . . . . As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the one Spirit illumine every body."

The conception of existence, therefore, may be summed up as the idea of consciously being and becoming. The consciousness here referred to need not be, and in fact, except in the higher and more complex forms of life, seldom is, accompanied by intelligence. But

that consciousness does exist apart from a rational intelligence is abundantly proved, not only by every day observation, but by the results of scientific research. It is inconceivable that what we know as inanimate matter, which enters so largely into animate things, and without which life itself could not persist, should be devoid of the qualities and attributes which it so largely confers; for, in the constant exchange of material which is inseparable from the processes of physiological life, and even of mental activity, inanimate matter would be incessantly undergoing a transition from the living and conscious to the not-living and unconscious states. Even if this could be considered possible, the fact that every organic structure can be and is, finally, resolvable into inanimate elements, mineral and gaseous, which are rapidly utilized in the inception or growth of new forms, only emphasizes the existence of vitality and consciousness in all things.

These facts force us to the conclusion that what is recognized as the evolution of the individual is merely a part of the application of a general law which controls all things, in other words, the Universe. What this law is, Science has failed to make clear; its workings and results have been studied and fully recognized in its effects as probably due to a force inherent in living things, but like the operation of other forces of Nature, its scope and application are limited to the most obvious demonstrations; outside these limitations, there has been mainly speculation.

Theosophy, recognizing the existence in all things of Body and Soul—Life and Consciousness—bases the law of progress or evolution upon the struggles of the Soul, which is divine in its origin and essence, to give expression to itself in intelligence; in other words, each Ray of Consciousness, being a direct emanation of the Divine, must return to its Source and in its efforts to do so, it must elevate itself by successive stages to a point where such reunion is possible.

The reasons why these Rays from the Divine are imprisoned in matter and must make the obligatory return pilgrimage, are given in the "three fundamental propositions" of the Secret Doctrine which, as giving the best and really only conceivable rational basis for any theory of evolution, may well be repeated here in summary.

"No. I. An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable

Principle, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and can only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought—in the words of the Mandukya, ‘unthinkable.’

“II. The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* is a boundless plane; periodically the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing, called ‘the Manifesting Stars,’ and the ‘Sparks of Eternity.’ . . . . . ‘The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.’

“This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental Laws of the Universe.”

“III. The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation, or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic Law, during the whole term.”

“In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi—Divine Soul—can have an independent, conscious existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth Principle—or the Over-Soul—has first, passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and second, acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts, checked by its Karma, thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, to the holiest Archangel.”

The essential character of these three fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine as a perfectly logical basis for any possible conception of a harmonious, progressive evolution, is shown in the fact that they are supported by any conceivable illustration from all departments of philosophy or physics.

De we question the existence of an “Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable Principle?” No very deep thought is

required to show that it must be accepted as a premise for all speculation and as the basis for all being. Upon this conception, whether expressed or implied, are founded all systems of religion or philosophy; "dwarfed" it is true, "by human expression and similitude," as the personal God of the Church, but more often postulated in the profounder philosophies as the "Absolute," the "Unknowable" and the "Eternal All."

Is there doubt of the "law of periodicity as one of the absolutely fundamental Laws of the Universe?" The existence of a present and a future implies the necessity of a past, for there can be no endless succession of present and future. If there is a future to be lived in, there must have been a past that was lived in and that past must have been a future to some antecedent past, and so on back to Infinity.

If we descend from universals to particulars and consider the manifestation of individual life, we find, as stated above, that the germ of each individual pre-exists in the parent; so, as each parent had in turn also parents, we again arrive by the same route, at the same destination—Infinity. What Infinity is, defies speculation since it "transcends the power of human conception." It must be accepted, however, as the source and end of all things, since any line of reasoning, whether looking to the past or to the future, leads us inevitably to the Infinite and Unconditioned. This is the central idea or concept, running through all systems of philosophy, to greater or less degree, though appearing under different names and varying with the point assumed as the beginning of specialization.

Spencer, whose system of philosophy embodies the culmination of all that is best in the thought of the world, gives great emphasis to the conception of evolution as a process of change from the Universal to the Particular, from the Homogeneous and Undifferentiated to the Heterogeneous and Specialized. His recognition of the universality of this law, applying it to the individual as well as to solar systems, grouping all evolutionary processes under the one all-embracing term, Cosmic Progress, although differing in the point of view, is identical with that of the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. Like the Secret Doctrine also, his philosophy carries with it no conception that any process of evolution is actually unlimited as to time, but that the process of differentiation from the

Homogeneous once begun, goes on from the simpler to the more and more complex to final completeness, when the reverse process carries back all things to the state of homogeneity from which they were evolved. This cycle of manifestation and disappearance, he refers to as evolution and dissolution and, in a limited sense, it is seen to be closely analogous to the Theosophical teaching of the Manvantara and Pralaya.

None of the accepted theories of evolution recognize the existence in so-called inanimate things, of either life or consciousness, dating their first appearance in those organic beings endowed with a nervous system; differing widely in this from the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine.

The use of the terms matter and force is closely analogous it is true, with the corresponding assumption embodied in the Theosophical teaching, but it is not identical. Matter and force are assumed to be permanent and indestructible, but also unchangeable except in manifestation, conditioned solely by environment; in other words, by their relations with other forms of matter and force. Both remaining always the same, the only theory of evolution that is possible under this hypothesis is that progress is synonymous with complexity and that complexity has an inherent tendency to simplicity. This might be accepted as a theory if it provided for the absolute harmony of relation in the gradually increasing complexity of structure which is such a necessary factor in the continuance and reproduction of special types. Although in all forms of the idea of evolution, from that of the early Atomist down to the theories accepted in our time, force is recognized as inherent in matter and inseparable from it, and that one is inconceivable apart from the other, there is entire absence of the conception of a superior controlling power—superior in the sense of being above, though not necessarily separate from structure.

If however, we follow closely Spencer's speculations upon the evolution of specialized forms from the Universal to the particular, through all grades of progress from the lowest to the highest and back to the Universal or Homogeneous, we shall find that we need not accept his conclusions as to sub-vital conditions, for his own statement that the idea of the Universal is a purely subjective one, seems to carry with it the key to the whole problem of evolution.

Thus, each specialization from the Universal, carrying with it a more or less definite conception of its own subjective existence as a direct inheritance, and inseparable from it, must necessarily and by virtue of the very impulse to differentiate which gave it birth from its parent substance, continue under the influence of its own subjectivity, to the point where re-absorption into the wholly subjective is possible. This would seem to supply a reason for the Cycle of Necessity, and, as each ray of subjective consciousness must be continuous from its first differentiation to its final re-absorption, manifesting in all grades and gaining all experiences, a succession of re-births—the Eternity of the Pilgrim—re-incarnation—is a logical necessity.

Man, as a physical organism, is supposed—and rightly so—to be the consummation thus far, of material evolution. Having reached the point in physical perfection where further evolution is impossible as a direct result of the first impulse to evolve—the determined out of the indeterminate, of Spencer—he entered into a further portion of his heritage, ages ago and became a living, rational Soul, having acquired the Fifth Principle. From that time on, his regaining the Sixth and Seventh Principles necessary to the complete and Divine Man, has depended and will depend upon his own “self-induced and self-devised efforts.” This, as I understand it, is Karma; automatic in its action in the lower grades of existence and recognised as the law of cause and effect, but becoming more and more under the direction and control of the human will and aspiration as the individual acquires greater and greater responsibility.

## THYSELF AND THY KING.

*"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom."*

We were talking of lucent intervals, when the primeval sunlight breaks through our clouds: here is the record of one of them. In the new birth, the door to real life, it is not fated that these dearly beloved personal selves of ours shall enter in, after undergoing some betterment and amelioration; as an old bonnet is renewed, a piece of ribbon here, a flower there, a skillful touch over all, and the miracle of regeneration consummated.

With us it is not like this, but quite otherwise. Everything we habitually consider ourselves to be, our whole normal selves, must melt away and dissolve in light, leaving not a wrack behind. Nothing that comes within our ordinary consciousness at all; nothing even of better hours but a few high and shining intuitions is good enough to "inherit the kingdom"; or, to speak sober prose, is large enough to enter into real life. I do not want to flatter us, but it seems to me most of us are finely gifted and endowed for our tragi-comedy of shadows, so much so, that these delicate perfections of ours are quite unsuited for the valor and vigor of real life—therefore they will never get there.

When the new birth is spoken of, we hear much of giving up ourselves and living for others. Here is only half a truth, and that the lesser half. It is not at all as though I should step forth from the throne of my heart, and invite my neighbor to take a seat there, while I meantime admire myself for being good. It is not as though I should open wide the doors of my house, so that they of the highways and hedges may come in, while I stay outside on the doorstep. That is something like the danger of the mansion swept and garnished. All this is merely imitating effects, without possessing the cause.

When I step down from the throne of my heart, with a comely feeling that I am a not quite adequate occupant, it will not be to give place to my neighbor or any human guest, however pious and worthy, but to make way for a divine and mightier power, of great majesty and mirth; a power whose glowing light has been shining through these clouds of my making for ages past. Myself and my



king—that old immortal self whom I have dimly felt, standing behind and above me, masterful and persistent. Whose purposes, which are my real purposes, have shaped all these many-colored incidents of my life; knowing that my fantastic mind would learn the real in no simpler and more direct way. My king, unquestioned, from self-evident majesty, and yet my real self. The self immortal, through whose dwelling already in real life, comes my possibility of new birth and inheritance there; though of this personality of mine I can see very little that is likely to share that inheritance. It must dissolve and melt away, quite completely and without reservation. It cannot “inherit the kingdom.” And after all, once you get used to the thought, there is a great satisfaction in thinking that this discreditable old friend is to stay behind—if complete disappearance can be called staying anywhere. One knows too much about him—has too much evidence as to his character, as the courts phrase it, when unearthing something particularly disagreeable. If this poor relation were to come into the fine company of the real, it would be perpetually necessary to hide his shabbiness behind things, to keep him in dim corners—an unending embarrassment.

So the personality, practically the whole of what we ordinarily suppose ourselves to be, must become permeable to the light, until it melts away in the light altogether. Thus it must give place to the immortal self, but not to any other power at all. It is of no avail to build up an artificial self of private and individual virtues, of self-consciously doing good and being good, to our own great admiration and humility. The real virtues, the valor and excellence of reality, are to be as little our private property as the ocean-depths or the sun-beams are; they are to be virtues, large, cosmic, universal. It is very likely, indeed, that for a personality of private and self-conscious virtue there is least hope of all; and for this reason, perhaps, there is greater joy over one sinner that repents than ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance—or at least who believe they need none, and thus shut themselves out by a hard shell of humble self-satisfaction from the great, real world of being. One thing, perhaps, is more futile and foolish than this sun-proof canopy of virtue, and that is, the vices which we, the enlightened, are tempted to permit ourselves, in order to keep ourselves quite safe from self-righteousness, from the sense of possessing a private hoard of good

works. If even fine virtue, when self-admiring, is foreign to the real, how much more vices, which are not fine at all? These contemptible things are quite invisible to the large, sane, and healthy life of the real, and not less invisible are the contemptible personalities who indulge in them.

Virtuous or vicious, therefore, this very dear usurper, this much-admired and greatly-pitied personal self, must consent to become quite diaphanous; first like a net in the sunlight; then gossamer that melts altogether into the glow. That is how the transformation appears to the real self, how it rightly should appear. But it would be comic, were not we ourselves so implicated in it, to watch the startled apprehension of the personal self, the lower man, when it first dawns on his mind that a speedy disappearance is what is most expected of him. We are too much the lower self ourselves to quite enter into the humor of it, except perhaps where other people are concerned.

A word about those good neighbors of ours, for whom we are unwilling to prepare the throne of the heart. They deserve, and shall receive, compensation. Indeed their part is taken, very mightily taken, by that very self and king who stands immortal behind us, perpetually reminding us that they are our other selves. Reminding us that we must not, presuming on our present enlightenment and superiority, forget for a moment that these others are our very selves, on pain of the keen mortification of waking up some morning to find that they are ahead of us, offering us the good-natured compassion which we would have extended to them. One of the chief works which lie before the real self, now to be installed in lawful sovereignty, is to establish a true relation with these our other selves, instead of the chaos of petulant preferences and detestations which has separated them from us hitherto. They must be received into our hearts; yet after the real self reigns there, not before. And to be truly received, they also must be transformed; till we know them, no longer subject to sorrow, but a serene, august company of immortals.

## MAN.

(An Eastern Fable).

Once Allah the omnipotent descended on earth, taking the appearance of the humblest of men, and, coming to the humblest of villages, entered the humblest of houses, which belonged to Ali.

"I am tired, I am faint with hunger," said Allah, "let a traveller in."

Poor Ali opened the door and said:

"A tired traveller brings a blessing to the house, come in."

Allah came in. The family of Ali were seated eating their supper.

"Sit down," said Ali.

Allah sat down. Everybody took a portion of their own supper and gave it to him. When they had finished eating, all the family got up to pray. The guest alone did not rise and would not pray.

"Don't you want to pray to Allah?" said Ali.

Allah smiled.

"Do you know who is your guest?" he asked.

Ali shook his head.

"You told me your name was traveller. I don't want any other."

"Know then who entered your house," said the traveller. "I am Allah."

And he shone like lightning. Ali dropped down on his knees before Allah and exclaimed with tears:

"What did I do to deserve this blessing? Are there no rich and mighty in the world? We have a high priest in our village; we have Kerim the headman; we have Mahomet, the rich merchant. Yet you have chosen the humblest, the poorest of all. Blessings be on your name."

Ali kissed the foot-print of Allah and as it was late everybody went to bed, but Ali could not sleep. All the night he tossed about thinking. All next day he was thinking too. At supper he was still thinking and could not eat anything. When supper was over, Ali could restrain himself no longer and said:

"Don't get angry with me, Allah, for I want to ask you a question."

Allah nodded.

"I wonder," said Ali, "I wonder and cannot understand it, we have a priest in our village, a man of learning and of wealth; on meeting him everybody bows to the ground. We also have Kerim, the headman, with whom the Governor of the province stops when passing through our village. We also have Mahomet, the rich man, so rich as very few people in the world. He would serve you on gold plate and let you sleep on swan-down, and, instead of all these, you came to Ali, the pauper, the beggar. Is it that you are very fond of me Allah, eh"?

Allah smiled and said:

"I am."

Ali laughed and said:

"How glad I am that you are so fond of me; oh how glad I am."

That night Ali slept well. Merrily he went to his work and merrily he returned home and sitting down to supper he merrily said to Allah:

"I want to talk to you after supper, Allah."

"All right," said Allah.

When supper was over and the wife had cleared the dishes, Ali merrily addressed Allah:

"Then you are very fond of me, Allah? Eh"?

"Yes," smiled Allah.

"Eh"? went on Ali chuckling. "There is the priest in the village whom everybody reveres; there is the headman; there is Mahomet, the rich man, who would have piled pillows for you up to the ceiling and who would have slaughtered ten sheep on your account, and you came to me, to the pauper. Then you must be very fond of me. You just tell me?"

"Yes, yes," answered Allah smiling.

"What's the use of saying 'yes, yes,'" insisted Ali, "when I want you to tell me *how* fond you are of me."

"Yes, yes, yes, I am very fond of you," said Allah, and smiled again.

"Very"?

"Yes, very."

"All right, Allah, let's go to bed."

The following day Ali went about smiling. His thoughts were very gay. At supper he ate for three, and after supper he patted Allah's knee.

"Do you know what I am thinking, Allah? I'm thinking that you must be awfully pleased that you are so fond of me, eh? You just tell me frankly, aren't you awfully pleased"?

"Yes, awfully," answered Allah and smiled.

"I should think so," said Ali. "Well, brother Allah, I know exactly how it is. With me it is so that if I am fond of a mere dog I am always pleased to see it; yet I should think there was some difference between me and a mere dog. I can just imagine how glad you are to see me, such a good, righteous man; your heart must be jumping for joy."

"It is," said Allah; "let's go to bed."

Next day Ali was very thoughtful. He sighed at supper, looking at Allah and Allah noted that furtively Ali wiped a tear.

"Why are you so sad, Ali," asked Allah when supper was over. Ali sighed.

"I am thinking about you, Allah," he said. "What would become of you, if I was not in the world? What would you do without me? See how windy, how cold it is outside, and rain is beating as if with sticks. If I were not such a good, such a pious man, where would you go? You would freeze in the cold, in the wind; not a thread on you would be left dry; and now here you sit in the warmth, it is dry here, it is light; you have had something to eat—and why? Just because there is such a good man as me in the world, to whose house you can go and so not perish. How lucky you are, Allah."

At this Allah could stand it no longer. He laughed aloud and disappeared from sight, but on the place where he sat there was a great heap of gold coin.

"Mercy upon me," exclaimed the wife of Ali, "what is this? I did not know there was so much money in the world. I'll go mad with joy."

But Ali waved her aside, counted the gold pieces and said:

"He need not have been so stingy."

## MYSTERIES.

What is to be done to restore the Mysteries? Who is to restore them? These and other similar questions, crowding one's thinking apparatus all of a sudden and with a great rush, could not but raise a great big cloud of dust, in the midst of which one's bewildered eyes seemed to read: "Impossible!"

But the cloud of dust resuming its natural position under one's feet—as all the clouds of dust are sure to do sooner or later—one's thinking apparatus resumed its natural function—that is, thinking. And soon it remembered the invariable morals of all its previous difficulties: in all cases of doubt and trouble there is nothing like going straight to some reliable source of information. And what better source of information about ancient Mysteries than some good book about antiquity in general; let us say, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, for instance, or, still better, the translated works of Plutarch.

And I must own that the bewilderment of my particular thinking apparatus was greatly relieved when it found out, in a purely scientific work, that Mysteries, in their Eleusinian shape, not only had real, matter of fact, undoubted existence, but that, during many long centuries, they were the most important, the most widely-spread function of national and social life. In fact, the initiation of the first degree seems to be nothing but a kind of baptismal ceremony, obligatory on all respectable and self-respecting humdrum ladies and gentlemen of ancient Greece—for we need not imagine that, being born in the midst of a heroic and mythical land, they all were heroic or mythological; surely most of them were just as humdrum as ourselves.

To the Eleusinian Mysteries of the first degree everyone had access. Slaves, who had no rights before law or society whatever, had the right not to be expelled, in case a kindly disposed master had brought them inside the hall where the Mysteries were enacted. Ladies of doubtful and even undoubted bad character could be admitted, with certain reservations. Babies in arms could pass the

first degree of initiation long before they could possibly realize the importance of this step, provided the parents of these babies were influential enough to procure for them this, so to speak, preparatory initiation.

Besides, it seems that the Greeks, who kept the Mysteries all to themselves, were just as vaingloriously proud of this exclusive right as any of us born Christians are inclined to take an unfounded pride in the fact of our being born in a Christian land, whereas the heathen were not. Proud eyes are always inclined to magnify the purport and size of the object of their pride, which general rule, applicable to the moral life of all epochs and all countries, brought about the two following facts: (1) Alexander the Great declaring that there was no privilege or achievement of his he valued more than being an initiate of the Eoptic Mysteries, and so glorifying them in the eyes of humdrum mortals; (2) Diogenes, his contemporary, saying in his cynical way, that, so far as he, Diogenes, was concerned, he could not quite see why it should be that Patæcion, a highway robber, but an initiate at the same time, was sure of his salvation, whereas Epaminondas, the benefactor of Thebes but a non-initiate, was not. By which saying the "cynical nondescript" of Macedon's brilliant era tried to check the too ready belief of his compatriots in the saving influence of the mere ceremony of initiation. And we have not to go so far back into antiquity to see the fatal influence on human character and general human progress of all such too implicit beliefs in any ready made mechanical ways to salvation.

So far there is nothing very mysterious in the Mysteries. Nothing but a close analogy to a condition of things just as widely spread and as well known in our own family and social life in Europe and America. A wise man was he who said: The more it changes, the more it remains the same.

And the analogy between these remote epochs and our own will be still more close when we come to see that then, as now, behind an apparent aspect of things there always was and is a deeper one, less visible and yet more true. Initiation to the Mysteries was not merely an act required by the customs of a popular religion, for behind the initiation of the first degree there was an initiation of the second degree, and yet an initiation of the third degree.

It was of the second or Eoptic initiation that Alexander the Great was so proud, that when Aristotle published his *Metaphysics* the young king reproachfully wrote to him:

“Alexander sends greeting to Aristotle. You have acted wrongly, having given out to the world several works about the acroamatic philosophy (the same as Eoptic). What difference will there be between me and others, if everyone is to learn a teaching into the Mysteries of which I was initiated? A knowledge of the most important I prefer to exterior power. . . .”

To which Aristotle gave the problematic answer that the above-mentioned works were “published and yet not published.” Meaning most probably that without a certain preparatory training and some knowledge of symbols and metaphors no one could possibly derive any good from his *Metaphysics*.

But as to the Mysteries of the third degree we of the glorious civilized era can make only feeble conjectures, at best succeeding in dovetailing the guesswork of ancient and modern writers.

“Not everybody knows what the hierophant is doing,” says Theodoret the ancient; “most people only see what is represented. They who are called priests accomplish the rites of these Mysteries, but the hierophant alone knows the reason of what he is doing and discloses it to those whom he thinks proper. . . .”

“We know positively,” says Lenormant the modern, “that for the hierophant and the *dadouch* (an intermediary between the hierophant and the crowd), on taking up the functions, there was a regular ordination, accompanied by a new and special initiation. . . . And it is perfectly evident that it was in this supreme initiation they received the doctrinal tradition. . . .”

Originated a good many centuries before Christ—some scientists say in the archaic times of purely mythical Greece and by a purely archaic demi-god—and continued far down in our own era, so far down, in fact, as to have several Neo-Platonists for their hierophants, and as to be well but not wisely abused by many Fathers of the Church, the Eleusinian Mysteries, for a wonder, managed to keep all their secrets pretty dark.

“What!” protests our natural scepticism, “slaves, untrained in the noble art of self-control; ladies of both good and bad repute, and even irresponsible infants, managing to keep a secret between



themselves, and these throughout long, long centuries? Surely this is contrary to all our notions of human nature."

To this very natural questioning I have two answers; one a quotation from Sopater, a writer of the sixth century A. D., another evolved out of my own inner consciousness.

"The law punishes with death anyone who would reveal the Mysteries. A person to whom the initiation appeared in a dream asks one of the initiates whether what he saw conforms to reality; the initiate acquiesces with a nod of the head, and for this he is accused of impiety. . . ."

Surely no law, be it ever so severe and implacable, could hold good against the irresistibly human inclination to talk about things that interest us most. Penalty of death or no penalty of death, the ladies of ancient Greece, gentlemen not excepted, *did* talk about Mysteries it was their good fortune to witness, this possibly being the only point about which I personally have no doubt whatever in the whole great variety of subjects I am going to touch upon in this article.

But, then, Mysteries just like Aristotelean *Metaphysics* were *published and yet not published*. There exists a wondrous law in the interior moral as well as intellectual life of human beings, a law which permits a great scientist to give out the whole of his most precious discoveries to the most skilled shoemaker, and the shoemaker none the wiser for it, and the discoveries of the learned man just as secret as before.

Ladies and gentlemen in peplums and togas talked and talked and talked. Ladies and gentlemen in French bonnets and frock coats talk and talk and talk. But how many amongst either could tell exactly what they were and are talking about, when "the hierophant alone knows the reason of what he is doing and discloses it to those whom he thinks proper"; be this hierophant a man as in the Eleusinian Mysteries, or the spark of God as in the inner mysterious operations of our souls and minds.

Then, just as now, many or even all were called but few were chosen. And the chosen ones surely can be entrusted with keeping a secret. Do not all, who hungrily seize upon every manifestation of their inner souls, who long to hear the soundless voices of their higher minds, know how difficult, how impossible it is to impart these

shapeless, evasive, yet intense and real impressions to our most intimate, most loved friend, unless this friend can see and hear for himself? The Mysteries remained secret throughout the ages, not because this or that hierophant wanted them to remain so, but because it is a part of their most essential nature to be and to remain secret.

Surely the penalty of death could be applied only to those of the revealers who had something to reveal, the initiates of the second and third degree; possibly only the latter, as history tells us that Aristotle had revealed the Eoptic Mysteries and lived to die his natural death.

For the millions and millions of people who had witnessed the Eleusinian and other Mysteries, they most probably remained only what they apparently were, that is to say, to use Plutarch's words, "marvellous illumination, elegant decorations of the whole place, singing and dancing which tempered the majesty of sacred words and holy apparitions." That is to say, pretty much the same thing as in most established churches, whether Christian or heathen, on the whole extensive surface of our extensive globe.

And so when my thinking apparatus was asked the question: What are the Mysteries? it was given a problem much greater than it—or any other thinking apparatus indeed—could possibly solve, so long as it remained unhelped by other constituents of the human mind. And it is exactly these other constituents of the human mind the Mysteries of all countries and all epochs address in their veiled yet intense and beautiful language.

Here are several quotations from several ancient and modern authors to testify to the truth of this statement.

Synesius, the rare example of a Neo-Platonist and Christian bishop combined, says:

"Aristotle is of the opinion that the initiates did not learn anything in a precise way, but that they received impressions; that they were put into a certain disposition, for which they were prepared."

Prepared, we may add, by a certain training, about which no one is positive, and by a certain diet about which everything is known, and which most strictly forbade flesh either of mammalian, bird or fish, for the time being, as well as certain vegetables. And

as a French writer remarks, "these abstinences were not founded, as with the Christians, on a principle of mortification; coming rather from certain mystical notions attached to the aliments, the use of which was forbidden."

In the following words of Plutarch there also is to be found an indirect allusion to the Mysteries:

"I listened to these things with simplicity, as in the ceremonies of initiation, which carry no demonstration, no conviction operated by reasoning."

Gallienus speaks thus on behalf of Nature:

"Give me, therefore, all thy attention; more than if, in the initiation of Eleusis or Samothrace, or some other sacred Mystery, the whole of thee was in the performed acts, in the words spoken by the hierophants; not considering this other initiation [the study of Nature] inferior, neither less capable of revealing either the wisdom, or the providence, or the power of the Creator of the universe. . . . For, to my mind, amongst men who honor the Gods, taken either in the totality of their nations, or individually, there is nothing comparable to the Mysteries of Eleusis and Samothrace. And yet these Mysteries show what they propose to teach only in a kind of twilight, whereas in Nature everything is in perfect brightness."

Then the Frenchman Guigniaut, in his *Religions de l' Antiquité*, says that "this was not a direct, rational, and logical teaching, but a teaching indirect, figurative, symbolical, which for all this was not any less real."

In the German work of Edwin Rohde is to be found a statement that "symbols, as well as dramatic performances, aimed at representing the state of bliss which was to be reached by the initiates after death."

All this answers more or less the question as to the subjects of the Mysteries. But needless to say, no one knows exactly what were the glorious sights and sublime words spoken of in a dim way by many initiates, including Plutarch.

Now to the second question one's bewildered eyes beheld in the cloud of dust, a question the more important as before answering it no one could seriously and honestly talk about anything like the restoration of the ancient Mysteries: If such a thing were possible what is to be done to restore the Mysteries?

At this point, I must ask all sincere and straightforward people to try and help me out of this very difficult situation by looking for the answer in their own hearts. If they promise to do so, I shall feel encouraged to say that, though I have no "direct, rational and logical" data for the following statement, yet my answer most decidedly is: *The resurrecting of our dead higher imaginations is strongly to be recommended.*

## A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

It becomes my duty as treasurer of the T. S. A. to remind its members that under the ruling of the present constitution, our organization relies for its financial sustenance upon their *voluntary contributions*. The system thus established has proved fairly successful in providing for the inevitable deficit in the expense account of our publications; but to support the measures undertaken and desired to be undertaken by the Secretary to enliven and extend the work for which the Society exists, it will be necessary for us to be more liberal in our donations. This suggestion does not apply to the particular few upon whom the treasurer has heretofore relied to come to the rescue in case of emergency, but is directed towards those good people usually in the majority who, believing it to be "more blessed to give than to receive," are self-sacrificing enough always to be willing to let the blessing accrue mainly to the other fellow.

Money intended for Theosophical purposes may be sent to the undersigned, who will in all cases immediately acknowledge receipt thereof. Remittances may be made in bank notes, by draft on New York, (other checks cost from ten to twenty-five cents for exchange), or preferably by Post Office Orders.

A. H. SPENCER,  
*Treasurer T. S. A.*  
Box 1584, N. Y.

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## TO OUR READERS.

There are many among our readers who feel an impulse to write something, either as a comment on something in THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, or following up some new line of thought. Very often, and very wrongly, they resist this impulse, through lack of self-confidence, or, perhaps, mere laziness.

We invite these future writers to begin at once. We shall be very glad to receive and consider anything they may send us. If THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM is to be read, it must first be written; and we should keep in mind that, in our Movement, we learn by teaching, and teach by learning.

THE EDITOR,  
Flushing, N. Y.



# THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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## THE LIFE THAT KILLS.

“Death and disintegration are not a mere breaking down, a going to pieces, but a specific process, that “is checked by the life process.”

*From a conversation with Dr. Loeb.*

In the work of Theosophical writers, especially in the technical literature, we meet with the assertion that “it is life, not death, that kills,” the statement not always being coupled with an explanation.

Let us consider the relation existing between the various aspects of the real man. Man's highest principle partakes of the nature of intensely active matter on the plane of spirituality; the Divine Ego. In contrast to this, at the other end of the diameter of the human sphere, stands the lowest principle; this is most inert Spirit (matter) *i. e.*, the physical body. Between the two and joining the three into one is the psychic body, the vehicle of the consciousness of the average person. It is like the fulcrum of a balance round which the personality swings, now gravitating towards the physical, now towards the spiritual, most of the “weight” being at the material end of the balance. Between the Ego and the material body a stream of vibrations flows or plays more or less intermittently according to man's state of waking, dreaming or dreamless sleep. In the waking state sensations or experience are

transmitted to the Divine Man through the medium of the psychic body which, at the same time, is influenced by these sensations in a degree depending upon the condition of the consciousness or "I am I," which functions in the psychic body. In the dreaming state the psychic self senses phenomena which exist on the psychic plane. In the state of dreamless sleep the condition of the waking state is reversed, the current is now flowing from the Higher Self towards the physical through the psychic plane, supplying vitality that the body expends during the waking state and remodeling and influencing the psychic body in so far as it is susceptible to the higher influence.

Now in order that the psychic body may perform these important functions properly, in order that it may transmit the life forces from the soul plane to the physical, it is necessary that it should be of an exceedingly refined, tenuous and elastic texture. These conditions obtain in childhood and youth, but as the man grows older he habitually thinks and acts in certain ways peculiar to his personality and acquires decidedly fixed ideas on many subjects on which he feels compelled to have an opinion.

This tendency towards sharply defining and limiting the sphere of consciousness of the personality has its corresponding effect upon the psychic body; as the man grows older it tends to assume more definite characteristics. It loses gradually its sensitiveness to all forms of sensation; becoming at the same time able to transmit the influences of the Higher Self through a constantly narrowing channel. Finally total unresponsiveness results and the psychic personality has crystallized into an intractable, unelastic form; it can no longer vibrate in harmony with the Ego whose life wave beats against and not through it. Under these conditions death is near at hand. The psychic body cannot persevere under the influence of the vibrations of the life forces; it is broken or shattered and the lower personality is dissolved.

While not the cause of death, this life force is the "life that kills."

## THEOSOPHY AND EVOLUTION.

This may seem a broad statement, but in the light of some of the demonstrations of modern science, it will be found to be susceptible of at least, logical proof.

No law of Nature ever acts alone and independently of all other laws; all are mutually interdependent to such a degree that if one fails in action all Nature falls into chaos. Imagine what would follow even a momentary suspension of the law of gravity, or of any of the laws regulating chemical affinity, the diffusion of gases, or the proper order of the vibrations constituting the solar spectrum! We should have at once an illustration, and in an universally disastrous manner, of the automatic action of the equally universal law of cause and effect.

As a matter of fact, it is upon the automatic action of this law that all the physical sciences, as mechanics, hydraulics, etc., are based, and it is in his ability to intelligently control, divert and utilize this law of cause and effect that man proves his inherent right of mastery over Nature—in other words, his Divinity.

In his "self-induced and self-devised efforts" at material and intellectual progress, man always finds himself as subject to Nature's laws as are the least evolved of Nature's creatures, and in his search for the causes of the effects which he observes, he is confronted by no law more important or more far-reaching than that of heredity, and in none will he find to be more important the injunction to "help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom."

The more deeply we investigate the subject of heredity, the more we shall find that like all other laws of Nature, it cannot act alone, but is dependent upon the harmonious action of all other natural laws. It might be assumed on first thought, that the persistence of vicious or perverted tendencies and of abnormal physical structure might serve to disprove this statement; but if we will stop to inquire just what heredity means and what are the purposes and limitations of the forces which determine its action,



we shall see that there is no stronger proof of its truth than that furnished by the existence of these deviations and their hereditary transmission.

Heredity has been defined as "that biological law which is essential to the preservation of species, whereby individuals transmit to their descendants all the physical, physiological, racial, instinctual and intellectual traits which are characteristic of the species to which they belong." It will be at once seen that the transmission of any hereditary trait or characteristic is thus limited to the species or family in which it took its origin, and, as Nature never proceeds by jumps, but always in a perfectly uniform and harmonious progression, we are forced to the conclusion that the manifestations of heredity in man, taken as the culmination of evolution, must represent the sum total of all the heredities of all the kingdoms of Nature below him. Thus, while it is true that the mineral elements which are so essential to the structure and physiological welfare of man, as iron, phosphorus, sulphur, sodium, etc., are in no way different from the same substances wherever found, it is equally true that, upon their proper combination with other elements and compounds of elements found in the vegetable kingdom, man is capable of functioning as a physical and intelligent being.

While it is true that the causes back of structure are among the hidden mysteries of Nature, we are justified in believing that in no case can these causes transcend the particular kingdom and even species to which they give rise, and at no point is it possible to say "here has branched off a new species." The transmission by heredity of traits and even of physical structure acquired in an attempt at "adaptation to environment" is a well known scientific fact, but if any new species has ever arisen in this manner, it has been by a process so gradual and of such duration as to constitute in itself an evolutionary cycle. And right here enters the question of Consciousness and its manifestation in the different kingdoms of nature.

Without going into the question of what Consciousness is, except in so far as it is a characteristic of matter that is the cause or bearer of heredity, it may be defined as that "state of being aware of some object, influence, action or agency." Such a con-

ception of Consciousness will do very well as a starting point, for, if evolution begins with a specialization of the Homogeneous, each conditioned form or substance so specialized must carry with it a distinct sense of special function as well as of form, and thus we are able to recognize this sense among the elements and in the mineral kingdom as "the state of being aware of the influence, action or agency" of cohesion, chemical affinity, magnetic attraction, etc.

To say that these "forces of nature" are outside substance and not inherent in special forms of substance, is not true, for in that case, all things would be under their influence or agency and none could escape from them, as in the case of that force of Nature which we know as the law of gravitation. All things belonging to the earth are held within the earth's sphere by the action of this law, but all things are not subject to magnetic influence, while cohesion and chemical affinity are limited and modified in their action by peculiarities of molecular and atomic structure. If we accept the specialization of the undifferentiated or homogeneous of modern evolutionary philosophy as the beginning of evolution—which, by the way, is the distinct Theosophical teaching—we must assume the existence in the undifferentiated or homogeneous of all future possibilities of development, "the ultimate homogeneous units" of Spencer.

This conception of the ultimate homogeneous units brings us back to the Third Fundamental Proposition of the *Secret Doctrine*, which will well bear re-quoting in this connection.

"The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul. . . . . and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul through the Cycle of Incarnation or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic or Karmic Law."

The existence of any quality in the thing evolved which did not have prior existence in the source of its evolution is manifestly impossible and, on the other hand, it is an equal impossibility that the qualities inherent in and arising from the Homogeneous, should not be ultimately acquired and possessed by the Differentiated. The Absolute and Unconditioned, therefore, must be not only All-Consciousness, but all forms of Consciousness and the first differentiation must carry with it its own ratio of this quality as well

as the last. It would probably be more nearly correct to say that each manifestation of the Absolute is this quality and that its physical appearance is only the objective aspect of the purely subjective Consciousness.

Each specialization therefore, even the simplest and most elementary, must of necessity, be endowed with its own "spark" of the Universal Consciousness and manifests it as the so-called forces of Nature, but which again, according to Spencer, "must not be taken as realities, but as our symbols of the reality. They are the forms under which the workings of the Unknowable are cognizable to us—modes of the Unconditioned as presented under the conditions of our consciousness."

This "Spark of the Divine" is the consciousness which pervades, or rather ensouls all things and is often referred to in speculative science as "the soul of things," or according to German philosophy, "the thing in itself."

It is the Universal Sixth Principle—Over-Soul of the *Secret Doctrine*, which must pass "through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and must acquire individuality," and it is through its union with its lower or reverse aspect on each plane that makes it objective on that plane. It has been claimed within the last few months—and probably correctly—that, under certain electrical conditions, matter can be and is reduced to its "primary state" and thus ceases to be objective as matter; but it must be noted that its return to the objective condition is always on the same plane from which it started—that is, platinum or aluminum would always re-come platinum or aluminum and nothing else.

It is this union of the subjective or noumenal and the objective or phenomenal—soul and body, positive and negative—that gives duality to all Nature, and through which consciousness manifests itself in the first differentiation as the first of the seven macrocosmic and microcosmic principles, *i. e.*, form, body, or structure—the Sthula Sharira of the Hindus.

It would be difficult to trace heredity here except as it would appear in the direct and automatic relations of cause to effect for, although in one sense there are gradations even among the elements, relating to atomic weights, combining power, etc., there is

still no evidence that the elements or the minerals have increased either in number or in quantity since their first appearance. It is a fact, however, that they always maintain their chemical identity, no matter in what inorganic or organic combinations they may occur.

Each evolution is limited to its own cycle of consciousness and, as the manifestation of consciousness enlarges, it extends to higher types and new orders, of life or existence appear. "In the mineral atom it is connected with the lowest principle of the Spirits of the Earth—the Six-fold Dhyanjis—; in the vegetable particle, with their second—Prana (Life); in the animal, with all these plus the third and fourth; in man, the germ must receive the fruitage of all the five." *S. D.* Vol 1., pp. 244-5.

There can, therefore, be no transference of consciousness from one kingdom of nature to another until each cycle in which consciousness is manifesting is complete. That is, each "spark" or "ray" of consciousness must have acquired "the absolute perfection" of its own cycle of existence before it can pass on to a "higher standard of excellence in the following period of activity—just as a perfect flower must cease to be a perfect flower and die, in order to grow into a perfect fruit." *S. D.* Vol. 1, p. 74.

As in the greater cosmical evolution of the differentiated from the homogeneous—the gradual expansion of consciousness—there is the necessary return to the homogeneous, so there is the same rhythmic or cyclic action "in all the minor changes throughout the Universe." (Spencer, *First Principles*.) And as each cycle, no matter how small and apparently unimportant, must be complete in itself, and as each period of activity must be followed by a corresponding period of rest, it would follow that in the transference of consciousness from one kingdom of nature to another, or even from special types or species within any kingdom, such a change must be preceded by a return of the evolved or specialized to its primary state, the homogenous. Thus iron is always iron and can never directly become anything else, just as sheep consciousness always manifests as sheep and never as goat, horse or man.

Each species is thus limited to its own cycle of existence and, in accordance with the Theosophical teaching in regard to cycles, it would seem more probable that an Ego, manifesting in one species,

having achieved the perfection of that species, returns to its source to again issue forth carrying with it the accumulation of past experiences to a new and larger existence, rather than that an Ego or ray of consciousness abandons its physical form in order to accommodate other Egos passing up from lower planes. This is borne out by the well known disappearance of types and species where the action of the law of the survival of the fittest can not apply and where, without some such hypothesis as the completeness of all cycles, whether small or great, we should be forced to the other alternative—an enormous waste of energy.

Viewed from this standpoint, there would seem to be complete harmony between the three accounts of creation most generally accepted by the world to-day—the Biblical, the Puranic and the modern evolutionary.

Science recognizes the evolution of the Universe as a harmonious progression from the Unmanifested, on through increasing degrees of manifestation back again to the Unmanifested, in endless succession, but so far, has refused to accept the necessity for the same rhythmic change, equally perpetual, in the minor evolutions or cycles of evolution, and which is equally essential in the atom as in the cosmic. As such harmonious progression the “days” or periods of Creation of Genesis are seen to be identical with the Creations of the Puranas, each “day” or period bringing forth a further unfoldment in proper evolutionary ratio.

In tracing a line of heredity in the continuity of life or consciousness through the successive evolutionary cycles, it may be well to recapitulate: The first physical stage of differentiation from the Homogeneous—although Esoteric Science recognizes one preceding this—is the nebular or “fire-mist period, the first stage of cosmic life after its chaotic state, when atoms issue from Laya.” The next stage would be that wherein consciousness crystallizes into concrete form under the influence of the dual manifestation of itself, known as attraction and repulsion which, as previously quoted, “must not be taken as realities, but as our symbols of the reality.”

The first “ultimate unit” of consciousness, having passed through, and gained the full experience and acquired the “absolute perfection” of its cycle, passes on to a “higher standard of excel-

lence" in the next period of activity, in union with the next ultimate unit—Prana, or organic life—in the vegetable organism. In this stage of evolution we have then consciousness capable of manifesting as form *plus* vitality and of transmitting through the medium of a "germ," by which this form and vitality are perpetuated, inherited traits and characteristics. This vegetable cycle completed, its evolution having been perfected, its Nirvana earned and enjoyed, the now enlarged consciousness re-emerges from its period of Nirvanic or subjective obscurity, united to the third and this again to the fourth ultimate unit—each expansion of consciousness bearing with it inherited traits acquired in previous states of specialization. Each inheritance thus belongs not only to its own cycle of evolution, but to the cycles of all the forms through which it has passed, each in turn the microcosm of its macrocosm.

Consciousness has now evolved to the plane of the animal kingdom, and here we find the first distinct evidence of a conscious and a sub-conscious sense of individuality—the first being the endowment of the animal soul—Kama—the second being astral and subjective. These qualities, or rather the peculiar character in structure of the organs through which these qualities are manifested, as well as the peculiarities of physical form, are transmitted as a direct inheritance from one individual to its successor by means of a germ which is not distinguishable from that which serves to perpetuate the characteristics of vegetable life.

The consummation of evolution in the animal kingdom is reached, as before stated, in man—that is, the purely animal man. Having reached "absolute perfection" on the strictly animal plane, man is now ready to have breathed into him the "Breath of Life," Manas, and he becomes a Living Soul. This is the last "creation" and in this creation is embodied the sum total of all the heredities of a gradually enlarging Consciousness of individuality through all the cycles—elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal—which preceded him. "Thus in man alone having received the fruitage of all the five" principles or creations, the "Jiva"—the aggregate of all the ultimate units of consciousness—"is complete." "As to his seventh principle, it is but one of the Beams of the Universal Sun, for each rational creature receives the temporary loan only of that which has to return to its source."

## MYSTERIES.

When a man accomplishes the task of bringing back to life his inherent capacity of seeing through and behind the symbols of any Mysteries, whether they be of Eleusis, or life, or Nature; when this dead centre of his mind's activities is once more ablaze with living fire, his time would come to be hierophant to us all. He will be entitled to give us object-lessons kindred to the Eleusinian Mysteries, and, by gradual and indirect suggestion, to lead our thought away from things gross and temporary, restoring it to its natural elements of direct perception and life amongst things immaterial and infinite.

This may seem a very high-sounding utterance, devoid of any practical and rational meaning. I must try to make my words clearer by the following illustration.

As I have said before, modern students cannot possibly make sure of either the subjects or the methods of the ancient Mysteries. But of one hint we may be sure, however, as all the learned heads of Europe seem to agree as to its authenticity. The symbolical mystery-dramas enacted by the priests at the Mysteries of Eleusis, with all their many-colored pomp of light and sound, invariably ended by a plain ear of corn being shown to the spectators, in perfect silence and with all simplicity, which, nevertheless, was considered as "the greatest, the most marvellous, and the most perfect act of the Mysteries." Once more, I have no "direct, rational and logical" data for the following statement, but my sense of things "indirect, figurative and symbolical," prompts me to suggest this was a way the hierophants had to remind their initiates of the many lives for every human soul.

How did I come to receive this impression? The answer is: By gradual and indirect suggestion, the image of more gross and temporary things being gradually supplanted by other images and words more refined and spiritual.

This is how I trace the gradual change:

- (1) An ear of corn, a thing of straw, a little starch and a little water.
- (2) Pictures I saw of ears of corn represented on very ancient funereal monuments and urns of Greece.
- (3) An article on ancient Egypt in which, amongst other things,

I read that in that country a dead man often was represented as a solitary grain falling into the earth from a complete ear of corn.

(4) The great words sacred and dear to any person brought up in a Christian country: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

(5) Similar symbols of the Vedantins, the thread-Self, the golden string going through the hearts of many pearls to form one complete jewel.

(6) The Self, the soul of the soul, remaining one and the same through all births of all humanity.

(7) Many lives for every human soul.

The Mysteries of Eleusis must have been only a sort of glorified and magnified elder brother to the thinking process by which I have thus reached things immaterial and eternal, having started from things gross and temporary.

Now comes the turn of the third question my thinking apparatus was worried with: Who is to restore Mysteries?

The great Teachers who work through the Theosophical Movement seem to suggest: the members of this movement. But I make so bold as to say that their efforts would prove of no avail whatever unless they received active, though sometimes unconscious, help from the huge crowd of ordinary men and women, who are so much more in the dark than they, yet with whom the bulk of resistance and effort must necessarily lie.

Yet without being too great an optimist, I take it upon myself to affirm that this active help *is* given to the Theosophical Movement by all sincere people without distinction of sex, race or creed, who long for something more stable, more true, and more real than the trumpery life we lead on this earth of ours. And whether these men and women belong to the Theosophical Society or not, whether they love it or hate it, even whether they know that there is such a thing in this world or not, is of no real importance. They are sure to help the restoration of ancient Mysteries, though, in most cases, unconsciously and indirectly, sometimes involuntarily, so long as there thrills a responsive echo in their hearts to the following words of the great initiate Plutarch:

"To die is to be initiated to the Great Mysteries. . . . All



our life is nothing but a succession of errors, of painful wanderings away from the road, of long tramps on crooked paths without issues. At the moment we are to leave it, fears and terrors, shivering, deathly perspiration and a lethargic torpor assails us. But once we are out of it we pass into delicious meadows, where one breathes the purest air, where one hears melodies and sacred discourse, where one beholds heavenly visions. It is there that man, having become perfect by his new initiation, returned to freedom, really master of himself, celebrates, crowned with myrtles, the most august of all Mysteries, conversing with other souls just and pure. . . .”

## THE USE OF A WORD.

The following article is the first of several which are intended to give an account of what some leading scientists think on subjects, on which our own studies have afforded us considerable information. The proposed series of articles is sure to be instructive, entertaining and suggestive. But they contain one debatable point which we think it better to mention beforehand.

This debatable point is the very word the author chose for the title and which necessarily will be used a good deal throughout the series. I mean the word "astral." But what is the "astral?"

What does this word imply? What is the function and the sphere of that part of man's inner nature, which this word designates? What limits its activity? How is it related to the rest of the principles which constitute either inanimate nature, or immortal man?

The reader will do well to answer all these questions to his own satisfaction to avoid future confusion in general and also because otherwise reading these articles will not give him the amount of pleasure and profit they are capable of giving.

First of all, let us turn to the early days of Theosophical study, the days when the great flood of new ideas, bursting on the student, necessitated the coining of new words. "Astral," on the lips of early Theosophists, was one of the words so coined. But in usage it soon became far too diffuse, far too vague.

By "astral" was meant the world of swaying, shifting, swarming images, which represent all the shapes of all that ever was or ever shall be, but have no sense, no volition of their own. The impalpable prototype of any physical body, man's physical body included, was also called the astral—still is—and no distinction was ever established between it, the lifeless and senseless *linga sharira* proper, and the *mayavi rupa*, the luminous, consciously evolved and consciously used immaterial body of beings who are more than human. Yet *linga sharira* is in the body like the liquid permeating a sponge, and, though it can be seen, on occasions, aimlessly floating apart from the physical body itself, it can never go very far from it, being still governed by the physical limitations of space and time. And the *mayavi rupa* lives and acts in regions, where

these limitations do not exist, being endowed with the will and the consciousness of the great soul, whose visible part it is for the time being.

Also people would speak of an "astral" sense, without any certainty as to whether this adjective should be applied to the sense in question because of its own essential nature or merely because it is capable of perceiving the astral images.

But the greatest confusion existed and still exists in people's talk about the "astral body." The *linga sharira* is merely an image, that same image of men and things which we see disporting itself, when materialized on the kinetographic plates. It is senseless, it cannot will, it cannot act, it is entirely inert in itself. Yet people ascribe to its agency phenomena of second sight, of thought transference, even of prevision and prophecy.

Why is it so? Why should people, by no means deprived of insight and knowledge, make this mistake? Simply because of the unguarded habit of their tongues. In their vocabulary everything that is not palpable is "astral," and so the function and sphere of activity, entirely belonging to *manas* in its dual aspect, are carelessly ascribed to the *linga sharira*.

The confusion began as early as the appearance of the first edition of "*Light on the Path*." For this indiscriminate use of the word "astral" was decidedly started at its appearance. Yet in justice and for the sake of true understanding we must remember that the author of "*Light on the Path*" says: "The whole world is animated and lit, down to its most material shapes, by a world within it. This inner world is called astral by some people, and it is as good a word as any other, though it merely means starry; but the stars, as Locke pointed out, are luminous bodies which give light of themselves. This quality is characteristic of the life which lies within matter; for those who see it, need no lamp to see it by. The word star, moreover, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *stir-an*, to steer, to stir, to move, and undeniably it is the inner life which is master of the outer, just as a man's brain guides the movements of his lips. So that although astral is no very excellent word in itself, I am content to use it for my present purpose."

And so, in the opinion of the author of "*Light on the Path*," "astral is no very excellent word in itself," and this in the early

days, before diligent study, research and introspection have made us able to see complex things and from many sides.

As to the present day, it is my strong belief, that the time has come for us to be quite certain, in our own minds, as to the exact meaning of the word "astral," whenever we happen to use it. For with the advance of years, the word has decidedly degenerated and from "not very excellent in itself" it has become confusing. Let every reader or a group of readers make it quite clear for themselves what they mean by this word in all its gradations and purposes, and then the proposed series of articles will not fail to produce an excellent result. For in accordance with the law of moral demand and supply, their own clearness and precision are sure to react on the minds of the scientists, who so courageously and unswervingly pursue the task of bringing light where formerly there was nothing but darkness.

## PHYSIOLOGISTS AND THE ASTRAL.

It is a reassuring symptom of the persisting, though probably unconscious, assimilation of occult teachings, that in very recent years—within the last decade, to be approximately exact—many most competent physiologists and other scientific investigators have devoted much time and labor to an examination of the evidence of the existence of the second principle of man, the *Linga Sharira*, or the Astral. It is needless to say these observers have not been studying the dual personality under this name—they have agreed to call it the subconscious or subliminal mind—but as discovered and described by them it corresponds exactly, as far as they have advanced, to the Eastern teaching on the subject. Although the modern conception is by no means commensurate with the ancient, many of the attributes and functions of the astral are to-day accepted by the foremost observers as facts beyond all doubt or question. Through experiments in hypnotism and kindred phenomena, they have become convinced of a consciousness which lies behind, or “under the threshold”—subliminal—of the ordinary intelligence; a consciousness that controls the automatic actions of the physical economy such as breathing and digestion, and also controls in many ways what may be called the physical intelligence. It is frequently found to be vastly superior to the brain mind, being cognizant of all kinds of information and knowledge wholly foreign and unrelated to the ordinary experience of the physical individuality. Some explorers, seeking to explain the phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., and yet avoiding the acceptance of a second and independent consciousness, have speculated upon the possibility of such explanation being found in the development of a sixth sense, potential in all, but manifesting only in some. This naturally is found to be adequately explanatory of a certain class of cases, but it fails to account for the projection of the self beyond the confines of the body, which is admittedly a fact in many well-known instances; and although belief in the growth of a sixth sense, a verification of the theosophical promise, is gaining quite a wide acceptance, it is not generally admitted that it can occupy the place or the functions of the subliminal self.

In confirmation of the foregoing some citations of the pub-

lished views of well-known physicians, physiologists and other students of man and nature may be found interesting and instructive, and encouraging withal to adherents of the ancient philosophy in finding the old teaching supported by the new. A most noteworthy presentation of the belief of the medical faculty in the Astral consciousness and its potent influence in disease is submitted in the annual address at a recent meeting of the Hampshire Branch of the Massachusetts Medical Society by its President, Dr. H. H. Seelye; as reported in the Medical Record (September, 1899) he said:

“For the purpose of explaining the possible mode of action of suggestion, hypnotism and allied phenomena, modern psychology has propounded the tentative working hypothesis of our possessing a sort of double personality, acting on and through the brain. These two personalities, living in harmony and usually working in unison, and acting and reacting on each other, may be designated as the conscious, and the subconscious or subliminal; or as the objective or physical, and the subjective or hidden and immaterial mind. The objective or conscious personality is the one we are so well acquainted with, and is, in our waking hours, acutely responsive to all outside influences, as well as to ideas mentally conceived, and receives impressions and transmits impulses in accordance with the conscious will of the individual. But the subjective personality and subconscious mind work unobtrusively and incessantly, through both our waking and sleeping hours, and are at all times in a state of receptivity to influence exerted through the senses from the world without, and presumably also to less material force and impulses originated in, or transmitted through, the physical brain cells and nervous ganglia. It is this form of mental activity that is manifested in dreams and in the vagaries of the somnambulist, that enables us to awake at a stipulated hour, and that recalls names and facts we vainly strive to remember, but that suddenly come to us later on when thinking about something else. It is this same power which, with no conscious thought or effect on our part, regulates the involuntary functions of breathing, heart-action, digestion, and the automatic activities of all the bodily organs. While responsive to stimuli from the conscious physical personality, it on the other hand often directs or modifies the ideas and actions

of the latter. It is as though there were two individuals of similar temperaments living as neighbors in the same house, at times working apart, and at others in harmony together. Each may do things and know of matters concealed from the other, but each may call upon the other for assistance when required. Each attends to its own affairs, but at times seems to delight in befooling or deceiving the other, or in acting eccentrically, to the surprise and wonder of its neighbor. While co-workers in the general management of the house, viz., the body, each works in its own way and as suits its own pleasure.

“It is by recognizing this hypothetical interrelation of two personalities in our individual that we can explain most of the phenomena induced by suggestion. An idea becomes implanted in the mind by either a known or an unknown process, and there it is taken up by the subconscious personality, and worked over and developed, till its effects appear in some easily recognized results, involving, it may be, some part of the body or its functions. Conviction or belief that a certain effect is to follow a given act is helpful and conducive to this unconscious transformation, but conscious belief is not always essential, provided that the subconscious ego is convinced, and so stimulated to activity. Thus many of the curative phenomena we so frequently observe, and which at times seem almost inexplicable, may be accounted for by alterations of nutrition produced by subconscious expectations aroused by suggestion. For instance, an ignorant child is told to work some ridiculous charm on a wart, and after a time, to his astonishment, he notices that it is gradually disappearing, though he has consciously given little or no attention to the matter since the first. But the subconscious personality, easily convinced of the efficacy of the act, has been steadily at work, concentrating energy and modifying nutrition in the diseased epithelial cells, till the cure is wrought. . . . . The essential fact for success in suggestion seems to be either consciously or unconsciously, there must be in the mind of the individual a desire, a longing, a hope, a faith, or an expectation, that a certain condition will in time prevail. Surprising as it may seem, it is, however, the unconscious belief, usually, that works most powerfully, and often this is directly contrary to the conscious and expressed opinion of the subject. Granting this

theory of unconscious cerebration and expectant attention, due to suggestion, to be correct, we have now an adequate explanation of the many authentic cures of both functional and chronic organic disorders wrought by homœopathists, osteopathists, hydropathists, electropathists, masseurs, faith curers, Christian scientists, religious enthusiasts, blue glass cranks, and by all the other fads that from time to time rage and flourish successfully for a while only to give way at last to some other new and wonderful method of cure."

Dr. John D. Quackenbos, former professor in Columbia University, and at present practising his profession in New York City, submitted to an interview reported not long since in the *New York Sun*. Since his resignation from the faculty of Columbia he has devoted much of his time to the study of hypnotism, and has been much quoted and somewhat criticized by some of his medical confreres for his assertions that many hypnotic subjects recalled various and widely diverse selves when under the influence. In the interview above referred to Dr. Quackenbos spoke as follows:—"When psychology was a less advanced and definite science, and the theory of a duplex personality was less commonly accepted, reputable physicians had a feeling that hypnotism savored of charlatanism and was outside the legitimate province of medicine. Even to-day many physicians distrust the psychological science of mental suggestion and refuse to accept its theories and results, but the progression and liberal element in the profession is deeply interested in the experiments with hypnotism as a healing agent, and many of the most prominent physicians in the world are making frequent use of mental suggestion in the treatment of cases. Some of these doctors, yielding to a public prejudice which is merely the result of ignorance and is rapidly lessening as the principles of psychology become more widely known and understood, refrain from admitting their indebtedness to hypnotism and seem to be ashamed to be found making use of it, but others come out boldly announcing their belief in the power and virtue of the science.

"Constant experiments are being made by medical societies and by individuals, and the results of these experiments with the truths deducible from them are absolutely prodigious.....Leaving the moral possibilities of hypnotism out of the question and keeping strictly to therapeutics, experiment has proved and medical journals



have admitted that the subliminal or automatic mind, which lies back of the objective personality, can directly influence many of the vital processes, the circulation, the digestive functions, etc. That is, the automatic mind can control the outgo of force to the vital organs. In addition to this hypnotic suggestion can put the mind into a cheerful optimistic attitude toward the disease. The treatment is usually supplemented with auto-suggestion, which might be called self-hypnotism. An objective consciousness can suggest so forcibly to its own subjective consciousness that it will itself be swayed in turn by the subjective consciousness which it has impressed. Does that sound formidable? It is intelligible enough if you once admit the duplex personality, and one must soon admit that, if he studies psychology."

In Prof. Quackenbos' opinion the condition of profound sleep is the same as that of hypnotic trance—a conclusion reached by Bernheim half a century since—and the subliminal self freed from the trammels of the outer consciousness holds symposiums with the egos of the rest of humanity, and he hints with the spirits of those who have gone before—which is in clear accord with theosophic teaching save with regard to intercourse with deceased friends—but like the hypnotized subject, it brings back no memory to the physical self of its spiritual experience, though this soulful fellowship may be the fertile source of the divine intuitions and imaginings of seers and poets.

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