

PSYCHIC MANUALS II.

SOUL-CULTURE: SELF DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IT IS, AND HOW IT IS DONE

BY

R. DIMSDALE STOCKER

Author of

*"Telepathy," "Sub-Consciousness," "The Human Face,"
"Clues to Character," "The Language of Handwriting,"
etc., etc.*

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R. DIMSDALE STOCKER

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I.

LIFE'S INEQUALITIES—THEIR CAUSE AND CURE.

Getting out of the Past.

IT would be idle — dishonest rather — to attempt to pretend that the prevailing inequalities of life are apparent only.

To maintain that nature's bounties are distributed with strict impartiality, or with equal profusion, upon all alike, would be a piece of wilful and deliberate self-deception; nay, downright cant and hypocrisy.

For, whilst a general survey of the conditions around us affords us a tolerably correct idea of the prevailing *apparent* inequality existing in the lives between man and man, much more does a more thorough and closer familiarity with such conditions

assure us that the inequalities are of a far more aggravated and deeper-laid character than we should have dared to presume either possible or consistent with a conception of a divine will and intelligence at the root of things.

There can, I think, be little doubt but that a serious consideration of the significance of this fact (unillumined by the explanation thereof with which higher-thought philosophy furnishes us) has driven far more people into Agnosticism and Atheism than any other single cause. And whilst a profound pessimism is perhaps as unwarranted as an unqualified optimism, we must admit that, taking the bare facts as we find them, and viewing these facts in the light of the philosophy of *this* world, the construction which we are led to place upon them must be, in the ordinary course of events, at best an entirely negative one.

It is indeed a gloomy picture that this world offers you—if you contemplate it in

the colours in which everyday experience paints it. But, of course, you must be honest enough to see the picture as it actually seems to admit this.

Many people delude themselves, to the end of the chapter, with the idea that this is the best of all possible worlds. And, just because they are too lazy, and too greatly lacking in common justice to trouble to sift the facts, they never take measures to make the world a whit better than they find it.

These people affect to imagine that the one aim of life is to get all the enjoyment they can out of it—to avoid indulging in perplexing intellectual problems—and to steer clear of anything approaching “morbid introspection.”

They tell us that much study is a weariness of the flesh—that we have to take life as it comes—that “as we did not make ourselves or voluntarily choose our conditions,” so we have a right “to get

even " with the arbitrary law which placed us here below.

I need scarcely point out that such philosophy as this is sheer materialism—that it satisfies only one department of our economy, viz., the animal—and that, judged according to both our ethical and highest philosophical standards, it is hopelessly and miserably inadequate—wanting, in the last degree.

To begin with, it is founded upon the merest assumption.

What right have we to maintain *that we ought to take the world just as we find it?* Still less, what reason have we for inclining to the belief *that we did not make ourselves?*

Our world-wise friend bids us remember that our *début* upon this planet was made in compliance with the requirements of a "natural law"—that we were begotten in the ordinary way, like any other animal, and so forth.

Well: What of that? What then?

Suppose we were;—suppose that our bodies were so begotten—what of it?

Bodies do not grow straight out of the air. Nature has a place for everything—and everything in its place.

But does that enable us to arrive at the inference that we came here without our consent, into an environment utterly out of keeping with our true character or deserts? I think not. Let us see.

Of course, if the physical body of you and of me is all that there is of us—if “we” are nothing more than the product of “a fortuitous concourse of atoms”—then there is very little to be said against this theory. Because, obviously, our mind is simply, in that case, a resultant—and we (that is, our soul-life, our centre of individual consciousness) are merely *reflexes* of natural laws affecting the physical realm, to whose sovereign will we cannot but bow and yield ourselves.

Under such circumstances, of course, it follows, that such intelligence as we possess is simply the derivative of heredity—that we have no independent existence—and that we are simply the effect of a long chain of causes which are of a purely physical kind.

But that interpretation of the laws which are supposed to govern our being, is, I submit, a totally gratuitous one—unwarranted by the facts of the case, and unsupported by every bit of evidence we are in a position to adduce.

For, to what laws would you and I be subject if everything connected with us were to be explained in that way?

To nothing but *blind force*, or brute energy.

It is quite true, of course, that on the *material plane*, brute strength counts for a good deal.

The physically efficient soon vanquish those who are less well qualified to exhibit

the self-protective instinct of offence and defence, on the *physical plane*, until, that is, cunning or foresight are developed on the "mental" side.

But, if evolution means anything—if brute strength and animal ferocity were the only pre-requisites to maintain separate existence, how was it that what we now recognise as "human" qualities came to be developed at all, or how was it possible for such qualities—*diametrically opposed* to the selfish, as some of these are—ever to get a chance of a hearing?

If a house be divided against itself, how can it stand? And if a natural law can be at variance with itself, how can it be a *universal* law?

Now, I submit that anyone who regards the physical universe as the whole universe—or who thinks that he is able to explain the higher phenomena of psychology, reason and philanthropy, maternal love or equity, by recourse to physics and

chemistry is little less than a simpleton.

Such a person—and there are many—may perhaps drag in a deity—but to what is such a deity reduced?

To a palpable absurdity. A god of blind force—a god of colossal strength only—is a god who ill accords with the yearnings of man's emotions—one who can never satisfy the moral cravings, or the higher aspirations of the enlightened intelligence of the deepest thinkers.

And whence proceeded such inspiration, such emotions, such divine ideals?

Surely natural selection, hereditary transmission—even survival of the fittest (in the ordinarily accepted and restricted sense) will not explain them.

The fact is this: *we must needs regard the physical world as but a part—a fragment—of a greater—a universe whose essence is spirit, and which even in its most material aspect affords us a clue (but no more) to its order, equilibrium and principle of love deep down within it.*

I look at a piece of wood—this table—and I behold an expression of this spiritual power.

Every atom related with the other, each occupying its precisely appointed position in space, and all welded together by the one law of attraction and cohesion—the forerunner of Love.

But—and here it is I part company with the materialist—I do not look upon that table as the final or only expression of Spiritual Law.

If the mineral were enough—why were vegetation—the animal kingdom—the man—evolved? Where were the need?

The resources of this Spiritual Law are inexhaustible; and so I know that *matter* and *motion* are only terms—terms which serve rather to cloak scientific men's ignorance, than to satisfy the hunger of those needing intellectual food.

The truth is, all these are but *modes* of the one—indivisible—and larger life. And, whilst each is inextricably interwoven

with the other, the special advantages of one over the other cannot be denied.

Even the word "evolution" attests this much.

The table, it is true, cannot take rank with the vegetable—much less with the man or the animal. But why? Because, you will say, it is not a living thing.

But it is a living thing. Science is showing us that there is a certain *response* in the inorganic world—notably in metals and crystals—which scarcely qualifies us to speak of anything as being properly "inanimate."

But, you will reply, it is not alive in the same sense as the vegetable or the animal—it cannot breathe, eat and drink, hear, see nor think.

No. In other words, evolution is all a *question of accession of increased responsiveness*—acquisition of function—or rather a process of *unfoldment*. It does not depend upon the permanence of form—that

goes to pieces—but upon the adaptation of function to the needs of the ensouled *Life*.

Now, I want to ask you seriously: do you think that it is possible for anything to unfold anything that has not, first of all, been *enfolded* within it?

Upon the answer to this question will depend the cause to which we shall assign *all life's inequalities*.

For, see. Here we meet with forms of many kinds—forms of micro-organisms, forms of insects, plants, flowers, birds, beasts and men—forms of such diversity that we may well ask whether nature has not been experimentalizing only in order to display her resourcefulness in the manufacture of infinite varieties of contour and outline. But no. Each form exists with one object, viz., *that of ensheathing and expressing the life contained within it*.

Now, if that is so—if evolution of form and expansion of consciousness be identical—if organization and function—spirit and

matter—are adapted each to each—we may well ask how, if the spirit is not derived from the matter by which it is encased, are we to know that it persists when the matter goes to pieces—when the particles of the form are shattered?

Think! Consider the cost at which the whole process is arrived at. And then again—think of the gradual *improvement* which is wrought in the course of nature's toilsome ascent. The life through all is preserved, whilst the form is dissipated.

Some people affect to ignore this. They tell us that things are as bad as—worse than—they always have been.

But they omit to say what it is enables them to see that—they forget to tell us that things are evil only because they fall short of the divine ideals with which they compare them—and which live in their minds, coming gradually nearer, more real as time goes on—types, foreshadowings of what shall ultimately be realized. They forget

that "high failure" may be better than "low success."

For the higher philosophy shows us that everything exists first of all on the super-physical plane—that thought anticipates material happenings, and that the real world of substance is not the phenomenal, not the sensual; but the ideal, the noumenal.

And this endures. For, if you notice, whilst forms innumerable perish, other forms, like them, patterned upon the same eternal plan, are builded; and these are ensouled by the One Life—identical everywhere, yet individual—and (as the facts of psychic research show us) related with many planes our limited vision has not yet explored or contacted.

And what is the outcome—the upshot—of all this: what is the meaning then of all the seeming inequality of life?

Just this, eternal wisdom, justice, love.

Life, as beheld in the light of the higher

B

thought, becomes a process of gradual transition ; a period of perpetual becoming.

All life is diversity in unity ; but only a portion of that life (whose aspects are diverse—whose possibilities are illimitable) may manifest at any one time.

And so, by the acquirement of knowledge, through contact with the without, the inner is awakened—the Ideal becomes the actual. *This is life's purpose.*

It has well been said that “ Spirit sleeps in the mineral ; breathes in the vegetable ; dreams in the animal, and awakens in the man.”

Consciousness is, of course, an attribute of all life. But self-consciousness is arrived at particularly in the human stage of development.

I am aware that I love or aspire or know what I learn. *I think*—therefore *I am*.

Here is the test of manhood. Here is the proof of the supremacy of man : the ascendancy of mind—intelligence.

Regarding the problem in this light—perceiving that the arrival at self-consciousness is the apotheosis of being—we are in a position to appreciate the fact that we have *within ourselves* the most priceless possession imaginable. We can take stock of ourselves, *therefore* we are above the perishable, the impermanent.

When we consider that it is not the relatively inanimate things of the world, but the spark of *consciousness* within us, to which we owe our supremacy, then we begin to see that all advance, all progress, must needs be a rousing of something latent within us—must needs be the evoking of a power resident within the soul.

Only *that* can satisfy us.

Men have always sought for things in the wrong places. They have mistaken possessions and position—wealth and affluence—for *themselves*—and so have missed the whole secret and value of living.

People have extended their territorial

domain to the outer world, instead of within their own souls.

The question is often asked, *Is life worth living?* Yes; emphatically, yes. But only when it is lived—and lived first hand.

It is useless to deplore the plight in which we find ourselves—to complain because things go amiss—to quarrel with our bread and butter.

I dare assert that everyone meets with his deserts.

I do not mean that other people can judge whether or no such-and-such an environment, worldly circumstances, and so forth, are best for a man : each must prove that for himself.

What I mean rather is this—that if we each come to consider it, we stand where we do just because we could not stand anywhere else. And that by standing where we are creditably we take the position to which Divine justice has called us.

A man comes to me and says, “ I should like to be in so-and-so’s place, and I should

be there *but* for some friend at court or for some other reason, over which I have no control."

He is mistaken. That man could be in no other position than the one in which he is.

He may have the intellect—or the moral qualities—or the hundred and one indispensable requisites needed to pursue the coveted vocation—but until that man can secure the friend at court the place is not his—nor does he want it. He only fancies he wants it.

He likes the look of the result, but does not care about the means.

When we look at life from the inner point of view, we behold the *means* as everything. The end is but the legitimate conclusion of the situation.

Every man gets what he seeks—no more, no less.

Where your treasure is, there also is your heart.

Even the person who wants his own way

gets it, sooner or later, and nothing more. That is, if he wants it very much—and providing always that someone else does not want *his* way more.

We must all distinguish between grumbling at the consequences which are brought about by neglecting to develop in certain directions, and adopting measures to remedy such consequences.

The one course is destructive—the other constructive—in its effects.

To be able to meet the difficulties of life—and to know that we are more than such difficulties—(which difficulties, we must remember, are always of our own creation)—we must set about levelling up our true natures.

Charity begins *at home*. A man's foes are those of his own household, and a man has no other province for his activities than his own inner being. *There let him learn to "hold his own."*

Let any man or woman, anxious to better

themselves or their surroundings, cease to complain, and learn to make use of the means which lie in their power.

All means lie *within*. And these are accessible to all who will but diligently set about taking the necessary steps to secure the desired results.

It is a good plan to—

- I. Retire each day apart—alone.
- II. Then to assume the most restful attitude; to get *quiet*, relaxed, and to take a few deep breaths.
- III. And after that, to arrest, by an effort of the will, all strain and tension; and close the eyes against the external world.
- IV. By fixing the attention upon some lofty idea—some noble sentiment—which accords with one's emotion-nature, one's reason, and one's moral status—you will then be able to lift the consciousness, as it were,

from its accustomed moorings. If you find it hard to do this in any other way, take a text, a motto, and *absorb it; give yourself up to it* (for 15 minutes or so).

V. By closing the eyes and isolating yourself, as it were, and by *aspiring* to become the essence of the motto you have before you, you will find that you will break away from your old limitations, transcend them and become, in process of time, a new creature.

VI. But do not forget to get into the habit of carrying this mode of "mental stillness" about with you when you are up and doing or during the wakeful hours of the night. And you will find that care and worry and impatience and discouragement will cease.

In bringing these remarks to a conclusion, let me remind you that Life's

inequalities are real, *painfully, terribly, appallingly* real. But that they are real *only because people think them so.*

Thought is the only *real* factor in existence. And it is just because people *think* inequality that they *are* inequality.

Let people rivet their mind upon justice and love, let them anchor their soul's being upon the larger hope—which sees all as a part of a Whole—and they will no longer become pessimists and misanthropes.

It is not *talking* about “this evil world” that will right matters. It is *doing good* that will set things straight. It is not generalizing about the “mass of iniquity” that will help—it is seeing the *little* virtues that will do so.

“Thank God my unconquerable soul is no worse than it is—and thank Him still more that He can make it as good as it may yet be.” This be our prayer—this be the attitude in which we face life and set ourselves to meet our destiny.

II.

THE MYSTERY OF BEING, AND THE REMEDY OF YOGA.

Seizing "the Living Present."

LIFE has always, I suppose, presented itself in the light of a doubtful experiment, a hazardous proceeding, often as a profound mystery, to the majority of mankind.

Indeed, it would probably be true to say that the wiser a man is, the more perplexing the problem underlying our term of natural existence becomes, and that the deeper anyone is prepared to delve into the recesses of Being, the more involved and complicated the whole enigma must inevitably appear.

And yet, that life is decided to be "worth the living," the millions upon millions of human beings, struggling for existence, unmistakably prove.

The Riddle of the Universe has attracted the attention of many more or less ingenious students of philosophy, who have attempted to supply the solution to the question both as to the "how," the "why," and the "wherefore" of existence. From the time of Pythagoras to that of Haeckel—from the time of Job to that of Spencer—the perpetually-recurring problem regarding the living of life, and living it to the best advantage, has taxed the intellects of the wisest among mankind. None of whom, it would appear, if we may judge from the recent additions to contemporary metaphysical literature, has succeeded in supplying the last word upon the subject.

It is indeed doubtful whether, after all is said and done, matters are very much simplified by a course of any one of the great philosophers of our own or any other period. Else we should find—what certainly is not the case—that the scholars and academic

philosophers of our time made the best of what (to the minds of many of us) appears at best a bad job.

As it is, we know that no amount of second-hand or book learning, will teach a man the way to live. And whilst it would be absurd to pretend that ignorance of philosophy is the passport to the attainment of wisdom, it must be confessed that many a man of simple, untutored mind is able to grapple more or less successfully with many a problem that proves oftentimes of the greatest perplexity and bewilderment to his sophisticated friend.

We must not, however, shut our eyes to this fact — that as the intellect expands, as, that is, mankind awakens to the ever-increasing expanse of human possibility, and responsibility, greater difficulties present themselves for consideration. And so that, after all, the all-but baffling questions which have driven men into despair and insanity and prompted them to commit

suicide, are, in the ordinary course of things, nothing but impediments which are in the last analysis self-created; answering as they do to the dawning of certain aspects of the mind which attempts to deal with them and cope with them as far as lies in its power.

Now, although the application of philosophy is competent to deal with many of the problems which have vexed mankind, and whilst a life ordered in accordance with (say) the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, of Seneca, or Epictetus, whose names occur to one among the Stoics of past times, is quite possible of realization, we must not forget that a life regulated according to such a code must needs have subordinated the emotions to the intellect, and must, to a very great extent, have attained to a height which is very far beyond the reach of the average man even to-day.

In other words, whilst the lofty precepts which such teachers inculcate are sufficient

for the needs of those who love right for right's sake, and are able to consecrate their lives to the sweet reasonableness of the ethical ideal, there are some—many—to whom such a means of living would be utterly impracticable, and who would be repulsed by the bare suggestion of the cold, impassive nature of the ideal before them.

Such people will continue to cling to some one of the "Two and seventy jarring sects," and whilst they will perhaps exercise their intellect upon certain questions, and allow themselves to be interested in the speculations of modern scientific thought, such persons will be unable to throw the searchlight of enquiry into the domain of their beliefs, and will therefore require to keep their commonsense, on the one hand, and their religious devotion, on the other hand, in separate water-tight compartments of their mind.

And all for want of going to the root of their beliefs; all because they are under

the impression that faith and exact knowledge are distinct, incompatible, and irreconcilable.

Now, it is somewhat late in the day to presume to speak upon the conflict of science and religion, when men like Myers, Oliver Lodge, Professor William James, and other recognised thinkers assure us that such conflict is apparent rather than real, and the result only of mistaking the province which each occupies in human experience. But I submit that if, instead of taking refuge either in priestly authority or Agnosticism, men were to study the *spirit* of religion, and not the dead letter, and the *living truths* and not the dry bones of science, they would find a basis alike for their beliefs and their philosophy.

This is nowhere more clearly insisted upon than in the life and thought of the East, where the pursuit of wisdom in its widest sense is made the final goal of human effort.

From the Orient has sprung both our culture and much of our religious thought. And whilst we may have extended the scope of inquiry in certain directions upon the physical plane, it is tolerably certain that many of the laws affecting alike physical phenomena and super-physical happenings (of which we are even yet ignorant) have long been understood in the East.

All the sacred writings of the world—even the Christian Scriptures—therefore introduce us to teachers, saints, seers, and prophets whose miraculous powers (as they seem to us) have enlisted the confidence of their followers.

Allowing for much misconception, and more misrepresentation and exaggeration, there must needs have been some foundation in fact to account for the super-normal events which have ever been associated with religious experience. And although we find now-a-days a tendency to ridicule the idea of miracles or *super-natural* occur-

rences, the attitude of scientific men towards inexplicable happenings—such as the so-called raising of the dead, divination and healing, of which we read in Holy Writ—is at the present time far more sympathetic than was formerly the case.

It is indeed strange to reflect that science—with its researches into the mysteries of mesmerism and hypnotism, the wonders of the subliminal-self and telepathy—is doing more to support the cause of religious experience than its officially-constituted custodians, the clergy, who are divided over the miracles of Christ, the Virgin birth, and similar misapprehended dogmas.

Well, bearing in mind that religion is cradled in mystery and prophecy, the point for us to consider now is whether there is anything practical to be gathered from the traditions which are bound up with the transcendental teachings of the East, and if so whether such methods are applicable to our own case.

In order that we may obtain something

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like a definite idea regarding such instruction, I will invite your attention for the remainder of this chapter to a brief consideration of the ancient system of "Yoga," which has provided a haven of refuge for so many storm-tossed souls in India and elsewhere.

A word first of all as to the term "Yoga."

Some of us, who read of the conviction of exponents of so-called "occultism" in the newspapers and elsewhere, are apt to regard "Yoga" as a kind of jugglery, or as a species of black magic. That, however, is not its true meaning at all.

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit, and implies "union," or *yoking together*.

It is, therefore, nothing but *practical religion*, since it has for its aim only Realization of the Divine Truth and attainment of the Highest Wisdom, which, all religions are unanimous in declaring, comes "from above."

Certain Hindu writers have, it is true, used this word in various other senses. But with these we need not concern ourselves for the moment.

Now, Yoga is of many kinds. The two principal of these, however, are known as "Hatha Yoga" and "Raja Yoga."

Hatha Yoga has reference more particularly to the physical nature, whilst Raja Yoga, on the contrary, is applied rather to mind-culture and our psychic powers.

There are several other branches of Yoga, such as Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga; but these we must leave, as space will not allow of my dealing with them.

We will proceed to take Hatha Yoga first of all.

Hatha Yoga, then, is devoted solely to the control of the bodily functions and physical powers, and forms, as it were, an introduction to the higher branch of Raja Yoga.

To become a Hatha Yogi no special discipline of the moral nature or intellect is required; or rather, I should say, the religious and intellectual natures are taken little account of in such training.

True, a Hatha Yogi requires to be temperate in his mode of life : abstemious, able to do without meat, alcohol or tobacco, and of rather simple habits. But this branch of Yoga concerns itself particularly with the power over the body and the training of the will, and therefore calls for little if any of the higher discipline, such as Raja Yoga requires, and which insists first of all upon non-killing, veracity, non-covetousness, chastity, cleanliness, contentment, self-denial, study and devotion.

The Hatha Yogi has his eye particularly upon "physical regeneration;" and in many respects his system of culture is not unlike that of physical culturists to-day.

For instance, Hatha Yoga teaches us how to arrest the decay of nature, how to

conserve our vital forces, how to preserve our youth and well-being, and how to obtain control of the involuntary muscles of the body.

To become a Hatha Yogi you must retire to a secluded spot, "far from the madding crowd." You must also allow yourself very little of this world's goods, be prepared to go without the luxuries that are deemed to be, over here, the indispensable adjuncts to existence, and take but little rest, and only a small amount of sleep.

I believe that people generally are coming to realise that much of our feeding and many activities of our social life are positively detrimental to our well-being. We find more people dying of over-eating, feverish excitement, and the eagerness to become wealthy than from starvation, sluggishness, or poverty. And whilst Hatha Yoga, if it were lived up to, might foster attendant evils in the way of sloth, idleness, and indifference as regards

material advancement, it is doubtful whether those evils could be productive of worse results than our own civilization has to show us at the present time.

Well, having decided that one will abandon worldly prosperity in favour of the benefits to be derived from Yoga practice, the next thing for us to bear in mind is, that *correct posturing* and *breathing* are deemed to be indispensable necessities if we would become proficient in this branch of study.

Now, it is often supposed that because a Yogi will sit and contemplate the point of his nose for an indefinite period, until he succeeds in acquiring a confirmed squint, or because he directs his gaze to an imaginary spot between his two eyebrows, until his sight becomes impaired, or because he holds his arm in the air until it withers, he is nothing but a fanatic—a deluded madman.

Let me, however, remark that the general

consensus of opinion in the East shows us that along with this apparent physical discomfiture, we have a co-existing and compensatory super-physical development, which takes place in the subtler, interior vehicle of consciousness, and for which the Yogi gladly sacrifices his physical body.

We, here in the West, ignorant as we are of such higher advantages, would not in all probability be prepared to do that. And if not, it would be unwise for us to sit contemplating the tip of our nose, or any other prominence of our person, but to postpone such practices until a more favourable season.

The "postures" which the Hatha Yogi assumes are many and varied. But I may state that an erect attitude, the neck, head, and back being held in a direct line, is imperatively necessary in all, owing to the fact that the spine must be kept straight, it being the main channel through which the afferent and efferent mental currents travel.

One such posture, for instance, is to sit bolt upright, cross-legged, upon the floor. After assuming this attitude for a while, one may take the great right toe in the right hand and the great left toe in the left hand, and sit thus. Such an exercise is prescribed to gain freedom from tremour of the nerves and restlessness of the limbs.

The next item for the attention of the would-be Yogi is breathing. Now breath is life, and by the act of regulated breathing the lungs are enabled to discharge their functions in the highest degree; and so, according to the Hindu philosophy, the *prana* or vital-essence in the atmosphere is imbibed and specialised in larger quantities than when one ignores the "breaths."

The Yogi, therefore, must cultivate deep inspiration; he must learn, that is, to take long, measured abdominal inhalations, and learn how to *hold* his breath. For it is an incontrovertible fact that the systole and diastole movements of the brain syn-

chronise and are commensurate with those of the lungs.

The Yogi believes in plain living and high thinking. And consequently, as control of the brain will alone enable him to achieve his purpose, so he pays particular attention to the kind of breathing he takes, which corresponds with the life that he leads.

Breath follows thought, as the night the day. And if you watch, you will observe that anger and fear and profound thought are all accompanied by a particular sort of breathing.

The Hatha Yogi, therefore, learns to gain such mastery of the function of respiration that he is able to acquire remarkable proficiency in the art of thought control.

A Yogi will indulge in special breathing exercises, some of which are exceedingly difficult; some of which, however, are quite simple, and you may try them for your-

selves. For instance, inhale through the left nostril and exhale through the right nostril, holding your breath for several seconds between each movement. By this means one gets his body into the position of a slave in the course of time.

Again, if you suffer from insomnia, it is a good plan to take a few extra-deep breaths (which you will hold), and then to lie down flat upon your back, your head being level with your body.

Yogis can perform marvellous feats by means of their study; such, for instance, as clairaudience,* clairvoyance, feats of levitation, and the overcoming of both sickness and death. They learn to remove all liability to cold by taking cold water through the nasal passages; and are often able to swallow their own tongue.

A well authenticated case is cited by T. J. Hudson, where a fakir was buried alive

* See *Psychic Manual III.* of this series.

for six weeks without the slightest inconvenience.

But it must not be supposed that the true aim of Yoga is wonder-working. On the contrary, bearing in mind what I have said as to the true meaning of the term, it has reference to—reference *alone* to—*union*.

And so it is that Hatha Yoga is, after all, only a step upon the path—*Raja* Yoga being the “Royal” road to attainment.

Now, *Raja* Yoga teaches us that the mind, or universally-distributed spiritual substance, is the sovereign power in the universe, and that when its forces are properly understood, and focussed, as it were, upon any object, the nature of that object will stand revealed before us.

Raja Yoga is divided into several steps—eight in all. The first four of these are identical with the Hatha Yoga methods—including, as they do, culture of the physical nature, the senses, breaths, and so forth.

The introspective condition of the inner nature has, however, now to be developed. And this is to be induced through subjective culture—by withdrawing the mind from the external world, and centring it within.

The sixth step has, after this, to be taken; and this introduces us to *concentration* proper. Now, concentration is impossible for those who have not progressed beyond the five preceding stages; as it demands complete subjugation of the sense nature, discrimination between the sense-objects and the nature of the inner being, and therefore a firm will united to an enlightened intellect. And so it cannot be performed until an advanced stage of Yoga culture.

After this comes *meditation*—the means whereby union is attained. And this in turn leads us to the last stage of the eight-fold path, *samadhi*, super-consciousness.

When this blissful state of being—this

consciousness of *realization* — supervenes, the inner senses are fully awakened.

The man who has arrived at that beatific vision no longer thinks — he *knows*; no longer seems—he *is*.

In this exalted state the soul is aware of its relationship with the Divine Being within it. No longer does it seek in special forms—in books, in persons—for a revelation of God; each object is a symbol—each person becomes an aspect — of the One Eternal Presence.

Assiduous effort, persistence and laborious endeavour are needed to attain this state. It may be that in this incarnation you and I may not reach it—it may be that that Divine Event is to be consummated hereafter, as we say.

But, far off as it may seem from the prosaic round of our daily lives, remote as it may appear from our present unlovely existence, let us remember that time bears no relation to the attainment of Peace—
“man has *for ever*.”

Only grief, disease, supineness, and doubt—things of the lower (because incomplete) plane—hinder us from becoming at one with the Ultimate Reality—call we it Christ, Brahm, or the blessed Nirvana.

“Kismet” is no word for him who is on the path; having set his face before, he passes forth to achieve.

As to what that achievement in its true nature may mean for us, it may be premature, profitless, to discuss: the lower cannot conceive of the higher; the lesser cannot comprehend the greater.

To know of It, however, we must be prepared to practise Its precepts and work with the “Great Law.”

And if self-subdual, non-attachment, devotion and renunciation of the fruits of action, lead us any whither—if surrender of the interests of the separated self in the interests of the Boundless Totality—have any meaning for you and for me, then maybe we shall find that the loss on

this side is the gain on that—the limitation of the lower is the liberation of the Higher.

All of us, as it seems to me, have a consciousness—dim and vague though it be—of this great Union with the “Higher Self.” All of us, as I think, possess a sense of one and the same ideal, however differently we may discern it. But though opinions divide our conceptions of It—though means of realizing It, of attaining It, of becoming at-one with It, may diverge—It altereth not. For Its changelessness, Its permanence, Its everlasting Being, are Its attributes.

And whilst on this plane of transition we may oft appear remote from It—whilst It may seem too high for us to attain to—let us take courage in that we know of It—let us welcome each lowly experience as a stepping stone leading us Thitherward.

Those who went before us in the past have told us of It. In our silent moments we ourselves have been vaguely aware of

Its August Presence. And so let us take heart, feeling that It shall yet find us—knowing that It will make us One with Itself.

This, then, is the meaning of Yoga: to be made one in the Spirit of Truth whose essence is Wisdom, Power, and Love.

III.

THE PREDICTIVE ART, AND THE RATIONALE OF FORTUNE TELLING.

Controlling the Future.

THE prophetic art has, at all periods of human history—if we may believe the mass of documentary evidence, sacred and profane, which has been handed down to us—made a direct appeal to the nature of mankind.

The precise reason which may be assigned for this may be open to controversy. But that the gift of divination has ever

appeared to be a coveted possession probably no one of my readers would be prepared to dispute for an instant.

And I venture to think that at no time in the world's history has the predictive faculty excited a greater share of interest and attention than at the present time.

People frequently assume to speak contemptuously of the ignorance and superstition of past times or of the deluded people of the Orient, whose confidence in the science of the astrologer and soothsayer has always been a prominent article of faith with them. But when one contemplates the eagerness and anxiety with which even the most prosaic of enlightened mortals, even here in the West, and particularly in America, will await the verdict of an exponent of cartomancy or palmistry, one may well wonder whether, after all, the interest to foreknow the future is not innate in all of us—and whether it is not only smouldering for a while in our pro-

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fessedly rational, common-sense, twentieth-century intelligence.

It has often been urged that faith and reason are direct opposites; that people are disposed to believe most where they understand least; and that therefore any confidence reposed in happenings which transpire beyond the radius wherein the five senses ordinarily operate must necessarily be misplaced.

But any such view as this, it appears to me, involves at best only a partial conception of man's complex constitution, which is to be understood and explained only by taking into account every factor in his make-up. And one such factor is faith in the Unseen.

It is, of course, open to question whether a great deal that one hears regarding the startling prophecies that are often said to be made by clairvoyants and other seers, is not due either to deliberate fraud, unconscious employment of the inventive

faculty or utilisation of the undoubted gift, which some favoured mortals possess, of making a few more or less lucky shots—which, after all, are bound to turn out right once in a while—just as if you spin a tee-to-tum, the pre-arranged figure now and again turns up.

But admitting all this, granting that an enormous percentage of prediction is conscious or unconscious deception, we cannot, by adopting such a hypothesis, explain a large amount, perhaps even the bulk, of the evidence which tends to prove that man can, under certain conditions, delve into the past and pre-determine the future.

Now, in order to understand how it may be possible to exercise the predictive faculty, and so that we may be able to command the conditions which will ensure the prophetic gift, let us for a moment pause to consider what “past,” “present,” and “future” respectively amount to, and then attempt to ascertain the means

which are available for putting us in touch therewith.

In the first place, I would remark that the terms past, present, and future are purely arbitrary, and hence illusory—affecting, as they do, *appearances*, not *realities*.

For example, astronomers know very well that light-waves are transmitted to us at a certain rate, in a given time, and also that the light which reaches us at any given moment is not, at that particular instant, anything more than an undulation upon the ether. Even the very planets themselves—the sun, the moon, and the stars, which we think we see every day of our lives—come to us merely as movements in the ether, which impinge upon the retina of the eye, and so set up quivers in the brain, which our mind tells us are images of certain planetary bodies.

At the same time, our distance from some of the more remote planets is so

great that, the vibrations reaching us now might have been sent off into space years and years ago, so that the very planets which set them up may be at the present time non-existent !

For example, although light travels at the rate of some 186,000 miles per second, it takes three and a half years for it to reach us from the nearest fixed stars, and as much as twenty-two years to come to us from Sirius.

You get a precisely similar instance of the limitation of the senses when you come to the sense of sound, which, as you know, amounts to nothing more than responsiveness to a certain set of aërial-waves.

Here, the medium of transmission being denser than the ether (by which light is propagated), the perception is accomplished more slowly.

You can prove this by noting how the thunder always follows the lightning.

That fact serves to make it evident, I

think, that appearances are very delusive, and that our senses, unaided by our reason, are very apt to play us false.

As Stephen Phillips has so well said in *Herod*—

•

“ I tell you we are fooled by the eye, the ear ;
These organs muffle us from that real
world
That lies about us.”

If, now, we come to consider the matter a little more closely, we can easily see that Time amounts to nothing more than our perception of the relative duration of phenomena or appearances — *i.e.*, effects — that, in point of fact, *Time is based rather upon the imperfection of our senses than upon the inherent nature of things.*

It is not my desire to carry you too deeply into this metaphysical problem. But I would point out, in passing, that this age of motor cars, electricity, and wireless telegraphy, is serving to annihilate Time.

And why? Simply because we are approaching the territories of those subtler forces in nature's domain, which are at work upon levels in which Time is all but non-existent.

Thought is the subtlest "mode of motion" of which we know. Thought, *per se*, is instantaneous.

If I think at this moment of London, I am in London. If I think of Paris, I am in Paris. Time, or the law of succession, plays no part in the matter. Time is a clumsy affair, and pre-supposes a roundabout way of getting at things. Thought disdains Time. It *is*—was not, will not be. Thought, being the basic fact of existence, is therefore the most real thing that we know or can know.

Well, having made it clear that Time is only a very relative thing, we are now in a position to see that happenings of any kind which take place upon this plane of ours are, after all, only the effects of

causes which are at work "behind the scenes."

In order to make this point clear to you, let me furnish you with an analogy which has occurred to me, and which, I think, will simplify the matter.

Think of the world without you—that is to say, picture every circumstance upon which your attention may be fixed at any given time—as a subject for a photograph.

Your body, then, becomes the camera, your sense-organs being the lens, and your mind—your inner self—the sensitised plate.

You find yourself in a certain situation; you bring, that is to say, your personal equation in to meet the demands which such-and-such conditions may entail upon you; and by so doing you adjust your camera (brain, etc.) to the required focus.

When you have done so, your next move is to expose the plate. And after having removed and replaced the cap, your photo

is taken. In other words, your mind has responded—you have taken a photograph which must needs be developed.

Without entering into technicalities, as you will know the development of a photographic negative is a lengthy process, which involves baths in different chemical solutions, and washing and time to complete. But the strange thing that a photographer often notices when he comes to develop his plate is this: that *the camera has seen more than the naked eye could detect*, and that therefore unobserved details present themselves when the process is completed.

Now that is precisely what happens with each of you.

When you have once exposed your mental plate and it has begun to develop in the dark-room of your inner experience, what happens is this: you find very much more has come out than you had bargained for, and that the way in which matters

shape themselves subsequently differs very much from what you had anticipated.

Exactly. The truth of the matter is that your unconscious mind has been at work, that it has taken into account things which your limited waking mind could not.

No two people take precisely the same mental photographs. And that explains why no two people are similarly circumstanced.

But, you may say, what has all this to do with prediction and prophecy?—where is the connection between the taking of these mental photographs and the casting beforehand of the shadows of coming events?

I will explain. Our mind—our subliminal-consciousness—which plays such a large part in our lives, is, as far as we can gather, an unconditioned thing. It would seem to be in touch with everything—with God and devil; with mineral, vegetable, animal, man, and angel alike. It has the

possibility of everything contained within itself, and under given conditions is qualified to respond to any vibrations which may reach it.

Now, this being so, we can easily see that under certain conditions this responsiveness may be enhanced or lowered as the case may be, and that, if the senses do not exhaust the means by which the subconscious factor is enabled to act (and there is evidence that they *do not*) the stimuli from without will set up a response within such as will awaken powers that are ordinarily unable to function.

And one of these powers is the capacity to foreknow—to divine—to predict.

For what, after all, does prediction amount to? To nothing but a responsiveness to conditions to which the mass of mankind is blind—to nothing but the capacity for contacting a subtle condition of things such as would register activities proceeding along levels to which the bulk

of humanity has no conscious access.

The future, therefore, in this way may be already existing in the germ. In point of fact, it would be true to say that though the future has not yet come off *here*—whilst it has not yet been worked out, as it were—it nevertheless *exists—somewhere*.

An argument is no argument unless it has both premises and conclusions adduced therefrom. And the Present could not be the present unless it took its rise in what we conceive of as the past and were to merge itself into the future.

But, in the light of a larger vision, from the standpoint of the fuller consciousness, past, present, and future are as one—the *Eternal Now*—the Living Present.

And it is as we come to realise that the present is all that we have, that the problem becomes at once simplified and dignified.

The living present, in the real sense of the term, involves both past and future.

No limit can be assigned to it. It is boundless. Thus a wise man sees (as we say) far afield; he anticipates results, and experience teaches him how he may forestall consequences. Indeed, unless he did this there would be no *present* for him!

A child's purview is a somewhat circumscribed one. It lives for to-day. A man, however, takes a wider outlook on life, and arranges his plans accordingly. He builds for Eternity.

True it is that many a man proposes whilst Providence disposes. Still, a really long-headed man is even with the contingencies of an untoward fate.

But man is enabled to anticipate consequences and forecast results only just in so far as he is alive to the tremendous possibilities involved in the present, and in so far as he places himself beyond the limitations of the lower plane of his being.

The snail crawling on the garden wall cannot foresee his destination, although it

is only a yard or two perhaps ahead of him. But we, who watch him from another standpoint, can do so—and perhaps even decide as to his future movements.

The position of that snail, as it seems to me, is very much the position of us—that is, relatively speaking.

So long as we confine ourselves to the most limited means at our disposal for grappling with life's difficulties, so long shall we fail to appreciate the true facts which are involved in the whole process of living; whilst we live in Time, so long shall we ally ourselves with the conditions of such temporal manifestation.

But once transcend the limits of sense! once expand the consciousness beyond the accustomed content!—then we regard each worldly experience in the same light as the movements of the snail, or as so many items in one stupendous scheme—as a mere series of shadows which are thrown by the slides of a celestial magic lantern,

whose operator is our inner Self—ceaselessly passing onward and upward to Perfection.

Some of us there are who can so behold things. Some of us there are who, even now, in those supreme, yet all-too-rare moments which are vouchsafed to us, are able so to get into touch with the workings of the Inner Life, that we can see not alone the past, but forestall the future.

Some of us, on the other hand, are led to doubt this, because now and then some quack — some charlatan — professes to be able to read the allotted term of years which awaits our corruptible body—or the amount of filthy lucre which is to come to us—and fails in the attempt. But let us not be put off by such tricksters.

The time will come when all mankind will be what we are in the habit of calling clairvoyants, clairaudients, seers, prophets, and prophetesses; and when men shall no longer betake themselves to others to know

that which they themselves alone should know and decide.

As it is, our bodies, our features, our very skulls, know us better than we know ourselves !

The child emerges into sentient existence—it is put into touch with another order of being—with astral influences, electrostatic conditions, and an environment distinct in every way from the one in which it has hitherto found itself. At that supreme moment, not alone the stars in their courses, but the very palms of the hands, record its future destiny, showing as they do the road upon which it shall travel and its lot in life.

How so? Why? How can it be that all is fore-known, fore-ordained?

Has an arbitrary Providence predestinated that child? Has some extra-cosmic intelligence directed that that tiny ego shall be thrust ruthlessly into this or that body?

No! a thousand times, no! Any such view of the question cannot but outrage

alike our emotional, moral, and intellectual nature, and as such cannot be entertained for a moment.

That child is branded, as it seems to me, just because at the moment of birth its sub-conscious mind or automatic-faculty is enabled to intuitively perceive the entire possibilities of that individual life, and is then able as it were to realise the whole panorama of future experience and fore-know the heights and the depths into which it will enter and traverse.

Is this an extravagant theory, if as Wordsworth has maintained :—

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star
Hath had *elsewhere* its setting, and cometh
from afar——”

And if also this light within,

“ Is perceived to die away,
And fade into the light of common day ”?

Surely not.

We all know how, before a drowning

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man, the "past" is recalled in an instant of time : how in a dream lasting in duration a few seconds only, a year or two of our life may be lived.

And by reversing the process—which is, after all, due in the one case as in the other to the ascendancy of our subliminal mind—it is, I think, perfectly reasonable and legitimate to infer that precisely the same operation may hold good as to the future.

For what is the future? Is it not merely events which are already occurring but at which we have not yet arrived?

Obviously the future *must* be contained within the present, for as we know that all is cause and effect, so the combination of causes which moulds the future can be only that already in operation.

Sir O. Lodge has instanced the analogy of the traveller in the railway train, which is helpful to us when we turn to regard this question.

"If he could never leave the train,"

says Professor Lodge, "nor alter its pace, he would probably consider the landscapes as necessarily successive and be unable to conceive of their co-existence. . . . If we once grasp the idea that past and future may be actually existing, we can recognise that they may have a controlling influence on all present action, and the two together may constitute the higher plane or totality of things, after which, as it seems to me, we are impelled to seek in connection with the directing of form or determinism, and the action of living beings consciously directed to a definite and preconceived end."

Even so it is with all things—with all of us.

The Power that works above us, within us, beyond us, without consulting us; that "shapes our ends," rough hew them how we may, impels us ever onward, so that we think, say and do that which we know not, but which It nevertheless knows—fore-knows.

But it is for us to endeavour to peer beyond the veil : it is for us to attempt to contact that All-Wise power which ordains that your lot and mine shall fall in such-and-such places.

As soon as we are able to recognise that we are so many items in one vast celestial programme—that each takes his “turn,” so to say—but that the Divine Managing Director has so arranged everything that each shall arrive at some *result* in the long run—then no life seems insignificant or unjust, no experience mean or trivial or worthless.

We are living wiser than we are aware of : we wish to know more, only because we *are* more.

The imperfections, the limitations, the partialities of the immediate present may embarrass us. But they need not do so as soon as we are prepared to acknowledge that, whilst we stand upon the earth, our soul is in the heavens.

I have not dealt with the legal aspect of the practice of fortune-telling, geomancy, crystal vision (scrying), cartomancy, and the rest of the hundred and one means that are resorted to in order to deceive his Majesty's subjects.

I did not think it necessary.

Whilst we have officially protected quacks—clergymen, lawyers, and medical practitioners among them—who will, for a small consideration, tell us whither we are bound, our moral status, and our chances of longevity or otherwise—I think it rather absurd to offer any remarks upon this bearing of the problem.

The instinct to penetrate into the sources of being is too inbred to be stopped by any compulsory measures from without—and even the prosecution of poor harmless palmists by ignorant detectives will not have the effect of quenching the thirst for “more light” upon the subject.

Only let that thirst be a pure, a natural,

a holy thirst. Let it proceed from a sincere desire to ascertain — not the amount of money a prospectively deceased relative shall leave us—or the date upon which we shall enter the state of matrimony—or some other “event”—but rather a sense of the supreme character of the Larger Life in which we are all called upon to share.

Then, realising that each item in our environment may prove a stepping stone to a lovelier life, we shall ascend to those sublime regions wherein vision and seer-ship are the common heritage of all who reach them.

Then shall we know as we are known; then shall we see face to face; then shall we understand, where now we dimly surmise.

It is even so that we shall pass beyond the barriers of Space and Time; it is thus that we shall attain unto wisdom; it is in this wise that we shall rise to every occasion, and surmount all the difficulties of the present.

“Leave Time for dogs and apes—man has For Ever.”

So spake one of the greatest of prophets of the last century. And so it is, by realising that there are no bounds betwixt ourselves and the great I AM—omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence—that life is transformed into a celestial paradise and becomes a bird’s-eye view of that ideal condition towards which all the race is set.

You may conceive of your mind as a phonographic cylinder, within which God is for ever whispering. It is for you and for me to catch and interpret such utterances in our deeds, our words and our thoughts.

God is never silent. He speaks, and it is done. Your brain, your nervous system, and your exquisitely-constructed organism will catch and utter—if you will but let them—these breathings of the Eternal Spirit.

And before it—Past, Present, and Future

are one—a thousand years but as one day
—all aspects of an Abiding Presence—the
same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

For, as Lowell has said—

“ To the Great Soul alone are all things
known—

Present and future are to her as past,
While she in glorious madness doth forecast
That perfect bud, which seems a flower
full-blown

To each new Prophet, and yet always opes
Fuller and fuller with each day and hour,
Heartening the soul with odour of fresh
hopes,

And longings high, and gushings of wide
power.

Yet never is or shall be fully-blown,
Save in the forethought of the Eternal One.”

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