

Bû ॥

(Earth)



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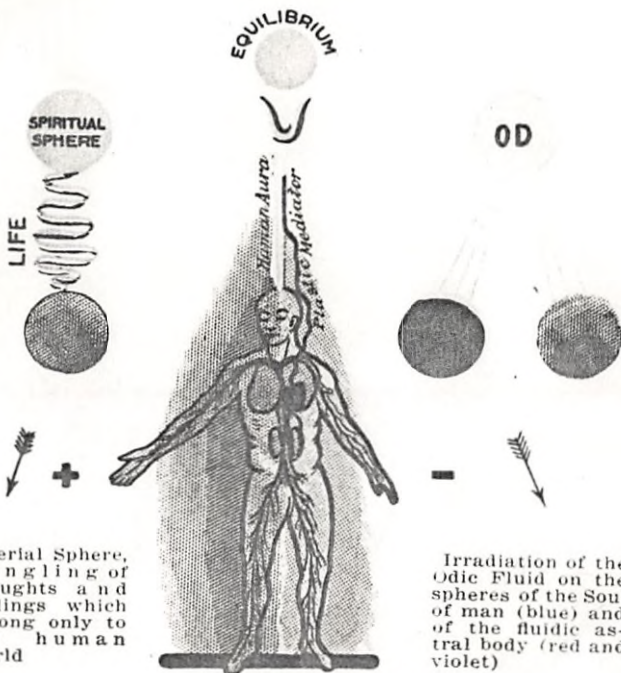
य ज

Yaj (Veneration)



मानव

Manava (Man)



FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ESOTERISM

A TEXT-BOOK
FOR STUDENTS OF THE FIRST DEGREE ✓

OF

THE ESOTERIC BROTHERHOOD ✓

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND ELSEWHERE

BY

AGNES E. MARSLAND



Third Edition



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TO ALL CLIMBERS

This Book is Dedicated by
ONE WHO LOVES THE HEIGHTS

*"Celui qui veut monter le chemin
doit se fatiguer."* Babu.



P R E F A C E

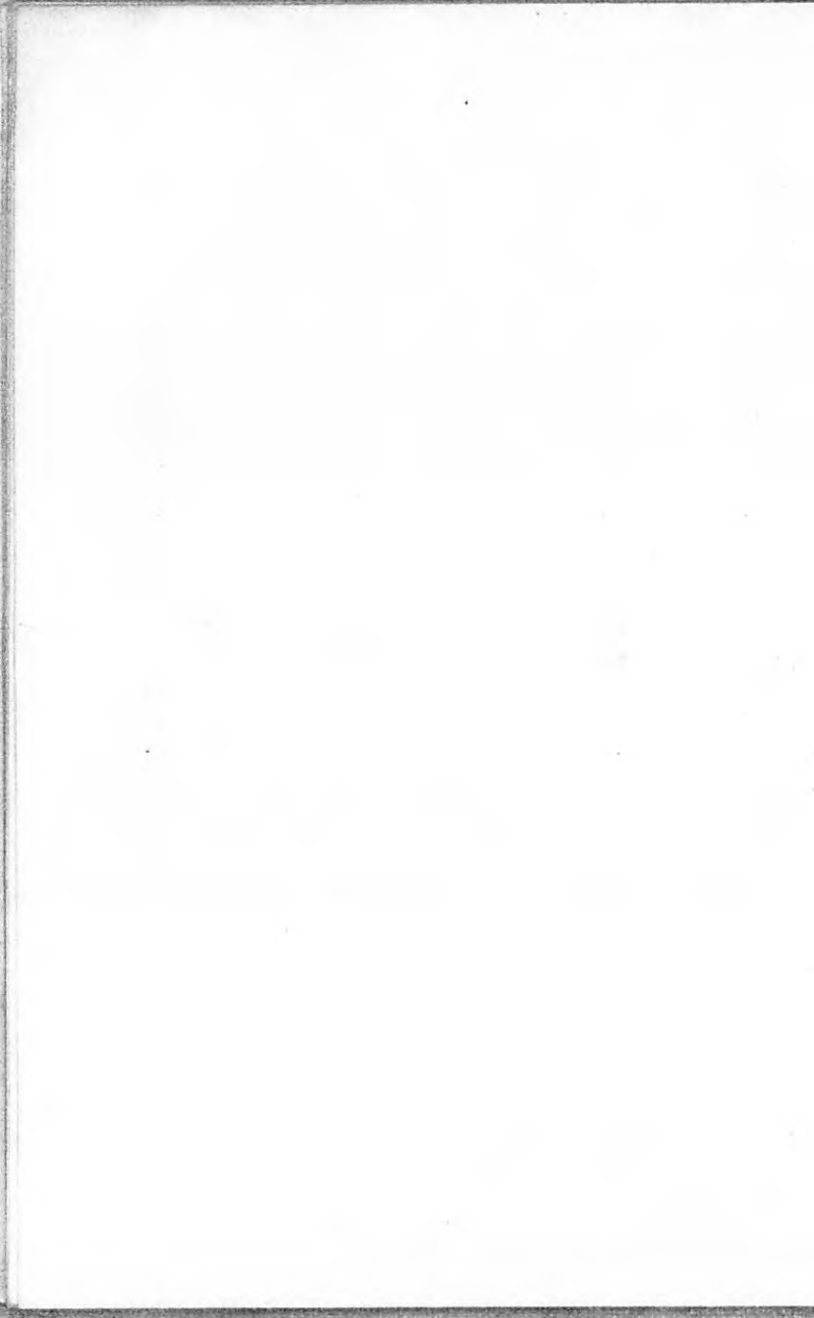
I N issuing this text-book for the use of students of the Esoteric Brotherhood of the U. S. A. it may be advisable to say a few words on its general scope. My object has been to present in an orderly sequence the "First Principles" upon which a balanced and symmetrical knowledge of Occultism rests, and to point out the essential connection between this and a pure, true life.

In order not to swell the work into an inconvenient size, many points that require further elucidation to the mind of the reader are but briefly touched upon, and may be too scantily treated. This can hardly be avoided as my object is to condense as much as possible, consistently with clearness; and, besides, *books can never explain as lucidly as the living teacher*. In the commonest art or science, the teacher or master is indispensable, much more so in the greatest of all arts and sciences—the Art of Living and the Science of Wisdom or the Sacred Science. All readers of this book, therefore, are invited to correspond with the teachers of the E. B. on practical questions and on individual and personal problems.

I wish to express my thanks to all those who have helped me in the work and from whose writings I have quoted, directly or indirectly.

The instruction is graduated to meet the needs of those who have familiarized themselves with the ordinary Oriental teachings; it is in no way exhaustive but suggestive, and if it stimulates the ardor and inspires the will of the disciple to attempt greater and ever steeper heights, it will have accomplished one of its objects.

A. E. M.



LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
Colored Frontispiece....THE THREE WORLDS	
Diagram No. 1, Constitution of Man.....	42
Diagram No. 2, Odic fluid	49
Diagram No. 3, Spiritual Intelligence	53
Preface	5
Introduction	13
CHAPTER I. EXOTERISM AND ESOTERISM	
Esoterism in the early Christian Church	21
Loss of the Inner Teachings	22
Causes of agnosticism and atheism	22
The Centers of Esoterism in the Orient	23
The Chinese and Sanscrit languages, tangible demonstrations of past civilizations	24
The Order of the Initiates of Thibet.....	25
The New Era	27
The three classes of aspirants to Initiation....	28
Ritual and discipline	29
Methods of Development	30
The "First Principle of Esoterism"	31
CHAPTER II. GOD, MAN AND THE UNIVERSE	
Early conceptions of the Deity.....	33
Is Religion the result of man's imagination?..	34
The Absolute, Parabrahm.....	35
The Personal God	35

	Page
God the Father	35
How the birth of a new religion takes place..	36
The Destiny of Man.....	36
Unity, Fraternity and the One Great Brotherhood	38
Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.....	39
The Solar Logos.....	39
The Supreme Breath.....	40
 CHAPTER III. THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN	
Difficulties of the western investigator	41 ✓
The three-fold nature of Life.....	43
Body, Life and Will.....	44
The three-fold body, the three-fold life or the Soul, and the three-fold Will or the Spirit....	44
Harmony between the teachings of the Orient and the Occident.....	45
Location of the Principles in the human body..	46
The Sympathetic Ganglia.....	46
The Magnetic Fluids.....	47
Man's present status in evolution.....	49
 CHAPTER IV. PLASTIC MEDIATOR AND ODIC FLUID	
Occultism and the Constitution of Man.....	51
The three Life-Principles.....	52
The Role of the Spleen in the organic functions	54
Why is the Spleen the "graveyard for the red-blood corpuscle?"	55
The chief end and aim of the subconscious activities of man	56
The Spleen—the Occult Organ	57
The Odic Fluid and occult powers.....	57

CHAPTER V. MAN'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSAL SCHEME

	Page
An illustration by analogy	61
The visible but a reflection of the real.....	65
Character of the astral substance	65
Dangers of experimenting in this field	66
Astral world should be entered only for positive creation	66
Creation on the three planes.....	68
Clairvoyance and Clairaudience	70
The Book of the Angel of Judgment.....	71

CHAPTER VI. INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION

The dawn of the Solar System.....	73
Ishwara	73
The Three	74
The Seven and the Twelve.....	74
The Elder Brethren.....	74
The Great Sacrifice	75
The Source of the Real Man.....	75
Atman, Paranirvana, Parabrahm	76
Illustration of the luminous ball showing the involution of the human soul.....	76
Individuality and Personality.....	79
Illustration of the snail showing the evolution of the human soul.....	79
Persistence of the personality not immortality..	81

CHAPTER VII. REINCARNATION AND IMMORTALITY

Questions asked by the thoughtful man.....	83
Reincarnation the only key to these problems..	85

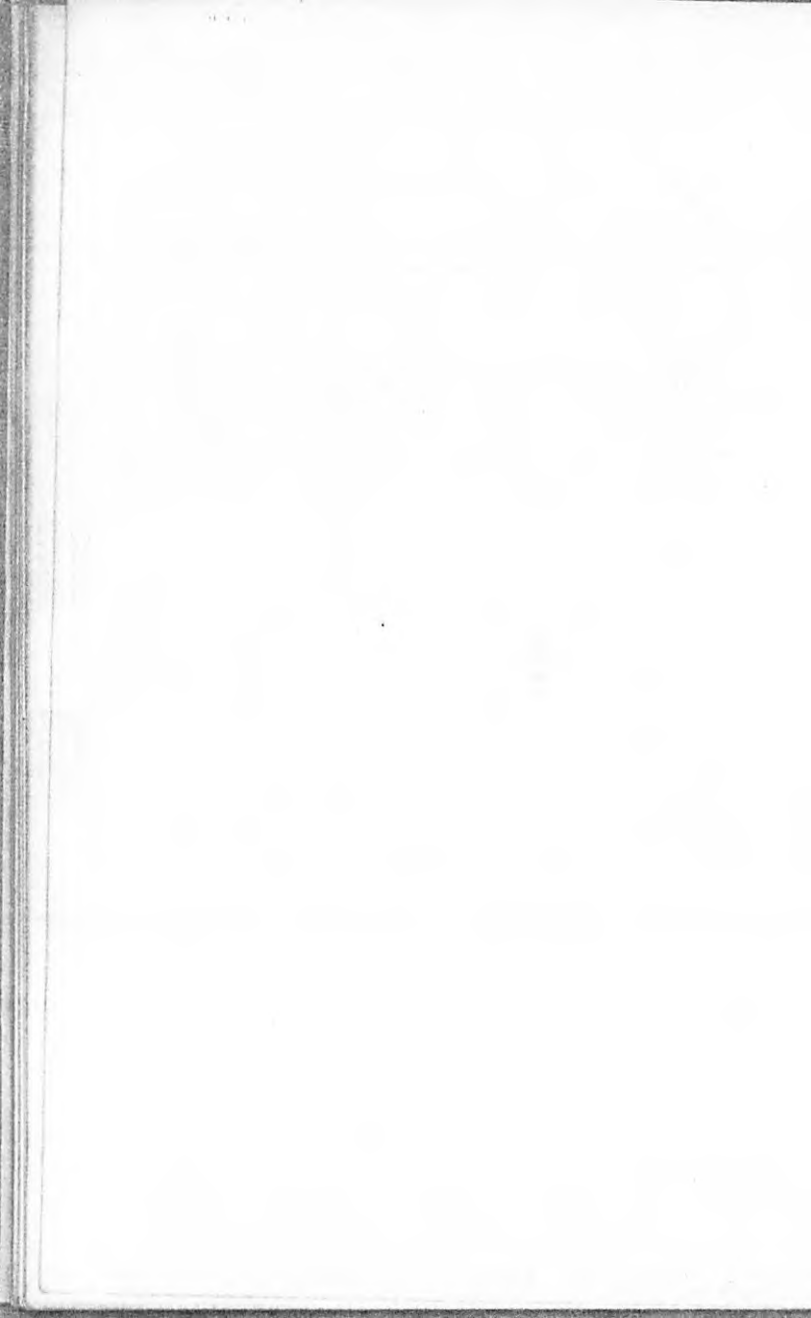
	Page
This earth-life one of many expressions.....	86
History of one cycle of the soul's experiences..	87
Conception	89
Birth	90
First, Second and Third Inflow of the Ego....	91
Responsibility for faults or diseases.....	93
Heredity	93
Desire, the law of the soul.....	93
Reincarnation and the Life of a Day.....	96
The Heaven-world and Devakan.....	97
The knowledge of past incarnations.....	99

CHAPTER VIII. THE LAW OF KARMA

The Law of Cause and Effect in Science.....	101
The Law in Religion.....	102
The oriental conception of God.....	103
The God of Justice, Love and Mercy.....	104
Infinite Patience	104
Man's three-fold personal Karma.....	105
The object of life—progress, not pleasure.....	106
The use to be made of uncongenial people.....	107
Karma, a law of minute detail.....	109
Illustration of the weaver.....	109
The tangle of cross-threads of personal ties....	111
The Karma of the community, the race, the planet	111
Illustration of the growth of a city.....	112
Every cause followed by its effect, nothing lost	113
Karma as affected by motive.....	114
Illustration of the alarm of fire.....	114
Escape from Karma.....	116
The building of the immortality.....	117

CHAPTER IX. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

	Page
The Heart Doctrine.....	119
The two paths.....	120
Education versus instruction.....	121
Freedom of student.....	122
Pride, scepticism, argument, doubt and discussion are foes to spiritual advancement.....	123
Humility of Lanu — favorable; criticism — unfavorable	123
The Guru	123
Work in our Centers.....	124
Object of existence and methods of attainment..	126
Will, the first of Powers.....	126
Two ways of living—synthetic and analytical..	127
Creation and synthesis.....	128
Equilibrium and the Akasha.....	128
Generation	128
The mark of the Great Soul.....	129
The power of poise.....	131
The Doctrine of the Heart versus the Doctrine of the Eye.....	132
Illustration of the Lighthouse.....	133
Intellectualism and analysis versus synthesis....	134
Synthesis, concentration and creation.....	134
Tests given by the Order in actual experience, not in writing-or viva voce.....	135
Esoterism the life of paradoxes.....	137
Faults of body and faults of the mind.....	137
Sacrifice, Silence and Service.....	140
The Adeptate	143



INTRODUCTION

Picture to yourselves a high and rocky mountain whose lofty crown rises peak above peak cleaving the sky, while its foot is buried in obscurity. The upper part of this mountain is bathed in glorious sunshine, and it also radiates a light of its own, the sources of which are not at once apparent. The paths leading up to these heights are precipitous and almost inaccessible, nor can it be imagined from below that any climber could affront the dangers of the ascent; yet as we fix our gaze upon the most lofty height we see that this realm is peopled by glorious Beings, centers of life and energy, the Sources, as we now perceive, of that radiance we had observed. We know, by some inner sense of intuition, as we still gaze, that upon These Beings lies the burden of the evolution of humanity, and that if They still dwell upon earth albeit in these sublime heights, it is of Their own free-will, because They have chosen to remain in touch with humanity and to aid in its progress.

From the base of the mountain, aeons and aeons, ago, They started, as we see so many another start today, and, outstripping the race,

They surmounted obstacle after obstacle, climbed from plane to plane, always serving, always willing to suffer, until we find Them substantially omniscient as far as the laws and conditions of our own solar system extend. One with the Universal Order, working in perfect harmony with the Ruler of the earth, Lords of Nature's hidden forces, these Great Souls give their all in the service of the human race.

The sides of the mountain are threaded with paths and crowded with human beings. These paths are varied and meandering at the foot, and shrouded in darkness, but about a third of the way up the mountain the clouds of darkness roll back, and those who have reached this twilight are able, if they look upward, to catch a glimpse of that summit which is so bright overhead. Here there are many paths to choose between, some of them with more promise of pleasure and ease than others, and some men turn one way and some another, but we notice that so long as they keep their gaze steadily upon the light above they make progress. When, however, they have arrived into the zone of daylight, much discrimination is needed; for some paths, though apparently with an upward

grade, soon begin to go downward and land the unfortunate traveler in swamps and morasses from which he has great difficulty in extricating himself.

The zone of daylight is very wide and includes a great part of the whole mountain side. Here the paths run together so that they are less and less numerous and more obstructed the higher they lead, yet those who are treading them keep steadily onwards, and, as they approach the brightness of the summit, even before they come into the light, we see that they are aided from time to time by messengers from above, who take their hand when the step is too steep, who stand between them and the precipice when their nerve is ready to fail them at the dizzy height, and who guide the climber while always leaving him perfect freedom. And, as we look, we know that these climbers will surely arrive, for we see them already almost at the little portal which leads into the realm above; already their faces glow and their garments catch the light, and, aided by Those Who Know, their progress is sure if they Will.

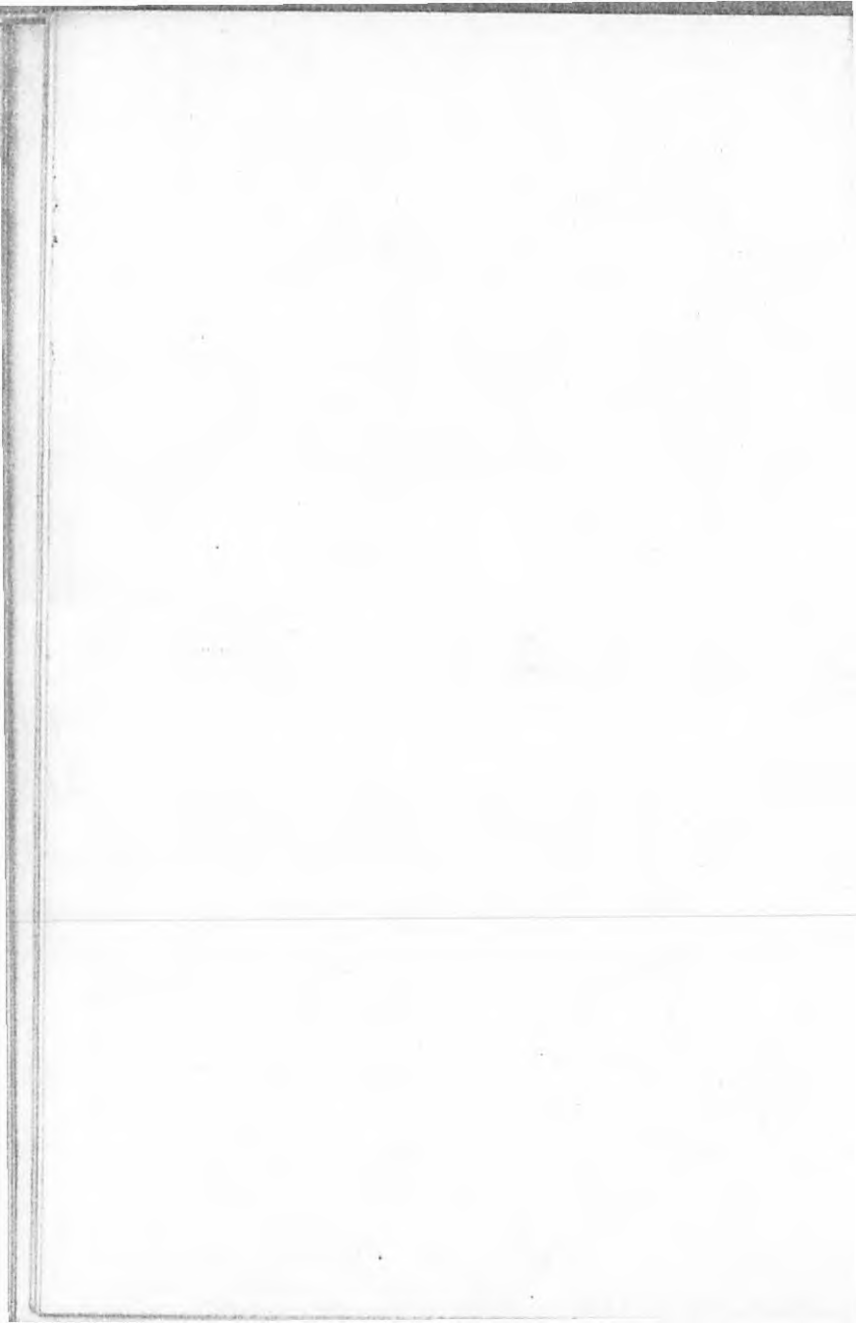
The summit of the mountain to which these aspiring souls are climbing is seen to be a center

of great activity, an activity so harmonious and calm, however, that it has been described as a state of ecstatic contemplation. It is indeed difficult for us, amid the hurry and bustle of our own civilization, to form any idea of this life of harmonious co-working with God and with the great Lord of our earth, nor can we have any conception of the calm of its intense activity. The shining ones who dwell there glow with a radiance which seems to be part of their own effulgence; they are the centers of energy from which the whole world is fed; and, as in a mighty army, each one both obeys and is obeyed in accordance with His powers and responsibilities, for even here there are degrees of attainment.

In the Agrouchada Parikai we read that the Initiates of Thibet are presided over by the Supreme Council, but regarding this body nothing is given out save that it is the heart of the world and from it men receive their spiritual light and life, that it guards and protects, governs and feeds the human race.

This illustration may serve to give symbolically an idea, however faint and unworthy, of the relations of the Great Masters and Initiates

to our earth and its humanity. In perfect knowledge and perfect love the Initiates of the Great Brotherhood execute the commands of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion in serving the earth, and they express a ray of this light and energy through each one of our Centers in the world. The Oriental Esoteric Centers are, as it were, the outstretched hand of those Elder Brethren Who have already climbed the mountain ahead of us and Who beckon us ever onward and upward. They are Centers fed from above with that food which the great Masters deem expedient, and it is their function in the world to give forth to others what they have received.



FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ESOTERISM

CHAPTER I

EXOTERISM AND ESOTERISM

In all the great religions of the world there have been two classes or grades of instruction, the Exoteric, or outer, and the Esoteric, or inner—both true, both vital, but differently designed in order to meet the needs of the two grand divisions into which mankind naturally falls. There are those who crowd all the numberless steps of the ladder of material knowledge, and those who already know all that the ordinary religion and science of the day can teach them and are in training for the Adeptate.

To enter upon such training is to step out of the slow, semi-conscious evolution of the race, and to work consciously in harmony with law. Man does not reach heaven by a single bound, but he evolves, by orderly and slow degrees, for there is grade beyond grade of human advancement—each grade an evolution from that which precedes it. The average civilization of the age

and time takes him a certain distance without requiring from him much beyond obedience to a few clearly understood laws of ethics; then comes the stage when he feels the need of higher truth, of more complete understanding. From that moment it is possible for him to consciously hasten his development. If he chooses to go up higher, he must take upon himself new duties, master new fields of knowledge, submit to severe and rigid discipline, and bring to bear upon his task new faculties, latent, indeed, in all, but in the disciple emergent, definite, capable of being brought under conscious control. Thus he rises, step by step, into those transcendent spheres of which it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," where dwells the purified soul of the Adept, the conscious co-worker with God.

In the Orient these two classes, the exoteric and the esoteric, have always been well defined, and two recognized methods of teaching have existed, to meet their different needs. Exoterism is that teaching which can be given to the masses without danger of misunderstanding. It consists of a series of rules of life, grounded on profound scientific principles, but simply expressed in terms suited to the state of the per-

sons to be instructed, and calculated to prepare them for a knowledge of the inner doctrine. But the secrets of Esoterism and the ancient mysteries are only given to the one who has successfully met the outer tests and proved himself worthy of higher teachings; they are nowhere to be found in writing; nor are they even communicated by word of mouth—they are the natural heritage of the awakened soul.

When the Christian religion was founded it possessed both of these distinct schools whose standards were as far apart then as they are to-day—the teachings for the people, and those for the disciple. This is clearly shown in the Scriptures: when the Lord Issa—the Esoteric name of the Lord Jesus—was asked by the young lawyer the way to attain eternal life, He pointed first to the path of virtue and afterwards to the higher way of complete self-surrender. And there are repeated references to “the mysteries,” the “hidden wisdom,” the “oracles of God,” the “mystery of the faith,” showing that the early Christians were well aware of the existence of this inner school.

Then came the Councils of Nicaea and of Constantinople (A. D. 325, and A. D. 381) by

whose decrees the Early Church became transformed into Christianity, religion sinking into a religion, world-wide in its influence for good, indeed, but exoteric, and lacking all the more definite precepts of Esoterism.

Thus the secret teachings faded into a memory and were forgotten so far as the Western World was concerned; the Mysteries became mysteries indeed, unknown and almost incomprehensible to the modern Christian.

Therefore we have today the anomalous spectacle of the good man, already morally and intellectually balanced, spiritually minded, ready for a reasonable faith, who, finding no one to point him the way, lapses into agnosticism, atheism or indifference. The agnostic is often a high-minded man, loving truth and justice, who insists on looking with his own eyes and refuses to do his thinking by custom and convention—a fact which proves him already somewhat in advance of his race and ready to step higher. But the religion of the day offers him no reasonable or logical faith; when he would believe, he cannot, and the legitimate cravings of his soul remain unsatisfied. He needs higher, fuller teaching. Where is he to find it?

In the Orient this inevitable stage of growth is foreseen and provided for. There, after a man has successfully met all the problems and experiences of the outer life, has been trained and disciplined in the Universities, in business and in the domestic relations—he still recognizes that he has but learned his lesson on the lowest plane, the physical. Then he prepares in earnest to devote himself to the Higher Life, so that he may, some day, be held worthy to be received into one of the Great Centers of Learning in which are taught the truths of the Ancient Wisdom.

For there is, in truth, an actual, organized body of living Teachers, having in Their charge the keeping of the Sacred Science. Now they live secluded, owing to the hostile attitude which, for many centuries, mankind has shown; but once the whole world knew and honored the Religion of the Initiates. No man rose so high in the state, in philosophy, science, or generalship that to be admitted to the knowledge of the Mysteries was not considered a greater honor than any the world could bestow. Now the Mysteries have ceased to be openly celebrated, but the great centers, from which they originally

sprang, still exist, as they have existed from untold ages, in the hidden fastnesses and plateaux of the Himalayas of Thibet and India, as well as in Central China, Chaldaea and Egypt.

From these centers, age after age, as the world needed guidance, leaders have been sent forth. As far back as the records of our race can carry us, we catch glimpses of great beings, law-givers, philosophers, sages, magi, kings and priests, all of whom, if we may trust the general outline of history, were in possession of powers and of knowledge which have since become lost temporarily to all but the few—who know.

When we consider the languages of these ancient civilizations, notably the Chinese and the Sanscrit, we find them monuments of intellectual and spiritual expression. Rich in imagery, yet capable of clear-cut and concise statements in the field of science and intellect, they are evidently the product of highly-evolved beings; for those who could have needed such wealth of language to express their thoughts must have been men of great ideas and powers. The Sanscrit language, now dead to civilization and spoken only by Those Who made it what it is, may serve us as a link, carrying back our thought in a tangible way to

these ancient times and aiding us to conceive the theory of the universe which Esoterism teaches. This ancient language opens a storehouse of spiritual truth—it is the natural outpouring of a people who were already far beyond us, as we stand today, spiritually, intellectually, and scientifically.

In its records we read that many hundreds of centuries ago the ancient sages, those great souls who consecrated their entire lives, generation after generation, to the investigation of the laws of the universe, resided in the Orient, in the heights of the Himalayas. Working alone in the silence they transmitted the knowledge which they acquired to trusted disciples only, who, starting from the data supplied by these great Masters, made many more discoveries and transmitted them in turn; so that, today, the body of Initiates is in possession of knowledge which the generality of men would be incapable of suspecting, and whose results, if they should be suddenly revealed (even a few of them), would appear to material scientists as miraculous and even as impossible of belief. Nor has this knowledge been acquired by imagination or by intuition alone, but by experiments which can be re-

peated and verified by those who are willing to submit to the necessary conditions.

In this aspect, certainly, the Sacred Science deserves the respectful consideration of all men of science. Its transcendent truths come to us with authority derived from their own nature, and emphasized by their hoary antiquity; nevertheless they do not rest their claim upon authority. They make that strong appeal to individual credence which is made by the truths of chemistry and physics—namely, that what one man announces as truth can be verified by another in actual experiment. And this method, superficially supposed to be the discovery of modern science, has been employed by the Initiates now for many centuries, so that the verification of each truth has been repeated hundreds—nay, many thousands of times.

The fact noted above that the experimenter must submit to the conditions imposed ought not to excite surprise. In chemical experiments during which poisonous gases may be released, or in experiments with explosives, the teacher who should not impose conditions to secure the safety of his pupils would be accounted criminally negligent. The tests required of the student of the

Occult Sciences are of precisely this nature. The forces to be investigated are so stupendous that only those who have developed themselves spiritually beyond the thrall of envy, jealousy, hatred and kindred passions can control them without widespread devastation. Not to the first-comer will the Veil of Isis be at once lifted; many and arduous are the tests, almost insurmountable the obstacles, next to impossible the conditions over which the aspirant is required to triumph, and many years of ardent endeavor may be the price which he has to pay for the solution of even the simplest of Nature's riddles. But never has an earnest disciple been turned away; to him who knocks the door shall be opened and to him who asks it shall be given.

For many centuries, few have knocked at these ancient portals, for the mind of the world has been bent on wars, conquest and the lust of wealth; men have lived in the indulgence of the desires of the flesh and the defence of the physical being. Now, however, with the New Era, is coming about a new order of things; the soul is weary of strife and useless toil and again men are knocking and asking as of old for the light of truth.

And in answer to this growing demand, feeble though it is at present, the Great Masters of Esoterism have sent out once again from Their midst, envoys, teachers with powers to establish schools and Centers of Instruction in all countries where the cry is heard, so that the hungry may be fed and the aspiring soul may be brought in touch with the Divine Mysteries.

There are in general three fairly distinct stages of interest shown in those students who approach our Centers of Initiation:

First, there are those whose intellectual curiosity has been aroused in some one of the usual ways and who desire to learn more about those scientific points which the Order professes to be willing to elucidate. Or they have had experiences of a psychic nature, phenomena which the science of the day does not attempt to explain. These persons will be satisfied, to a great extent, by books and scientific investigations and teachings—their interest being for the most part in outer manifestations.

Second, there are those who desire personal development. Suffering or perhaps disaster has driven the soul in upon itself, and it craves a solution of life's inequalities; it would know the

reason of the disappointments and the dark side of life and learn how best to bear its suffering with courage and equanimity. For these, and for all who are seeking something for themselves, there are inner teachings which will guide the soul into the higher path, weaning him gradually away from the thought of selfish attainment to that of service, so that he may be prepared to receive those greater truths which are given to Active Members of the Order.

And third, there are those who seek the bond of Union, Love and Peace, to unite themselves with all those who are working together for the good of humanity, standing shoulder to shoulder for the uplifting of the race; giving without stint of their time, of their means, and of themselves for the good of all.

To these the Order gives special exercises, a Ritual, and discipline, so that they may attain that spiritual and psychic advancement which can only be undertaken safely by those who work fraternally, with order and method, having shown in frequent tests the purity and unselfishness of their motives. Men who are thus systematically trained attain to a Clear Vision in the immaterial, spiritual world, their inner faculties of

sight and hearing become exceedingly sensitive and acute, and they perceive spiritual truths as readily as their physical senses perceive the objects of the world, or as their intellect grasps the climax of a train of reasoning.

Esoterism, then, begins where Exoterism ends: it takes the "good man" by the hand, after he has learned all that the sectarian religions of the day can teach him, and bids him climb yet higher. Those far-off vistas which his faith but vaguely senses, it declares true; his hopes and spiritual aspirations it bids him realize; it presents him with a new science in religion and finds religion in all true science; it teaches him, step by step, as he is able to learn, the mysteries of the nature of God and the laws of the Universe; it offers him a vast field of scientific research after he shall have developed within himself the powers necessary to experiment in safety; it bids him relinquish the ratiocination of intellectual attainment for wisdom, and it promises him the aid of Those Who Know in the realization of all his aspirations—in short, it teaches him to round out all the phases of his being, balancing the intellectual by the spiritual, and curbing the emotions and desires of the lower nature.

Thus his higher powers develop naturally without using any method of artificial forcing, and he attains to that perfection of knowledge which gives him the power to direct the forces of Nature and to perform so-called *miracles*.

The true Lanu (disciple), however, remains ever humble and unobtrusive; he does not seek after powers or desire them; he asks for nothing but gives everything, for well he knows that if Esoterism offers all things, it demands all in return. All or nothing it asks; all or nothing it gives!



CHAPTER II

GOD, MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

Man is naturally religious and turns towards some One greater than himself for aid and inspiration; the tiny spark within him is ever seeking after the Great Light, as the sunflower, emblem of the Soul, follows the path of her Lord. In the morning her golden petals unclose and greet the first ray of His arising; at noon she worships towards the south, nor ever loses sight of His glory while daylight lasts. Thus does man throughout his many lives seek after God.

Each age and each people have had their own conception of God, although these conceptions have varied in form with the development of the different races, all the way from the cruel and arrogant tyrant to the sublime and mystical ideals of the advanced philosophies of the Orient. The ignorant savage worships the medicine man of his tribe, and brings him servile offerings, so that by their means he may propitiate the evil spirits

whom he has been taught to fear. Later and more civilized races worship a Personal God and serve Him, while they fear death, hell and the devil, and strive by every means to escape from them. But the characteristics with which men endow their Personal God vary so widely that we may almost say that each man creates his own idea of God and worships his own creation; certain it is that if we could compare ideas, your God would not be my God, nor mine yours.

This has led many, especially scientists, to argue that there is no God—in very truth—but only an anthropomorphic, man-created deity, and that all systems of religion are built up from below, the result of man's fertile imagination; that therefore Truth, *per se*, is non-existent, since all the most varied conceptions claim to be true, although apparently they are in the last degree contradictory to each other.

If we would find order in this chaos of conflicting opinions, we must turn to the Orient, cradle of religion and philosophy, and delve into its most sacred mysteries. There we shall find the inner esoteric doctrine of the One God, THE ABSOLUTE, of Whom, and by Whom, and from Whom are all things. It is the doctrine of

Absolute Being, far away beyond all the power of man to conceive or express in thought or language, beyond attributes, beyond qualities, beyond the highest reach of human thought. "Parabrahman," we read in the Secret Doctrine, "being the Supreme All, the ever-invisible Spirit and Soul of Nature, changeless and eternal, can have no attribute; the term 'Absolute' very naturally precluding any idea of the finite or conditioned from being connected with it."

This conception of THE ABSOLUTE, THE ONE GOD, PARABRAHM, cannot be grasped or understood by the intelligence, but it is nevertheless the basis of all true religion; and though inconceivable to the human mind, yet it is postulated more or less clearly in every known theory of the Universe, and is granted by the awakened soul without question, like so many another mystery; for the soul is the home of THAT WHICH KNOWS, and it recognizes Truth.

PARABRAHM, THE GRAND WHOLE of all that is, or was, or ever shall be, is however not the God to whom we have been taught to address our worship; nor indeed could we approach in words that which is unthinkable. We need the personal touch of a Father to guide our faltering

footsteps, and so when man lifts his heart to his highest ideal, to Parabrahm, he clothes this inner, super-conscious knowledge of the ONE GOD with a more or less personal conception, according to the degree of his evolution. Thus all Religion is from Above first of all, and afterwards from below also, as the mind of man adapts the Divine Inflow to his own ideals and conceptions.

The same law is seen to obtain in the birth of the individual soul: the Above wakens the below, and causes it to aspire towards Itself. Again, in the birth of a Great Religion, the New Nirmanakaya, or World-Redeemer, descends into a sleeping world, and arouses those whose hour has struck. *It is ever the Fire from above which kindles the sacrifice upon the altar!*

Truly the Universe is One, and all birth is One, and God is One!

Man also is One, for though seemingly so complex a being, and so varied in his manifestations, there is but one part, the Spirit, which is real and permanent, and it is by the development of this Divine Nature that man is destined to know God—to become God—not the Absolute certainly, but that Personal God who has so far

been the object of the worship of enlightened humanity.

Man then bears, in a state of potency, as a germ, a Divine Nature.

But this Divine Germ, whence did he derive it?

To this we answer that unless we accept its creation by a miracle, or we give credence to the still more incomprehensible theory of a blind, yet omnipotent chance, we are unable to explain the Divine qualities of man otherwise than by a filiation equally Divine. If man can become God, if he can accomplish that prodigious ascension which surpasses the most sublime hopes, it is because, Son of God, he has received from his Father the gift of His own nature. And if it has been possible for man to receive from God so sublime an inheritance, we can but conclude that the Supreme Being, the Perfect One, is not only a possibility but a reality; that, not only He will exist when time shall be no more, but that He exists now, in all the splendor of His Wisdom and His Love. And since He exists, it can only be at the end and as the result of a past evolution, exactly similar in its essential features to that in which we find ourselves today. God, then, must be regarded as a Divine Reality, the

fruit of an anterior evolution; and Man, in his true, spiritual nature, is seen to be the Son of God, mounting step by step toward the Divine Fatherhood.

All Life is One, eternal, indestructible, the Soul of the Universe, which also is One. Everything in the Universe, being part of that One, is in relation with every other thing, and also with the whole, just as we see it to be in the case of the physical body, where an injury to one member affects, more or less severely, all the others. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Thus fraternity, true brotherhood, is not only an ideal to be aspired to, it is a universal law and a fact in nature; for everything in this physical world exists by reason of the mutual helpfulness that all parts render to one another. All beings belong to one great brotherhood, all are "sparks from the hearth of Myalba."

In the Orient, where for many centuries men have concentrated all their life-energies in search after the hidden truths of God and the human soul, we find a logical and reasonable religion, as well as a sublime philosophy.

"Upon inaugurating an active period" (the birth of a Universe), says the Secret Doctrine, "an expansion of the Divine Essence from without inwardly, and from within outwardly, occurs in obedience to eternal and immutable law, and the phenomenal or visible universe is the ultimate result of the long chain of cosmical forces thus progressively set in motion."

In obedience to this same law there issue from the One Being, THREE GREAT BEINGS—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Transformer; from These come forth Seven, then Twelve, Great Beings, the Creators and Fathers of all below Them, and so on downwards in endless succession, every Great Being the God and Father of myriads of lesser beings to which he gives birth and whom he sustains. Thus the Solar Logos is the Name given to the Great Being Who rules and upholds our Solar System, which is indeed His body and manifestation. Below Him again in dignity and power, but infinitely greater than we can yet conceive, is the Great One Who is the God and Father of our earth, "of Whom and through Whom and by Whom" we are.

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All these came forth in obedience to law from the Absolute, a part of His Very Being; therefore They are not many but ONE; and when man raises his eyes to heaven, he praises the One, by whatever Name he calls Him, for what he sees and adores is the hidden Fire, PARABRAHM, the SUPREME BREATH, and not the Personal semblance which masks IT. He who separates his personal God from others in his mind and says: "Mine is the only true God," worships something less than the Absolute and is an idolator, whatever his creed; for there is but ONE GOD and HE IS THE SUBLIME WHOLE.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

The occidental mind, trained in all the materialism of the vigorous and literal West, necessarily finds it difficult to enter the field of Oriental Thought. This is true, first, because of the exclusively philosophical terms in which the esoteric teachings are given—terms wholly incompatible with the usual habit of western expression; and second, on account of the difficulties of the language itself. To the oriental mind Sanscrit is a powerfully suggestive instrument of expression. Rich in imagery, it leads by subtle and alluring paths to the very heights of knowledge, and the disciple, ever eager to learn—to know—is led irresistibly on and on, deeper and deeper into the mystery, farther and farther into the heights. On the other hand, the western tongues into which the Ancient Wisdom must be translated, offer no such facilities for intricate and subtle

CONSTITUTION OF MAN

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

ARay of Universal Substance.

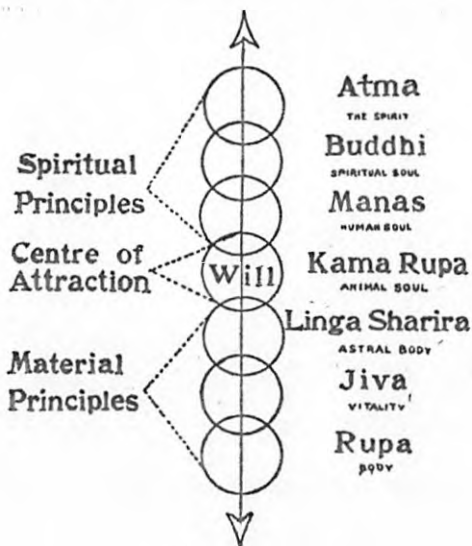


Diagram 1

investigation, and consequently the free passage of the spirit of esoterism is obstructed or at least clouded.

This difficulty, therefore, has led many writers on oriental philosophy to employ—for the sake of their vibrations—Sanskrit words and phrases, and the occidental reader complains of the “technical terms”—terms over which consecutive thought trips and stumbles till the rationality of the text is lost in a maze of definitions, that however do not define. Unfortunately the western languages are destitute of even the vocal elements to express such strange and unfamiliar thought-forms as esoterism presents. Nevertheless, by careful comparison and by the parallel of objective knowledge, a medium of comprehension may be established.

We take therefore the seven mystic names applied to the seven philosophical divisions of being, as represented by the oriental writers. These the western student may readily understand, for they can be located or at least approximated in the physical body.

The Western doctrine of the three-fold nature of life is indeed the trinity out of which, with a little doubling up, we shall see the seven

principles of the Orient appear. For if man is three-fold in nature, body, soul and spirit, so body, in its turn, is three-fold, soul three-fold, and spirit also three-fold, in manifestation—ostensibly nine in all; but the accompanying tables, pp. 45, 47 and 48, will show the overlapping of the folds that makes the third principle of the body to be the first principle of the soul, and in the same way the third plane of the soul becomes the first plane of the spirit.

For the present we will follow the occidental methods and begin with the lowest principle (the Oriental always works from above downward), pointing out the manifestation of each principle in the visible man—the man of material organs and of so-called immaterial thoughts, emotions and desires, contrasting the Oriental with the Occidental concepts.

In the teachings of the Occident we have first the physical *body* with its vast and intricate system of cells and of circulating mediums. Second, *Vitality*. The body lives under the double influence of the blood and of the network of nerve cells called the sympathetic system. *Life* is carried continuously to every part of the organism by the blood, but a reserve is

always held in the Sympathetic Ganglia. Third, *Will*. The body moves—has volition under the influence of the will, which controls the actions of the different parts by means of the motor and sensory nerves.

Let us now examine the teachings of the Orient and bring out the harmony which exists between these two poles of thought, so that we may smooth the way of the investigator and make it possible for him to understand and perhaps to see the truth of and accept the seven-fold classification. We have, first, Rupa—which the higher occultism holds to be complex in organism, consisting of cells differing from each other in form and function, all of which corresponds to the scientific conclusion of the Western mind. Second, Prana—the energy of this aggregate of cells. Third, the Astral Body.

BODY

Oriental

Occidental

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. RUPA..... | the Physical Body |
| 2. PRANA..... | Vitality |
| 3. The ASTRAL BODY..... | Will to move |

Thus we have located the first three principles, and shown that the Orient and the Occident are

thus far in harmony in their teachings. Let us now see whence comes the fourth principle, and, following that, the three superior principles which are given by occultism to the constitution of man.

The third principle, the Astral Body, is known by Oriental Science to have other functions than that of directing the movement of the various fluids in circulation. It is a condensation of the life force itself, in other words the *Body of Life*, and we use it again as the first of a new group of three principles, representing three aspects of *life*, just as the three principles which we have examined above are three aspects of *body*.

Fourth, the nervous ganglia of the chest and abdomen—the Grand Sympathetic—are not only the mysterious motor-power of our organism but also the dynamo of the subconscious or instinctive mind, and this instinctive mind, called by the Orientals Kama Rupa, the Body of Desire, is the fourth principle. It is the *Life of Life*, the very center of life itself.

Following the nervous system of the physical structure a step farther, we locate in the brain the psychic powers, the faculties of the Intelligence, Reason and Memory, and these constitute

the Fifth Principle, known as Manas, or the Human Soul.

Thus we have completed our second group of three principles and this group constitutes the Life or Soul of Man:

SOUL

Oriental

Occidental

3. The ASTRAL BODY....the Condensation
of the Magnetic
Fluids or the
Body of Life.

4. KAMA RUPA, the
Animal Soul, Desire
or the Instinctive Na-
turethe Life of Life.

5. MANAS, the Human
Soul, Intellect, Reason,
Memorythe Directing
power of the Life.

Yet Intellect, that marvellous faculty of which man is so proud, is but the lowest of the manifestations of a third group—Spirit; for, as Esoterism ranks Wisdom above Knowledge, so it values spirituality above intellectuality. This third group, then, is composed of three mani-

festations of Pure Spirit, the 5th, 6th and 7th Principles.

The 5th Principle forms the basis or body of spiritual activities.

As to the 6th Principle, Buddhi, only a Master or an Adept has evolved to a knowledge of Spiritual Wisdom. In those few souls, who are so far in advance of the present humanity, this Principle is manifested in the development of special brain cells at the top of the head.

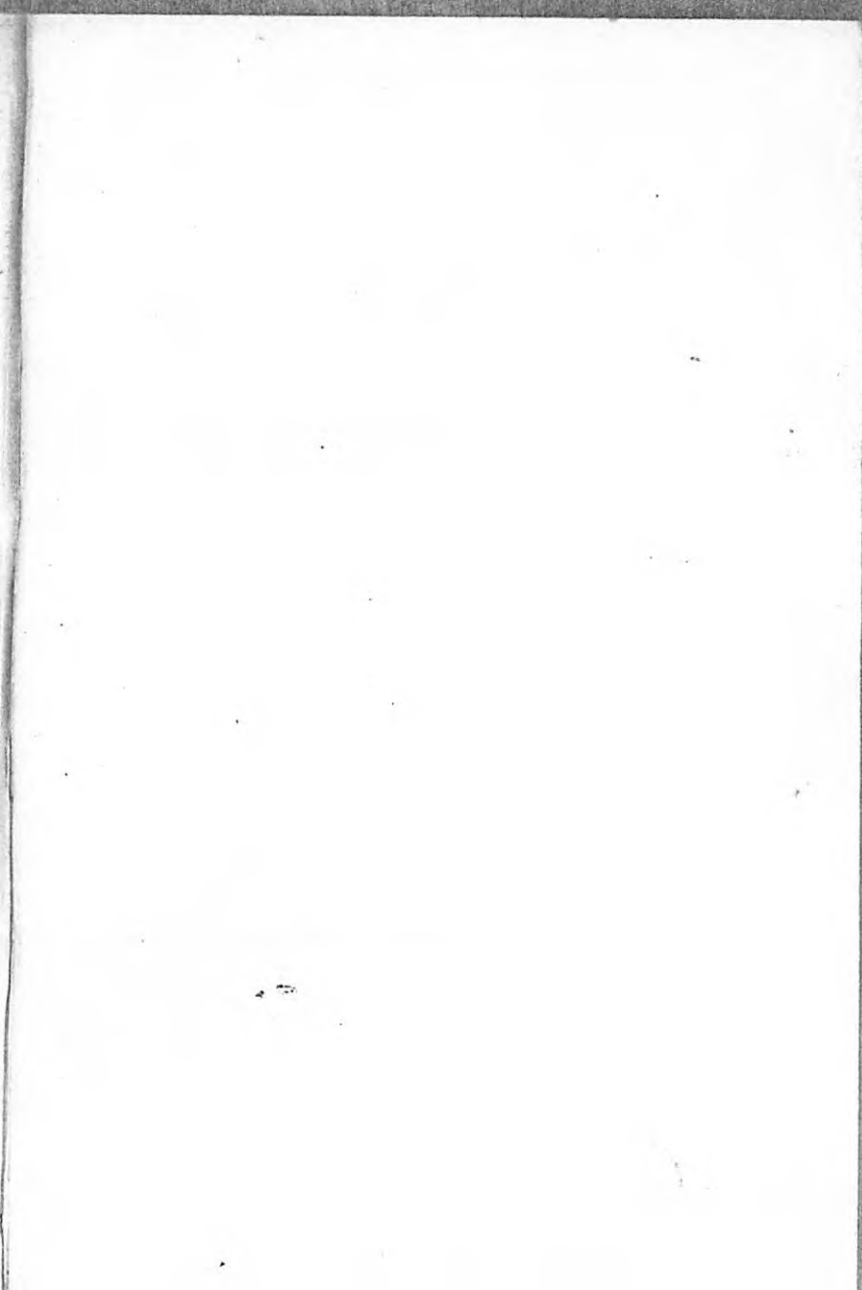
But above and beyond all this—wholly incomprehensible except to the vision of a Master—is the 7th Principle, Atma, the Spirit of the Spiritual Man.

Thus we have our third group of Principles, descriptive of the Spiritual Nature of man, as follows:

SPIRIT

Oriental	Occidental
5. MANAS, Intellect and Soul activities.....	the Body of Spirit.
6. BUDDHI, Wisdom.....	the Life of the Spirit.
7. ATMA.....	Pure Spirit.

In the present cycle the average man is occupied in developing his 5th Principle and bring-



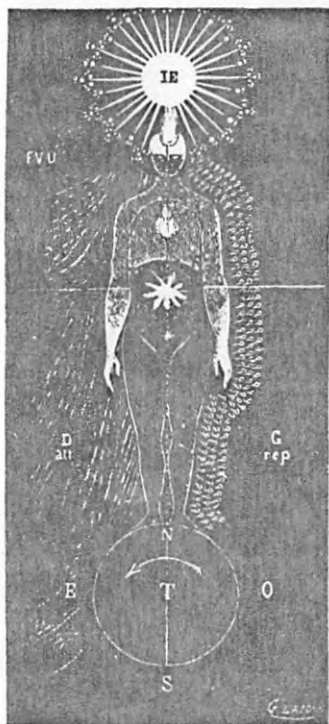


DIAGRAM 2

ing his lower kamic nature into subservience to the mandates of Reason. The two faculties, Reason and Memory, which mark his progress are however very imperfect; his body is coarse, notwithstanding its complexity; his intelligence is uncertain; his Will has not even the firmness of instinct; his affection is still egotistical; he has yet many stages to pass before attaining the fullness of his growth. Therefore the 7th Principle cannot be located in Man at the present stage of his development; it is, however, to be seen by those whose vision is clear and strong, hovering above the head, like a radiant sun (Diagram 2), the center of all the energies and the fount of all the possibilities of the Being. As man evolves, this center of energy, this Divine Spark of Spiritual Intelligence, comes more and more into manifestation, and becomes more closely identified with the life of the individual. His evolution continues with regularity and continuity towards its goal, Divinity; for some day man will know himself as God. He will have reached this perfection, little by little, having mounted, by degrees, slowly and laboriously, all the steps of the immense Cosmic Spiral.

And since gradual evolution, in ever widening cycles, is the law that governs manifestation in the Universe, so man climbs, day by day and age after age, towards the consciousness of his Divine Sonship.

"Just as from a blazing fire are thrown off, on every side, thousands of sparks, each one resembling its parent; even so does the diversity of creations come forth from that which is imperishable and return to it."

CHAPTER IV

THE PLASTIC MEDIATOR AND THE ODIC FLUID

In the last chapter we deviated for a moment from our text, Esoterism, to show that a real basic harmony exists between the Orient and the Occident in their teachings as to the nature and constitution of man, although the ways in which they express themselves are different. For the Oriental mind, being contemplative, expresses from the center outwards or from above downwards; while his more active and practical brother of the Occident builds up his subject from below, a plan which, in deference to his way, we follow in our parallel. We will now return to our former Esoteric view-point, and give these same teachings as presented by the Occultist.

The theory of Occultism holds man to be of a three-fold nature: a life principle, a plastic mediator, and a physical body. Each of these divisions has its three aspects as shown in Chapter III.

1. The life principle—intelligent, conscious and perceptive—is that which gives rise to the psycho-vibratory currents, those currents which, radiating from the Center of Spiritual Intelligence on the cerebro-spinal and ganglionic system (see diagram 2, 1E), produce the different functions of life in the internal viscera. This same life-principle also interprets the inflowing currents from the organs at the surface—that stand as sentinels on the borders to report the contact of universal life.

2. The plastic mediator. This principle includes the whole of these currents, both those which flow from the life-principle and those which return to it; and since, in the human organism, there is not one single point that does not reflect a nervous current, the plastic mediator permeates the whole of the human form with the Odic fluid of which it is composed. It is called "mediator" because in reality it is the intermediary between the life-principle and the physical body; and it is called "plastic" since it can take any form whatever, owing to its fluidic nature, just as a liquid adapts itself exactly to the vase in which it is contained.

This fluidic form, when externalised, presents an etheric double of the human form, and may be perceived, shining with a phosphorescent light, by those persons who are sensitive, or by those who possess double vision. It can also be photographed by a method which is explained later in the chapter.

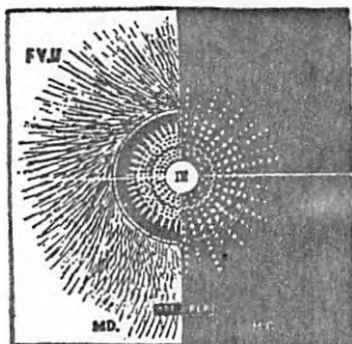


Diagram 3

3. A physical body, purely material, without life in and of itself, without feeling, without movement, or any of the other conditions proper to organic matter.

These then are the three life-principles of man, and the occultist is prepared to show how, from

the interaction of these with each other, all the infinite variety of man's relations with God, the Universe and his fellow-man, are made possible. As we are dealing here only with "First Principles of Esoterism" we can but point to the most evident and easily proved of these, and put the beginner in the way of demonstrating for himself the existence of the plastic mediator and even of the Spiritual Intelligence (IE) pictured in diagram 3 above the head of man.

To the mind of the Western Savant who would accept the theory of the plastic mediator or etheric double, a great difficulty presents itself, for he naturally asks how this double can live, and whence it derives its nourishment.

This question calls for an explanation of the functions of one of the organs of the human machine concerning which very little is known to western science. That organ is the spleen.

It has been thought by different peoples that the spleen modified in some way the affections and moral sentiments. But the influence it is supposed to exert varies in different countries. In France, for example, it is thought to produce gaiety, whilst in England it is considered the organ of sadness and nostalgia. However that

may be, the spleen, being the most voluminous of the glandular organs of the body, it would be very surprising if it did not play some grand *role* in the organic functions. The "remarkably large and tortuous artery" (Leonard) brings it a supply of rich, red arterial blood that would seem to be far too great for the needs of an organ whose duties to the body were as small and insignificant as those which have, so far, been attributed to it by western scientists. One fact is known however, although its significance still escapes the investigator, and that is that the blood which has passed through the splenic pulp is impoverished of hematic elements and rich in lymphatic. The red corpuscles have suffered in the spleen a special operation, that has transformed them into leucocytes or white corpuscles.

The deduction that the ordinary scientist draws from this, "that the spleen is the graveyard for the red blood corpuscle" (Prof. C. H. Stowell as quoted by Leonard), is far short of indicating the real function of this organ; but Occult Science knows it to be the *Center of relation between the plastic mediator and the physical body*. It knows the work of the spleen to consist in receiving from the red corpuscle of the

blood its store of vitality; and this vitality, as Odic fluid, nourishes and sustains the plastic mediator and etheric double of man.

If this contention be true, and it can be proved, it shows the materialistic scientist to be in error in supposing that the physical processes of the body are planned for the benefit of the physical, visible man; for the red hematic corpuscle of arterial blood which is thus diverted to the use of the invisible man is acknowledged to be the *synthetic and definitive result of all organic operations*, from the elaboration and purging of the food taken in, to its assimilation in the capillaries of the stomach and intestines. Not the support of the physical body but that of the plastic mediator is thus seen to be the first and principal aim of the subconscious activities of man, and this teaching is in accord with religion, as indeed occult science always is. Not the body but the soul of man is the link with his true divine nature and with God, and, *in spite of himself*, his activities are being directed towards the preservation intact of that link.

In all the experiments of Occult Science and in the demonstrations of Occult Powers the spleen is in great activity, for it has to furnish fluid

and life to the plastic mediator and to the etheric double, both of which vibrate under the strain with so great a mobility that the body could not resist without the sustaining aid of this organ. Therefore it has been called, and rightly, the Occult Organ.

The supreme cause—the origin and manifestation of all occult phenomena—is the fluidic, vital, Odic Force, which exists throughout all nature, and, carried by the nervous currents of the plastic mediator, permeates not only every part of the human organism, but every other being as well. It is through this fluid that man comes in touch with the occult world, for by means of the Will it puts him in communication with all living beings, visible or invisible. It circulates through all the nervous centers in a double current of Magnetic and of Odic fluids, and this circulation forms what is known as Odic Respiration. Also it becomes the vehicle and conductor of that incessant worker in the immense human laboratory—the Will.

In fact, by means of this fluid the whole universe is in movement. All breathes, all gravitates, all tends to perfection, all maintains a majestic equilibrium in and by it. It is the

source of life, not only in the microcosm, but also in the macrocosm.

When the Plastic Mediator is seen by the sensitive, or is photographed, it is surrounded by a phosphorescent aureola of Odic Fluid, which is its proper radiation. Such a photograph may be obtained by establishing a current of astral light between the exteriorized plastic mediator of a sensitive, and the objective of a camera. Or this radiation may be seen by introducing the subject into a dark room and observing him from a little distance. After a short time, a phosphorescence will be seen, more or less clearly, at the part of the room where he is seated, and if the observation is continued it will show the outline of the body, and take on prismatic hues of red or blue rays according to the intensity of the force of the vibration. The red color corresponds to the left side of the body of the human being, and the blue to the right side.

All of these phenomena will not show themselves at the first sitting, but will appear gradually from time to time as the investigations proceed.

Those beings who possess a greater quantity of Odic force have a proportionate power over

other beings who possess less of it. This explains the power exerted by such a man as Napoleon Bonaparte for instance. Obscure in station, insignificant in stature, he yet radiated a force that made him obeyed by all about him, and even by those at a distance; for the Odic Fluid can act upon the absent as well as on those present, if it is rightly understood and directed by a firm will. But even Napoleon failed, for only the Occultist can continue to stand for all time alone against the world, and so the great man, who is not truly an Adept, sooner or later falls, and his work perishes. Ambition, pride and a domineering, selfish nature may bear a man for a time on the crest of a great wave of success, but where there is no depth of spiritual energy the wave breaks on the sand, turns over and over, and drags down to destruction that which it has but now uplifted.

It takes an energy of the highest order, without a particle of self-seeking, the true Divine Intelligence (see chart 2 I E) to attain to power over Nature's forces that shall never fail, and this height is reached as yet by few.

The Atharva Veda says: "He who has penetrated into the secret of the wherefore of things,

who has raised himself by meditation to the knowledge of Immortal Principle, who has mortified his body and advanced his soul, who knows the mysteries of Being and Non-Being, who knows all the transformations of the vital molecule, from Brahma to man, and from man again to Brahma, this one is in communication with the Pitris, and he commands the Occult Forces of Nature."

CHAPTER V

MAN'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSAL SCHEME

Not only is it necessary for man to know his own nature but he must also realize, to the full, his place in the universal life. He is but a single cell of the Great Life, and, as he must function in union with his associate cells, the more intelligently he does so, the more of harmony will he establish in the vast complex organism, the Cosmos.

The general scheme of the Universe, as taught by Occultism, may be outlined in a few words by means of an illustration.

A steamer launched on an immense ocean sails toward the port assigned as the end of the voyage. All which the steamer contains is carried forward together, and yet each traveller is free to arrange his cabin as he pleases; he may go up on the bridge-deck to contemplate the Infinite, or he may descend into the hold; he may drowse away the days, wrapped in his rug in a secluded

corner, or he may mingle with his fellow-passengers. The journey goes on day by day for the whole, but each one is free to act as he will, being merely subservient to the general law. All social classes are represented on this boat, from the poor emigrant who sleeps on the deck wrapped in a sack, to the rich man in his *cabine de luxe*; but the rains, the storms and the sunshine are the same for all; and so is the speed of the onward rush of the great ship through the battling waves; and all will arrive at the same port at the same time.

The analogy may be further unfolded in the detail and equipment of the ship, and in the power that moves its mighty engines. In them a blind force (steam) generated by a special factor (heat) is conducted to an unconscious, complex machine, causing it to operate by fixed laws; thus driving the ship forward, through calm or tempest, to its desired haven. But this blind force, with its allied machinery, even though under the direct control of the skilled engineer, would as readily, and quite as likely, drive the ship on the rocks as on its safe and proper course, without a master-mind able to see and control its direction.

This master-mind is the Captain. In his chart-room with his instruments, and on the lofty bridge, where he can see over the entire length of the ship and all about her, with his knowledge of the laws of navigation, he figures with mathematical exactness the location of his vessel on the great ocean, and directs her further progress toward the far-off destination. He does not directly control the engines, that, with their powerful throbs, seem to make the ship a thing of life; he does not feed the passengers; he does none of the detailed work of operating the giant organism, and yet his will is law in every minutest detail, and in a moment of danger is rigorously enforced. The Captain holds in the hollow of his hand the fate of every individual soul on board, so far as the voyage is concerned.

Let us now make the application:—The Universe may be compared to an immense steamer, of which He whom we call God is the Captain. With His greater intelligence, he guides its progress through time and space, by orders to His inferior officers, each of whom is in charge of, and skillfully controls, his own department. Nature is the machinery, the entire mechanism, which drives the whole system forward blindly

according to fixed laws. Human beings are the passengers. These are ignorant of the methods and laws by which the ship traverses the trackless waste of waters; they occupy themselves as they please during the voyage, each according to his own tastes and inclinations. But the officers know when a storm is coming and they put in action all the powers of their science to prevent disaster. While the ordinary passenger is content to be acted upon by fate and passively endures, as he may, the conditions about him, the officers react on those same conditions, controlling and changing them. Having powers, they use them in serving the ignorant, directing the progress of those more advanced, and protecting all.

Thus it is seen to be most essential that we learn something of the hidden forces which play upon us—forces which, though invisible to our ordinary sight, we yet sense with that finer sensitiveness awakening in many of us.

In chapter 4 we have said that there is, besides the visible man, an invisible being who dwells in union with the physical man and causes him to live and act. And this is true also of the "Grand Man," the Cosmos, and of every other

Being, whether Universe, Sun, Planet or individual—the visible presentation is only a reflection of the Real, which is invisible but potent.

The teachings of esoterism tell us of the existence of an etheric substance throughout the entire universe, which Occultists name "Akasa," or the Astral Light, and they say that the Soul of man is a mass of astral light, forming a union between the outer or physical man and the inner or spiritual being.

The earth floats in the ether, or Akasa, as do fish in the ocean; all the objects which constitute our world are continually bathed in the Astral Light, and more than bathed, they are interpenetrated with it, for matter forms no obstacle to its passage. Unconsciously, during sleep, we perceive the objects which constitute the astral world, just as during our waking hours we see the objects of the physical world; and the objects of this etheric, intangible and extremely changing environment are not less real on their plane than are the physical objects on the physical plane. Being plastic, the astral substance is elusive and shifting to the last degree; it responds to every nascent thought, it gathers like a thunder-cloud to simulate passion, its pictures come

and go with equal inconsequence—apparently as changing and unstable as the wave of the ocean. We say “apparently” with intention, for though on the lower subplanes conditions prevail which seem to be fraught with danger, this is not the case to the disciple who enters this realm from above.

To the extreme mobility of astral matter is added a power of illusion, almost a love of deception it might be called, which is the cause of the downfall of many a too-curious investigator. On this plane, truly, “Appearances are deceptive” to every one except the trained occultist for he alone understands the laws of this plane, and can draw the right conclusions from what he sees. This is why many of the details described by clairvoyants prove to be inaccurate; the medium may be sincere and describe faithfully that which he believes he sees, but, being untrained, he is deceived by “Maya.”

We can say nothing in detail here in “First Principles” concerning the many kinds of elementals, elementaries and unevolved beings which crowd this world; in a later work we will give some illustrations of their forms and explain their nature and origin; but the astral world is

not one where the disciple will find great spiritual upliftment, and if he is wise he will put away all curiosity and desire concerning it until with a strong will, indomitable courage, pure motive and humility, he is master of himself. Then he may safely confront its many dangers.

There is however one function of this ocean of astral substance which must be touched upon—that of *creation*. In this intermediary world whose vibrations vary from the subtlest aspiration where they approach the spiritual realm, down to the lowest desire of the animal, there float the thoughts of men—thoughts of every form and hue, some beautiful, others truly awful. These thoughts flow in currents, those of a kind approaching each other, seeking like vibrations with their own. When man withdraws his attention from the physical to think deeply, he enters this world and attracts to himself such thought-currents as he is able to command, and from them he takes that which he is seeking.

Besides the thoughts, the desires also of men (and animals) take form and substance in the astral—from the aspiration of the spiritually enlightened to the lust of the brute—desires of evil, desire of selfish aggrandizement of all

kinds, desire of money, all sorts of ambitions as well as the pure desire of intellectual achievement and spiritual light. These desires are interwoven inextricably with the thought-substance of which they form the nucleus or life (for there is hardly a thought of ours that does not owe its birth to desire), and they cause it to vibrate with an intensity that varies with the depth of the emotion.

All *creation* takes place by means of this ocean of etheric substance, and in accordance with its laws, however unconscious the operator may be of the means he is employing or the laws he is obeying. All things are first created in the Divine World *in principle*, or in potentiality of being; this principle then passes on to the astral plane and there manifests in negative—that is, all that was luminous in the principle becomes obscure, and, vice-versa, all that was dark becomes luminous. It is not the exact image of the principle which is manifested, it is the mould of that image. The mould being once obtained, creation on the astral plane is finished.

Then commences creation on the physical plane in the visible world. The astral form, acting upon matter, gives birth to the physical form just

as a mould gives form to a vessel, and thus the sublimest ideal of the artist, drawn from the spiritual plane by the force of his aspiration, is moulded in the astral, then formed in the physical—clothed in colors on the canvas, hewn in stone or marble. The form which is obtained on the physical plane is but the reflection of a reflection; and in following the law of all reflections it has lost in brilliance of tone and clearness of outline; nevertheless it is the best we have at present, and it serves to raise the heart of man nearer to the realm of truth. Without the mediation of the astral substance, even this would have been impossible, for the spiritual cannot manifest in terms of the physical, nor can matter grasp spirit; there must be a medium of interpretation.

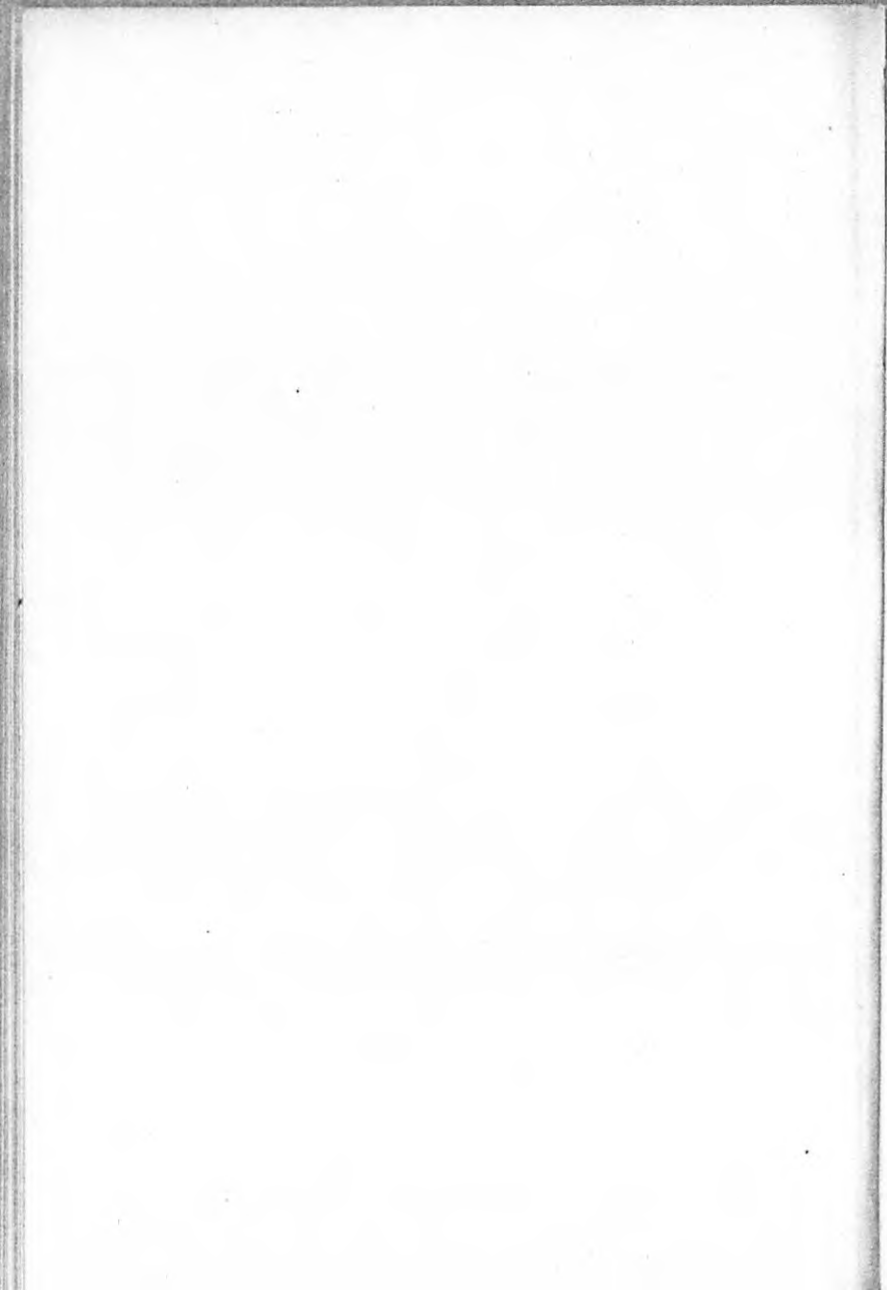
Without aspiration, thought, desire, imagination and faith in the invisible, how could man soar? These are the stars of man's firmament—stars that lift his eyes to the pure realm of spirit and set him gazing into the depths of space. "Without the stars," it has been asked, "what would man have become?"

The existence of this etheric substance, Akasa, throughout the entire Universe is one of the

basic teachings of esoterism, and it offers the scientific explanation of all super-conscious and sub-conscious activities. It also shows the possibility of clairvoyance, clairauidence and other psychic phenomena. The superconscious activities are those in which the human soul comes in touch, by means of the *higher* astral vibrations, with the spiritual realm; the subconscious show man's life on the *lower* astral—the plane of instinct or Kama Rupa. When a person is clairvoyant the outer sensibilities have, from some cause, become blunted; a passing inferiority is thus induced in the condition of the body, and at the same time a superiority in the condition of perception. The medium may voluntarily throw himself into this state, or it may be induced hypnotically by another, or again it may be spontaneous, the result of weakness. In any case the effect is the same, for the subject becomes sensitive, as we say, to more subtle vibrations than those which were normally possible for him to respond to, and so having withdrawn his attention temporarily from the outer, he perceives those finer vibrations of the Astral Light to which he is ordinarily blind. The same explanation applies to the clairaudent whose spiritual

hearing becomes in a similar way so abnormally acute that a whole new world of sound is opened up to him, and all animate and inanimate Nature finds voice. At times he even catches a far-off, ineffable harmony—a "music of the spheres" beyond words.

The Akasa is the reservoir of events, past, present and future; it is therefore to the Akasic records that the Adept has recourse when it becomes necessary to trace out the details of any period of the world's history, to revive an ancient race, or to look forward into the future and see that which shall be. Here are preserved the trace of all effects produced by spiritual causes, as well as all the acts and all the thoughts proceeding from matter and from spirit, so that the Akasa has been rightly named, "The Book of the Angel of Judgment."



CHAPTER VI

INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION

When we go back into the far-off past, a past so remote that the mind is powerless in its efforts to image an epoch so distant—when we look back to the dawn of the Solar System, more than nineteen and a half hundred millions of years ago, as we are told by the oldest Occult records, "We see Ishwara, as a mountain of light, appearing to illumine the darkness." "Then," we are told, "Ishwara unfolds himself, and there appear in a higher state of activity all the hierarchies of Beings who formed the life of the preceding Universe; all the Intelligences, all the forms, all the souls, and all the bodies." From the very point where they were left when the total destruction overtook them, they start again to take up their evolution.

In this prodigious descent of the Invisible towards the Visible, of Spirit into matter, a rigorous order is preserved. First we see, issuing forth in wondrously magnificent outline, THREE

MIGHTY AND DIVINE FORMS—the Three Great Persons which, under one name or another, all religions revere and all philosophies recognize—THE THREE whom the Orientals know as Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer. Then, in the Light which emanates from these glorious Forms, we see the Grand Cosmic Entities, those “Seven” Great Beings—Archangels—Sephiroth, the “Seven Spirits in the Sun,” it matters little the name by which They are known to different peoples. And as we gaze still further into the glory which radiates from the SEVEN we see THE TWELVE—those who conduct the evolution of the Chains, of the Globes, and of the Races. And following these comes a hierarchy of DIVINE MEN who, in the ages of the past, have raised themselves above the level of humanity. These are the “fruit” of the past Universes, and They descend into the inferior worlds only to instruct and to liberate the human masses. They are the GREAT SOULS, “Mahatmas,” the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, our Elder Brothers, to Whom we always turn for inspiration and for aid, Who occupy in the evolutionary series a necessary place between God and man.

Thus, then, is accomplished the GREAT SACRIFICE—the putting forth of Himself by the Logos, in order that in the fullness of time many individualities may be drawn back into the Great Source, to share consciously with Him that bliss which is His very nature and essence.

Thus does Spirit descend into matter, and taking on ever increasing limitations, it is crucified, dies and is buried in matter. Yet “after three days” does it rise again, and begin the ascent towards the Source whence it came.

But the true Man—the Real Being within us—never appears upon the earth. That which we see and recognize as a personality is only an emanation—an efflux from the Real Man who forever lives the perfect Life in a sphere unknown to the worldly personality. Indeed, this worldly personality, in its present state of development, is quite incapable of understanding its True Self. The Real Man, who in occultism is designated THE SELF, is the permanent part of the human being, and it remains in the sphere of REALITY—that last and highest sphere beyond the six other spheres which, though more or less elevated, are spheres of *appearance* only. The True Man is not found in the material world, nor in the astral

world, not in the mental world, neither in the world of Devakan, nor in the Buddhic; not even in the spiritual world. For all these *personalities*, if we may call them so, are capable of transformation, and in consequence are relatively mortal; that is to say, they are not Eternal.

The source then of the REAL BEING must be sought in the bosom of the ABSOLUTE. And since the true man is in the ABSOLUTE, it follows that he is not in any of the personalities which he ensouls; for he is ATMAN or Spiritual Principle, PARANIRVANA and PARABRAHM — the Great Whole, the Principle of Universal Mind, the Creator of All!

The septenary chain, Body, Vitality, Fluidic Form, Animic Form, Astral, Mental, and Spiritual Bodies, are not the SELF, the TRUE MAN; for, as we have seen, He is not visible to the Being on earth as yet. He can never descend to the earth, or to any of the other planets till his evolution shall be entirely complete.

This problem is very difficult of comprehension, but we will try by means of an illustration to give a slight idea of it. Suppose that the TRUE BEING of man were a luminous ball, vibrating by the energy of its own existence far above all the

spheres of which we have spoken. When the TRUE BEING wills to constitute a human personality it sends forth into the realm nearest to it a RAY which gathers about itself from the Spiritual Substance of that realm a sheath or covering, organizes it into a body, and descends thus clothed into the next lower sphere. Here it repeats the process, adding a second and outer covering;— it then descends into the physical world, taking a physical body suitable to the needs of that sphere. In other words it lowers its vibrations as it descends from plane to plane, taking upon itself the limitations of each sphere in succession. This process is indeed continued in each of these realms throughout the whole life and is prolonged through all the lives, whether physical, astral or spiritual.

The True Human Being, which we will call "The Human Monad," exists then beyond and outside of all of these states.

It is composed of energies to be manifested, and the Ray which it projects into the seven spheres of manifestation is a group of these energies; the function of this group being to manifest itself on ALL the planes of existence. When it has completed its manifestation, it re-

turns to the Monad from which it was sent forth, bringing in the harvest of experiences which it has gathered during its stay upon the different planes of manifestation. The Essence, that last analysis of the experiences of the personality which has finished its course upon the physical, astral and spiritual planes, re-enters within the Monad; and in time a new group of energies, constituting a new personality, is sent forth to accomplish, in turn, a series of manifestations upon the seven planes. And this goes on from the beginning to the end of a Manvantara or period of 306 million 720 thousand years, seven of which Manvantaras constitute the evolution of a Universe.

Therefore we see that it is an illusion to think that the physical, astral or spiritual personality of one single life can subsist throughout one entire Manvantara. That of each personality which does persist is the modification suffered by the group of energies manifested under the mask of the personality. Each manifestation leaves throughout the Manvantara a residue, which has, however, as little resemblance to the personage as the little heap of ashes, remaining after burning a corpse, resembles the living man.

The personalities, as we know them, are in truth destroyed (on this point we agree with the materialists), but personality is one thing, Individuality is another. The one is lost, the other remains. The materialists usually err because they make no distinction between the essence and its outer shell; they do not know that this essence, being of a different nature, cannot suffer the same fate as the personality. This fades away, since it is but illusion—like the form of the body when burned; but the Individuality, the reality, enriched with the result of experiences, remains, like the little heap of ashes.

Each personality is nothing more nor less than an experiment made by the Monad. It is, as it were, a kind of probe, which the Monad plunges into the three spheres of existence to take knowledge of them, and which it afterwards draws back, bringing with it its record of experiences. Have you ever watched a snail? Did you observe the use which it makes of its horns? See it advance them slowly as if to take notice of the surroundings in which it finds itself; and every time they come up against an obstacle, a new substance, a vibration, a sensation of any kind whatever, immediately it draws them in, as

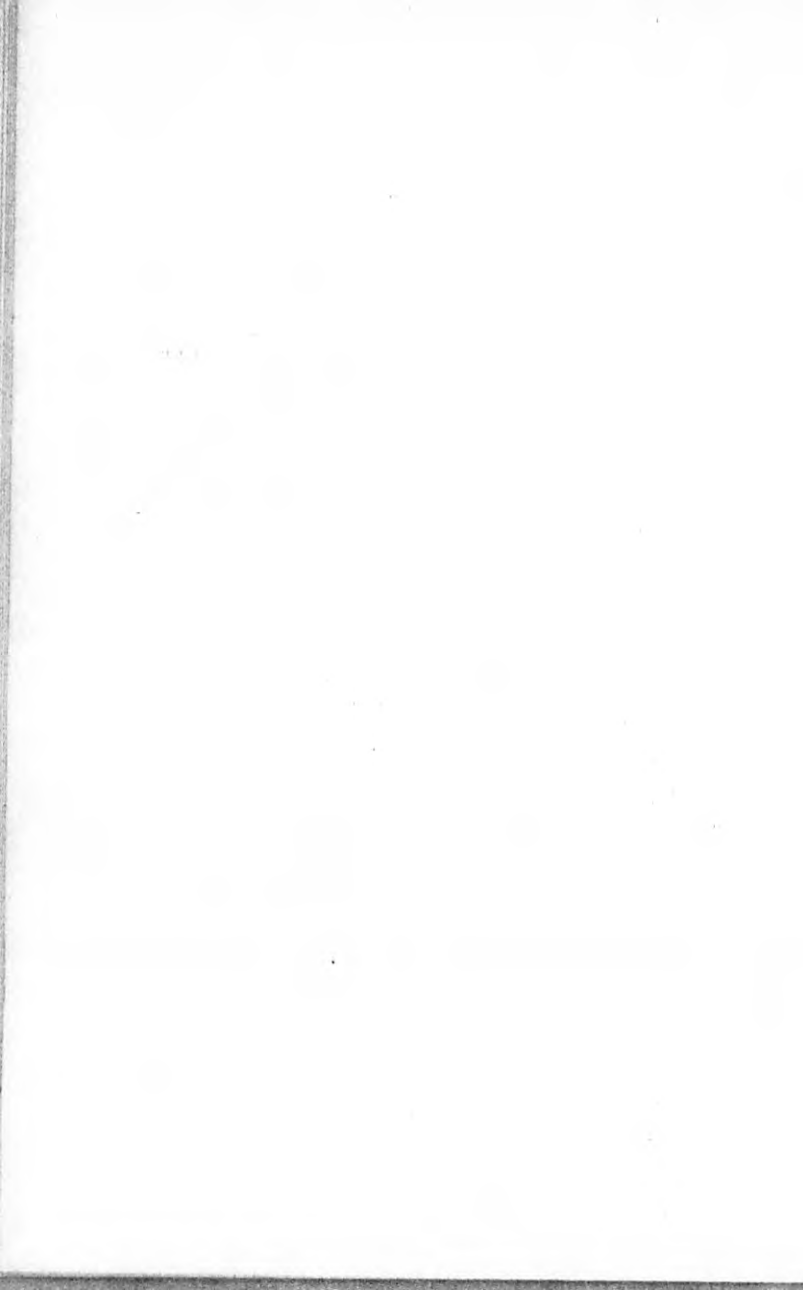
if to listen to their account of the experience. The Monad may be compared, not inaptly, with the snail. Each time the snail puts out her horns symbolizes the projection of a personality into the world of manifestation by the Monad; each time that the horns are withdrawn corresponds to the death of the personality—but the snail remains always the snail. It does not die.

The Monad contains within itself a sum of energies destined to test all possible varieties of human existence; and each group of energies which it projects forms a new personality. It takes the Monad the whole length of a Manvantara to incarnate all the groups of energies which we may consider as its constituent molecules; and it is evident that, after having completed the series of the incarnations of all its different groups of energies, the Monad is no longer the same as it was before these incarnations; for each group of energies has, by experiences on the seven planes of manifestation, contributed modifications to the inner texture of the Monad. It cannot have enriched its experience and yet remain the same.

At the end of a Manvantara, therefore, the Monad is called to a different destiny from that which lay before it at the commencement. And

this is how we must understand the gaining of our Immortality. Immortality is not the heritage of any one of the personalities which we know; it belongs only to that part of the personality which has been likened to the heap of ashes—to that residue which remains, being made up of the experience gained, and the consequent modifications suffered, by the monadic energies on the seven planes.

Now, though during life on the physical plane our personality lives also on the astral and the spiritual planes, still its manifestation on these two last-mentioned planes does not necessarily end at the same time as the death of the body occurs. The Spiritists are not wrong in believing in the persistence of personalities after the physical death; their error is in the belief that this persistence demonstrates the *Immortality* of the personality. These personalities fade out eventually on the astral and spiritual planes, just as the body falls to pieces on the physical plane; but the energies which form their essence bear back to the Monad their harvest of experience, which the Monad assimilates, and in so doing works in its inner texture changes in preparation for the destinies that await it in a future Manvantara.



CHAPTER VII

REINCARNATION AND IMMORTALITY

The world of today is seeking ardently in every field of investigation for some tangible evidence of the truth of immortality; but for the most part these researches have been fruitless. It is true that there are various schools professing to demonstrate the persistence of the personality; but the proofs they offer, although convincing to themselves, are found to have but little scientific coherence, and are, indeed, capable of many interpretations. The thoughtful man is not prepared to yield full credence to any theory founded alone on phenomena—he has too often been deceived in the past by appearances—and he looks back of these for a reasonable and intelligible plan, that shall appeal to something more than his curiosity and love of the marvelous. This plan he does not find.

Disappointed, yet hopeful, he turns to the field of science; here he is sure of finding, at least, definite and careful investigation and elimination

of all vague speculations; and by uniting the results of the researches of these savants with the phenomena of the former school, he thinks that he will be able to arrive at a conclusion. But the scientist meets him with skepticism, and some ridicule: in all his experience with scalpel, bistury and microscope, never has he come upon anything other than physical manifestation; therefore there is nothing more, he illogically assumes. Just what life is, he is unable to say; but it began at birth and will end with death, of that he is confident!

From this picture of death as the end of all things, the soul of man recoils; and almost in despair he returns to the religion of his infancy. But even here he finds no comfort, for the teachings appear to his manhood both vague and contradictory, as well as cruel and altogether irreconcilable with his inner convictions of the goodness and justice of God. If life, he argues to himself, begins in the cradle, it must end in the tomb, as indeed the materialists declare, for that which has a beginning must also have an end. And better it were for many that it should so end he feels, for it has been for most men but one long and bitter experience; and even annihilation

as taught by the materialist, would be more merciful than an eternity of torment, though both, as it seems to him, would be equally unjust and illogical. Point by point his intelligence brings in question all the doctrines of the religions about him: "Where is the proof of life beyond the grave?" it asks. "Who are the 'good'?" Why are they good? Is it good to desire happiness for oneself when multitudes are in torment? Is a God good who, being omnipotent, can look down on such misery and injustice as are in the world and not find a remedy? How about death-bed conversions? Is it just that some should be born depraved, while others, seemingly, have only good impulses and are therefore pure? How can a God who is Love consign to eternal punishment any of his creatures however rebellious? No father among us would treat thus his own child."

These are but a few of the questions that form a barrier in the path of the thoughtful man when he approaches any of the religions of our day; to them and to a host of others equally insistent, he seeks in vain an answer.

There is but one teaching that offers a key to all these problems—Reincarnation.

Does man's life begin at birth? Reincarnation says: "No, it does but continue what has always been." Aeons and aeons ago, there came forth from the Creator a Divine Germ; for long ages it has involved—descended into matter; now it is evolving, consciously learning from every experience, whether of pleasure or of pain, and is returning to pure spirit, bearing with it the treasures of its varied experiences.

The life of man did not begin, but it came forth from the source of all life. From the time the first vital undulation issued from Nirvana, to the present, it continues its work; each wave manifesting as an individual soul. Infinite in number, these living undulations constitute all manifested life in all worlds. The personalities which we see masquerading in our world as human beings, are, as it were, beads threaded upon these life-waves, as the beads of a chaplet are upon their string. Each bead may differ in a marked way from its neighbor but the string is always the same and serves to unite them all. Thus while the vital undulation remains the same, and the individual is ever the same individual, yet the personalities are numerous and varied enough to include all human experience.

At one time rich, at another poor, in one life high in rank, in the next humble and obscure, now man, now woman, the individual soul passes through every possible experience and mounts step by step from the foot to the summit of the hill of life.

Many and varied have been its school terms, from the first day when it studied in the humblest place in the lowest class. Through all the grades it has passed, failing often, but gradually advancing in knowledge of the world, in self-control, and in the consciousness of the powers latent within. And every one of such school-days represents a life, as the word is generally used—a term of years beginning with birth and ending with the change called death. This little span in which we find ourselves today is but one of many; it is relative, not conclusive, and those who are suffering now are having an experience necessary for them, one that is, indeed, the direct result of some unlearned lesson in their past. When they shall have patiently and cheerfully met their present adverse conditions, and triumphed over them, the cloud will pass over of its own accord.

All life is in cycles. Thus a day of twenty-

four hours is one entire cycle, consisting of morning, noon, and night; and seven days form another and larger cycle. Beyond these we have months and years, the larger cycle always including the lesser and itself forming part of another still greater. In a human life, we have some very interesting cycles of seven years, the periods of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one, marking distinct epochs in the evolution of the individual. After three times seven, there are also two other cycles of seven that are well marked—seven times seven, or forty-nine, and ten times seven, or the allotted threescore years and ten. And according to the Law of Cycles, this whole life of seventy or more years is but one of many similar lives, all of which together go to make up one grand life. Not that this one grand life is separate and alone, even; for many of such grand cycles go to make up still greater and greater cycles of which we can have absolutely no conception at our present stage of evolution.

With this wider horizon much of the apparent injustice and inequality of the present dispensation is done away, and we begin to recognize the presence of law and exact retribution in those very circumstances that before had distressed

us. We catch a glimpse of the working of a law of infinite patience and wisdom, offering unlimited opportunity to every soul to learn and to triumph—the law of God who wills that every soul shall be saved, and Who provides the way of that salvation so clearly and impartially that it is impossible for the most unworthy to wander for ever.

Reincarnation teaches us that before a soul comes forth into our world as a babe, it has rested for a longer or a shorter period in the heaven-world, where it has assimilated the harvest of the experiences of its former incarnate states. Here the desires of the past life have been purified, the old failings worked off, the past more or less obliterated; every good thought, good deed, good aspiration has been recollected, gone over and steeped anew in the quickening spirit, so that it may be strengthened and may thus aid in the progress of the soul when it shall incarnate anew. At last there comes a time when this work is completed, the stimulus of past experience grows weak, and desire, which is the law of the soul, begins to turn towards the laying in of a fresh store of earthly joys, thoughts, feelings and emotions; it *desires re-*

birth so that it may again meet in the flesh its loved ones, or that it may realize some ambition that remained unfulfilled in the past life, or, in short, that it may experience again some of the thousand delights that are, and can be, the object of life on earth. When these desires awake, the soul passes into the sphere of waiting souls and rests there until a suitable outlet can be arranged for it by the Lords of Karma who care for this realm. All its past is again reviewed, all its gains, all its losses, are instantly apparent to these Great Ones, and the soul rises or falls to one of the seven planes of waiting where its own state of evolution places it in order of merit.

Some parents, at the moment of conception, are able to rise to a very great height of aspiration, and in so rising they may touch a soul on one of these higher planes and afford it an opportunity of re-birth. If, however, as is too often the case, there is no such aspiration or desire for the advancement of the race, the soul attracted by the parents will be one of those waiting on the lower planes.

Now, immediately, commences a series of changes. Guided by the Lords Who watch over it, the soul begins its approach toward those who

have attracted it; it undergoes change after change, puts on vesture after vesture, limitation after limitation, ever suffering and sacrificing, yet impelled by desire. Every different vesture brings a new burden and weight to the soul and causes new sufferings and new sacrifice. Just as is the case in the Great Sacrifice described in the last chapter, so is the case in this lesser sacrifice: the soul becomes more and more bound by conditions.

Whilst the soul is approaching the parents, the parents also are preparing a suitable temple for it; and the first cry of the child marks the entrance of the first inflow from the Ego. The temple, the baby-body, is, naturally, not able at first to bear a great strain; it could not receive the whole force of the ego at once; there are, therefore, certain definite periods and stages of growth and of the inflow of force. The first inflow takes place at birth. Before that time, the ego has overshadowed the mother, and aided her in building the body, but there has been no direct control from within. From birth onwards the ego dwells within, or to state the process more accurately, he guides the organism from within. Every seventh year sees a new influx, new con-

ditions either in the body, or in the emotional, psychic or spiritual natures. At about seven years of age the child begins to ask questions and to require intellectual food. Then it can be sent to school; this is the sign of the second inflow. Again at fourteen, the ego makes a further approach and pours into the organism the creative energies; this is the third inflow and the ego is now in full physical manifestation. The further changes which take place every seven years throughout the earth-life are equilibrations rather than inflows, and are due to activities on the higher planes of being.

These explanations will confirm the view which has always been put forward by religion—that man's nature is from above as well as from below. His body, it is true, has been prepared by evolution through all the kingdoms, mineral, vegetable and animal; it is subject to change and is mortal; but not so the informing spirit, the Ego; this is individual and never dies: it is, indeed, that vital undulation which comes forth from Nirvana and, after a series of trials and transformations lasting throughout one Manvantara, returns thither.

The individual struggles from dawn to eve,

from his first appearance in this world to the time he goes out of it, with the problems and difficulties of each day; sometimes he triumphs, often he fails—but always he learns, whether gaining or apparently losing in the fight, and all of these experiences serve him as stepping-stones to his immortality. It is in this way, indeed, that he builds his future.

There is no chance attending our birth-place or family, for every detail of all our past lives is taken into account by the Great Lords of Karma in guiding the reincarnating soul to those circumstances best calculated to evolve his budding tendencies, and to those persons to whom he has been intimately bound in a former life by love or by hate, or by some other strong emotion.

As the child grows, he manifests the characteristics that marked him in a past life; he makes mistakes which are foreign to the family in which he finds himself, yet in many ways he resembles them. This agreement, and at the same time disagreement, has been a great puzzle to those who give an undue importance to the influence of heredity, but can be well understood in the light of what has been said above; for it was these very similarities in desire (known as heredity)

which attracted this particular ego to these parents in the first instance, because the traits of the parents, whether good or evil, offer to the child an opportunity of manifesting his own good or evil propensities.

It is therefore unjust for a man to charge to his parents those faults which he has allowed to master him; they are his own, and his parents did but give him the opportunity of facing them once more and conquering or being conquered by them. They are responsible for their weaknesses, and he for his. Nor, on the other hand, can parents rightly hold themselves responsible for the vices of their sons, except in so far as they might, by early training, have strengthened their moral nature. The soul of each individual is ruled by desire, and until these desires are purified and eliminated, the suffering consequent on ignorance and self-seeking will continue.

The teaching of rebirth is pictured very beautifully in many of the ways of nature. With the illustration of the coming forth of the butterfly from its chrysalis, all are familiar; we know that the forest tree, today bare, leafless, and apparently dead, will put forth its buds as soon as springtime comes and in the summer be alive

and heavy with foliage and fruit; and that it will continue around this cycle for perhaps hundreds of years; we see the perpetual alternation of night and day—a period of rest always preceding the activity and work of the day, and essential to its success—everywhere we find analogies and illustrations of Reincarnation, some of them indeed most suggestive and exactly analogous in every detail and similar in their evolution and general features to the larger cycle of Life, of which they form a part.

Thus, if we regard the life of a man during one day, we shall find it to be very similar to that life viewed as a whole. When we awake in the morning, we arouse ourselves with difficulty from the slumber in which we have been steeped, and it is some time before our waking activity reaches its zenith—probably towards noon of the day. From this time on, our strength wanes, until, when the sun sets, we are willing to take up the “night-side” of our life, and rejoice in the loving activities of the home, the family, leisure and sleep—all of which are as essential to the rounding out of a well-ordered life as are the very evident occupations of the day. We are all well acquainted with the cycle we have just sketched,

and if we apply this to the teaching of reincarnation, it throws much light on the soul's experience. The analogy is indeed so close between the whole life and the life of a day, that we have worked it out in detail in Lesson IV of the Correspondence Course, to which we recommend our readers who wish to pursue the subject further.

All life is cyclic. When at first it comes forth, it is weak and has little power of manifestation, like the new-born child; gradually it gathers strength and up to a certain point its activities increase; they culminate; then decline from maturity into old age. Then the life enters the second half of the cycle, corresponding to night, where its activities are similar to those of sleep—the general renewal of the powers through the immersion of the individual soul in the Over Soul or spiritual principle. After a period of rest, there follows invariably another time of activity as regularly as day follows night.

By analogy, the whole life of the man is symbolized in the life of one day of the world's time, and his life in the heaven-world by a night's sleep; for, asleep on the physical plane, the soul is but the more untrammelled in its activities in

higher realms. In the morning, he, like the child, is under the influence of the night's slumber, and as he awakens more and more to the realities of life, he reaches the noon of strength and activity. Later, as his physical powers lessen with the declining sun, his higher moral nature matures, desire for earthly experience diminishes as his power of triumphing outwardly lessens, and night finds him ready, like a tired child, to rest once again on the bosom of Nature, the good nurse, who carries him back to the "Dweller in the Heart", the Lord of that realm and the Source of that refreshment and spiritual strength which he needs; and here he again resumes those relations that are necessary to his life but that had been temporarily suspended by his work in the world.

The soul may rest in this heaven-world for many years or for few, according to the law governing its destiny. If its merits in the past have been great, it will have much to assimilate and to learn, as well as a great deal of actual constructive work to do, so that long periods of time often elapse between the incarnations of those who are well-evolved. There are also many other intricate considerations governing the

time of rebirth, considerations into which we do not intend to enter here. And even in the case of persons of a very low order of development, who are lacking in moral strength, there are still very few who have not to their credit, when they pass from this terrestrial life, some atom of ideality, some intellectual aspiration, some unselfish action, capable of producing an effect for them in the world of Devakan, or the higher heaven. Here the intensity and duration of joy will be proportionate to their cause and each good deed will make for them a season of joy and of realization a thousand-fold exceeding their deserts. If they have had but one moment of ideality, this single moment will bear its fruit; this one note sounded on the lyre of life will be reproduced and will resound in prolonged harmony. The Devakanic state is, indeed, that realm where all our aimless aspirations come to fruition, our fallen hopes are realized and the dreams of our objective life become realities. The soul in this state enjoys a bliss beyond anything of which we can conceive; nor is there any disappointment possible, for the heaven of each one is his own creation, the work of his own aspirations and therefore exactly adapted to his capacities and capable of fulfilling his every wish.

But just as the physical life may be divided into periods, so the Devakanic state has its periods of increase, of intensity, then of gradual exhaustion, and after this, a time of entire oblivion—not death—followed by a new incarnation or physical rebirth.

And this cycle is repeated from the beginning to the end of a Manvantara.

Born again into a new personality we recommence work, creating new causes, which will lead to new effects, and these in their turn will be assimilated and harvested in a future Devakanic state.

"He, therefore," remarks an Adept, "who, by means of a long succession of incarnations and reincarnations, reaches, at last, the end of the chain of births and becomes a Buddha, or he who has attained to this happy state by a path which is well understood, and which puts him in possession of the complete development of his psychic faculties—this one has arrived at full knowledge; and in one of these births, the one that precedes the Great Victory, he will be able to contemplate all his past lives, as they unroll themselves before his eyes like a vast panorama, giving him the spectacle of the varied and diverse scenes that they caused to exist."



CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF KARMA

Sir Isaac Newton, in formulating his first Law of Movement, gave expression to one of the modes of Karma on the physical plane when he said: "Action and reaction are equal and opposite in direction." Science proclaims the law of cause and effect. Logic proceeds from the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents. Mill says: "Invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in Nature and some other fact which has preceded it." All of our common experience teaches us to act according to our own estimate of the consequences to follow; we work or rest, indulge ourselves or make sacrifices, scheme and plan, eat and drink, for the most part with regard to the effects of these activities upon our life as a whole. Thus do we observe the law of Karma on the physical plane and in the realm of thought.

Despite this universal acceptance by individuals of the law of cause and effect as it applies to their personal affairs, the religions of Christen-

dom have failed to recognize it as a moral principle. All great teachers have proclaimed, as with one voice, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This principle is distinctly set forth in the scriptures of all ages. Still, many Christians seek an escape for the sinner, by which his "reaction" will not be "equal and opposite in direction" to his action. Others, with greater courage and sincerity, recognize the law of compensation in the visible world and seek the principle of eternal and universal retributive justice, securing to every man the exact reward of his deeds, a principle which shall repair all human wrongs, make always for readjustment, and tend toward equilibrium in the physical and toward harmony in the moral world. This ideal of justice, which has thus far failed of intelligible expression in the religious teachings of the western world, is fully recognized in the Orient as the law of Karma.

To those who believe that we have but this one life, in which each must work out the salvation of his own soul, there is great inequality in the distribution of Nature's benefits. Some men are born poor and others rich, some are intelligent and others are imbecile, some live many

years and others but a few moments. The justice of God cannot be seen by him whose life is one long agony resulting from no fault of his own in this existence. The heart of the "good man," who knows no other teaching, aches for these tortured souls, and sometimes he turns away perforce from all religions, an atheist or an agnostic.

The law of Karma on the other hand discloses a God of strict justice, meting out to every man what he has himself earned and has created in the realm of cause and effect. But it shows also a God of love and mercy, offering numberless opportunities to triumph over the lower nature. Many lives are necessary to accomplish so great a task, and the soul passes through a countless series of incarnations to gain self-knowledge and self-mastery. He who will not learn from gentleness must learn from pain; but one single thought or aspiration toward the good, one unselfish, pure desire in the whole life assures the soul another opportunity. Even the weakest son of the Great Father has time and occasion to learn the lessons which his stronger brother has perhaps mastered in a few incarnations. Those who fail are not condemned. The God of justice

is also a God of infinite patience, and gives to every soul the opportunity to try again and again until every difficulty is surmounted and every weakness strengthened. The God of love wills that every soul shall be saved. Under this dispensation of mercy not one can go astray.

All religions agree that the soul of man is accountable for its actions. It is this sense of responsibility that separates man from the lower creations; it is the supreme mark of his divinity. Karma and Reincarnation are the bases upon which all true religion rests—Karma showing man courageously encountering his weaknesses, time after time, until he learns to master them and to know himself; Reincarnation providing him with the means to this arduous but glorious achievement.

Karma recompenses and chastises with absolute impartiality. It respects no personality, and its action may not be modified even by means of prayers. The same wondrous order that describes in the heavens the distinct yet interdependent ellipses of the planets prevails also in the moral world. Every life expresses that quality to which the individual has earned a right by work done and by victories gained in a past incarnation.

Man comes to earth with a three-fold personal Karma. First, there is his mass of unpaid debt, accumulated from the experiences of all his past lives. While much of this has been liquidated during his various incarnations, a balance remains that he has not yet been able to discharge. This, in the Sanscrit, is called Samchita. As this balance is the result of more than one past life, it may be too heavy and complicated to be laid upon the debtor's shoulders at one time, or in one life; therefore in the second place the Lords of Karma, the Masters who aid in the administration of the law, select from his liabilities a portion of his past Karma, with which he is to begin a new life. This is called Prarabdha, or the destiny of his present incarnation. Third, there is the new Karma, the new combination he is to make, called Kriamana. Over Samchita and Prarabdha the man has no control. In the past they were his own creation, since he made the causes of which they are the effects. Now he can work only in the third field, by accepting the old conditions and making from them a new future.

Man in the hands of Karma is like a child in the home of its parents. Food and clothing,

opportunities for instruction, all are freely and lovingly provided; but not the wisest of fathers or the tenderest of mothers can say to what use their child will put these advantages. They cannot grow for him or learn for him. His future is in his own hands, and for it he is responsible. Even his very presence in that family is due to causes which he set up in the long past, for we are born of the parents who can provide us with the opportunity to follow out some unsatisfied desire of long ago, to develop some trait of character, or to gratify some ambition.

The purpose of life is progress, not pleasure. He who believes that the chief object of life here and hereafter is happiness concentrates all his energies on the pursuit of some desire or aspiration which he expects will bring him pleasure. His concept of heaven is usually a state of blissful enjoyment for himself and his loved ones, with a selfish disregard of the tortures of others. On the other hand he who knows the law of Reincarnation thinks lightly of present pleasure or enjoyment, but is intent rather upon the preparation of a better future in another incarnation. To this end he suffers humbly and without complaint the buffetings of fortune, recog-

nizing in these present untoward circumstances the working of the law. For him life holds no chance happenings. He knows that destiny demands that he develop along particular lines and that Karma provides him with the necessary experiences and places him in a certain family, nation, and race, according to the requirements of his awakening nature. At some stages of his growth pain is his most effective teacher; therefore he gratefully accepts a life of struggle and suffering, the conflict being always between the spiritual self who knows and is striving upward toward freedom, and the astral or kamic nature which desires to enjoy.

If man rightly understood the meaning of this life and its purpose he would welcome many persons and experiences that he now puts away from him as unpleasant and wearisome. From this point of view it is not the one who comes to us with a smiling face and gracious words who is in reality our friend, but rather the one who does not hesitate to tell us an unpalatable truth, who gives us pain, who is a constant thorn in our side, who is perhaps even malicious or hostile. For such an one, though uncongenial, even impossible, is more useful than the one who

is always gentle. Every time we are able to turn aside one of his intended thrusts with some loving word he gives us the opportunity to pay an old debt. It was for this reason that the Lord Issa, and all the other Adepts before him, enjoined upon their disciples to love their enemies. For love alone can triumph over the law of Karma and loose its bonds.

Life on one plane is death on another. The struggle between the higher and lower natures of man continues throughout all his earth lives. When he attains to peace man will have become divine and will reincarnate no more.

A man who is at the head of a large organization comes in direct contact with many thousands of people. Every such touch, however slight, is not only the result of some cause in the past of each man, but is also the beginning of a new activity. Each one attracted into the organization is the better or the worse for the encounter. These lives have flowed into the central stream because of the general trend of individual ideas and the particular Karmic ties and debts which each has made in some former life. It is not by chance that we choose, or think we choose, the men to serve us or to work with

us. The universal law brings to us those who belong to our work or to us personally, or to some one associated with us. Karma adjusts every detail of our daily life. Man is; it is true, master of these conditions; he can take or refuse those who are sent to him; he can work with or against the law of Karma, and thus shorten or prolong the time of his earthly ordeal; but he cannot escape until he has paid the uttermost farthing of his debt. This is the law. Nor does the wise man desire to be freed until he has fully atoned for every evil action and thought.

For the most part man in his ignorance works against the law and for ages he is forced to reincarnate again and again, so that the strands of his tangled web may be patiently unraveled and rewoven into the Great Plan. To the onlooker the mass of threads lying before the weaver are hopelessly confused. It would appear that they could never take their place in a pattern. To the weaver, however, each strand is in its right place, and for each he has a use. The ordinary man cannot see, through the apparent complications of life, the working out of a plan, but those with a clearer understanding of the law are content to let the Great Weaver

work out his pattern and use them as his threads, in whatever way may be best. They are not anxious about the apparent confusion among the threads which have not yet been woven into the fabric. They trust and wait.

The law which governs in the world of affairs controls us in our social ties. Not one of these is idly formed, however ignorant we may be of the force which brings us together. You love some one with all the strength of your soul. Why? Because you have known this one before; he possesses certain qualities of attraction which bind your soul to his. He also loves you, and for the moment you are happy. But he may suddenly turn from you and say that he loves you no more. Then you feel that you are the most unhappy of beings. You are in despair. Yet this is just the moment when your future happiness is being prepared out of this very debt of suffering which you are paying. For pain comes to lead us to better things, and the more we suffer the more quickly we progress, for what is past will never come again. He who is wise will even rejoice instead of regretting the breaking of a bond of love, for he will know that this separation severs one more

of the ties that hold him to earth. Every personal association by which we unite our life to that of another interweaves with our own the strands of his Karmic responsibilities and increases our sufferings and our difficulty in eventually loosing ourselves from them. All love that depends upon the bodily presence of the loved one, every smile and word of affection sent out without a profound knowledge of the higher law, will be the cause of tears and suffering. Blessed is the Adept, who, loving all humanity, feeling for the sorrows of all, is freed from the plane of Maya. All must traverse this vale of woe, must live again and again according to the attachments formed in each incarnation, and until all of these Karmic debts are paid, we cannot come to the end of our incarnations.

If the individual is thus the center of a tangle of cross threads of other lives, knotted with his own beyond the power of loosing, how much more intricate becomes the problem when we consider that the law affects humanity in groups, the city, the state, the country, the race, the planet? Each one of these groups, great or small, has its rope of many strands to weave into the Great Plan, and each as an individual is evol-

ing through struggles, failures and victories—Karma. Consider the city as a type of the group, under the influence of this law. It is an individual, a being, a growing developing entity, with a Karmic history, comprising the sum-total of the good and evil traits of its past inhabitants. It is a mass of unfinished business, unrealized ideals, unsatisfied ambitions. It includes the Karma of the first man, the man who founded it, and that of all who have ever lived in it, of all those who have ever touched it in any manner or degree. And with this confused mass the city deals, day by day, and year by year, working off the old and creating new Karma, corresponding in nature to the purity or the corruption of its administration. Each member of the community bears his share of the burden. Although he may avoid office, he cannot escape the Karma of his city, and his future is appreciably influenced by every move made by those in authority as well as by every dweller, however humble his rôle.

The law works in precisely the same manner in the evolution of the larger organizations of men, the greater groups, the wider spheres of human activity. There is no place in all the field of man's endeavor, in all the realm of physical

or moral existence, where the Karma of the whole is not influenced by that of the individual. Christ suggested the infinite scope of this law when he said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God."

How inspiring is the knowledge that not even the weakest aspiration of the most rebellious soul, struggling upwards to the light, is lost, and that every cause must have its effect, not only in the life of the individual but of the race, the planet, the universe! A good thought sounds and resounds in the Akasha throughout eternity. Nothing can be lost, for the law of Karma gathers up the fragments of all energies.

This vital connection between every living being and the Creator, between the humblest and the most exalted of men, between all parts of the universe, presents yet another aspect when we come to consider the motives of men and to take account of all the emotions, desires, inherited tendencies and habits of thought which lead to any action. We must see that even the simplest movement may bear many interpretations and may lead to various and opposite Karmic results. For the nature of the effect will depend

upon the motive. For example: An alarm of fire is heard and three men start to run at full speed to the scene; each man is making Karma by his action, but the kind of Karma he makes, and the effects to which it will give rise in the future, depend upon various causes, chiefly his motive in hastening to the fire. Suppose that the first man is actuated solely by curiosity and an excitable temperament and that he merely watches the progress of the fire with the rest of the crowd: he will receive both immediately and later the due effect of his deed; he will have accentuated his propensities both as to curiosity and excitability, and attracted towards himself the dangerous fire elemental. Suppose that the second man runs because he is afraid a friend is in danger, but when he arrives at the scene he is too paralyzed with fear to be of service, and does nothing to help; his Karma will be better than that made by the first, because he is moved by love, or at least by interest in his neighbor; still, the results will not be wholly good, for an opportunity is afforded him to serve and through his former habits of fear-thought and lack of control over his emotions he is unable to take advantage of it. But suppose

the third man, knowing that a cool head and an unflinching courage are needed, hastens to the spot and, unknown, unsolicited, unnoticed, lends a hand wherever it is required, and when the danger is over retires, unthanked, without even measuring his own service in his thoughts; this man will make good Karma, for without thought of reward he is moved by pure love of his fellow, and of the universal life.

We cannot know how long it will be, as men count years, before the results of our present activities are seen. Only unimportant causes have immediate effects. The more far reaching the idea the longer it will be in realization, for its sphere of influence covers a larger field. The wing of an army is easier to manoeuvre than the main body, while a single regiment is easier still of management. But we do know that day by day, in every act of our lives, especially in every motive, thought and feeling, our new Karma grows on the one hand as we touch other lives, and dwindles on the other hand as we learn the lessons presented to us and are able to render good for evil. At the end of life the sum of all the causes left over is laid by in store. These causes are assimilated in the long sleep that fol-

lows active life in the world. The lesser tangles and loose ends are smoothed and straightened and the weak places are strengthened, so that, in the next incarnation, the soul comes forth, justly clothed in a garment woven from a stuff of its own making. All those desires that remained unsatisfied in the past life of the man become causes in his new life; his past ideals become his present circumstances; his former tendencies have endowed him with qualities; the ambitions he pursued without success in his previous incarnation he can now attain. It is as if he were a boy again and, having slept over night, goes on his way to school in the morning, refreshed and recruited, to take up all his activities at the place where he left them the day before, having grown and advanced toward maturity during the night.

Is there no way to escape? Are we to be forever bound upon the wheel of Karma? Does every life see us paying off old debts only to make as many new ones? There is the same escape for the race that there is for the school boy. So long as the boy is in the lower classes he must remain subject to the discipline of the school; but when he has graduated, having passed

through all the experiences and learned all the lessons which school life affords, he is then freed from its laws, he is no longer bound because he has transcended them and his obedience is not only ready and willing, but it is also intelligent. So the man who lives in the world but not of it, who works ardently yet without looking for personal gain, who loves and serves all men irrespective of what they may do or say to him, this one is free from Karma. He has graduated from the school of life.

Those who recognize the law of Karma consciously build up their own immortality from day to day and from life to life. They purify every thought and action, knowing that upon these is based their own destiny. They learn to act for the good of all, regardless of the reaction. They rise above the operation of the law of Karma, and, transcending cause and effect, build, not only their own immortality, but the destiny of the planet.

As a stone, cast into a calm lake, causes ripples to spread in ever widening circles until at last the whole surface is moved, so is the influence of one strong life—nay, of one pure thought!

In the Vedas we read:

“Sow a thought and reap an action;
Sow an action and reap a habit;
Sow a habit and reap character;
Sow character and reap a destiny!”

CHAPTER IX

"Learn above all to separate head-learning from Soul Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine . . . The doctrine of the eye is for the crowd; the doctrine of the heart for the elect."

—Voice of the Silence

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION OF THE ORDER

At this moment, when the fate of the race stands trembling upon the threshold of the New Era, it becomes necessary, above all things, to point out clearly to the disciple the path to follow, and to give forth in plain language the main principles and methods by which the awakening soul may be guided.

"Fiat Lux," Let there be Light, is the cry of the New Era,—light upon our social problems, light for our intellectual upliftment, but, above all, let the light shine forth from the spiritual nature of man!

And the dawn is with us. The barriers, that have hitherto shut us in and separated us from

the world of the invisible, are already down, as anyone who enters the field of psychic science may see. It is now plain that man can receive impressions by other and more subtle means than through the physical senses—thought-transference has proved it again and again. A new world is open to the man who wills, and throngs are stepping forward over the threshold.

To all such we say, "Pause," for there are, as ever, two paths opening before the aspirant: the broad and pleasant way, strewn with the beautiful flowers of phenomena sought for their own sake, and fed by streams of flattery and adulation; and the steep and narrow path, whose thorns tear the feet of the disciple, and whose waters are oftentimes bitter to the taste. The broad way is full of brilliant promises to the one who is looking for ease, for greatness, for powers, or for any of the good things of life; while the narrow path makes no such appeal; it is rugged and arduous. And these two paths will present themselves before the seeker continually, until he shall have made his final choice of one or the other; therefore it is that we say "Pause, and consider!" The narrow path demands the exercise of Will, Self-Sacrifice and

Constancy; but he who follows it is more than repaid, for its discipline develops the dormant faculties of the real man, and enables him to learn at the fountain-head the secrets of Nature. It alone leads to the goal; the pleasant path leads nowhere!

The instructions of the Order of the Initiates of Thibet take the disciple by the hand from the very place where he finds himself—whether he be in distress and doubt, or whether he have already reached the higher plane of faith and certainty. They show him the plan of his life and a reason for his experiences, and they teach him how to choose safely for himself among the varied inducements held out to him on all sides.

The Guru, or Instructor, knows that all true advancement is to be attained by the evolving of the innate qualities of the disciple, and not by the amount of knowledge imbibed; he, therefore, allows every soul to learn its own lesson in the way it chooses, and when some apparently take a downward path for a time, he does not make any attempt to hold them; for their very downward trend shows him that they have yet back work to make up, qualities to evolve, Karma to work off, before they can continue the ascent.

Occult Science prefers to educate (*E'duco*), to bring forth out of man that which sleeps within, rather than to instruct; and to this end he is left free to receive or to reject, to eat or to go hungry. If he is sceptical and refuses to receive a truth, or if he is careless and allows a teaching to pass by him unnoticed, the Guru remains silent, well aware that whatever the disciple is ready to accept he will recognize and appropriate, while no amount of argument, explanation or demonstration will enable him to recognize what he is unable to receive.

Nor is the instruction delivered as a science already-made, which the student has but to learn by heart; Esoterism is not the same for any two persons, for it consists in evolving the peculiar virtue of each one and thus awakening the individual soul. The Master leaves the student free to do his own thinking. One day, for example, he will give a demonstration of the disintegration and reintegration of matter, or of the power of the "vril." These will arouse the attention and thought of the disciple if he is humble, or will stir his curiosity and perhaps stimulate his doubt and criticism if he has not yet learned humility. In any case they will arrest

his attention and set him thinking, and therefore growing. Then, some other day, after allowing a short interval for the germination of the seed sown, the Guru will present the scientific principle back of cohesion and of force; and if the disciple is alert and intelligent he will make his own connection between the principle of today and the earlier demonstration, and this one realization will open his eyes to a whole field of thought, and will explain many other phenomena of the same nature as those presented. If however he is one of those persons who "know it all" this attitude of his will at once shut the door to all progress in any school whatever. Argument, doubt and discussion are also deadly foes to spiritual advancement.

The Guru is so far in advance of those whom he instructs, that his disciples, who are called *Lanus* and afterwards *Chelas*, revere him and yield him a willing and glad obedience, as to a superior being. This attitude of humility on the part of the one who learns is very favorable to the reception of high spiritual teaching. When, on the other hand, there is no such vast difference to be seen in the spiritual attainment of teacher and taught, when all are living the same life, all

equally intent upon their own aims and ambitions, all seeking after happiness here and hereafter, and living with regard to what can be enjoyed on this plane,—the layman, who sees that his pastor is not so very far in advance of himself, has not that deep reverence for his teachings that he should have. He is even ready, at the first opportunity, to criticise the actions of his superior, and thus he closes his own door to progress; for the spirit of criticism or judgment is inimical to all true advancement. Every Great Teacher has emphasized this truth: "Judge not!" "Who art thou that judgest another?" "Be ye therefore as little children," we read in our own Scriptures; and the same spirit is to be found throughout all the Sacred Books of the Orient.

The Guru has passed through all the grades of earth's school and graduated. He has learned far in advance of those about him the lore of Nature and material forces. Nor is his wisdom limited to this planet, for, in his flights through space, he has investigated, at first hand, the conditions of life in other worlds, so that the Solar System, its laws, conditions and destiny, hold no mystery for him. He has raised himself by a determined and systematic line of effort, carried

on through many lives, from the lower ground on which the Chela stands, step by step, to his present opportunity to serve; and this height, this difference of attainment, is recognized and revered. Every word of such a teacher is treasured, his every wish is sacred, while to minister to his material welfare is a privilege eagerly sought for and embraced; for the Guru is felt by the disciple to be the open door between the world and God, between his own soul and the Divine, inasmuch as he enters at will the invisible world of spirit and is in immediate touch with the Great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, those who show forth the Divine Presence and declare God's Will.

The instruction given in our Centers in the Occident takes a line between these two extremes; for although our Western teachers who conduct the work of the Members, are not always Gurus, and may not therefore excite the same feeling of veneration toward themselves, yet they are provided with the teachings of the Order in writing, and are, at times, supported by a Guru, or even by a Great Master in person. Being thus upheld and fed with the Water of Life direct from its Source, our Centers attract to themselves those

strong souls in the world who belong to the particular work which the New Era is bringing, and form them into a band of brotherhood which is reaching around the world.

The Order of the Initiates of Thibet teaches that the object of all existence is to know and love God, and the method of attaining to such knowledge is by service. Silently and secretly the disciple is bidden to sacrifice himself and to serve his fellow-man—his energies being at all times directed towards a single aim, "the advancement of the Holy Cause of Eternal Truth."

Will is the first of powers. Will supplies the initial vibration which makes possible any act of creation. The cultivation of the Will is therefore of prime importance to the disciple and he is taught to lose no single opportunity that his outer life offers of stimulating its activity. By means of the Will, man can steer a straight path through all the difficulties which beset him in the world, neither stumbling nor turning aside even when confronted by problems which are apparently impossible of solution. He uses the power which he has at his disposal today upon the unpleasantnesses and the obstacles of today, obliging himself to serve when he would rather rule,

to work when he would rather play, to love when he would sooner hate. And by these small victories his Will is strengthened and he is able to meet the trials of tomorrow.

There are two ways of living, the one creative and the other productive, the one synthetic and the other analytical. Both of these aspects are good and each has its place in the life of the disciple. Creation is however first and must be always predominant: he must be first of all and above everything else a creator, for this is his birthright. It is to this end that he has so lately been endowed with the higher faculties of reason and memory, imagination, intuition and perception. The Will acts upon all these faculties; it supplies the initial vibration, and as man learns to use this power and direct it on to the higher planes, he brings forth from the realms of the unknown, not material children in his own physical image, but children of his higher nature.

In all the teachings of the Order which are given out along the lines of generation, the attention of the disciple is always fixed on the higher intellectual and spiritual planes; the instruction is given by means of symbols and the mind is never allowed to fall to the material

plane, this being accounted as the grossest and least important manifestation of a sacred truth. The Great Initiates teach us that all evolution, whether physical, psychic, mental or spiritual is effected through generation; and when this truth is recognized, the morality resulting from its true appreciation will be seen to be something infinitely more than a matter of convention only; it is the expression in life of a principle which requires the correlation of all planes in "universal equilibrium, which must be ever harmonious and perfect."

Equilibrium in nature is the point towards which all forces tend. A cup of hot water set in a room of moderate temperature will radiate its heat until the water reaches the mean temperature of the air about it. A pendulum, if disturbed and set swaying, will continue to vibrate to and fro as long as the force of the impulsion lasts, but each outswing will be less than the one before it until at last it comes to rest. Thus the forces of the Universe come forth into manifestation, from One issue Two or Duality; these two separate, oppose each other, then gradually return to that Unity and equilibrium from which they came forth. Since this is the perpetual law

of the Universe, the man who understands it and holds himself at the center can make use of all obstacles and opposing forces and cause them to serve his own purposes, while he remains ever poised, calm and concentrated. We see this power of poise in all great leaders of men and in those who hold in their hands the safety and welfare of thousands. In the life of the disciple especially, poise is an outward sign of advancement. It is not always the eloquent speaker or the brilliant writer who is the Great Soul, but the one who is calm and poised at critical moments. When we observe a man serene in all great crises and at the same time active in serving others, who is always at his best in a moment of danger, and whose equilibrium is never disturbed by any of the so-called accidents of life—then we know that this one is stayed upon some power greater than the common.

We have known occasions, however, when an apparent equilibrium and self-control have been due to weakness rather than strength. A man has been known to receive the news of complete financial ruin and make no sign of suffering; another will see his home broken up through some calamity over which he has no control,

and though his happiness is destroyed, yet he may remain unmoved.

But this immobility is not necessarily a sign of strength; it may result from apathy or inertia. True poise includes something more than an outward calm, something higher than stolid indifference; it rests upon an inner activity and power to reconstruct, and the disciple will always show, in addition to a serene bearing, a great activity in serving his fellow and the power to rebuild what disaster has torn down. This creative power of reconstruction is one of the marks of greatness in any of the walks of life. Take, for example, the characteristics and the exigencies of the life of some man whose profession places him in a position of great responsibility. This creative power of which we are speaking is of the first importance, for instance, to the Captain of an Ocean-liner, for, at a moment's notice, he may be called upon to face the direst peril—not to himself and his own life alone, but to the thousands whose lives, at that instant, touch his own, both those on land and those about him on sea. If we have ever observed the Captain at such a moment of danger, we have found him quick, resourceful, energetic in command, but

calm almost to apparent indifference—caring for each one on the ship individually, as well as collectively, but at the same time keenly alive to every favoring circumstance of wind and wave, and able to take advantage of these in his efforts to save the boat. This is not the calmness of indifference although outwardly it resembles it, nor is it a want of sympathy, but it is the poise of attainment—the result of a life well-spent; it is not the outcome of a moment's emotion but the natural culmination of a long series of efforts through many lives.

And this supreme moment, which to the ordinary man may come but once or twice in a lifetime, is a constant quantity in the life of the disciple. This quality which we have seen displayed in the Captain at a time of great strain, is the faculty that the disciple is required to cultivate and use at every moment. The Will of the disciple must be ever on the alert, strong enough and quick enough to meet any emergency however overwhelming or sudden, and every minute of his life must be to him like the moment of danger to the Captain—a focussing point of the whole of his activities, bringing up to his assistance all the knowledge and wisdom he has made

his own during the whole of his present and former lives. The true disciple lives at this high state of tension; each moment is to him of value; upon every situation, however trivial, he brings to bear all the forces born of past experiences, and having but one aim—the service of God and of his fellow-man—he is always at peace.

Esoterism is very difficult. Its demands upon the disciple are imperative, dominant and all-embracing. It requires of him not alone intellectual study, but a changed life; not alone morality, but spirituality.

In the "Voice of the Silence," as we quoted at the head of our chapter, the disciple is bidden to choose the doctrine of the "heart" rather than the doctrine of the "eye." This has ever been the teaching of the Great Masters whom we follow. The doctrine of the heart is synthetic. All its energies are focused at the center and in the inner man. For this it cares first of all, because it recognizes that at the center is the life. The doctrine of the eye, on the other hand, is analytical; it thinks much of the instruments through which the manifestation of life is made possible, and its attention is outward into the

mazes of intellect and of phenomena. The teachings of our Order to students of the first degree have little to say concerning body and the outer man, but much about the inner fire of his Divine nature.

The individual is often compared to a lighthouse, set up on a wild and rocky shore to light the forlorn and shipwrecked mariner. Every day the disciple feeds and trims his lamp, for the brilliancy of the central flame, the Divine Spark, is the one essential to the lighthouse, and the brighter it burns, the more useful the beacon. His first care and devotion are therefore given to the light itself and its dazzling clearness; but he does not, on this account, neglect to brighten the reflectors and all the outer windows through which the light must shine. The more the energy of his being is concentrated in feeding the flame, the more surely will he purify his instruments and clear the outer channels, the windows of his lighthouse. He whose light burns pure will have clean windows. He, however, who concentrates his attention on the outer and makes his first consideration the purification of the outer envelope, is meanwhile putting the main object of

life, the awakening of the spirit, into the second place.

We have dwelt for a moment here upon the principle of intellectualism and analysis which is not our own method, so that the disciple may well distinguish between the two schools. Analysis is good in its place, but this is second and never first in the spiritual life. Synthesis, on the other hand, leads to concentration, and this again to creation; and so our own school lays a great stress upon the development of the creative power in man. While teaching the action and interaction of the positive and negative in nature, it always warns the disciple against falling into mechanical and negative habits of thought. It requires him to be ever "up and doing," believing that it is better to attempt and fail than to remain inert and passive. He who would advance must learn to concentrate his forces, and this he will not do by listening, by speaking, or by reading even—but by action on the physical plane and by concentration on the spiritual.

In the first days of his awakening, reading and the hearing of lectures will fan the tiny flame; at that early stage, talking with those who

are more advanced than himself will be of great service, and may hasten his development; but all of these things are scattering and dissipating to his *own* forces. They cause him to take in food from without, and spend his own strength in assimilating it, and while this is a very necessary preparation for work, yet it is not work in itself: if no fruit is born of that flower, then is that flower barren and useless. So, let the disciple understand that, though reading and talking and the hearing of lectures are all good, yet Silence is better; for in the Silence the Soul grows.

In the awakening of the Soul and its after development, the teacher makes use, not only of instruction both synthetic and analytical, of demonstration and the enunciation of principle, but also of a still more powerful and vital method—discipline.

The disciple is not understood to know a thing until he has experienced it. He has not conquered a fault, in the opinion of his teacher, until he has been tried in every possible part of his nature experimentally along that particular line. Thus the tests of the Order are not given in writing but in the blood of the heart. The

student is not presented with a question upon some one of life's problems and required to put down on paper what he would do under given circumstances; but, by the guidance of the Masters of the Order, the Karma of that soul is so grouped as to bring him the very circumstances that will try to the uttermost his powers of choice. He will be led, step by step, apparently without the intervention of any unusual agency, but nevertheless under the invisible guidance of the Master, into situations where he must inevitably either fall or stand upright, and where he will learn a useful lesson in either case. If he falls he will learn to know his own weakness and will have opportunity of strengthening himself; if he is able to stand upright and to resist the temptation, his victory will give him added energies to attempt and undertake the impossible in the future. For the Esoteric disciple is always required to attempt the impossible and it is thus that he builds his immortality. The doing of the possible and the apparent is for the ordinary man; but he who creates, who brings forward some form of activity which has until now been latent, and who is thereby a benefactor of the race, is always scaling impossible heights.

As we have said, Esoterism is not an easy path, but it is the way that is opening out before a great many souls at the present time, and each one enters upon this path when his hour has struck. It is a path full of paradoxes for it looks at life from the standpoint of the soul, whereas the world in general always considers the personality. The discipline, and therefore the difficulties, of esoterism all center about this point. The laws of the world refer to the outer life of the citizen, and decree what he shall or shall not *do*; esoterism teaches what he must *be* and its laws all have to do with self-control and the use of the spiritual powers. Little is said of ordinary vices and faults of body, for it is understood that the aspirant is already an exemplary citizen; but the greatest stringency is required to be exercised over the thoughts and desires of the lower man; for he who enters upon this path and then permits himself to indulge in jealousy, or any form of hatred, is in danger of being torn to pieces by the very forces he invoked to his aid when he entered. And what is true of the individual is equally true of groups of men; so long as the aim is high and unselfish, and the thoughts pure, the group is strong and united; but as soon as

the individuals begin to have selfish ideas of something to be gained for themselves as apart from the interests of the whole, they are on the downward path. Beware, O disciple, of separating thyself, even for a moment, in thy thoughts from the whole; for from separate desire comes jealousy of those more favored, then dissatisfaction, intolerance and hatred with all its train will follow, and these will consume thy soul with fierce burning. When the candidate approaches our Order for Initiation, he tears down, by that action, a part of the wall which until now has shut out from him "the knowledge of good and evil," and while receiving the beneficent influence of the good, he is also more open to the evil suggestions of less evolved entities. It behoves him therefore to fortify himself and watch carefully his thoughts and desires. Having entered one of our Centers, he will perhaps be offered his choice, in one way or another, between remunerative work for himself and less lucrative employment in serving the Order or the world. If he choose work for the world, then will follow the temptation to personal self-seeking even in the work. He will be tried in every part of his nature, and observed under the tests by the

Master who is guiding him; ambition will be presented to him in a very specious and subtle way; or it will be suggested to him that his aid is essential to the work and he will be tempted to pride; his prejudices will be stirred; his lower nature will constantly assert itself in favor of ease and comfort or of enjoyment, all for the sake of the work. Every day will bring its own problem, and unless he is very pure-hearted he will inevitably fall sometimes. The disciple, however, who has entered upon the path of esoterism does not "stay fallen." He is no sooner down than he rises quickly to his feet, and with more care continues his way. Thus every fall is a step upwards.

In the beginning of his discipleship, the principal discipline centers around the subjugation of the personality, and the killing out of such faults as criticism and the others we have enumerated; but every day, month by month and year by year, the disciple becomes both freer and more tightly bound; for by one of those strange paradoxes which mark the esoteric life, the more freedom he attains from the bonds of his lower nature the more closely does he cling to the ties of his inner spiritual Self. Therefore the law by which

he lives becomes daily more stringent as he is more exacting with himself; and what would have been a virtue and a great victory yesterday is today but an ordinary stepping-stone. The height which was before him last year is today behind his back and another height with still more glorious promise is ahead of him—and this is life.

At this period Silence and Secrecy begin to be required, in order that by adding them to Sacrifice, which he has already been practising, the Lanu may gather to a center his deeper and inner forces. We see this in nature, when the seed germinates in the darkness and the silence of the earth, undergoing changes of which it is little conscious. All this is secret.

It is unfortunate that this word, with so profound a meaning, should have been used in recent years to cloak the baser designs of men, so that today, if anything is spoken of as being "secret," the ordinary person at once imagines something too shameful to bear the light. Thus secret societies are supposed to be banded together for the protection of persons and things which are below the normal standard of morality in the world, instead of beyond and above, as

in ancient times. There must always be secret things so long as men are not full-grown. So long as the race is still advancing, there will always be inequalities of intellectual acquirement and of spiritual growth; and every such inequality involves a "secret." For example, two dear friends may be most congenial and closely united, but however much they may wish to share every confidence, there will always be some subtler shades of meaning that each understands his own way, there will be some lines of thought along which the one knows that the other cannot follow him, there will be some ideals that one has but the other does not share, though he would. No two souls are alike, and the differences constitute the secrets of each one—the heights of their natures which are theirs alone—the depths into which no other soul can follow them. The real word "secret" is synonymous with "sacred," and this is the sense in which it is used in esotericism. And the "secrets" of Secret Societies may be, and sometimes are, of the same nature; for what is true of the individual is true of the community. Those persons who are more nearly alike in ideals or in habits of thought will come together into a group, and many things that

they know and do will, of necessity, be secrets from another group of persons with different ideals, just as the ideals of this second group will be secrets from the first group; not because either one of these is engaged in any operations of a doubtful nature, but simply that they look at life from a side which the others could not, if they would, understand.

Esoterism, as we explained in our first chapter, is, above all things, secret. It appeals to the deeps and the heights whence the soul cries out to the "Father who seeth in secret." Every heart has a sacred place which is open to God alone. This is the place of the Silence in his own soul, and from it will issue both sacrifice and willing service; for it is at once the dwelling of the disciple and of the Most High. All service to be truly acceptable must be both secret and sacrificial, just as sacrifice must be in secret, and as silence must bind all three in one whole.

S stands for Esoterism; it also symbolizes the three duties of the disciple: Sacrifice, Silence and Service. This is why the serpent, or the letter S, is so prominently displayed in all the insignia of Occult and Esoteric Orders. The Old Serpent, so well known to Bible students, is used in

occultism to represent the Great Force latent throughout all nature which the disciple learns to use with more and more certainty and power as he advances from plane to plane of evolution. Very little in explanation of this force is given out to Members of the first degree, for whom this text-book is primarily written, this degree being, for their own safety, one of preparation, by the methods we have outlined, for the awakening of the higher powers. The soul of man evolves continually and for ever, and even the Adeptate, in which it reaches an exalted state of human evolution has its degree of attainment. By laborious, personal discipline and by arduous work, often reaching through many incarnations the Adept takes step after step, Initiation after Initiation, and always he sees before him other steps leading toward Divinity.

It has been said: "Speech is for Time, Silence for Eternity," and truly the Silence surrounding these Great Souls is awful, and the Secrets which they hold but cannot yet communicate, give us, who sometimes catch a glimpse of their faces, some appreciation of the great gulf which still separates the race of today from the man that shall be.

Will! Be Able! Dare! and Keep Silence! for
To think is to create!

"HE WHO FEELS HIS HEART BEAT PEACEFULLY,
HE SHALL HAVE PEACE."

