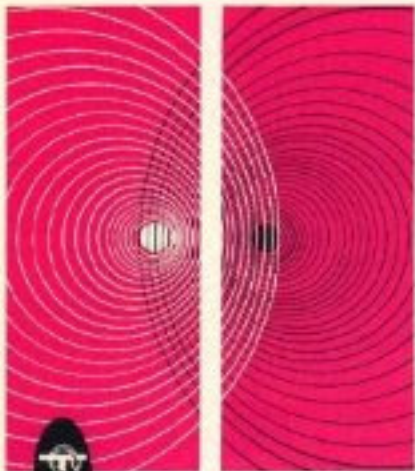


# DYNAMICS OF THE PSYCHIC WORLD

comments by **H. P. BLAVATSKY**

on **MAGIC — MEDIUMSHIP — PSYCHISM**  
and **THE POWERS OF THE SPIRIT**

compiled with notes by **LINA PSALTIS**



**A QUEST BOOK . . . \$1.95**

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## DYNAMICS OF THE PSYCHIC WORLD

PSYCHIC phenomena, magic, hypnotism, spiritualism, planes of perception, dreams, and spiritual progress—these are some of the subjects discussed in this collection of excerpts from the writings of one of the most famous occultists of history—Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

H. P. Blavatsky, who lived in the last century (1831-91), was able to produce unusual psychic phenomena and exercised extraordinary powers of extrasensory perception. Because of her unorthodox approach she was greatly maligned and suffered public calumny and slander. At the same time she won fame for her deep metaphysical knowledge and erudition and left a rich mine of literary work, which is still in great demand. She was cofounder of The Theosophical Society, which was established in New York in 1875 and quickly spread throughout the world.

In this small book the compiler has drawn together from various sources some of the important and interesting statements made by H. P. Blavatsky nearly a century ago on subjects which are arousing wide interest today. Her comments not only reveal something of her profound knowledge and wisdom, but they are fascinating, informative, relevant, and contain valuable advice to those who would dabble in psychic realms without being aware of their dangers and pitfalls.

## FOREWORD

CHILD of the past and parent of the future, the twentieth century has seen the fulfillment of the prophecy made by H. P. Blavatsky \* to the effect that this century would fall heir to an outburst of psychism. At face value, this would not seem of any great import, if it were not for the fact that simultaneously with a reawakened interest in phenomena of the unseen worlds has come the breaking up of the forms and beliefs of traditional Christianity, resulting in an emotional vacuum.

Not only the general public, but many ministers and members of the academic world are now investigating and experimenting with psychic phenomena. Being heirs to a culture that has traditionally frowned upon such “foolishness,” they have no philosophical foundation upon which to build a spiritually balanced concept of the supra-normal.

It is this ignorance of the spiritual leaders—an ignorance brought about by centuries of repression and distortion of the knowledge regarding man’s inner Self by a bigoted and dominating church hierarchy, aided and abetted by a scientific community dedicated to the god Materialism—that H. P. B. sought to leaven by pointing the way to the wisdom and knowledge of the ancients; a knowledge handed down from generation to generation of devoted servants of truth and a wisdom none is asked to accept on faith, but a wisdom that lies buried and forgotten in the scriptures of the religions of the world and concealed in the writings of alchemists. This ancient wisdom can homogenize the duality of science and religion. “The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge gives death without the fruit of the Tree of Life. Man must know *himself* before he can hope to know the ultimate genesis even of beings and powers less developed in their inner nature

\* Hereinafter generally referred to as H. P. B.

than himself. So with religion and science; united two in one they were infallible, for the spiritual intuition was there to supply the limitations of physical senses. Separated, exact science rejects the help of the inner voice, while religion becomes merely dogmatic theology—each is but a corpse without a soul.” So she wrote in her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, which was published in 1877.

Faced with the downfall of religious idols erected by generations of believers, the present generation is fast filling the vacuum with another idol—the psychic world. H. P. B. cautioned repeatedly that man must reach from the spiritual to the psychic else he would be subject to mental, psychic and physical dangers which are “ inevitable when that unfolding [of psychic powers] takes place. . . in a hot-bed of selfishness and evil passions.” If what she terms “ large-minded and noble ideas of Religion, Duty and Philanthropy ” and the cornerstone of Theosophy, Universal Brotherhood, prevail, then “ man’s mental and psychic growth will proceed in harmony with his moral improvement, while his material surroundings will reflect the peace and fraternal good-will which will reign in his mind. . . . ” \* It is a noble cause that man serves- when he begins to thrust aside the veils of ignorance, superstition and self-deceit. It is to be hoped that this little book will aid this cause. It may anger some and dismay others, for the knowledge of the psychic world as given by her disavows much that is- being or has been taught by well-known and diverse authorities-

Never utter these words: “I do not know this—therefore it is false.”

One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge.

—NARADA

LINA PSALTIS, *Editor*

\* The preceding quotations are contained in the concluding chapter of *The Key To Theosophy* by H. P. Blavatsky.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is divine philosophy alone, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with nature, which, by revealing the fundamental truths that lie hidden under the objects of sense and perception, can promote a spirit of unity and harmony in spite of the great diversities of conflicting creeds.\*

*A Master of Wisdom*

MARSHALLING evidence from religions dead and living, from philosophers of all ages, from the science of the 19th century, H. P. Blavatsky presented to a skeptical world the reality of man's inner capacity and potentiality. Never stating the mass of knowledge given to be other than what mankind has had available to it in greater or lesser degree from the dawn of man, she laid forth the foundation upon which could be constructed the understanding of man himself—not just as a “creature of environment and slave of physical memory,” but as an aspect of that which he calls God.

Directing the attention of her readers to the recurring pattern of “sevening” that exists throughout nature, she broke down the composite nature of man into seven categories. Drawing upon the teachings of immemorial antiquity, man was shown to be an assemblage of all the elements, forces, substances and energies of the universe; hence, a miniature universe, or a universe within a universe. She showed the way for man to conquer *inner space*, and thus integrate his varied and often confusing physical, psychical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Indeed, she said the doors that lead to the mysteries of the universe must remain closed to the aspirant for wisdom until he solves the mystery of his own being.

An understanding of the sevenfold structure of man requires that we encompass the tradition of reincarnation, as it applies

\* *Collected Collect Writings*, Vol. VII, p. 173.



to man on this planet. The term is used to describe the dynamic process of evolution brought about through a series of periodic embodied existences on the lower or material planes of life, followed by a period of disembodied existences or rest in invisible spheres or planes of being. This periodic oscillation between existence in form and existence in pure consciousness is but a facet of the universal law of action and reaction (called in theosophy by the Sanskrit term *karma*), of dynamic growth and recessive quiescence, followed by another cycle of growth, etc. The direction is always toward further expansion of consciousness, of greater reaches of what in man is called mind. It is an eternally dynamic progression in which *all* spheres of nature participate; an evolution of form and an evolution of consciousness from potential to actual.

The following table illustrates the foregoing as it applies to man (Sanskrit terms are employed in theosophical literature as comparable terms have not as yet come into popular usage in the English language):

UPPER DUAD	{	Ātman	{	SPIRIT OR INNER GOD
		Buddhi		
INTERMEDIATE DUAD	{	Manas (Mind)	{	SOUL OR PSYCHE
		Kâma (Emotion, Desire)		
LOWER TRIAD	{	Prâṇa (Electromagnetic Field)	{	BODY
		Lîṅga-śarîra (Model or Energy Body)		
		Sthûla-śarîra (Physical Body)		

The upper duad is the essence of man, his spiritual Self, the divine-spiritual monad. This is that aspect of the constitution which is unconditionally immortal, it is the inner God of everyr

man—the Father to whom Jesus prayed. Atman is the undifferentiated homogeneous Source of Being. It is, therefore, a universal principle and should not be thought of as a personalized aspect of the Divine.

Buddhi is the center of intuition, spiritual awareness, discrimination, wisdom, compassion, impersonal love, and direct perception of Reality uncolored by personal conceptions or desires. The nature of these two seats of consciousness cannot be grasped by our finite minds; their influence is as a glorious radiance of illumination gradually penetrating the purified and awakened manas or mind which, once illuminated, is capable of comprehending infinitude. It is with the principle called buddhi that differentiation commences.

Manas can be translated broadly as mind. It is the aspect of consciousness wherein is contained self-awareness or self-consciousness. At this stage of evolution, the entity has the power of choice, exercised by the use of the will. And thereby hangs the tale, for its chief characteristic is duality. No doubt everyone is aware of being pulled first in one direction, then in another diametrically opposite one in thought, word and deed at various times, by forces within seemingly beyond our comprehension. These forces are the result of the duality of manas, *the keynote of mind being polarization*. These poles exist within man as centers of attraction, either to the spiritual pole which is the spiritual individuality, or to the pole of the terrestrial personality which includes the animalistic impulses, the emotions, and the material, separative intelligence. The spiritual pole embodies the concept of the cosmic consciousness wherein no “me and thee” can exist, for all are One; the lower personal consciousness of the material pole embodies the concept of “me and mine” against all else.

Ignoring all the others, and cursing them as false, every special colored ray claims not only priority, but to be *that white ray* itself, and anathematizes even its own tints from

light to dark, as heresies. Yet, as the sun of truth rises higher and higher on the horizon of man's perception, and each colored ray gradually fades out until it is finally reabsorbed in its turn, humanity will at last be cursed no longer with artificial polarizations, but will find itself bathing in the pure colorless sunlight of eternal truth. ... \*

When illumined by the light of the spiritual individuality, buddhi, manas is what might be termed the higher human Ego, the spiritual intellect, the seat or force-field of the reincarnating Ego.\*\* It is the center of foresight, deliberate reasoned choice, judgment,, association of ideas, and is a creative center of consciousness. Manas is usually classified as higher manas when mind is illumined by buddhi, or wisdom, and lower manas when mind is functioning on the level of the kamic, or *self-ish*., desires. Intellectual capacities, even of the highest, do not necessarily reflect a spiritual polarization. An intellectual giant can be a spiritual midget.

Kama, or desire, as the center of the vital psycho-electric impulses such as desires, passions, aspirations, considered in their energetic aspects, is consequently the elemental or driving force in the field of consciousness and as such is neither good nor bad. It depends for its use and direction upon mind, just as electricity can either kill or light a city, depending upon its user. As the desire-element is universal and active on all planes, there is,, therefore, a divine and spiritual kama graduating down to the gross, emotional, selfish energies. The lower energies of kama uncontrolled by the higher energies are represented by the instinctual, sensuous, self-centered qualities; when controlled by the inner Self, the higher energies of kama become a powerful

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\* H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, Section IV.

\*\* H. P. B. defines the terra Ego as "... Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two *Egos* in man, the mortal or *personal*, and the Higher, the Divine and the Impersonal, calling the former 'personality' and the latter 'Individuality'." (*Theos. Glossary*.) The term Reincarnating Ego refers to an aspect of the latter.

force which can be utilized for constructive purposes. Kama- manas, or lower manas, is the term employed to indicate that stage of evolution when the entity must and does experience the pain of an existence which regards all outside of himself as the enemy. Once this stage of experience is completed, and he functions consciously in conjunction with buddhi, and activates the higher energies of kama, he becomes truly MAN. Mankind as a whole is functioning on the kama-manasic level.

The individual is building throughout his lifetime a force- field of emotional thoughts and impulses, called in theosophy the kama-rupa, or desire-form, which is karmically destined to be reflected in the physical form, either during this life or in a future life. The kama-rupa is the form used by the entity in the first stage of the after-death state. Man is the absolute creator of his destiny, for he has the faculty of imagination, (the image- producing faculty), and will. Hence it is that those who teach mind cure have glimpsed only a portion of the truth, for if they were to encompass reincarnation and karma they could teach their adherents to build for the future; Jesus called it “ treasures stored in Heaven.”

That which is called the soul is *mortal as to the lower polarization and immortal only in the spiritual polarization*. That which is sown on healthy soil, to paraphrase, grows to fruition; that which is sown on unhealthy soil lives not to see the harvest, but is thrown back into the great mill of the Gods.

The lower triad is completely mortal and is a composite of a physical frame with vital-astral and physical forces. The physical body, the sthula-sarira, is the form which serves as the container of the inner principles or consciousness centers. It can also be thought of as the form which serves the inner Man with a point of contact with the physical world, enabling the soul' to gain experience and knowledge and thus fulfill its destiny.

The linga-sarira, or astral body as it is sometimes called, is composed of a finer substance than the physical and serves as the

link between the mind and the physical body. Through this astral or model body flow the higher vibrations or energies. At this level these energies are transformed into a lower frequency. The characteristic of the astral form is plasticity and extreme sensitivity; it responds instantly to thoughts and emotions, transmitting these to the physical form and vice versa. It is formed before birth, hence is also called the model body, for upon this model is built atom by atom and cell by cell the physical body.

The term “ astral body ” can lead to considerable confusion. It is used by some writers to apply to those energies of the *subphysical* structure. As used by H. P. B., it can apply to the various energy fields of the higher principles, or what are often called the inner bodies. It should be borne in mind by the student that these gradations of energy-substance can only be given a specific name when specific knowledge is available. The term bioplasmic body as used in certain scientific fields may prove to be a more explicit term for the *linga-sarira*.

Prana, or vitality, is the electromagnetic field manifesting as life or vital currents. It is Cosmic Life in one of its manifestations, specializing during the life span of a particular form. Every physical and astral life-atom has its own prana or life, and all are bathed in vital currents of energy which issue from the inner Man and return after death to the great reservoir of nature.

Thus it is that man is described as being sevenfold. He responds to seven distinct but correlated wavelengths or vibratory rates, each of which corresponds to a specific plane or sphere or world of being, while the One Cosmic Life-Consciousness, binding everything together, and permeating everything, flows through all. The form which man calls his “ body ” is but the outer manifestation of an energy field, popularly called the *aura*, said energies interpenetrating and interacting. The psychic, or clairvoyant, by virtue of having developed or activated one or more of the senses which relate to the inner worlds is able to “ see ” but another

wavelength or frequency of the total spectrum. Much error can be avoided if one remembers this simple fact.

“Man” is indeed a term difficult to define, impossible to categorize, *but necessary to understand*. For without the understanding of his complex nature, the many fields upon which his consciousness *can* act and interact will remain *terra incognita* to him; and the many fields upon which his consciousness *does* act and interact will continue to be misunderstood and ill-defined. Real awareness of what we are, what our capabilities are, and what this thing we call “ I ” can do to change our world or not to change it, as the case may be, can only come about through knowledge of Self.

The phenomena popularly classed as the supernatural, if examined in the light of the foregoing, will be seen to be the result of energies and laws of nature which are subject to the will and image-making faculty of man himself. If psychic phenomenon is restored to its proper place in the scheme of Cosmic Mind, then the psychic ills so gravely prophesied by H. P. B. will be forestalled, light will be shed “ into the dark corners of superstition,” and truth will become the shrine of the soul. There are yet higher mountains to climb, new frontiers to conquer, before man will realize his full potential as a son of the universe and his oneness with all beings.

L. P.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the material which follows, the introductory remarks for each chapter, as well as some explanatory comments within some of the chapters, are printed in italics and between brackets to distinguish these from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, which comprise the main part of the book. There are also bracketed words included in some of the excerpts or as footnotes. These have been added by the compiler for the purpose of joining portions of the quoted excerpts, or for the purpose of elucidation.

## CHAPTER I

# NATURAL LAW AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

*[Two thousand years ago, more or less, nascent Western civilization was given spiritual direction by teachings accredited to a man called Jesus. His teachings and those of the apostle Paul included the significant fact of man being a triune being. The New Testament references to body, soul and spirit are perhaps the least understood and least known of all the Christian teachings. This lost chord of Christianity was resurrected by H. P. B. and shown by her to be the key to understanding the dynamics of the soul. Without this key, man will continue \_ to tread a path devoid of a sense of responsibility to himself and to humanity in such vital areas as psychic phenomena and meditation. The following excerpts define the basic concepts involved in gaining an understanding in the differences between the psychic nature (lower mind or soul) and the spiritual nature (higher mind or spirit).]*

To comprehend the principles of natural law involved in the several phenomena hereinafter described, the reader must keep in mind the fundamental propositions of the Oriental philosophy. . .

1st. There is no miracle.' Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever active. . .



2nd. Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone, eternal and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.

3rd. Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

4th. Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.

5th. Arcane knowledge misapplied, is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or WISDOM.

6th. Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.

∴ 7th. All things that ever were, that are, or that will be. having their record upon the astral light.\* or

\* [The Astral Light is the energy field surrounding and interpenetrating the earth (as in the case with every physical body). It corresponds to the *linga-sarira* in the sevenfold classification of man. It can also be described as being that part of the spectrum of Cosmic energies within the range of frequencies categorized as the astral plane. For further information see *Theosophical Glossary* by H. P. Blavatsky and *Occult Glossary* by G. de Purucker.]

tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known. . . .

9th. One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man ('physical body'). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction — "a brown study," as some call it.

To the movements of the wandering astral form neither time nor space offer obstacles. The thaumaturgist, thoroughly skilled in occult science, can cause himself (that is, his physical body) to *seem* to disappear, or to apparently take on any shape that he may choose. He may make his astral form visible, or he may give it protean appearances. In both cases these results will be achieved by a mesmeric hallucination of the senses of all witnesses, simultaneously brought on. This hallucination is so perfect that the subject of it would stake his life that he saw a reality, when it is but a picture in his own mind, impressed upon his consciousness by the irresistible will of the mesmerizer.

But, while the astral form can go anywhere, penetrate any obstacle, and be seen at any distance' from the physical body, the latter is dependent upon

ordinary methods of transportation. It may be levitated under prescribed magnetic conditions, but not pass from one locality to another except in the usual way. Hence we discredit all stories of the aerial flight of mediums in body, for such would be miracle, and miracle we repudiate. Inert matter may be, in certain cases and under certain conditions, disintegrated, passed through walls, and recombined, but living animal organisms cannot.

Swedenborgians believe and arcane science teaches that the abandonment of the living body by the soul frequently occurs, and that we encounter every day, in every condition of life, such living corpses. Various causes, among them overpowering fright, grief, despair, a violent attack of sickness, or excessive sensuality may bring this about. The vacant carcass may be entered and inhabited by the astral form of an adept sorcerer, or an elementary (an earth-bound disembodied human soul), or, very rarely, an elemental. Of course, an adept of white magic has the same power, but unless some very exceptional and great object is to be accomplished, he will never consent to pollute himself by occupying the body of an impure person. In insanity, the patient's astral being is either semi-paralyzed, bewildered, and subject to the influence of every passing spirit of any sort, or it has departed forever, and the body is taken possession of by some vampirish entity near its own disintegration, and clinging desperately to earth, whose sensual pleasures it may enjoy for a brief season longer by this expedient.

10th. The cornerstone of MAGIC is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man. There are occult properties in many other minerals, equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic *must* know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant. Plants also have like mystical properties in a most wonderful degree, and the secrets of the herbs of dreams and enchantments are only lost to European science and, useless to say, are unknown to it, except in a few marked instances, such as opium and hashish. Yet, the psychical effects of even these few upon the human system are regarded as evidences of a temporary mental disorder. The women of Thessaly and, Epirus, the female hierophants of the rites of Sabazius, did not carry their secrets away with the downfall of their sanctuaries. They are still preserved, and those who are aware of the nature of Soma, know the properties of other plants as well.

To sum up all in a few words, MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. The adept can stimulate the movements of the natural forces in plants and animals in a preternatural degree. Such experiments are not obstructions of nature, but quickenings; the conditions of more intense vital action are given.

The adept can control the sensations and alter the conditions of the physical and astral bodies of other persons not adepts; he can also govern and employ, as he chooses, the spirits of the elements. He cannot control the immortal spirit of any human being, living or dead, for all such spirits are alike sparks of the Divine Essence, and not subject to any foreign domination.

There are two kinds of seership—that of the soul and that of the spirit. The seership of the ancient Pythoness, or of the modern mesmerized subject, vary but in the artificial modes adopted to induce the state of clairvoyance. But, as the visions of both depend upon the greater or less acuteness of the senses of the astral body, they differ very widely from the perfect, omniscient spiritual state; for, at best, the subject can get but glimpses of truth, through the veil which physical nature interposes. The astral principle, or mind, called by the Hindu Yogin *jivatman*, is the sentient soul,, inseparable from our physical brain, which it holds in subjection, and is in its turn equally trammelled by it. This is the *ego*,\* the intellectual life-principle of man, his conscious entity. While it is yet *within* the material body, the clearness and correctness of its spiritual visions depend on its more or less intimate relation with its higher Principle. When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees; then only is it the pure, rational, *supersentient* soul. That.

\* [See footnote, p. xii.]

state is known in India, as the *Samadhi*; it is the highest condition of spirituality possible to man on earth. Fakirs try to obtain such a condition by holding their breath for hours together during their religious exercises, and call this practice *dama-sadhana*. The Hindu terms *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, and *Dharana*, all relate to different psychological states, and show how much more the Sanskrit, and even the modern Hindu language, are adapted to the clear elucidation of the phenomena that are encountered by those who study this branch of psychological science, than the tongues of modern peoples, whose experiences have not yet necessitated the invention of such descriptive terms.

When the body is in a state of *dharana*—a total catalepsy of the physical frame—the soul of the clairvoyant may liberate itself, and perceive things subjectively. And yet, as the sentient principle of the brain is alive and active, these pictures of the past, present, and future will be tinctured with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision. But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncolored and undistorted, whereas, the clairvoyant, unable to control the vibrations of the astral waves, will perceive but more or less broken images through the medium of the brain. The seer can never take flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his will as the rest of the body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit.

Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership, in which, according to an expression of Plato, soul is raised above all inferior good. When we reach “ that which is supreme, which is *simple, pure and unchangeable, without form, color, or human qualities*: the God—our *Nous*.”

This is the state which such seers as Plotinus and Apollonius termed the “ Union to the Deity which the ancient Yogins called *Isvara*, and the modern call *Samadhi*; but this state is as far above modern clairvoyance as the stars above glowworms. Plotinus, as is well known, was a clairvoyant-seer during his whole and daily life; and yet, *he had been united to his God* but four times during the sixty-six years of his existence, as he himself confessed to Porphyry.

—*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 587-91.

• • • The starting point of the “ pantheistic ” (we use the word for want of a better one) system of morality is a clear perception of the unity of the one energy operating in the manifested Cosmos, the grand ultimate result which it is incessantly striving to produce, and the affinity of the immortal human spirit and its latent powers with that energy, and its capacity to co-operate with the one life in achieving its mighty object. . . . The principal obstacle to the realization of this oneness is the inborn habit of man of always placing himself at the center of the Universe. Whatever a man might act, think or feel, the irrepressible “ I ” is sure to be the central figure. This, as will appear,

on the slightest consideration, is that which prevents every individual from filling his proper sphere in existence, where he only is exactly in place and no other individual is. The realization of this harmony is the practical or objective aspect of the GRAND PROBLEM. Practice of morality is the effort to find out this sphere; and morality indeed is the Ariadne's clue in the Cretan labyrinth in which man is placed. ... It availeth naught to intellectually grasp the notion of your being everything and Brahma [God], if it is not realized in practical acts of life. . . You cannot be one with ALL, unless all your acts, thoughts and feelings synchronize with the onward march of nature. . . .

. . . There is a tendency, in every department of nature, of an act to repeat itself; so the Karma acquired in the last preceding birth is always trying to forge fresh links in the chain and thereby lead to continued material existence; and that this tendency can only be counteracted by unselfishly performing all the duties appertaining to the sphere in which a person is born. . . .

. . . Inactivity of the physical body (*sthula-sarira*) does not indicate a condition of inactivity either on the astral or the spiritual plane of action. ... it will be easily seen by any one who examines the nature of occult dynamics, that a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence. . . . Similarly the ultimate effects of spiritual energy are infinitely greater than those of intellectual energy.

. . .



“ Every kind of subjugation to another is pain and subjugation to one’s self is happiness: in brief, this is to be known as the characteristic marks of the two.” \* Now it is universally admitted that the whole system of Nature is moving in a particular direction, and this direction, we are taught, is determined by the composition of two forces, namely the one acting from that pole of existence ordinarily called “ matter-” towards the other pole called “ spirit,” and the other in the opposite direction. The very fact that Nature is moving shows that these two forces are not equal in magnitude. The plane on which the activity of the first force predominates is called in occult treatises the “ascending arc,” and the corresponding plane of the activity of the other force is styled .the “descending arc.” A little reflection will show that the work of evolution begins on the descending arc and works its way upwards through the ascending arc. From this it follows that the force directed towards spirit is the one which must, though not without hard struggle, ultimately prevail. This is the great directing energy of Nature, and although disturbed by the operation of the antagonistic force, it is this that gives the law to her; the other is merely its negative aspect, for convenience regarded as a separate agent. If an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force. We need not say that such a result

\* [From the *Laws of Manu* IV. 160.]

would be the very reverse of pleasurable. The only way therefore, in which happiness might be attained, is by merging one's nature in great Mother Nature, and following the direction in which she herself is moving: this again, can only be accomplished by assimilating man's individual conduct with the triumphant force of Nature, the other force being always overcome with terrific catastrophes. The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality. Obedience to this universal law, after ascertaining it, is true religion, which has been defined by Lord Buddha " as the realization of the True."

An example will serve to illumine the position. Can a practical student of pantheism, or, in other words, an occultist utter a falsehood ? Now, it will be readily admitted that life manifests itself by the power of acquiring sensation, temporary dormancy of that power being suspended animation. If a man receives a particular series of sensations and pretends they are other than they really are, the result is that he exercises his will-power in opposition to a law of nature on which, as we have shown, life depends and thereby becomes suicide on a minor scale.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. V, pp. 336-41.

This *thinking of oneself* as this, that, or the other, is the chief factor in the production of every kind of psychic or even physical phenomena. The words " whosoever shall say to this mountain be thou removed

and cast into the sea, and *shall not doubt* . . . that thing will come to pass,” are no vain words. Only the word “ faith ” ought to be translated by WILL. Faith without Will is like a wind-mill without *wind*—barren of results.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. II, p. 59 fn.;  
6 Vol. ed.: Vol. III, p. 70 fn.

. . . Among the numberless hosts of spirits—*men* that were, and those who will be men—there are those immeasurably superior to the human race, higher and holier than the highest Saint on Earth, and wiser than any mortal without exception. And there are those again who are no better than we are, as some are far worse and inferior to the lowest savage. It is the latter classes that command the readiest communication with our earth, who perceive and sense us, as the clairvoyants perceive and sense them. The close proximity of our respective abodes and planes of perception are in favor of such inter-communication unfortunately, as they are ever ready to interfere with our affairs for weal or woe. If we are asked how it is that none but sensitive hysterical natures, neuro-and psycho-pathic persons see and occasionally talk with “ Spirits,” we answer the question by several other queries. We ask:

“ Do you know the nature of hallucination, and can you define its psychic process? How can you tell that all such visions are due merely to physical hallucinations? What makes you feel so sure that mental and nervous diseases, while drawing a veil over our

*normal* senses (so called) *do not* reveal at the same time vistas unknown to the healthy man, by throwing open doors usually closed against your scientific perceptions (?): or that a psycho-spiritual faculty *does not* forthwith replace the loss, or the temporary atrophy, of a purely physical sense? It is disease, or the exuberance of nervous fluid which produces mediumship and visions —hallucinations, as you call them. But what *does* Science know even of mediumship?” Truly were the modern Charcots to pay attention to the *delirium* of their patients from a more psychic standpoint, Science, and physiology especially, might be more benefitted than they are now, and truth have a wider field of fact in its knowledge.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. II, pp. 370-1  
fn.; 6 Vol. ed.: Vol. III, pp. 369-70 fn.

## CHAPTER II

### MAGIC, HYPNOTISM AND WITCHCRAFT

*[H. P. B. lists three factors as being necessary in order to elevate the realm of psychic or spiritual phenomena from that of superstition: observation of facts, induction of laws from these facts, and verification of those laws by constant practical experience. (Isis Unveiled, Vol. II, p. 637.) This is the methodology of the mystery schools, and it has enabled generations of adepts to attain an understanding of the forces and energies within man himself. It is this body of knowledge which supplied the information as recorded by H. P. Blavatsky.]*

Our object was ... to show the public . . . [the] *modus operandi* in regard to “white” and “black” magic,\* and thus deprive the latter of any supernatural flavor. . . .

. . . The scientific proof of the existence of doubles\*\* in living people must also confirm the possibility of the facts I have spoken of. . . as well as establish the reality of witchcraft itself. Only then will these enter into

\* [Black magic as used here and in subsequent material refers to *any* misuse of the power of one's inner capacities, said misuse being either conscious or unconscious. The terms “white” or “black” magic are used to convey the concept of “Light” and “no-light” respectively.]

\*\* [The term “doubles ” is used in this article to designate what elsewhere is termed “astral body” or soul.]

the sphere of psychical facts proved by science, without losing either their relative or their factual meaning and will be fully disclosed and explained. This would mean an enormous and important step forward in the history of humanity as a whole. The light of Truth would then illumine all the dark corners of centuries-old superstitions. Many enigmatic, unexplainable and heretofore rejected facts in the domain of so-called “ spiritualistic ” [or psychic] phenomena, will then be seen in a more plausible and natural coloring. *Witchcraft*, with its dark charms and witches in the foreground, will then appear what it really is: a psycho-physiological phenomenon, which ought, long ago, ever since the first knockings on tables and furniture, to have taken a foremost place in research of biologists.

— *The Mysterious Tribes of the Blue Hills*, chap. 7,  
translated from the Russian by Boris de  
Zirkoff.

. . . [The faculty of astral projection or projection of the astral entity] is no more a miracle than one’s reflection in a looking glass. ... [It is] *the power of the human will itself, freed from terrestrial concern*. Our thoughts are *matter*. . . every energy produces more or less of a disturbance in the atmospheric waves. Therefore, as every man—in common with every other living, and even inert object—has an *aura* of his own emanations surrounding him; and, moreover, is enabled, by a trifling effort, to transport himself in *imagination* wherever he likes, why is it scientifically impossible

that his thought, regulated, intensified, and guided by that powerful magician, the educated WILL, may become corporealized for the time being, and appear to whom it likes, a faithful double of the original? . . . the adepts, the alchemists, the savants of the secret art . . . have already found out that which scientists deny today, but may discover true tomorrow, i.e., how to project electrically their astral bodies, in an instant, through thousands of miles of space, leaving their material shells with a certain amount of animal vital principle to keep the physical life going, and acting within their spiritual, ethereal bodies as safely and intelligently as when clothed with the covering of flesh. . . . There is a higher form of electricity than the physical one known to experimenters; a thousand correlations of the latter are as yet veiled to the eye of the modern physicist, and none can tell where end its possibilities. . . .

—*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 619-20.

... For the sake of comparison, let us grant for a moment that there exists in man such a half-material double. Then let us remember the reality and power of hypnotic and mesmeric phenomena witnessed by many. . . . [Let us begin with] the so-called “evil eye” . . . [It] is simply the transmitting of illnesses, bad luck and death to people and even to animals, by an unseen and elusive method. Biologists and physiologists, denying such a possibility, have just as much right to do so, as to deny a parallel fact, which, however, they acknowledge.

namely, the transmission, by an equally elusive and unexplainable process, of *infectious diseases*. Admitting the hypotheses of unseen germs and bacteria living in the air, and other similar suppositions, why can they not admit the same in the sphere of spiritual life, or, as it is called, the domain of “ psychism ” ? If they acknowledge the existence of some *psychical* force, issuing from the eyes or the extremities of one man, and which, directed towards another, either by will power alone or with the help of metals, takes possession of his mind and his organs—i.e., *hypnotism*—what right have they then, without having studied and observed the processes of *witchcraft*, to deny the possibility of the action of the same force in this case ?

We are emphatic on this point: the evil caused by so-called witchcraft (crude mesmerism or hypnotism, as it should rightly be called) is not a mere invention. It does exist and will soon be proved, as mesmerism itself was proved, after having been denied for so long, and finally accepted as a fact with a change of name. . . . There exists conscious and unconscious witchcraft. A somnambulist acts in two ways:\* under the influence of his own impelling force or under the impulse of another person, namely, the *magnetizer*. The latter, if he is vicious, vengeful and evil, can inflict upon his *subjects* considerable harm, definitely and with impunity. Directing his thought, infected with vice, and his will towards his chosen victim, especially when the latter

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\* Somnambulists are similar to hypnotized persons. A greater power takes the upper hand over a weaker one and controls it.



is weaker than himself, the magnetizer can stir up any type of passion, or instill the germ of illness and in time even kill his victim. If it has been demonstrated that hypnotists acquire complete control over their victim's mind . . . why, then, could not the same be done by a sorcerer? . . . the difference between a magnetizer or hypnotist on the one hand, and a sorcerer or natural hypnotist on the other, is only in the quantity and quality of the force or *current* used by them. If one individual can act so strongly on the mind of another that he produces temporary insanity, [in the sense of causing him to do that which in a normal state of mind he would not do] and a second [individual], on the contrary, directing the current towards a diseased part of the body, can heal by calling forth a beneficent reaction, why then, I ask, is it so impossible to believe, that a *sorcerer* is also able to direct. . . [the same magnetic current] on some vital organ in the body of a victim chosen beforehand, and, by *spoiling* it, kill a human being or an animal? . . . why, if a healthy magnetizer can give a part of his vital force, his *vitalite* (the surplus of a force concerning which doctors know nothing,) to his patient, could not the same man, like a vampire, suck from his victim all his strength? If one believes in the former, one cannot deny the latter. And once men begin to believe, or become convinced of both as possibilities, it would be impossible for them not to- see in witchcraft, as well as in hypnotism, the manifestation of one and the same force, innate to, and possessed by man. . . .

Owing to the complete ignorance of science concerning the nature of the “ life-force,” and of what causes it to appear or to disappear tracelessly, and consequently of the currents and forces of animal magnetism [hypnotism], we protest against scientific decisions in such matters. Without research on this force, because of its elusive nature and the absence of all knowledge about its character, no one can judge its qualities, functions, intensity, etc., and least of all its sphere of power. . . . We know only one thing: this force. . . will flood the world with a wave of foolish superstition, if science does not erect a strong dam in time. .

Insisting that *all* the facts of mediumism and the phenomena of Spiritualism [or psychic phenomena] are mere fraud or hallucination. . . [the scientists] force the educated masses to follow the inclination of their intellects and hearts, unsatisfied by all-destroying science, and to seek satisfaction in the deceptive outer forms of phenomena . . .

When, thanks to the efforts of wiser and more honest men among their colleagues, the reality of the “ double ” or that inner sheath of the soul, unseen under normal conditions of our everyday existence, . . . becomes a proved fact. . . then all of us will probably learn something new about the substance of this phantom. . . we declare that the double is the *inner* shadow of man, outlining him in the light of the soul, just as the earthy shadow outlines his body *outwardly* in the light of the sun; that this shadow normally remains unseen and

intangible; but that in consequence of a psychological shock or desire, a dangerous outburst of passion, this shadow can separate itself from the physical body and appear independently of physical organs. . . .

A few years hence, when such cases of doubles and ghosts will be shown as facts ... as a result of the efforts of one camp of scientists, what will the other camp, the rabid materialists, say? How will they meet plain facts ? . . .

—*The Mysterious Tribes of the Blue Hills*, chap. 7.

An important point for the student of occult science . . . should not be overlooked. The law of physics that action and reaction tend to equilibrate each other holds in the realm of the occult. ... A current of Akasa \* directed by a sorcerer at a given object with an evil intent, must either be propelled by such intensity of will as to break through every obstacle and overpower the resistant will of the selected victim, or it will rebound against the sender, and afflict him or her in the same way as it was intended the other should be hurt. ... So well is this law understood that it has been preserved to us in many popular proverbs, such as the English ones, “ curses come home to roost ” . . .

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 218-19.

\* [A current of Akasa, or Akasic currents, is used in theosophical literature to describe currents of electromagnetic energies on planes and sub-planes (see chap. 5) superior to, and interpenetrating, the physical. Akasa is the primordial spacial substance; the subtle, supersensuous spiritual essence which pervades all space; it is the fifth kosmic element, one which science has yet to “ discover.” In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, it is described as being the one element which is Nature, pervades and is space, (p. 63.) It is to the astral light what Spirit is to the soul. See footnote page 2.]

The exercise of *magical* power is the exercise of *natural* powers, but SUPERIOR to the ordinary functions of Nature. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people. Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world. Spiritualism in the hands of an adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the Universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an experienced medium, Spiritualism becomes UNCONSCIOUS SORCERY; for, by allowing himself to become the helpless tool of a variety of spirits, of whom he knows nothing save what the latter permit him to know, he opens, unknown to himself, a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of Nature lurking in the astral light, as well as good and bad spirits.

A powerful mesmerizer, profoundly learned in his science, such as Baron Du Potet, Regazzoni, Pietro d'Amicis of Bologna, are *magicians*, for they have become the adepts, the initiated ones, into the great mystery of our Mother Nature. Such men as the above-mentioned—and such were Mesmer and Cagliostro—*control* the spirits instead of allowing their subjects or themselves to be controlled by them; and Spiritualism is safe in their hands. In the absence of experienced Adepts though, it is always safer for a naturally clairvoyant medium to trust to good luck and chance, and try to judge of the tree by its fruits. Bad spirits will

seldom communicate through a pure, naturally good and virtuous person; and it is still more seldom that pure spirits will choose impure channels. Take attracts like.

But to return to Magic. Such men as Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lully, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, Eugenius Philalethes, Khunrath, Roger Bacon and others of similar character, in our skeptical century, are generally taken for visionaries; but so, too, are Modern Spiritualists and mediums—nay worse, for charlatans and poltroons; but never were the Hermetic Philosophers taken by anyone for fools and idiots, as, unfortunately for ourselves and the Cause, every unbeliever takes ALL of us believers in Spiritualism to be. Those Hermeticists and philosophers may be disbelieved and doubted now, as everything else is doubted, but very few doubted their knowledge and power during their lifetime, for they always could prove what they claimed, having command over those forces which *now command* helpless mediums. They had their science and demonstrated philosophy to help them to throw down ridiculous negations, while we sentimental Spiritualists, rocking ourselves to sleep with our “ Sweet By-and-By,” are unable to recognize a spurious phenomenon from a genuine one, and are daily deceived by vile charlatans. Even though doubted then, as Spiritualism is in our day, still these philosophers were held in awe and reverence, even by those who did not implicitly believe in their Occult potency, for they were giants of intellect.. Profound knowledge, as well as cultured intellectual!

powers, will always be respected and revered; but our mediums and their adherents are laughed and scorned at, and we are all made to suffer, because the phenomena are left to the whims and pranks of self-willed and other mischievous spirits, and we are utterly powerless in controlling them.

To doubt Magic is to reject History itself as well as the testimony of ocular witnesses thereof, during a period embracing over 4,000 years. Beginning with Homer, Moses, Hermes, Herodotus, Cicero, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon the Magician, Plato, Pausanias, Iamblichus, and following this endless string of great men, historians and philosophers, who all of them either believed in magic or were magicians themselves . . . spiritual mediums were better known in those days to the ancients, than they are now to us,

. . . the inspired Sibyls, Pythonesses, and other mediums, were entirely guided by their High Priest and those who were initiated into the Esoteric Theurgy and mysteries of the Temples. Theurgy was *magic*', as in modern times, the Sibyls and Pythonesses WERE MEDIUMS; but their High Priests were magicians. All the secrets of their theology, which included *magic*, or the art of invoking ministering spirits, were in their hands.. They possessed the science of DISCERNING SPIRITS ; . . . By this power they controlled the spirits at will, allowing but the good ones to absorb their mediums. Such is the explanation of *magic*—the real, existing, *White* or sacred magic, which ought to be in the hands of science now . . . the ancients had their illegal mediums—I

mean those who belonged to no special Temple, and thus the spirits controlling them, unchecked by the expert hand of the magician, were left to themselves, and had all the opportunity possible to perform their capers on their helpless tools; that such mediums were generally considered *obsessed* and *possessed*, which they were in fact; in other words, and according to the Bible phraseology, “they had the seven devils in them.” Furthermore, these mediums were ordered to be put to death, for the intolerant Moses, the magician, who was learned in the wisdom of Egypt, had said, “Thou shall not suffer a witch to live.” [*Exodus XXII, 18.*] Alone, the Egyptians and Greeks, even more humane and just than Moses, took such into their Temples, and when found unfit for sacred duties of prophecy [they] *were cured*, in the same way as Jesus Christ cured Mary of Magdala and many others, by “casting out the seven devils.” Either [we] must completely deny the miracles of Christ, the Apostles, Prophets, Thaumaturgists, and Magicians, and so deny point-blank every bit of the sacred and profane histories, or . . . confess that there is a POWER in this world which can command spirits, at least the bad and unprogressed ones, the elementary [the earth-bound disembodied human soul] and Diakka. The *pure ones*, the disembodied, will never descend to our sphere, unless attracted by a current of powerful sympathy and love, or on some useful mission.

. . . There is a white and a black magic; and no one who has ever travelled in the East, can doubt it,

if he has taken, the trouble to investigate. My faith being firm I am, therefore, ever ready to support and protect any honest medium—aye, and even occasionally one who appears *dishonest*; for I know but too well, what helpless tools and victims such mediums are in the hands of unprogressed, invisible beings. I am furthermore aware of the malice and wickedness of the elementary, and how far they can inspire not only a sensitive medium, *but any other person* as well. . . .

Thus magic exists and has existed ever since prehistoric ages. Begun in history with the Samathracian mysteries, it followed its course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of christianized Greece; then reappeared for a time again with the Neo-Platonic, Alexandrian school, and passing, by initiation, to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the mediaeval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and finally died out in Europe with the Count de St. Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from the frozen-hearted skepticism in its native country of the East.

In India, magic has never died out, and blossoms there as well as ever. Practiced, as in ancient Egypt, only within the secret enclosure of the Temples, it was, and still is, called the “ sacred science.” For it is a science, based on natural occult forces of Nature; and



not merely a blind belief in the poll-parrot talking of crafty, elementary ones, ready to forcibly prevent *real, disembodied* spirits from communicating with their loved ones whenever they can do so.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 137-42.

. . . much has been said about magic and its potentiality, much of the immense antiquity of its practice. Do we wish to affirm that the occult sciences ought to be studied and practiced throughout the world? Would we replace modern spiritualism with the ancient magic? Neither; the substitution could not be made, nor the study universally prosecuted, without incurring the risk of enormous public dangers. At this moment, [1877] a well-known spiritualist and lecturer on mesmerism is imprisoned on the charge of raping a subject whom he had hypnotized. A sorcerer is a public enemy, and mesmerism [hypnotism] may most readily be turned into the worst of sorceries.

We would have neither scientists, theologians nor spiritualists turn practical magicians, but all to realize that there were true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before this modern era. We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity; and that nobler spiritual aspirations and a higher average morality prevail in the countries where the people take their precepts as the rule of their lives.

"We would have all to realize that magical, i.e., spiritual, powders, exist in every man, and those few to practice them who feel called to teach, and are ready to pay the price of discipline and self-conquest which their development exacts.

Many men have arisen who had glimpses of the truth, and fancied they had it all. Such have failed to achieve the good they might have done and sought to do, because vanity has made them thrust their personality into such undue prominence as to interpose it between their believers and the *whole* truth that lay behind. The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by anyone who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God*.

*The trinity of nature is the lock of magic, the trinity of man the key that fits it.* Within the solemn precincts of the sanctuary, the SUPREME had and has no name. It is unthinkable and unpronounceable; and yet every man finds in himself his god. "Who art thou, O fair being?" inquires the disembodied soul, in the *Khordah-Avesta*, at the gates of Paradise. "I am, O soul, *thy good and pure thoughts*, thy works and thy *good law* . . . thy angel . . . and thy god." \* The man, or the soul, is reunited with ITSELF, for this "Son of God" is one with him; it is his own mediator, the *god* of his human soul and his "Justifier." " *God not revealing*

\* [*Khordah-Avesta*, yasht xxii, §10 seq.]

*himself immediately to man, the spirit is his interpreter,\**  
says Plato in the *Symposium*.\*

—*Isis Unveiled*, vol. II, pp. 634-5.

*[The following excerpts are from an account by Charles Johnston on conversations held with H. P. B. and his personal appraisal of her.]*

[H. P.B.] “. . . Do you not see the tremendous evils that lie concealed in hypnotism? Look at Charcot’s experiments at the Salpêtrière! He has shown that a quite innocent person can be made to perform actions quite against his or her will; can be made to commit crimes, even, by what he calls Suggestion. And the *somnambule* will forget all about it, while the victim can never identify the real criminal. Charcot is a benevolent man, and will never use his power to do harm. But all men are not benevolent. The world is full of cruel, greedy, and lustful people, who will be eager to seize a new weapon for their ends, and who will defy detection and pass through the midst of us all unpunished.

“Yes, Sir! Witch-tales in this enlightened age! And mark my words! You will have such witch-tales as the Middle Ages never dreamt of. Whole nations will drift insensibly into black magic, with good intentions, no doubt, but paving the road to hell none the less for that! Hypnotism and suggestion are great and dangerous powers, for the very reason that the victim never knows when he is being subjected to them;

\* [202E-203A.]

his will is stolen from him, and mark my words: these things may be begun with good motives, and for right purposes. But I am an old woman, and have seen much of human life in many countries. And I wish with all my heart I could believe that these powers would be used only for good! Whoever lets himself or herself be hypnotized, by anyone, good or bad, is opening a door which he will be powerless to shut; and he cannot tell who will be the next to enter! If you could foresee what I foresee, you would begin heart and soul to spread the teaching of universal brotherhood. It is the only safeguard!”

[C. J.] “ How is it going to guard people against hypnotism?”

[H. P. B.] “ By purifying the hearts of people who would misuse it. And universal brotherhood rests upon the common soul. It is because there is one soul common to all men, that brotherhood, or even common understanding is possible. Bring men to rest on that, and they will be safe. There is a divine power in every man which is to rule his life, and which no one can influence for evil, not even the greatest magician. Let men bring their lives under its guidance, and they have nothing to fear from man or devil. And now, my dear, it is getting late, and I am getting sleepy. So I must bid you goodnight!” [C. J.] And the Old Lady dismissed me with that grand air of hers which never left her, because it was a part of herself. She was the most perfect aristocrat I have ever known.

It was long after that, before we came back to the question of magical powers. In August, 1888, H. P. B. had a visit from her old chum, Colonel H. S. Olcott. He was writing, at a side table. H. P. B. was playing Patience, as she did nearly every evening, and I was sitting opposite her, watching, and now and then talking about the East, whence Colonel Olcott had just come. Then H. P. B. got tired of her card game, which would not come out, and tapped her fingers slowly on the table, half unconsciously. Then her eyes came to focus, and drawing her hand back a foot or so from the table, she continued the tapping movement in the air. The taps, however, were still perfectly audible—on the table a foot from her hand. I watched, with decided interest. Presently she had a new idea, and turning in my direction, began to send her astral taps against the back of my hand. I could both feel and hear them. It was something like taking sparks from the prime conductor of an electric machine; or, better still, perhaps, it was like spurting quicksilver through your fingers. That was the sensation. The noise was a little explosive burst. Then she changed her direction again and began to bring her taps to bear on the top of my head. They were quite audible, and, needless to say, I felt them quite distinctly. I was at the opposite side of the table, some five or six feet away, all through this little experiment in the unexplained laws of nature, and the psychical powers latent in man.

No experiment could have been more final and convincing; its very simplicity made it stand out as

a new revelation. Here was a quite undoubted miracle, as miracles are generally understood, yet a miracle which came off. But at our first meeting, Mme. Blavatsky did not even approach the subject; none the less, she conveyed the sense of the miraculous. It is hard to say exactly how, but the fact remains. There was something in her personality, her bearing, the light and power of her eyes, which spoke of a wider and deeper life, not needing lesser miracles to testify to it, because in itself miraculous. That was the greatest thing about her, and it was always there; this sense of a bigger world, of deeper powers, of unseen might; to those in harmony with her potent genius, this came as a revelation and incentive to follow the path she pointed out. To those who could not see with her eyes, who could not raise themselves in some measure to her vision, this quality came as a challenge, an irritant, a discordant and subversive force, leading them at last to an attitude of fierce hostility and denunciation.

When the last word is said, she was greater than any of her works, more full of living power than even her marvellous writings. It was the intimate and direct sense of her genius, the strong ray and vibration of that genius itself, which worked her greatest achievements and won her greatest triumphs. Most perfect work of all, her will carried with it a sense and conviction of immortality. Her mere presence testified to the vigor of the soul.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. VIII, pp. 407-9.

## CHAPTER III

### SPIRITUALISM AND MEDIUMSHIP

*[By 1875 several million people in the West were reported to have become involved in the spiritualistic movement inaugurated by the Fox Sisters in 1848. Not only was there an interest in communicating with the "spirits" of the dead, but also in the seemingly supernatural powers exhibited by certain "gifted" persons. The spiritualistic movement provided the means for those who were interested in man's spiritual evolution, with H. P. B. serving as their representative, to broaden the scope of the spiritualists by demonstrating that beyond the phenomenal aspect were deeper truths, that "Man's best guide, religious, moral and philosophical, is his own inner, divine sense. Instead of clinging to the skirts of any leader in passive inertia he should lean upon that better self—his own prophet, apostle, priest, king and saviour. No matter what his religion, he will find within his own nature the holiest of temples, the divinest of revelations." (Collected Writings, Vol.*

*III, p. 73.) Calling down upon her head villification from those threatened by her exposure of the rationale of phenomena (which 100 years later is still active), she had this to say.]*

Yes. I am sorry to say that I *had* to identify myself during that shameful exposure of the *mediums* [the] Holmes with the Spiritualists. I had to save the situation, for I was sent from Paris on purpose to America

to *prove* the phenomena and their reality and—show the fallacy of the Spiritualistic theories of “Spirits.” But how could I do it best? I did not want people at large to know that I could *produce the same thing at will*. I had received ORDERS to the contrary, and yet I had to keep alive the reality, the genuineness and *possibility* of such phenomena in the hearts of those who from *Materialists* had turned *Spiritualists* and now, owing to the exposure of several mediums fell back again, returned to their skepticism. . . . The world is not prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult Sciences—let them assure themselves first of all that there are beings in an invisible world, whether “Spirits” of the dead or *Elementals*; \* and that there are hidden powers in man, which are capable of making a *God* of him on earth. ... I have pledged my word to help people on to *Truth* while living and—will keep my word.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 73.

*[After these words were written, The Theosophical Society was founded, based upon the concept of universal brotherhood, a concept rooted in the fact of nature that from atom to star, to man to angel, all are of one divine origin.*

*The spiritualists had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the Ancient Wisdom for they had the attention of the world and western man was ready for new understanding. Subsequent events are a matter of record, and amply*

\* [Elementals, as defined in *The Theosophical Glossary*, are the spirits of the elements. They are forces of nature which may produce various effects and deceive the credulous.]



*demonstrate the fate of one who dares defy the established thought.]*

In philosophy, [spiritualism is] the state or condition of mind opposed to materialism or a *material conception* of things. Theosophy, a doctrine which teaches that all which exists is animated or informed by the Universal Soul or Spirit, and that not an atom in our universe can be outside of this omnipresent Principle—is *pure* Spiritualism. As to the belief that goes under that name, namely, belief in the constant communication of the living with the dead, whether through the mediumistic powers of oneself or a so-called *medium*—it is no better than the materialization of spirit, and the degradation of the human and the divine souls. ... It was well called “Necromancy” in days of old.

—*The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 307.

\_ In Spiritualism the word [materializations] signifies the objective appearance of the so-called “Spirits” of the dead, who re clothe themselves occasionally in matter; i.e., they form for themselves out of the materials at hand, which are found in the atmosphere and the emanations of those present, a temporary body bearing the human likeness of the defunct as he appeared, when alive. Theosophists accept the phenomenon of “materialization”; but they reject the theory that it is produced by “Spirits,” i.e., the immortal principles of the disembodied persons. Theosophists hold that when the phenomenon is genuine—and it is a fact of

rarer occurrence than is generally believed—it is produced by the *larvae*, the *eidola*, or Kamalokic \* “ghosts” of the dead personalities. . . . [The dead] are present, around us, but being on another plane do not see us any more than we see them. But whenever the strong desires of living men and the conditions furnished by the abnormal constitutions of mediums are combined together, these *eidola* are drawn, nay, pulled down from their plane on to ours and made objective. This is *Necromancy*, it does no good to the dead, and great harm to the living. . . .

— *The Theosophical Glossary*, pp. 209-10.

Now what is a medium? The term medium, when not applied simply to things and objects, is supposed to be a person through whom the action of another person or being is either manifested or transmitted. Spiritualists believing in communications with disembodied spirits, and that these can manifest through, or impress sensitives to transmit “messages” from them, regard mediumship as a blessing and a great privilege. We Theosophists, on the other hand, who do not believe in the “communion of spirits” as spiritualists do, regard the gift as one of the most dangerous of abnormal nervous diseases. A medium is simply one in whose personal Ego, or terrestrial mind (psyche) [soul, or lower manas] the percentage of “astral” light \*\* so preponderates as to impregnate

\* [See footnote on page 36.]

\*\* [See footnote on page 36.]

with it his whole physical constitution. Every organ and cell thereby is attuned, so to speak, and subjected to an enormous and abnormal tension. The mind is ever on the plane of, and quite immersed in, that deceptive light [the astral light, *q.v.*] whose *soul* is divine, but whose body—the light waves on the lower planes, infernal; for they are but the black and disfigured reflections of the earth’s memories. The untrained eye of the poor sensitive cannot pierce the dark mist, the dense fog of the terrestrial emanations, to see beyond in the radiant field of the eternal truths. His vision is out of focus. His senses, accustomed from his birth, like those of a native of the London slums, to stench and filth, to the unnatural distortions of sights and images tossed on the kaleidoscopic waves of the astral plane \*—are unable to discern the true from the false. And thus the pale soulless corpses moving in the trackless fields of “ Kama-loka,” \*\* appear to him the living- images of the “ dear departed ” ones; the broken echoes of once human voices, passing through his mind, suggest to him well-coordinated phrases, which he repeats, in ignorance that their final form and polish were received in the innermost depths of his own brain-

\* [Astral light and astral plane are interchangeable.]

\*\* [The kama-loka translates literally as “ desire-world.” It is related to the states of consciousness pertaining to the personality whether in the physical body or the afterdeath state. It is in the kama-loka that the disembodied entity experiences the “ Second Death,” wherein all that relates to the personality, its desires and thoughts, is abandoned by the Higher Self, just as the lower triad was dropped at what is commonly called death. In the kama-loka are gradually dissipated those energies which by their very nature are vibrationally in harmony with planes of consciousness pertaining to the gross animalistic nature. There are many gradations of energies and consciousness relating to every plane or world in this instance ranging from the desires and thoughts of a Dr. Jekyll to those of a Mr. Hyde.]

' Factory. And hence the sight and the hearing of that which if seen in its true nature would have struck the medium's heart cold with horror, now fills him with a sense of beatitude and confidence. He really believes that the immeasurable vistas displayed before him are the real spiritual world, the abode of the blessed disembodied angels.

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

—“ Psychic and Noetic Action,” *Lucifer*, Vol. VII, October, November, 1890).

. . . Science says, the vibration of one single note of music will linger on in motion through the corridors of all eternity; and theosophy, the last thought of the dying man changes into the man himself; it becomes his *eidolon* . . . the so-called “ ghost ” . . .  
[and would be]

neither the conscious spirit nor the soul of the dead man; but simply his short—for one instant—*materialized*, thought projected unconsciously and by the sole power of its own intensity in the direction of him who occupied that THOUGHT.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. Ill, pp. 173-4.

. . . Many and varied are the psychic phenomena \* in life, which unintentionally or otherwise are either attributed to the agency of disembodied “ spirits ” or entirely and intentionally *ignored*. By saying this we do not intend at all depriving the spiritual theory of its *raison d'etre*. But beside that theory there exist other manifestations of the same psychic force in man's daily life, which are generally disregarded or erroneously looked upon as a result of simple chance or coincidence for the only reason that we are unable to forthwith assign for them a logical and comprehensive cause, though the manifestations undoubtedly bear the impress of a scientific character, evidently belonging, as they do, to that class of psycho-physiological phenomena. . . . The cause for this particular phenomenon is to be sought in the occult (yet no less undeniable for it) influence exercised by the active will of one man over the will of another man, whenever the will of the latter is surprised in a moment of rest or a state of passiveness.

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\* [Psychism is defined in the *Glossary* as being popularly used to denote every kind of mental phenomena, every phase and manifestation of the powers and., potencies of the divine as well as the terrestrial. It remains for future generations- .to clearly delineate the differences, following the outline laid down by H. P. founder the terms psychic and noetic (see chap. 4).]

Were every person to pay close attention—in an experimental and scientific spirit, of course—to his daily action and watch his thoughts, conversation and resultant acts, and carefully analyse these, omitting no details, trifling as they might appear to him, then would he find for most of these actions and thoughts coinciding *reasons* based upon mutual psychic influence between the embodied intelligences.\*

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. Ill, pp. 171-2.

Generally speaking, the world's ignorance on the nature of the human phantom and vital principle, [astral body], as on the functions of all man's principles, is deplorable . . . before the question can be argued with any hope of lucidity, the following points have to be settled and studied. . . .

1. The difference between a physiological hallucination and a psychic or spiritual clairvoyance and clairaudience.

2. Spirits, or the entities of certain invisible beings—whether *ghosts* of once living men, angels, spirits, or elementals—have they, or have they not, a natural though an ethereal and to us invisible body? Are they united to, or can they assimilate some fluidic substance that would help them to become visible to men?

3. Have they, or have they not, the power of so becoming infused among the atoms of any object,

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\* [The reader is referred to an article on elementals and elementaries in. the *Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 104-17, for additional information.]

whether it be a statue (idol), a picture, or an amulet, as to impart to it their potency and virtue, and even to *animate* it?

4. Is it in the power of any Adept, Yogi or Initiate, to *fix* such entities, whether by *White* or *Black* magic, in certain objects?

5. What are the various conditions (save Nirvana and Avitchi) of good and bad men after death? etc., etc. . . .

To conclude, the reader may be reminded that if the astral body of man is no *superstition* founded on mere hallucinations, but a reality in nature, then it becomes only logical that such an *eidolon* [“ghost,” the dead personality], whose individuality is all centred after death in his *personal* EGO—should be attracted to the remains of the body that was his, during life; and in the case the latter was burnt and the ashes buried, that it should seek to prolong its existence vicariously by either possessing itself of some living body (a medium’s), or, by attaching itself to his own statue, picture, or some familiar object in the house or locality that it inhabited. . . .

. . . man [has] within him his astral counterpart, which would appear by separating itself or oozing out of the gross body, during life as well as after the death of the latter. Till that moment the “spectral soul” was the vehicle of the divine soul and the pure spirit. But as soon as *the flames had devoured* the physical envelope, the spiritual soul, separating itself from the *simulacrum* of man, ascended to its new home of unalloyed bliss

(Devachan [Heaven World] or Svarga), while the spectral eidolon *descended* into the regions of Hades (*limbus*, purgatory, *Kama-loka*). ...

We gather thus two points . . .: “(a) the astral or materialized figure of the dead is neither *the soul*, nor the *spirit*, nor the *body* of the deceased personage, but simply the *shadow* thereof, which justifies our calling it a “shell”; and (b) unless it be an *immortal God* (an angel) who animates an object, it can never be a *spirit*, to wit, the SOUL, or real, spiritual ego of a once living man; for these ascend, and an astral shadow (unless it be of a living person) can never be higher than a terrestrial, *earth-bound* ego, or an *irrational* shell. . . .

It is such illusive shadows, belonging to neither Earth nor Heaven, that are used by sorcerers and other adepts of the Black Art, to help them in persecutions of victims; to hallucinate the minds of very honest and well-meaning persons occasionally, who fall victims to the mental epidemics aroused by them for a purpose; and to oppose in every way the beneficent work of the guardians of mankind, whether divine or—human.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. VII, pp. 225-30.

A familiar example of one phase of the power of the soul or astral body to manifest itself, is the phenomenon of the so-called spirit-hand. In the presence of certain mediums these seemingly detached members will gradually develop from a luminous nebula, pick up a pencil, write messages, and then dissolve before



the eyes of the witnesses. Many such cases are recorded by perfectly competent and trustworthy persons. These phenomena are real, and require serious consideration.

. . . The “ force concerned in the phenomena ” is the will of the medium, exercised unconsciously to the outer man, which for the time is semi-paralyzed and cataleptic; the phantom-hand is an extrusion of the man’s inner or astral member . . .

The same principle involved in the unconscious extrusion of a phantom limb by the cataleptic medium, applies to the projection of his entire “ double ” or astral body. This may be withdrawn by the will of the medium’s own inner self, without his retaining in his physical brain any recollection of such an intent —that is one phase of man’s dual capacity. It may also be effected by elementary and elemental spirits, to whom he may stand in the relation of mesmeric subject. . .

The medium need not exercise any *will power*. It suffices that she or he shall know what is expected by the investigators. The medium’s “spiritual” entity, when not obsessed by other spirits, will act outside the will or consciousness of the physical being, as surely as it acts when within the body during a fit of somnambulism. Its perceptions, external and internal, will be acuter and far more developed, precisely as they are in the sleepwalker. And this is why “ the materialized form sometimes knows more than the medium,” for the intellectual perception of the astral entity is proportionately as much higher than the corporeal

intelligence of the medium in its normal state, as the spirit entity is finer than itself. Generally the medium will be found cold, the pulse will have visibly changed, and a state of nervous prostration succeeds the phenomena, bunglingly and without discrimination attributed to disembodied spirits; whereas, but one-third of them may be produced by the latter, another third by elementals, and the rest by the astral double of the medium himself. . . .

—*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 594-6.

Our Theosophical doctrine is that one is never safe in ascribing mediumistic communications to any foreign source until the wonderful intrinsic capabilities of the human mind incarnate have all been taken into account.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IV, p. 605.

*Student*.—When a clairvoyant, as a man did here a year ago, tells me that, “ he sees a strong band of spirits about me,” and among them an old man who says he is a certain eminent character, what does he really see? Empty and senseless shells? If so, what brought them there? . . . .

*Sage*.—Shells, I think, and thoughts, and old astral pictures. If, for instance, you once saw that eminent person and conceived great respect or fear for him, so that his image was graven in your astral sphere in deeper lines than other images; it would be seen for your whole life by seers, who, if untrained—as they

all are here—could not tell whether it was an image or reality; and then each sight of it is a revivification of the image.

Besides, not all would see the same thing. Fall down, for instance, and hurt your body, and that will bring up all similar events and old forgotten things before any seer's eye.

The whole astral world is a mass of illusion; people see into it, and then, through the novelty of the thing and the exclusiveness of the power, they are bewildered into thinking they actually see true things, whereas they have only removed one thin crust of dirt.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, p. 109.

*[Having covered the popular concept of “ mediums,” a term generally associated with spiritism, H.P.B. throws light on what is only partially understood today under the term “ subliminal ” in the following passages.]*

It would be extremely difficult to find on earth a human being, who could not be more or less influenced by the “ *Animal Magnetism* ” or by the active *Will* (which sends out that “ *Magnetism* ”) of another. If the beloved General rides along the front, the soldiers become all “ *Mediums*.” They become filled with enthusiasm, they follow him without fear, and storm the death-dealing battery. One common impulse pervades them all; each one becomes the “ *Medium* ” of another, the coward becomes filled with heroism, and only he, who is *no medium* at all and therefore insensible

to epidemic or endemic moral influences, will make an exception, assert his independence and run away.

The “ revival preacher ” will get up in his pulpit, and although what he says is the most incongruous nonsense, still his actions and the lamenting tone of his voice are sufficiently impressive to produce a “ change of heart ” amongst, at least, the female part of his congregation, and if he is a powerful man, even sceptics “ that came to scoff, remain to pray”. . . There is no man, except a genuine block-head, whose emotions and consequently whose actions cannot be influenced in some way or other, and thereby *the action of another be manifested or transmitted through him*. All men and all women and children are therefore *Mediums*, and a person who is not a *Medium* is a monster, an abortion of nature.; because he stands without the pale of humanity.

The above definition can therefore hardly be considered sufficient to express the meaning of the word “ Medium ” . . . unless we add a few words, and say: “ A medium is a person through whom the action of another being is said to be manifested and transmitted *to an abnormal extent* by the consciously or unconsciously active will of that other being.” This reduces the number of “ Mediums ” in the world to an extent proportionate to the space around which we draw the line between the normal and abnormal, and it will be just as difficult to determine who is a medium and who is not a medium, as it is to say where sanity ends and where insanity begins. Every man has his little

“weaknesses,” and every man has his little “medium-ship”; that is to say, some vulnerable point, by which he may be taken unawares. . .

. . . only such persons shall be considered mediums, who allow other beings to influence them in the above described manner *to such an extent that they lose their self-control* and have no more power or will of their own to regulate their own actions. Now such a relinquishing of self-control may be either active or passive, conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, and differs according to the nature of the beings, who exercise the said active influence over the medium.

A person may consciously and voluntarily submit his will to another being and become his slave. This other being may be a human being, and the medium will then be his obedient servant and may be used by him for good or bad purposes. This other “being” may be an idea, such as love, greediness, hate, jealousy, avarice, or some other passion, and the effect on the medium will be proportionate to the strength of the idea and the amount of self-control left in the medium. This- “other being” may be an elementary or an elemental [*q.v.*]. . . This “other being” may be the man’s own higher principle, either alone or put into rapport with another ray of the collective universal spiritual principle, and the “medium” will then be a great genius, a writer, a poet, an artist, a musician, an inventor, and so on. This “other being” may be one of those exalted beings, called Mahatmas, and the

conscious and voluntary medium will then be called their “ Chela . .

Furthermore, a medium may know the sources from which the influence comes, or in more explicit terms, *the nature of the being, whose action is transtnitted through him*, or he may not know it. He may be under the influence of his own seventh principle [see Introduction] and imagine to be in communication with a personal Jesus Christ, or a saint; he may be in rapport with the “ intellectual ” ray of Shakespeare and write Shakespearean poetry, and at the same time imagine that the personal spirit of Shakespeare is writing through him, and the simple fact of his believing this or that, would make his poetry neither better nor worse. He may be influenced by some Adept to write a great scientific work and be entirely ignorant of the source of his inspiration, or perhaps imagine that it was the “ spirit ” of Faraday or Lord Bacon that is writing through him. . .

From all this it follows that the exercise of medium- ship consists in the more or less complete giving up of self-control, and whether this exercise is good or bad, depends entirely on the use that is made of it and the purpose for which it is done. This again depends on the degree of knowledge which the mediumistic person possesses, in regard to the nature of the being to whose care he either voluntarily or involuntarily relinquishes for a time the guardianship of his physical or intellectual powers.

—*The Collected Writings*, Vol. VI, pp. 223-6.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POWER OF THOUGHT

[ *The door of inquiry into the powers of the mind has swung wide open, and scientists now accept as commonplace the concept of the brain as a generator of energy. In Russia, scientists have demonstrated through the use of special photographic equipment the existence of a field of force surrounding and interpenetrating a physical form, which they call the bioplasmic body. (See *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970.)*

*The teaching of the Ancient Wisdom is that each of the seven aspects of man is itself divisible into seven sub-categories, etc. hence there is an infinite gradient of energies, ranging from the most spiritual to the grossest physical. These energies are the output or “ offspring ” of an Originator. This Originator is generally regarded as being the specialization of the theologians and philosophers; but there are those who are beginning to feel the Wind of the Spirit and are becoming aware of the interaction of man with his environment—subjective and objective, and that the “ only world of reality is the subjective.”]*

. . . From the remotest antiquity, *mankind as a whole have always been convinced of the existence of a personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man.* This inner

entity was more or less divine, according to its proximity to the *crown*—Christos. The closer the union, the more serene man's destiny, the less dangerous the external conditions. This belief is neither bigotry nor superstition, only an ever-present, instinctive feeling of the proximity of another spiritual and invisible world, which, though it be subjective to the senses of the outward man, is perfectly objective to the inner ego. Furthermore, they believed that *there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions*. They rejected fatalism, for fatalism implies a blind course of some still blinder power. But they believed in *destiny*, which from birth to death every man is weaving thread by thread around himself, as a spider docs his web; and this destiny is guided either by that presence termed by some the guardian angel, or our more intimate astral inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the man of flesh. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail; and from the very beginning of the invisible affray, the stern and implacable *law of compensation* steps in and takes its course, following faithfully the fluctuations. When the last strand is woven, and man is seemingly enwrapped in the network of his own doing, then he finds himself completely under the empire of this *self-made* destiny. It then either fixes him like the inert shell against the immovable rock, or like a feather carries him away in a whirlwind raised by his own actions [i.e. karma.].

—*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 593.



. . . the plastic power of the imagination is much stronger in some persons than in others. The mind is dual in its potentiality: it is physical and metaphysical. The higher part of the mind is connected with the spiritual soul or Buddhi, the lower with the animal soul, the Kama principle.\* There are persons who never think with the higher faculties of their minds at all; those who do so are the minority and are thus, in a way, *beyond*, if not above, the average of human kind. These will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane. The idiosyncrasy of the person determines in which “ principle ” of the mind the thinking is done, as also the faculties of a preceding life, and sometimes the heredity of the physical. \_\_\_\_ This is why it is so very difficult for a materialist—the metaphysical portion of whose brain is almost atrophied—to raise himself, or for one who is naturally spiritually minded, to descend to the level of the matter-of-fact vulgar thought.. Optimism and pessimism depend on it also in a large measure. . . .

The person who is endowed with this faculty \_of thinking about even the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought has, by virtue of that gift which he possesses, a plastic power of formation, so to\_ say, in his very imagination. Whatever such a person may think about, his thought will be so far more intense than the thought of an ordinary person, that by this very intensity it obtains the power of creation. Science has established the fact that

\* [See Introduction.]

thought is an energy. This energy in its action disturbs the atoms of the astral atmosphere around us . . . the rays of thought have the same potentiality for producing forms in the astral atmosphere as the sunrays have with regard to a lens. Every thought so evolved with energy from the brain, creates *nolens volens* a shape. . . .

[In answer to the question as to the necessity of a person having imagination and psychic powers attending to his thoughts, H.P.B. had this to say:]

Certainly, for each thought has a shape which borrows the appearance of the man engaged in the action of which he thought. Otherwise how can clairvoyants see in your *aura* your past and present? What they see is a passing panorama of yourself represented in successive actions by your thoughts. You asked me if we are punished for our thoughts. Not for all, for some are still-born; but for the others, those which we call “silent” but potential thoughts—yes. Take an extreme case, such as that of a person who is so wicked as to wish the death of another . . . such a wish only comes back to roost . . . just as a ball which fails to penetrate an object rebounds upon the thrower. . . .

The first and most important step in occultism is to learn how to adapt your thoughts and ideas to your plastic potency. . . . Because otherwise you are creating things by which you may be making bad Karma. No one should go into occultism or even touch it before he is perfectly acquainted with his own powers, and . . . knows how to commensurate it with his actions. And

this he can do only by deeply studying the philosophy of Occultism before entering upon the *practical* training. Otherwise, as sure as fate—HE WILL FALL INTO BLACK MAGIC.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. X, pp. 222-6.

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

Moreover, we Theosophists understand the terms “psychic” and “psychism” somewhat differently from the average public, science, and even theology. . . . For many, there is little, if any, difference between “psychic” and “psychological,” both words relating in some way to the *human* soul. Some modern metaphysicians have wisely agreed to disconnect the word Mind (*pneuma*) from Soul (*psyche*), the one being the .rational, spiritual part, the other—*psyche*—the living principle in man, the breath that *animates* him (from *anima*, soul). Yet, if this is so, how in this case refuse a soul to *animals*? These are, no less than man, informed with the same principle of sentient life, the *nephesh* of the 2nd chapter of *Genesis*. . . . To describe, as the [psychologists] do, the human Soul in its relations to senses and appetites, desires and passions, common to man and the brute, and then endow it with God-like

\* [H. P. B. employs the term “nous” and “noetic” as used in Platonism, and refers to the higher or divine mind: “the highest intuitive and immediate insight” (Webster).]

intellect, with spiritual and rational faculties which can take their source but in a *supersensible* world—is to throw forever the veil of an impenetrable mystery over the subject. Yet in modern science, “ psychology ” and “ psychism ” relate only to conditions of the nervous system, mental phenomena being traced solely to molecular action. The higher *noetic* character of the Mind- Principle is entirely ignored and even rejected as “ superstition ” by both physiologists and psychologists. . . .

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

\* The Sanskrit word *Manas* (Mind) is used by us in preference to the Greek *Nous* (noetic) because the latter word having been so imperfectly understood in philosophy, suggests no definite meaning.

Occultism as the “ personal ” and the “ impersonal *Egos*. For, between the *psychic* and the *noetic*, between the *Personality* and the *Individuality*, there exists the same abyss as between a “Jack the Ripper,” and a holy Buddha . . . [Manas] whenever it disconnects itself, for the time being, from kama, becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties, and is the organ of the free will in physical man. . . .

[The metaphysics of occult physiology and psychology distinguish between] the Higher *Manas* (Mind or Ego), and the *Kama-manas*, i.e., the rational, but earthly or physical intellect of man, incased in, and bound by, matter, therefore subject to the influence of the latter: the all-conscious SELF, that which reincarnates periodically—verily the WORD made flesh!—and which is always the same, while its reflected “ Double,” changing with every new incarnation and personality, is, therefore, conscious but for a life-period. The latter “ principle ” is the *Lower Self*, or that which, manifesting through our *organic* system, acting on this plane of illusion, imagines itself the *Ego Sum*, and thus falls into what Buddhist philosophy brands as the “ heresy of separateness.” The former we term INDIVIDUALITY, the latter *Personality*. From the first proceeds all the *noetic* element, from the second, the *psychic*, i.e., “ terrestrial wisdom ” at best, as it is influenced by all the chaotic stimuli of the human or rather *animal passions* of the living body.

The “ Higher Ego ” cannot act directly on the body, as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane:

and planes of ideation: the “ lower ” *Self* does: and its action and behavior *depend on its free will and choice* as to whether it will gravitate more towards its parent (“ the Father in Heaven ”) or the “ animal ” which it informs, the man of flesh. The “ Higher Ego,” as part of the essence of the UNIVERSAL MIND, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere, as it has to act solely through its *alter ego*—the Personal Self.

—“ Psychic and Noetic Action,” *Lucifer*, VII,  
(October, November, 1890).

The seat of memory, then, is assuredly neither here nor there, but everywhere throughout the human body. . . . Occultism regards every atom as an “ independent entity ” and every cell as a “ conscious unit.” It explains that no sooner do such atoms group to form cells, than the latter become endowed with consciousness, each of its own kind, and with *free will to act within* the limits of law. . . memory has no seat, no special organ of its own in the human brain, but . . . has *seats* in every organ of the body. . . .

. . . Indeed, every organ in our body *has its own memory*. For if it is endowed with a consciousness “ of its own kind,” every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own psychic and noetic action. Responding to the touch of both a physical and a *metaphysical* Force, the impulse given by the *psychic* (or psycho-molecular) Force will act from *without within*; while that of the noetic (shall we

call it Spiritual-dynamical?) Force works *from within without*. For, as our body is the covering of the inner “principles,” soul, mind, life, etc. so the molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its “principles,” the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell’s activity and behavior are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly by the noetic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the *physical* cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms—being psycho-spiritual, *not physical units—act under laws of their own*. ... For the whole life of man is guided by this double-faced Entity. If the impulse comes from the “Wisdom above,” the Force applied being noetic or spiritual, the results will be actions worthy of the divine propeller; if from the “terrestrial, devilish wisdom”\* (psychic power), man’s activities will be selfish, based solely on the exigencies of his physical, hence animal, nature. The above may sound to the average reader as pure nonsense; but every Theosophist must understand when told that there are *Manasic* as well as *Kamic* organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulses.

Verily that body ... is the temple of the Holy Grail ... an Aeolian harp, chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut. When the breath from the divine Fiat brushes softly

\* [Epistle of James, iii, 15.]

over the former, man becomes like unto *his* God—but the other set feels it not. It needs the breeze of a strong terrestrial wind, impregnated with the animal effluvia, to set its animal chords vibrating. It is the function of the physical, lower mind to act upon the physical organs and their cells; but, it is the higher mind *alone* which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, *via the spinal “ center ” cord*, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane.

. . . The whole human body is, as said, a vast sounding board, in which each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, or call it instinct if you will. These impressions are,, according to the nature of the organ, physical, psychic, or mental, as they relate to this or to another plane. They may be called “ states of consciousness ” only for the want of a better expression—as there are states of instinctual, mental, and purely abstract, or spiritual consciousness. If we trace all such “ psychic ” actions to brain-work, it is only because in that mansion called the human body the brain is the front door, and the only one which opens out into Space. All the others arc inner doors, openings in the private building, through which travel incessantly the transmitting agents of memory and sensation. The clearness, the vividness and intensity of these depend on the state of health and the organic soundness of the transmitters. But:



their reality, in the sense of trueness or correctness, is due to the “ principle ” they originate from, and the preponderance in the Lower *Manas* of the *noetic* or of the *phrenic* (“ Kamic,” terrestrial) element.

—“ Psychic and Noetic Action,” *Lucifer*, VII,  
(October, November, 1890).

In the normal or natural state, the sensations are transmitted from the lowest physical to the highest spiritual body, i.e., from the first to the 6th principle (the 7th being no organized or conditioned body, but an infinite, hence unconditioned principle or state), the faculties of each body having to awaken the faculties of the next higher one, to transmit the message in succession. until they reach the last, when, having received the impression, the latter (the spiritual soul) sends it back in an inverse order to the body. Hence, the faculties of some of the “ bodies ” (we use this word for want of a better term) being less developed, they fail to transmit the message correctly to the highest principle, and thus also fail to produce the right impression upon the physical senses, as a telegram may have started for the place of its destination faultless, and have been bungled up and misinterpreted by the telegraph operator at some intermediate station. This is why some people, otherwise endowed with great intellectual powers and perceptive faculties, are often utterly unable to appreciate —say, the beauties of nature, or some particular moral quality; as, however perfect their physical intellect —unless the original, material or rough physical

impression conveyed has passed in a circuit through the sieve of every “principle”—(from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, up to 7, and down again from 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, to No. 1) —and that every “sieve ” is in good order—the spiritual perception will always be imperfect.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IV, pp. 101-2.

It has been often remarked by observant writers, that the “origin of nearly every popular myth and legend could be traced invariably to a fact in Nature.” In these fantastic creations of an exuberant subjectivism, there is always an element of the objective and real. The imagination of the masses, disorderly and ill-regulated as it may be, could never have conceived and fabricated *ex nihilo* so many monstrous figures, such a wealth of extraordinary tales, had it not had, to serve it as a central nucleus, those floating reminiscences, obscure and vague, which unite the broken links of the chain of time to form with them the mysterious, dream foundation of our collective consciousness.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. II, p. 293;  
6 vol. ed., Vol. III, p. 295.

## CHAPTER V

### PLANES OF PERCEPTION

*[Let us imagine for a moment that we live on an island completely isolated from other humans. One day, there lands on our beach a plane filled with humans of a different color, dressed in a different way, but speaking "our language." They invite us into this "great cold bird." Upon entering we are shown the "magic" of moving pictures on the wall; of voices coming out of a box; of a tube that brings the moon and stars almost within reach—all these strange and mysterious "things" that never before have we known. What would be our reaction? Let us suppose that we are taken in this "great cold bird" to the land of the "people of the cold bird." We knew not of the existence of this strange land and its people; now we learn that it was there from before the time of our father's father. If left unguided our untrained ear and our untrained eye would surely lead us into many incongruous and perhaps dangerous situations; our untrained mind—our consciousness—would translate the sights and sounds of the civilization into our frame of reference without the slightest reference to truth.*

*So it is with the spheres or planes of the universe around us of which we have no awakened consciousness. They are there, we function in them, but we do so unconsciously and hence without self-direction or purpose. We have learned through education to use our mind in the*

*three-dimensional world; we have learned through parental guidance and social contact of those goals and habits which serve as a guide for living; we have learned from our society what we must do in order to be part of that society. These various stimuli are presented simply as a means of illustrating that forces throughout our lifetime are operating upon our consciousness—but it is up to us to what extent we accept or reject these environmental forces; whether we function in a conscious or unconscious state is determined by the dynamics of the inner Man. The teachings of the. Ancient Wisdom postulate a Self acting and reacting thus on varied levels of its consciousness in self-consciousness or unself-consciousness.*

*The field of forces upon which this drama is acted out has been given many names down through the ages: anima mundi, sidereal light, astral light (q.v.), akasa (q.v.), noosphere, and others. Theosophy postulates that thoughts are energy and as such have a medium through which these energy waves are transmitted. This psychic environment, or astral light, can thus be considered as a plane of perception to those who can “see” this particular energy field through the extension of the physical vision— such “ extension ” not being a spiritual gift but simply the acquired ability (in this or a previous life), or more rarely by physical blows which reprecuss on certain psychic centers (chakras). Artificial stimulation of the astral or psychic senses can be compared to the imbalance of the Junction of the pituitary gland which results in physical disharmony; this artificial stimulation generally results in psychic imbalance and disharmony.*

*Thus paranormal abilities are literally analogous to the ability to see gradations of the color spectrum or*

hear sounds beyond the normal range. Science is proving to be man's benefactor in this field of the paranormal, for, by and large, it is proceeding along well regulated, impersonal lines. Unfortunately, some religious groups are embracing everything, without discrimination, from spiritism to hypnotism. Further, scientific investigation is co-existing with an evolution of a "new" psychology, the transpersonal, that is itself in the birth-throes of discovering what has been called "pneumatology"<sup>5</sup>—a word embracing the spirit (pneuma) of man.

As we proceed along the lines of psychic investigation, two concepts become significant: 1. Psychic, paranormal, or altered states of consciousness, as generally understood, are., the extension of the physical senses; they are another wave length which is neither miraculous nor a spiritual faculty. 2. Senses, to function, necessitate the existence of a force-field in which to function, said force-field itself containing many gradations of energy-substance.

H. P. B. defines a plane as: "From the Latin *planus* (level, flat) an extension of space or of something in it, whether physical or metaphysical, e.g. a 'plane of consciousness.' As used in Occultism, the term denotes the range or extent of some state of consciousness, or of the perceptive power of a particular set of senses, or the action of a particular force, or the state of matter corresponding to any of the above." (*The Theosophical Glossary*.)

*The existence of forces, energies, which are the basis of all paranormal phenomena does not necessarily contravene, or supersede, known laws of physics. It is only*

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<sup>5</sup> The reader is referred to the works of G. de Purucker for his presentation of this teaching.

*that the occult or hidden potencies of nature have been investigated inductively rather than deductively. The scientist measuring brain-waves of a subject in the laboratory is at a loss to give a logical explanation of the origin of this energy. The universe as a continuum of space-time is undisputed, but the universe as a continuum of energy-matter is, by and large, considered a fable.*

*As a concept, the energy-matter continuum taken in conjunction with the doctrine of successive or alternating states of diverse refracted wave-lengths of this energy-matter [or consciousness) resolving into a neutral or Homogeneous center (i.e. laya center), then again activated from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous on another plane or sphere is, put simply, the continuum of Life in Eternity. The resolution of energy—whether matter or consciousness —through the homogeneous centers, or zero points, from one field to another is the mode of operation of the law of evolution, theosophically.*

*It has been previously established that the astral light is the model for the physical, and that the physical and astral react upon one another. This repercussing psychic environment, by its very nature, is of great significance for those who strive to make this a “ better world in which to live.” If the general public begins to regard the psychic realm as being the spiritual, then man will indeed fall heir to the same type of hysteria which prevailed during the days of the Spanish Inquisition or the Crusades.*

*Development of the appropriate “ sense ” for comprehension of the corresponding plane is a cornerstone of the dynamics of consciousness, and is the reason why no development of the psychic senses will allow the perception of the spiritual planes. Like attracts like: psychical*

*senses pertain to the psychical realms; for perception of the spiritual plane, man must develop the spiritual sense, which theosophy describes as wisdom, intuition, divine love, compassion, brotherhood. These latter are the signs “ whereby you shall know ” and understand.*

*A balanced attitude, devoid of emotionalism, toward these varied phenomena will and can result in man becoming more aware of his inherent capacities; in a just appreciation of the natural laws of nature; in an expansion of his individual field of awareness; and, ultimately, in an integration of his aspects of consciousness rather than the opposite pole—the rejection, brutal submission, or glorification of innate capabilities and disabilities. The following excerpts exemplify this.]*

The Hermetic axiom, “ as below, so above,” is the only rule of evidence accepted by the Theosophists. Believing in a spiritual and invisible universe, we cannot conceive of it in any other way than as completely dovetailing and corresponding with the material, objective universe; for logic and observation alike teach us that the latter is the outcome and visible manifestation of the former, and that the laws governing both are immutable.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 296-7.

As the highest development, physically and spiritually, on earth, of the Creative Cause, man should aim to solve the mystery of his being. He is the procreator of his species, physically, and having inherited the nature of the unknown but palpable Cause of his

own creation, must possess in his inner, psychical self, this creative power in lesser degree. He should, therefore, study to develop his latent powers, and inform himself respecting the laws of magnetism, electricity and all other forms of force, whether of the seen or unseen universes.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 377.

[Theosophists] have nothing whatever against the physical side of the theory of evolution . . . what we object to is the utter unconcern . . . [for] the other side of the theory . . . the evolution of spirit, silently developing and asserting itself more and more with every newly perfected form.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. II, p. 185.

Nature taken in its abstract sense, *cannot* be “unconscious,” as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals *a consciousness of their own*. All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. I, p. 277 fn.;  
6 vol. ed., Vol. I, p. 320 fn.

It is through Fohat that the ideas of the Universal Mind are impressed upon matter. Some faint idea of the nature of Fohat may be gathered from the appellation “Cosmic Electricity” sometimes applied to it;



but to the commonly known properties of electricity- must, in this case, be added others, including intelligence.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. I, p. 85;  
6 vol. ed., Vol. I, p. 150.

. . . there evidently exists a corresponding electricity produced by the cerebral pile [more commonly, *pile* is called a *battery*] of man; this *soul-electricity*, this spirituul and universal ether, which is the *ambient, middle nature of the metaphysical universe*, or rather of the *incorporeal universe*, has to be studied before it is admitted by science, which, having no idea of it, will never know anything of the great phenomenon of life until she does.

—*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. 322.

. . . neither the cosmic planes of substance nor even the human principles—with the exception of the lowest material plane or world and the physical body, which, as has been said, are no “principles,”—can be located or thought of as being in Space and Time. As the former are seven in ONE, SO are we seven in ONE—that same absolute Soul of the World, which is both Matter and non-Matter, Spirit and non-Spirit, Being and non-Being. Impress yourselves well with this idea, all those of you who would study the mysteries of SELF.

Remember that with our physical senses alone at our command, none of us can hope to reach beyond gross Matter. We can do so only through one or another of our seven *spiritual* senses, either by training, or if one is a born Seer

. . . .

These seven senses of ours correspond with every other septenate in nature and in ourselves. Physically, though invisibly, the human Auric Envelope (the amnion of the physical man in every age of life) has seven layers, just as Cosmic Space and our physical epidermis have. It is this Aura which, according to our mental and physical state of purity or impurity, either opens for us vistas into other worlds, or shuts us out altogether from anything but this three-dimensional world of Matter.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, 6 vol. ed., Vol. V, pp. 428-9.

*[Rejecting the possibility of that which is called “miracle” as superstition, the esoteric philosopher maintains that there is only either conscious or unconscious use of the forces or energies which interpenetrate all planes of existence. Hence the so-called “miracle-worker” is merely the unconscious manipulator of the universal energies. As man awakens to the realization of his potential, he thus discovers within himself powers formerly ascribed to a god or a devil. The ability to tap the reservoirs of the subtler energies of the Inner Man is within the domain of all. “Control your involuntary powers and develop in the right direction your will. . .” (The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, p. 141.)*

*The six primary forces or energies in nature, generally described as universal energy, are called Saktis. They are synthesized by the seventh. The following is the esoteric Hindu presentation of the Saktis and does not cover “the tenth part of what might be said.”]*

(1) PARASAKTI:— Literally the great or Supreme Force or power. It means and includes *the powers of light and heat*.

(2) JNANASAKTI:— Literally the power of intellect, or . . . real wisdom or knowledge. It has two aspects:

The following are some of its manifestations *when placed under the influence or control of material conditions*.

(a) The power of the mind in interpreting our sensations. (b) Its power in recalling past ideas (memory) and raising future expectation, (c) Its power as exhibited in what are called by modern psychologists “the laws of association,” which enables it to form *persisting* connections between various groups of sensations and possibilities of sensations, and thus generate the notion or idea of an external object, (d) Its power in connecting our ideas together by the mysterious link of memory, and thus generating the notion of self or individuality;

*[some]\** of its manifestations *when liberated from the bonds of matter* [are]—(a) Clairvoyance, (b) Psychometry.

(3) ICHCHHASAKTI:— Literally *the power of the Will*. Its *most ordinary manifestation* is the generation of certain nerve currents which set in motion such muscles as are required for the accomplishment of the desired object. «

(4) KRIYASAKTI:—The mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy. » The ancients held that *any idea will manifest itself externally if one's attention is deeply concentrated upon it*. Similarly an intense volition will be followed by the desired result.

\* [All bracketed words in this excerpt are insertions made by H. P. B.]

A Yogi generally performs his wonders by means of Ichchhasakti and Kriyasakti.

(5) KUNDALINI-SAKTI:—Literally the power or force which moves in a serpentine or curved path. It is the universal life-principle [manifesting everywhere] in nature. This force includes . . . the two great forces of attraction and repulsion. Electricity and magnetism are but manifestations of it. This is the power . . . which brings about that “ continuous adjustment of *internal relations to external relations* ” which is the essence of life according to Herbert Spencer, and that “ *continuous adjustment of external relations to internal relations* ” which is the basis of transmigration of souls or *punarjanman* (rebirth) according to the doctrines of the ancient Hindu philosophers. A Yogi must thoroughly subjugate his power . . . before he can attain Moksha.\*. . .

(6) MANTRIKA-SAKTI :— Literally the force or power of letters or speech or music. . . . *Mantra Sastra* has for its subject matter this force in all its manifestations. . . . The influence of [melody] is one of its ordinary manifestations. The power of the mirific ineffable name is the crown of this Sakti.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. I, pp. 292-3; 6 vol. ed., Vol. I, p. 333; quoting T. Subba Row in *Five Tears of Theosophy* (1885), pp. 110-11 fn.

[The Occultist] maintains that Spirit and Matter are two FACETS of the unknowable UNITY, their apparently

\* [Liberation or Nirvana.]

contrasted aspects depending, (a) on the various degrees of differentiation of the latter, and (b) on the grades of consciousness attained by man himself.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. I, p. 543;  
6 vol. ed., Vol. II, p. 267.

[ *The following refers to the relationship between color and vibration:*]

. . . Not only Adepts and advanced Chelas,\* but also the lower order of Psychics, such as clairvoyants and psychometrists, can perceive a psychic Aura of various colors around every individual, corresponding to the temperament of the person within it. In other words, the mysterious records within the Auric Egg are not the heirloom of trained Adepts alone, but sometimes also of natural psychics. Every human passion, every thought and quality, is indicated in this Aura by corresponding colors and shades of color, and certain of these are sensed and felt rather than perceived. The best of such psychics . . . can also perceive colors produced by the vibrations of musical instruments, every note suggesting a different color. As a string vibrates and gives forth an audible note, so the nerves of the human body vibrate and thrill in correspondence with various emotions under the general impulse of the circulating vitality of Prana, thus producing undulations in the psychic Aura of the person which result in chromatic effects.

\* [Disciples.]

The human nervous system as a whole, then, may be regarded as an Aeolian Harp, responding to the impact of the vital force, which is no abstraction, but a dynamic reality, and manifests the subtlest shades of the individual character in color phenomena. If these nerve vibrations are made intense enough and brought into vibratory relation with an astral element, the result is—sound. How, then, can anyone doubt the relation between the microcosmic and macrocosmic forces?

— *The Secret Doctrine*, 6 vol. ed., Vol. V, p. 485.

*Student*.— . . . What is a mantram?

*Sage*.—A mantram is a collection of words which, when sounded in speech, induce certain vibrations not only in the air, but also in the finer ether, thereby producing certain effects.

*Student*.—Are the words taken at haphazard?

*Sage*.—Only by those who, knowing nothing of mantrams, yet use them.

*Student*.—May they, then, be used according to rule and also irregularly? Can it be possible that people who know absolutely nothing of their existence or field of operations should at the same time make use of them? Or is it something like digestion, of which so many people know nothing whatever, while they in fact are dependent upon its proper use for their existence? I crave your indulgence because I know nothing of the subject.

*Sage*.—The “ common people ” in almost every country make use of them continually, but even in that case the principle at the bottom is the same as in the

other. In a new country where folklore has not yet had time to spring up, the people do not have as many as in such a land as India or in long settled parts of Europe. The aborigines, however, in any country will be possessed of them.

*Student.*—You do not now infer that they are used by Europeans for the controlling of elementals.

*Sage.*—No. I refer to their effect in ordinary intercourse between human beings. And yet there are many men in Europe, as well as in Asia, who can thus control animals, but those are nearly always special cases. There are men in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Ireland who can bring about extraordinary effects on horses, cattle, and the like, by peculiar sounds uttered in a certain way. In those instances the sound used is a mantram of only one member, and will act only on the particular animal that the user knows it can rule.

*Student.*—Do these men know the rules governing the matter? Are they able to convey it to another?

*Sage.*—Generally not. It is a gift self-found or inherited, and they only know that it can be done by them, just as a mesmeriser knows he can do a certain thing with a wave of his hand, but is totally ignorant of the principle. They are as ignorant of the base of this strange effect as your modern physiologists are of the function and cause of such a common thing as yawning.

*Student.*—Under what head should we put this unconscious exercise of power?

*Sage.*—Under the head of natural magic, that materialistic science can never crush out. It is a touch

with nature and her laws always preserved by the masses, who, while they form the majority of the population, are yet ignored by the “cultured classes.” And so it will be discovered by you that it is not in London or Paris or New York drawing-rooms that you will find mantrams, whether regular or irregular, used by the people. “Society,” too cultured to be natural, has adopted methods of speech intended to conceal and to deceive, so that natural mantrams cannot be studied within its borders.

Single, natural mantrams are such words as “wife.” When it is spoken it brings up in the mind all that is implied by the word. And if in another language, the word would be that corresponding to the same basic idea. And so with expressions of greater length, such as many slang sentences; thus, “I want to see the color of his money.” There are also sentences applicable to certain individuals, the use of which involves a knowledge of the character of those to whom we speak. When these are used, a peculiar and lasting vibration is set up in the mind of the person affected, leading to a realization in action of the idea involved, or to a total change of life due to the appositeness of the subjects brought up and to the peculiar mental antithesis induced in the hearer. As soon as the effect begins to appear the mantram may be forgotten, since the *law of habit* then has sway in the brain.

Again, bodies of men are acted on by expressions having the mantramic quality; this is observed in great social or other disturbances. The reason is the same as



before. A dominant idea is aroused that touches upon a want of the people or on an abuse which oppresses them, and the change and interchange in their brains between the idea and the form of words go on until the result is accomplished. To the occultist of powerful sight this is seen to be a “ringing” of the words coupled with the whole chain of feelings, interests, aspirations, and so forth, that grows faster and deeper as the time for the relief or change draws near. And the greater number of persons affected by the idea involved, the larger, deeper, and wider the result. A mild illustration may be found in Lord Beaconsfield of England. He knew about mantrams, and continually invented phrases of that quality. “Peace with honor” was one; “a scientific frontier” was another; and his last, intended to have a wider reach, but which death prevented his supplementing, was “Empress of India.” King Henry of England also tried it without himself knowing why, when he added to his titles, “Defender of the Faith.” With these hints numerous illustrations will occur to you.

—*Collected, Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 117-20.

*[The Esoteric Philosophy postulates seven states of the consciousness continuum. This stream of consciousness cognizable to the Inner Man is generally described by the Eastern mystics as having four general classifications:*

*(1) Jagrat, the waking normal consciousness; (2) Svapna, the sleeping-dreaming state, clairvoyance or the trance state, wherein, more or less freed from the restrictions of the physical body, the consciousness functions in the astral*

realms, higher or lower as the case may be. A contemporary term could be the alpha-wave state; (3) Sushupti, deep sleep; (4) Turiya, the dreamless sleep—a causal condition. It can be borne in mind by the student that these states of consciousness are in actuality the various functions of consciousness within a certain field of perception and are applicable whether the Inner Man is applying them in the act of meditation, death, sleep or initiation.

*The tools of scientific research have established the existence of various brain-wave patterns that correspond with the function of varied states of consciousness. The dynamics of unconditioned consciousness are such that it depends upon self direction as to whether that state called Turiya becomes an active state. The majority of mankind, at its present level of awareness, is self-conscious only in the first three aforementioned.]*

*Q. What are the “ principles ” which are active during dreams?*

A. The “ principles ” active during ordinary- dreams—which ought to be distinguished from real dreams, and called idle visions—are *Kama*, the seat of the personal Ego and of desire awakened into chaotic activity by the slumbering reminiscences of the lower Manas.

*Q. What is the “ lower Manas ”?*

A. It is usually called the animal soul (the *Nephesh* of the Hebrew Kabalists). It is the ray which emanates from the Higher Manas or permanent EGO, and is that “ principle ” which forms the human mind—in animals instinct, for animals also dream. The combined

action of Kama and the “ animal soul,” however, are purely mechanical. It is instinct, not reason, which is active in them. During the sleep of the body they receive and send out mechanically electric shocks to and from various nerve-centers. The brain is hardly impressed by them, and memory stores them, of course, without order or sequence. On waking these impressions gradually fade out, as does every fleeting shadow that has no basic or substantial reality underlying it. The retentive faculty of the brain, however, may register and preserve them if they are only impressed strongly enough. But, as a rule, our memory registers only the fugitive and distorted impressions which the brain receives at the moment of awakening. This aspect of “ dreams ” however, has been sufficiently observed and is described correctly enough in modern physiological and biological works, as such human dreams do not differ much from those of the animals. That which is entirely *terra incognita* for Science is the real dreams and experiences of the higher EGO, which are also called dreams, but ought not to be so termed, or else the term for the other sleeping “ visions ” changed.

*How do these differ?*

A. The nature and functions of real dreams cannot be understood unless we admit the existence of an immortal Ego in mortal man, independent of the physical body, for the subject becomes quite unintelligible unless we believe—that which is a fact—that during sleep there remains only an animated form of

clay, whose powers of independent thinking are utterly paralyzed.

But if we admit the existence of a higher or permanent *Ego* in us—which *Ego* must not be confused with what we call the “Higher Self,” we can comprehend that what we often regard as dreams, generally accepted as idle fancies, are, in truth, stray pages torn out from the life and experiences of the *inner* man, and the dim recollection of which at the moment of awakening becomes more or less distorted by our physical memory. The latter catches mechanically a few impressions of the thoughts, facts witnessed, and deeds performed by the *inner* man during its hours of complete freedom. For our *Ego* lives its own separate life within its prison of clay whenever it becomes free from the trammels of matter, i.e., during the sleep of the physical man. This *Ego* it is which is the actor, the real man, the true human self. But the physical man cannot feel or be conscious during dreams; for the personality, the outer man, with its brain and thinking apparatus, are paralyzed more or less completely.

We might well compare the real *Ego* to a prisoner, and the physical personality to the jailer of his prison. If the jailer falls asleep, the prisoner escapes, or, at least, passes outside the walls of his prison. The jailer is half asleep, and looks, nodding all the time, out of a window, through which he can catch only occasional glimpses of his prisoner, as he would a kind of shadow moving in front of it. But what can he perceive, and what can he know of the real actions, and especially the thoughts, of his charge ?

*Q. Do not the thoughts of the one impress themselves upon the other?*

A. Not during sleep, at all events; for the real Ego does not think as his evanescent and temporary personality does. During the waking hours the thoughts and Voice of the Higher Ego do or do not reach his jailer—the physical man, for they are the *Voice of his Conscience*, but during his sleep they are absolutely the “Voice in the desert.” In the thoughts of the *real* man, or the immortal “Individuality,” the pictures and visions of the Past and Future are as the Present; nor are his thoughts like ours, subjective pictures in our cerebration, but living acts and deeds, present actualities. They are realities, even as they were when speech expressed in sounds did not exist; when thoughts were things, and men did not need to express them in speeches, for they instantly realized themselves in action by the power of *Kriyasakti*, that mysterious power which transforms instantaneously ideas into visible forms.

...

*Q. How, then, does Esoteric Philosophy account for the transmission of even a few fragments of those thoughts of the Ego to our physical memory which it sometimes retains?*

A. All such are reflected on the brain of the sleeper, like outside shadows on the canvas walls of a tent, which the occupier sees as he wakes. Then the man thinks that he has dreamed all that, and feels as though *he* had lived through something, while in reality it is the *thought-actions* of the true Ego which he has dimly perceived. As he becomes fully awake, his recollections become with every minute more distorted,

and mingle with the images projected from the physical brain, under the action of the stimulus which causes the sleeper to awaken. These recollections, by the power of association, set in motion various trains of ideas.

*Q. It is difficult, to see how the Ego can be acting during the night things which have taken place long ago. Was it not stated that dreams are not subjective?*

A. How can they be subjective when the dream state is itself for us, and on our plane, at any rate, a subjective one? To the dreamer (the Ego), on his own plane, the things on that plane are as objective to him as our acts are to us. . . .

*Q. This Ego, then, is the "Higher Ego"?*

A. Yes; it is the higher Manas illuminated by Buddhi; the principle of self-consciousness, the "I-am-I," in short. It is the Karana-Sarira, the immortal man, which passes from one incarnation to another.

*Q. Is the "register" or "tablet of memory" for the true dream-state different from that of waking life?*

A. Since dreams are in reality the actions of the Ego during physical sleep, they are, of course, recorded on their own plane and produce their appropriate effects on this one. But it must be always remembered that dreams in general, and as we know them, are simply our waking and hazy recollections of these facts.

It often happens, indeed, that we have no recollection of having dreamt at all, but later in the day the remembrance of the dream will suddenly flash

upon us. Of this there are many causes. It is analogous to what sometimes happens to every one of us. Often a sensation, a smell, even a casual noise, or a sound, brings instantaneously to our mind long-forgotten events, scenes and persons. Something of what was seer, done, or thought by the “night-performer,” the Ego, impressed itself at that time on the physical brain, but was not brought into the conscious, waking memory, owing to some physical condition or obstacle. This impression is registered on the brain in its appropriate cell or nerve center, but owing to some accidental circumstance it “hangs fire,” so to say, till something gives it the needed impulse. Then the brain slips it off immediately into the conscious memory of the waking man; for as soon as the conditions required are supplied that particular center starts forthwith into activity, and does the work which it had to do, but was hindered at the time from completing.

*Q. How does this process take place?*

A. There is a sort of conscious telegraphic communication going on incessantly, day and night, between the physical brain and the inner man. The brain is such a complex thing, both physically and metaphysically, that it is like a tree whose bark you can remove layer by layer, each layer being different from all the others, and each having its own special work, function, and properties.

*(A What distinguishes the “dreaming” memory and imagination from those of waking consciousness?)*

A. During sleep the physical memory and imagination are of course passive, because the dreamer is asleep: his brain is asleep, his memory is asleep, all his functions are dormant and at rest. It is only when they are stimulated, as I told you, that they are aroused. Thus the consciousness of the sleeper is not active, but passive. The inner man, however, the real Ego, acts independently during the sleep of the body; but it is doubtful if any of us—unless thoroughly acquainted with the physiology of occultism—could understand the nature of its action. . . .

*Q. But do not our minds receive their illuminations direct from the higher Manas through the Lower? . . .*

A. . . . Were the Personalities (Lower Manas or the *Physical* minds) to be inspired and illumined solely by their higher *alter Egos* there would be little sin in this world. But they are not; and getting entangled in the meshes of the Astral Light, they separate themselves more and more from their parent Egos. Read and study what Eliphas Levi says of the Astral Light, which he calls Satan and the Great Serpent. The Astral Light has been taken too literally to mean some sort of a second blue sky. This imaginary space, however, on which are impressed the countless images of all that ever was, is, and will be, is but a too sad reality. It becomes in, and for, man—if at all psychic — and who is not?—a tempting Demon, his “evil angel,” and the inspirer of all our worst deeds. It acts on the will of even the sleeping man, through visions impressed upon his slumbering brain (which



visions must not be confused with the “dreams”), and these germs bear their fruit when he awakes.

*Q. What is the part played by Will in dreams?*

A. The will of the outer man, our volition, is of course dormant and inactive during dreams; but a certain bent can be given to the slumbering will during its inactivity. . . .

*Q.. Are so-called prophetic dreams a sign that the dreamer has strong clairvoyant faculties?*

A. It may be said, in the case of persons who have truly prophetic dreams, that it is because their physical brains and memory are in closer relation and sympathy with their “Higher Ego” than in the generality of men. The Ego-Self has more facilities for impressing upon the physical shell and memory that which is of importance to such persons than it has in the case of other less gifted persons. Remember that the only God man comes in contact with is his own God, called Spirit, Soul and Mind, or Consciousness, and these three are one.

*Q.. Are there people who have never dreamed?*

A. There is no such man in the world so far as I am aware. All dream more or less; only with most, dreams vanish suddenly upon waking. This depends on the more or less receptive condition of the brain ganglia. Unspiritual men, and those who do not exercise their imaginative faculties, or those whom manual labor has exhausted, so that the ganglia do not act even mechanically during rest, dream rarely, if ever, with any coherence.

*Q. What is the difference between the dreams of men and those of beasts ?*

A. The dream state is common not only to all men, but also to all animals, of course, from the highest mammalia to the smallest birds, and even insects. Every being endowed with a physical brain, or organs approximating thereto, must dream. Every animal, large or small, has, more or less, physical senses; and though these senses are dulled during sleep, memory will still, so to say, act mechanically, reproducing past sensations. That dogs and horses and cattle dream we all know, and so also do canaries, but such dreams are, I think, merely physiological. Like the last embers of a dying fire, with its spasmodic flare and occasional flames, so acts the brain in falling asleep. Dreams are not, as Dryden says, “ interludes which fancy makes,” for such can only refer to physiological dreams provoked by indigestion, or some idea or event which has impressed itself upon the active brain during waking hours.

*Q. What, then, is the process of going to sleep?*

A. This is partially explained by Physiology. It is said by Occultism to be the periodical and regulated exhaustion of the nervous centers, and especially of the sensory ganglia of the brain, which refuse to act any longer on this plane, and, if they would not become unfit for work, are compelled to recuperate their strength on another plane or *Upddhi*. First comes the *Svapna* [q.v.], or dreaming state, and this leads to that of *Sushupti* [q.v.]. Now it must be remembered that our M uses are all dual, and act according to the plane

of consciousness on which the thinking entity energizes. Physical sleep affords the greatest facility for its action on the various planes; at the same time it is a necessity, in order that the senses may recuperate and obtain a new lease of life for the *Jagrat* [q.v.], or waking state, from the *Svapna* and *Sushupti*. According to *Raja- Toga, Turiya* [q.v.] is the highest state. As a man exhausted by one state of the life fluid seeks another; as, for example, when exhausted by the hot air he refreshes himself with cool water; so sleep is the shady nook in the sunlit valley of life. Sleep is a sign that waking life has become too strong for the physical organism, and that the force of the life current must be broken by changing the waking for the sleeping state. Ask a good clairvoyant to describe the aura of a person just refreshed by sleep, and that of another just before going to sleep. The former will be seen bathed in rhythmical vibrations of life currents— golden, blue, and rosy; these are the electrical waves of Life. The latter is, as it were, in a mist of intense golden-orange hue, composed of atoms whirling with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity, 'showing that the person begins to be too strongly saturated with Life; the life essence is too strong for his physical organs, and he must seek relief in the shadowy side of that essence, which side is the dream element, or physical sleep, one of the states of consciousness. . . .

*Q. To what causes are dreams chiefly due?*

A. There are many kinds of dreams, as we all know.

Leaving the “ digestion dream ” aside, there

are brain dreams and memory dreams, mechanical and conscious visions. Dreams of warning and premonition require the active co-operation of the inner Ego. They are also often due to the conscious or unconscious co-operation of the brains of two living persons, or of their two Egos.

*Q. What is it that dreams, then?*

A. Generally the physical brain of the personal Ego, the seat of memory, radiating and throwing off sparks like the dying embers of a fire. The memory of the Sleeper is like an Aeolian seven-stringed harp; and his state of mind may be compared to the wind that sweeps over the chords. The corresponding string of the harp will respond to that one of the seven states of mental activity in which the sleeper was before falling asleep. . . . Therefore there is no simple answer to the question "What is it that dreams," for it depends entirely on each individual what principle will be the chief motor in dreams, and whether they will be remembered or forgotten.

*Q. Is the apparent objectivity in a dream really objective or subjective?*

A. If it is admitted to be apparent, then of course it is subjective. The question should rather be, to whom or what are the pictures or representations in dreams either objective or subjective? To the physical man, the *dreamer*, all he sees with his eyes shut, and in or through his mind, is of course subjective. But to the *Seer* within the physical dreamer, that Seer himself being subjective to our material senses, all he sees is as

objective as he is himself to himself and to others like himself. Materialists will probably laugh, and say that we make of a man a whole family of entities, but this is not so. Occultism teaches that physical man is one, but the thinking man septenary, thinking, acting, feeling, and living on seven different states of being or planes of consciousness, and that for all these states and planes the permanent Ego (not the false personality) has a distinct set of senses.

*Q. Can these different senses be distinguished?*

A. Not unless you are an Adept or highly-trained Chela, thoroughly acquainted with these different states. . . .

Now, it frequently happens that we are conscious and know that we are dreaming; this is a very good proof that man is a multiple being on the thought plane; so that not only is the Ego, or thinking man, Proteus, a multiform, ever-changing entity, but he is also, so to speak, capable of separating himself on the m'nd or dream plane into two or more entities; and on the plane of illusion which follows us to the threshold of Nirvana, he is like Ain-Soph talking to Ain-Soph, holding a dialogue with himself and speaking through, about, and to himself. And this is the mystery of the inscrutable Deity in the *Zohar*, as in the Hindu philosophies; it is the same in the Kabbala, *Puranas*, Vedantic metaphysics, or even in the so-called Christian mystery of the Godhead and Trinity. Man is the microcosm of the macrocosm; the god on earth is built on the pattern of the god in nature. But the universal consciousness

of the real Ego transcends a millionfold the self-consciousness of the personal or false Ego. . . .

*Q. How does it happen that persons who have never seen mountains in nature often see them distinctly in sleep and are able to note their features?*

A. Most probably because they have seen pictures of mountains; otherwise it is somebody or something in us which has previously seen them.

*Q. What is the cause of that experience in dreams in which the dreamer seems to be ever striving after something, but never attaining it?*

A. It is because the physical self and its memory are shut out of the possibility of knowing what the real Ego does. The dreamer only catches faint glimpses of the doings of the Ego, whose actions produce the so-called dream in the physical man, but is unable to follow it consecutively. A delirious patient, on recovery, bears the same relation to the nurse who watched and tended him in his illness as the physical man to his real Ego. The Ego acts as consciously within and without him as the nurse acts in tending and watching over the sick man. But neither the patient after leaving his sick bed, nor the dreamer on awaking, will be able to remember anything except in snatches and glimpses.

*Q. How does sleep differ from death ?*

A. There is an analogy certainly, but a very great difference between the two. In sleep there is a connection, weak though it may be, between the lower and higher mind of man, and the latter is more or less

reflected into the former, however much its rays may be distorted. . . .

*A. What is the condition of the Linga-Sarira, or plastic body, during dreams?*

A. The condition of the Plastic form is to sleep with its body, unless projected by some powerful desire generated in the higher Manas. In dreams it plays no active part, but on the contrary is entirely passive, being the involuntarily half-sleepy witness of the experiences through which the higher principles are passing.

*Q. Under what circumstances is this wraith seen?*

A. Sometimes, in cases of illness or very strong passion on the part of the person seen or the person who sees; the possibility is mutual. A-sick person, especially just before death, is very likely to see in dream, or vision, those whom he loves and is continually thinking of, and so also is a person awake, but intensely thinking of a person who is asleep at the time. . . .

*Q. Can there be any connection between a dreamer and an entity in "Kama-Loka"?*

A. The dreamer of an entity in *Kama-Loka* would probably bring upon himself a nightmare, or would run the risk of becoming "possessed" by the "spook" so attracted, if he happened to be a medium, or one who had made himself so passive during his waking hours that even his higher Self is now unable to protect him. This is why the mediumistic state of passivity is so dangerous, and in time renders the Higher Self entirely helpless to aid or even warn the sleeping or entranced

person. Passivity paralyzes the connection between the lower and higher principles. It is very rare to find instances of mediums who, while remaining passive *at will*, for the purpose of communicating with some higher intelligence, some *ex-terreneous* spirit (not disembodied), will yet preserve sufficiently their personal will so as not to break off all connection with the higher Self.

*Q. Can a dreamer be “ en rapport ” with an entity in Devachan ?*

A. The only possible means of communicating with a Devachani is during sleep by a dream or vision, or in trance state. No Devachani can descend into our plane; it is for us—or rather our *inner Self*—to ascend to his. . . .

*Q Is it a good thing to cultivate dreaming?*

A. It is by cultivating the power of what is called “ dreaming ” that clairvoyance is developed.

*Q. Are there any means of interpreting dreams—for instance, the interpretations given in dream-books?*

A. None but the clairvoyant faculty and the: spiritual intuition of the “ interpreter.” Every dreaming Ego differs from every other, as our physical bodies do. If everything in the universe has seven keys to its symbolism on the physical plane, how many keys may it not have on higher planes?

*Q. Is there any way in which dreams may be classified?*

A. We may roughly divide dreams also into seven classes, and subdivide these in turn. Thus, we would divide them into:—



1. Prophetic dreams. These are impressed on our memory by the Higher Self, and are generally plain and clear: either a voice heard or the coming event foreseen.

2. Allegorical dreams, or hazy glimpses of realities caught by the brain and distorted by our fancy. These are generally only half true.

3. Dreams sent by adepts, good or bad, by mesmerisers, or by the thoughts of very powerful minds bent on making us do their will.

4. Retrospective; dreams of events belonging to past incarnations.

5. Warning dreams for others who are unable to be impressed themselves.

6. Confused dreams, the causes of which have been discussed above.

7. Dreams which are mere fancies and chaotic pictures, owing to digestion, some mental trouble, or such-like external cause.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. X, pp. 246-64. (Also in  
*The Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*.)

## CHAPTER VI

### SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

*[“ Through joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, the soul comes to a knowledge of itself. . . . Through self-encounter we can experience awareness of our weaknesses and strengths and the realization of self-induced limitations and excesses. In so doing, we can come to understand that within each of us dwell the motives, hopes and desires of the community of man, and that we share a common destiny. The supernal Spiritual Forces, the guardians and teachers of mankind, who are ever watching the progress of man, have periodically sent a Teacher into the world to help it understand itself and the immutable cosmic laws which govern its growth. A mere glance at history reveals that such simple truths as “ love your neighbor as yourself ” soon become obscured under the cloak of an “ authority ” and man is separated once again from his God by walls of ignorance.*

*The modern era of research into the various realms of the invisible worlds carries with it attendant dangers. H.P.B. warns of these in the following passages and shews the way to spiritual progress and spiritual freedom.]*

Christina Rossetti’s well-known lines:

“ Does the road wind up hill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Does the journey take the whole long day?  
From morn till night, my friend.” \*

\* [*Up-Hill*, lines 1-4.]

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

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

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent, and not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable, in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change, and always,

\* [First published 1885. See Quest Book Miniature edition 1970.]

just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

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

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives; the trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen—it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. 11' we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg; but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime—every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

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

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

The goal of the aspirant for spiritual wisdom is entrance upon a higher plane of existence; he is to become a new man, more perfect in every way than he is at present, and if he succeeds, his capabilities and faculties will receive a corresponding increase of range and power, just as in the visible world we find that each stage in the evolutionary scale is marked by increase of capacity. This is how it is that the Adept becomes endowed with marvellous powers that have been so often described, but the main point to be remembered is, that these powers are the natural accompaniments of existence on a higher plane of evolution, just as the ordinary human faculties are the natural accompaniments of existence on the ordinary human plane.

Many persons seem to think that adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man, who, by going through a certain plainly defined course of training, consisting of minute attention to a set of arbitrary rules, acquires first one power and then another; and when he has attained a certain number of these powers is forthwith dubbed an adept. Acting on this mistaken idea they fancy that the .first

thing to be done towards attaining adeptship is to acquire “ powers ”—clairvoyance and the power of leaving the physical body and travelling to a distance, are among those which fascinate the most.

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

\* [The Theosophical Society.]

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

It appears that various societies have sprung into existence since the foundation of the Theosophical Society, profiting by the interest the latter has awakened in matters of psychic research, and endeavouring to gain members by promising them easy acquirement of psychic powers. In India we have long been familiar with the existence of hosts of sham ascetics of all descriptions, and we fear that there is fresh danger in this direction, here, as well as in Europe and America. We only hope that none of our members, dazzled by- brilliant promises, will allow themselves to be taken in by self-deluded dreamers, or, it may be, willful deceivers.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. VI, pp. 331-4..

. . . the prisms through which Occultism appears, to those innocent of the philosophy, are as multicolored and varied as human fancy can make them.

Will . . . candidates to Wisdom and Power feel very indignant if told the plain truth ? It is not only useful, but it has now become *necessary* to disabuse

most of them and before it is too late. This truth may be said in a few words: There are not in the West half-a-dozen among the fervent hundreds who call themselves “Occultists,” who have even an approximately correct ideal of the nature of the Science they seek to master. With a few exceptions, they are all on the highway to Sorcery. Let them restore some order in the chaos that reigns in their minds, before they protest against this statement. Let them first learn the true relation in which the Occult Sciences stand to Occultism, and the difference between the two, and then feel wrathful if they still think themselves right. Meanwhile, let them learn that Occultism differs from Magic and other secret Sciences as the glorious sun does from a rush-light, as the immutable and immortal Spirit of Man—the reflection of the absolute, causeless and unknowable ALL—differs from the mortal clay—the human body .....

. . . . true OCCULTISM . . . is . . . translated as it stands from the compound word *Gupta-Vidya*, “Secret Knowledge.” But the knowledge of what? Some of the Sanskrit terms may help us.

There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the Exoteric *Puranas*. There is (1) *Tajna-Vidya*, knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Mahavidya*, the “great knowledge,” the magic of the Kabalists and of the *Tantrika* worship, often Sorcery of the worst description. (3)



*Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing- in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) *ATMA-VIDYA*, a term which is translated simply “knowledge of the Soul,” *true Wisdom* by the Orientalists, but which means far more.

This last is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires *Light on the Path*\* and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. All the rest is some branch of the “Occult Sciences,” i.e., arts based on the knowledge of the ultimate essence of all things in the Kingdoms of Nature—such as minerals, plants and animals—hence of things pertaining to the realm of *material* nature, however invisible that essence may be, and howsoever much it has hitherto- eluded the grasp of Science. Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature and the *exact* Sciences—perhaps so called, because they are found in this age of paradoxical philosophies the reverse—have already discovered not a few of the secrets of the above *arts*. But clairvoyance, symbolized in India as the “Eye of Siva,” called in Japan, “Infinite Vision,” is *not* Hypnotism, the illegitimate son of Mesmerism, and is not to be acquired by such arts. All the others may be mastered and results obtained, whether good, bad, or indifferent; but *Atma-Vidya* sets small value on them. It includes them all and may

\* [*Light on the Path* is a treatise on spiritual endeavor.]

even use them occasionally, but it does so after purifying them of their dross, for beneficent purposes, and taking care to deprive them of every element of selfish motive. Let us explain: any man or woman can set himself or herself to study one or all of the above specified “ Occult Arts ” without any great previous preparation, and even without adopting any too restraining mode of lib'. One could even dispense with any lofty standard of morality. In the last case, of course, ten to one the student would blossom into a very decent kind of sorcerer, and tumble down headlong into black m a g i c . . . .

But the interest of our readers will probably center on those who are invincibly attracted towards the “ Occult, ” yet who neither realize the true nature of what they aspire towards, nor have they become passion-proof, far less truly unselfish.

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

himself a terrible Karma? Is there no other road for him?

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

Let them know at once and remember always, that *true Occultism or Theosophy* is the “Great Renunciation of SELF.” unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. It is ALTRUISM, and it throws him who practises it out of calculation of the ranks of the living altogether, “Not for himself, but for the world, he lives,” as soon as he has pledged himself to the work. Much is forgiven during the first years of probation. But, no sooner is he “accepted” than his personality must disappear, and he has to become *a mere beneficent force in Nature*. There are two poles for him after that two paths, and no midway place of rest. He has either to ascend laboriously, step by step, often through numerous incarnations and *no Devachanic break*,\* the golden ladder leading to Mahatmaship (the Arhat or

\* [Devachanic break refers to “the state between earth-lives into which the human entity, the human monad, enters and there rests in bliss and repose.” (*G. de Purucker, Occult Glossary*.)]

*Bodhisattva* condition), 6 or—he will let himself slide down the ladder at the first false step, and roll down into *Dugpaship* . . . .

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 249-54.

. . . *sorcery is any kind of evil influence exercised upon other persons, who suffer, or make other persons suffer, in consequence.* Karma is a heavy stone splashed in the cpuct waters of Life; and it must produce ever widening circles of ripples, carried wider and wider, almost *ad infinitum*. Such causes produced have to call forth effects, and these are evidenced in the just laws of Retribution.

Much of this may be avoided if people will only abstain from rushing into practices neither the nature nor importance of which they understand. No one is expected to carry a burden beyond his strength and powers. There are “natural-born magicians”; Mystics and Occultists by birth, and by right of direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and aeons of suffering and failures. These are passion-proof, so to say. No fires of earthly origin can fan into a flame any of their senses or desires; no human voice can find response in their souls, except the great cry of Humanity. These only may be certain of success. But they can be met only far and wide, and they pass

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6 [These three terms refer to those, who, through a succession of lives devoted to spiritual striving, have become far advanced along the path of evolution and can be said to have succeeded in overcoming the downward pull of matter, responding only to the spiritual pole within. As such, they are the embodiment of the fully blossomed intellectual-spiritual powers attainable one day by all.]

t [Dugpaship is the embodiment of selfishness—the force that pulls matter-ward.]

through the narrow gates of Occultism because they carry no personal luggage of human transitory sentiments along with them. They have got rid of the feeling of the lower personality, paralyzed thereby the “ astral ” animal, and the golden, but narrow gate is thrown open before them. Not so with those who have to carry yet for several incarnations the burden of sins committed in previous lives, and even in their present existence. For such, unless they proceed with great caution, the golden gate of Wisdom may get transformed into the wide gate and the broad way “ that leadeth unto destruction,” and therefore “ many be they that enter in thereby.” This is the Gate of the Occult arts, practised for selfish motives and in the absence of the restraining and beneficent influence of ATMA-VIDYA.\* We are in the Kali-Yuga \*\*and its fatal influence is a thousandfold more powerful in the West than it is in the East; hence the easy preys made by the Powers of the Age of Darkness in this cyclic struggle, and the many delusions under which the world is now labouring. One of these is the relative facility with which men fancy they can get at the “ Gate ” and cross the threshold of Occultism without any great sacrifice .....For, as well said by one believed to have sacrificed himself for Humanity—“ narrow is the gate and straight the way that leadeth unto life ” eternal, and therefore “ few be they that find it.” . . .

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 259-60.

\* [The highest form of spiritual knowledge.]

\*\* [Kali-Yuga is a Sanskrit term generally used in the sense of “ Black or Iron Age.”]

In his *Introduction* to . . . [his] little pamphlet, [*Visions*] “ M. A. Oxon.” strikes the keynote of his *Visions*. They are “ teaching ” or “ instruction ” to those whose wants they meet. In saying this, the author has, perhaps unwittingly, expressed a great fact, i.e., that for each one of us *that is truth* which meets our greatest need—whether moral, intellectual or emotional. As the author seems to feel, it matters very little whether these visions were subjective or objective. They conveyed to him certain moral truths with a directness and vividness which no other method of teaching could have attained. And whether we consider that these “ Visions ” were the thoughts of the intelligence teaching him impressed and objectivized in the recipient’s brain; or whether we think that in these visions the seer beheld objective things—does not in any way alter their value as expressions of subtle truth. In many respects they resemble the visions seen by Swedenborg, and they share with the writings of that wonderful man the same curious personal coloring or shaping of the form in which they are cast, in accordance with the intellectual views and beliefs held by the seer.

The “ Visions ” are instructive from several points of view. They offer a curious study to the student of psychology, who will trace in them the various elements due to the Seer and to the influences acting upon him. To the man in search of moral light, they will express truths of the inner life, known and recorded in many forms during the past ages of man’s life-history.

They teach most impressively the cardinal doctrine of that inner life, *viz.*, that man is absolutely his own creator. To the student of practical psychic development, they speak of the difficulties which attend the opening of the psychic senses, of the difficulty of distinguishing between the creation of man's own imagination and the more permanent creations of nature.

There is a pathetic touch here and there, bringing out clearly the difficulties just mentioned. The seer longs for the personal contact of earth and is told "to leave the personal." How long will it be before this, the deepest truth of Theosophy, is in any sense realized. . . .

The clinging to personality is so strong that it is felt even in another state of consciousness. How then can it fail to color and distort the pure truth, which is and must be absolutely impersonal? But this lesson is one hard to learn, so hard that many lives suffice not even for its comprehension.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 176-7.

"The key in each degree is the *aspirant himself*."<sup>7</sup> It is not "the fear of God" which is "the beginning of Wisdom," but the knowledge of SELF which is WISDOM ITSELF.

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<sup>7</sup> [H. P. B. is quoting from an article published in *The Path* (New York, Feb., 1888) wherein W. Q.-Judge discusses the original school of initiation. He states that "It is secret, because, founded in nature and having only real Hierophants at the head, its privacy cannot be invaded without the real key. And that key, in each degree, is the *aspirant himself*." Until that aspirant has become in fact the sign and the key, he cannot enter the degree above him. As a whole then, and in each degree, it is self-protective."]

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

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, p. 162.

. . . True knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone, and cannot be acquired in any other way except through the region of the higher mind, the only plane from which we can penetrate the depths of the all- pervading Absoluteness. He who carries out only those laws established by human minds, who lives that life which is prescribed by the code of mortals and their fallible legislation, chooses as his guiding star a beacon which shines on the ocean of Maya, or of temporary delusions, and lasts for but one incarnation. These laws are necessary for the life and welfare of physical man alone. He has chosen a pilot who directs him through the shoals of one existence, a master who parts with him, however, on the threshold of death. How much happier that man who, while strictly performing on the temporary objective plane the duties of daily life, carrying out each and every law of his country, and rendering, in short, to Caesar what is Caesar's, leads in reality a spiritual and permanent existence, a life with no breaks of continuity, no gaps, no interludes, not even during those periods which are the halting- places of the long pilgrimage of purely spiritual life..



All the phenomena of the lower human mind disappear like the curtain of a proscenium, allowing him to live in the region beyond it, the plane of the noumenal, the one reality. If man by suppressing, if not destroying, his selfishness and personality, only succeeds in knowing *r* himself as he is behind the veil of Physical Maya, he will soon stand beyond all pain, all misery, and beyond  $\dagger$  all the wear and tear of change, which is the chief originator of pain. Such a man will be physically of Matter, he will move surrounded by Matter, and *f* yet he will live beyond and outside it. His body will be subject to change, but he himself will be entirely without it, and will experience everlasting life even while in temporary bodies of short duration. All this may be achieved by the development of unselfish *k* universal love of Humanity, and the suppression of personality, or *selfishness*, which is the cause of all sin, and consequently of all human sorrow.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, 6 vol. ed., Vol. V, p. 434.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOUL DYNAMICS

*[Chained, for centuries to the concept of a God whose justice can be bought for the price of a candle, whose mercy is aroused by the pleas of his followers, whose law is subject to the restrictions of man's definitions of it, whose love is sent only to those who have accepted his Son, the Christian world has been rendered impotent, incapable of recognizing its responsibility to the future. Yet within the Bible are the very teachings which would enable all to work in harmony with Divine Law, each becoming a co-heir and co-worker rather than an idolater and slave:*

*“ Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” (Eccl. 11: 1.)*

*“ They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.” (Job 4: 8.)*

*“ God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galat. 6: 7.) In theosophy this all-embracing Law is called “ karma.” The mode by which Divine Justice is carried out is reincarnation, a doctrine which teaches no foolish regression but an eternal progression, a progression characterized in scientific thought as “ survival of the fittest,” and embodied in the reality of the unlimited potentiality of the human Spirit.]*

The function of religion [should be] to comfort and encourage humanity in its life-long struggle with sin



and sorrow. This it can do only by presenting mankind with noble ideals of a happier existence after deaths and of a worthier life on earth, to be won in both cases by conscious effort.

—*Collected Writings*, Vol. VIII, p. 278.

[Karma] exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is ETERNITY itself; and as such, since no act can be <sup>1</sup>- co-equal with eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is ACTION itself. It is not the Wave which drowns a man, but the *personal* action of the wretch, who goes deliberately and places himself under the *impersonal* action of the laws that govern the Ocean's motion. Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects; which adjustment is not an act, but universal <sup>1</sup>harmony, tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour. If it happen[s] to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say that it is the bough which broke our arm, or that our own folly has brought us to grief? Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the God invented by the Monotheists.

It has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man; nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who unveils through study and meditation its intricate paths, and „ throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of

the labyrinth of life, is working for the good of his fellow-men.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. II, p. 305;  
6 vol. ed., Vol. III, p. 306.

The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through “the still small voice” of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.

— *The Secret Doctrine*, orig. ed., Vol. I, p. 280,  
6 vol. ed., Vol. I, pp. 322-3.

[ *The concept of the perfectibility of man would remain sterile and in the realm of pure theory or wishful thinking if it were not sustained by evidence of the existence of men and women who have attained this very perfectibility.*

*In short, those individuals who have awakened and developed their spiritual faculties while living on this planet. H. P. Blavatsky was the first Westerner to publicly announce the existence of such persons, called by her Adepts, Masters, Mahatmas, or simply Brothers. It was their teachings that she promulgated; teachings presented not for blind acceptance on faith or belief, but as a foundation upon which to experiment and subject to closest scrutiny one's*

*own individual past, present and future experiences, and the collective experiences of humanity.*

*Folklore and mythology abound with references to men and women who performed a service for mankind and were then transformed into gods by credulous followers. Culture heroes fulfill, however, a very real need for they afford the aspiring soul with an ideal, without which most would fall by the wayside. Teilhard de Chardin, an eminent philosopher, is quoted as having confided that "Nothing in the universe can resist the cumulative ardor of a sufficiently large number of enlightened minds working together in organized groups." Teilhard has done much to popularize the concept that man is progressing toward perfectibility ;with his theory of Christo genesis.*

*Man's tendency to worship such individuals [the Adepts) remains an obstacle to his understanding of their logical place in the Divine Plan. They are human beings, not spirits; all too often misunderstandings have arisen, and they have been taken to be that which they are not. Put simply, they are men of spiritual vision who have, throughout the history of humanity, guided and encouraged man in his search for ever-greater truths.*

*Another difficulty standing in the way of pure understanding was and is the spirit of commercialization. As soon as H.P.B. began to write of their existence, others saw the money-making possibilities and so designed copies. This troubled her deeply; in one instance she wrote the following.]*

TO DARE, TO WILL, TO ACHIEVE AND KEEP SILENT

is the motto of the true Occultist. . . . True Occultism, i.e. genuine *Raja-Toga* powers, are not pompously boasted of, and advertised in, "Dailies" and monthlies,

like Beecham's pills or Pears' soap . . . . bear in mind that true occult knowledge can never be bought. He who has anything to teach, unless like Peter to Simon he says to him who offers him money for his knowledge —“ Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of (*our inner*) God may be purchased with money” is either a black magician or an IMPOSTOR.

—*Collected Writings, Vol. X, p. 285.*

*[No evaluation of the subjective planes of perception as presented by H.P.B. can properly be made without background information as to the sources of her information. During the twentieth century man progressed in the exploration of space to the point where he walked on the moon, and, during the plight to the moon, mankind was able to view the earth as it looks from outer space. Yet, in the face of this evidence, there are still those few who maintain that the earth is flat, as there are undoubtedly millions who know nothing whatever of the advances made in space science. Man could not have walked on the surface of the moon were there not a body of scientific knowledge, accumulated over centuries, which served as the foundation upon which others built. So it is in the science transcribed by H.P.B.: There are men who have accumulated this body of knowledge.]*

Enough has been given, it is believed, to show that the existence of a Secret Universal Doctrine, besides its practical methods of Magic, is no wild romance or fiction. The fact was known to the whole ancient world, and the knowledge of it has survived in the East

in India especially. And if there be such a Science,, there must be naturally, somewhere, professors of it, '» or Adepts. In any case it matters little whether the Guardians of the Sacred Lore are regarded as living, *i* actually existing men, or are viewed as myths. It is their Philosophy that will have to stand or fall upon its own merits, apart from, and independent of any Adepts. For in the words of the wise Gamaliel, addressed by him to the Synedrion: “ If this doctrine is false it will perish, and fall of itself; but if true, *j* then—*it cannot, be destroyed,.*””

— *The Secret Doctrine*, 6 vol. ed., Vol. V, p. 50-

*As with every spiritual teacher, H.P.B.'s writings contain an exoteric and an esoteric teaching, the outer and the inner meaning. For the majority of mankind, her writings will show the way to becoming a fully integrated, functional human being. For the few, there is the inner teaching which points the way to the Path of Renunciation, or what is called in Northern Buddhism the Path of the Buddhas (i.e. Enlightened Ones) of Compassion (for their fellow beings), Bhikshu Sangharakshita, a foremost scholar of Mahayana School of Buddhism, in a poem entitled “ Bodhisattva,” writes-*

\*

Because I could not muse apart In  
world-oblivious ecstasy,  
But felt like fire-drops on my heart The  
tears of all humanity,  
I cast aside the robe of selfish peace,

And donned the dress of painfulness Until  
all others' pain should cease.

\* \* \* \*

Let me endure unending pains,  
Drain to the dregs grief's bitterest cup;  
While one unhappy life remains My own I  
cannot render up.  
Nirvana's joy would only cloy Should it to  
me alone befall:  
Closed evermore Nirvana's door Unless I  
enter last of all.\*

*Within the Western tradition there is the well-loved  
story by Henry Van Dyke, The Other Wise Man. He  
writes:*

'Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul, v  
May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;  
While he who walks in love may wander far,  
Yet God will bring him where the blessed are.

*By way of introducing the reader to the story, he asks'. “  
But have you heard the story of the Other Wise Man. . . Of the great  
desire of the fourth pilgrim, and how it was denied, yet  
accomplished in the denial; of his many wanderings and the  
probations of his soul; of the long way of his seeking, and the  
strange way of his finding, the One whom he sought—I would tell  
the tale as I have heard fragments of it in the Hall of Dreams, in the  
palace of the Heart of Man.” Van Dyke speaks with great*

\*Reprinted with the kind permission of the Ven. Maha Sthavira Sangha-  
jnikshihhi from his collection entitled *Messenger From Tibet and Other  
Poems*.



understanding of the “ greater sin of spiritual selfishness” —that which H.P.B. calls the Path of the Pratyeka Buddha: He who gains the bliss of Nirvana and “ disappears from the sight and the hearts of man.” One of the Teachers in the early days of the theosophical movement wrote: “It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness— but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbor, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true theosophist

*It is this sacred teaching of all genuine schools of wisdom which has nurtured and produced individuals willing to renounce the well-deserved bliss of illimitable peace— the Cup offered to Jesus and which he freely took. “ But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”* (Mark 10:3].)

*H. P. B.’s devotional book The Voice of the Silence is the repository of this teaching. It is her translation of a selection of treatises of untold antiquity and takes the aspirant from the realm of the psychic, to the threshold of Spirit {Nirvana), and to the ultimate moment of choice when one of the two Paths must be taken.*

*The first segment of The Voice relates to the- subject under discussion in this anthology and opens with the words “ These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower IDDH1.” (Siddhis in Sanskrit.) It is explained that the siddhis are the psychic faculties-*

*(paranormal powers) in man, and that there are two distinct classifications thereof: 1. the lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies; and, 2. the spiritual powers or energies which manifest under the highest training and enable one to have full and complete control over all aspects of his psychic energies. The second segment describes the Two Paths, for this is the moment of choice. In the last segment, "The Seven Portals," the newly-born Man is reminded of the golden keys of Life Immortal, of the sustaining psychological truths which will enable him to fulfill his mighty task—his duty to humanity. The following are excerpts from this book.*

Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion. . .

Before the soul can comprehend and may remember,, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modelled, is first united with the potter's mind. For then the soul will hear, and will remember. And then to the inner ear will speak—THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE \_\_\_\_\_

If through the Hall of Wisdom, thou would'st reach the Vale of Bliss, Disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest. . . .

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. . . .

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. . . . Unsullied by the hand of matter she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit—the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms. ...

Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost. . . .

The light from the ONE Master, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick dark clouds of matter. . . .

Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search: the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities . . . the VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the Knowledge of the non-existent! . . .

O Teacher, what shall I do to reach to Wisdom? O Wise one, what, to gain perfection?

\*

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo [disciple], be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the “ Eye ” from the “ Heart ” doctrine.

Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.

But even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

The seeds of Wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul [the One Eternal and Absolute Reality and Truth], . .soar beyond illusions . . . mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.

For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes- of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek O beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul. . . .

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake. . . .

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin. . . .

Have patience, Candidate, as one who fears no failure,, courts no success . . . Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure . . . that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeing life: it is the man that was, that, is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike. . . .

The Selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life —has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to' race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. . . .

Thou canst create this “ day ” thy chances for thy “ morrow.” In the “ Great Journey ” [the cycle

of existences], causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World. With mighty sweep of never erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds. . . .

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. . . . To reach Nirvana's bliss, but to renounce it, is the supreme, the final step—the highest on Renunciation's Path. . . . The PATH is one, Disciple, yet in the end, twofold. . . . At one end—bliss immediate, and at the other—bliss deferred. Both are of merit the reward: the choice is thine. . . . Thou hast the knowledge now concerning the two Ways. Thy time will come for choice, O thou of eager Soul. . . . Unveiled stands truth and looks thee sternly in the face. She says:

“ Sweet are the fruits of Rest and Liberation for the sake of *Self*; but sweeter still the fruits of long and bitter duty. Aye, Renunciation for the sake of others, of suffering fellow men.”

He, who becomes Pratyeka-Buddha, makes his obeisance but to his *Self*. The Bodhisattva who has won the battle, who holds the prize within his palm, yet says in his divine compassion:

“ For others' sake this great reward I yield ”—accomplishes the greater Renunciation.

A SAVIOR OF THE WORLD is he. . . .

Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims. . . .

. . . thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF. ...

“ Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind? ” . . . Hast thou attuned thy being to Humanity’s great pain, O candidate for light? . . .

The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet. The path that leadeth on, is lighted by one fire—the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale—and that alone can guide. . .

Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void. O fearless Aspirant, look deep within the well of thine own heart, and answer. Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows? . . . Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body; control and master both . . . . Have mastery o’er thy Soul, O seeker after truths undying, if thou would’st reach the goal... . .

Now bend thy head and listen well, O Bodhisattva — Compassion speaks and saith: “ Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?” . . .

Thou art enlightened—Choose thy way.

—The preceding excerpts are from *The Voice of the Silence*, Original Edition.

... as the sun of truth rises higher and higher on the horizon of man’s perception, and each colored ray gradually fades out until it is finally reabsorbed in its turn, humanity will at last be cursed no longer with artificial polarizations, but will find itself bathing in the pure colorless sunlight of eternal truth.

— *The Key to Theosophy*, Section 4.

*THERE IS NO RELIGION  
HIGHER THAN TRUTH*



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