



THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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OBJECTIVES:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the Study of Comparative religion, Philosophy and Science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

A reminder that yearly dues are due.



PASSING OF LONG TIME BOARD MEMBER, SIMON POSTMA



Simon Postma was a TSC member from Edmonton and he served as a Director of The Theosophical Society in Canada for many years. He was an Honorary Lifetime member of our Society. Even in his 90's Simon was providing wise advice and commentary on theosophical matters. He will be greatly missed.

His daughter from Victoria, BC, wrote to us of his lifetime commitment to Theosophy. In his younger years,

Simon had been deeply connected to and influenced by his uncle, John Postma, MD, of the Netherlands, a physician and student of Theosophy. This same uncle wrote extensively on Theosophy and was a close friend with Alice Bailey.

Judy Moore, Simon's daughter, let us know that Simon would be honoured, if our donation to respect his passing, be directed to the Edmonton Food Bank.



2024 THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA SCHOLARSHIP

Our 2024 Recipient is Kavika Taylor from Vancouver, BC. She will be studying at Queen's University in Kingston, in a four year Bachelor of Commerce program.

Kavika graduated from grade 12 at Collingwood School in West Vancouver, and, due to her high qualifications, has been accepted at Queen's University

Smith School of Business. We wish her success as she embarks on this next step in her education.

The TSC Scholarship is for \$2000. First consideration is given to a relative of a member of The Theosophical Society in Canada.



A NIGHT INSIDE THE GREAT PYRAMID – *continued*

Paul Brunton

Somewhere in the centre of that still thing which was my body, I knew that my heart beat like a hammer under the strain of it all. The dread of the supernatural, which lurks at the bottom of every human heart, touched me again. Fear, dread, horror persistently presented their evil visages to me in turn. Involuntarily my hands clenched themselves as tightly as a vice. But I was determined to go on, and although these phantom forms that moved across the room began by stirring in me a sense of alarm, they ended by provoking me to summon whatever reserves of courage and combativeness I could muster.

My eyes were closed and yet these grey, gliding, vaporous forms obtruded themselves across my vision. And always there came with them an implacable hostility, an ugly determination to deter me from my purpose.

A circle of antagonistic beings surrounded me. It would have been easy to end it all by switching on the light or by leaping up and dashing out of the chamber and running back a few hundred feet to the locked grille-entrance, where the armed guard would have provided gregarious comfort. It was an ordeal which imposed a subtle form of torture, that harried the soul and left the body untouched. Yet something inside

intimated just as implacably that I must see this thing through.

At last the climax came. Monstrous elemental creations, evil horrors of the underworld, forms of grotesque, insane, uncouth and fiendish aspect gathered around me and afflicted me with unimaginable repulsion. In a few minutes I lived through something which will leave a remembered record behind for all time. That incredible scene remains vividly photographed upon my memory. Never again would I repeat such an experiment; never again would I take up a nocturnal abode within the Great Pyramid.

The end came with startling suddenness. The malevolent ghost invaders disappeared into the obscurity whence they had emerged, into the shadowy realms of the departed, taking with them their trail of noxious horrors. My half-shattered nerves experienced overwhelming relief such as a soldier feels when a fierce bombardment ends abruptly.

I do not know how long a period elapsed before I became conscious of a new presence in the chamber, of someone friendly and benevolent who stood at the entrance and looked down upon me with kindly eyes. With his arrival the atmosphere changed completely- and changed for the better. Something clean and sane had come with him. A new element began



to play upon my overwrought sensitive being, soothing and calming it. He approached my stony seat, and I saw that he was followed by another figure. Both halted at my side and regarded me with grave looks, pregnant with prophetic meaning. I felt that some momentous hour of my life was at hand.

In my vision the apparition of these two beings presented an unforgettable picture. Their white robes, their sandalled feet, their wise aspect, their tall figures- all these return at once to the mind's eye. Withal they wore the unmistakable regalia of their office, High Priests of an ancient Egyptian cult. There was light a-glimmer all around them, which in a most uncanny manner lit up the part of the room. Indeed, they looked more than men, bearing the bright mein of demi-gods; for their faces were set in unique clostral calm.

They stood motionless as statues, regarding me, their hands crossed upon their breasts, remaining absolutely silent. Was I functioning in some fourth dimension, aware and awake in some far-off epoch of the past? Had my sense of time regressed to the early days of Egypt? No; that could not be, for I perceived quickly that these two could see me and even now are about to address me.

Their tall figures bent forward; the lips of one spirit seemed to move, his face close to mine, his eyes flashing spiritual fire, and his voice sounding in my ear.

"Why dost thou come to this place, seeking to evoke the secret powers?

Are not mortal ways enough for thee?" he asked.

I did not hear these words with any physical ear; certainly no sound-vibration disturbed the silence of the chamber. Yet I seemed to hear them much in the manner in which a deaf man, using an electric earphone, might hear the words sounding against his artificial ear-drum; but with this difference—that they were heard on the inside of the drum. Really, the voice which came to me might be termed a mental voice, because it was surely heard within my head, but that might give the wrong impression that it was a mere thought. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It was a voice.

And I answered: "They are not!"

And he said:

"The stir of many crowds in the cities comforts the trembling heart of man. Go back, mingle with thy fellows, and thou wilt soon forget the light fancy that brings thee here."

But I answered again: "No, that cannot be."

Still he strove once more.

"The way of Dream will draw thee far from the fold of reason. Some have gone upon it—and come back mad. Turn now, whilst there is yet time, and follow the path appointed for mortal feet."

But I shook my head and muttered: "I must follow this way. There is none other for me now."



Then the priestly figure stepped forward closer and bent down again to where I sat.

I saw his aged face outlined by the surrounding darkness. He whispered against my ear:

"He who gains touch with us loses kin with the world. Art thou able to walk alone?"

I replied: "I do not know."

Out of the darkness came his last words:

"So be it. Thou hast chosen. Abide by thy choice for there is now no recall. Farewell," and he was gone.

I was left alone with the other spirit, who so far had only played the part of a silent witness.

He moved closer so that he stood now in front of the marble coffer. His face revealed itself as the face of a man, very very old. I dared place no guess of years upon him.

"My son, the mighty lords of the secret powers have taken thee into their hands. Thou art to be led into the Hall of Learning to-night," he explained dispassionately. "Stretch thyself out upon this stone! In olden days it would have been within that yonder, upon a bed of papyrus-reeds," and he pointed to the coffin-like sarcophagus.

It did not occur to me to do other than obey my mysterious visitant. I laid myself flat upon my back.

What happened immediately afterwards is still not very clear to me. It was as though he had unexpectedly given me a dose of some peculiar, slow-working, anaesthetic, for all my muscles became taut, after which a paralysing lethargy began to creep over my limbs. My entire body became heavy and numb. First, my feet became colder and colder. The feeling developed into a kind of iciness which moved by imperceptible degrees up my legs, reached the knees, whence it continued its mounting journey. It was as though I had sunk up to the waist in a pile of snow while on some mountain climb. All sensation in the lower limbs was numbed.

I appeared next to pass into a semi-somnolent condition and a mysterious intimation of approaching death crept into my mind. It did not trouble me, however, for I had long ago liberated myself from the ancient fear of death and arrived at a philosophic acceptance of its inevitability.

As this strange chilling sensation continued to grip me, to pass up my shivering spine, to overpower my entire body, I felt myself sinking inwards in consciousness to some central point within my brain, while my breathing became weaker and weaker.

When the chill reached my chest and the rest of my body was completely paralysed, something like a heart attack supervened, but it passed quickly and I knew that the supreme crisis was not far off.



Had I been able to move my stiff jaws, I might have laughed at the next thought which came to me. It was this:

"To-morrow, they will find my dead body inside the Great Pyramid- and that will be the end of me."

I was quite sure that all my sensations were due to the passage of my own spirit from physical life to the regions beyond death.

Although I knew perfectly well that I was passing through all the sensations of dying, all opposition had now vanished.

At last, my concentrated consciousness lay in the head alone, and there was a final mad whirl within my brain. I had the sensation of being caught up in a tropical whirlwind and seemed to pass upwards through a narrow hole; then there was a momentary dread of being launched in infinite space, I leapt into the unknown- and I was Free!

No other word will express the delightful sense of liberation which then became mine. I had changed into a mental being, a creature of thought and feeling yet without the clogging handicap of the heavy flesh body in which I had been shut up. I had gone ghost-like clean out of my earthly body, like a dead man rising out of his tomb, but had certainly gone into no sort of unconsciousness. My sense of existence in fact, was intensely more vivid than before. Above all, with this exodus to a higher dimension, I felt free, blissfully, languorously free, in

this fourth dimension to which I had penetrated.

At first I found myself lying on my back, as horizontal as the body I had just vacated, floating above the stone floor-block. Then came a sensation of some invisible hand turning me upright on my heels, after pushing me forward a little, and placing me properly on my feet. Ultimately I had a curiously combined feeling of both standing and floating simultaneously.

I gazed down upon the deserted body of flesh and bone, which was lying prone and motionless on the stone block. The inexpressive face was upturned, the eyes were scarcely open, yet the pupils gleamed sufficiently to indicate that the lids were not really closed. The arms were folded across the breasts- certainly not an attitude which I could remember having assumed. Had someone crossed those hands without my being aware of the movement? The legs and feet were stretched out side by side, touching each other. There lay the seemingly dead form of myself, the form from which I had withdrawn.

I noted a trail of faint silvery light projecting itself down from me, the new me, to the cataleptic creature who lay upon the block. This was surprising, but more surprising still was my discovery that this mysterious psychic umbilical cord was contributing towards the illumination of the corner of the King's Chamber where I hovered; showing up the wall-stones in a soft moonbeam-like light.



I was but a phantom, a bodiless creature sojourning in space. I knew, at last, why those wise Egyptians of old had given, in their hieroglyphs, the pictured symbol of the bird to man's soul-form. I had experienced a sense of increased height and breadth, a spreading out just as though I had a pair of wings. Had I not risen into the air and remained floating above my discarded body, even as a bird rises into the sky and remains circling around a point. Did I not have the sensation of being environed by a great void? Yes, the bird symbol was a true one.

Yes; I had risen into space, disentangled my soul from its mortal skein, separated myself into two twin parts, left the world which I had known so long. I experienced a sense of being etherealized, of intense lightness, in this duplicate body which I now inhabited. As I gazed down at the cold stone block upon which my body lay, a single idea obtained recognition in my mind, a single realization overwhelmed me. It expressed itself to me in a few brief silent words:

"This is the state of death. Now I know that I am a soul, that I can exist apart from the body. I shall always believe that, for I have proved it."

This notion clutched hold of me with an iron grip, the while I was poised lightly above my empty fleshy tenement. I had proved survival in what I thought the most satisfactory way—by actually dying and then surviving! I kept on looking at the recumbent relic

which I had left behind. Somehow, it fascinated me. Was that discarded form the thing which, for so many years, I had considered as myself? I perceived then, with complete clarity, that it was nothing more than a mass of unintelligent, unconscious, fleshy matter. As I regarded those unseeing unresponsive eyes, the irony of the whole situation struck me forcibly. My earthly body had really imprisoned me, the real "me," but now I was free. I had been borne hither and thither upon this planet by an organism which I had long confused with my real central self.

The sense of gravity seemed to have gone, and I was literally floating on air, with that strange half-suspended, half-standing feeling.

Suddenly, by my side appeared the old priest, grave and imperturbable. With upturned eyes, his face more ennobled still, with reverent mood, he prayed: "O Amen, O Amen, who art in Heaven, turn thy face upon the dead body of thy son, and make him well in the spirit-world. It is finished." And he addressed me:

"Thou hast now learned the great lesson. Man, whose soul was born out of the Undying, can never really die. Set down this truth in words known to men. Behold!"

And out of space there came the half-remembered face of a woman whose funeral I had attended more than twenty years before; then the familiar countenance of a man who had been more than a friend and whom I had



last seen laid to rest in his coffin twelve year previously; and, finally, the sweet smiling picture of a child i knew who had died in an accidental fall.

These three peered at me with tranquil faces, and their friendly voices sounded once again around me. I had the shortest of conversations with the so-called dead, who soon melted away and vanished.

"They too live, even as thou livest, even as this Pyramid, which has seen the death of half a world, lives on," said the High Priest.

"Know, my son, that in this ancient fane lies the lost record of the early races of man and of the Covenant which they made with their Creator through the first of His great prophets. Know, too, that chosen men were brought here of old to be shown this Covenant that they might return to their fellows and keep the great secret alive. Take back with thee the warning that when men forsake their Creator and took on their fellows with hate, as with the princes Atlantis in whose time this Pyramid was built, they are destroyed by the weight of their own iniquity, even as the people of Atlantis were destroyed.

"It was not the Creator who sank Atlantis, but the selfishness, the cruelty, the spiritual blindness of the people who dwelt on those doomed islands. The Creator loves all; but the lives of men are governed by invisible laws which He has set over them. Take back this warning, then."

There surged up in me a great desire to see this mysterious Covenant and the spirit must have read my thought, for he quickly said:

"To all things there is an hour. Not yet, my son, not yet."

I was disappointed.

He looked at me for a few seconds.

"No man of thy people hath yet been permitted to behold such a thing, but because thou art a man versed in these things, and hast come among us bearing goodwill and understanding in thy heart, some satisfaction thou shalt have. Come with me!"

And then a strange thing happened. I seemed to fall into a kind of semi-coma, my consciousness was momentarily blotted out, and the next thing I knew was that I had been transported to another place. I found myself in a long passage which was softly lit, although no lamp or window was visible: I fancied that the illuminant was none other than the halo-like emanation around my companion combined with the radiation from the luminous vibrant cord of ether which extended behind me, yet I realized that these would not sufficiently explain it. The walls were built up with a glowing pinkish terra-cotta coloured stone, slabbed with the thinnest of joints. The floor sloped downwards at precisely the same angle as the Pyramid entrance itself descends. The masonry was well finished. The passage was square and fairly low, but



not uncomfortably so. I could not find the source of its mysterious illuminant, yet the interior was bright as though a lamp were playing on it.¹

The High Priest bade me follow him a little way down the passage. "Look not backwards," he warned me, "nor turn thy head." We passed some distance down the incline and I saw a large temple-like chamber opening out of the farther end. I knew perfectly well that I was inside or below the Pyramid, but I had never seen such a passage or chamber before. Evidently they were secret and had defied discovery until this day. I could not help feeling tremendously excited about this startling find, and an equally tremendous curiosity seized me as to where and what the entrance was. Finally, I had to turn my head and take a swift look backwards at what I hoped was the secret door. I had entered the place by no visible entrance, but at the farther end I saw that what would have been an opening was closed with square blocks and apparently cemented. I found myself gazing at a blank wall; then, as swiftly whirled away by some irresistible force until the whole scene was blotted out and I had floated off into space again. I heard the words: "Not yet, not yet," repeated as in an echo and a few moments later saw my inert unconscious body lying on the stone.

"My son," came a murmur from the High Priest, "it matters not whether thou discoverest the door or not. Find

but the secret passage within the mind that will lead thee to the hidden chamber within thine own soul, and thou shalt have found something worthy indeed. The mystery of the Great Pyramid is the mystery of thine own self. The secret chambers and ancient records are all contained in thine own nature. The lesson of the pyramid is that man must turn inward, must venture to the unknown centre of his being to find his soul, even as he must venture to the unknown depths of this fane to find its profoundest secret. Farwell!"

My mind whirled into some vortex that caught me; I slipped helplessly, sucked downwards, ever downwards; heavy torpor overcame me, and I seemed to melt back into my physical body; I strained my will, pushed and trying to move its rigid muscles, but failed, and finally I swooned....

I opened my eyes with a shock, in inky blackness. When the numbness passed, my hands groped for the torch and switched the light on. I was back in the King's Chamber, still tremendously excited, so excited in fact, that I jumped up and shouted, my voice echoing abc in muffled tones. But, instead of feeling the floor beneath my feet, I found myself falling through space. Only by throwing both hands on the edge of the stone block and clinging to the sides did I save myself. I then realized what had happened. In rising I had unwittingly moved to the far end of the block and my feet were now dangling



over the excavated hole in the north-west corner of the floor.

I picked myself up and got back to safety, secured the lamp and threw a beam of light upon my watch. The glass was cracked in two places, where I had struck my hand and wrist against the wall in jumping up, but the works still ticked merrily away; and then,

as I noted the time I almost laughed outright despite the solemnity of my surroundings.

For it was precisely the melodramatic hour of midnight, both hands pointing to twelve, neither more nor less!

¹Dr. Abbate Pacha, Vice-President of the Institut Egyptien, spent a night in the desert near the Pyramids, together with Mr. William Groff, a member of the Institut. In the official report of their experiences, the latter said: "Towards eight o'clock, in the evening, I noticed a light which appeared to turn slowly around the Third Pyramid almost up to the apex; it was like a small flame. The light made three circuits round the Pyramid and then disappeared. For a good part of the night I attentively

watched this Pyramid; towards eleven o'clock I again noticed the same light, but this time it was of a bluish colour; it mounted slowly almost in a straight line and arrived at a certain height above the Pyramid's summit and then disappeared." By pursuing enquiries among the Bedouins, Mr. Groff discovered that this mysterious light had been seen more or less frequently in the past, the traditions of its existence stretching back centuries.



CHAPTER X. (CONTINUED) – HUMAN STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.⁶²

1. *THE SUB-CONSCIOUSNESS*

WE have already noticed the fact that many activities of consciousness, once purposive, have become automatic, and have gradually sunk below the "threshold of consciousness". The processes which maintain the life of the body—such as the beating of the heart, the expansion and contraction of the heart, the processes of digestion, etc.—have all fallen into a region of consciousness on which the attention of consciousness is not fixed. And there are innumerable phenomena, not directly connected with the maintenance of bodily life, which also inhabit this dim region. The sympathetic system is a storehouse of traces left by long-past events—events not belonging to our present life at all, but events that passed hundreds of centuries ago, that occurred in long-past lives, when the Jivatma which is our Self was abiding in savage human bodies, and even in the bodies of animals. Many a causeless terror, many a midnight panic, many a surge of furious anger, many an impulse of vindictive cruelty, many a rush of passionate revenge, is flung up from the depths of that dark sea of the sub-conscious which rolls within us, concealing many a wreck, many a skeleton of our past. Handed down by the astral consciousness of the time to its physical instrument for putting into action, the ever-sensitive plate of the permanent

atom has caught and photographed them, and has registered them in the recesses of the nervous system, life after life. The consciousness is off guard; or a strong vibration from another strikes us; or some event reproduces circumstances that start vibrations that arouse; in one way or another, the slumbering possibilities are awakened, and hurling itself upwards into the light of day comes the long-buried passion. There too hide the instincts which oft overpower reason, instincts that were once life-preserving efforts, or the results of experiences in which our body of the time perished, and the soul registered the result for future guidance. Instincts of love for the opposite sex, outcome of innumerable unions. Instincts of paternal and maternal love, poured out in many generations. Instincts of self-defence, developed in countless battles. Instincts of taking undue advantage, offspring of numberless cheatings and intrigues. And yet again there lurk there many vibrations that belong to events, and feelings, and desires, and thoughts of our present life, experienced and forgotten, but lying near the surface, ready for upcall. Time would fail to enumerate the contents of this relic-chamber of an immemorial past, containing old bones fit only for the dust-bin, side by side with interesting fragments of earlier days, with tools still useful for our present needs. Over the door of the relic-chamber is written: "Fragments of



the Past". For the sub-consciousness belongs to the Past, as the waking-consciousness to the Present, as the super-consciousness to the Future.

Another part of the sub-conscious in us is composed of the contents of all the consciousnesses that use our bodies as fields of evolution—atoms, molecules, cells of many grades. Some of the queer spectres and dainty figures that arise from the sub-conscious in us do not belong to us at all, but are the dim gropings, and foolish fears, and pretty fancies, of the Units of consciousness at a lower stage of evolution than our own, that are our guests, inhabiting our body as a lodging-house.

In this part of the sub-conscious go on the wars, waged by one set of creatures in our blood against another set, which do not enter our consciousness, save when their results appear as diseases.

Human sub-consciousness, working on the physical plane, is thus composed of very varied elements, and it is necessary thus to analyse and to understand it, in order to distinguish its workings from those of the true human super-consciousness, which resembles the instincts in its sudden irruptions into consciousness, but differs entirely from them in its nature and place in evolution, belonging to the future while they belong to the past. These two differ as atrophied vestigial organs, recording the history of the past, differ from germinal rudimentary

organs, indicating the progress of the future.

We have also seen that consciousness, working on the astral plane, built up and is still building the nervous system for its instrument on the physical plane; but this also does not form part of what is called the normal waking consciousness at this stage of evolution. In the average man, consciousness, working on the mental plane, is now building up and organising the astral body as its instrument in the future on the astral plane; but this again does not form part of the waking-consciousness. What then is the human waking-consciousness?

2. THE WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS.

The waking-consciousness is consciousness working on the mental plane and on the astral, using mental and astral matter as its vehicle, seated in the physical brain as Self-consciousness 63, and using that brain with its connected nervous system as its instrument for willing, knowing, and acting on the physical plane. In waking-consciousness the brain is always active, always vibrating; its activity may be stimulated as a transmitting organ from outside through the senses, or it may be stimulated by the consciousness from the inner planes; but it is ceaselessly active, responding to the without and the within. In the average man, the brain is the only part in which consciousness has definitely become Self-consciousness, the only



part in which he feels himself as "I", and asserts himself as a separate individual unit. In all the rest of him consciousness is still vaguely groping about, answering to external impacts but not yet defining them, conscious as to changes in its own conditions, but not yet conscious of "others" and "myself". In the more advanced members of the human family, consciousness, working on the astral and mental planes, is very rich and active, but its attention is not yet turned outwards to the astral and mental worlds in which it is living, and its activities find their outer expression in Self-consciousness on the physical plane, to which all the outer attention in consciousness is turned, and into which is poured as much of the higher workings as it is capable of receiving. From time to time, powerful impacts on the astral or mental plane create so violent a vibration in consciousness, that a wave of thought or emotion surges outwards into the waking consciousness and throws it into such furious motion, that its normal activities are swept away, submerged, and the man is hurried into action which is not directed or controlled by Self-consciousness. We shall consider this further when we come to the super-physical consciousness.

Waking-consciousness may then be defined as that part of the total consciousness which is functioning in the brain and nervous system, and which is definitely Self-conscious. We may conceive of consciousness as symbolised by a great light, which shines through a glass globe inserted

in a ceiling, illuminating the room below, while the light itself fills the room above, and sheds its radiance freely in every direction. Consciousness is as a great egg of light, of which only one end is inserted into the brain, and that end is the waking-consciousness. As consciousness becomes Self-consciousness on the astral plane, and the brain develops sufficiently to answer to its vibrations, astral consciousness will become part of the waking-consciousness. Later still, when consciousness becomes Self-consciousness on the mental plane, and the brain develops sufficiently to answer to its vibrations, the waking-consciousness will include mental consciousness. And so on, until all the consciousness on our five planes has evolved to waking-consciousness.

This enlarging of waking-consciousness is accompanied with development in the atoms of the brain, as well as with the development of certain organs in the brain, and of the connexions between cells. For the inclusion of the astral Self-consciousness, it is necessary that the pituitary body should be evolved beyond its present condition, and that the fourth set of spirillae in the atoms should be perfected. For the inclusion of the mental, the pineal gland must be rendered active, and the fifth set of spirillae brought into thorough working order. So long as these physical development remain unaccomplished, Self-consciousness may be evolved on the astral and mental planes, but it remains super-consciousness and its workings do not express themselves



through the brain, and thus become part of the waking-consciousness.

Waking-consciousness is limited and conditioned by the brain so long as a man possesses a physical body, and any injury to the brain, any lesion, any disturbance, at once interferes with its manifestation. However highly developed may be a man's consciousness, he is limited by his brain so far as its manifestations on the physical plane are concerned, and if that brain be ill-formed or ill-developed, his waking-consciousness will be poor and restricted.

With the loss of the physical body, the connotation of waking-consciousness changes, and that which is here said of the physical conditions is transferred to the astral. We may therefore enlarge our original definition to the general statement: waking-consciousness is that part of the total consciousness which is working through its outermost vehicle, that is, which is manifesting on the lowest plane then touched by that consciousness.

In the earlier stages of human evolution, there is little activity in consciousness on the inner planes except as stimulated from the outer; but as Self-consciousness grows more vivid on the physical plane, it enriches with ever-increasing rapidity the content of consciousness on the inner; consciousness, working upon its content, rapidly evolves, until its internal powers far outstrip the possibilities of their manifestation through the brain, and the latter

becomes a limitation and a hindrance instead of feeder and a stimulator. Then the pressure of consciousness on its physical instrument becomes at times perilously great, causing a nervous tension which endangers the equilibrium of the brain, unable to adapt itself with sufficient rapidity to the powerful waves beating upon it. Hence the truth of the saying "Great wits to madness near allied". Only the highly and delicately organised brain can enable the "great wits" to manifest themselves on the physical plane; but such a brain is the one most easily thrown off its balance by the strong waves of these same "great wits", and this is "madness". Madness—the incapacity of the brain to respond regularly to vibrations—may indeed be due to lack or arrest of development, lack or arrest of brain organisation, and such madness is not allied to "great wits"; but it is a significant and pregnant fact that a brain in advance of normal evolution, developing new and delicately balanced combinations for the enriched expression of consciousness on the physical plane, is the brain of all others that may most easily be disabled by the throwing out of gear of some part of its mechanism not yet sufficiently established to resist a strain. To this again we must return in considering the super-physical consciousness.

3. THE SUPER-PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

Psychologists in the West have lately betaken themselves to the study of states of consciousness other than the



waking; these are variously designated as "abnormal", "sub-conscious", "inconscient", and often as "dream-consciousness"—because the dream is the most generally recognised and universal form of other-consciousness. At first there was a tendency to regard these states as the result of disordered brain conditions, and this view is still largely held; but the more advanced psychologists are out-growing this narrow idea, and are beginning to study such states as definite manifestations of consciousness under conditions not yet understood, but not necessarily disorderly; some definitely recognise a "larger consciousness", a part only of which can find expression in the brain as at present evolved. In the East, this state of other consciousness has for long ages been regarded as higher than the waking state, as that of the consciousness set free from the narrow limits of the physical brain, and acting in a subtler and more plastic and congenial medium. Dream has been regarded as one phase of this superphysical activity, and as a touch with higher worlds; and means have been taken to arouse Self-consciousness in the dream-world, to set Self-consciousness, clothed in its higher vestures, free from the physical body at will; so that, instead of the vague and confused answers to impacts from higher worlds in undeveloped dream states, Self-consciousness may be established therein with clear and definite vision. To effect this, Self-consciousness in its higher vehicles must be at first removed from the physical body and

made active on the astral plane; for until it knows itself out of the dense body, it cannot separate out in the "dream", the extra-physical experiences from the chaotic fragments of physical experiences mixed up with them in the brain. As clear water poured into a muddy bucket becomes mixed up with the mud, so does an astral experience, poured down into a brain full of fragments of past physical happenings, become blurred, confused, incongruous 64. Eastern psychology hence sought after methods of separating the Self-consciousness from its physical vehicle, and it is interesting to observe that these methods, wholly different as they are from those used in the West, and directed to the intensifying of consciousness, reduce the body to the same state of quiescence as that induced by physical methods in the West, when the western psychologist betakes himself to the study of other-consciousness.

Super-consciousness includes the whole of the consciousness above the waking-consciousness; that is, all on the higher planes that does not express itself on the physical plane as Self-consciousness working through the brain. It is therefore a great complexity, and covers a large number of phenomena. Dream, as said, is part of it; so are all the workings of the astral consciousness asserting themselves as premonitions, warnings, visions of happenings distant in space or time, vague touches from other worlds, sudden intuitions as regards character or events; also all the



workings of the mental consciousness, lower or higher, that appear as intuitive grasp of truths, sudden insight into causal connexions, inspirations—mental or moral—flashes of genius, visions of high artistic beauty, etc., etc. These irruptions of the super-consciousness into the physical plane have the character of unexpectedness, of conviction, of imperious authority, of lack of apparent cause. They are unrelated, or only indirectly related, to the contents of the waking-consciousness, and do not justify themselves to it, but simply impose themselves on it.

To bring the super-consciousness into manifestation on the physical plane, it is necessary—in the early stages—to reduce the brain to inactivity, to render the sense-organs unresponsive to physical impacts, and, by expelling the conscious entity from the body, reduce that body to the state called trance. Trance is but the sleep-state, artificially or abnormally induced; whether produced by mesmeric, hypnotic, medicinal, or other means, the result is the same, so far as the physical body is concerned. But the result on the other planes will depend entirely on the evolution of consciousness on those planes, and a highly evolved consciousness would not permit the use of hypnotic or medicinal means—unless, perhaps, of an anaesthetic for an operation—though such a one might allow, under exceptional circumstances, the use of mesmerism in producing the trance state. Trance may also be produced by action from the higher planes, as by intense

concentration of thought, or by rapt contemplation of an object of devotion, inducing ecstasy. These are the means used from time immemorial by the Raja Yogis of the East, and the ecstasy of the Saint in the West is produced by this rapt contemplation; the trance is indistinguishable from that produced by the means above referred to in the Salpetriere and elsewhere. The Hatha Yogis also reach this same trance condition, but by means much resembling the last named,—by staring at a black spot on a white ground, at the point of the nose, and other similar practices.

But when other than physical vision and physical tests are used, how great is the difference between the super-physical conditions of consciousness in the hypnotised subject and in the Yogi. H. P. Blavatsky has well described this difference: "In the trance state the Aura changes entirely, the seven prismatic colours being no longer discernible. In sleep also they are not all 'at home'. For those which belong to the spiritual elements in the man, viz., yellow, Buddhi; indigo, Higher Manas; and the blue of the Auric Envelope, will be either hardly discernible or altogether missing. The Spiritual Man is free during sleep, and though his physical memory may not become aware of it, lives, robed in his highest essence, in realms on other planes, in realms which are the land of reality, called dreams on our plane of illusion. A good clairvoyant, moreover, if he had an opportunity of seeing a Yogi in the trance state and a mesmerised subject side by side, would learn an important



lesson in Occultism. He would learn to know the difference between self-induced trance and a hypnotic state resulting from extraneous influence. In the Yogi, the 'principles' of the lower quaternary disappear entirely. Neither red, green, red-violet, nor the auric blue of the body are to be seen; nothing but hardly perceptible vibrations of the golden-hued Prana principle, and a violet flame streaked with gold rushing upwards from the head, in the region where the Third Eye rests, and culminating in a point. If the student remembers that the true violet, or the extreme end of the spectrum, is no compound colour of red and blue, but a homogeneous colour with vibrations seven times more rapid than those of the red, and that the golden hue is the essence of the three yellow lines from orange-red to yellow-orange and yellow, he will understand the reason why; he [the Yogi] lives in his own Auric Body, now become the vehicle of Buddhi-Manas. On the other hand, in a subject in an artificially produced hypnotic or mesmeric trance, an effect of unconscious when not of conscious Black Magic, unless produced by a high Adept, the whole set of the principles will be present, with the Higher Manas paralysed, Buddhi severed from it through that paralysis, and the red-violet Astral Body entirely subjected to the Lower Manas and Kama Rupa" 65.

This difference in the appearance of the entranced person, as seen by the clear-seeing eye, is connected with a difference of immense importance in the after outcome of the trance. The

Yogi, who thus leaves the body, leaves it in full Self-consciousness, visits the higher worlds in full possession of his faculties, and, on returning to the dense body, imprints on the evolved brain the memory of his experiences. The little evolved person, entranced, "loses consciousness"; when his Self-consciousness is not developed on the higher planes, his awareness is not there turned outwards; he is practically as much asleep there, in the astral and mental worlds, as he is in the physical plane, and on awaking from the trance he knows nothing of what has occurred during its continuance, either here or elsewhere.

If, however, the subject be sufficiently evolved, as most people are at this stage of evolution, to be Self-conscious on the astral plane, then others may be profited by questioning him while entranced. For in the artificially induced trance state, wherein the brain is cut off from the normal action and reaction between itself and its environment, it becomes an instrument, however inadequate, of the super-physical consciousness. Isolated from its physical environment, rendered incapable of responding to its accustomed stimuli from outside, cut off from its lower attachments while remaining united to its higher, it continues to answer to the impacts from above, and can do this the more effectively since none of its energies are running out into the physical plane. This is the essence of the trance state. In the forcible closure of the avenues of the senses, through which its forces pour out into the external world, these



forces remain available as servants of the superphysical consciousness. In the silence thus imposed on the physical plane, the voices of the other planes can make themselves heard.

In the hypnotic trance, a quickening of the mental faculties is observed: memory is found to embrace a far larger area, for the faint pulsings left by far-off events become audible when the stronger pulsings from the recent are temporarily stilled; people forgotten in the waking state are remembered in the trance; languages known in childhood, but since lost, reappear; trivial events re-arise. Sometimes the perceptive powers range over a larger area; distant occurrences are seen, vision pierces through physical barriers, far-off speech becomes audible. Fragments of other planes are also occasionally glimpsed, much mixed up with the thought-forms of waking hours. A whole literature exists on this subject, and can be studied by the investigator.

It has also been found that the results of deeper trance are not identical with those of the more superficial. As the trance deepens, higher strata of the super-physical consciousness manifest themselves in the brain. The famous case of Leonie I., II. and III. is well-known; and it should be observed that Leonie I. knew nothing of Leonie II. and III.; that Leonie II. knew Leonie I. but did not know Leonie III.; that Leonie III. knew both Leonie I. and II. That is, the higher knows the lower, while the lower does not know the higher—a most pregnant fact.

In the mesmeric trance, the higher phenomena are more easily obtained than in the hypnotic, and, in this, very clear statements may be had of the phenomena of the astral and even of the mental plane—where the “subject” is well-developed—and sometimes glimpses are gained of past lives.

When we see that the exclusion of the physical plane is the condition for these manifestations of the super-physical consciousness, we begin to understand the rationale of the methods of Yoga, practised in the East. When the methods are physical, as in Hatha Yoga, the ordinary hypnotic trance is most often obtained, and the subject, on re-awakening, remembers nothing of his experiences. The method of the Raja Yoga, in which the consciousness is withdrawn from the brain by intense concentration, leads the student to continuity of consciousness on the successive planes, and he remembers his super-physical experiences on his return to the waking state. Both in the West and in the East, the same cessation of waking-consciousness is aimed at, in order to obtain traces of the super-physical consciousness, or as the western psychologist would say, from the unconscious in man. The eastern method, however, with thousands of years of experience behind it, yields results incomparably greater in the realms of the super-physical consciousness, and establishes, on the sure basis of reiterated experiences, the independence of consciousness as regards its physical vehicle.



The ecstasy and the visions of Saints, in all ages and in all creeds, afford another example of the irruptions from the "unconscious". In these, prolonged and absorbing prayer, or contemplation, is the means for producing the necessary brain-condition. The avenues of the senses become closed by the intensity of the inner concentration, and the same state is reached spasmodically and involuntarily which the practiser of Raja Yoga seeks deliberately to attain. Hence we find that devotees of all faiths ascribe their visions to the favour of the Deity worshipped, and not to the fact that they have produced in themselves a passive brain-condition, which enables the super-physical consciousness to imprint on that brain the sights and sounds of the higher worlds.

Prof. William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, points out that some of the most striking of these irruptions from the "unconscious" are cases of "sudden conversions", in which a sudden thought, or vision, or voice, has changed at once and completely the whole course of a man's waking life. He rightly argues that a force, sufficiently powerful to produce such effects, cannot be lightly waved aside, or contemptuously ignored, by any serious student of human consciousness. This whole class of psychical phenomena demands careful and scientific study, and promises a rich harvest of results, as to the super-physical consciousness, to repay the serious investigator.

As against this view, however, it is urged that these facts are observed in connexion with morbid nervous states, and that the subjects are hysterical, over-excited persons, whose experiences are vitiated by their condition. In the first place, this is not always true; the eastern Raja Yogis are persons distinguished for their calmness and serenity, and some of the cases of conversion have been those of worldly and capable men. Let it be granted, however, that in the majority of cases the nervous condition is morbid, and the brain overstrained, what then? The normal brain is admittedly evolved to the point of responding to the vibrations of the physical world, and of transmitting these upwards, and of transmitting downwards mental and astral vibrations connected with these, from the higher vehicles. It is not yet evolved to the point of receiving without disturbance very violent vibrations from the higher planes, nor of responding at all to the vibrations set up in the subtler vehicles by the external phenomena of their own planes. Very violent emotions of joy, pain, grief, terror, often prove too much for the normal brain, causing severe headache, hysteria, and even nervous collapse. It is, therefore, no wonder that the very violent emotion which causes what is called a conversion should often be accompanied by similar nervous distress. The important point is, that when the nervous upset has passed, the effect—the changed attitude towards life—remains. The nervous



disturbance is due to the inadequacy of the physical brain to bear the violent and rapid vibrations dashing down upon it; the permanently changed attitude is due to the steady pressure of the super-physical consciousness, continuously exerted. Where the super-physical consciousness is not sufficiently developed to exert this continuous pressure, the converted person "falls from grace" as the surge of emotion ebbs away.

In cases of visions, and like phenomena, we have already seen that they may occur when a form of trance has been produced. But without this, such phenomena may occur, in cases where the brain is in a state of tension, either from some temporary cause, or from the fact that its evolution has gone beyond the normal. Strong emotion may increase the nervous tension to the point where response to direct astral vibrations becomes possible, and thus an astral happening becomes visible or audible. The reaction from the strain will probably show itself as nervous disturbance. When the brain is more highly evolved than the ordinary brain, has become more complicated and more sensitive, astral happenings may be felt constantly, and this strain may well be somewhat greater than the nervous system is quite fitted to bear, in addition to bearing the ordinary wear and tear of modern civilisation. Hence, again, hysteria and other forms of nervous distress are likely to accompany the visions.

But these facts do not take away from the importance of the experiences, as facts in consciousness. Rather, perhaps, do they increase their importance, as showing the way in which evolution works in the action of the environment on an organism. The reiterated impacts of external forces stimulate the growing organism, and very often temporarily overstrain it; but the very strain forces forward its evolution. The crest of the evolutionary wave must always consist of abnormal organisms; the steady, normal, safe, average organisms follow on behind; they are most respectable, but perhaps not so interesting as the pioneers, and most certainly not so instructive as regards the future. As a matter of fact, the forces of the astral plane are constantly playing vigorously on the human brain, in order that it may develop as a fuller vehicle of consciousness, and a sensitive brain, in the transitional state, is apt to be thereby thrown a little out of gear with the world of its past. It is probable that a good many activities to which thought is at present directed will, in the future, be carried on automatically, and will gradually sink below the threshold of the waking consciousness, as have done various functions, once performed purposively.

As these changes go on, the subtler vibrations must inevitably show themselves in an increasing number in the most delicately equilibrated brains, those which are not normal, inasmuch as these—on the crest of evolution—will be those most capable



of responding. Dr. Maudsley writes: "What right have we to believe Nature under any obligation to do her work by means of complete minds only? She may find an incomplete mind a more suitable instrument for a particular purpose" 66. And Prof. James himself remarks: "If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity" .

When we once recognise that forces subtler than the physical must necessitate for their expression a more refined vehicle than the brain organised for the reception of the physical, we shall cease to be troubled or distressed when we find that the super-physical forces often find their readiest expression through brains that are more or less out of gear with the physical plane. And we shall understand that the abnormal physical symptoms accompanying their manifestations in no way derogate from the value of these energies, nor from the importance of the part they will play in the future of humanity. At the same time the wish must naturally arise to find out some method whereby these forces may be enabled to manifest themselves without risking the destruction of their physical instrument.

This way has been found in the East in the practice of Raja Yoga, whereby the safe exercise of the higher consciousness is sought by intense concentration. This concentration, in itself, develops the brain as an instrument for the subtler forces, working in the brain-cells in the manner already described in connexion with thought. 68 Moreover, it slowly opens up the set of spirillae of the atom, next in order to those now in activity, and thus adds a new organ for the higher functioning. This process is necessarily a slow one, but it is the only safe way of development; and, if its slowness be resented, it may be suggested as a reason for patience that the student is endeavouring to ante-date the atomic development of the next Round, and he can hardly expect to accomplish this with rapidity. It is, however, this slowness of the Raja Yogic practices which renders them somewhat unacceptable to the hurrying West; and yet there is no other way to secure a balanced development. The choice lies between this and the morbid nervous disturbances which accompany the irruptions of the super- physical consciousness into an unprepared vehicle. We cannot transcend the laws of Nature; we can only try to understand, and then to utilise them.



CHAPTER XI – THE MONAD AT WORK.

1. BUILDING HIS VEHICLES.

LET us now consider the work of the Monad in the shaping of his vehicles, when he has, as his representatives—as himself on the third, fourth, and fifth planes—Atma-Buddhi-Manas, with the causal body as the receptacle, the treasure-house, of the experiences of each incarnation.

At the close of each period of life, that is to say, at the end of each devachanic existence, he must stimulate into renewed activity the three successive nuclei of the bodies he is to wear during his next life-period. First, he arouses the mental nucleus. This arousing consists in increasing the flow of life through the spirillae. It will be remembered that when the permanent units "went to sleep", the normal flow of life in the spirillae lessened, and, during the whole period of repose, this flow is small and slow. 69 When the time for reincarnation arrives, this flow is increased, the spirillae thrill with life, and the permanent units, one after another, behave as magnets, attracting round themselves appropriate matter. Thus when the mental unit is stimulated, it begins to vibrate strongly, according to the vibratory powers—the results of past experiences—stored up therein, drawing towards and arranging round itself appropriate matter from the mental plane. Just as a bar of soft iron becomes a magnet when a current is sent through a wire

encircling it, and as matter within its magnetic field will at once arrange itself round that magnet, so is it with the permanent mental unit. When the life-current encircles it, it becomes a magnet, and matter within the field of its forces arranges itself round it and forms a new mental body. The matter attracted will be according to the complexity of the permanent unit. Not only will finer or coarser matter be attracted, but the matter must also vary in the development of the atoms which enter into the formation of its aggregations. The molecules attracted will be composed of atoms the vibratory energies of which are identical with, or approach nearly to, or are in tune with, those of the attracting unit. Hence, according to the stage of evolution reached by the man, will be the development of the matter of his new mental vehicle. In this way, incarnation after incarnation, a suitable mental body is built up.

Exactly the same process is repeated on the astral plane in the building of the new astral body. The astral nucleus—the astral permanent atom—is similarly vivified, and acts in a similar way.

The man is thus clothed with new mental and astral bodies which express his stage of evolution, and enable whatever powers and faculties he possesses to express themselves duly in their own worlds.



But when we come to the shaping of the body on the physical plane a new element appears. So far as the Monad is concerned, the work is the same. He vivifies the physical nucleus—the physical permanent atom—and it acts as a magnet like its fellows. But now it is as though a man interfered with the attraction and arrangement of matter within a magnetic field; the Elemental, charged with the duty of shaping the etheric double after the model given by the Lords of Karma, steps in and takes control of the work. The materials; indeed, may be gathered together, as a workman might carry bricks for the building of a house, but the builder takes the bricks, accepts or rejects, and sets them according to the plan of the architect.

The question arises: Why this difference? Why, on reaching the physical plane, where we might expect a repetition of the previous processes, should an alien power take the control of the building out of the hands of the owner of the house? The answer lies in the working of the law of karma. On the higher planes, the sheaths express as much of the man as is developed, and he is not there working out the results of his past relations with others. Each centre of Consciousness, on those planes, is working within its own circle; its energies are directed towards its own vehicles, and only so much of them as is finally expressed through the physical vehicle acts directly upon others. These relations with others complicate his karma on the physical plane, and the particular physical form

that he wears during a particular life—period must be suitable for the working out of this complicated karma. Hence the need for the adjusting interference of the Lords of Karma. Were he at a point of evolution at which he entered into similarly direct relations with others on other planes, similar limitations of his power to shape his vehicles on those planes would appear. In the sphere of his external activities, whatever it may be, these limitations must present themselves.

Hence the shaping of the physical body is done by an authority higher than his own; he must accept the conditions of race, nation, family, circumstances, demanded by his past activities. This limiting action of karma necessitates the building of a vehicle which is but a partial expression of the working consciousness—partial, not only because of the shutting off of power by the coarseness of the material itself, but also because of the external limitations above referred to. Much of his consciousness, even though ready for expression on the physical plane, may thus be excluded, and only a small part of it may appear on the physical plane as waking-consciousness.

The next point in connexion with this building that we must consider is the special work of organising the vehicles as expressions of consciousness, leaving apart the general building by desire and thought, with which we are so familiar. We are concerned here with details, rather than with broad outlines.



We know that while qualities are imparted to matter during the descent of the Second Logos, the arrangement of these specialised materials into relatively permanent forms belongs to His ascent. When the Monad, through his reflexion as the Spiritual Man, assumes some directive power over his vehicles, he finds himself in possession of a form in which the sympathetic nervous system is playing a very large part, and in which the cerebro-spinal has not yet assumed predominance. He will have to work up a number of connecting links between this sympathetic system which he inherits and the centres which he must organise in his astral body, for his future independent functioning therein. But before any independent functioning in any higher vehicle is possible, it is necessary to carry it to a fairly high point as a transmitting vehicle, that is a vehicle through which he works down to his body on the physical plane. We must distinguish between the primary work of the organisation of the mental and astral vehicles that fits them to be transmitters of part of the consciousness of the Spiritual Man, and the later work of developing these same vehicles into independent bodies, in which the Spiritual Man will be able to function on their respective planes. Hence there are two tasks to be performed: first the organisation of the mental and astral vehicles as transmitters of consciousness to the physical body; secondly, the organisation of these vehicles into independent bodies, in which

consciousness can function without the help of the physical body.

The astral and mental vehicles, then, must be organised in order that the Spiritual Man may use the physical brain and nervous system as his organ of consciousness on the physical plane. The impulse to such use comes from the physical world by impacts upon the various nerve-ends, causing waves of nervous energy to pass along the fibres to the brain: these waves pass from the dense brain to the etheric, thence to the astral, thence to the mental vehicle, arousing a response from the consciousness in the causal body on the mental plane. That consciousness, thus roused by impacts from without, gives rise to vibrations, which flow down in answer from the causal body to the mental, from the mental to the astral, from the astral to the etheric and dense physical; the waves set up electric currents in the etheric brain, and these act on the dense matter of the nervous cells.

All these vibratory actions gradually organise the first inchoate clouds of astral and mental matter into vehicles which serve as effective fields for these constant actions and reactions. This process goes on during hundreds of births, started, as we have seen, from below, but gradually coming more and more under the control of the Spiritual Man; he begins to direct his activities by his memories of past sensations, and starts each activity under the impulse of these memories stimulated by desire. As the process continues, more and more forcible direction



comes from within, and less and less directive power is exercised by the attractions and repulsions of external objects, and thus the control of the building up of the vehicles is largely withdrawn from the without and is centred in the within.

As the vehicle becomes more organised, certain aggregations of matter appear within it, at first cloudy and vague, then more and more definitely outlined. These are the future chakras, or wheels, the sense-centres of the astral body, as distinguished from the astral sense-centres connected with the sense-organs and centres of the physical body. 70 But nothing is done to vivify these slowly growing centres for immense periods of time, and the connexion of them with the physical body is often delayed, even after they are functioning on the astral plane; for this connexion can only be made from the physical vehicle, wherein the fiery force of Kundalini resides. Before Kundalini can reach them, so that they can pass their observations on to the physical body, they must be linked to the sympathetic nervous system, the large ganglionic cells in that system being the points of contact. When these links are made, the fiery current can flow through, and observations of astral events can be transmitted fully to the physical brain. While they can only be thus linked with the physical vehicle, the building of them as centres and the gradual organisation of them into wheels, can be begun from any vehicle, and will be begun in any individual from that vehicle which represents

the special type of temperament to which he belongs. According as a man belongs to one typical temperament or another, so will be the place of the greatest activity in the building up of all the vehicles, in the gradual making of them into effective instruments of consciousness to be expressed on the physical plane. This centre of activity may be in the physical, astral, lower, or higher mental body. In any of these, or even higher still, according to the temperamental type, this centre will be found in the principle which marks out the temperamental type, and from that it works "upwards" or "downwards", shaping the vehicles so as to make them suitable for the expression of that temperament.

2. AN EVOLVING MAN.

A special case may be taken to facilitate the understanding of this process—a temperament in which the concrete mind predominates. We will trace the Spiritual Man through the third, fourth, and fifth Root Races. When we look at him at work in the third Race, we find him very infantile mentally, even though the mind is the predominant note of his type. The surging life around him, that he can neither understand nor master, works strongly upon him from outside, and powerfully affects his astral vehicle. This astral vehicle will be retentive of impressions, in consequence of the temperament, and the desires will stimulate the infantile mind to efforts directed to their satisfaction. His physical constitution differs from that of the fifth Race man; the sympathetic system



is still dominant, and the cerebro-spinal system subordinate, but parts of the sympathetic system are beginning to lose much of their effectiveness as instruments of consciousness, belonging, as such instruments, to the stage below the human. There are two bodies in the brain especially connected with the sympathetic system in their inception, although now forming part of the cerebro-spinal—the pineal gland and the pituitary body. They illustrate the way in which a part of the body may function in one manner at an early stage, may then lose its special use and function little, if at all, and at a later stage of evolution may again be stimulated by a higher kind of life, which will give it a new use and function at a higher stage of evolution.

The development of these bodies belongs to the invertebrate rather than to the vertebrate kingdom, and the "third eye" is spoken of by biologists as the "invertebrate eye". It is, however, still found, as an eye among vertebrates, for a snake was lately found in Australia which showed on the top of the head a peculiar arrangement of semitransparent scales; when these were cut away a complete eye was found underneath—an eye complete in its parts although not functioning. That third eye was functioning among the Lemurians in the vague and general way characteristic of the lower stages of evolution, and specially characteristic of the sympathetic system. As our man advanced from the Lemurian into the Atlantean Race, the third eye ceased to function,

the brain developed round it, and it became the appendage now called the pineal gland. As a Lemurian, he had been psychic, the sympathetic system being largely affected by the surgings of the undeveloped astral body. As an Atlantean, he gradually lost his psychic powers, as the sympathetic system became subordinate and the cerebro-spinal grew stronger.

The growth of the cerebro-spinal system would be more rapid in this Atlantean than in those of other temperaments, because the main activity would be in the concrete mind, and would thus stimulate and fashion it; the astral body would lose its predominance sooner, and would become more rapidly a transmitter of mental impulses to the brain. Hence, when our man passed on into the fifth Race, he would be peculiarly ready to take advantage of its characteristics; he would build a large and well-proportioned brain; he would utilise, his astral chiefly as a transmitter, and would build his chakras from the mental plane.

3. *THE PITUITARY BODY AND PINEAL GLAND.*

To return to the second of the two bodies mentioned above—the pituitary body. This is regarded as developed from a primeval mouth, in direct continuity with the alimentary canal of the invertebrates. It ceased to function as a mouth in the vertebrates, and became a rudimentary organ; but it has retained a peculiar function in connexion with the growth of the



body. It is active during the normal period of physical growth, and the more actively it functions, the greater the growth of the body. In giants it has been found that this organ is peculiarly active. Moreover, the pituitary body sometimes again begins to function in later life, when the bony framework of the body is set, and then causes abnormal and monstrous growth at the free points of the body, hands, feet, nose, etc., giving rise to disfigurement of a most distressing kind.

As the cerebro-spinal system became dominant, the earlier function of these two bodies disappeared; but these organs have a future as well as a past. The past was connected with the sympathetic system; the future is connected with the cerebrospinal system. As evolution goes on, and the chakras in the astral body are vivified, the pituitary body becomes the physical organ for astral, and later, for mental clairvoyance. Where too great a strain is made upon the astral faculty of sight, while in the physical body, inflammation of the pituitary body sometimes results. This organ is the one through which the knowledge gained by astral vision is transmitted to the brain; and it is also used in vivifying the points of contact between the sympathetic system and the astral body, whereby a continuity of consciousness is established between the astral and physical planes.

The pineal gland becomes connected with one of the chakras in the astral body, and through that with the mental body, and serves as a physical organ

for the transmission of thought from one brain to another. In thought transmission the thought may be flashed from mind to mind, mental matter being used as the medium for transmission; or it may be sent down to the physical brain, and by means of the pineal gland may be sent, via the physical ether, to the pineal gland in another brain, and thus to the receiving consciousness.

While the centre of activity lies in the dominant principle of the man, the connexion of the chakras with the physical body must be made, as said, from the physical plane. The object of this connexion is not to make the astral vehicle a more efficient transmitter to the physical body of the energies of the Spiritual Man, but to enable the astral vehicle to be in full touch with the physical. There may be different centres of activity for the building up of transmitting vehicles, but it is necessary to start from the physical plane in order to bring the results of the activities of bodies functioning on other planes within the waking-consciousness. Hence the high importance of physical purity in diet and other matters.

People often ask: How does knowledge gained on higher planes reach the brain, and why is it not accompanied by a memory of the circumstances under which it was acquired? Anyone who practises meditation regularly knows that much knowledge that he has not gained by study on the physical plane appears in the brain. Whence comes it? It comes from the



astral or mental plane, where it was acquired, and reaches the brain in the ordinary way above described; the consciousness has assimilated it on the mental plane directly, or it has reached it from the astral, and sends down thought-waves as usual. It may have been communicated by some entity on the higher plane, who has acted directly on the mental body. But the circumstances of the communication may not be remembered, for one of two reasons, or for both. Most people are not what is technically called "awake" on the astral and mental planes; that is their faculties are turned inwards, are occupied with mental processes and emotions, and are not engaged in the observation of the external phenomena of, those planes. They may be very receptive, and their astral and mental bodies may easily be thrown into vibration, and the vibrations convey the knowledge which is thus given, but their attention is not turned to the person making the communication. As evolution goes on, people become more and more receptive on the astral and mental planes, but do not therefore become aware of their surroundings.

The other reason for the lack of memory is the absence of the connecting links with the sympathetic system before mentioned. A person may be "awake" on the astral plane and functioning actively thereon, and he may be vividly conscious of his surroundings. But if the connecting links between the astral and physical systems have not been made, or are not vivified, there is a break in

consciousness. However vivid may be the consciousness on the astral plane, it cannot, until these links are functioning, bring through and impress on the physical brain the memory of astral experiences. In addition to these links, there must be the active functioning of the pituitary body, which focusses the astral vibrations much as a burning glass focusses the rays of the sun. A number of the astral vibrations are drawn together and made to fall on a particular point, and vibrations being thus set up in dense physical matter, the further propagation of these is easy. All this is necessary for "remembering".

4. THE PATHS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The question arises: Does consciousness always travel along the same path to reach its physical vehicle? Transits, we know, are sometimes made directly through the atomic sub-planes from plane to plane, and sometimes by passing through each sub-plane from the seventh to the first before reaching the atomic sub-plane next below. Which of these paths does consciousness follow? In its normal working, in the ordinary process of thinking, the wave comes steadily down through each successive sub-plane, from the mental through the seven astral sub-planes to the physical etheric, and so to the dense nervous matter. This wave sets up electrical currents in the etheric matter, and these affect the protoplasm of the grey cells. But when the peculiar flashes of consciousness occur, as in flashes of genius, or as in sudden



illuminative ideas which flash into the mind—such a flash as comes to the scientific man when out of a great mass of facts there suddenly springs forth the unifying underlying law—then the consciousness pours downward through the atomic sub-planes only, and thus reaches the brain.

This is the illuminative idea which justifies itself by its mere appearance, like the sunlight, and does not gain in compelling power by any process of reasoning. Thus reasoning comes to the brain by the successive sub-planes; authoritative illumination by the atomic sub-planes only.

CHAPTER XII – THE NATURE OF MEMORY

1. THE GREAT SELF AND THE LITTLE SELVES.

WHAT is memory? and how does it work? by what means do we recover the past, whether near or remote? For, after all, whether the past be near or remote, belonging to this or to any anterior life, the means which govern its recovery must be similar, and we require a theory which will include all cases of memory, and at the same time will enable us to understand each particular case.

The first step towards obtaining a definite and intelligible theory is a comprehension of our own composition, of the Self with its sheaths, and their interrelation; and we may here briefly restate the main facts in the foregoing chapters which directly bear on the problem of Memory. We must bear constantly in mind the facts that our consciousness is a unit, and that this unit of consciousness works through various sheaths, which impose upon it a false appearance of multiplicity.

The innermost, or most tenuous, of these sheaths is inseparable from the unit of consciousness; in fact, it is this sheath which makes it a unit. This unit is the Monad, dwelling on the anupadaka plane; but for all practical purposes we may take it as the familiar Inner Man, the Tri-Atom, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, thought of as apart from the atmic, buddhic, and manasic sheaths. This unit of consciousness manifests through, abides in, sheaths belonging to the five planes of its activity, and we call it the Self working in its sheaths.

We must think, then, of a conscious Self dwelling in vehicles that vibrate. The vibrations of these vehicles correspond, on the side of matter, with the changes in consciousness on the side of the Self. We cannot accurately speak of vibrations of consciousness, because vibrations can only belong to the material side of things, the form side, and only loosely can we speak of a vibrating consciousness. We have changes in consciousness corresponding with vibrations in sheaths.



The question of the vehicles, or bodies, in which consciousness, the Self, is working, is all-important as regards Memory. The whole process of recovering more or less remote events is a question of picturing them in the particular sheath—of shaping part of the matter of the sheath into their likeness—in which consciousness is working at the time. In the Self, as a fragment of the Universal Self—which for our purpose we can take to be the LOGOS, although in verity the LOGOS is but a portion of the Universal Self—is present everything: for in the Universal Self is present all which has taken place, is taking place, and will take place in the universe; all this, and an illimitable more, is present in the Universal Consciousness. Let us think only of a universe and its LOGOS. We speak of Him as omnipresent and omniscient. Now, fundamentally, that omnipresence and omniscience are in the individualised Self, as being one with the LOGOS, but—we must put in here a but—with a difference; the difference consisting in this, that while in the separated Self as Self, apart from all vehicles, that omnipresence and omniscience reside by virtue of his unity with the One Self, the vehicles in which he dwells have not yet learned to vibrate in answer to his changes of consciousness, as he turns his attention to one or another part of his contents. Hence we say that all exists in him potentially, and not as in the LOGOS actually: all the changes which go on in the consciousness of the LOGOS are reproducible in this separated Self, which is an indivisible

part of His life, but the vehicles are not yet ready as media of manifestation. Because of the separation of form, because of this closing in of the separate, or individualised, Self, these possibilities which are within it as part of the Universal Self are latent, not manifest, are possibilities, not actualities. As in every atom which goes to the making up of a vehicle, there are illimitable possibilities of vibration, so in every separated Self there are illimitable possibilities of changes of consciousness.

We do not find in the atom, at the beginning of a solar system, an illimitable variety of vibrations; but we learn that it possesses a capacity to acquire an illimitable variety of vibrations; it acquires these in the course of its evolution, as it responds continually to vibrations playing upon its surface; at the end of a solar system, an immense number of the atoms in it have reached the stage of evolution in which they can vibrate in answer to any vibration touching them that arises within the system; then, for that system, these atoms are said to be perfected. The same thing is true for the separated, or individualised, Selves. All the changes taking place in the consciousness of the LOGOS which are represented in that universe, and take shape as forms in that universe, all these are also within the perfected consciousnesses in that universe, and any of these changes can be reproduced in any one of them. Here is Memory: the reappearance, the reincarnation in matter, of anything that has been within that



universe, and therefore ever is, in the consciousness of its LOGOS, and in the consciousnesses which are parts of His consciousness. Although we think of the Self as separate as regards all other Selves, we must ever remember it is inseparable as regards the ONE SELF the LOGOS. His life is not shut out from any part of His universe, and in Him we live and move and have our being, open ever to Him, filled with His life.

As the self puts on vehicle after vehicle of matter, its powers of gaining knowledge become, with each additional vehicle, more circumscribed but also more definite. Arrived on the physical plane, consciousness is narrowed down to the experiences which can be received through the physical body, and chiefly through those openings which we call the sense-organs; these are avenues through which knowledge can reach the imprisoned Self, though we often speak of them as shutting out knowledge when we think of the capacities of the subtler vehicles. The physical body renders perception definitive and clear much as a screen with a minute hole in it allows a picture of the outside world to appear on a wall that would otherwise show a blank surface; rays of light are truly shut off from the wall, but, by that very shutting off, those allowed to enter form a clearly defined picture.

2. *CHANGES IN THE VEHICLES AND IN CONSCIOUSNESS.*

Let us now see what happens as regards the physical vehicle in the reception of an impression and in the subsequent recall of that impression, i.e., in the memory of it.

A vibration from outside strikes on an organ of sense, and is transmitted to the appropriate centre in the brain. A group of cells in the brain vibrates, and that vibration leaves the cells in a state somewhat different from the one in which they were previous to its reception. The trace of that response is a possibility for the group of cells; it has once vibrated in a particular way, and it retains for the rest of its existence as a group of cells the possibility of again vibrating in that same way without again receiving a stimulus from the outside world. Each repetition of an identical vibration strengthens this possibility, each leaving its own trace, but many such repetitions will be required to establish a self-initiated repetition; the cells come nearer to this possibility of a self-initiated vibration by each repetition compelled from outside. But this vibration has not stopped with the physical cells; it has been transmitted inwards to the corresponding cell, or group of cells, in the subtler vehicles, and has ultimately produced a change in consciousness. This change, in its turn, re-acts on the cells, and a repetition of the vibrations



is initiated from within by the change in consciousness, and this repetition is a memory of the object which started the series of vibrations. The response of the cells to the vibration from outside, a response compelled by the laws of the physical universe, gives to the cells the power of responding to a similar impulse, though feebler, coming from within. A little power is exhausted in each moving of matter in a new vehicle, and hence a gradual diminution of the energy in the vibration. Less and less is exhausted as the cells repeat similar vibrations in response to new impacts from without, the cells answering more readily with each repetition.

Therein lies the value of the "without"; it wakes up in the matter, more easily than by any other way, the possibility of response, being more closely akin to the vehicles than the "within".

The change caused in consciousness, also, leaves the consciousness more ready to repeat that change than it was first to yield it, and each such change brings the consciousness nearer to the power to initiate a similar change. Looking back into the dawns of consciousness, we see that the imprisoned Selves go through innumerable experiences before a Self-initiated change in consciousness occurs; but bearing this in mind, as a fact, we can leave these early stages, and study the workings of consciousness at a more advanced point. We must also remember that every impact, reaching the innermost sheath, and giving rise to a change in consciousness, is followed by a

reaction, the change in consciousness causing a new series of vibrations from within outwards; there is the going inwards to the Self, followed by the rippling outwards from the Self, the first due to the object, and giving rise to what we call a perception, and the second due to the reaction of the Self, causing what we call a memory.

A number of sense-impressions, coming through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell run up from the physical vehicle through the astral to the mental. There they are coordinated into a complex unity, as a musical chord is composed of many notes. This is the special work of the mental body: it receives many streams and synthesises them into one; it builds many impressions into a perception, a thought, a complex unity.

3. MEMORIES.

Let us try to catch this complex thing, after it has gone inwards and has caused a change in consciousness, an idea; the change it has caused gives rise to new vibrations in the vehicles, reproducing those it had caused on its inward way, and in each vehicle it reappears in a fainter form. It is not strong, vigorous, and vivid, as when its component parts flashed from the physical to the astral, and from the astral to the mental; it reappears in the mental in a fainter form, the copy of that which the mental sent inwards, but the vibrations feeble; as the Self receives from it a reaction—for the impact of a vibration on touching each vehicle must cause a reaction—that



reaction is far feebler than the original action, and will therefore seem less "real" than that action; it makes a lesser change in consciousness, and that lessening represents inevitably a less "reality".

So long as the consciousness is too little responsive to be aware of any impacts that do not come through with the impulsive vigour of the physical, it is literally more in touch with the physical than with any other sheath, and there will be no memories of ideas, but only memories of perceptions, i.e., of pictures of outside objects, caused by vibrations of the nervous matter of the brain, reproducing themselves in the related astral and mental matter. These are literally pictures in the mental matter, as are the pictures on the retina of the eye. And the consciousness perceives these pictures, "sees" them, as we may truly say, since the seeing of the eye is only a limited expression of its perceptive power. As the consciousness draws a little away from the physical, turning attention more to the modifications in its inner sheaths, it sees these pictures reproduced in the brain from the astral sheath by its own reaction passing outwards, and there is the memory of sensations. The picture arises in the brain by the reaction of the change in consciousness, and is recognised there. This recognition implies that the consciousness has withdrawn largely from the physical to the astral vehicle, and is working therein. The human consciousness is thus working at the present time, and is, therefore, full of memories, these memories being

reproductions in the physical brain of past pictures, caused by reactions from consciousness. In a lowly evolved human type, these pictures are pictures of past events in which the physical body was concerned, memories of hunger and thirst and of their gratification, of sexual pleasures, and so on, things in which the physical body took an active part. In a higher type, in which the consciousness is working more in the mental vehicle, the pictures in the astral body will draw more of its attention; these pictures are shaped in the astral body by the vibrations coming outwards from the mental, and are perceived as pictures by the consciousness as it withdraws itself more into the mental body as its immediate vehicle. As this process goes on, and the more awakened consciousness responds to vibrations initiated from outside on the astral plane by astral objects, these objects grow "real", and become distinguishable from the memories, the pictures in the astral body caused by the reactions from consciousness.

Let us note, in passing, that with the memory of an object goes hand in hand a picture of the renewal of the keener experience of the object by physical contact, and this we call anticipation; and the more complete the memory of an event the more complete is this anticipation. So that the memory will sometimes even cause in the physical body the reactions which normally accompany the contact with the external object, and we may savour in anticipation pleasures which are not within present reach of the



body. Thus the anticipation of savoury food will cause "the mouth to water". This fact will again appear, when we reach the completion of our theory of Memory.

4. WHAT IS MEMORY?

Now, having noted the changes in the vehicles which arise from impacts from the external world, the response to these as changes of consciousness, the feebler vibrations produced in the vehicles by the reaction of consciousness, and the recognition of these again by consciousness as memories, let us come to the crux of the question: What is Memory? The breaking up of the bodies between death and reincarnation puts an end to their automatism, to their power of responding to vibrations similar to those already experienced; the responsive groups are disintegrated, and all that remains as a seed for future responses is stored within the permanent atoms; how feeble this is, as compared with the new automatisms imposed on the mass of the bodies by new experiences of the external, may be judged by the absence of any memory of past lives initiated in the vehicles themselves. In fact, all the permanent atoms can do is to answer more readily to vibrations of a kind similar to those previously experienced than to those that come to them for the first time. The memory of the cells, or of groups of cells, perishes at death, and cannot be said to be recoverable, as such. Where then is Memory preserved?

The brief answer is: Memory is not a faculty, and is not preserved; it does not inhere in consciousness as a capacity, nor is any memory of events stored up in the individual consciousness. Every event is a present fact in the universe-consciousness, in the consciousness of the LOGOS; everything that occurs in His universe, past, present, and future, is ever there in His all-embracing consciousness, in His "eternal NOW". From the beginning of the universe to its ending, from its dawn to its sunset, all is there, ever-present, existent. In that ocean of ideas, all is; we, wandering in the ocean, touch fragments of its contents, and our response to the contact is our knowledge; having known, we can more readily again contact, and this repetition—when falling short of the contact of the outside sheath of the moment with the fragments occupying its own plane—is Memory. All "memories" are recoverable, because all possibilities of image-producing vibrations are within the consciousness of the LOGOS, and we can share in that consciousness the more easily as we have previously shared more often similar vibrations; hence, the vibrations which have formed parts of our experience are more readily repeated by us than those we have never known, and here comes in the value of the permanent atoms; they thrill out again, on being stimulated, the vibrations previously performed, and out of all the possibilities of vibrations of the atoms and molecules of our bodies those sound out which answer to the note struck by the permanent atoms.



The fact that we have been affected vibrationally and by changes of consciousness during the present life makes it easier for us to take out of the universal consciousness that of which we have already had experience in our own. Whether it be a memory in the present life, or one in a life long past, the method of recovery is the same. There is no memory save the ever-present consciousness of the LOGOS, in whom we literally live and move and have our being; and our memory is merely putting ourselves into touch with such parts of His consciousness as we have previously shared.

Hence, according to Pythagoras, all learning is remembrance, for it is the drawing from the consciousness of the LOGOS into that of the separated Self that which in our essential unity with Him is eternally ours. On the plane where the unity overpowers the separateness, we share His consciousness of our universe; on the lower planes, where the separateness veils the unity, we are shut out therefrom by our unevolved vehicles. It is the lack of responsiveness in these which hinders us, for we can only know the planes through them. Therefore we cannot directly improve our memory; we can only improve our general receptivity and power to reproduce, by rendering our bodies more sensitive, while being careful not to go beyond their limit of elasticity. Also we can "pay attention"; i.e., we can turn the awareness of consciousness, we can concentrate consciousness, on that special part of the consciousness of the LOGOS to which we desire to attune

ourselves. We need not thus distress ourselves with calculations as to "how many angels can stand on the point of a needle", how we can preserve in a limited space the illimitable number of vibrations experienced in many lives; for the whole of the form-producing vibrations in the universe are ever-present, and are available to be drawn upon by any individual unit, and can be reached as, by evolution, such a one experiences ever more and more.

5. REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.

Let us apply this to an event in our past life: Some of the circumstances "remain in our memory", others are "forgotten". Really, the event exists with all its surrounding circumstances, "remembered" and "forgotten" alike, in but one state, the memory of the LOGOS, the Universal Memory. Anyone who is able to place himself in touch with that memory can recover the whole circumstance as much as we can; the events through which we have passed are not ours, but form part of the contents of His consciousness; and our sense of property in them is only due to the fact that we have previously vibrated to them, and therefore vibrate again to them more readily than if we contacted them for the first time.

We may, however, contact them with different sheaths at different times, living as we do under time and space conditions which vary with each sheath. The part of the consciousness of the LOGOS that we move through in our physical bodies is far more restricted than that we move through



in our astral and mental bodies, and the contacts through a well-organised body are far more vivid than those through a less-organised one. Moreover, it must be remembered that the restriction of area is due to our vehicles only; faced by the complete event, physical, astral, mental, spiritual, our consciousness of it is limited within the range of the vehicles able to respond to it. We feel ourselves to be among the circumstances which surround the grossest vehicle we are acting in, and which thus touch it from "outside"; whereas we "remember" the circumstances which we contact with the finer vehicles, these transmitting the vibrations to the grosser vehicle, which is thus touched from "within".

The test of objectivity that we apply to circumstances "present" or "remembered" is that of the "common sense". If others around us see as we see, hear as we hear, we regard the circumstances as objective; if they do not, if they are unconscious of that of which we are conscious, we regard the circumstances as subjective. But this test of objectivity is only valid for those who are active in the same sheaths; if one person is working in the physical body and another in the physical and the astral, the things objective to the man in the astral body cannot affect the man in the physical body, and he will declare them to be subjective hallucinations. The "common sense" can only work in similar bodies; it will give similar results when all are in physical bodies, all in astral, or all in mental. For the "common sense" is merely the thought-forms of the

LOGOS on each plane, conditioning each embodied consciousness, and enabling it to respond by certain changes to certain vibrations in its vehicles. It is by no means confined to the physical plane, but the average humanity at the present stage of evolution has not sufficiently unfolded the indwelling consciousness for them to exercise any "common sense" on the astral and mental planes. "Common sense" is an eloquent testimony to the oneness of our indwelling lives; we see all things around us on the physical plane in the same way, because our apparently separate consciousnesses are all really part of the One Consciousness ensouling all forms. We all respond in the same general way, according to the stage of our evolution, because we share the same consciousness; and we are affected similarly by the same things because the action and reaction between them and ourselves is the interplay of the One Life in varied forms.

Recovery of anything by memory, then, is due to the ever-existence of everything in the consciousness of the LOGOS, and He has imposed upon us the limitations of time and space in order that we may, by practice, be able to respond swiftly by changes of consciousness to the vibrations caused in our vehicles by vibrations coming from other vehicles similarly ensouled by consciousness; thus only can we gradually learn to distinguish precisely and clearly; contacting things successively—that is, being in time—and contacting them in relative directions in regard to ourselves



and to each other—that is, being in space—we are gradually unfolded to the state in which we can recognise all simultaneously and each everywhere—that is, out of time and space.

As we pass through countless happenings in life, we find that we do not keep in touch with all through which we have passed; there is a very limited power of response in our physical vehicle, and hence numerous experiences drop out of its purview. In trance, we can recover these, and they are said to emerge from the sub-conscious. Truly they remain ever unchanging in the Universal Consciousness, and as we pass by them we become aware of them, because the very limited light of our consciousness, shrouded in the physical vehicle, falls upon them, and they disappear as we pass on; but as the area covered by that same light shining through the astral vehicle is larger, they again appear when we are in trance—that is, in the astral vehicle, free from the physical; they have not come and gone and come back again, but the light of our consciousness in the physical vehicle had passed on, and so we saw them not, and the more extended light in the astral vehicle enables us to see them again. As Bhagavan Das has well said:

"If a spectator wandered unrestingly through the halls of a vast museum, a great art-gallery, at the dead of night, with a single small lamp in one hand, each of the natural objects, the pictured scenes, the statues, the portraits, would be illuminated

by that lamp, in succession, for a single moment, while all the rest were in darkness, and after that single moment, would itself fall into darkness again. Let there now be not one but countless such spectators, as many in endless number as the objects of sight within the place, each spectator meandering in and out incessantly through the great crowd of all the others, each lamp bringing momentarily into light one object and for only that spectator who holds that lamp. This immense and unmoving building is the rock-bound ideation of the changeless Absolute. Each lamp-carrying spectator out of the countless crowd is one line of consciousness out of the pseudo-infinite lines of such, that make up the totality of the one universal consciousness. Each coming into light of each object is its potency, is an experience of the Jiva; each falling into darkness is its lapse into the latent. From the standpoint of the objects themselves, or of the universal consciousness, there is no latency, nor potency.

From that of the lines of consciousness, there is."

As vehicle after vehicle comes into fuller working, the area of light extends, and the consciousness can turn its attention to any one part of the area and observe closely the objects therein included. Thus, when the consciousness can function freely on the astral plane, and is aware of its surroundings there, it can see much that on the physical plane is "past" – or "future", if they be things to which in



the "past" it has learned to respond. Things outside the area of light coming through the vehicle of the astral body will be within the area of that which streams from the subtler mental vehicle. When the causal body is the vehicle, the "memory of past lives" is recoverable, the causal body vibrating more readily to events to which it has before vibrated, and the light shining through it embracing a far larger area and illuminating scenes long "past"—those scenes being really no more past than the scenes of the present, but occupying a different spot in time and space. The lower vehicles, which have not previously vibrated to these events, cannot readily directly contact them and answer to them; that belongs to the causal body, the relatively permanent vehicle. But when this body answers to them, the vibrations from it readily run downwards, and may be reproduced in the mental, astral, and physical bodies.

6. ATTENTION.

The phrase is used above, as to consciousness, that "it can turn its attention to any one part of the area, and observe closely the objects therein included". This "turning of the attention" corresponds very closely in consciousness to what we should call focussing the eye in the physical body. If we watch the action taking place in the muscles of the eye when we look first at a near and then at a distant object, or vice versa, we shall be conscious of a slight movement, and this constriction or relaxation causes a slight compression or the

reverse in the lenses of the eye. It is an automatic action now, quite instinctive, but it has only become so by practice; a baby does not focus his eye, nor judge distance. He grasps as readily at a candle on the other side of the room as at one within his reach, and only slowly learns to know what is beyond his reach. The effort to see clearly leads to the focussing of the eye, and presently it becomes automatic. The objects for which the eye is focussed are within the field of clear vision, and the rest are vaguely seen. So, also, the consciousness is clearly aware of that to which its attention is turned; other things remain vague, "out of focus".

A man gradually learns to thus turn his attention to things long past, as we measure time. The causal body is put into touch with them, and the vibrations are then transmitted to the lower bodies. The presence of a more advanced student will help a less advanced, because when the astral body of the former has been made to vibrate responsively to long past events, thus creating an astral picture of them, the astral body of the younger student can more readily reproduce these vibrations and thus also "see". But even when a man has learned to put himself into touch with his past, and through his own with that of others connected with it, he will find it more difficult to turn his attention effectively to scenes with which he has had no connexion; and when that is mastered, he will still find it difficult to put himself into touch with scenes outside the experiences of his recent past; for instance, if



he wishes to visit the moon, and by his accustomed methods launches himself in that direction, he will find himself bombarded by a hail of unaccustomed vibrations to which he cannot instinctively respond, and will need to fall back on his inherent divine power to answer to anything which can affect his vehicles. If he seeks to go yet further, to another planetary system, he will find a barrier he cannot overleap, the Ring Pass-not of his own Planetary Logos.

6. THE ONE CONSCIOUSNESS.

We thus begin to understand what is meant by the statements that people at a certain grade of evolution can reach this or that part of the kosmos; they can put themselves into touch with the consciousness of the LOGOS outside the limitations imposed by their material vehicles on the less evolved. These vehicles, being composed of matter modified by the action of the Planetary Logos of the Chain to which they belong, cannot respond to the vibrations of matter differently modified; and the student must be able to use his atmic body before he can contact the Universal Memory beyond the limits of his own Chain.

Such is the theory of Memory which I present for the consideration of theosophical students. It applies equally to the small memories and forgettings of everyday life as to the

vast reaches alluded to in the above paragraph. For there is nothing small or great to the LOGOS, and when we are performing the smallest act of memory, we are as much putting ourselves into touch with the omnipresence and omniscience of the LOGOS, as when we are recalling a far-off past. There is no "far-off", and no "near". All are equally present at all times and in all spaces; the difficulty is with our vehicles, and not with that all-embracing changeless Life. All becomes more and more intelligible and more peace-giving as we think of that Consciousness, in which is no "before" and no "after", no "past" and no "future". We begin to feel that these things are but the illusions, the limitations, imposed upon us by our own sheaths, necessary until our powers are evolved and at our service. We live unconsciously in this mighty Consciousness in which everything is eternally present, and we dimly feel that if we could live consciously in that Eternal there were peace. I know of nothing that can more give to the events of a life their true proportion than this idea of a Consciousness in which everything is present from the beginning, in which indeed there is no beginning and no ending. We learn that there is nothing terrible and nothing which is more than relatively sorrowful; and in that lesson is the beginning of a true peace, which in due course shall brighten into joy.



CHAPTER I. THE WILL TO LIVE.

IN the brief study of Origins which forms [points] 1., 2., of the Introduction to this book, we saw that the Monad, coming forth from the First Logos, showed in his own nature the tri-unity of his Source, the aspects of Will, Wisdom, and Activity.

It is to the study of Will—showing itself as Will on the higher plane and as Desire on the lower—that we are now to turn our attention; and the study of Desire leads us to the study of Emotion, indissolubly attached to it. We have already seen that we are here because we have willed to live in the lower worlds, that the Will determines our stay here. But the nature and power and work of the Will are for the most part but little realised, for in the earlier stages of evolution it is not manifest on the lower planes save as Desire, and it must be studied as Desire before it can be understood as Will.

It is the Power aspect of consciousness, ever veiled within the Self, hiding as it were behind Wisdom and Activity, but prompting both to manifestation. So hidden is its nature that many regard it as one with Activity, and refuse to it the dignity of an aspect of consciousness. Yet Activity is the action of the Self on the Not-Self, that which gives to the Not-Self its temporary Reality, that which creates; but Will hides ever within, impelling to Activity, attracting, repelling, the core of the Heart of Being.

Will is the Power which stands behind Cognition, and stimulates Activity; Thought is the creative activity, but Will the motive power. Our bodies are as they are, because the Self has for countless ages set his Will that matter should be shaped into forms whereby he may cognise and energise on all outside himself. It is written in an ancient Scripture: "Of a truth this body is mortal, O Maghavan, it is subject to death. Yet is it a resting-place of the immortal and bodiless Atma. The eyes are intended as organs of observation for the Being who dwelleth within the eyes. He who willetteth, 'I shall smell', is the Atma, wishing to experience fragrance. He who willetteth, 'I shall speak', is the Atma wishing to utter words. He who willetteth, 'I shall hear', is the Atma wishing to listen to sounds. He who willetteth, 'I shall think', is the Atma. The mind is the celestial eye, observing all desirable objects. By means of the mental celestial eye, Atma enjoyeth all" 72.

This is the secret, the motive power, of evolution. True, the great Will traces the high road of evolution. True, spiritual Intelligences of many grades guide the evolving entities along that high road. But too little attention has been paid to the countless experiments, failures, successes, the little bye-ways and twists and curls, due to the gropings of the separate Wills, each Will to Live trying to find Self-expression. The contacts from the outer world arouse in each Atma, the Will to know what touches. He knows but little in the jellyfish, but the Will to know shapes, in form after form, an



ever-improving eye, that hinders less his power of perception. As we study evolution, we become more and more conscious of Wills which shape matter, but shape it by groping experiments, not by clear vision. The presence of these many Wills makes the constant branching of the evolutionary tree. There is a real truth in Professor Clifford's playful story to the children about the great Saurians of an early age: "Some chose to fly and became birds; others chose to crawl, and became reptiles". Often we see an attempt foiled, and then the attempt is made in another direction. Often we see the most clumsy contrivances side by side with the most exquisite adaptations. The latter are the results of Intelligences knowing their aims and constantly chiselling the matter into appropriate forms; the others are the outcome of the strivings from within, still blind and groping, but steadfastly set to Self-expression. If there were only outside designers, seeing the end from the beginning, Nature would present us with insoluble puzzles in her building, so many are the inadequate attempts, the ineffective designs. But when we realise the presence of the Will to Live in each form, seeking Self-expression, shaping his vehicles for his own purposes, then we can see alike the creative plan which underlies all—the plan of the LOGOS; the admirable adaptations which work out His plan—the labour of the building Intelligences; and the inapt contrivances and clumsy expedients—due to the efforts of the Selves that will, but have not yet the knowledge or the power to perform

perfectly.

It is this groping, striving, struggling divine Self, which, as evolution goes on, becomes in ever-increasing measure the true Ruler, the inner Ruler, the Immortal. Anyone who grasps that he is himself that Immortal Ruler, seated within his Self-created vehicles of expression, gains sense of dignity and power which grows ever stronger, and more compelling on the lower nature. The knowledge of the truth make us inly free. The inner Ruler may still be hampered by the very forms he has shaped for self-expression, but knowing himself as the Ruler, he can work steadfastly to bring his realm into complete subjection. He knows that he has come into the world for a certain purpose, to make himself fit to be a co-worker with the Supreme Will, and he can do and suffer all which is necessary to that end. He knows himself divine, and that his Self-realisation is only a question of time. Inwardly the divinity is felt, though outwardly it is not yet expressed, and there remains to become in manifestation what he is in essence. He is king *de jure*, not yet *de facto*.

As a Prince, born to a crown, patiently submits to the discipline which is fitting him to wear it, so the sovereign Will in us is evolving to the age when royal powers will pass into its grasp, and may patiently submit to the necessary discipline of life.



CHAPTER II. DESIRE.

1. THE NATURE OF DESIRE.

WHEN the Monad sends forth his rays into the matter of the third, fourth, and fifth planes, and appropriates to himself an atom of each of these planes, 73 he creates what is often called his "reflexion in matter", the human "Spirit", and the Will-aspect of the Monad is mirrored in the human Atma, whose home is on the third or atomic plane. That first hypostasis is indeed lessened in powers by the veils of matter thus endued, but it is in no way distorted; as a well-made mirror produces a perfect image of an object, so is the human Spirit, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, a perfect image of the Monad, is, indeed, the Monad himself veiled in denser matter. But as a concave or convex mirror yields a distorted image of an object placed before it, so do the further reflections of the Spirit in, or involutions into, yet denser matter show but distorted images thereof.

Thus, when the Will, in its downward progress, veiling itself farther on each plane, reaches the world immediately above the physical, the astral world, it appears therein as Desire. Desire shows the energy, the concentration, the impelling characteristics of Will, but matter has wrenched away its control its direction, from the Spirit, and has usurped dominion over it. Desire is Will discrowned, the captive, the slave of matter. It is no longer Self-determined, but is determined by the attractions

around it.

This is the distinction between Will and Desire. The innermost nature of both is the same, for they are verily but one determination, the Self-determination of the Atma, the one motor-power of man, that which impels to Activity, to action on the external world, on the Not Self. When the Self determines the activity, uninfluenced by attractions or repulsions towards surrounding objects, then Will is manifested. When outer attractions and repulsions determine the activity, and the man is drawn hither and thither by these, deaf to the voice of the Self, unconscious of the Inner Ruler, then Desire is seen.

Desire is Will clothed in astral matter, in the matter which by the second life-wave was formed into combinations, the reaction between which and consciousness would cause sensations in the latter. Clothed in this matter, the vibrations of which are accompanied with sensations in consciousness, Will is modified into Desire. Its essential nature of giving motor-impulses, surrounded by matter which arouses sensations, answers by impelling energy, and this energy, aroused through and acting through astral matter, is Desire.

As in the higher nature Will is the impelling power, so in the lower nature Desire is the impelling power. When it is feeble the whole nature is feeble in its reaction on the world. The effective force of a nature is measured by its Will-power or its Desire-power, according to the stage of evolution.



There is a truth underlying the popular phrase, "The greater the sinner the greater the saint". The mediocre person can be neither greatly good nor greatly bad; there is not enough of him for more than petty virtues or petty vices. The strength of the Desire-nature in a man is the measure of his capacity for progress, the measure of the motor-energy whereby that man can press onwards along the way. The strength in a man that impels to reaction on his environment is the measure of his power to modify, to change, to conquer it. In the struggle, with the Desire-nature which marks the higher evolution, the motor-energy is not to be destroyed but transferred; lower Desires are to be transmuted into higher, energy is to be refined while losing nought of its power; and finally the Desire-nature is to vanish into Will, all the energies being gathered up and merged into the Will-aspect of the Spirit, the Power of the Self.

No aspirant, therefore, should be discouraged by the storming and raging of desires in him, any more than a horse-breaker is displeased with the rearings and plungings of the unbroken colt. The wildness of the young untrained creature, and his rebellion against all efforts to control and restrain, are the promise of his future usefulness when disciplined and trained. And even thus are the strainings of Desire against the curb imposed by the Intelligence, the promise of the future strength of Will, of the Power-aspect of the Self.

Rather does difficulty arise where desires are feeble, ere yet the Will has freed itself from the trammels of astral matter; for in such case the Will to Live is expressing itself but feebly, and there is little effective force available for evolution. There is some obstacle, some barrier, in the vehicles, checking the forthgoing energy of the Monad, and obstructing its free passage, and until that barrier is removed there is little progress to be hoped for. In the storm the ship drives onward, though there be peril of wreck, but in the dead calm she remains helpless and unmoving, answering neither to sail nor helm. And since, in this voyage, no final wreck is possible, but only temporary damage, and the storm works for progress rather than the calm, those who find themselves storm-tossed may look forward with sure conviction to the day when the storm-gusts of Desire will be changed into the steady wind of Will.

2. THE AWAKENING OF DESIRE.

To the astral world we refer all our sensations. The centres by which we feel lie in the astral body, and the reactions of these to contacts give rise to feelings of pleasure and pain in consciousness. The ordinary physiologist traces sensation of pleasure and pain from the point of contact to the brain-centre, recognising only nervous vibrations between periphery and centre, and in the centre the reaction of consciousness as sensation. We follow the vibrations further, finding only vibrations in the brain-centre and in the ether



permeating it, and seeing in the astral centre the point at which the reaction of consciousness takes place. When a dislocation between the physical and astral bodies occurs, whether by the action of chloroform, ether, laughing-gas, or other drugs, the physical body, despite all its nervous apparatus, feels no more than if bereft of nerves. The links between the physical body and the body of sensation are thrown out of gear, and consciousness does not respond to any stimulus applied.

The awakening of Desire takes place in this body of sensation, and follows the first dim sensings of pleasure and pain. As before pointed out 74 pleasure "is a sense of 'moreness', of increased, expanded life", while pain is a shutting in or lessening of life, and these belong to the whole consciousness. "This primary state of consciousness does not manifest the three well-known aspects of Will, Wisdom, and Activity, even in the most germinal stage; 'feeling' precedes these, and belongs to consciousness as a whole, though in later stages of evolution it shows itself so much in connexion with the Will-Desire aspect as to become almost identified with it". "As the states of pleasure and pain become more definitely established in consciousness, they give rise to another; with the fading away of pleasure there is a continuation of the attraction in consciousness, and this becomes a dim groping after it"—a groping, be it noted, not after any pleasure-giving object, but after a continuance of the feeling of pleasure—"a vague following of the vanishing feeling,

a movement—too indefinite to be called an effort—to hold it, to retain it; similarly with the fading away of pain there is a continuation of the repulsion in consciousness, and this becomes an equally vague movement to push it away. These stages give birth to Desire".

This arising of Desire is a feeble reaching out of the life in search of pleasure, a movement of the life, undirected, vague, groping. Beyond this it cannot go, until Thought has developed to a certain extent, and has recognised an outer world, a Not-Self, and has learned to relate various objects in the Not-Self to the pleasure or pain arising in consciousness on contacting them.

But the results of these contacts, long before the objects are recognised, have caused, as above indicated, a division in, a forking of, Desire. We may take as one of the simplest illustrations the craving for food in a lowly organism; as the physical body wastes, becomes less, a sense of pain arises in the astral body, a want, a craving, vague and indeterminate; the body, by its wasting, has become a less effective vehicle of the life pouring down through the astral, and this check causes pain. A current in the water that bathes the organism brings food up against the body; it is absorbed, the waste is repaired, the life flows on unobstructed; there is pleasure. At a little higher stage, when pain arises, there is the desire to escape from it, the sense of repulsion arises, the contrary to the sense of



attraction, caused by pleasure. There results from this that Desire is cloven in twain. From the Will to Live arose the longing to experience, and in the lower vehicle this longing, appearing as Desire, becomes on the one hand a longing for experiences that make the feeling of life more vivid, and on the other a shrinking from all that weakens and depresses. This attraction and repulsion are equally of the nature of Desire. Just as a magnet attracts or repels certain metals, so does the embodied Self attract and repel. Both attraction and repulsion are Desire, and these are the two great motor-energies in life, into which all desires are ultimately resolvable. The Self comes under the bondage of Desire, of Attraction-Repulsion, and is attracted hither and thither, repelled from this or that, hurried about among pleasure and pain-giving objects, as a helmsless ship amid the currents of air and sea.

3. THE RELATION OF DESIRE TO THOUGHT.

We have now to consider the relation that Desire bears to Thought, and see how it first rules and then is ruled by the latter.

The Pure Reason is the reflexion of the Wisdom-aspect of the Monad, and appears in the human Spirit as Buddhi. But it is not the relation of Desire to the Pure Reason with which we are concerned, for it cannot, in fact, be said to be directly related to Wisdom, but to Love, the manifestation of Wisdom on the astral plane. We are to seek rather its relation to the Activity-

aspect of the Monad, showing itself on the astral plane as sensation and on the mental as thought. Nor are we even concerned with the Higher Mind, which is creative Activity, Manas, in its purity; but with the distorted reflexion of this, the lower mind. It is this lower mind which is immediately related to Desire, and is inextricably intermingled with it in human evolution; so closely joined, indeed, are they, that we often speak of Kama-Manas, Desire-Mind, as of a single thing, so rare is it, in the lower consciousness, to find a single thought which is uninfluenced by a desire. "Manas verily is declared to be twofold, pure and impure; the impure is determined by desire, the pure is desire-free."

This lower mind is "thought" on the mental plane; its characteristic property is that it asserts and denies; it knows by difference; it perceives and remembers.

On the astral plane, as we have seen, the same aspect that on the mental plane is thought appears as sensation, and is aroused by contact with the external world.

When a pleasure has been experienced, and has passed away, Desire arises to experience it again, as we have seen. And this fact implies memory, which is a function of the mind. Here, as ever, are we reminded that consciousness is ever acting in its threefold nature, though one or other aspect may predominate, for even the most germinal desire cannot arise without memory being



present. The sensation caused by an external impact must have been many times aroused, before the mind will establish a relation between the sensation of which it is conscious, and the external object which has caused the sensation. At last the mind "perceives" the object, i.e., relates it to one of its own changes, recognises a modification in itself caused by the external object. Repetitions of this perception will establish a definite link in memory between the object and the pleasurable or painful sensation, and when Desire presses for the repetition of pleasure, the mind recalls the object which supplied that pleasure. Thus the mingling of Thought with Desire gives birth to a particular desire, the desire to find and appropriate the pleasure-giving object.

This desire impels the mind to exert its inherent activity. Discomfort being caused by the unsatisfied craving, effort is made to escape the discomfort by supplying the object wanted. The mind plans, schemes, drives the body into action, in order to satisfy the cravings of Desire. And similarly, equally prompted by Desire, the mind plans, schemes, drives the body into action in order to avoid the recurrence of pain from an object recognised as pain-giving.

Such is the relation of Desire to Thought. It rouses, stimulates, urges on, mental efforts. The mind is, in its early stages, the slave of Desire, and the rapidity of its growth is in proportion to the fierce urgings of Desire. We desire, and thus are forced to think.

4. DESIRE, THOUGHT, ACTION.

The third stage of the contact of the Self with the Not-Self is Action. The mind having perceived the object of desire, leads to, guides and shapes the action. Action is often said to arise from Desire, but Desire alone could only arouse movement, or chaotic action. The force of Desire is propulsive, not directive. Thought it is that adds the element of direction, and shapes the action purposively.

This is the ever-recurring cycle in consciousness—Desire, Thought, Action. The propulsive power of Desire arouses Thought; the directive power of Thought guides Action. This sequence is invariable, and the clear understanding thereof is of the profoundest importance, for the effective control of conduct depends on this understanding, and on its application in practice. The shaping of karma can only be achieved when this sequence is understood, for evitable and inevitable action can only thus be discriminated.

It is by Thought that we can change Desire, and thereby change Action. When the mind sees that certain desires have impelled to thoughts that have directed actions which were productive of unhappiness, it can resist the future promptings of Desire in a similar direction, and refuse to guide actions to a result already known as disastrous. It can picture the painful results, and thus arouse the repellent energy of Desire, and can image the blissful outcome of desires of the opposite kind. The creative



activity of Thought can be exerted in the moulding of Desire, and its propulsive energy can be turned into a better direction. In this way Thought can be used to master Desire, and it may become the ruler instead of the slave. And as it thus asserts control over its unruly companion, it begins the transmutation of Desire into Will, changing the governance of the outgoing energy from the outer to the inner, from the external objects that attract or repel to the Spirit, the inner Ruler.

5. HE BINDING NATURE OF DESIRE.

Since the Will to Live is the cause of the forthgoing, of the life seeking [319] embodiment and appropriating to itself that which is necessary for its manifestation and persistence in form, Desire, being Will on a lower plane, will show similar characteristics, seeking to appropriate, to draw into itself, to make part of itself that whereby its life in form may be maintained and strengthened. When we desire an object, we seek to make it part of ourselves, part of the "I", so that it may form part of the embodiment of the "I". Desire is the putting forth of the power of attraction; it draws the desired object to itself. Whatever we desire, we attach to ourselves. By the desire to possess it, a bond is established between the object and the desirer. We tie to the Self this portion of the Not-Self, and the bond exists until the object is possessed, or until the Self has broken off the bond and repudiated the object. These are "the bonds of the heart" 76, and tie the Self

to the wheel of births and deaths.

These bonds between the desirer and the objects of desire are like ropes that draw the Self to the place where the objects of desire are found, and thus determine its birth into one or another world. "On this runs the verse: He also who is attached ever obtains by action that on which his mind has set its mark. Having obtained the object of action he here performs, he comes again therefore from that world to this world for the sake of action. Thus is it with the desiring mind." 77 If a man desires the objects of another world more than the objects of this, then into that world will he be born. There is a continuing tension in the bond of Desire until the Self and the object are united.

The one great determining energy, the Will to Live, which holds the planets in their path around the sun, which prevents the matter of the globes from scattering, which holds our own bodies together, that is the energy of Desire. That which rules all is in us as Desire, and it must draw to us, or draw us to, everything into which it has fixed its hooks. The hook of Desire fixes itself in an object, as a harpoon in the whale at which it is flung by the harpooner. When Desire has fixed its harpoon in an object, the Self is attached to that object, has appropriated it in Will, and presently must appropriate it in action. Hence a great Teacher has said: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee ... if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee"



78. The thing desired becomes part of the body of the Self, and, if it be evil, it should be torn out, at whatever cost of anguish. Otherwise it will only be worn away by the slow attrition of time and of weariness. "Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death."





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