



THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

A publication of this kind cannot exist without your support, so we welcome all editorial suggestions and seek contributing editors for essays on a wide range of theosophical themes. And, in the true spirit of dialogue and debate we look forward to letters to the editor, comments, and suggestions for the content and themes of this journal.

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to no more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all. The editor will contact the writer prior to publication date – please include a phone number and or email address with all correspondence.

### Board Members

Lois Brisbois, President/Secretary  
104-40 Horseshoe Blvd  
Oro-Medonte, ON L4M 4Y8

Paul J. Carroll, Vice President/Editor  
77 Spencer Avenue  
Toronto ON M6K 2K4

Bohdan Wysochanskyj, Treasurer  
66 Brookside Ave.,  
Toronto, ON M6S 4G9

Simon Postma, Director  
505-12111 51 Ave NW,

## LIBRARY

792 Glencairn Ave.  
North York, ON, M6B 2A3  
416 787 6969

The Library is open on Tuesdays from 6:30- 8:30 pm. You can call the Librarian directly during Library hours at 416 922 5571.

Membership is \$15. per year.

Some books may not be removed from the Library.



# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL.16 No.2

WINTER/SPRING 2024

Price \$5.00

77 Spencer Avenue, Toronto ON M6K 2K4 | [Paul\\_jCarroll@yahoo.ca](mailto:Paul_jCarroll@yahoo.ca)

Publication Mail Registration Number No.090794. Return Postage Guaranteed. Content ©November 2017

The Theosophical Society in Canada is not responsible for any statement in the Magazine, unless made in an official document.





## IN THIS ISSUE

---

A STATE OF MIND — ITEM 1

PRESIDENT'S REPORT — ITEM 2

A NIGHT INSIDE THE GREAT PYRAMID — CONTINUED — ITEM 3

STUDY IN CONSCIOUSNESS — ITEM 4

TO OUR READERS — ITEM 5

## 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.



## A STATE OF MIND

*Paul Carroll*

Throughout the day, for the majority of us, our thoughts are fragmented, and most of our actions are on autopilot. We live in a world where material takes precedence over all, food, clothing, housing, transportation, are paid for with paper or a mere tap of plastic. On closer examination we have paper with value, and plastic with borrowing power, and we have accepted this idea. We have consciously given value to both, paper and plastic. Food for thought.

On an individual conscious level let investigate NDE, (near death experience) in many cases individuals have completely different experiences, experiences based on their religious beliefs. Christians are greeted by Jesus, Muslims are greeted by Mohammad, Atheists are greeted by family members, why? Perhaps our deep seeded subconscious manifests an outcome suited to what we as individuals believe in order to create a loving transition. All and all this is another example of the power of the mind. Food for thought.

However, the power of our conscious thoughts doesn't stop there, the world around us is a product of our collective thoughts. Corrupt governments, war, genocide, poverty, human discrimination, and the stripping of our planet through greed, we consciously except it as, well, that's the way it is. Feeling helpless we muster feelings of hate and resentment, sending negative vibrations into the ether which then manifests into our reality, whereas, we perpetuate this cycle.

If our thought collectively can cause such havoc, what's to say the opposite is possible as well. Spreading good cheer or vibes is contagious, for instance, have you ever been effected by a smile and a good morning greeting? We can have an impact on the human experience and our planet by merely emitting positive thoughts, see the world as a loving place and understanding that we are one and human collective consciousness has the power to change the world around us, taking us into a more evolved future. food for thought.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023 KIMPTON HOTEL, TORONTO

*December 9, 2023*  
**PRESIDENT REPORT**

We've had fewer Board Meetings this fiscal year. In future we should consider a TSC Zoom account to facilitate more meetings.

We welcomed a few new members into TSC over the past year. Word of Mouth is working. All new members have been sent receipts and member cards. Most members have provided email addresses. Those members received their AGM notices by email for the very first time.

Our Zoom meetings with our Financial Advisor, Carlo Cansino, have gone well. We now meet with him twice a year. All three TSC Officers receive notices and invitations to Assante events, mostly held at Thornhill Club.

For 2023, we did not receive any applications for our TSC Scholarship. To date we have awarded 6 scholarships.

We now have a contact for Indigenous House, being constructed by University of Toronto, at the Scarborough campus. We are considering a TSC donation for that project.

Our TSC donations at Christmas, of \$2000. each, were sent to Ronald McDonald House, Covenant House, Salvation Army and Hospital for Sick Children. Since we are a Charitable non issue for us.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lois Brisbois, President



## A NIGHT INSIDE THE GREAT PYRAMID – *continued*

*Paul Brunton*

Here, too, the presence of a couple of air tubes, each about nine inches square, killed the tomb-chamber theory. Their openings into the room had never been sealed, as were those in the Queen's Chamber, but they had been completely filled with loose stones, which Colonel Vyse had to clear out when he wanted to determine the nature of these shafts. That this filling operation had been carried out at the same time as all the other attempts to conceal the internal arrangement of the overground portion of the Pyramid, was extremely probable.

I flashed the lamp over the bare walls and flat ceiling, noting anew the admirably accurate immense fitting of the polished granite blocks at their joints, and then began a slow circuit of the walls, carefully examining each individual stone. The rose-tinted rocks of far Syene had been split in twain to provide these blocks. Here and there treasure-seekers had scarred both floor and wall in their vain quests. On the eastern side of the floor, part of the stone flags had disappeared and beaten earth had taken its place, while on the north-western side a deep rectangular hole remained unfilled. A long rough stone block stood against the wall on one side, left there by early Arab hands, perchance. Parallel with it, and but a few inches away, was the flat-sided, coffin-like sarcophagus: a lidless, lonely object, which was the

only other thing to be found in this bare room. It was placed exactly north and south. The dislodged flooring-block offered a possible seat, so I sat down on it, tailor-like, with folded feet, and settled there for the remainder of the night.

On my right I had placed my hat, jacket and shoes; on my left reposèd the still-burning torch, a thermos flask with hot tea, a couple bottles of iced water, a notebook and my Parker pen. A last look around the chamber, a final glimpse of the marble coffer beside me, and then I extinguished the light. I kept beside me a powerful electric torch ready to be switched on. The sudden plunge into total darkness brought with it the wondering question of what the night would bring forth. The only thing one could do in this strange position was to wait . . . and wait . . . and wait. The minutes slowly dragged themselves along, while I slowly "sensed" that the King's Chamber possessed a very strong atmosphere of its own, an atmosphere which I can only call psychic." For I had deliberately made myself receptive in mind, passive in feeling and negative in attitude, so that I might become a perfect register of whatever super-physical event might transpire. . . I gradually diminished the flow of thoughts until the mind entered a the flow of thoughts until the mind entered a half-blank state.



And the stillness which descended on my brain rendered me acutely cognizant of the stillness which had descended on my life. The world, with its noise and bustle, was now as utterly remote as though it did not exist. No sound, no whisper, came to me out of the darkness. Silence is the real sovereign of the kingdom of the Pyramid, a silence that began in prehistoric antiquity and which no babble of visiting tourists can really break, for every night it returns anew with awe-inspiring completeness. I became aware of the powerful atmosphere of the room. It is a perfectly normal and common experience for sensitive persons to become aware of the atmosphere of ancient houses, and my own experience began with something of this sort. . . Yet, following my self-imposed resolve, I did not resist the feeling,

A strange feeling that I was not alone began to creep insidiously over me. Under the cover of complete blackness, I felt that something animate and living was throbbing into existence. It was a vague feeling but a real one, and it was this, coupled with the increasing sense of the returning Past, that constituted my consciousness of something "psychic." Yet nothing clear-cut, definite, emerged from this vague and general sense of an eerie life that pulsated through the darkness. The hours slipped on and, contrary to my expectation, the advancing night brought increasing coldness with it. The effects of the three-day fast, which I had undertaken

in order to increase my sensitivity, now showed themselves in growing chilliness. Cold air was creeping into the growing Chamber through the narrow ventilation shafts, and then creeping past the thin barrier of my light garment. My chilled flesh began to shiver under its thin shirt. I got up and dressed myself in the jacket which I had put off only a few hours before on account of the intense heat. Such is Eastern life at certain times of the year - tropical heat by day and a heavy fall of temperature by night.

To this day no one has discovered the mouth of these air channels on the outside of the Pyramid, although the approximate area of their positions is known. Some Egyptologists have even doubted whether the channels were ever carried right through to the outside, but the complete chilling of the air during my experience finally settles the point. I sat down for the second time upon my stone seat and surrendered myself anew to the oppressive death-like silence, and to the oppressive death-like silence, and to the all-pervading sombre darkness of the chamber. With pliant soul I waited and wondered. . . The queer sepulchral stillness in the room, the empty stone coffin beside me, were not reassuring to one's nerves, while the break in my vigil seemed to have broken something else too, for very quickly I found that the sensing of invisible life around me rapidly rose into complete certainty. There tuns something throbbing and alive in my vicinity, although I could still see absolutely nothing.



With this discovery the realization of my isolated and uncanny situation suddenly overwhelmed me. Here I was sitting alone in a queer room that was perched more than two hundred feet [over 60 m.] above the ground, high up above all the million people of Cairo, surrounded by total darkness, locked up and imprisoned in a strange building on the edge of a desert that stretched away for hundreds of miles...

The great space of the King's Chamber became for me — who had investigated deeply into the psychic, into the mysteries of the occult, into the sorceries and wizardries of the Orient - peopled with unseen beings, with spirits who guarded that age-old building. One momentarily expected some ghostly voice to arise out of the all-embracing silence. I now thanked the early builders for those narrow vent-shafts which brought a steady but tiny supply of cool air into this hoary old room. That air travelled through nearly 300 hundred feet (c. 80 m.) of the Pyramid before it arrived; no matter, it was still welcome. I am a man accustomed to solitude — indeed glad to enjoy it - but there was something uncanny and frightening in the solitude of this chamber.

The all-encompassing darkness began to press on my head like an iron weight. The shadow of uncalled-for fear flickered into me. I brushed it away immediately. Tim sit in the heart of this desert monument required no physical courage, but it did require some moral fortitude.

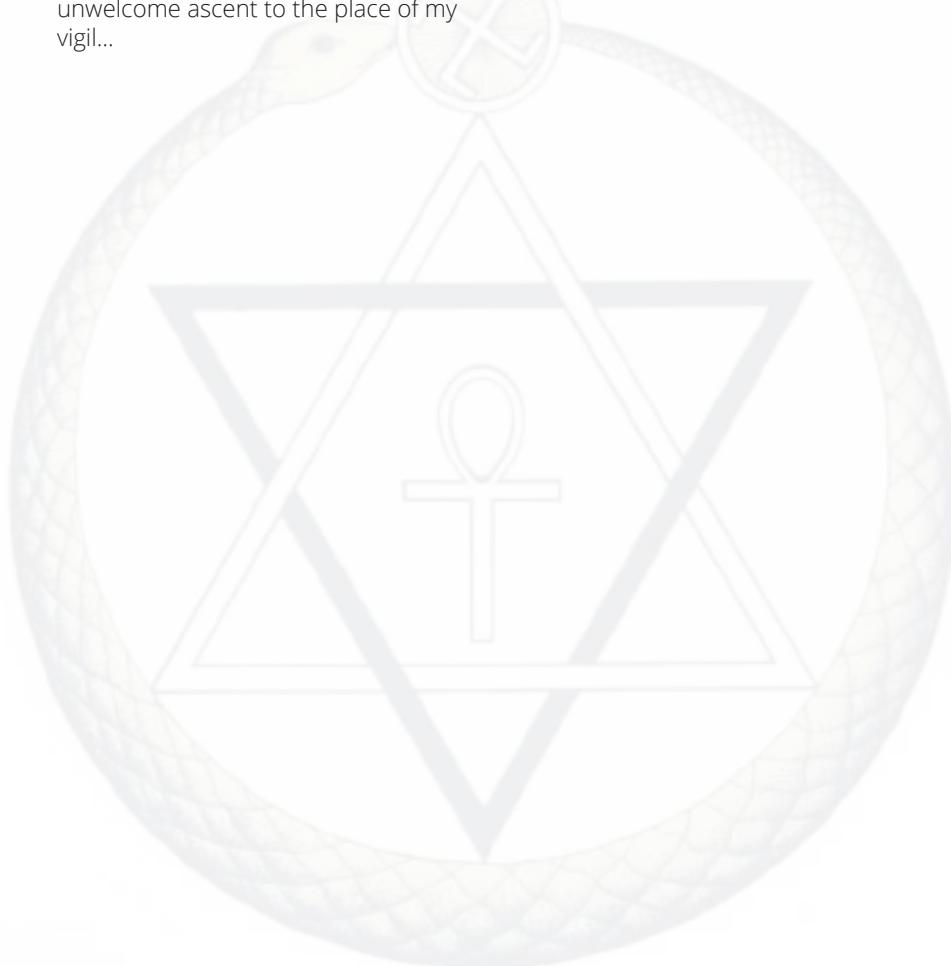
No snakes were likely to emerge from holes or crevices, and no lawless wanderers were likely to climb its stepped sides and enter it in the dead of night...There was naught of a physical nature which could possibly injure one here, and yet - a vague uneasiness, a feeling that invisible eyes were watching me, recurred for the second time. The place possessed a dream- like mysteriousness, a ghostly unreality....

I had now brought myself out of the state of mere receptive waiting into a forcefully concentrated condition of mind which vocalized the whole of its attention upon an effort to pierce the black silence which surrounded it. If, in the result, my faculty of awareness was temporarily heightened to an abnormal extent by the intense inward concentration, who shall say that it is impossible I began to detect the presence of invisible forces? I know only that as I "tuned-in" by a method of interiorised attention which I had learnt long before this second visit to Egypt, I became aware that hostile forces had invaded the chamber. There was something abroad which I sensed as evil, dangerous. A nameless dread flickered into my heart and returned again and again soon after it was driven away. Still following my method of intense, single-pointed, inward-turned concentration, feeling followed its usual trend and changed into vision. Shadows began to flit to and from in the shadowless room: gradually these tools more definite shape, and malevolent countenances appeared suddenly quite close to my own face.



sinister images rose plainly before my mind's eye. Then a dark apparition advanced, looked at me with fixed sinister regard and raised its hands in a gesture of menace, as though seeking to inspire me with awe. Age-old spirits seemed to have crept out of the neighbouring necropolis, a necropolis so old that mummies had crumbled away inside their stone sarcophagi; the shades that clung to them made their unwelcome ascent to the place of my vigil...

Spectral figures had begun to creep into and around the dark room wherein I sat, and the undeniable feeling of uneasiness which earlier had seized me was now receiving fit and full justification...





Study in Consciousness A  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENCE  
OF PSYCHOLOGY. BY Annie Besant

SECOND EDITION Theosophical  
Publishing Society LONDON AND  
BENARES Reprinted 1915 continued.

## CHAPTER VI. UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

### 1. CONSCIOUSNESS A UNIT

IN studying the very varied manifestations of consciousness, we are apt to forget two important facts: first, that the consciousness of each man is a Unit, however separate and different from each other its manifestations may appear to be; secondly, that all these Units themselves are parts of the consciousness of the Locos, and therefore re-act similarly under similar conditions. We cannot too often remind ourselves that consciousness is one; that all apparently separate consciousnesses are truly one, as one sea might pour through many holes in an embankment. That sea-water might issue from the holes differently coloured, if the embankment were composed of differently coloured earths; but it would all be the same sea-water; analysed, it would all show the presence of the same characteristic salts. So are all consciousnesses from the same ocean of consciousness, and have many essential identities. Enveiled in the same kind of matter, they will act in the same kind of way, and reveal their fundamental identity of nature.

The individual consciousness appears to be a complexity instead of a unity, when its manifestations are concerned, and modern psychology speaks of dual

and treble and multiplex personality, losing sight of the fundamental unity among the confusion of the manifold. Yet truly is our consciousness a Unit, and the variety is due to the materials in which it is working.

The ordinary waking-consciousness of a man is the consciousness working through the physical brain at a certain rate imposed by it, conditioned by all the conditions of that brain, limited by all its limitations, baulked by the varying obstructions it offers, checked by a clot of blood, silenced by the decay of tissue. At every moment the brain hinders its manifestations, while at the same time it is, on the physical plane, its only enabling instrument of manifestation.

When the consciousness, turning its attention away from the external physical world, ignores the denser part of the physical brain, and uses only the etheric portions thereof, its manifestations at once change in character. The creative imagination disports itself in etheric matter, and drawing on its accumulated contents, obtained from the external world by its denser servant, it arranges them, dissociates, and recombines them after its own fancies, and creates the lower worlds of dream.



When it casts aside for a while its ethereal garment, turning its attention away completely from the physical world, and shedding its fetters of physical matter, it roams through the astral world at will, or drifts through it unconsciously, turning all its attention to its own contents, receiving many impacts from that astral world, which it ignores or accepts according to its stage of evolution, or its humour of the moment. If it should manifest itself to an outside observer—as may happen in trance-conditions—it shows powers so superior to those it manifested when imprisoned in the physical brain, that such an observer, judging only by physical experiences, may well regard it as a different consciousness.

Still more is this the case when, the astral body being thrown into trance, the Bird of Heaven shows itself soaring into loftier regions, and its splendid flight so enchanting the observer that he deems it a new being, and no longer the same entity as crawled in the physical world. Yet truly is it ever one and the same; the differences are in the materials with which it is connected, and through which it works, and not in itself.

As to the second important fact stated above, man is not yet sufficiently developed to appreciate any evidence as to the unity of consciousness in its workings above the physical plane, but its unity on the physical plane is being demonstrated.

## 2. *UNITY OF PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.*

Amid the immense varieties of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, the underlying unity of physical consciousness has been lost sight of, and broad lines of cleavage have been set up which do not, in reality, exist. Life has been wholly denied to the mineral, grudged to the vegetable, and H. P. Blavatsky was ridiculed when she declared that one Life, one Consciousness vivified and informed all.

"With every day, the identity between the animal and the physical man, between the plant and man, and even between the reptile and its nest, the rock, and man, is more and more clearly shown, the physical and chemical constituents of all being found to be identical. Chemical Science may well say that there is no difference between the matter which composes the ox, and that which forms man. But the occult doctrine is far more explicit. It says: Not only the chemical compounds are the same, but the same infinitesimal invisible Lives compose the atoms of the bodies of the mountain and the daisy, of man and the ant, of the elephant and of the tree which shelters it from the sun. Each particle—whether you call it organic or inorganic—is a Life." 46

If this be true, it should be possible to obtain from such living minerals, vegetables, animals, and men, evidence of an identity of life, of sentiency, of response to stimuli; and while we may

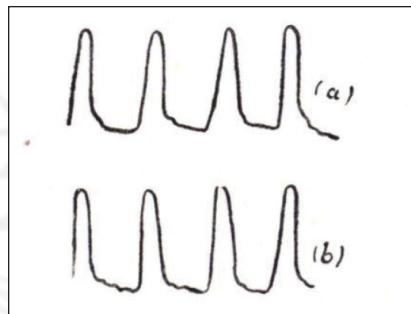


freely admit that we should expect to find gradations of sentiency, that as we ascend the ladder of life we should expect the manifestations to become fuller and more complex, yet some definite manifestations of sentiency should be found in all who share one life. The evidence for this was lacking when H. P. Blavatsky wrote; it is available now; and it is from an eastern scientist, whose rare ability has ensured his welcome in the West, that the evidence appropriately comes.

Professor Jagadish Chandra Bose, M.A., D.Sc., of Calcutta, has definitely proved that so-called "inorganic matter" is responsive to stimulus, and that the

response is identical from metals, vegetables, animals, and—so far as experiment can be made—man.

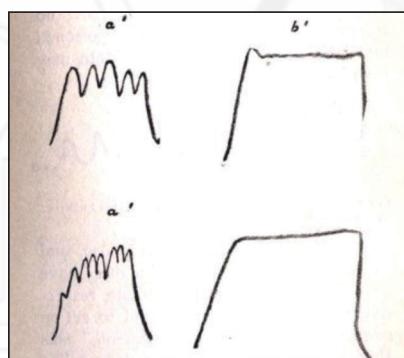
He arranged apparatus to measure the stimulus applied, and to show in curves, traced on a revolving cylinder, the response from the body receiving the stimulus. He then compared the curves obtained in tin and in other metals with those obtained from muscle, and found that the curves from tin were identical with those from muscle, and that other metals gave curves of like nature but varied in the period of recovery.



(a) SERIES OF ELECTRIC RESPONSES TO SUCCESSIVE MECHANICAL STIMULI AT INTERVALS OF HALF A MINUTE, IN TIN. (b)

#### MECHANICAL RESPONSES IN MUSCLE.

Tetanus, both complete and incomplete, due to repeated shocks, was caused, and similar results accrued, in mineral as in muscle.

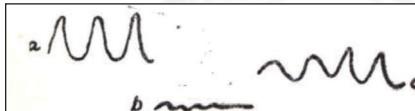


EFFECTS ANALOGOUS TO (a) INCOMPLETE AND (b) COMPLETE TETANUS IN TIN. (a') INCOMPLETE AND (b') COMPLETE TETANUS IN MUSCLE.



Fatigue was shown by metals, least of all by tin. Chemical re-agents, such as drugs, produced similar results on metals with those known to result with animals—exciting, depressing, and deadly. (By deadly is meant resulting in the destruction of the power of response.)

A poison will kill a metal, inducing a condition of immobility, so that no response is obtainable. If the poisoned metal be taken in time, an antidote may save its life.



(a) NORMAL R&SPONSE; (b) EFFECT ON POISON; (c) REVIVAL BY ANTIDOTE.

A stimulant will increase response, and as large and small doses of a drug have been found to kill and stimulate respectively, so have they been found to act on metals. "Among such phenomena," asks Professor Bose, "how can we draw a line of demarcation and say: Here the physical process ends, and there the physiological begins? No such barriers exist." Professor Bose has carried on a similar series of experiments on plants, and has obtained similar results. A fresh piece of cabbage stalk, a fresh leaf, or other vegetable body, can be stimulated and will show similar curves; it can be fatigued, excited, depressed, poisoned. There is something rather pathetic in seeing the way in which the tiny spot of light, which records

the pulses in the plant, travels, in ever weaker and weaker curves, when the plant is under the influence of poison, falls into a final despairing straight line, and—stops. The plant is dead. One feels as though a murder had been committed—as indeed it has. These admirable series of experiment have established, on a definite basis of physical facts, the teaching of occult science on the universality of life.

Mr. Marcus Reed has made microscopical observations which show the presence of consciousness in the vegetable kingdom. He has observed symptoms as of fright when tissue is injured, and further he has seen that male and female cells, floating in the sap, become aware of each other's presence without contact; the circulation quickens, and they put out processes towards each other. More than three years after the publication of Professor Bose's experiments, some interesting confirmation of his observations arose in the course of M. Jean Becquerel's study of the N-rays, communicated by him to the Paris Academy of Sciences. Animals under chloroform cease to emit these rays, and they are never emitted by a corpse. Flowers normally emit them, but under chloroform the emanation ceases. Metals also emit them, and under chloroform the emanation again ceases. Thus animals, flowers, and metals alike give out these rays, and alike cease to emanate them under the action of chloroform.



### 3. THE MEANING OF PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The term "physical consciousness" is used in two distinct senses, and it may be useful to pause a moment, in order to define these. It is often used to indicate what is above termed "ordinary waking-consciousness", i.e., the consciousness of the man, of the Jivatma -or, if the phrase be preferred, of the Monad working through the Jivatma, and the lower triad of permanent atoms. It is also used in the sense in which it is used here, as consciousness working in physical matter, receiving and responding to physical impacts, unconcerned with any transmission of impulses onward to the higher planes, or with any impulses sent to the physical body from those planes.

In this more restricted and accurate sense, it would include (a) any out-thrillings from the atoms and molecules ensouled by the life of the Third Logos; (b) any

similar out-thrillings from organised forms ensouled by the life of the Second Logos; and (c) any similar out-thrillings from the life of the Monad, proceeding from the permanent atoms, in which the spirillae are not directly concerned. When the spirillae are active, the "ordinary wakingconsciousness" is affected. For instance ammonia sniffed up by the nose shows two results; there is a rapid secretion; that is the response of the cells in the olfactory tract; there is also a "smell"; that is the result of

a vibration running up to the sense-centres in the astral body, and there recognised in consciousness; the change in consciousness affects the first set of spirillae in the atoms of the olfactory tract, and thus reaches the "waking-consciousness"—consciousness working in the physical brain. It is only through the spirillae that changes in consciousness on the higher planes bring about changes in the "waking-consciousness".

It must be remembered that as the Solar System is a field for the evolution of all the developing consciousnesses within it, so are there smaller areas within it, serving as smaller fields. Man is the microcosm of the universe, and his body serves as a field of evolution for myriads of consciousnesses less evolved than his own. Thus the three activities mentioned above under (a), (b), and (c) are all present in his body, and all enter into the physical consciousness working therein; that in which the atomic spirillae are concerned does not enter it; that belongs to the consciousness of the Jivatma. The workings of physical consciousness do not now directly affect the "waking-consciousness" in the higher animals or in man. They affected it in the earlier part of the embryonic life in the Group-Soul, while the consciousness of the Second Logos was "mothering" the dawning consciousnesses derived from it. But physical consciousness has now sunk below the "threshold of consciousness", while showing itself as "the memory of the cell", as the selective action in glands and papillae,



and generally in the carrying on of functions necessary for the support of bodies. It is the lowest activity of consciousness, and as consciousness functions more and more actively on the higher plane, its lowest workings no longer attract its attention, and they become what we call automatic.

Now it is physical consciousness that is appealed to in Professor Bose's experiments, and it is the response of this consciousness in the tin and in the animal that is the same, and is shown in the pulse indicated by the curves; the animal will feel the stimulus while the tin will not—that is the result of the additional working of the consciousness in astral matter.

We may thus allege that consciousness, working in physical matter, responds to various kinds of stimulation, and that the response is the same, whether it be obtained from mineral, vegetable, or animal. The consciousness shows the same characteristic workings, is the same. The differences which, as already said, we observe as we ascend, lie in the improvement of the physical apparatus, an apparatus which enables astral and mental—not physical—activities of consciousness to manifest themselves on the physical plane. Men and animals feel and think better than minerals and vegetables, because their more highly evolved consciousness has shaped for itself on the physical plane this much improved apparatus; but even so, our bodies answer as the lower bodies answer to the same stimuli, and this purely physical consciousness is the same in all.

Now in the mineral, the astral matter connected with the permanent astral atom is so little active, and consciousness is sleeping so deeply therein, that there is no perceptible working from the astral to the physical. In the higher plants there seems to be a sort of forth-shadowing of a nervous system, but it is too little developed and organised to serve anything but the simplest purposes. The added activity on the astral plane improves the astral sheath in connexion with the plant, and the vibrations of the astral sheath affect the etheric portion of the plant, and thus its denser matter. Hence the forth-shadowing of a nervous system above alluded to. When we come to the animal stage, the much greater activity of the consciousness on the astral plane causes more powerful vibrations, which pass to the etheric double of the animal, and by the etheric vibrations thus caused, the nervous system is builded. The shaping of it is due to the Logos through the Group-Soul, and to the active assistance of the Shining Ones of the Third Elemental Kingdom, directing the work of the ethereal Nature-Spirits. But the impulse comes from the consciousness on the astral plane working in the permanent atom and the sheath of astral matter attracted by it, roused to activity by the Group-Soul. As the first very simple apparatus is formed, more delicate impacts from without can be perceived, and these impacts also help in thy evolution. Action and reaction succeed each other, and the mechanism continually improves in receptive and transmitting ability.



Consciousness does not do much building on the astral plane at this stage, and works there in an unorganised sheath; the organising is done on the physical plane by the efforts of consciousness to express itself—dim and vaguely groping as these efforts are—aided and directed by the Group-Soul and the Shining Ones.

This work has to be completed to a great extent before the Third Life-Wave pours down, for animal man has evolved, with his brain and nervous systems, before that great outpouring comes which gives the Jivatma a working body, and makes possible the higher evolution of man.

## THE MECHANISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

### 1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MECHANISM.

IN a very real sense the whole of the bodies of man form the mechanism of consciousness, as organs for willing, thinking, and acting; but the nervous apparatus may be called its special mechanism, as that whereby, in the physical body, it controls and directs all. Every cell in the body is composed of myriads of tiny lives, each with its own germinal consciousness; 51 each cell has its own dawning consciousness, controlling and organising these; but the central ruling consciousness which uses the whole body controls and organises it, in turn, and the mechanism in which it functions for this purpose is the nervous.

This nervous mechanism is the outcome of astral impulses, and consciousness must be active on the astral plane before it can be constructed. Impulses set up by the

consciousness - willing to experience and vaguely endeavouring to give effect to this Will -cause vibrations in etheric matter, and these vibrations, by the very nature of the matter 52, become electric, magnetic, heat, and other energies. These are the masons which work under the impulse of the master-builder, Consciousness. The impulse is from him; the execution is by them. The directive intelligence, which as yet he cannot furnish, is supplied by the Logic life in the Group-Soul, and by the Nature-Spirits working under the guidance, as already said, of the Shining Ones of the Third Elemental Kingdom.

We have then to understand that nervous matter is built up on the physical plane under impulses from the astral, the directly constructive forces being indeed physical, but the guidance and the setting in motion of them being astral, i.e., proceeding from consciousness active on the astral plane. The life-energy, the prana, which



flows in rosy waves, pulsing along the etheric matter in all nerves, not in their medullary sheaths but in their substance, comes down immediately from the astral plane; it is drawn from the great reservoir of life, the LOGOS, and is specialised on the astral plane and sent down thence into the nervous system, blending there with the magnetic, electrical, and other currents which form the purely physical prana, drawn from the same reservoir, but through the Sun, His physical body; close examination shows that the constituents of the prana of the mineral kingdom are fewer and less complex in arrangement than those of the prana in the higher vegetable kingdom, and this again less so than that in the animal and human, and this difference is due to the fact that the astral prana mingles in the latter and not in the former—to any perceptible degree, at least. After the formation of the causal body, this complexity of the prana circulating in the nervous systems of the physical body much increases, and it appears to become yet more enriched in the progress of human evolution. For as the consciousness becomes active on the mental plane, the prana of that plane mingles also with the lower, and so on as the activity of consciousness is carried on in higher regions.

We may pause a moment on this word "prana", that I have translated as "life- energy". Pran is a Samskrit root, meaning to breathe, to live, to blow, made up of an, to breathe, move, live, and hence the Spirit, joined with the prefix pra, forth. Thus pra-

an, pran, means to breathe forth, and life-breath, or life-energy, is the nearest English equivalent to the Samskrit term. As according to Hindu thought there is but one Life, one Consciousness, everywhere, the word Prana has been used for the Supreme Self, the all-sustaining Breath. It is the forth- giving energy of the One; for us, the Life of the LOGOS. Hence that Life on every plane may be spoken of as the Prana of the plane; it becomes the life- breath in every creature. On the physical plane it is energy, appearing in many forms, electricity, heat, light, magnetism, etc., transmutable into each other, because fundamentally one; on other planes we have no names whereby to designate it, but the idea is definite enough. Appropriated by a being, it is prana in the narrower sense in which it is generally used in theosophical literature, the individual's life-breath. It is the vital energy, the vital force, of which all other energies, chemical, electrical, and the rest, are merely derivatives and fractional parts; and it is a little quaint for the occultist when he hears scientific men talking glibly of chemical or electrical energy, and denouncing their parent, vital energy, as an "exploded superstition". These partial manifestations of vital energy are merely due to the arrangements of matter in which it plays, cutting off one or another of its characteristics, or perhaps all of them save one, as blue glass will shut off all the rays except the blue ones, and red all except the red.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H. P. Blavatsky speaks of the relation of prana to the



nervous system. She quotes, and partly endorses, partly corrects, the view of "nervous ether", put forward by Dr. B. W. Richardson; the Sun-force is "the primal cause of all life on earth" 53, and the Sun is "the store-house of vital force, which is the noumenon of electricity" 54. The "nervous ether" is the lowest principle of the Primordial Essence which is Life. It is animal vitality diffused in all Nature, and acting according to the conditions it finds for its activity. It is not an 'animal product'; but the living animal, the living flower and plant, are its products" 55.

On the physical plane this prana, this life-force, builds up all minerals, and is the controlling agent in the chemico-physiological changes in protoplasm, which lead to differentiation and the building of the various tissues of the bodies of plants, animals, and men. They show its presence by the power of responding to stimuli, but for a time this power is not accompanied by distinct sentiency; consciousness has not unfolded enough to feel pleasure and pain.

When the current of prana from the astral plane, with its attribute of sentiency, blends with that of the prana of the physical plane, it begins the building of a new arrangement of matter—the nervous. This, nervous arrangement is fundamentally a cell, details as to which can be studied in any modern text-book dealing with the subject 56, and the development consists of internal changes and of outgrowths of the matter of the cell, these outgrowths becoming sheathed

in medullary matter and then appearing a threads or fibres. Every nervous system, however elaborate, consists of cells and their outgrowths, these outgrowths becoming more numerous, and forming ever multiplying connexions between the cells, as consciousness demands, for its expression, a more and more elaborated nervous system. This fundamental simplicity at the root of such complexity of details is found even in man, the possessor of the most highly evolved nervous organisation. The many millions of neural ganglia 57 in the brain and body are all produced by the end of the third month of ante-natal life, and their development consists in expansion, and the outgrowth of their substance into fibres. This development in later life results from the activity of thought; as a man thinks strenuously and continuously, the thought-vibrations cause chemical activity, and the dendrons 58 shoot out from the cells, making connexions and cross-connexions in every direction, literal pathways along which prana pulsates—prana which is now composed of factors from the physical, astral and mental planes—and thought-vibrations travel.

Returning from this digression into the human kingdom, let us see how the building of the nervous system, by vibratory impulses from the astral, begins and is carried on. We find a minute group of nerve cells and tiny processes connecting them. This is formed by the action of a centre which has previously appeared in the



astral body—of which something will presently be said—an aggregation of astral matter arranged to form a centre for receiving and responding to impulses from outside. From that astral centre vibrations pass into the etheric body, causing little etheric whirlpools which draw into themselves particles of denser physical matter, forming at last a nerve cell, and groups of nerve cells. These physical centres, receiving vibrations from the outer world, send impulses back to the astral centres, increasing their vibrations; thus the

physical and the astral centres act and re-act on each other, and each becomes more complicated and more effective. As we pass up the animal kingdom, we find the physical nervous system constantly improving, and becoming a more and more dominant factor in the body, and this first-formed system becomes, in the vertebrates, the sympathetic system, controlling and energising the vital organs—the heart, the lungs, the digestive tract; beside it slowly develops the cerebro-spinal system, closely connected in its lower workings with the sympathetic, and becoming gradually more and more dominant, while it also becomes in its most important development the normal organ for the expression of the “waking consciousness”. This cerebro-spinal system is built up by impulses originating in the mental, not in the astral plane, and is only indirectly related to the astral through the sympathetic system, built up from the astral. We shall see later the bearing of this on the astral sensitiveness of animals, and lowly-developed human

beings, the disappearance, of this sensitiveness with the development of intellect, and its reappearance in the higher human evolution.

The permanent atoms form the imperfect but only direct channel between the consciousness manifesting as the spiritual Triad and the forms he is connected with. In the case of the higher animals these atoms are exceedingly active, and in the brief time between the physical lives considerable changes occur in these. As evolution goes on the increasing flow of life from the Group-Soul and through the permanent atom, as well as the increasing complexity of the physical apparatus, rapidly augment the sensitiveness of the animal. There is comparatively little sensitiveness in the lower animal lives, and little in fishes, despite their cerebro-spinal system. As evolution proceeds, the sense-centres continue to develop in the astral sheath, and in the higher animal these are well organised and the senses are acute. But with this acuteness there is brevity of sensations, and except with the highest animals little of the mental element mingles to lend increased and longer continued sensitiveness to sensation.

## 2. *THE ASTRAL OR DESIRE BODY.*

The evolution of the astral body must be studied in relation to the physical, for while it plays the part of a creator on the physical plane, as we have seen, its own further development largely depends on the impulses received through the very



organism it has created. It does not, for a long time, enjoy an independent life of its own on its own plane, and the organisation of the astral body in relation to the physical is quite a different matter, and much earlier in time, than its organisation in relation to the astral world. In the East they speak of the astral and mental vehicles of consciousness, when acting in relation to the physical, as koshas, or sheaths, and use the term sharira, or body, for a form capable of independent action in the visible and invisible worlds. This distinction may serve us here.

The astral sheath of the mineral is a mere cloud of appropriated astral matter, and does not show any perceptible signs of organisation. The same is the case with most vegetables, but in some there seem to be certain indications of aggregations and lines, which, in the light of later evolution, appear to be the dawn of incipient organisation; and in some old forest trees distinct aggregations of astral matter are visible at certain points. In animals these aggregations become clearly marked and definite, forming centres in the astral sheath of a permanent and specialised kind.

These aggregations in the astral sheath are the beginnings of the centres which will build up the necessary organs in the physical body, and are not the often-named chakras, or wheels, which belong to the organisation of the astral body itself, and fit it for functioning on its own plane in connexion with the mental sheath, as the lower type of the eastern sukhsha sharira, or subtle

body. The astral chakras are connected with the astral senses, so that a person in whom they are developed can see, hear, etc., on the astral plane; they lie far ahead of the point in evolution that we are considering, a point at which the perceptive powers of consciousness have not yet any organ, even on the physical plane. As these aggregations in the astral sheath appear, the impulses of consciousness on the astral plane, guided as before explained, play on the etheric double, forming the etheric whirlpools already mentioned, and corresponding centres thus arise in the astral sheath and physical body, the sympathetic system being thus built up. This system always remains thus directly connected with the astral centres, even after the cerebro-spinal system is evolved. But from the aggregations in the fore-part or the astral sheath, ten important centres are formed, which become connected with the brain through the sympathetic system, and gradually become the dominant organs for the activities of the physical, or waking-consciousness—that is, for that part of the consciousness which functions normally through the cerebro-spinal system. Five out of the ten serve to receive special impressions from the outside world, and are the centres through which consciousness uses its perceptive powers; they are called in Samskrit, Jnanendriyas, literally “knowledge-senses”, i.e., senses, or sense-centres, by which knowledge is obtained. These set up, in the way before explained, five distinct etheric whirlpools, and thus construct five



centres in the physical brain; these, in turn, severally shape and remain connected with their appropriate sense-organs. Thus arise the five sense-organs: the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin, specialised to receive impressions from the outer world, corresponding to the five perceptive powers of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling. These are specialised ways in the lower worlds by which part of the perceptive ability of consciousness, its power of receiving external contacts, is exercised. They belong to the lower worlds and to the grosser forms of matter which shut consciousness in, and prevent it, thus enwrapped, from knowing other lives; they are openings in this dense veil of matter, permitting vibrations to enter in and reach the shrouded consciousness.

The remaining five of these ten astral centres serve to convey vibrations from consciousness to the outer world; they are the avenues outwards, as the knowledge-senses are the avenues inwards; they are named Karmendriyas, literally action-senses, senses or sense-centres which cause action. These develop like the others, forming etheric whirlpools, which make the motor-centres in the physical brain; these, again, severally shape and remain connected with their appropriate motor-organs, hands, feet, larynx, and organs of generation and excretion.

We have now an organised astral sheath, and the continual action and re-action between this and the physical

body improve both, and these together act on the consciousness and it re-acts on them, both again gaining by this mutual interaction. And as we have already seen, these blind impulses of consciousness are guided in their play upon matter by the Logic life in the Group-Soul and by the Nature-Spirits. Always it is life, consciousness, seeking to realise itself in matter, and matter responding in virtue of its own inherent qualities, vitalised by the action of the Third Logos.

### 3. CORRESPONDENCE IN ROOT-RACES.

A similar succession in the present, the fourth, Round marks the evolution of the kingdoms of Nature, the main characteristics of the previous Rounds being, as it were, repeated in the Root-Races, just as the history of evolution wrought out during long ages is repeated during the embryonic life of each new body. During the existence of the first two human Races there were conditions of temperature which would render sensibility destructive of any life-manifestation, and those Races show no sensibility to pleasure and pain on the physical plane. In the third Race there is sensibility to violent impacts, causing coarse pleasures and pains, but only some of the senses are evolved, those of hearing, touch, and sight, and these but to a low stage, as we shall presently see.

Now in the first two Races there are visible the beginnings of aggregations in the astral matter of the sheaths, arid if these could connect themselves with appropriate physical matter there



would be in the physical consciousness sensations of pleasure and pain. But the appropriate connexions are lacking. The first Race shows a feeble sense of hearing, the second a vague response to impacts, the dawning sense of touch.

The spiritual Triad, at this stage of evolution, is so insensitive to vibrations from external matter that it is only when he receives the tremendous vibrations caused by impacts on the physical plane that he begins slowly to respond. Everything begins for

him on the physical plane. He does not respond directly, but indirectly, through the mediation of the Logic life, and only as the primary physical apparatus is built up do the subtler impulses come through with sufficient force to cause pleasure and pain. The violent vibrations from the physical plane cause corresponding vibration on the astral, and he becomes dimly conscious of sensation.

## VIII. FIRST HUMAN STEPS.

### 1. *THE THIRD LIFE-WAVE.*

THE middle of the Third Root-Race had been reached; the nervous apparatus of animal man had been built up to a point at which it needed for its further improvement the more direct flow of thought from the spiritual Triad to which it was attached; the Group-Soul had completed its work for these, the higher products of evolution, as the medium by which the life of the Second Logos protected and nourished His infant children; it was now to form the foundation of the causal body, the vessel into which the down-pouring life was, to be received; the term of the ante-natal life of the Monad was touched, and the time was ripe for his birth into the lower world. The mother-life of the Logos had built for him the bodies in which he could now live as a separate entity in the world of

forms, and he was to come into direct possession of his bodies and take up his human evolution.

We have seen that the Monads derive their being from the First Logos, and dwell on the anupadaka, the second, plane during the ages over which we have glanced. We have also seen that they appropriated to themselves with the help of different agents the three permanent atoms that represent them as Jivatmas on the third, fourth, and fifth planes, and also those which form the lower triad on the fifth, sixth, and seventh. All the communication of the Monad with the planes below his own has been through the Sutratma, the life-thread, on which the atoms are strung, that life-thread—of second plane matter—passing from the atmic atom to the buddhic, from the buddhic to the manasic, and from the manasic



re-entering the atmic, thus making the "Triangle of Light" on the higher planes. We have seen further that from the line of this Triangle on the buddhic plane comes forth a thread, the Sutratma of the lower planes, on which the lower triad is strung.

The time has now come for a fuller communication than is represented by this delicate thread in its original form, and it, as it were, widens out. This is but a clumsy way of picturing the fact that the Ray from the Monad glows and increases, assuming more the form of a funnel: "The thread between the Silent Watcher and his shadow becomes stronger an radiant" 59. This downflow of monadic life is accompanied by much increased flow between the buddhic and manasic permanent atoms, and the latter seems to awaken, sending out thrills in every direction. Other manasic atoms and molecules gather round it, and a whirling vortex is seen on the three upper sub-planes of the mental plane. A similar whirling motion is seen in the cloudy mass surrounding the attached mental unit below, enveloped in the remaining layer of the Group-Soul, as already described. The layer is torn asunder, and caught up into the vortex above, where it is disintegrated, and the causal body is formed, a delicate filmy envelope, as the whirlpool subsides. This downflow of life, resulting in the formation of the causal body, is called the Third Life-Wave, and is properly ascribed to the First Logos, since the Monads came forth from Him and represent His triune life.

The causal body once formed, the spiritual Triad has a permanent vehicle for further evolution, and when Consciousness becomes able to function freely in this vehicle, the Triad will be able to control and direct, far more effectively than ever before, the evolution of the lower vehicles.

The earlier efforts to control are not, however, of a very intelligent description, any more than the first movements of the body of the infant show they are directed by any intelligence, although we know that an intelligence is connected with it. The Monad is now, in a very real sense, born on the physical plane, but still he must be regarded as a babe there, and must pass through an immense period of time before his power over the physical body will be anything but infantile.

## 2. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

And this is clearly seen if we look at man as he was in his early days. Those long-perished Lemurians—if we except those entities who had already developed consciousness to a considerable extent, and who took birth in the clumsy Lemurian bodies in order to lead human evolution—were very poorly developed as to their sense organs; those of smell and taste were not developed, but were only in process of building. Their sensitiveness to pleasure and pain was slight.

In the Atlanteans the senses were much more active; sight was very keen and hearing was acute; taste was more



developed than among the Lemurians, but was still not highly evolved; coarse and rank foods were found perfectly tolerable and even agreeable, and very highly-flavoured articles of diet, such as decaying meat, were preferred to more delicate viands, which were considered

tasteless. The body was not very sensitive to injuries, and severe wounds did not cause much pain, nor were followed by prostration—even extensive lacerations failing to incapacitate the sufferer—and healing very quickly. The remnants of the Lemurian Race now existing, as well as the widely spread Atlantean, still show a relative insensitiveness to pain, and undergo, with very partial disablement, lacerations that would utterly prostrate a fifth Race man. A North American Indian has been reported as fighting on after the side of the thigh had been slashed away, and taking the field again after twelve or fifteen hours. This characteristic of the fourth Race body enables a savage to bear with composure, and to recover from, tortures that would prostrate a fifth Race man from nervous shock.

These differences derive largely from the varying developments of the permanent atom, the nucleus of the physical body. There is, in the fifth Root-Race, a fuller stream of life pouring down, causing the greater internal development of the permanent atom, and increasing as that development proceeds. As evolution goes on, there is an increasing complexity of vibratory powers in the physical permanent

atom, a similar increase in the astral atom, and again in the mental unit. As birth follows birth, and these permanent nuclei are put out on each plane to gather round them the new mental, astral and physical encasements, the more highly developed permanent atoms draw round them the more highly developed atoms on the planes to which they belong, and thus build up a better nervous apparatus through which the ever-increasing stream of consciousness can flow. In this way is built up the delicately organised nervous apparatus of the fifth Race man.

In the fifth Race man the internal differentiation of the nervous cells is much increased, and the intercommunications are much more numerous. Speaking generally, the consciousness of the fifth Race man is working on the astral plane, and is withdrawn from the physical body except so far as the cerebro-spinal nervous system is concerned. The control of the vital organs of the body is left to the sympathetic system, trained through long ages to perform this work, and now kept going by impulses from the astral centres other than the ten, without deliberate attention from the otherwise occupied consciousness, although of course sustained by it. It is, however, as we shall presently see, quite possible to draw the attention of consciousness again to this part of its mechanism, and to reassume intelligent control of it. In the more highly evolved members of the fifth Race, the main impulses of



consciousness are sent down from the lower mental world; and work down through the astral to the physical, and there stimulate the physical nervous activity. This is the keen, subtle, intelligent consciousness, moved by ideas more than by sensations, and showing itself more actively in the mental and emotional brain-centres than in those concerned with sensory and motor phenomena.

The sense-organs of the fifth Race body are less active and acute than those of the highest fourth Race in responding to purely physical impacts. The eye, the ear, the touch do not respond to vibrations which would affect the fourth Race sense-organs. It is significant, also, that these organs are at their keenest in early childhood, and diminish in sensitiveness from about the sixth year onward. On the other hand, while less acute in receiving pure sense-impacts, they become more sensitive to sensations intermingled with emotions, and delicacies of colour and of sound, whether of nature or of art, appeal to them more effectively. The higher and more intricate organisation of the sense-centres in the brain and in the astral body seems to bring about increased sensitiveness to beauty of colour, form, and sound, but diminished response to the sensations in which the emotions play no part.

The fifth Race body is also far more sensitive to shock than are the bodies of the fourth and third Races, being more dependent upon consciousness for its upkeep. A nervous shock is

far more keenly felt, and entails far greater prostration. A severe mutilation is no longer a question merely of lacerated muscle, of torn tissues, but of dangerous nervous shock; the highly organised nervous system carries the message of distress to the brain centres, and it is sent on from them to the astral body, disturbing and upsetting the astral consciousness. This is followed by disturbance on the mental plane; imagination is aroused, memory stimulates anticipation, and the rush of mental impulses intensifies and prolongs sensations. These again stimulate and excite the nervous system, and its undue excitation acts on the vital organs, causing organic disturbance; hence depression of vitality and slow recovery.

So also in the highly evolved fifth Race body, mental conditions largely rule the physical, and intense anxiety, mental suffering, and worry, producing nervous tension, readily disturb organic processes and bring about weakness or disease. Hence mental strength and serenity directly promote physical health, and when the consciousness is definitely established on the astral or the mental plane, emotional and mental disturbance are far more productive of ill-health than any privations inflicted on the physical body. The evolved fifth Race man lives physically literally in his nervous system.



## 2. INCONGRUOUS SOULS AND BODIES.

But we should here notice a significant fact, bearing on the all-important question of the relation of the nervous organisation to consciousness. When a human consciousness has not yet grown beyond the later Lemurian or earlier Atlantean type, but is born into a fifth Race body, it presents a curious and interesting study. (The reasons for such a birth cannot here be enlarged upon; briefly, as the more advanced nations annex the lands occupied by little evolved tribes, and kill them off either directly or indirectly, the people thus summarily evicted from their bodies have to find new habitats; the suitable savage conditions are becoming rarer and rarer, under the ever-expanding flood of higher races, and they have to take birth under the lowest available conditions, such as the slums of large cities, in families of criminal types. They are drawn to the conquering nation by karmic necessity.) Such persons incarnate in fifth Race bodies of the worst available material. They then show out in these fifth Race bodies the qualities that belong to the earlier fourth or the third; and though they have the physical outer nervous organisation, they have not the internal differentiation in the nervous matter that only comes with the play on physical matter of energies coming from the astral and mental worlds. We observe in them the non-responsiveness to impressions from outside, unless the impressions are of a violent order, that marks the low grade of development of the individual consciousness. We notice

the falling back into inertia when a violent physical stimulus is absent; the recurrent craving for such violent stimulus when roused by physical necessities; the stirring into faint mental activity under vehement impact on the sense-organs, and the blankness when the sense-organs are at rest; the complete absence of any response to a thought or a high emotion—not a rejection but an un-consciousness of it. Excitement or violence in such a person is caused as a rule by something outside—by something coming before him physically which his dawning mind connects with the possibility of gratifying some passion which he remembers, and desires again to feel. Such a person may not be intent on robbery or murder at all, but may be stimulated into either or both by the mere sight of a well-dressed passer-by who seems likely to have money—money, that means gratification by food, drink, or sex. The stimulus to attack the passer-by is at once given, and will be followed at once by action, unless checked by a physical and obvious danger, such as the sight of a policeman. It is the embodied physical temptation which arouses the idea of committing the crime; a man who plans a crime beforehand is more highly developed; the mere savage commits a crime on the impulse of the moment, unless faced by another physical embodiment, that of a force which he fears. And when the crime is committed, he is impervious to all appeals to shame or remorse; he is susceptible only to terror.



These remarks do not, of course, apply to the intelligent criminal, but only to the congenital brutal and obtuse type, the third or fourth Race savage in a fifth Race body.

As the truths of the Ancient Wisdom more and more colour modern thought, they will inevitably, among other things, modify the treatment of the criminal. Such criminals as are here spoken of will not be punished brutally, but will be kept permanently under strict discipline; and will be, as far as is practicable, aided to progress more quickly than would have been possible under the conditions of savage life. But the further consideration of this would lead us too far from our main study, and we must now return to the workings of consciousness on the astral plane, as they show themselves in the higher animals and in the lower human types.

#### *4. DAWN OF CONSCIOUSNESS ON THE ASTRAL PLANE.*

We have seen that astral organisation precedes and shapes the physical nervous system, and we have now to consider how this must affect the workings of consciousness. We should expect to find that consciousness on the astral plane will become aware of impacts on its astral sheath in a vague and un-precise way, just as, in the minerals and the plants and the lowest animals, it became aware of impacts on its physical body. This awareness of astral impacts will long precede any definite organisation in the astral sheath, the bridge between

the mental and the physical, that will gradually evolve it into an astral body, the independent vehicle of consciousness on the astral plane. And, as we have seen, the first organisation in the astral sheath is a response to impacts received through the physical body, and is related to the physical body in its evolution. This organisation has nothing to do directly with the reception, co-ordination, and understanding of astral impacts, but is engaged in being acted upon by, and re-acting on, the physical nervous system. Consciousness everywhere precedes Self-consciousness and the evolution of consciousness on the astral plane proceeds contemporaneously with the evolution of Self-consciousness—to be dealt with presently—on the physical.

The impacts on the astral sheath from the astral plane produce vibratory waves over the whole astral sheath, and the ensheathed consciousness gradually becomes dimly aware of these surgings, without relating them to any external cause. It is groping after the much more violent physical impacts, and such power of attention as it has evolved is turned on them. The aggregations of astral matter, connected with the physical nervous systems, naturally share in the general surgings of the astral sheath, and the vibrations caused by these surgings mingle with those coming from the physical body, and affect also the vibrations sent down to it by the consciousness through these aggregations. Thus a connexion is established between astral impacts



and the sympathetic system, and they play a considerable part in its evolution. As the consciousness working in the physical body begins slowly to recognise an external world, these impacts from the astral—gradually classified under the five senses as are the impacts from the physical—mingle with those from the physical plane and are not distinguished as being different from them in origin. This recognition is the lower clairvoyance, that which precedes the great evolution of mind. So long as the sympathetic system is acting as the dominant apparatus of consciousness, so long will the origin, astral or physical, of impacts remain as the same to consciousness. Even the higher animals—in whom the cerebro-spinal system is well developed, but in whom it is not yet, save in its sense-centres, the chief mechanism of consciousness—fail to distinguish between physical and astral sights, sounds, etc. A horse will leap over an astral body as though it were a physical one; a cat will rub herself against the legs of an astral figure; a dog will growl at a similar appearance. In the dog and the horse there is the dawning of an uneasy sense of some difference, shown by the fear of such appearances often manifested by the dog, and by the timidity of the horse. The nervousness of the horse—despite which he can be trained to face the dangers of a battle-field, and even, as with Arab mares, learn to pick up and carry away his fallen rider through all the alarming surroundings—seems chiefly due to his confusion and

bewilderment as to his environment, and his inability to distinguish between what later he will learnedly call “objective realities”, against which he can injure his body, and “delusions”, or “hallucinations”, through which his body can pass unscathed. To him they are all “real”, and the difference of their behaviour alarms him; in the case of an exceptionally intelligent horse the nervousness is often greater, as he evolves a dawning sense of difference in the phenomena themselves, and this at first, not being understood, is yet more disquieting.

The savage, living more in the cerebro-spinal system, distinguishes between the physical and the astral phenomena, though the latter to him are as “real” as the physical: he relates them to another world, to which he relegates all things that do not behave in the way he considers normal. He does not know that, with regard to these, he is conscious through the sympathetic and not through the cerebro-spinal system; he is conscious of them—that is all. The Lemurians and early Atlanteans were almost more conscious astrally than they were physically. Astral impacts, throwing the whole astral sheath into waves, came through the sense-centres of the astral to the sympathetic centres in the physical body, and they were vividly aware of them. Their lives were dominated by sensations and passions more than by intellect, and the special apparatus of the astral sheath, the sympathetic system, was then the dominant mechanism of consciousness.



As the cerebro-spinal system became elaborated, and more and more assumed its peculiar position as the chief apparatus of consciousness on the physical plane, the attention of consciousness was fixed more and more on the external physical world, and its aspect of activity, as the concrete mind, was brought into greater and greater prominence. The sympathetic system became subordinate, and its indications were less and less regarded, submerged under the flood of the coarser and heavier physical impacts from without. Hence a lessening of astral consciousness and an increase of intelligence, though there still remains in almost every one a vague sense of non-understood impressions received from time to time.

At the present stage of evolution this lower form of clairvoyance is still found among human beings, but in persons of very limited intellect; they have little idea as to its rationale, and little control over its exercise. Attempts to increase it are apt to cause nervous disturbances of a very refractory kind, and these attempts are against the law of evolution, which works ever forward towards a higher end, and does not move backwards. As the law cannot be changed, attempts to work against it only cause disturbance and disease. We cannot revert to the condition in which the sympathetic system was dominant, save at the cost of health, and of the higher intellectual evolution.

Hence the serious danger of following many of the directions now published broadcast, to meditate on the solar plexus, and other sympathetic centres.

The practices, a few of which have come over to the West, are systematised into Hatha Yoga in India. Control over the involuntary muscles is regained, so that a man can reverse peristaltic action, inhibit the beating of the heart, vomit at will, and so on. Much time and trouble must be wasted ere the performance of such feats becomes possible, and at the end the man has only brought back to the control of the will muscles which have long since been handed over by it to the sympathetic system. As that handing-over was done by a gradual turning away of attention, so is it by a concentration of attention on the parts concerned that the earlier achievement is reversed. As such performances impose upon the ignorant, who regard them as evidences of spiritual greatness, they are often practised by men who desire power, and are unable to obtain it in a more legitimate way. Moreover, they are the easiest form of Hatha Yoga; and are more easily cultivated, and cost far less suffering, than holding an arm extended till it withers, or lying on a bed of spikes.

When the cerebro-spinal system is thrown temporarily into abeyance, the impulses from the astral sheath through the sympathetic system make themselves felt in consciousness.



Hence "lucidity" in trance, self-induced or imposed, the power of reading in the astral by the use of crystals, and other similar devices. The partial or complete suspension of the action of consciousness in the higher vehicle causes it to direct attention on the lower.

It may be well to add here, to prevent misconception, that the higher clairvoyance follows, instead of preceding, the growth of mind, and cannot appear until the organisation of the astral body, in contradistinction to the astral sheath, has been carried to a considerable height. When this is effected by the play of intellect and the perfecting of the physical intellectual apparatus, then the true astral senses before mentioned, called the chakras, or wheels, from their whirling appearance, are gradually evolved. These develop on the astral plane, as astral senses and organs, and are built and controlled from the mental plane, as were the brain-centres from the astral. Consciousness is then working on the mental plane and building its astral mechanism, as before it worked on the astral plane, building its physical mechanism. But now it works with far greater power and greater understanding, having unfolded so

many of its powers. Further, it shapes centres in the physical body from the sympathetic and cerebrospinal systems, to act as physical plane apparatus for bringing into the brain-consciousness the vibrations from the higher planes. As these centres are vivified, knowledge is "brought through", i.e., is available for the use of consciousness working in the physical nervous system. This, as said, is the higher clairvoyance, the intelligent and self-directed exercise of the powers of consciousness in the astral body.

In this upward-climbing, then, the powers of consciousness are awakened on the physical plane, and are then severally awakened on the astral and the mental. The astral and mental sheaths must be highly evolved ere they can be farther developed into the subtle body, acting independently on the higher planes, and then building for itself the necessary apparatus for the exercise of these higher powers in the physical world. And even here when the apparatus is ready, built by pure thought and pure desire, it must be vivified on the physical plane by the fire of Kundalini, aroused and directed by the consciousness working in the physical brain. [193]



## CHAPTER IX. CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

### 1. CONSCIOUSNESS.

For an immense period of time—throughout the later vegetable and the animal evolution, and throughout the evolution of normal humanity up to the present time—the astral, or desire, sheath is, as we have seen, subordinate to the physical, so far as the workings of consciousness are concerned. We have now to trace the unfolding of the consciousness, of the life becoming aware of its surroundings. While the nervous system is truly said to be created from the astral plane, it is none the less created for the expression of consciousness on the physical plane, and for its effective working thereon. It is there that consciousness is first to become Self-consciousness. When the vibrations of the outer world play on the physical sheath of the infolded infant Self, the Jivatma, the Ray of the Monad, they at first cause responsive thrills within that Self, a dawning consciousness within itself, a feeling, unrelated by that Self to anything outside, though caused by impacts from outside. It is a change outside the enveloping film of the Self, clothed in sheaths of denser matter, which outside change causes a change within that envelope, and this change causes an act of consciousness—consciousness of change, of a changed condition. It may be an attraction, a drawing towards, exerted by an external object

over the sheaths, reaching to the envelope of the Self, causing a slight expansion in the envelope, following an expansion in the sheaths, towards the attractive object; and this expansion is a change of condition, and causes a feeling, an act of consciousness. Or it may be a repulsion, a driving away, again exerted by an external object against the sheaths, reaching to the envelope of the Self, causing a slight shrinking in the envelope, following the shrinking away of the sheaths from the repellent object; and this shrinking is also a change of condition, and causes a corresponding change in consciousness.

When we examine the conditions of the enveloping sheaths under an attraction and a repulsion, we find they are entirely different. When the impact of an external object causes a rhythmical vibration in these envelopes—that is, when their materials are made to arrange themselves in undulating regular lines of rarefaction and densification—this arrangement of the enclosing matter permits an interchange of life between the two objects that have come into contact, and in proportion to the correspondence of the rarefactions and densifications in the two is the fulness of the interchange. This interchange, this partial union of two separated Lives through the separating sheaths of matter, is “pleasure”, and



the going out of the Lives towards each other is "attraction"; however complicated pleasure may become, herein lies its essence; it is a sense of "moreness", of increased, expanded life. The more fully developed the Life, the greater the pleasure in the realisation of this moreness, in the expansion into the other Life, and each of the Lives thus uniting gains the moreness by union with the other. As rhythmical vibrations and corresponding rarefactions and densifications make this interchange of life possible, it is truly said that "harmonious vibrations are pleasurable". When, on the contrary, the impact of an external object causes a jangle of vibrations in the envelopes of the impacted object—that is, when the materials are made to arrange themselves irregularly, moving in conflicting directions, striking themselves against each other—the contained Life is shut in, isolated, its normal out-flowing rays are checked, intercepted, even turned back on themselves. This check to normal action is "pain", increasing with the energy of the in-driving, and the result of the driving- in process is "repulsion". Here, also, the more fully developed the Life, the greater the pain in this violent reversal of its normal action, and in the sense of frustration that accompanies the reversal. Hence, again, "inharmonious vibrations are painful". Be it observed that this is true of all the sheaths, although the astral sheath becomes specialised as the recipient of the class of sensations later called pleasurable and painful.

Constantly, in the course of evolution, a general life-function thus becomes specialised, and a particular organ is normally used for its exercise. The astral body being the vehicle of desires, the need for its special susceptibility to pleasure and pain is obvious.

To return from this brief digression into the state of the envelopes to the germ of consciousness itself; we shall find it important to notice that there is herein no "awareness" of an external object, no such awareness as is ordinarily conveyed by the use of the word. Consciousness, as yet, knows nothing of an outer and an inner, of an object and a subject; the divine germ is now becoming conscious. It becomes consciousness with this change of conditions, with this movement in the sheaths, this expanding and contracting, for consciousness exists only in, and by, change. Here, then, for the separated divine germ is the birth of consciousness; it is born of change, of motion; where and when this first change occurs, there, consciousness, for that separated germ, is born.

The mere clothing of this germ with successive envelopes of matter on successive planes gives rise to these first vague changes within the germ that are the birthing of consciousness; and none of us may count the ages which roll on as these changes become more defined, and as the envelopes become more definitely shaped by the ceaseless impacts from without, and the no less ceaseless responsive thrillings from within. The state of consciousness at this stage can only



be described as one of "feeling", feeling becoming slowly more and more definite, and assuming two phases, pleasure and pain—pleasure with expansion, pain with contraction. And, be it noted, 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; in the plural, as feelings, indeed, it belongs to that aspect, which is the first to arise as a differentiation within consciousness.

As the states of pleasure and pain become more definitely established in consciousness, they give rise to the three aspects: with the fading away of pleasure there is a continuance of the attraction in consciousness, a memory, and this becomes a dim groping after it, 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 continuance of the repulsion in consciousness, again a memory, and this becomes an equally vague movement to push it away. These states give birth to: Memory of past pleasure and pain, indicating the germination of the Thought-aspect; longing to experience again pleasure, or avoid pain, the germination of the Desire-aspect; this stimulating a movement, the germination of the Activity-aspect. Thus Consciousness

is differentiated into its three aspects from its primary unity of Feeling, repeating [200] in miniature the kosmic process in which the triple Divinity ever arises from the One Existence. The Hermetic axiom is here, as always, exemplified: "As above, so below".

## 2. *SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.*

Desire, thus germinated, gropes after pleasure, not, as yet, after the pleasure giving object; for consciousness is as yet limited within its own kingdom, is conscious only in the within, is conscious only of changes in that within. It has not yet turned its attention outwards, is not yet conscious even that there is an outwards. Meanwhile that outwards of which it is not aware is continually hammering at its vehicles, and most vehemently at its physical vehicle, the vehicle most easily affected from outside, and with most difficulty from within. Gradually the persistent and violent shocks from outside draw its attention in their direction; their irregularity, their unexpectedness, their constant assaults, their unrelatedness to its slow, groping movements, their unexplained appearances and disappearances, are in opposition to its dim sense of regularity, continuity, of being always there, of slow surges of change rising and falling within what is not yet to it "himself"; there is a consciousness of difference, and this grows into a sense of a something that remains within a changing hurly-burly, a sense of a "within" and a "without", or, to speak more accurately, of a "without" and a "within", since it is the



hammering outside that causes the difference of "without" and "within" to arise in consciousness. "Without" comes first, if only by a fraction of time, because its recognition alone makes possible and inevitable the recognition of "within". So long as there is nothing else, we cannot speak of "within"; it is everything. But when "without" forces itself on consciousness, "within" rises up as its inevitable opposite. This sense of a "without" arises necessarily at the points of contact between the continuing consciousness and the changing hurly-burly; that is, in its physical vehicle, its physical body. Herein is slowly established the awareness of "others", and with the establishment of this "others" comes the establishment also of "I", over against them. He becomes conscious of things outside instead of being conscious only of changes, and then he comes to know that the changes are in "himself", and that the things are outside himself. Self-consciousness is born.

This process of perceiving objects is a complex one. It must be remembered that objects contact the body in various ways, and the body receives some of their vibrations by the parts differentiated to receive such vibrations. The eye, the ear, the skin, the tongue, the nose, receive various vibratory waves, and certain cells in the organs affected vibrate similarly in response. The waves set up pass to the sense-centres in the brain, and

thence to the knowledge-senses in the astral sheath; there the changes in consciousness take place which correspond with them, as explained in Chapter II., and they are sent on as these changes, the sensations of colour, outline, sound, form, taste, smell, etc., still as separate sensations, to consciousness working in the mental sheath, and are there combined by it into a single image, unified into a single perception of an object. This blending of the various streams into one, this synthesis of sensations, is a specialty of the mind. Hence, in Indian psychology, the mind is often called "the sixth sense", "the senses, of which mind is the sixth". 60 When we consider the five organs of action in relation to the mind, we find a reverse process going on; the mind pictures a certain act as a whole, and thereby brings about a corresponding set of vibrations in the mental sheath; these vibrations are reproduced in the motor senses in the astral sheath; they break it up, analyse it into its constituent parts, and these are accompanied with vibrations in the matter of the motor centres; these, in turn, are repeated in the motor centres in the brain as separate waves; the motor centres distribute these waves through the nervous system to the various muscles that [204] must co-operate to produce the action. Regarded in this double relation the mind becomes the eleventh sense, "the ten senses and the one" 61.



### 3. REAL AND UNREAL.

With the change of consciousness into Self-consciousness comes the recognition of a difference which later, in the more evolved Self-consciousness, becomes the difference between the objective or "real"—in the ordinary western sense of the word—and the subjective or "unreal", and "imaginary". To the jelly-fish, the sea anemone, the hydra, waves and currents, sunshine and blast, food and sand touching the periphery or the tentacles, are not "real", are registered only as changes in consciousness, as in truth they are also to the body of the human infant; I say registered, not recognised, since no mental observation, analysis, and judgment are possible in the lower stages of evolution. These creatures are not yet sufficiently conscious of "others", to be conscious of "themselves"; and they only feel changes as occurring within the circle of their own ill-defined consciousness. The external world grows into "reality" as the consciousness, separating itself from it, realises its own separateness, changes from a vague "am" into a definite "I am".

As this self-conscious "I" gradually gains in clearness of self-identification, of separateness, and distinguishes between changes within himself and the impact of external objects, he is ready to take the next step of relating the changes within himself to the varying impacts from outside. Then follows the development of Desire for pleasure into definite desires for pleasure-giving objects, followed by

thoughts as to how to obtain them; these lead to efforts to move after them when in sight, to search for them when absent, and the consequent slow evolution of the outer vehicle into a body well-organised for movement, for pursuit, for capture. The desire for the absent, the search, the success or failure, all impress on the developing consciousness the difference between his desires and thoughts, of which he is, or can be, always conscious, and the external objects which come and go without any reference to himself; and with disconcerting irrelevance to his feelings. He distinguishes these as "real", as having an existence which he does not control, and which affects him without any regard to his likings or objections. And this sense of "reality" is first established in the physical world, as being the one in which these contacts between the "others" and the "I" are first recognised by consciousness. Self-consciousness begins its evolution in and through the physical body, and has its earliest centre in the brain.

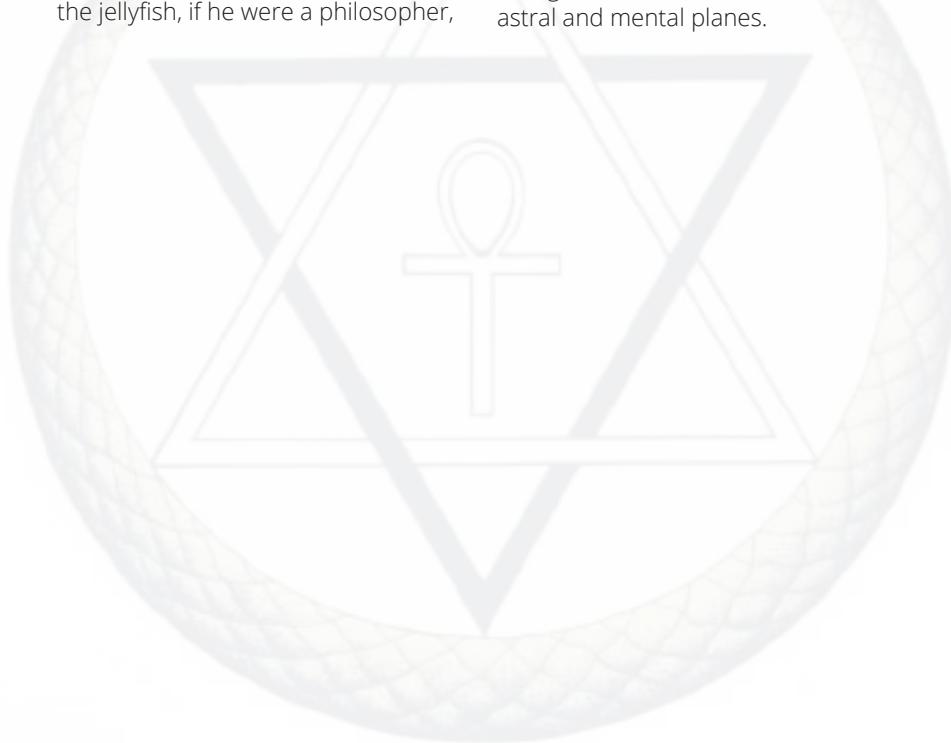
The normal man, at the present stage of evolution, still identifies himself with this brain-centre of Self-consciousness, and is hence restricted to the waking consciousness, or consciousness working in the cerebro-spinal system, knowing himself as "I", distinctly and consecutively, only on the physical plane, that is, in the waking state. On this plane he is definitely self-conscious, distinguishing between himself and the outer world, between his own thoughts and outside appearances, without hesitation;



hence on this plane, and on this plane only, external things are to him "real", "objective", "outside himself".

On other planes, the astral and the mental, he is, as yet, conscious but not self-conscious; he recognises changes within himself, but does not yet distinguish between the self-initiated changes and those caused by impacts from without on his astral and mental vehicles. To him they are all alike changes within himself. Hence all phenomena of consciousness occurring on super-physical planes—planes on which Self-consciousness is not yet definitely established—the normal, average man calls "unreal", "subjective", "inside himself", just as the jellyfish, if he were a philosopher,

would designate the phenomena of the physical plane. He regards astral or mental phenomena as the result of his "imagination", i.e., as forms of his own creating, and not as the results of impacts upon his astral or mental vehicle from external worlds, subtler indeed, but as "real" and "objective" as the external physical world. That is, he is not yet sufficiently evolved to have reached self-realisation on those planes, and thus to have become capable of objectivising there the external worlds. He is only conscious there of the changes in himself, the changes in consciousness, and the external world is consequently to him merely the play of his own desires and thoughts. He is, in fact, an infant on the astral and mental planes.





## TO OUR READERS

So when a man comes to apply to the life such a truth as karma, the law of cause and effect, he is only accepting a law he never dreamed of questioning in the everyday workings of nature, but which for ages we seem to have been trying to ignore our moral responsibility. We have tried to believe we can do as we please, and then, hiding behind another's sacrifice, escape the effect we had set in motion. Such a belief roots firmly in the black soil of selfishness which is the most complete expression of man's lower nature; small wonder then, that dies hard. But, still worse, it has been given out as a religious teaching this idea which outrages utterly the sense justice and fair play which we deem indefensible to a fine character.

If, then, those who feel attracted to this philosophy, go no further into it than to make these simple truths a part of their life, they will have done themselves a very great service: they will have brought into play a balancing power, comforting and encouraging, that will enable them to look on life much more calmly and intelligently. Is there any one who doubt the need of such beliefs today and as great thinned, just so wide will be Theosophy's appeal.

The magazine will continue to publish articles that we hope stimulate thought and direct our readers to look within. The Canadian Theosophist welcomes articles submitted by our readers.



THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## NOTES

---





THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## NOTES

---





THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## NOTES

---

