

A SUMMARY OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE

PART II

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

WE have seen that the all-important point in the theosophical teaching, is the unity of all things with the Divine, and that only upon this foundation can the cornerstone of Universal Brotherhood be laid. For this idea of brotherhood does not mean an aggregate of more or less similar and sympathetic beings, it means the absolute *identity* of all the rays with the One Divine Ray, "the One manifested Life, the Breath of the Absoluteness." The differences that we see, the obstacles in the way of realizing this oneness of mankind, are all illusions, belonging to this material plane, and have nothing to do with the Real Man, the re-incarnating Ego, except in so far as matter affords him a stage as it were, on which to play his many parts, and through the trials and tribulations of the body and the soul to work his way up to the purified and perfected spirit.

There are two ways of studying the seven-fold nature of man, downwards from above, and upwards from below. We can take the descent of the soul into matter as our starting-point, and trace its gradual involution through ever-thickening veils of matter, till it becomes united with the physical body, or we can begin with the material, and follow the gradual ascent of the inner man, to spirit. With the brief sketch of evolution as taught by theosophy just given, it seemed necessary to begin again with the *highest* point in our study, and as the evolution of the Kosmos is governed by the same laws as rule the earth and man, the three schemes of evolution are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. With the gradual consolidation of the earth upon which man *as we know him* was to live, the consolidation of his physical body began, and the fourth Element, earth, made its appearance, with the senses fitted to function therein. There never was a time, we are told, when life did not exist upon this earth, but the life of those early periods, was without any of the characteristics by which we know it now. "Life precedes Form," says the *Commentary*, "and Life survives the last atom of Form," that is, the external body.

The seven fundamental transformations of the matter of the heavenly spheres, are given as: I. The homogeneous. II. The aeriform and radiant (*the gaseous*). III. The curdlike (*nebulous*). IV. The atomic, ethereal; (the beginning of *motion*, hence of *differentiation*).

V. The germinal, the fiery (differentiated, but composed of the *germs* only of the elements in their earliest states). VI. The four-fold, vapory (the future earth); and VII, Cold, and dependent (on the Sun for light and life).

When evolution has run through the whole cycle of seven "globes" (or states of matter and consciousness), on our Earth, that is one Round, and every Round, on the *descending* scale, is a grosser and more material copy of the preceding Round. On the ascending scale evolution spiritualises and etherealises, so to speak, the general nature of each "globe," so that when the seventh stage in whatever Round is reached, the nature of everything in process of evolution, returns to its first spiritual condition, *plus* each time a higher degree of consciousness. In the first Round, the globe having been built by the primitive fire-lives, had no solidity nor other qualities, save a cold brightness, neither form nor color; it was only towards the end of the Round that it developed one element, *Fire*, which from its simple *essence* became in our Round the *FIRE* we know. The first human types did not resemble the men of to-day either in form or nature, but in the first Round were only dimensionless images from the astral regions. Hence the term *men* would be here a very misleading one, and is used only as an equivalent for "thinking entities."

From the second Round, Earth began its real existence; it developed the second element, *AIR*, and individual Life, its second principle. The second corresponds to the sixth principle (the Spiritual Soul); the latter is life continuous; the former, life temporary.

The third Round developed the third element, *WATER*; while the fourth Round transformed the gaseous fluids and plastic form of our "globe" into the hard, crusted, grossly material *EARTH*. She will reach her true ultimate form only towards the end of the cycle, after the seventh Round. Our globe is so far only in its fourth state, the astral body of desires, of dark egotism, the progeny of the lower Mind. "It is not the human body that is the grossest of our principles, but verily the real animal centre, the animal Soul, for our body is but its shell, through which it acts."

It will only be in the fifth Round, as before said, that the fifth element, *ETHER*, will be as familiar to all men as air is now.

We have glanced at the different phases in the evolution of our earth and of the elements that make life possible in its different phases of existence, and we come now to the study of man as we know him, ourselves in short. This will be again a case of guide-posts to a road, rather than the road itself, the subject is so complicated, and the space so small. We must try then to indicate the most important points, and when we find ourselves hopelessly lost, patiently wait for more light. It will certainly come.

I. In the first place, we know that man is composed of a physical body, gifted with five senses now, and the promise of two more hereafter as the conditions of matter and consciousness become spiritualised, and enable man to function on higher planes. That there are even now occasionally human beings who have reached a point of higher development than their fellows, shows that these faculties will one day be the property of all, for the tide of evolution never recedes, it always seeks a higher level.

II. Next comes the astral body, the model upon which the physical body is built, as our great skyscrapers go up, first the mere outline of an office-building, till bit by bit the whole structure is filled out and completed, according to the architect's plan. But the analogy is defective in that the astral body, like the physical, is molecular, and does not *outline* in any way the physical body, but interpenetrates every part of it. To withdraw the astral body from the physical, is not the simple thing that many students believe, but really means the withdrawal of every astral molecule from its place in the physical body. The white corpuscles of the blood are formed from astral matter in the spleen, and can slip through the walls of the blood-vessels, or ooze out of a medium's side during a séance. They are the sanitary police of the body, devouring the bacterial germs. H. P. B. (in *Lucifer*, Jan., '89) calls the spleen "the physical vehicle of the Protean Double." As there are many kinds of astral bodies, with many names, it would be more exact to call the second principle "the *Linga Sarira*," but it seems unnecessary to be so particular here, and better to use the English name whenever possible.

It is the astral body that forms the bridge between our physical sensations and our consciousness. Just as a telegraph operator receives a message, and forwards it to the person for whom it is intended, so a sensation received by our nerves is transmitted by them to the brain, and thence to the corresponding seat of sensation in the astral body, whence it is reflected to the lower mind, and comes into consciousness. Science has never yet bridged the gap between the physical brain and consciousness, and only when the existence of many gradations of matter between the physical and the mental are accepted, will the problem be solved.

It is upon the model of the astral body that the physical body is built, and when it dies, the astral dies and disintegrates with it, more or less slowly. For this reason, among others, cremation is so desirable, as it frees the particles of the physical and astral bodies at once, instead of subjecting them to a long process of decay.

III. The third principle is LIFE, although it cannot properly be numbered, as it pervades every atom of the universe. In the very beginning of her teaching H. P. B. warned her pupils not to think of these principles as water-tight compartments, but rather to consider them

as having each its seven gradations, and all as interpenetrating and mingling with each other. Life is like the ocean, and we are like the drops of water that compose it, there is no possibility of saying that here one drop leaves off and another one begins.

The Life-principle, on our plane, is but the effect and result of the *intelligent* action of the "Host," or collective Principle, the manifesting Life and Light. The "nervous Ether" is the lowest principle of the primordial Essence, which is *Life*. The Sun is the storehouse of vital force, which is the *noumenon* of electricity. It is the action of cosmic electricity upon a compound or even a simple body, that produces life. When a body dies, it passes into the same polarity as its male energy, and repels, therefore, the active agent, which losing its hold upon the *whole*, fastens upon the parts or molecules, this action being called chemical.

The fourth principle, the animal Soul, completes the Quaternary, or fourfold man, and includes the passionate, instinctual, and emotional nature. It is called sometimes the body of Desire. It is this principle that binds us to earth-life. "It is not the human body that is the grossest of all our principles," says H. P. B., "but verily the *middle* principle, the real animal centre; whereas our body is but its shell, the irresponsible factor or medium, through which the beast in us acts."

The "breath of life" breathed into the nostrils of Adam, is life and the animal soul conjoined, it is these two together that make the "Vital Spark." When united to the lower part of the Mind, it becomes Kama-Manas, or the normal brain-intelligence, and joined to the Life-principle, it pervades every part of the body, as the vital force, or Vitality. During life, Kama has no form or body, but after death it takes a form composed of astral matter, and becomes what is known as the Kama-Rupa. It possesses consciousness of a very low order, and is always attracted to the lowest type of mediums. Such a Body of Desire is a very dangerous associate, and is the entity often spoken of as a "spook."

The persistence of the Kama-rupa after death, depends upon the character of the dying person. The more intellectual and spiritual his life has been, the less vitality will the Kama-rupa have, and it will quickly fade out into nothingness. But if during the man's life on earth, his animal nature was predominant, the Kama-rupa would last a long while after the death of the body. In case of sudden death or suicide, the person is doomed to fill out the measure of his days within the sphere of the earth.

The fourth principle then, which completes the fourfold man, the Quaternary, leaves him a perfect animal, with the potential higher qualities still undeveloped. Stanza IV, Part II of the *Secret Doctrine* gives us a wonderfully complete sketch of the evolution of the fourfold man up to the point where it was impossible to make further progress without Mind. "The Breath (that is, the human Monad) needed a form; the

Fathers (the Lunar Ancestors) gave it. The Breath needed a gross body; the Earth moulded it. The Breath needed the Spirit of Life; the Solar Ancestors breathed it into its form. The Breath needed a mirror of its body (that is, an astral shadow); 'we gave it our own,' said the Creative Powers. The Breath needed a vehicle of desires (the emotional soul); 'It has it,' said the Drainer of Waters (the fire of passion and animal instinct). The Breath needs a mind to embrace the Universe. 'We cannot give that,' said the Fathers. 'I never had it,' said the Spirit of the Earth. 'The form would be consumed were I to give it mine,' said the Great (Solar) Fire. . . .

"(Nascent) Man remained an empty senseless phantom."

This is the summing up of occult knowledge in the poetic language of the East. Modern psychology would say that not until the processes of evolution had perfected the physical brain, could it become a fitting instrument for the use of the mind, but after all, to the psychologist mind is only a function of the brain. Very different is the conviction of the occultist. *The Voice of the Silence* says: "Have perseverance as one who doth evermore endure. Thy shadows (personalities) live and vanish; that which is in thee shall live forever, that which *Knows*, for it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike."

IV. The human Monad referred to in Stanza IV, Vol. II, as *the Breath*, is the reincarnating Ego, the Ray of the Divine Spirit, eternal and unchangeable, the string upon which are threaded the countless beads of the personalities, "that live and vanish." The Monad, Manas, the Man or the Thinker, is very clearly described in *The Key to Theosophy*. "Try to imagine a 'Spirit,' a celestial Being, divine in its essential nature, yet not pure enough to be one with the ALL, which union it can achieve only by passing *individually* and *personally*, that is, *spiritually* and *physically* through every experience that exists in the manifested Universe. It has, therefore, after having gained such experience in the lower Kingdoms, to pass through every experience on the human planes. This *individualised* 'Thought' is what we theosophists call the *real* human Ego, the thinking Entity imprisoned in a case of flesh and bones. Once imprisoned, or incarnate, the Mind is always dual, that is to say the *rays* of the eternal, divine Mind, considered as individuals, assume a two-fold attribute, their essential, heaven-aspiring mind (the higher Manas) and the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalised, owing to the superior quality of the human brain, which is the lower Mind (or Manas)."

That is, to put it still more plainly, the mind is always dual, and when we are considering it as an individual Entity, is composed of the heaven-aspiring intellect, which we call the higher mind, and the reasoning power which we have in common with the animals (but in a higher

degree, owing to the superior development of the human brain), which we know as the lower mind.

This conception of the dual character of the mind, solves many problems in connection with the intelligence of animals, and enables us to realise that an animal may be possessed of a physical body, an astral form, vitality, instinct, even a large share of intelligence, and yet be devoid of the higher mind, the reincarnating Ego. As to vegetable or mineral monads, the more correct expression would be "the Monadic Essence" manifesting in that form of matter called the mineral (or vegetable) kingdom. . . . The tendency towards separation into individual Monads is gradual, and in the higher animals, comes almost to the point. "Man is a perfected animal, the vehicle of a fully developed Monad, *self-conscious*, and deliberately following its own line of progress, whereas in the insect, and even in the higher animals, the higher Triad of principles is absolutely dormant." (*Transactions Blavatsky Lodge*, I. 13.) Precisely the same thing is said in the *Secret Doctrine*, and in Vol II, p. 81, we have these emphatic words: "Between man and the animal—whose Monads are fundamentally identical—there is the impossible abyss of Mentality and Self-Consciousness." But we must remember that these higher principles are not *non-existent* in the animal, they are dormant or latent, to be developed in due time. "The animal has an astral body that survives the physical a short time, but its (animal) Monad does not re-incarnate in the same, but in a higher species, and has no Devachan, of course. It has the seeds of all the human principles in itself, but they are *latent*." (*S. D.* II, 196.)

The best analysis of the higher principles in man, put in the simplest way, is that given in *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 175, beginning with the higher Mind, in order to keep the sequence we have used hitherto.

V. THE INNER OR HIGHER EGO. { "The Inner or Higher Ego is *Manas*, the fifth principle, so-called, independently of *Buddhi*, (The Spiritual Soul). The Mind Principle is only the Spiritual Soul when merged *into one* with *Buddhi*. It is the permanent Individuality, or the Re-incarnating Ego.

VI. THE SPIRITUAL DIVINE EGO. { The Spiritual *Divine* Ego, is the Spiritual Soul or *Buddhi*, in close union with *Manas*, the Mind-principle, without which it is no Ego at all, but only the Atmic vehicle.

VII. THE
HIGHER SELF.

The HIGHER SELF is Atmâ, the inseparable Ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God *above* more than within us."

It will be evident, then, that the highest in us is that Eternal Existence which we share with every particle of Life and Intelligence in the universe, and that in conjunction with the Spiritual Soul and the Mind, makes up the trinity in Man, and forms the permanent Individuality or the Reincarnating Ego. Strictly speaking, there are but five principles in man, the lowest, the physical body, being an illusion, and the highest being that Breath of the Divine which over-shadows man, rather than forms a part of him. But for ordinary purposes, the sevenfold division is more convenient.

KATHARINE HILLARD.

(*To be continued.*)
