



## AN ESSAY ON THE BEAUTIFUL.

(FROM THE GREEK OF PLOTINUS)

(Translated by Thomas Taylor)

### INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem wonderful that language, which is the only method of conveying our conceptions, should, at the same time, be a hindrance to our advancement in philosophy; but the wonder ceases when we consider, that it is seldom studied as the vehicle of truth, but is too frequently esteemed for its own sake, independent of its connection with things. This observation is remarkably verified in the Greek language; which, as it is the only repository of ancient wisdom, has, unfortunately for us, been the means of concealing, in shameful obscurity, the most profound researches and the sublimest truths. That words, indeed, are not otherwise valuable than as subservient to things<sup>1</sup>, must surely be acknowledged by every liberal mind, and will alone be disputed by him who has spent the prime of his life, and consumed the vigour of his understanding, in verbal criticisms and grammatical trifles. And, if this is the case, every lover of truth will only study a language for the purpose of procuring the wisdom it contains; and will doubtless wish to make his native language the vehicle of it to others. For, since all truth is eternal, its nature can never be altered by transposition, though by this means its dress may be varied, and become less elegant and refined. Perhaps even this inconvenience may be remedied by sedulous cultivation; at least, the particular in-

<sup>1</sup> I think what Taylor means by "subservient to things" is the characteristic of language to symbolize something more important than itself; *i.e.*, that the symbol has value only to the extent that it "points out the Way." Semantics is largely an effort to correct our mis-use and mis-evaluation of language. — Ed., A.T.

ability of some, ought not to discourage the well-meant endeavours of others. Whoever reads the lives of the ancient Heroes of Philosophy, must be convinced that they studied things<sup>2</sup> more than words, and that Truth alone was the ultimate object of their search ; and he who wishes to emulate their glory and participate their wisdom, will study their doctrines more than their language, and value the depth of their understandings far beyond the elegance of their composition. The native charms of Truth will ever be sufficient to allure the truly philosophic mind; and he who has once discovered her retreats will surely endeavour to fix a mark by which they may be detected by others.

But, though the mischief arising from the study of words is prodigious, we must not consider it as the only cause of darkening the splendours of Truth, and obstructing the free diffusion of her light. Different manners and philosophies have equally contributed to banish the goddess from our realms, and to render our eyes offended with her celestial light. Hence we must not wonder that, being indignant at the change, and perceiving the empire of ignorance rising to unbounded dominion, she has retired from the spreading darkness, and concealed herself in the tranquil and divinely lucid regions of mind.

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<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, what the words pointed to.

For we need but barely survey modern pursuits to be convinced how little they are connected with wisdom. Since, to describe the nature of some particular place, the form, situation and magnitude of a certain city; to trace the windings of a river to its source, or delineate the aspect of a pleasant mountain; to calculate the fineness of the silkworm's threads, and arrange the gaudy colours of butterflies; in short, to pursue matter through its infinite divisions, and wander in its dark labyrinths, is the employment of the philosophy in vogue.

But surely the energies of intellect are more worthy our concern than the operations of sense; and the science of universals, permanent and fixed, must be superior to the knowledge of particulars, fleeting and frail. Where is a sensible object to be found, which abides for a moment the same; which is not either rising to perfection, or verging to decay; which is not mixed and confused with its contrary; whose flowing nature no resistance can stop, nor any art confine? Where is the chemist who, by the most accurate analysis can arrive at the principles of bodies; or who, though he might be so lucky in his search as to detect the atoms of Democritus, could by this means give respite to mental investigation? For every atom, since endued with figure, must consist of parts, though indissolubly cemented together; and the immediate cause of this cement must be something incorporeal or knowledge can have no stability and enquiry no end.

Where, says Mr. Harris, is the microscope which can discern what is smallest in nature? Where the telescope which can see at what point in the universe wisdom first began? Since, then, there is no portion of matter which may not be the subject of experiments without end, let us betake ourselves to the regions of mind, where all things are bounded in intellectual measure; where everything is permanent and beautiful, eternal and divine. Let us quit the study of particulars, for that which is gen-

eral and comprehensive, and through this, learn to see and recognize whatever exists.

With a view to this desirable end, I have presented the reader with a specimen of that sublime wisdom which first arose in the colleges of the Egyptian priests, and flourished afterwards in Greece; which was there cultivated by Pythagoras, under the mysterious veil of numbers; by Plato, in the graceful dress of poetry; and was systematized by Aristotle, as far as it could be reduced into scientific order; which, after becoming in a manner extinct, shone again with its pristine splendour among the philosophers of the Alexandrian school; was learnedly illustrated with Asiatic luxury of style by Proclus; was divinely explained by Iamblichus; and profoundly delivered in the writings of Plotinus. Indeed, the works of this last philosopher are particularly valuable to all who desire to penetrate into the depths of divine wisdom.

From the exalted nature of his genius, he was called *Intellect* by his contemporaries, and is said to have composed his books under the influence of divine illumination. Porphyry relates, in his life, that he was four times united by an ineffable energy with the divinity; which, however such an account may be ridiculed in the present age, will be credited by everyone who has properly explored the profundity of his mind. The facility and vehemence of his composition was such, that when he had once conceived a subject, he wrote as from an internal pattern, without paying much attention to the orthography, or reviewing what he had written; for the celestial vigour of his intellect rendered him incapable of trifling concerns, and in this respect, inferior to common understandings, as the eagle, which in its bold flight pierces the clouds, skims the surface of the earth with less rapidity than the swallow.

Indeed a minute attention to trifles is inconsistent with great genius of every kind, and it is on this account that retire-

ment is so absolutely necessary to the discovery of truths of the first dignity and importance; for how is it possible to mix much with the world, without imbibing the false and puerile conceptions of the multitude; and without losing that true elevation of soul which comparatively despises every mortal concern? Plotinus, therefore, conscious of the incorrectness of his writings arising from the rapidity, exuberance and daring sublimity of his thoughts, committed their revision to his disciple Porphyry; who, though inferior in depth of thought to his master, was, on account of his extraordinary abilities, called by way of eminence the Philosopher. The design of the following discourse is to bring us to the perception of the beautiful itself, even while connected with a corporeal nature, which must be the great end of all true philosophy and which Plotinus happily obtained.

To a genius, indeed, truly modern, with whom the crucible and the air-pump are alone the standards of Truth, such an attempt must appear ridiculous in the extreme. With these, nothing is real but what the hand can grasp or the corporeal eye perceive, and nothing useful but what pampers the appetite or fills the purse; but unfortunately, their perceptions, like Homer's frail dreams, pass through the ivory gate; and are consequently empty and fallacious, and contain nothing belonging to the vigilant soul. To such as these a treatise on the beautiful cannot be addressed; since its object is too exalted to be approached by those engaged in the impurities of sense, and too bright to be seen by the eye accustomed to the obscurity of corporeal vision. But it is alone proper to him who is sensible that his soul is strongly marked with ruin by its union with body; who considers himself in the language of Empedocles, as

"Heaven's exile, straying from the orb of light;"

and who so ardently longs for a return to his true country, that to him, as to Ulysses when fighting for Ithaca,

"Slow seems the sun to move, the hours to roll;  
His native home deep-imag'd in his soul."<sup>1</sup>

But here it is requisite to observe that our ascent to this region of Beauty must be made by gradual advances, for, from our association with matter, it is impossible to pass directly, and without a medium, to such transcendent perfection; but we must proceed in a manner similar to those who pass from darkness to the brightest light, by advancing from places moderately enlightened, to such as are the most luminous of all.

It is necessary therefore, that we should become very familiar with the most abstract contemplations; and that our intellectual eye should be strongly irradiated with the light of ideas which precedes the splendours of the beautiful itself, like the brightness which is seen on the summit of mountains previous to the rising of the sun. Nor ought it to seem strange, if it should be some time before even the liberal soul can recognize the beautiful progeny of intellect as its kindred and allies; for, from its union with body, it has drunk deep of the cup of oblivion, and all its energetic powers are stupefied by the intoxicating draught; so that the intelligible world, on its first appearance, is utterly unknown by us, and our recollection of its inhabitants entirely lost; and we become familiar to Ulysses on his first entrance into Ithaca, of whom Homer says,

"Yet had his mind, thro' tedious absence lost  
The dear remembrance of his native coast."<sup>2</sup>

For,

"Now all the laud another prospect bore  
Another port appeared, another shore,  
And long continued ways, and winding  
floods

<sup>1</sup> Pope's Homer's Odyssey, Book xiii., ver. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Odyssey, Book xiii., ver. 223.

And unknown mountains crowned with unknown woods:"

until the goddess of wisdom purges our eyes from the mists of sense and says to each of us, as she did to Ulysses,

"Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore  
The pleasing prospect of thy native shore."

For then will

" . . . the prospect clear,  
The mists disperse, and all the coast appear."

Let us then, humbly supplicate the irradiations of wisdom, and follow Plotinus as our divine guide to the beatific vision of the Beautiful itself; for in this alone can we find perfect repose, and repair. those destructive clefts and chinks of the soul which its departure from the light of good, and its lapse into a corporeal nature, have introduced.

But before I conclude, I think it necessary to caution the reader not to mix any modern enthusiastic opinions with the doctrines contained in the following discourse; for there is not a greater difference between substance and shade than between ancient and modern enthusiasm. The object of the former was the highest good and the supreme beauty; but that of the latter is nothing more than a phantom raised by bewildered imaginations, floating on the unstable ocean of opinion, the sport of the waves of prejudice and blown about by the breath of factious party. Like substance and shade, indeed they possess a similitude in outward appearance, but in reality they are perfect contraries; for the one fills the mind with solid and durable good, but the other with empty delusions; which like the ever running waters of the Danaïdes, glide away as fast as they enter, and leave nothing behind but the ruinous passages through which they flowed.

I only add, that the ensuing treatise is designed as a specimen (if it should meet with encouragement) of my intended mode of publishing all the works of Plotinus. The undertaking is, I am sensible, arduous in the extreme; and the disciples of wisdom are unfortunately few; but, as I desire

no other reward of my labour, than to have the expense of printing defrayed, and to see Truth propagated in my native tongue; I hope those few will enable me to obtain the completion of my desires.

For then, to adopt the words of Ulysses,

That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprise

With ever-during shade these happy eyes!<sup>1</sup>

CONCERNING THE BEAUTIFUL.

BEAUTY<sup>2</sup> for the most part, consists in objects of sight ; but it, is also received through the ears, by the skilful composition of words, and the consonant proportion of sounds; for in every species of harmony, beauty is to be found. And if we rise from sense into the regions of soul, we shall there perceive studies and offices, actions and habits, sciences and virtues, invested with a much larger portion of beauty. But whether there is above these, a still higher beauty, will appear as we advance in its investigation. What is it then, which causes bodies to appear fair to the sight, sounds beautiful to the ear, and science and virtue lovely to the mind? May we not enquire after what manner they all partake of beauty? Whether beauty is one and the same in all? Or, whether the beauty of bodies is of one kind, and the beauty of souls of another? And again, what these are, if they are two? Or, what beauty is, if perfectly simple, and one? For

<sup>1</sup> Odyssey, Book vii., ver. 303.

<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to inform the Platonical reader, that the Beautiful, in the present discourse, is considered according to its most general acceptation, as the same with the Good though, according to a more accurate distinction, as Plotinus himself informs us, the Good is considered as the fountain and principle of the Beautiful. I think it likewise proper to observe, that as I have endeavoured, by my paraphrase, to render as much as possible the obscure parts evident, and to expand those sentences which are so very much contracted in the original, I shall be sparing of notes; for my design is not to accommodate the sublimest truths to the meanest understandings, (as this would be a contemptible and useless prostitution) but to render them perspicuous to truly liberal and philosophic minds. My reasons for adopting this mode of paraphrase, may be seen in the preface to my translation of Orpheus's Hymns.

some things, as bodies, are doubtless beautiful, not from the natures of the subjects in which they reside, but rather by some kind of participation; but others again appear to be essentially beautiful, or beauties themselves; and such is the nature of virtue. For, with respect to the same bodies, they appear beautiful to one person, and the reverse of beauty to another; as if the essence of body were a thing different from the essence of beauty. In the first place then, what is that, which, by its presence, causes the beauty of bodies? Let us reflect, what most powerfully attracts the eyes of beholders, and seizes the spectator with rapturous delight; for if we can find what this is, we may perhaps use it as a ladder, enabling us to ascend into the region of beauty, and survey its immeasurable extent.

It is the general opinion that a certain commensuration of parts to each other, and to the whole, with the addition of colour, generates that beauty which is the object of sight; and that in the commensurate and the moderate alone the beauty of everything consists. But from such an opinion the compound only, and not the simple, can be beautiful, the single parts will have no peculiar beauty; and will only merit that appellation by conferring to the beauty of the whole. But it is surely necessary that a lovely whole should consist of beautiful parts, for the fair can never rise out of the deformed. But from such a definition, it follows, that beautiful colours and the light of the sun, since they are simple and do not receive their beauty from commensuration, must be excluded the regions of beauty. Besides, how, from such an hypothesis, can gold be beautiful? Or the glittering of night and the glorious spectacle of the stars? In like manner, the most simple musical sounds will be foreign from beauty, though in a song wholly beautiful every note must be beautiful, as necessary to the being of the whole. Again, since the same proportion remaining, the same face is to one person beautiful and to another the reverse, is it not necessary to call the

beauty of the commensurate one kind of beauty and the commensuration another kind, and that the commensurate is fair by means of something else? But if transferring themselves to beautiful studies and fair discourses, they shall assign as the cause of beauty in these the proportion of measure, what is that which in beautiful sciences, laws or disciplines, is called commensurate proportion? Or in what manner can speculations themselves be called mutually commensurate? If it be said because of the inherent concord, we reply that there is a certain concord and consent in evil souls, a conformity of sentiment, in believing (as it is said) that temperance is folly and justice generous ignorance. It appears, therefore, that the beauty of the soul is every virtue, and this species of the beautiful possesses far greater reality than any of the superior we have mentioned. But after what manner in this is commensuration to be found? For it is neither like the symmetry in magnitude nor in numbers. And since the parts of the soul are many, in what proportion and synthesis, in what temperament of parts or concord of speculations, does beauty consist? Lastly, of what kind is the beauty of intellect itself, abstracted from every corporeal concern, and intimately conversing with itself alone?

We still, therefore, repeat the question, What is the beauty of bodies? It is something which at first view presents itself to sense, and which the soul familiarly apprehends and eagerly embraces, as if it were allied to itself. But when it meets with the deformed, it hastily starts from the view and retires abhorrent from its discordant nature. For since the soul in its proper state ranks according to the most excellent essence in the order of things, when it perceives any object related to itself, or the mere vestige of a relation, it congratulates itself on the pleasing event, and astonished with the striking resemblance enters deep

into its essence<sup>1</sup>, and, by rousing its dormant powers, at length perfectly recollects its kindred and allies. What is the similitude then between the beauties of sense and that beauty which is divine? For if there be any similitude the respective objects must be similar. But after what manner are the two beautiful? For it is by participation of species that we call every sensible object beautiful. Thus, since everything void of form is by nature fitted for its reception, as far as it is destitute of reason and form it is base and separate from the divine reason, the great fountain of forms; and whatever is entirely remote from this immortal source is perfectly base and deformed.<sup>2</sup>

What is the similitude then between the beauties of sense and that beauty which is divine?

And such is matter, which by its nature is ever averse from the super-vening irradiations of form. Whenever, therefore, form accedes, it conciliates in amicable unity the parts which are about to compose a whole; for being itself one it is not wonderful that the subject of its power should tend to unity, as far as the nature of a compound will admit. Hence beauty is established in multitude when the many is reduced into one, and in this case it communicates itself both to the parts and to the whole. But when a particular one, composed from similar parts, is received it gives itself to the whole, without departing from the sameness and integrity of its nature. Thus at one and the same time it communicates

<sup>1</sup> "Enters deep into its essence." etc.. The Platonic Philosophy insists much on the necessity of retiring into ourselves in order to the discovery of truth; and on this account Socrates, in the first Alcibiades, says that the soul entering into herself will contemplate whatever exists and the divinity himself. Upon which Proclus thus comments, with his usual elegance and depth (in Theol. Plat., p. 7): "For the soul," says he, "contracting herself wholly into a union with herself, and into the centre of universal life, and removing the multitude and variety of all-various powers, ascends into the highest place of speculation. from whence she will survey the nature of beings. For if she looks back upon things posterior to her essence, she will perceive nothing but the shadows and resemblances of beings; but if she returns into herself she will evolve her own essence, and the reasons she contains. And at first indeed she will, as it were, only behold herself: but when by her knowledge she penetrates more profoundly in her investigations she will find intellect seated in her essence and the universal orders of beings; but when she advances into the more interior recesses of herself, and as it were into the sanctuary of the soul, she will be enabled to contemplate, with her eyes closed to corporeal vision, the genus of the gods and the unities of beings. For all things reside in us, after a manner correspondent to the nature of the soul; and on this account we are naturally enabled to know all things, by exciting our inherent powers and images of whatever exists."

<sup>2</sup> "And such is matter," etc. There is nothing affords more wonderful speculation than matter, which ranks as the last among the universality of things, and has the same relation to being as shade to substance. For, as in an ascending series of causes it is necessary to arrive at something, which is the first cause of all, and to which no perfection is wanting; so in a descending series of subjects, it is equally necessary we should stop at some general subject, the lowest in the order of things, and to which every perfection of being is denied. But let us hear the profound

and admirable description which Plotinus gives us of matter (lib. vi, Ennead 3), and of which the following is a paraphrase: "Since matter," says he, "is neither soul, nor intellect, nor life, nor form, nor reason, nor bound, but a certain indefiniteness;" nor yet capacity, for what can it produce? Since it is foreign from all these. it cannot merit the appellation of being, but is deservedly called non-entity. Nor yet is it non-entity in the manner as motion or station; but it is true non-entity, the mere shadow and imagination of bulk and the desire of subsistence; abiding without station, of itself invisible, and avoiding the desire of him who wishes to perceive its nature. Hence, when no one perceives it, it is then in a manner present, but cannot be viewed by him who strives intently to behold it. Again, in itself contraries always appear, the small and the great, the less and the more. deficiency and excess. So that it is a phantom. neither abiding nor yet able to fly away; capable of no one denomination and possessing no power from intellect, but constituted in the defect and shade, as it were, of all real being. Hence, too, in each of its vanishing appellations it eludes our search; for if we think of it as something great, it is in the meantime small; if as something more, it becomes less; and the apparent being which we meet with in its image is non-being, and as it were a flying mockery. So that the forms which appear in matter are merely ludicrous, shadows falling upon shadow, as in a mirror, where the position of a thing is different from its real situation; and which, though apparently full of forms, possesses nothing real and true — but imitations of being and semblances flowing about a formless semblance. They appear, indeed, to affect something in the subject matter, but in reality produce nothing: from their debile and flowing nature being endued with no solidity and no rebounding power. And since matter, likewise, has no solidity they penetrate it without division, like images in water, or as if anyone should fill a vacuum with forms."

itself to the whole building and its several parts; and at another time confines itself to a single stone, and then the first participation arises from the operations of art, but the second from the formation of nature. And hence body becomes beautiful through the communion supernally proceeding from divinity.

But the soul, by her innate power, than which nothing more powerful, in judging its proper concerns, when another soul concurs in the decision, acknowledges the beauty of forms. And, perhaps, its knowledge in this case arises from its accommodating its Internal ray of beauty to form, and trusting to this in its judgment; in the same manner as a rule is employed in the decision of what is straight. But how can that which is inherent in body, accord with that which is above body? Let us reply by asking how the architect pronounces the building beautiful by accommodating the external structure to the fabric of his soul? Perhaps, because the outward building, when entirely deprived of the stones, is no other than the intrinsic form, divided by the external mass of matter, but indivisibly existing, though appearing in the many. When, therefore, sense beholds the form in bodies, at strife with matter, binding and vanquishing its contrary nature, and sees form gracefully shining forth in other forms, it collects together the scattered whole, and introduces it to itself, and to the indivisible form within; and renders it consonant, congruous and friendly to its own intimate form. Thus, to the good man, virtue shining forth in youth is lovely because consonant to the true virtue which lies deep in the soul. But the simple beauty of colour arises, when light, which is something incorporeal, and reason and form entering the obscure involutions of matter, irradiates and forms its dark and formless nature. It is on this account that fire surpasses other bodies in beauty, because, compared with the other elements, it obtains the order of form; for it is more eminent than the rest, and is the most subtle of all, bordering, as it were, on an incorporeal nature.

**Fire surpasses other bodies in beauty, because, compared with the other elements, it obtains the order of form; for it is more eminent than the rest, and is the most subtle of all, bordering, as it were, on an incorporeal nature.**

is more eminent than the rest, and is the most subtle of all, bordering, as it were, on an incorporeal nature. And too, that though impervious itself it is intimately received by others, for it imparts heat, but admits no cold. Hence it is the first nature which is ornamented with colour, and is the source of it to others; and on this account it beams forth exalted like some immaterial form. But when it cannot vanquish its subject, as participating but a slender light, it is no longer beautiful, because it does not receive the whole form of colour. Again, the music of the voice rouses the harmony latent in the soul, and opens her eye to the perception of beauty, existing in many the same. But it is the property of the harmony perceived by sense, to be measured by numbers, yet not in every proportion of number or voice; but in that alone which is obedient to the production and conquest of its species. And this much for the beauties of sense, which, like images and shadows flowing into matter, adorn with spectacles of beauty its formless being, and strike the respective senses with wonder and delight.

But it is now time, leaving every object of sense far behind, to contemplate, by a certain ascent, a beauty of a much higher order; a beauty not visible to the corporeal eye, but alone manifest to the brighter eye of the soul, independent of all corporeal aid. However, since, without some previous perception of beauty it is impossible to express by words the beauties of sense, but we must remain in the state of the blind, so neither can we ever speak of the beauty of offices and sciences, and whatever is allied to these, if deprived of their intimate possession. Thus we shall never be able to tell of virtue's brightness, unless by looking inward we perceive the fair countenance of justice and temperance, and are convinced that neither the evening nor morning star are half so beautiful and bright. But it is requisite to perceive objects of this kind by that eye by which the

soul beholds such real beauties. Besides it is necessary that whoever perceives this species of beauty, should be seized with much greater delight, and more vehement admiration, than any corporeal beauty can excite; as now embracing beauty real and substantial. Such affections, I say, ought to be excited about true beauty, as admiration and sweet astonishment; desire also and love and a pleasant trepidation. For all souls, as I may say, are affected in this manner about invisible objects, but those the most who have the strongest propensity to their love; as it likewise happens about corporeal beauty; for all equally perceive beautiful corporeal forms, yet all are not equally excited, but lovers in the greatest degree.

But it may be allowable to interrogate those, who rise above sense, concerning the effects of love in this manner; of such we enquire, what do you suffer respecting fair studies, and beautiful manners, virtuous works, affections, and habits, and the beauty of souls? What do you experience on perceiving yourselves lovely within? After what manner are you roused as it were to a Bacchalian fury; striving to converse with yourselves, and collecting yourselves separate from the impediments of body? For thus are true lovers enraptured. But what is the cause of these wonderful effects. It is neither figure, nor colour, nor magnitude; but soul herself, fair through temperance, and not with the false gloss of colour, and bright with the splendours of virtue herself. And this you experience as often as you turn your eye inwards; or contemplate the amplitude of another soul; the just manners, the pure temperance; fortitude venerable by her noble countenance; and modesty and honesty walking with an intrepid step, and a tranquil and steady aspect; and what crowns the beauty of them all, constantly receiving the irradiations of a divine intellect.

In what respect then, shall we call these beautiful? For they are such as they

appear, nor did ever any one behold them, and not pronounce them realities. But as yet reason desires to know how they cause the loveliness of the soul; and what that grace is in every virtue which beams forth to view like light? Are you then willing we should assume the contrary part, and consider what in the soul appears deformed? for perhaps it will facilitate our search, if we can thus find what is base in the soul, and from whence it derives its original.

Let us suppose a soul deformed, to be one intemperate and unjust, tilled with a multitude of desires, a prey to foolish hopes and vexed with idle fears; through its diminutive and avaricious nature the subject of envy; employed solely in thought of what is immoral and low, bound in the fetters of impure delights living the life, whatever it may be, peculiar to the passion of body; and so totally merged in sensuality as to esteem the base pleasant, and the deformed beautiful and fair. But may we not say, that this baseness approaches the soul as an adventitious evil, under the pretext of adventitious beauty; which, with great detriment, renders it impure, and pollutes it with much depravity; so that it neither possesses true life, nor true sense, but is endued with a slender life through its mixture of evil, and this worn, out by the continual depredations of death; no longer perceiving the objects of mental vision, nor permitted any more to dwell with itself, because ever hurried away to things obscure, external and low? Hence, becoming impure, and being on all sides snatched in the unceasing whirl of sensible forms, it is covered with corporeal stains, and wholly given to matter, contracts deeply its nature, loses all its original splendour, and almost changes its own species into that of another; just as the pristine beauty of the most lovely form would be destroyed by its total immersion in mire and clay. But the deformity of the first arises from inward filth, of its own contracting; of the second, from the accession of some foreign nature. If such a one then

desires to recover his former beauty, it is necessary to cleanse the infected parts, and thus by a thorough purgation to resume his original form. Hence, then if we assert that the soul, by her mixture, confusion and commerce with body and matter, becomes thus base, our assertion will, I think, be right. For the baseness of the soul consists in not being pure and sincere. And as the gold is deformed by the adherence of earthly clods, which are no sooner removed than on a sudden the gold shines forth with its native purity; and then becomes beautiful when separated from natures foreign from its own, and when it is content with its own purity for the possession of beauty; so the soul, when separated from the sordid desires engendered by its too great immersion in body, and liberated from the dominion of every perturbation, can thus and thus only, blot out the base stains imbibed from its union with body; and thus becoming alone, will doubtless expel all the turpitude contracted from a nature so opposite to its own.

Indeed, as the ancient oracle declares, temperance and fortitude, prudence and every virtue, are certain purgatives of the soul; and hence the sacred mysteries prophesy obscurely, yet with truth, that the soul not purified lies in Tartarus, immersed in filth. Since the impure is, from his depravity, the friend of filth, as swine, from their sordid body, delight in mire alone.

For what else is true temperance than not to indulge in corporeal delights, but to fly from their connection, as things which are neither pure, nor the offspring of purity? And true fortitude is not to fear death; for death is nothing more than a certain separation of soul from body, and this he will not fear, who desires to be alone. Again, magnanimity is the contempt of every mortal concern; it is the wing by which we fly into the regions of intellect. And lastly, prudence is no other than intelligence, declining subordinate objects; and directing the eye of the soul to that which is immortal and divine. The

soul, thus refined, becomes form<sup>1</sup> and reason, is altogether incorporeal and intellectual, and wholly participates of that divine nature, which is the fountain of loveliness, and of whatever is allied to the beautiful and fair. Hence the soul reduced to intellect, becomes astonishingly beautiful; for as the lambent flame which appears detached from the burning wood, enlightens its dark and smoky parts, so intellect irradiates and adorns the inferior powers of the soul, which, without it said, would be buried in the gloom of formless matter. But intellect, and whatever emanates from intellect, is not the foreign, but the proper ornament of the soul, for the being of the soul, when absorbed in intellect, is then alone real and true. It is, therefore, rightly said, that the beauty and good of the soul consists in her similitude to the Deity; for from hence flows all her beauty, and her allotment of a better being. But the beautiful itself is that which is called being; and turpitude is of a different nature and participate more of non-entity than being.

But, perhaps, the good and the beautiful are the same, and must be investigated by one and the same process; and in like manner the base and the evil. And in the first rank we must place the beautiful, and consider it as the same with the good; from which immediately emanates intellect as beautiful. Next to this, we must consider the soul receiving its beauty from intellect<sup>2</sup>, and every inferior beauty deriving its origin from the forming power of the soul, whether conversant in fair actions and offices, or sciences and arts. Lastly, bodies themselves participate of beauty from the soul, which, as something divine, and a

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "form and reason" may mean that the soul arises from latency to activity and thus becomes a self-moving unit. Our souls, it may be, suffer from two maladies: 1, lack of experience on this plane of matter; and 2, the degradations of a too close embrace with sense.

— Ed., A. T.

<sup>2</sup> Our soul in this context is the dual-Ray emanated by the Higher-Manas, the Buddhi-Manas, and Buddhi is described as the "highest intellection."

— Ed., A. T.

portion of the beautiful itself, renders whatever it supervenes and subdues, beautiful as far as its natural capacity will admit.

Let us, therefore, re-ascend to the good itself, which every soul desires; and in which it can alone find perfect repose. For if anyone shall become acquainted with this source of beauty he will then know what I say, and after what manner he is beautiful. Indeed, whatever is desirable is a kind of good, since to this desire tends. But they alone pursue true good, who rise to intelligible beauty, and so far only tend to good itself; as far as they lay aside the deformed vestments of matter, with which they become connected in their descent. Just as those who penetrate into the holy retreats of sacred mysteries, are first purified and then divest themselves of their garments, until some one by such a process, having dismissed everything foreign from the God, by himself alone, beholds the solitary principle of the universe, sincere, simple and pure, from which all things depend, and to whose transcendent perfections the eyes of all intelligent natures are directed, as the proper cause of being, life and intelligence. With what ardent love, with what strong desire will he who enjoys this transporting vision be inflamed while vehemently affecting to become one with this supreme beauty. For this it is ordained, that he who does not yet perceive him, yet desires him as good, but he who enjoys the vision is enraptured with his beauty, and is equally filled with admiration and delight. Hence, such a one is agitated with a salutary astonishment; is affected with the highest and truest love; derides vehement affections and inferior loves, and despises the beauty which he once approved. Such too, is the condition of those who, on perceiving the forms of gods or daemons, no longer esteem the fairest of corporeal forms. What, then, must be the condition of that being, who beholds the beautiful itself?

For the miserable man is not he who neglects to pursue fair colours, and beautiful corporeal forms; who is deprived of power, and falls from dominion and empire, but he alone who is destitute of this divine possession.

In itself perfectly pure,<sup>1</sup> not confined by any corporeal bond, neither existing in the heavens, nor in the earth, nor to be imaged by the most lovely form imagination can conceive; since these are all adventitious and mixed, and mere secondary beauties, proceeding from the beautiful itself. If, then, anyone should ever behold that which is the source of munificence to others, remaining in itself, while it communicates to all, and receiving nothing, because possessing an inexhaustible fulness; and should so abide in the intuition, as to become similar to his nature, what more of beauty can such a one desire? For such beauty, since it is supreme in dignity and excellence, cannot fail of rendering its votaries lovely and fair. Add too, that since the object of contest to souls is the highest beauty, we should strive for its acquisition with unabated ardour, lest we should be deserted of that blissful contemplation, which, whoever pursues in the right way, becomes blessed from the happy vision; and which he who does not obtain is unavoidably unhappy. For the miserable man is not he who neglects to pursue fair colours, and beautiful corporeal forms; who is deprived of power, and falls from dominion and empire; but he alone who is destitute of this divine possession, for which the ample dominion of the earth and sea and the still more extended empire of the heavens, must be relinquished and forgot, if, despising and leaving these far behind, we ever intend to arrive at substantial felicity, by beholding the beautiful itself.

<sup>1</sup> "in itself perfectly pure." This is analogous to the description of the beautiful in the latter part of Diotima's Speech in the Banquet; a speech which is surely unequalled, both for elegance of composition and sublimity of sentiment. Indeed, all the disciples of Plato are remarkable for nothing so much as their profound and exalted conceptions of the Deity; and he who can read the works of Plotinus and Proclus in particular, and afterwards pity the weakness and error-ousness of their opinions on this subject, may be fairly presumed to be himself equally an object of pity and contempt.

What measures, then, shall we adopt? What machine employ, or what reason consult by means of which we may contemplate this ineffable beauty; a beauty abiding in the most divine sanctuary without ever proceeding from its sacred retreats lest it should be beheld by the profane and vulgar eye? We must enter deep into ourselves, and, leaving behind the objects of corporeal sight, no longer look back after any of the accustomed spectacles of sense. For, it is necessary that whoever beholds this beauty, should withdraw his view from the fairest corporeal forms; and, convinced that these are nothing more than images, vestiges and shadows of beauty, should eagerly soar to the fair original from which they are derived. For he who rushes to these lower beauties, as if grasping realities, when they are only like beautiful images appearing in water, will, doubtless, like him in the fable, by stretching after the shadow, sink into the lake and disappear. For, by thus embracing and adhering to corporeal forms, he is precipitated, not so much in his body as in his soul, into profound and horrid darkness; and thus blind, like those in the infernal regions, converses only with phantoms, deprived of the perception of what is real and true. It is here, then, we may more truly exclaim, "Let us depart from hence, and fly to our father's delightful land."<sup>1</sup> But, by what leading stars shall we direct our flight, and by what means avoid the magic power of Circe, and the detaining charms of Calypso?<sup>2</sup> For

<sup>1</sup> "Let us depart;" etc., vide Hom. Iliad, lib. ii., 140, et lib. ix., 27.

<sup>2</sup> Porphyry informs us in his excellent treatise, "De Antro Nymph," "that it was the opinion of Numenius, the Pythagorean (to which he also assents), that the person of Ulysses in the Odyssey, represents to us a man, who passes in a regular manner, over the dark and stormy sea of generation; and thus, at length, arrives at that region where tempests and seas are unknown, and finds a nation who

"Ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar."

Indeed, he who is conscious of the delusions of the present life and the enchantments of this material house, in which his soul is detained like Ulysses in the irriguous cavern of Calypso, will like him continually bewail his captivity, and only pine for a return to his native country. Of such a

thus the fable of Ulysses obscurely signifies, which feigns him abiding an unwilling exile, though pleasant spectacles were continually presented to his sight; and every thing was promised to invite his stay which can delight the senses, and captivate the heart. But our true country, like that of Ulysses, is from whence we came, and where our father lives. But where is the ship to be found by which we can accomplish our flight? For our feet are unequal to the task since they only take us from one part of the earth to another. May we not each of us say,

"What ships have I, what sailors to convey  
What oars to cut the long laborious way."<sup>3</sup>

But it is in vain that we prepare horses to draw our ships to transport us to our native land. On the contrary, neglecting all these, as unequal to the task, and excluding them entirely from our view, having now closed the corporeal eye,<sup>4</sup> we

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one it may be said as of Ulysses (in the excellent and pathetic translation of Mr. Pope).

"But sad Ulysses by himself apart  
Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart.  
All on the lonely shore he sate to weep  
And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep  
Tow'rd the lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain  
Till, dimmed with rising grief, they stream'd again."  
[*Odyssey*, book v., 103.]

Such a one too, like Ulysses, will not always wish in vain for a passage over the dark ocean of a corporeal life, but by the assistance of Mercury, who may be considered as the emblem of reason, he will at length be enabled to quit the magic embraces of Calypso, the Goddess of Imagination, and to return again into the arms of Penelope, or Philosophy, the long lost and proper object of his love

<sup>3</sup> See Pope's Homer's *Odyssey*, book v., 182

<sup>4</sup> "We must stir up and assume a purer eye within." This inward eye is no other than intellect, which contains in its most inward recesses a certain ray of light, participated from the sun of Beauty and Good, by which the soul is enabled to behold and become united with her divinely solitary original. This divine ray, or, as Proclus calls it, mark or impression, is thus beautifully described by that philosopher (Theol. Plat., p. 105): "The Author of the Universe," says he, "has planted in all beings impressions of his own perfect excellence. and through these he has placed all beings about himself, and is present with them in an ineffable manner, exempt from the universality of things. Hence, every being entering into the ineffable sanctuary of its own nature finds there a symbol of the Father of all. And by this mystical impression which corresponds to his nature they be-

must stir up and assume a purer eye within, which all men possess, but which is alone used by a few. What is it, then, this inward eye beholds? Indeed, suddenly raised to intellectual vision, it cannot perceive an object exceeding bright. The soul must therefore be first accustomed to contemplate fair studies and then beautiful works, not such as arise from the operations of art, but such as are the offspring of worthy men; and next to this it is necessary to view the soul, which is the parent of this lovely race. But you will ask, after what manner is this beauty of a worthy soul to be perceived? It is thus. Recall your thoughts inward, and if while contemplating yourself, you do not perceive yourself beautiful, imitate the statuary; who when he desires a beautiful statue cuts away what is superfluous, smooths and polishes what is rough, and never desists until he has given it all the beauty his art is able to effect. In this manner must you proceed, by lopping what is luxuriant, directing what is oblique, and, by purgation, illustrating what is obscure, and thus continue to polish and beautify your statue until the divine splendour of Virtue shines upon you, and Temperance seated in pure and holy majesty rises to your view. If you become thus purified residing in yourself, and having nothing any longer to impede this unity of mind, and no farther mixture to be found within, but perceiving your whole self to be a true light, and light alone; a light which though immense is not measured by any magnitude, nor limited by any circumscribing figure, but is everywhere immeasurable, as being greater than every measure, and more excellent

**It is necessary that the perceiver and the thing perceived should be similar to each other before true vision can exist.**

than every quantity; if, perceiving yourself thus improved, and trusting solely to yourself, as no longer requiring a guide, fix now steadfastly your mental view, for with the intellectual eye alone can such immense beauty be perceived. But if your eye is yet infected with any sordid concern, and not thoroughly refined, while it is on the stretch to behold this most shining spectacle, it will be immediately darkened and incapable of intuition, though someone should declare the spectacle present, which it might be otherwise able to discern. For, it is here necessary that the perceiver and the thing perceived; should be similar to each other before true vision can exist. Thus the sensitive eye can never be able to survey the orb of the sun, unless strongly endued with solar fire, and participating largely of the vivid ray. Everyone therefore must become divine, and of godlike beauty, before he can gaze upon a god and the beautiful itself. Thus proceeding in the right way of beauty he will first ascend into the region of intellect, contemplating every fair species, the beauty of which he will perceive to be no other than ideas themselves; for all things are beautiful by the supervening irradiations of these, because they are the offspring and essence of intellect. But that which is superior to these is no other than the fountain of good, everywhere widely diffusing around the streams of beauty, and hence in discourse called the beautiful itself because beauty is its immediate offspring. But if you accurately distinguish the intelligible objects you will call the beautiful the receptacle of ideas; but the good itself, which is superior, the *FINIS* fountain and principle of the beautiful; or, you may place the first beautiful and the good in the same principle, independent of the beauty which there subsists.<sup>1</sup>

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come united with their original, divesting themselves of their own essence and hastening to become his impression alone; and, through a desire of his unknown nature and of the fountain of good, to participate in him alone. And when they have ascended as far as to this cause they enjoy perfect tranquillity and are conversant in the perception of his divine progeny and of the love which all things naturally possess, and goodness, unknown, ineffable, without participation and transcendently full,"

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<sup>1</sup> But before I take my leave of Plotinus, I cannot refrain from addressing a few words to the Platonic part of my readers. If such then is the wisdom contained in the works of this philoso-

pher, as we may conclude from the present specimen, is it fit so divine a treasure should be concealed to shameful oblivion? With respect to true philosophy you must be sensible that all modern sects are in a state of barbarous ignorance; for Materialism and its attendant Sensuality have darkened the eyes of the many with the mists of error, and are continually strengthening their corporeal tie. And can anything more effectually dissipate this Increasing gloom than discourses composed by so sublime a genius, pregnant with the most profound conceptions, and everywhere full of intellectual light? Can anything so thoroughly destroy the phantom of false enthusiasm as establishing the real object of the true? Let us then boldly enlist ourselves under the banners of Plotinus, and, by his assistance, vigorously repel the encroachments of error, plunge her dominions into the abyss of forgetfulness, and disperse the darkness of her baneful night. For indeed there never was a period which required so much philosophic exertion, or such vehement contention from the lovers of Truth. On all sides nothing of philosophy remains but the name, and this is become the subject of the vilest prostitution; since it is not only engrossed by the naturalist, chemist, and anatomist, but is usurped by the mechanic in every trifling invention, and made subservient to the lucre of traffic and merchandise. There cannot surely be a greater proof of the degeneracy of the times than so unparalleled a degradation and so barbarous a perversion of terms. For the word philosophy, which implies the love of wisdom, is now become the ornament of folly. In the times of its inventor, and for many succeeding ages, it was expressive of modesty and worth; in our days it is the badge of impudence and vain pretensions. It was formerly the symbol of the profound contemplative genius, it is now the mark of the superficial and unthinking practitioner. It was once revered by kings and clothed in the robes of nobility; it is now (according to its true acceptance) abandoned and Despised and ridiculed by the vilest plebeian. Permit me, then, my friends, to address you in the words of Achilles to Hector:

"Rouse, then, your forces this important hour  
Collect your strength and call forth all your pow'r."

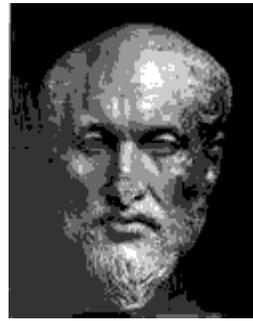
Since, to adopt the animated language of Neptune to the Greeks,

" . . . On dastards, dead to fame,  
I waste no anger, for they feel no shame,  
But you, the pride, the flower of all our host,  
My heart weeps blood, to see your glory lost."

Nor deem the exhortation impertinent, and the danger groundless.

"For lo! the fated time, th' appointed shore,  
Hark, the gates burst, the brazen barriers roar."

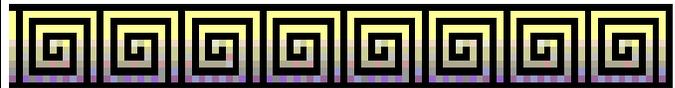
Impetuous ignorance is thundering at the bulwarks of philosophy and her sacred retreats are in danger of being demolished, through our feeble resistance. Rise then, my friends, and the victory will be ours. The foe is indeed numerous, but at the same time feeble; and the weapons of truth in the hands of vigorous union, descend with irresistible force, and are fatal wherever they fall.



**Plotinus**

c.205-270 A.D.

Plotinus, who brought forth the last great system of Greek speculative philosophy, was born in Egypt. At the age of thirty he came into contact with Ammonius Saccas and immediately became his disciple; on meeting the master, Plotinus exclaimed: "I have found the man I need." He studied under Saccas for ten years, that is, until the death of his teacher. He then joined an expedition to the East under Jordanus, and there obtained a knowledge of Oriental religions. After the failure of the expedition, Plotinus went to Rome, where he taught for the next twenty years.



Plotinus is considered to be the founder of Neo-Platonism. Taking his lead from his reading of Plato, Plotinus developed a complex spiritual cosmology involving three hypostases: the One, the Intelligence, and the Soul. It is from the productive unity of these three Beings<sup>1</sup> that all existence emanates. The principal of emanation is not simply causal, but also contemplative. In his system, Plotinus raises intellectual contemplation to the status of a productive principle; and it is by virtue of contemplation that all existents are said to be united as a single, all-pervasive reality. In this sense, Plotinus is not a strict pantheist, yet his system does not permit the notion of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothingness). In addition to his cosmology, Plotinus also developed a unique theory of sense-perception and knowledge, based on the idea that the mind plays an active role in shaping or ordering the objects of its perception, rather than passively receiving the data of sense experience (in this sense, Plotinus may be said to have anticipated the phenomenological theories of Husserl). Plotinus' doctrine that the soul is

<sup>1</sup> <http://radicalacademy.com/philplotinus.htm#life>

Calling the "One" a "Being" illustrates the sad state to which philosophy has fallen! However, if you read between the lines, especially persons familiar with the *S.D.*, you can see why his was the "pure" theosophy of an earlier day. — ED., A.T.

composed of a higher and a lower part -- the higher part being unchangeable and divine (and aloof from the lower part, yet providing the lower part with life), while the lower part is the seat of the personality (and hence the passions and vices) -- led him to neglect an ethics of the individual human being in favor of a mystical or soteric doctrine of the soul's ascent to union with its higher part. The philosophy of Plotinus is represented in the complete collection of his treatises, collected and edited by his student Porphyry into six books of nine treatises each. For this reason they have come down to us under the title of the *Enneads*.

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For Information contact:

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## POINT OUT THE WAY

XXXV

### Chapter VII

#### III.—Intuition, Intellect and "Lighting Up" the Child

**Question:** — Does the mindless man, when lighted up, say, "Never was time when I was not"?

**Answer:** — Would it be exactly correct to say, "Never was time when I was not"? Why, if you can say it, it must be exactly correct to say it—but a dog can't say it. The dog, if he knew, if he believed, if he suspected, if somebody had ever told him, "Say, friend doggie, never was time when you were not"—and the dog's intelligence had reached (which it hasn't) that point where it could entertain an idea of Self — the doggie would say, "Well, I wonder! I wonder! And after a while, it would say, "I believe that's the explanation of things in this kingdom of mine — I must always have existed!

So, you see, the fact is the same for the mindless man as for the Mahatma. The fact is the same for the soul that we call an atom as it is for the greatest being. But the atom, the vegetable, the mineral, the animal. forms of consciousness are not yet capable of reflecting the image of Self — call it the *idea* of Self. Once

that image has found lodgment, then the very first question the man asks himself is the question the child asks after he gets the conception of "I": "Well, who am I? What am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?" That's the child stage of self-consciousness.

If you look around the world, you will see that most human beings have received but a spark; in other words, they are in the child state of self-consciousness. They go to their father and say, "Dad, who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I bound for?" And Dad says, "Well, you'd better go to the preacher about that." So they go to the preacher and they say, "Who am I?"

And the preacher says, "Why, God made you; your father and mother furnished your body, but God furnished your Soul."

Then they ask, "Where am I going?"

And the preacher replies, "Well, you are going to Hell if you don't believe that!" — And the people swallow that, most of them. Doesn't it show, then, that their self-consciousness here in the body — confused by impressions from the four lower principles — is vague, uncertain and erroneous? The fact of self-consciousness is there, but not until we have learned to *dis*-associate our consciousness from the body and say, "Whatever I am, I can't be this body," will we have the real thing.

**Question:** — Mr. Crosbie, in the *Answers to Questions* compares the lighting up of Manas to the lighting up of the of an infant by the parents or guardians. What would be the results to the child if this were not done, and what might be the possibilities of the parents in this lighting up?

**Answer:** — If there were no one, whether parent or guardian or other living man or woman, to light up the Manas in the new-born body, what would be the result? Can't our imagination or

our intuition tell us the answer? Idiots Teach a child nothing, and it will know nothing. H.P.B. makes the very definite statement that if you were to graft the Spiritual Monad of a Newton on that of the greatest saint on earth in a body with only the animal principles, without the presence of Manas, you would have an idiot.

Now the question is, what can the parents do towards facilitating — in much greater degree than is ordinarily the observable case — this lighting up of Manas? They give the child what we are all learning here, trying to light up Manas in ourselves. Remember that the chapter tells us that Manas is very far indeed from being fully operative and in control in the adult body and mind. To the extent then, that we try to make our own lives respond to Manasic impact rather than to Kamic impact, we are fitting ourselves for parenthood and for the training of children. There could be no question that, as there come to be more and more parents of that kind, they will draw into incarnation a very different class of egos indeed from those which constitute the bulk of the race. H.P.B. goes so far as to say that men and women have it in their power "*to procreate Buddha-like children — or demons.*"

**Question:** — In general, does it not depend largely upon the character or nature of the incarnating ego itself?

**Answer:** — Surely, in the true sense, all depends on that. But just as if there were nobody to look after the baby body, the most powerful ego in the world would lose out on incarnation, so, applying it in corresponding terms to the development of the intelligence here, if it were not for the help of parents and other human beings, then the most powerful ego would lose both body and human mind — because he is not in a position to form them for himself. But I take the question also to mean that we might do our utmost for a low — grade ego and we couldn't make a Buddha out

of that low-grade ego. Still, when a high-grade ego is drawn to a body, its powers here could be prepared for in a way almost undreamed of by us. That subject, by the way, is quite fully discussed under the heading of "Theosophy and Education" in *The Key to Theosophy*. There is no more remarkable treatise, Theosophically speaking, in existence, than that one upon the right method of education of the child, which only means the lighting up of Manas here.

**Question:** — Isn't it true that no matter what kind of a preparation we make for them, a very limited number of low-grade egos could get into incarnation now, on account of their own limitations?

**Answer:** — The majority of mankind today consists of low-grade egos; that is, of those who, in the words of *The Secret Doctrine* "received but a spark." That is true, but who knows the possible range of growth for even those egos, if they were given the right help by those already here? Certainly there are innumerable cases of low-grade egos, those who had but a spark, who have become beneficent forces right here in human life, while, alas there are innumerable cases also of those who had great intelligence — very different from those who received but a spark — and who have in fact been a curse to the human race.

**Question:** — Referring to the four peculiarities of Manas (p. 56 Am. Ed.), why is the natural motion of Manas excluded from the second and third characteristics?

**Answer:** — Mr. Judge gives four characteristics. He says the first one is due to two things — the natural motion of Manas plus memory — and that the next two are due to memory alone, while the final one is due to the absence of manasic motion. What *is* the natural motion of Manas? The natural motion of Manas is due to one of three things, or rather to three things in combination — self-

consciousness, knowledge and imagination. No being in the universe, except a Manasic being, has imagination. Now, the moment that Manas is caught in the mould of memory, the motion of imagination is done for. How can Manas identify itself with anything? That is the very meaning of the word *imagination*. Imagination is putting ourselves in the other fellow's place, and if memory catches us, good-bye, imagination. But it is a good thing to think about. Over and over, Mr. Judge will make a sentence where the English is so clear that we do not stop to ask ourselves whether we get the meaning or not.

**Question:** — Where in the teachings does it say, "The Buddhi-Manas of the race has to be raised"? How can Buddhi-Manas, which is a very high state, be "raised"?

**Answer:** — Refer to *Letters That Have Helped Me*, (p. 72 (Indian Ed., p. 77)) and to a memorial article by Mr. Judge, "H.P.B.: — A Lion-Hearted Colleague Passes."

Buddhi-Manas is our cognition of Self, our realization of Self, our sense of Self. When we regard the human race as it is and see the degraded idea of Self that we have, is it not perfectly clear that the whole story of the Theosophical Movement, its success or its failure, rests upon giving mankind a new idea of Self? That Self is divine; that Self is immortal; that Self is responsible; that Self is what it is — whatever its condition — as the result of its own actions. When we get the idea that our Self is a God, that our Self is immortal, that there is absolutely no limit to our rise or fall, is not that a change in our Buddhi-Manas? And a change in the Buddhi-Manas of a single individual seeking understanding is like a fire. A single match could set the whole world on fire. Wherever a person gets a change in the Buddhi-Manas, it becomes a living, quenchless fire.

There is another side to this Theosophical Movement, an inner side. Every one of us knows how many people come to us telling their troubles, seeking light, seeking understanding. That is where the real work of the Theosophical Movement is done — from mouth to ear. That is the contact of one individual with another. That is why it is so necessary for us to have true understanding.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



## THE COFFEE KLATCH

**Coffee Maker:** The tea — a clear light golden brown. The wake-up tea folks will hate it but the wimps will love it. I better make a stronger pot just for my sleepy-heads who still have their kidneys intact.

**Gray-flanneled Man:** What did you do in the black-out, meditate?

**New-Baked Theosophist:** Oh, I did push-ups and wondered what kind of karma the “killer Comets” represent? Listen to this, then tell me if your black-out is worth talking about. As long as Coffee Maker has that trusty back-up generator I can sleep easy:

### Killer Comets

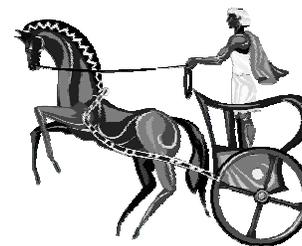
People once feared comets, then came to regard them as beautiful astronomical oddities, then learned to fear them all over again. “They are in fact agents of destruction,” says Don Yeomans, who leads NASA’s Near-Earth Object Program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Although about 100 times as many asteroids as comets approach Earth, comets pack a bigger punch — they plunge toward the sun several times faster than asteroids. That means a comet could hit Earth will about 10 times as much energy as an asteroid with the same mass. Furthermore, astronomers can locate and project orbits of most asteroids, but comets

are not easy to spot until they get inside Jupiter’s orbit, where the sun heats them enough to create a visible tail. A new comet gives us only a nine-month lead time. “These things have the potential for very little warning time, whereas most asteroids give us a decade or more,” says Yeomans. He believes we should have a plan for a doomsday comet. But no one is quite certain what to do if one does show up. Small nuclear bursts in space near the comet might nudge it and change its orbit, a vast solar sail anchored to one would tug it off course, and coating part of the surface with a white powder that reflects solar energy might cause a change in orbit. Blowing it up could make things worse. In 1994 Jupiter’s gravity shredded comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 into 21 visible chunks, which then plunged into the gas giant piece after piece. A typical piece detonated with the force of about 25,000 megatons of TNT. A chain of blasts around Earth might wreak more havoc than a single impact. Yeomans hopes that exposing the ingredients and the structure of comets will show us how to alter their course. Until then, he says, “We’re a long way from being able to deal with an impactor.”

— R.I.

*Discover*, p. 58  
September 2003

## DNYANESHVARI



[The *Dnyaneshvari* is mentioned many times by Madame Blavatsky, always in glowing terms. The following rendition is extracted from Manu Subedar’s translation. The great Sage, Dnaneshwara Maharaj sang this work to his people when he was quite young. He did it in their native language, Marathi, about 700 years ago. It is his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*.]

### XXXIV

#### CHAPTER TEN

**Arjuna says to Shri Krishna:** The joys of the world appear worthless at the hearing of this discourse and calmness of heart

is automatically established. The very idea of life and death fades away and happiness spreads really both internally and externally. Even if this nectar were secured incidentally, it has the most far-reaching effect. Why should I, who have You near at hand, say I have had enough? Your name is dear to me and I have You before me. You also have affection for me. I am feeling an indescribable happiness and I am anxious to hear again and again the description of your forms. The sun is never stale, nor is fire ever impure. Nor are the running waters of the Ganges ever still. Your discourse is like Brahman in the form of sound personified, standing before me. It is like flowers of the sandalwood — so difficult to secure.

**Shri Krishna says to Arjuna:** The forms that I assume are infinite. There are so many that I am unable to tell them Myself, as a man is unable to tell the number of hairs on his body. I do not know My stature or extent. I can, therefore, delineate only those of My forms which are well-known. If you can fix a few of them in your mind, you will be able to guess the others in the same manner. When you get a seed, you may be said to have got a tree, which will grow out of that seed. The owner of a garden meets with no opposition when he takes fruits and flowers. If you, therefore, gradually know My principle forms, you will know the universe. I am limitless. Even the most extensive thing, *viz.*, the sky, is contained in Me. I am the soul of every living being. In this body, I am the heart and the skin that covers everything. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all living things. The cloud has got sky under it, inside it, upon it, everywhere. Being created in the sky, it remains in the sky, and when it comes to an end, it is still in the sky. So am I, three-fold condition of all things, *viz.*, the origin, the maintenance and the end. The contemplation of My forms will enable you to realize this infinity and omnipresence. I am Vishnu. Of the luminous articles, I am the sun, with the rays of won-

wonderful light; I am the moon. Of the Vedas, I am Sama Veda, and of the gods (Devas) I am Indra, the brother of the wind. Of the senses I am the eleventh, *viz.*, the mind, and I am the life-force amongst living beings. Of the Rudras, I am Shankara, the enemy of Madana. Of the Rakshasas, I am Kuber, the friend of Shankara. I am the fire contained in the eight Vasus and I am Meru, the highest amongst the towering mountains. I am Brihaspati, the prime minister of Indra, the eternal set of all learning and the best of all the priests. I am Kartikeya the greatest of generals, born in the womb of Kritika by contact with Agni and from the limbs of Shankara. Of things holding water, I am the ocean. Of the great Rishis, I am Bhrigu, the seat of penance (Tapas). Out of all spoken things, I am the word, which contains the truth. I am also the syllable AUM, which is produced by austerities and which is recited in every sacrifice, which is described in the Vedas as Paramayadna, which purifies acts of duty, to utter which it is not necessary to take a bath in the rivers, and which is the highest form of recitation as an offering to the Supreme. Of the immovable mountains, I am the sacred Himalaya. Of the various trees that fulfill desires, amongst which the Parijata and the sandalwood are well-known, I am the leading tree, *viz.*, Aswatha (pipal). Of the divine Rishis, I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas, I am Chitraratha. Of the siddhas, I am the leading Kapila-Acharya. Of horses, I am the famous Uchchairsava. Of the elephants, I am the Airavata. I am the nectar, which is supreme amongst the liquids and which is secured by the Devas from the churning of the milky ocean. I am the sovereign, to whom all people are subject and to whom all offer their obedience. Of the implements of warfare, I am Varja (thunderbolt), which can be only handled by Indra, who has finished a hundred sacrifices. Of cows, I am the Kamashenu (cow of desire), and passion, which gives birth to every-thing, is Myself. Of the ordinary serpents, I am Vasuki, and of the cobras I am Ananta Shesha. Of the water deities, I

am Varuna, the lord of the westerly direction. Amongst the ancestors, I am the spiritual ancestor Aryamma. I am Yama and Dharma, witnesses of the acts of all living beings, who keep account of all the good and bad actions of the people who watch the mind and body of living things and who reward them according to their deeds. Of the demons, I am Prahlad, for which reason he was not overcome by their Satanic nature. Of the destroyers, I am Maha Kali, the great destroyer. Of four-footed animals, I am the leader, *viz.*, the lion. Of the birds, I am the great eagle. Amongst those that have motion, I am the wind that can envelop round the world in less than a second and which can surround the seven oceans at one bound. Of the warriors I am Rama, who was famed in the Treta Age in the cause of righteousness with no other weapon than his bow, who made an array of the heads of the brave Ravana on the Suvela mountain and offered them as oblation to the spirits, who were shouting "victory, victory," who restored the prestige of the Vedas and re-established them, who shone like another sun in the Surva Vamsha (race), and who was the husband of Sita. Of water animals with tail, I am the crocodile. Of the rivers, I am the river Ganges, the leading river in the world, which is swallowed by Janhu when it was being brought down by Bahgiratha from heaven.

The full description of My forms would take several life periods. If one desired to have all the planets and stars of the sky, the best thing for him would be to roll up the heavens in one bundle. If one wanted an estimate of the an estimate of the atoms constituting the earth, he must take the entire globe in his own hand. In order to know fully My extent, a man must know Me first. If a man desired to know all my forms without exception, he would have to uproot the entire tree and turn it over in his palm. Similarly, if a man desired to know all My forms without exception, he would have to know **in the first instance My pure form**. For this purpose,

fix the fact in your mind that I am all-enveloping. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of the entire universe. If this omnipresence is realized, there is no object in fixing attention on the different forms.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



## EXPERIENCE: MAN'S GIFT TO MAN.

"The essential faculty possessed by all the cosmic and terrestrial elements of generating within themselves a regular and harmonious series of results,- a concatenation of causes and effects, is an irrefutable proof that they are either animated by an extra or r intra INTELLIGENCE, or conceal such within or behind the manifested, veil." [S.D.1,594]

What is that beyond our sentient space-time that can cross the boundary and control our world? How does it emerge from the metaphysical order into that of explicit existence, and then double back again into the metaphysical?

Sheldrake along with other holistic scientists seems to be asking three questions: "How valuable is an increasingly sophisticated knowledge of pieces? Is the concept of *dissection* as a mode of knowledge a self-destructive theory? Is it only the *crudeness* of our senses which makes it usable in the everyday world?"

The ancient, occult teaching of matter as *spatial presence* has forced its way back into the mental world of science.

Thus a body maybe considered divorced from its relations with other bodies only *conceptually* — concepts born of the crudeness of our senses.

By returning to the basic thinking of such men as Alfred North Whitehead, Bergson, and Goethe, Sheldrake was able to think afresh in the field of biology. He postulates six major problems of forming:

**The first problem** is that of morphogenesis. What is the genesis of form? Why does an acorn become an oak tree? Real growth is not by excrescence, but by wholes. The entire body grows simultaneously, with each major area having a form and *growth-rate* peculiar to itself. As a zoologist once remarked, "The growth and development of any living system would appear to be controlled by someone sitting on the organism and directing its whole living process."

**The second problem** involves what is called "regulation." If part of an embryo is removed or a part is added, the organism continues to develop a more or less normal structure. If one of the first two cells of the sea urchin embryo is killed, the other doesn't produce half a sea urchin, it produces a **whole** but smaller sea urchin. Conversely if you add, you get a giant sea urchin. As differentiation proceeds and the embryo becomes more complex, it loses this ability, but in the early stages it would suggest that something is directing the process.

In Theosophical language we might say the astral field or lunar pitri of a human directs and dominates the growth of the body until about seven years of age, at which time its waning dominance

allows the emergence of another agency. In the lower life-forms, this direction by the astral field or Elemental will extend through the entire life cycle of the form. All of Sheldrake's six problems of forming can, be rephrased into a problem of cycles.

**The third problem** is that of regeneration. The orthodox explanation that "Natural selection has favored individuals who could heal wounds, and genes were selected which could instruct this process," is useful only if we use our assumption to push out contradictory evidence. For example, in a normal newt embryo, the lens develops by unfolding from the skin. Once the newt is mature, this path of lens formation is blocked. When the scientist cut the lens out of a mature newt, the lens nevertheless regenerated by developing from the edge of the iris. Somehow the organism possessed a forming process that could fill the hole. How is this possible?

**The fourth problem** of morphogenesis is reproduction. How do two parts — sperm and egg in humans — manage to become a whole, with a shape completely different from that of the parts?

**The fifth problem** extends the idea of forming beyond the processes which **shape** matter and into those which also **move** it. Sheldrake asks: How is it that living things move the way they do? An important insight of Sheldrake's hypothesis is his connecting the processes which form matter and those which propel it habitually through the environment. Theosophically we might

say that the "Rajah of the Senses," the lunar mind, finds its kingdom in the realm of food, sex, and shelter. Studies in the animal kingdom are very clearcut, but in the human kingdom the Light of the Logos — self-consciousness — adds another factor, or in Sheldrake's language, "another Field or hierarchy of possibilities becomes active." An interesting question at this point would be: "How does Sheldrake view Agassiz' remark that morphogenetically **all of the kingdoms are following in the wake of man?**"<sup>1</sup>

**The sixth problem:** How did the giraffe get its "long neck? How did the camel get the calluses on its knees, which are present even in its embryo?

The neo-Darwinian biologist would insist that all six of Sheldrake's problems can be answered by viewing the growth of the embryo like the growth of a car on a computer-controlled assembly line; each part fits exactly into its

<sup>1</sup> "Arrived on our Earth at the commencement of the Fourth in the present series of life-cycles and races, MAN is the first form that appears, thereon, being preceded only by the mineral and vegetable kingdoms—even the latter **having to develop and continue its further evolution through man.** Humanity develops fully only in the Fourth — our present Round. Up to this fourth Life-Cycle, it is referred to as "humanity" only for lack of a more appropriate term. Like the grub which becomes chrysalis and butterfly, Man, or rather that which becomes man, passes through all the forms and kingdoms during the first Round and through all human shapes during the two following Rounds.

Therefore our human forms have existed in the Eternity as astral and ethereal prototypes; according to which models, the Spiritual Beings whose duty it was to bring them into objective being and terrestrial Life, evolved the protoplasmic forms of the future Egos from **their own essence.** After which, when this human **Upadhi**, or basic mould was ready, the natural terrestrial Forces began to work on those supersensuous moulds which contained, besides their own, **the elements of all the past vegetable and future animal forms** of this globe in them." [S.D.1,159,282]

neighbors as determined by the computer program. On the biological assembly line, that program is DNA, the blueprint which administrates such factors as shape and instinct, reproduction and regulation and regeneration. It is the ultimate determiner of the forming process at all levels. Yet, the admitted successes of reductionist biological theory are obscuring the fact that large areas of ignorance are being papered over by dogma and hope.

For example, DNA does not control form. If you burn a flower to ashes, the mass and energy are conserved and can be reflected in the scientists' calculations. But form is not a conserved quality. It is simply destroyed. Where does it go? This problem is a reflection of the on-going crisis in embryology, one as deep and severe as it was a hundred years ago. Embryologists, as scientists who deal directly with questions of forming, are, in fact, at an impasse. They have no good theory to explain what they see taking place in even the simplest organisms — the miracle of growth and development. The ball, or developing organism, rolling down the landscape in its chreode is being attracted by the future or end point. This end point is the developed form. How does this attraction of the present toward the future take place?

Sheldrake gradually moved in the direction of the elan vital or the non-quantifiable something that controls all quantifiable agencies; or, in short spirit as related to matter. But he did not stop there in his thinking, but proceeded to that which mediates between spirit and matter: **Fohat.**

In the hypothesis he developed, Sheldrake proposes that there exists a state which mediates between DNA and the forming processes of an organism. This mediator is a complex set of hidden fields which direct all stages of morphogenesis and the final forms things take, including their behavior. All of these fields, like the reflections in a mirror, or an individual's dreams, originate partly outside our sentient space and time.

Great philosophers, great thinkers, great scientists, seem to exemplify a pure search for truth rather than applied. This, regardless of the spectacular spin-offs into the world of "application" their work may originate. The holiness of the human saga seeps into their skull, making "prior assumptions" very disposable baggage.

Mystically, one might say that "thinking through a problem from the beginning" involves those revelations impacted in the human heart; revelations passed from the **Devas** of the first and second races to the **Manushis** of the third, to the great **Siddhas** of the Fourth, to those Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the fifth, our race.

In any -given field, for there to be evolution, there has to be something that does not evolve. An acorn is the revelation of an oak tree in the sense that it doesn't evolve, it won't suddenly shift gears into a pine tree or a deer. Its "universe" emanates from it, objectivizing its potentiality for "systems of **light** and **darkness**," while it remains a "center-of-rest," a center to which all motion can be ultimately referred.

The ideas that eventually developed, which Sheldrake called, "the hypothesis of formative causation," were aided by a scientifically rigorous study of fields in living organisms conducted by Harold Saxton Burr of Yale. Beginning in 1935, and for almost forty years until his death. Burr explored what he called "L-fields." Using

a special voltage detector, Burr discovered that different types of organisms — trees, slime molds, human beings — have identifiably distinct patterns of electrical activity. His instrument also showed that individuals possess characteristic fields, like electrical fingerprints. Disruptions in this characteristic pattern, he claimed, foretell events that will show up in the physical structure of the organism. For example, a field change may indicate the growth of a cancer. In human subjects, Burr discovered, changes in the fields registered changes in psychological mood as well as health. In women he studied, Burr found that the exact moment of ovulation could be predicted by a change in the field voltage. His researches concluded that many of the women he studied did not ovulate in the middle of their menstrual cycles, and the voltage change was successfully used to advise women who were thought to be infertile about when they might conceive.

Burr also discovered that there are fields and field changes associated with an organism's movement in the environment. He speculated that L-fields governing different parts of an organism or different stages in the development of embryos are connected to each other in a hierarchy and that these fields are in turn affected by other fields in the environment, including such very large fields as gravity and solar radiation. His researches convinced him that his L-fields were not just effects of changes that were already taking place in matter (as a feverish rise in body temperature is the result of an illness already present) but in fact could actually cause changes. He concluded that the L-fields both **determined and were determined by the biological matter they are associated with**.

This last idea sounds a lot like Metcalfe's discussion of what he called "Sun-force" or Caloric, and "Earth-force" or ponderable matter. The first using the last to manifest through, and the quality of the

last determining the nature of the manifestation.

Despite his rigorous adherence to acceptable scientific methods, Burr's work did not receive much attention. In other words, progress in science is not determined by truth but by the flow of the monads. A few martyrs have to come first in order to prepare the mental groove.<sup>1</sup>

Like other holistic scientists, Sheldrake decided there were definite limits to the mechanistic approach to nature. Beyond these limits something else is happening. He sensed there must be life fields of some sort which give creatures their form and movement. Yet how could they be demonstrated? Such concrete fields as those discovered by Burr posed other problems. Where did these fields come from? Were they inherited? If so, by what process? More important, what could be the relationship of such life fields to matter?

In moving away from the orthodox science he made room in his mind for the ancient axiom that life and intelligence are ubiquitous: **Everything is alive whether it be an atom or a planet, a field or a spatial presence.**

With this step, Sheldrake was able to propose the existence of his morphogenetic fields — hidden fields which give regular shape and movement to the universe. From particle to human to galaxy, all growth and form is determined by action of morphogenetic fields on matter. These fields serve as a channel or blueprint. The formation of an atom from a nucleus and electrons is guided by one field, the shape of a molecule by another, the regulation of a cell by yet another. Each field interlocks with others, and the field of a larger form

<sup>1</sup> Dirac, for example, gives Hamilton credit for being the real father of quantum physics. Yet, Hamilton, a man mentioned by the Mahatmas in their letters to Sinnett, lived surrounded by the Newtonian Physics of the Nineteenth century! His equations were so far ahead of their time that they could not be used for more than a hundred years.

orchestrates the morphogenetic fields of the smaller forms within it. An individual human being — atoms, molecules, tissue, organs, systems — is composed of literally billions of fields, all directed in an ascending Interlocking order up to the general field that is the person.

Consider a dandelion springing up unwanted on the front lawn. Its shape and growth have been directed from seed to flower by a morphogenetic field (actually a web of fields) for that species of dandelion. It isn't just that particular dandelion which is governed by the field. The field also is guiding all the other dandelions of that species on the lawn, and indeed every member of that species of dandelions all over the world. Not only that, this field has also governed all dandelions since the beginning of dandelion creation!

Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields are unlike any field biologists have proposed or physicists have discovered, because they do not obey our current laws of space and time. These fields are not like Plato's **archetypes**, for **they are themselves formed by the very things they are forming.**

Over time, the morphogenetic field of a dandelion species doesn't remain exactly the same: The field is continually subtly modified by every dandelion that exists or has ever existed. The 'experience' of the individual dandelion as it develops in the pressures of its environment is transmitted to the field. The field, in turn, transmits this total experience to the form of every dandelion. Adjustments a species has to make in order to live in one location (such as the adjustment the peppered moth made to pollution) modify the field and create a tendency for similar adjustments in an entirely different geographic location if the environment there is similar.

Neo-Darwinians, of course, would claim that this explanation is superfluous. According to evolution, similar environments would naturally produce similar adaptations.

Yes, Sheldrake says, but the adaptations in different locations take place more quickly than could be the case if random mutation and selection were having to start **all over again at a new site**. The more individuals of a species or variety that occur, the more the field is reinforced. The strengthened field, in turn, makes it more likely for that species or variety to appear.

Some fields have been around so long and have been reinforced so often by events that they're effectively changeless. For example, as more and more energy took the shape of the hydrogen atom, the hydrogen atom field was reinforced. This field, in turn, made hydrogen atoms more likely to occur. At this point in time, the hydrogen atom field is so strong that hydrogen atoms occur as a law of nature and there is virtually no difference between one such atom and another. This also applies to hydrogen bonding with oxygen to form the water molecule. The field of this molecule is by now very powerful and causes water molecules to form all the time, throughout the universe.

Sheldrake's fields thus depict a universe in which laws of nature — such as the laws that form atoms and bond atoms into molecules — **are built up**. Laws are, in effect, **habits**, reinforced by repetition. Laws of nature aren't eternal, they **evolve**.

Sheldrake calls the process by which forms in different times and places affect one another through participation in the field "morphic resonance." Suppose that a number of violin strings are stretched on a board and one of them is plucked. If one of the others happens to have exactly the same characteristics of tension, mass, and "length, then it too will begin to vibrate without being touched. Strings that are "in tune," or vibrating at the same frequency, will transfer energy to each other through resonance.

But the word "resonance" is used only metaphorically. **Unlike** Burr's L-fields, Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields

are not transmitted **energy**. They aren't physical fields at all. They exist in another, nonphysical, dimension. They can't be measured directly by a dial or counter, though, as we'll see, Sheldrake has proposed ways of detecting them that might lead to indirect measurements. Unlike physical fields, they do not diminish with distance. They enter into time and are affected by time, but once a field comes into existence it doesn't die.<sup>1</sup>

Morphic resonance takes place when a morphogenetic field attaches to a basic unit such as an atom, molecule, or cell. Sheldrake calls this unit a "morphic germ." Once attached to the morphic germ, the field guides other atoms, molecules, or cells into their correct positions, and when this is accomplished, it has created a new, more complex germ. A "higher" field attaches to this germ and comes into play until the overall field that is that organism or form is accomplished. In the case of biological forms, the succession of fields work **in conjunction** with DNA to guide cell growth and direction. They are like a television signal acting on the circuitry of a TV set — the two together creating an animated form. In the case of inorganic forms, the fields work **in conjunction** with the forces and properties of matter. Once an entity has its final form, the morphic field remains in place and stabilizes it against fluctuations in the environment.

So despite the fact that when you meet a friend after six months not one molecule in that friend's face is the same, the face has kept the same basic shape thanks to your friend's morphogenetic field.

<sup>1</sup> If "they enter into time," then there is a birth growth and decline — a waxing and waning. They are cyclic but may be of such extent that they seem "deathless" because of our foreshortened viewpoint. Death for a human is a doorway, for a field it might be described as **latency** — a latency often imposed by a higher more inclusive field.

The morphic field, therefore, helps replace lost parts (regeneration); it directs the growth of the acorn into the oak. In fact, the existence of a morphic field would answer all the questions of forming posed by Sheldrake. In regulation, for example, a sea urchin embryo cell may be taken away but the embryo still develops into a whole, if smaller, sea urchin. This is possible because the morphic field directs the process though it has less matter to work with (so the urchin is smaller). In reproduction, the sperm and egg create a morphic germ to which a field attaches and begins the process of unfolding an organism.

Sheldrake argues his fields can also be used to explain habitual movement. He calls fields which govern movement "motor fields." Animal movement in feeding, reproduction, growth, blood circulation, digestion, etc., is controlled by a hierarchy of motor fields, and these fields also affect behavior and instinct.

If an experimenter pokes a hole in the pot made by a potter's wasp, the insect quickly reseals it. This is a "new" behavior, in effect, because it is an adjustment to unusual circumstances. Just as fields which guide form move the organism or entity to complete its whole shape, so motor fields move the wasp toward the wholeness of completing its goals. Sheldrake says **flexibility** is part of **wholeness**. If it takes a new response such as accepting an artificial organ or sealing an unusual damage to the nest, wholeness will find the way.

According to orthodox biological theory, behavior is either innate or learned. With the field-theory learned behavior would always move in the direction of the innate. Repetition would reinforce the motor field such that even human behavior is influenced and aided. There are fields associated with cooking, toolmaking; hunting, farming, and weaving — activities that have been performed over and over again for thousands of years. In addition there

are historically new tasks such as car driving, piano playing, running the four-minute mile, and flying a jet, which, according to Sheldrake, should become generally **easier and easier to learn** as time goes on. Sheldrake even suggests that under carefully controlled conditions it should be possible to show experimentally how successive humans learn such tasks more and more quickly.

The Lamarckian theory can now be dusted off and refashioned, for Sheldrake argues that acquired physical characteristics such as a camel's knee calluses can be passed on by generations of kneeling camels, creating and reinforcing the field which covers callus development. The field theory offers a mechanism for the transmission of an individual's experience to future generations without the direct genetic transmission of the original Lamarckian theory. In Sheldrake's formulation, the individual's influence is not a simple cause-effect link to its offspring but to the field of the entire population via the field, that is **through the whole**.

When the "orthodox" argue that hidden fields are totally unnecessary to explain form and behavior, Sheldrake offers an analogy: If someone who knew nothing about electromagnetic waves were to investigate a TV set he might first think it contained little people whose images he saw on the screen. When he looked inside and found transistors and tubes he might adopt an hypothesis similar to that of the reductionist — that the images resulted from some interaction of these mechanical parts. This hypothesis would be supported if he found that by taking out some parts he could distort or destroy the picture. If at this juncture someone (like Sheldrake) were to suggest that the picture did not result from these parts but depended on invisible influences entering into them, the investigator would doubtless reject the idea scornfully. He would argue that the set weighed the same when turned off or turned on. He would admit that he couldn't

just now, explain everything from the interactions of the parts of the box but eventually he was sure he would be able to. Compared to the power from the electrical outlet which **drives the TV**, the power of a **TV signal** is Very weak and subtle. But it's obviously crucial.

The evidence for Sheldrake's hypothesis is at present exceedingly slight — but dramatic. For dramatic support in the realm of first crystallizations, see page 227 in *The Looking Glass Universe*.

In the realm of living entities, Sheldrake says experiments have already been conducted which inadvertently confirm his hypothesis. In one such experiment a particular genetic strain of mice was trained generation, after generation to perform a particular task. By the time **fifty generations** and **twenty years** had elapsed the new generations of mice did in fact learn their task faster than their distant forebears.

At the time, however, the experiment was judged inconclusive because a strange thing had happened — the **control group also had the ability to learn the task faster**.

**Conventional thinking** could give no reason for accelerated learning in the control group, so, for this reason, the experiment was judged valueless. However, Sheldrake points out that accelerated learning in both experimental **and** the control group is to be expected on the basis of motor fields. By strengthening the motor field over fifty generations, any genetically similar mouse — control or otherwise — would be affected. Sheldrake suggests that specifically designed experiments should be performed to confirm this effect using groups of mice located hundreds of miles apart.

Could Sheldrake's fields also explain why particle physicists find **it progressively** easier to locate a particle in their accelerators once the first one appears? If so, then the theory offers a curious look at

the **observer-observed question**: The physicist, like a plant breeder, is cultivating a variety of particle. The more he observes it by looking for it with his machine, the more it will exist. In a sense he is abstracting it out of the whole, and his observations participate in establishing it more and more firmly in the explicate order. The point has an interesting echo of Kuhn's observation that once a paradigm shifts the data begin to change, as did the data on atomic weights once Dalton's theory was accepted. All this works, of course, because implicate and explicate, morphogenetic form and the entity, its shapes, aren't really separate — they're different dimensions of the same thing.

Consciousness as a whole is a morphogenetic field giving a shape to each individual's consciousness. Each individual consciousness also forms its own field, including its experience and memories. This individual field resonates and modifies the field of human, consciousness as a whole, affecting the future. The ethical-moral-psychological implications of such an idea are obviously enormous. **It makes the individual responsible for the whole.**

#### NOTES ON MORPHOGENESIS

If at some stage of the evolutionary process there is an ascent from the animal to the human kingdom, this in no way supports Darwinism, for that theory omits spirit or "consciousness" as the ruling factor and is unaware of the vast evolutionary cycles termed "Rounds." Privately Darwin came close to the idea, when he remarked in a letter to Wallace:

"To attempt to measure **intellectual** or social fitness by standards of **physical** fitness is hopelessly to confuse the whole question, for human evolution has progressed in **three distinct** paths." (Dr. Edwin Conklin of Princeton: "Retiring address to the American Association for: the Advancement of Science, 1937")

There was an ascent from the animal to the human "at the stage of the first Round, and partially at the second, never

during any stage of the **Fourth Round**. A purely **mathematical** or rather algebraical reason exists for this: — The present (our) Round being the middle Round (between the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, and the 5th, 6th, and 7th) is one of adjustment and final equipoise between Spirit and matter. It is that point, in short, wherein the reign of **true matter**, its grossest state (which is as unknown to Science as its opposite pole — homogeneous matter or substance) stops and comes to an end. From that point physical man begins to throw off 'coat after coat,' his material molecules for the benefit and subsequent formation or clothing of the animal kingdom, which in its turn is passing it on to the vegetable, and the latter to the mineral kingdoms. Man having evolved in the first Round from the animal via the two other kingdoms, it stands to reason that in the present Round he should appear **before** the animal world of this manvantaric period."

"Archaic Science allows the human physical frame to have passed through every form, from the lowest to the very highest, its present one, or from the simple to the complex to use the accepted terms. But it claims that in this cycle (the fourth), the frame having already existed among the types and models of nature from the **preceding Rounds** — that it was quite ready for man from the beginning of **this Round**. The Monad had but to step into the astral body of the progenitors, in order that the work of physical consolidation should begin around the shadowy proto-type."

"Secondary causes of differentiation, grouped under the head of sexual selection, natural selection, climate, isolation, etc., etc., mislead the Western Evolutionist and offer no real explanation whatever of the 'whence' of the 'ancestral types' which served as the **starting point** for physical development. The truth is that the differentiating 'causes' known to modern science only come into operation after the **physicalization of the primeval animal root-**

**types out of the astral**. Darwinism only meets Evolution at its midway point — that is to say when astral evolution has **given place** to the play of the ordinary physical forces with which our present senses acquaint us.... The underlying physiological variation in species — one to which all other laws are subordinate and secondary — is a sub-conscious intelligence pervading matter, ultimately traceable to a **REFLECTION** of the Divine and Dhyana-Chohanian wisdom. This **REFLECTION** is the result of the mediating action of Fohat, or Dhyana-Chohanian energy rich with the **guiding intelligence** of Divine Thought."

"'Natural Selection' is merely a term to express the manner in which 'useful variations' are stereotyped when produced. The real question at issue is: What **CAUSE** — combined with other secondary causes — produces the 'variations' in the organisms themselves. Mere variability of type, apart from the supervisory presence of a quasi-intelligent impulse, is powerless to account for the stupendous complexities and marvels of the human body for instance."

"Dr. Bourges explains the origin of the variety of organic forms, made to fit their environment with such evident Intelligent design, by the existence and the mutual help and **interaction** of two principles in (manifested) nature, the inner Conscious Principle adapting itself to physical nature and the **innate potentialities** in the latter."

"The most clear, as the most familiar, type of development may be found in our own mental or physical evolution, which has served others as a model to follow. If organisms are **entities**,... then it is only just to conclude and assert that the organic life strives to beget psychic life; but it would be still more correct and in accordance with the spirit of these two categories of evolution to say, that the **true cause of organic life is the tendency of spirit to manifest in substantial forms**,

**to cloth itself in substantial reality. It is the highest form which contains the complete explanation of the lowest, never the reverse."** Thus Strachof admits here, as also Bourges, "the identity of this mysterious, **integrally acting and organizing** Principle with the Self-Conscious and Inner Subject, which we call the EGO and the world at large — the; Soul." [With the exception of Darwin's letter to Wallace, the quoted material comes from *The Secret Doctrine*, and *Lucifer*.]

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## When Man Learns to Focus

Isn't it a fact that the psychic world is the realm of angels and devils?

What is meant by the psychic world? We might think of it from this point of view: There are beings which incarnated — that is, took physical forms — in matter as we know it, including our astral matter; and there is a whole stream of evolution which will never know matter as we know matter during our period of evolution. It is a world of perfectly real beings, but they are out of embodiment during our period of evolution — they are in the psychic world, pure and simple, a world of *discarnate* beings.

Every time we die we go into that realm, not as natives of it, but as foreigners, as voyagers; and we come out of it again to the earth. The psychic world is an evolution quite outside of any that is connected with physical matter. .... They appear to *us* as devils and angels. We are influenced by them. We are aware while we are awake; no matter what state it is that we are awake in, we care conscious of that state. Here, we are in waking consciousness. But the psychic world interpenetrates ours, and we are influenced by the beings of that world, and they are influenced by us. We mistake the nature of the influence, however, and when in abnormal states we get glimpses of some of those beings, we define them in terms of

earth-life, in terms of earth-religion, and we call them angels and devils and gods.

It would be worth while to read, for example, pp. 605-608 in the First Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, about *other worlds*. How many have ever seen the fiery lives? Everyone could. There you are looking at "Devachanees." One who is out in clear air and looks away from the sun, will see that the whole air is luminous with what look like little silver globules, globules of mercury or quicksilver. They don't belong to this plane at all, but, in a certain light and in a certain purity of the air, they can be seen — in exactly the same way that, say, molecules can be seen through a high-powered laboratory microscope. By means of light reflections we can see images; and so we can see these lives. They are denizens of the psychic world, of a million different kinds, but they all look to us like globules. Were we able to use our *inner sight*, we could tell what kind of beings they are, and what their state is.

Do you know that such is the limitation of our physical sight that it is almost impossible for the average man to focus his sight at all, unless he has an object to focus on? If you want to try an experiment, see if you can look at a dime in the air six feet away from you — the dime existing only in your imagination. In other words, can you focus your sight on a point in space? If you could, you would soon find out that space is full of something. But the truth is, we are unable to focus our sight, except upon a gross physical object. Whenever we are able to focus our sight mentally, we shall discover that there is another kind of vision. All of these things are here for us to learn about; they are a subject for thought, a legitimate subject of experimentation.

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JG