The Ancient Wisdom

by Annie Besant

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Besant's lucid outline of Theosophical cosmology, subtle planes, karma, and spiritual evolution.

Ad Outline of Theosophical Teachings

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WITH GRATITUDE, REVERENCE, AND LOVE

VI. The Buddhic and Nirvanic Planes, .

This book is intended to place in the hands of the general reader an epitome of theosophical teachings, sufficiently plain to serve the elementary student, and sufficiently full to lay a sound foundation for further knowledge. It is hoped that it may serve as an intro- duction to the profounder works of H. P. Blavatsky, and be a convenient stepping-stone to their study.

Those who have learned a little of the Ancient Wisdom know the illumination, the peace, the joy, the strength, its lessons have brought into their lives. That this book may win some to con its teachings, and to prove for themselves their value, is the prayer with which it is sent forth into the world.

THE UNITY UNDERLYING ALL RELIGIONS.

Right thought is necessary to right conduct, right understanding to right living, and the Divine Wis- dom—whether called by its ancient Sanskrit name of Brahma Vidya, or its modern Greek name of Theosophia, Theosophy — comes to the world as at once an adequate philosophy and an all-embracing religion and ethic. It was once said of the Christian Scriptures by a devotee that they contained shallows in which a child could wade and depths in which a giant must swim. A similar statement might be made of Theosophy, for some of its teachings are so simple and so practical that any person of average intelligence can understand and follow them, while others are so lofty, so profound, that the ablest strains his intellect to contain them and sinks ex- hausted in the effort.

In the present volume an attempt will be made to place Theosophy before the reader simply and clearly, in a way which shall convey its general principles and truths as forming a coherent conception of the

universe, and shall give such detail as is necessary for the understanding of their relations to each other. An elementary text-book cannot pretend to give the fulness of knowledge that may be obtained from abstruser works, but it should leave the student with clear fundamental ideas on his subject, with much indeed to add by future study but with little to unlearn. Into the outline given by such a book the student should be able to paint the details of further research.

It is admitted on all hands that a survey of the great religions of the world shows that they hold in common many religious, ethical, and philosophical ideas. But while the fact is universally granted, the explanation of the fact is a matter of dispute. Some allege that religions have grown up on the soil of human ignorance tilled by imagination, and have been gradually elaborated from crude forms of animism and fetichism; their likenesses are referred to universal natural phenomena imperfectly observed and fancifully explained, solar and star worship be- ing the universal key for one school, phallic worship the equally universal key

for another; fear, desire, ignorance, and wonder led the savage to personify the powers of nature, and priests played upon his terrors and his hopes, his misty fancies, and his be- wildered questionings ; myths became scriptures and symbols facts, and as their basis was universal the likeness of the products was inevitable. Thus speak the doctors of "Comparative Mythology," and plain

people are silenced but not convinced under the rain of proofs ; they cannot deny the likenesses, but they dimly feel : Are all man's dearest hopes and loftiest imaginings really nothing more than the outcome of savage fancies and of groping ignorance? Have the great leaders of the race, the martyrs and heroes of humanity, lived, wrought, suffered, and died de- luded, for the mere personifications of astronomi- cal facts and for the draped obscenities of bar- barians ?

The second explanation of the common property in the religions of the world asserts the existence of an original teaching in the custody of a Brotherhood of great spiritual Teachers, who — Themselves the outcome of past cycles of evolution — acted as the instructors and guides of the child-humanity of our planet, imparting to its races and nations in turn the fundamental truths of religion in the form most adapted to the idiosyncrasies of the recipients. Ac- cording to this view, the Founders of the great relig- ions are members of the one Brotherhood, and were aided in Their mission by many other members, lower in degree than Themselves, Initiates and dis- ciples of various grades, eminent in spiritual insight, in philosophic knowledge, or in purity of ethical wisdom. These guided the infant nations, gave them their polity, enacted their laws, ruled them as kings, taught them as phiosophers, guided them as priests ; all the nations of antiquity looked back to such mighty men, demigods and heroes, and they left

their traces in literature, in architecture, in legisla- tion.

That such men lived it seems difficult to deny in the face of universal tradition, of still existing Scrip- tures, and of prehistoric remains for the most part now in ruins, to say nothing of other testimony which the ignorant would reject. The sacred books of the East are the best evidence for the greatness of their authors, for who in later days or in modern times can even approach the spiritual sublimity of their religious thought, the intellectual splendor of their philosophy, the breadth and purity of their ethic? And when we find that these books contain teachings about God, man, and the universe identical in substance under much variety of outer appear- ance, it does not seem unreasonable to refer them to a central primary body of doctrine. To that body we give the name of the Divine Wisdom, in its Greek form : Theosophy.

As the origin and basis of all religions, it cannot be the antagonist of any; it is indeed their purifier, revealing the valuable inner meaning of much that has become mischievous in its external presentation by the perverseness of ignorance and the accretions of superstition; but it recognizes and defends itself in each, and seeks in each to unveil its hidden wis- dom. No man in becoming a Theosophist need cease to be a Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu; he will but acquire a deeper insight into his own faith, a firmer hold on its spiritual truths, a broader un-

derstandlng of its sacred teachings. As Theosophy of old gave birth to reHgions, so in modern times does it justify and defend them. It is the rock whence all of them were hewn, the hole of the pit whence all were digged. It justifies at the bar of intellectual criticism the deepest longings and emo- tions of the human

heart ; it verifies our hopes for man ; it gives us back ennobled our faith in God.

The truth of this statement becomes more and more apparent as we study the various world-Scrip- tures, and but a few selections from the wealth of material available will be sufficient to establish the fact, and to guide the student in his search for further verification. The main spiritual verities of religion may be summarized thus :

i. One eternal Infinite incognizable real Existence.

ii. From That the manifested God, unfolding from unity to duality, from duality to trinity.

iii. From the manifested Trinity many spiritual Intelligences, guiding the kosmic order.

iv. Man a reflection of the manifested God and therefore a trinity fundamentally, his inner and real Self being eternal, one with the Self of the universe.

V. His evolution by repeated incarnations, into which he is drawn by desire, and from which he is set free by knowledge and sacrifice, becoming divine in potency as he had ever been divine in latency.

China, with its now fossilized civilization, was peopled in old days by the Turanians, the fourth subdivision of the great Fourth Race, the race which

inhabited the lost continent of Atlantis, and spread its offshoots over the world. The Mongolians, the last subdivision of that same race, later reinforced its population, so that in China we have traditions from ancient days, preceding the settlement of the Fifth, or Aryan race in India. In the Ching Chang Ching, or Classic of Purity, we have a fragment of an ancient Scripture of singular beauty, breatliing out the spirit of restfulness and peace so character- istic of the "original teaching." Mr. Legge says in the introductory note to his translation* that the treatise —

Is attributed to Ko Yiian. (or Hsiian), a Taoisl of the Wu dynasty (a.d. 222-227), who is fabled to have attained to the state of an Immortal, and is generally so denominated. He is represented as a worker of miracles ; as addicted to intemper- ance, and very eccentric in his ways. When shipwrecked on one occasion, he emerged from beneath the water with his clothes unwet, and walked freely on its surface. Finally he ascended to the sky in bright day. All these accounts may safely be put down as the figments of a later time.

Such stories are repeatedly told of Initiates of various degrees, and are by no means necessarily '^figments," but we are more interested in Ko Yuan's own account of the book:

When I obtained the true Tao, I had recited this Ching [book] ten thousand times. It is what the Spirits of Heaven practise and had not been communicated to scholars of this lower world. I got it from the Divine Ruler of the Eastern Hwa ; he received it from the Divine Ruler of the Golden Gate ; he received it from the Royal-mother of the West.

Now the "Divine Ruler of the Golden Gate" was ♦ The Sacred Books of the East, vol. xl.

the title held by the Initiate who ruled the Toltec empire in Atlantis, and its use suggests that the Classic of Purity was brought thence to China when the Turanians separated off from the Toltecs. The idea is strengthened by the contents of the brief treatise, which deals with Tao — literally "the Way'* — the name by which the One Reality is indicated in the ancient Turanian and Mongolian religion. We read :

The Great Tao has no bodily form, but It produced and nourishes heaven and earth. The Great Tao has no passions, but It causes the sun and moon to revolve as they do. The Great Tao has no name, but It effects the growth and main- tenance of all things (i. 1).

This is the manifested God as unity, but duality

Now the Tao (shows itself in two forms), the Pure and the Turbid, and has (the two conditions of) Motion and Rest. Heaven is pure and earth is turbid; heaven moves and the earth is at rest. The masculine is pure and the feminine is turbid ; the masculine moves and the feminine is still. The radical (Purity) descended, and the (turbid) issue flowed abroad, and thus all things were produced (i. 2).

This passage is particularly interesting from the allusion to the active and receptive sides of Nature, the distinction between Spirit, the generator, and Matter, the nourisher, so familiar in later writings.

In the Tao Teh Ching the teaching as to the Un- manifested and the Manifested comes out very plainly :

The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and un-

changing Tao. The name that can be named is not the endur- ing and unchanging name. Having no name, it is the Origi- nator of heaven and earth ; having a name, it is the Mother of all things. . , . Under these two aspects it is really the same ; but as development takes place it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery (i. 1, 2, 4).

vStudents of the Kabalah will be reminded of one of the Divine Names, "the Concealed Mystery." Again :

There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before heaven and earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted). It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao. Making an effort to give it a name, I call it the Great. Great, it passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns (xxv. 1-3).

Very interesting it is to see here the idea of the forthgoing and the returning of the One Life, so familiar to us in Hindu literature. Familiar also seems the verse :

All things under heaven sprang from It as existent (and named) ; that existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named) (xl. 2).

That a universe might become, the Unmanifest must give forth the One from whom duality and trinity proceed :

The Tao produced One ; One produced Two ; Two produced Three ; Three produced all things. All things leave behind them the Obscurity (out of which they have come), and go forward to embrace the Brightness (into which they have

emerged), while they are harmonized by the Breath of Va- cancy (xlii. 1).

"Breath of Space" would be a happier translation. Since all is produced from It, It exists in all :

All-pervading is the great Tao. It may be found on the left hand and on the right. ... It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord; — It may be named in the smallest things. All things return (to their root and disappear), and do not know that it is It which presides over their doing so ; — It may be named in the great- est things (xxxiv. 1,2).

Chwang-ze (fourth century b. c.) in his presenta- tion of the ancient teachings, refers to the spiritual Intelligences coming from the Tao :

It has Its root and ground (of existence) in Itself. Before there were heaven and earth, from of old, there It was securely existing. From It came the mysterious existence of spirits, from It the mysterious existence of God (Bk. vi., Pt. i., Sec. vi. 7).

A number of the names of these Intelligences fol- low, but such beings are so well known to play a great part in the Chinese religion that we need not multiply quotations about them.

Man is regarded as a trinity, Taoism, says Mr.

Legge, recognizing in him the spirit, the mind, and

the body. This division comes out clearly in the

Classic of Purity, in the teaching that man must get

rid of desire to reach union with the One :

Now the spirit of man loves purity, but his mind disturbs it. The mind of man loves stillness, but his desires draw it away. If he could always send his desires away, his mind would of itself become still. Let his mind be made clean, and his spirit of itself becomes pure. . . . The reason why men are not able

to attain to this is because their minds have not been cleansed, and their desires have not been sent away. If one is able to send the desires away, when he then looks in at his mind it is no longer his; when he looks out at his body it is no longer his ; and when he looks farther off at external things, they are things which he has nothing to do with (i. 3,4).

Then, after giving the stages of indrawing to "the condition of perfect stillness," it is asked:

In that condition of rest independently of place, how can any desire arise? And when no desire any longer arises there is the true stillness and rest. That true (stillness) becomes (a) constant quality, and responds to external things (without error) ; yea, that true and constant quality holds possession of the nature. In such

constant response and constant stillness there is the constant purity and rest. He who has this abso- lute purity enters gradually into the (inspiration of the) True Tao (i. 5).

The supplied words "inspiration of" rather cloud than elucidate the meaning, for entering into the Tao is congruous with the whole idea and with other Scriptures.

On putting away of desire is laid much stress in Taoism; a commentator on the Classic of Purity re- marks that understanding the Tao depends on abso- lute purity, and

The acquiring this Absolute Purity depends entirely on the Putting away of Desire, which is the urgent practical lesson of the Treatise.

Always without desire we must be found.

If its deep mystery we would sound ;

Its outer fringe is all that we shall see (i.3).

Reincarnation does not seem to be so distinctly taught as might have been expected, although pas- sages are found which imply that the main idea was taken for granted and that the entity was considered as ranging through animal as well as human births. Thus we have from Chwang-ze the quaint and wise story of a dying man, to whom his friend said :

"Great indeed is the Creator ! What will He now make you to become? Where will He take you to? W^ill He make you the liver of a rat or the arm of an insect?" Szelai replied, "Wherever a parent tells a son to go, east, west, south, or north, he simply follows the command. . . . Here now is a great founder, casting his metal. If the meal were to leap up (in the pot) and say, 'I must be made into a (sword like the) Moysh,' the great founder would be sure to regard it as uncanny. So, again, when a form is being fashioned in the mould of the womb, if it were to say, 'I must become a man, I must become a man,' the Creator would be sure to regard it as uncanny. When we once understand that heaven and earth are a great melting-pot and the Creator a great founder, where can we have to go that shall not be right for us? We are born as from a quiet sleep and we d»e to a calm awaking" (Bk vi., Pt. i.. Sec. vi.).

Turning to the Fifth, the Aryan Race, we have the same teachings embodied in the oldest and greatest Aryan religion — the Brahmanical. The eter- nal Existence is proclaimed in the Chhandogyo- panishad as "Oneonly, with out a second," and it is written :

It willed, I shall multiply for the sake of the universe (vi. ii. 1,3).

The Supreme Logos, Brahman, is threefold — Being, Consciousness, Bliss, and it is said:

From This arise life, mind, and all the senses, ether, air, fire, water, earth the support of all {Mundakopanishad, ii. 3).

No grander descriptions of Deity can be found anywhere than in the Hindu Scriptures, but they are becoming so familiar that brief quotation will suffice. Let the following serve as specimens of their wealth

of gems :

Manifest, near, moving in the secret place, the great abode, herein rests all that moves, breathes, and shuts the eyes. Know That as to be worshipped, being and non-being, the best, beyond the knowledge of all creatures. Luminous, sub- tler than the subtle, in which the worlds and their denizens are infixed. That this imperishable Brahman ; That also life and voice and mind. ... In the golden highest sheath is spotless, partless Brahman; That the pure Light of hghts, known by the knowers of the Self. . . . That deathless Brahman is be- fore, Brahman behind, Brahman to the right and to the left, below, above, pervading; this Brahman truly is the all. This the best {Mundakopanishad, IL ii. 1, 2, 9, 11).

Beyond the universe. Brahman, the supreme, the great, hid- den in all beings according to their bodies, the one Breath of the whole universe, the Lord, whom knowing (men) become immortal. I know that mighty Spirit, the shining sun beyond the darkness. ... I know Him the unfading, the ancient, the Soul of all, omnipresent by His nature, whom the Brahman- knowers call unborn, whom they call eternal (Shvetdshva- taropanishad, iii. 7, 8, 21).

When there is no darkness, no day nor night, no being nor non-being (there is) Shiva even alone ; That the indestructible. That is to be worshipped by Savitri, from That came forth the ancient wisdom. Not above nor below, nor in the midst, can He be comprehended. Nor is there any similitude for Him whose name is infinite glory. Not with the sight is established His form, none may by the eye behold Him ; they who know

Him by the heart and by the mind, dwelling in the heart, be- come immortal (ibid., iv. 18-20).

That man in his inner Self is one with the Self of the universe — "I am That" — is an idea that so thor- oughly pervades all Hindu thought that man is often referred to as the "divine town of Brahman,"* the "town of nine gates/'f God dwelling in the cav- ity of his heart.J

In one manner is to be seen (the Being) which cannot be proved, which is eternal, without spot, higher than the ether, unborn, the great eternal Soul. . . . This great unborn Soul is the same which abides as the intelligent (soul) in all living creatures, the same which abides as ether in the heart ; § in him it sleeps; it is the Subduer of all, the Ruler of all, the sov- ereign Lord of all ; it does not become greater by good works nor less by evil work. It is the Ruler of all, the sovereign Lord of all beings, the Preserver of all beings, the Bridge, the LTpholder of the worlds, so that they fall not to ruin (Brihad- dranyakopanishad, IV. iv. 20, 22, Trs. by Dr. E. Roer).

When God is regarded as the evolver of the uni- verse, the three- fold character comes out very clear- ly as Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, or again as Vishnu sleeping under the waters, the Lotus springing from Him, and in the Lotus Brahma. Man is likewise threefold, and in the Mdndukyopanishad the Self is described as conditioned by the physical body, the subtle body, and the mental body, and then rising

* Mimdakopanishad, 11. ii. 7. t Shvetashvataropanishad, iii. 14. % Ibid., ii.

§ The "ether in the heart" is a mystical phrase used to inid- cate the One, who is said to dwell therein.

out of all into the One "without duality." From the Trimurti (Trinity) come many Gods, connected with the administration of the universe, as to whom it is said in the Brihaddranyakopanishad :

Adore Him, ye Gods, after whom the year by rolling days is completed, the Light of lights, as the immortal Life (IV. iv. 16).

It is hardly necessary to even mention the pres- ence in Brahmanism of the teaching of reincarna- tion, since its whole philosophy of life turns on this pilgrimage of the Soul through many births and deaths, and not a book could be taken up in which this truth is not taken for granted. By desires man is bound to this wheel of change, and therefore by knowledge, devotion, and the destruction of desires, man must set himself free. When the Soul knows God it is liberated.* The intellect purified by knowledge beholds Him.f Knowledge joined to de- votion finds the abode of Brahman.J Whoever knows Brahman becomes Brahman.§ When desires cease the mortal becomes immortal and obtains Brahman.||

Buddhism, as it exists in this northern form, is quite at one with the more ancient faiths, but in the southern form it seems to have let slip the idea of the Logic Trinity as of the One Existence from which They come forth. The Logos in His triple manifestation is : the First Logos, Amitabha, the

Boundless Light; the Second, Avalokiteshvara, or Padmapani (Chenresi) ; the Third, Mandjusri— "the representative of creative wisdom, corresponding to Brahma."* Chinese Buddhism apparently does not contain the idea of a primordial Existence, beyond the Logos, but Nepaulese Buddhism postulates Adi-Buddha, from Whom Amitabha arises. Padmapani is said by Eitel to be the representative of compas- sionate Providence and to correspond partly with Shiva, but as the aspect of the Buddhist Trinity that sends forth incarnations He appears rather to represent the same idea as Vishnu, to whom He is allied by bearing the Lotus (fire and water, or Spirit and Matter as the primary constituents of the uni- verse). Reincarnation and Karma are so much the fundamentals of Buddhism that it is hardly worth while to insist on them save to note the way of lib- eration, and to remark that as the Lord Buddha was a Hindu preaching to Hindus, Brahmanical doc- trines are taken for granted constantly in His teach- ing, as matters of course. He was a purifier and a reformer, not an iconoclast, and struck at the accre- tions due to ignorance, not at fundamental truths belonging to the Ancient Wisdom:

Those beings who walk in the way of the law that has been well taught, reach the other shore of the great sea of birth and death, that is difficult to cross (Uddnavarga, xxix. 37).

Desire binds man, and must be gotten rid of:

It is hard for one who is held by the fetters of desire to free * Eitel's Sanskrit Chinese Dictionary, sub voce.

himself of them, says the Blessed One. The steadfast, who care not for the happiness of deires, cast them off and do soon depart (to Nirvana). . . . Mankind has no lasting desires: they are impermanent in them who experience them ; free yourself then from what cannot last, and abide not in the sojourn of death (ibid., ii. 6, 8).

He who has destroyed desires for (worldly) goods, sinful- ness, the bonds of the eye of the flesh, who has torn up desire by the very root, he I declare, is a Brahmana. (Ibid., xxxiii 68).

And a Brahmana is a man "having his last body,"* and is defined as one

Who, knowing his former abodes (existences), perceives heaven and hell, the Muni, who has found the way to put an end to birth (Ibid., xxxiii. 55).

In the exoteric Hebrew Scriptures, the idea of a Trinity does not come out strongly, though duality is apparent, and the God spoken of is obviously the Logos, not the One Unmanifest:

I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil ; I am the Lord that doeth all these things (Is., xlvii. 7),

Philo, however, has the doctrine of the Logos very clearly, and it is found in the Fourth Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word [Logos] and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made (S. John i. 1, 3).

In the Kabalah the doctrine of the One, the Three, the Seven, and then the many, is plainly taught :

The Ancient of the Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a form, yet also has not any form. It has a form through which the universe is maintained. It also has not any form as It cannot be comprehended. When It first took this form [Kether, the Crown, the First Logos] It permitted to proceed from It nine brilliant Lights [Wisdom and the Voice, forming with Kether the Triad, and then the seven lower Sephiroth]. ... It is the Ancient of the Ancients, the Mystery of the Mysteries, the Unknown of the Unknown. It has a form which appertains to It, since It appears (through it) to us, as the Ancient Man above all, as the Ancient of the Ancients, and that which there is the Most Unknown among the Unknown. But under that form by which It makes Itself known. It however still remains the Unknown (Isaac Myer's Qabba- lah, from the Zohar, pp. 274, 275).

Myer points out that the "form" is "not 'the An- cient of ALL the Ancients,' who is the Ain Soph." Again :

Three Lights are in the Holy Upper which Unite as One; and they are the basis of the Thorah, and this opens the door to all. . . . Come, see ! the mystery of the word. These arc three degrees and each exists by itself, and yet all are One and are knotted in One, nor are they separated one from an- other. . . . Three come out from One, One exists in Three, it is the force between Two, Two nourish One, One nourishes many sides, thus All is One {ihid., 373,375,376).

Needless to say that the Hebrews held the doc- trine of many Gods — "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods ?"* — and of multitudes of sub- ordinate ministrants, the "Sons of God," the "An- gels of the Lord," the "Ten Angelic Hosts."

Of the commencement of the universe the Zohar teaches :

In the beginning was the Will of the King, prior to any ex- istence which came into being through emanation from this Will. It sketched and engraved the forms of all things that were to be manifested from concealment into view, in the supreme and dazzHng Ught of the Quadrant [the Sacred Te- tractys] (Myer's Qabbalah, pp. 194, 195).

Nothing can exist in which the Deity is not im- manent, and with regard to Reincarnation it is taught that the Soul is present in the divine Idea ere coming to earth; if the Soul remained quite pure during its trial it escaped rebirth, but this seems to have been only a theoretical possibility, as it is said :

All souls are subject to revolution (metempsychosis a'leen o'gilgoolah), but men do not know the ways of the Holy One: blessed be It ! they are ignorant of the way they have been judged in all time, and before they came into this world and when they have quitted it (ibid., p. 198).

Traces of this belief occur both in the Hebrew and Christian exo.teric Scriptures, as in the belief that Elijah would return, and later that he had returned in John the Baptist.

Turning to glance at Egypt, we find there from hoariest antiquity its famous Trinity, Ra, Osiris-Isis as the dual Second Logos, and Horus. The great hymn to Amun-Ra will be remembered.

The Gods bow before Thy Majesty by exalting the Souls of That which produceth them . . . and say to Thee : Peace to all emanations from the unconscious Father of the conscious Fathers of the Gods. . . . Thou Producer of beings, we adore the Souls which emanate from thee. Thou begettest us, O Thou Unknown, and we greet Thee in worshipping each God-

Soul which descendeth from Thee and liveth in us (quoted in Secret Doctrine, iii. p. 486).

The "conscious Fathers of the Gods" are the LoGOi, the "unconscious Father" is the One Exist- ence, unconscious not as being less but as being infinitely more than what we call consciousness, a limited thing.

In the fragments of the Book of the Dead we can study the conceptions of the reincarnating of the human S'oul, of its pilgrimage towards and its ulti- mate union with the Logos. The famous papyrus of "the scribe Ani, triumphant in peace," is full of touches that remind the reader of the Scriptures of other faiths; his journey through the underworld, his expectation of re-entering his body (the form taken by reincarnation among the Egyptians), his identification with the Logos :

Saith Osiris Ani : I am the great One, son of the great One ; I am Fire, the son of Fire. ... I have knit together my bones, I have made myself whole and sound ; I have become young once more; I am Osiris, the Lord of eternity (xliii. 1, 4).

In Pierret's recension of the Book of the Dead we find the striking passage:

I am the being of mysterious names who prepared for him- self dwellings for milUons of years (p. 22) . Heart, that comest to me from my mother, my heart necessary to my existence on earth. . . . Heart, that comest to me from my mother, heart that is necessary to me for my transformation (pp. 113, 114).

In Zoroastrianism we find the conception of the One Existence, imaged as Boundless Space, whence arises the Logos, the creator Auharmazd:

Supreme in omniscience and goodness and unrivalled in splendor; the religion of light is the place of Auharmazd (The Bundahis, Sacred Books of the East, v. 3, 4, v. 2.)

To him in the Yasna, the chief liturgy of the Za- rathustrians, homage is first paid:

I announce and I (will) complete (my Yasna [worship] to Ahura Mazda, the Creator, the radiant and glorious, the great- est and the best, the most beautiful (?) (to our conceptions), the most firm, the wisest, and the one of all whose body is most perfect, who attains his ends the most infallibly, because of His righteous order, to Him who disposes our minds aright, who sends His joy-creating grace afar; who made us and has fashioned us, and who has nourished and protected us, who is the most bounteous Spirit {Sacred Books of the East, xxxi. pp. 195, 196).

The worshipper then pays homage to the Ame- shaspends and other Gods, but the supreme mani- fested God, the Logos, is not here presented as tri- une. As with the Hebrews, there was a tendency in the exoteric faith to lose sight of this fundamental truth. Fortunately we can trace the primitive teaching, though it disappeared in later times from the popular belief. Dr. Haug, in his Essays on the P arsis (translated by Dr. West and forming vol. v. of Triibner's Oriental Series), states that Ahura- mazda — Auharmazd or Hormazd — is the Supreme Being, and that from him were produced

Two primeval causes, which, though different, were united and produced the world of material things as well as that of the spirit (p. 303).

These were called twins and are everywhere pres- ent, in Ahuramazda as well as in man. One pro-

duces reality, the other non-reaUty, and it is these who in later Zoroastrianism became the opposing Spirits of good and evil. In the earlier teachings they evidently formed the Second Logos, duality being his characteristic mark.

The "good" and "bad" are merely Light and Dark- ness, Spirit and Matter, the fundamental 'twins" of the Universe, the Two from the One.

Criticising the later idea, Dr. Haug says:

Such is the original Zoroastrian notion of the two creative Spirits, who form only two parts of the Divine Being. But in the course of time this doctrine of the great founder was changed and corrupted, in consequence of misunderstandings and false interpretations. Spentomainyush [the "good spirit"] was taken as a name of Ahuramazda Himself, and then of course Angromainyush [the "evil spirit"], by becoming entirely separated from Ahuramazda, was regarded as the constant adversary of Ahuramazda ; thus the Dualism of God and Devil arose (p. 205).

Dr. Haug^s view seems to be supported by the Gat ha Ahiinavaiti, given with the other Gathas by "the archangels" to Zoroaster or Zarathustra:

In the beginning there was a pair of twins, two spirits, each

of a peculiar activity; these are the good and the base

And these two spirits united created the first (the material things) ; one the reahty, the other the non-reality. . . . And to succor this life (to increase it) Armaiti came with wealth, the good and true mind; she, the

everlasting one, created the material world. . . . All perfect things are garnered up in the splendid residence of the Good Mind, the Wise and the Right- eous, who are known as the best beings {Yas. xxx. 3, 4, 7, 10: Dr. Haug's Trans., pp. 149-151).

Here the three LoGoi are seen, Ahuramazda the first, the supreme Life; in and from him the "twins," the Second Logos; then Armaiti the Mind, the Creator of the Universe, the Third Logos.* Later Mithra appears, and in the exoteric faith clouds the primitive truth to some extent. Of him it is said :

Whom Ahura Mazda has established to maintain and look over all this moving world; who, never sleeping, wakefully guards the creation of Mazda (Mihir Yast., xxvii. 103 ; Sacred Books of the East, xviii.)-

He was a subordinate God, the Light of Heaven, as Varuna was the Heaven itself, one of the great ruling Intelligences. The highest of these ruling Intelligences were the six Ameshaspends, headed by the Good Thought of Ahuramazda, Vohuman —

Who have charge of the whole material creation (Sacred Books of the East, v. p. 10, note).

Reincarnation does not seem to be taught in the books which, so far, have been translated, and the belief is not current among modern. Parsis. But we do find the idea of the Spirit in man as a spark that is to become a flame and to be reunited to the Su- preme Fire, and this must imply a development for which rebirth is a necessity. Nor will Zoroastrian- ism ever be understood until we recover the Chal- dcean Oracles and allied writings, for there is its real root.

* Armaita was at first Wisdom and the Goddess of Wisdom. Later, as the Creator, She became identified with the earth, and was worshipped as the Goddess of Earth.

Travelling westward to Greece, we meet with the Orphic system, described with such abundant learn- ing by Mr. G. R. S. Mead in his work Orpheus. The Ineffable Thrice-unknown Darkness was the name given to the One Existence.

According to the theology of Orpheus, all things originate from an immense principle, to which through the imbecility and poverty of human conception we give a name, though it is perfectly ineffable, and in the reverential language of the Egyptians is a thrice unknown darkness, in contemplation of which all knowledge is refunded into ignorance (Thomas Taylor, quoted in Orpheus, p. 93).

From this the "Primordial Triad," Universal Good, Universal Soul, Universal Mind, again the Logic Trinity. Of this Mr. Mead writes:

The first Triad, which is manifestable to intellect, is but a reflection of, or substitute for the Unmanifestable, and its hypostases are: (a) the Good, which is super-essential; (b) Soul (the World Soul), which is a self-motive essence; and (c) Intellect (or the Mind), which is an impartible, immovable essence (ibid., p. 94).

After this, a series of ever-descending Triads, showing the characteristics of the first in diminishing splendor, until man is reached, who

Has in him potentially the sum and substance of the uni- verse. . . . "The race of men and gods is one" (Pindar, who was a Pythagorean, quoted by Clemens, Strom, v. 709). . . . Thus man was called the Microcosm or little world, to distin- guish him from the universe or great world (ibid., p. 271).

He has the Nous, or real mind, the Logos or ration- al part, the Alogos or irrational part, the two latter again forming a Triad, and thus presenting the more

elaborate septenary division. The man was also re- garded as having three vehicles, the physical and subtle bodies and the luciform body or augoeides, that

Is the "causal body," or karmic vesture of the soul, in which its destiny, or rather all the seeds of past causation are stored. This is the "thread-souL," as it is sometimes called, the "body" that passes over from one incarnation to.another (ibid., p. 284)

Together with all the adherents of the Mysteries in every land the Orphics believed in reincarnation (ibid., p. 292).

To this Mr. Mead brings abundant testimony, and he shows that it was taught by Plato, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and others. Only by virtue could men escape from the life-wheel.

Taylor, in his notes to the Select Works of Plo- tinus, quotes from Damascius as to the teachings of Plato on the One beyond the One, the unmanifest Existence :

Perhaps, indeed, Plato leads us ineffably through the one as a medium to the ineffable beyond the one which is now the subject of discussion; and this by an ablation of the one in the same manner as he leads to the one by an ablation of other things. . . . That which is beyond the one is to be honored in the most perfect silence. . . . The one indeed wills to be by itself, but with no other; but the unknown beyond the one is perfectly ineffable, which we acknowledge we neither know, nor are ignorant of, but which has about itself super-igno- rance. Hence by proximity to this the one itself is darkened; for being near to the immense principle, if it be lawful so to speak, it remains as it were in the adytum of the truly mystic silence. . . . The first is above the one and all things, being more simple than either of these (pp. 341-343).

The Pythagorean, Platonic, and Neo-Platonic schools have so many points of contact with Hindu and Buddhist thought that their issue from one fountain is obvious. R. Garbe in his work. Die Sdmkhya Philosophie (iii. pp. 85 to 105) presents many of these points, and his statement may be summarized as follows :

The most striking is the resemblance — or more correctly the identity — of the doctrine of the One and Only in the Upanishads and the Eleatic school. Xenophanes* teaching of the unity of God and the Kosmos and of the changelessness of the One, and even more that of Parmenides, who held that reality is ascribable only to the One unborn, indestructible and omnipresent, while all that is manifold and subject to change is but an appear- ance, and further that Being and Thinking are the same — these doctrines are completely identical with the essential contents of the Upanishads and of the Vedantic philosophy which springs from them. But even earlier still the view of Thales, that all that exists has sprung from Water, is curiously like the Vaidik doctrine that the Universe arose from the waters. Later on Anaximander assumed as the basis

(dpxv^ ^^ ^^^ things an eternal, infinite, and in- definite Substance, from which all definite sub- stances proceed and into which they return — an as- sumption identical with that which lies at the root of the Sankhya, vis., the Prakriti from which the whole material side of the universe evolved. And his famous saying ndvTa pel expresses the character-

istic view of the Sankhya that all things are ever changing under the ceaseless activity of the three gunas. Empedocles again taught theories of trans- migration and evolution practically the same as those of the Sankhyas, while his theory that nothing can come into being which does not already exist is even more closely identical with a characteristically San- khyan doctrine.

Both Anaxagoras and Democritus also present several points of close agreement, especially the lat- ter's view as to the nature and position of the Gods, and the same applies, notably in some curious mat- ters of detail to Epicurus. But it is, however, in the teachings of Pythagoras that we find the closest and most frequent identities of teachings and argu- mentation, explained as due to Pythagoras himself having visited India and learnt his philosophy there, as tradition asserts. In later centuries we find some peculiarly Sankhyan and Buddhist ideas playing a prominent part in Gnostic thought. The following quotation from Lassen, cited by Garbe on P. 97, shows this very clearly :

Buddhism in general distinguishes clearly between Spirit and Light, and does not regard the latter as immaterial; but a view of Light is found among them which is closely related to that of the Gnostics. According to this, Light is the mani- festation of Spirit in matter; the intelligence thus clothed in Light comes into relation with matter, in which the Light can be lessened and at last quite obscured, in which case the Intel- ligence falls finally into complete unconsciousness. Of the highest Intelligence it is maintained that it is neither Light nor Not-Light, neither Darkness nor Not-Darkness, since all

these expressions denote relations of the Intelligence to the Light, which indeed in the beginning was free from these con- nections, but later on encloses the Intelligence and mediates its connection with matter. It follows from this that the Buddhist view ascribes to the highest Intelligence the power to produce light from itself, and that in this respect also there is an agreement between Buddhism and Gnosticism.

Garbe here points out that, as regards the features alluded to, the agreement between Gnosticism and the Sankhya is very much closer than that with Buddhism, for while these views as to the relations between Light and Spirit pertain to the later phases of Buddhism, and are not at all fundamental to, or characteristic of it as such, the Sankhya teaches clearly and precisely that Spirit is Light. Later still the influence of the Sankhya thought is very plainly evident in the Neo-Platonic writers ; while the doctrine of the Logos or Word, though not of Sankhyan origin, shows even in its details that it has been derived from India, where the conception of Vach, the Divine Word, plays so prominent a part in the Brahmanical system.

Coming to the Christian religion, contempora- neous with the Gnostic and Neo-Platonic systems, we shall find no difficulty in tracing most of the same fundamental teachings with which we have now become so familiar. The threefold Logos ap- pears as the Trinity; the First Logos, the fount of all life being the Father; the dual-natured Second Logos the Son, God-man; the Third, the creative Mind, the Holy Ghost, whose brooding over the waters of chaos brought forth the worlds. Then

come "the seven Spirits of God"* and the hosts of archangels and angels. Of the One Existence from which all comes and into which all returns, but little is hinted, the Nature that by searching cannot be found out; but the great doctors of the Church Catholic always posit the unfathomable Deity, in- comprehensible, infinite, and therefore necessarily but One and partless. Man is made in the "image of God,"f and is consequently triple in his nature — Spirit and Soul and body;t he is a "habitation of God,"§ the "temple of God,"|| the "temple of the Holy Ghost,"^ — phrases that exactly echo the Hindu teaching. The doctrine of reincarnation is rather taken for granted in the New Testament than dis- tinctly taught ; thus Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, declares that he is Elias "which was for to <:ome,"** referring to the words of Malachi, "I will send you Elijah the prophet" iff and again, when asked as to Elijah coming before the Messiah, He an- swered that "Elias is come already and they knew him not.^Jt So again we find the disciples taking re- incarnation for granted in asking whether blindness from birth was a punishment for a man's sin, and Jesus in answer not rejecting the possibility of ante^ natal sin, but only excluding it as causing the blind- ness in the special instance.§§ The remarkable phrase applied to "him that overcometh" in Rev.

iii, 12, that he shall be "a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out," has been taken as signifying escape from rebirth. From the writings of some of the Christian Fathers a good case may be made out for a current belief in reincar- nation; some argue that only the pre-existence of the Soul is taught, but this view does not seem to me supported by the evidence.

The unity of moral teaching is not less striking than the unity of the conceptions of the universe and of the experiences of those who rose out of the prison of the body into the freedom of the higher spheres. It is clear that this body of primeval teaching was in the hands of definite custodians, who had schools in which they taught, disciples who studied their doctrines. The identity) of these schools and of their discipline stands out plainly when we study the moral teaching, the demands made on the pupils, and the mental and spiritual states to which they were raised. A caustic division is made in the Tao Teh Ching of the types of schol- ars:

Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about Tao, earnestly carry it into practice. Scholars of the middle class, when they have heard about it, seem now to keep it and now to lose it. Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it {Sacred Books of the East, xxxix., op. cit. xli. 1).

The sage puts his own person last, and yet it Is found in the foremost places; he treats his person as if it were foreign to him, and yet that person is preserved. It is not because he

has no personal and private ends that therefore such ends are reaUzed? (vii. 2.) He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion, and therefore he is distin- guished; from self -boasting, and therefore his merit is ac- knowledged; from self-complacency, and therefore he ac- quires superiority. It is because he is thus free from striving that therefore no one in the world is able to strive with him (xxii. 2). There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot ; no fault greater than the wish to be getting (xlvi. 2). To those who are good (to me) I am good; and to those who are not good (to me) I am also good; and thus (all) get to be good. To those who are sincere (with me) I am sincere ; and to those who are not sincere (with me) I am also

sincere; and thus (all) get to be sincere (xHx. 1). He who has in himself abun- dantly the attributes (of the Tao) is Hke an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him (Iv. 1). I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness; the second is economy; the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others. . . . Gentleness is sure to be victorious, even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his (very) gentleness protecting him (Ixvii. 2, 4).

Among the Hindus there were selected scholars deemed worthy of special instruction to whom the Guru imparted the secret teachings, while the gen- eral rules of right living may be gathered from Manu's Ordinances, the Upanishads, the Mahdhhdrata and many other treatises :

Let him say what is true, let him say what is pleasing ,let him utter no disagreeable truth, and let him utter no agreea- ble falsehood; that is the eternal law (Manu. iv. 138). Giv- ing no pain to any creature, let him slowly accumulate spirit- ual merit (iv. 238). For that twice-born man, by whom not

the smallest danger even is caused to created things, there will be no danger from any (quarter) after he is freed from his body (vi. 40). Let him patiently bear hard words, let him not insult anybody, and let him not become anybody's enemy for the sake of this (perishable) body. Against an angry man let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed (vi. 47, 48). Freed from passion, fear and anger, thinking on Me, taking refuge in Me, purified in the fire of wisdom, many have entered into My Being (Bhagavad Gita, iv. 10). Supreme joy is for this Yogi whose Manas is peace- ful, whose passion-nature is calmed, who is sinless and of the nature of Brahman (vi. 27). He who beareth no ill-will to any being, friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, ever content, harmonious, with the self controlled, resolute, with Manas and Buddhi dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me (xii. 13, 14).

If we turn to the Buddha, we find Him with His

Arhats, to whom His secret teachings were given;

The wise man through earnestness, virtue, and purity makes himself an island which no flood can submerge (Uddnavarga, iv. 5). The wise man in this world holds fast to faith and wisdom, these are his greatest treasures ; he casts aside all other riches (x. 9). He who bears ill-will to those who bear ill-will can never become pure; but he who feels no ill-will pacifies those who hate ; as hatred brings misery to mankind, the sage knows no hatred (xiii. 12). Overcome anger by not being angered; overcome evil by good; overcome avarice by liberality; overcome falsehoods by truth (xx. 18).

The Zoroastrian is taught to praise Ahuramazda,

What is fairest, what pure, what immortal, what brilliant, all that is good. The good spirit we honor, the good kingdom we honor, and the good law, and the good wisdom (Yasna,

xxxvii.). May there come to this dweUing contentment, blessing, guilelessness, and wisdom of the pure (Yasna, lix.). Purity is the best good. Happiness, happiness is to him : namely, to the best pure in purity (Ashem-vahu) . All good thoughts, words, and works are done with knowledge. All evil thoughts, words,

and works are not done with knowledge (Mispa Kumata). (Selected from the Avesta in Ancient Iranian and Zoroastrian Morals, by Dhunjibhoy Jamsetji Medhora).

The Hebrew had his "schools of the prophets" and his Kabbalah, and in the exoteric books we find the accepted moral teachings:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and who stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceit- fully (Pj. xxiv. 3, 4). What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah, vi. 8.) The lip of truth shall be esta- lished for ever ; but a lying tongue is but for a moment (Prov. xii. 19). Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? (Is. Iviii. 6, 7.)

The Christian Teacher had His secret instructions

for His disciples,* and He bade them:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine (Matt. vii. 6).

For public teaching we may refer to the beati- tudes of the Sermon on the Mount, and to such doc- trines as:

I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which de- spite fully use you and persecute you. ... Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. V. 44, 48). He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it (x.39). Who- soever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (xviii. 4). The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law (Gal. V. 22, 23). Let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God (1 John iv. 7).

The school of Pythagoras and those of the Neo- Platonists kept up the tradition for Greece, and we know that Pythagoras gained some of his learning in India, while Plato studied and was initiated in the schools of Egypt. More precise information has been published of the Grecian schools than of others; the Pythagorean had pledged disciples as well as an outer discipline, the inner circle passing through three degrees during five years of probation. (For details see G. R. S. Mead's Orpheus^ pp, 263 et seq.) The outer discipline he describes as follows:

We must first give ourselves up entirely to God. When a man prays he should never ask for any particular benefit, fully convinced that that will be given which is right and proper, and according to the wisdom of God and not the subject of our own selfish desires (Diod. Sic, ix. 41). By virtue alone does man arrive at blessedness, and this is the exclusive privilege of a rational being (Hippodamus, De Felicitate, ii., Orelli, Opusc. Grcecor. Sent, et Moral., ii. 284). In himself, of his own nature, man is neither good nor happy, but

he may be- come so by the teaching of the true doctrine (fia^T^creugKal npovolag 3

noTidierat) — (Hippo, ibid.). The most sacred duty is filial

piety. "God showers his blessings on him who honors and

reveres the author of his days," says Pampelus (De Paren-

tibus, Orelli, op. cit., ii. 345). Ingratitude towards one's

parents is the blackest of all crimes, writes Perictione (ibid., p. 350), who is supposed to have been the mother of Plato. The cleanliness and dehcacy of all Pythagorean writings were

remarkable (GElian, Hist. Var., xiv. 19). In all that con- cerns chastity and marriage their principles are of the utmost purity. Everywhere the great teacher recommends chastity and temperance ; but at the same time he directs that the married should first become parents before living a life of ab- solute celibacy, in order that children might be born under favorable conditions for continuing the holy life and success- sion of the Sacred Science (Jamblichus, Vit. Pythag., and Hierocl., ap. Stob. Serm., xlv. 14). This is exceedingly in- teresting, for it is precisely the same regulation that is laid down in the Manava Dharma Shastra, the great Indian Code. . . . Adultery was most sternly condemned (Jamb., ibid.). Moreover, the most gentle treatment of the wife by the husband was enjoined, for had he not taken her as his companion "before the Gods"? (See Lascaulx, Zur Geschichte der Ehe bei den Griechen, in the Mem. de I' Acad, de Baviire, vii. 107, sq.).

Marriage was not an animal union, but a spiritual tie. Therefore, in her turn, the wife should love her husband even more than herself, and in all things be devoted and obedient. It is further interesting to remark that the finest characters among women with which Ancient Greece presents us were formed in the school of Pythagoras, and the same is true of the men. The authors of antiquity are agreed that this discipline had succeeded in producing the highest examples not only of the purest chastity and sentiment, but also a simplicity of manners, a delicacy, and a taste for serious pursuits which was unparalleled. This is admitted even by Christian writers (see Justin, xx. 4.). . . . Among the members of the school the idea of justice directed all their acts, while they observed

the strictest tolerance and compassion in their mutual relation- ships. For justice is the principle of all virtue, as Polus (ap. Stob., Serm., viii., ed. Schow, p. 232) teaches: 'tis justice which maintains peace and balance in the soul ; she is the mother of good order in all communities, makes concord be- tween husband and wife, love between master and servant.

The word of a Pythagorean was also his bond. And finally a man should live so as to be ever ready for death (Hippolytus, Phiios., vi.). Uhid., pp. 263-267.)

The treatment of the virtues in the Neo-Platonic schools is interesting, and the distinction is clearly made between morality and spiritual development, or, as Plotinus put it, "The endeavor is not to be without sin, but to be a God."* The lowest stage was the becoming without sin by acquiring the "political virtues" which made a man perfect in conduct (the physical and ethical being below these), the reason controlling

and adorning the irrational nature. Above these were the cathartic, pertaining to reason alone, and which liberated the Soul from the bonds of generation ; the theoretic, lifting the Soul into touch with natures superior to itself; and the paradigmatic, giving it a knowledge of true being :

Hence he who energizes according to the practical virtues is a worthy man; but he who energizes according to the cathar- tic virtues is a demoniacal man, or is also a good defnon.f He who energizes according to the intellectual virtues alone is a God. But he who energizes according to the paradigmatic

* Select Works of Plotinus, trans, by Thomas Taylor, ed. 1895, p. 11.

t A good spiritual intelligence, as the daimon of Socrates.

virtues is the Father of the Gods. (Note on Intellectual Prudence, pp. 325-332.)

By various practices the disciples were taught to escape from the body, and to rise into higher re- gions. As grass is drawn from a sheath, the inner man was to draw himself from his bodily casing.* The "body of light" or "radiant body" of the Hin- dus is the "luciform body" of the Neo-Platonists, and in this the man rises to find the Self:

Not grasped by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses (lit., Gods), nor by austerity, nor by religious rites; by serene wisdom, by the pure essence only, doth one see the partless One in meditation. This subtle Self is to be known by the mind in which the fivefold life is sleeping. The mind of all creatures is instinct with [these] lives; in this, purified, manifests the Self (Mundakopanishad, III. ii. 8, 9).

Then alone can man enter the region where sepa- ration is not, where "the spheres have ceased." In G. R. S. Mead's Introduction to Taylor's Plotinns he quotes from Plotinus a description of a sphere which is evidently the Turiya of the Hindus :

They likewise see all things, not those with which genera- tion, but those with which essence is present. And they per- ceive themselves in others. For all things there are diapha- nous; and nothing is dark and resisting, but everything is apparent to every one internally and throughout. For light everywhere meets with light; since everything contains all things in itself and again sees all things in another. So that all things are everywhere and all is all. Each thing likewise is everything. And the splendor there is infinite. For every- thing there is great, since even that which is small is great.

The sun too which is there is all the stars ; and again each star is the sun and all the stars. In each, however, a different property predominates, but at the same time all things are visible in each. Motion likewise there is pure ; for the motion is not confounded by a mover different from it (p. Ixxiii,).

A description which is a failure, because the re- gion is one above describing by mortal language, but a description that could only have been written by one whose eyes had been opened.

A whole volume might easily be filled with the similarities between the religions of the world, but the above imperfect statement must suffice as a pref- ace to the study of Theosophy, to that which is a fresh and fuller presentment to the world of the an- cient truths on which it has ever been fed. All these

similarities point to a single source, and that is the Brotherhood of the White Lodge, the Hierarchy of Adepts who watch over and guide the evolution of humanity, and who have preserved these truths un- impaired; from time to time, as necessity arose, re- asserting them in the ears of men. From otner worlds, from earlier humanities. They came to help our globe, evolved by a process comparable to that now going on with ourselves, and that will be more intelligible when we have completed our present study than it may now appear; and They have afforded this help, reinforced by the flower of our own humanity, from the earliest times until to-day. Still They teach eager pupils, showing the path and guiding the disciple's steps ; still They may be reached by all who seek Them, bearing in their

hands the sacrificial fuel of love, of devotion, of un- selfish longing to know in order to serve; still They carry out the ancient discipline, still unveil the an- cient Mysteries. The two pillars of Their Lodge gateway are Love and Wisdom, and through its strait portal can only pass those from whose shoul- ders has fallen the burden of desire and selfishness. A heavy task lies before us, and beginning on the physical plane we shall climb slowly upwards ; but a bird's-eye view of the great sweep of evolution and of its purpose may help us, ere we begin our detailed study in the world that surrounds us. A Logos, ere a system has begun to be, has in His mind the whole, existing as idea — all forces, all forms, all that in due process shall emerge into objective life. He draws the circle of manifestation within which He wills to energize, and circumscribes Himself to be the life of His universe. As we watch we see strata appearing of successive densities, till seven vast regions are apparent, and in these centres of energy appear whirlpools of matter that separate from each other, until when the processes of separation and of con- densation are over — so far as we are here concerned — we see a central sun, the physical symbol of the Logos, and seven great planetary chains, each chain consisting of seven globes. Narrowing down our view to the chain of which our globe is one, we see life-waves sweep round it forming the kingdoms of nature, the three elemental, the mineral, vegetable, animal, human. Narrowing down our view still further to our own globe and its surroundings, we

watch human evolution, and see man developing self-consciousness by a series of many life-periods ; then centring on a single man we trace his growth and see that each life-period has a threefold division, that each is linked to all life-periods behind it reap- ing their results, and to all life-periods before it sowing their harvests, by a law that cannot be pro- ken; that thus man may climb upwards with each life-period adding to his experience, each life-period lifting him higher in purity, in devotion, in intellect, in power of usefulness, until at last he stands where They stand who are now the Teachers, fit to pay to his younger brothers the debt he owes to Them.

We have just seen that the source from which a universe proceeds is a manifested Diivne Being, to whom in the modern form of the Ancient Wisdom the name Logos, or Word, has been given. The name is drawn from Greek philosophy, but perfectly expresses the ancient idea, the Word which emerges from the Silence, the Voice, the Sound, by which the worlds come into being. We must now trace the evolution of spirit-matter, in order that we may un- derstand something of the nature of the materials with which we have to deal on the physical plane, or physical world. For it is in the potentialities wrapped up, involved, in the spirit-matter of the physical world that lies the possibility of evolution. The whole process is an unfolding, self-moved from within and aided by intelligent beings without, who can retard or quicken

evolution, but cannot trans- cend the capacities inherent in the materials. Some idea of these earliest stages of the world's "becom- ing" is therefore necessary, although any attempt to go into minute details would carry us far beyond the limits of such an elementary treatise as the present. A very cursory sketch must suffice.

Coming forth from the depths of the One Exist- ence, from the One beyond all thought and all speech, a Locos, by imposing on Himself a limit, circumscribing voluntarily the range of His own Being, becomes the manifested God, and tracing the limiting sphere of His activity thus outlines the area of His universe. Within that sphere the universe is born, is evolved, and dies; it lives, it moves, it has its being in Him ; its matter is His emanation ; its forces and energies are currents of His life; He is immanent in every atom, all-pervading, all sustain- ing, all-evolving; He is its source and its end., its cause and its object, its centre and circumference; it is built on Him as its sure foundation, it breathes in Him as its encircling space; He is in everything and everything in Him. Thus have the Sages of the Ancient Wisdom taught us of the beginning of the manifested worlds.

From the same source we learn of the Self-un- folding of theLoGos into a threefold form ; the First Logos, the Root of all Being; from Him the Sec- ond, manifesting the two aspects of Life and Form, the primal duality, making the two poles of nature between which the web of the universe is to be woven — Life-Form, Spirit-Matter, Positive-Nega- tive, Active-Receptive, Father-Mother of the worlds. Then the Third Logos, the Universal Mind, that in which all archetypically exists, the source of beings, the fount of fashioning energies, the treasure-house in which are stored up all the archetypal forms which are to be brought forth and elaborated in

lower kinds of matter during the evolution of the universe. These are the fruits of past universes, brought over as seeds for the present.

The phenomenal spirit and matter of any universe are finite in their extent and transitory in their du- ration, but the roots of spirit and matter are eter- nal. The root of matter* has been said by a pro- found writer to be visible to the Logos as a veil thrown over the One Existence, the supreme Brah- manf — to use the ancient name.

It is this 'Veil" which the Logos assumes for the purpose of manifestation, using it for the self-im- posed limit which makes activity possible. From this He elaborates the matter of His universe, being Himself its informing, guiding, and controlling life.J Of what occurs on the two higher planes of the universe, the seventh and the sixth, we can form but the haziest conception. The energy of the Logos as whirling motion of inconceivable rapidity "digs holes in space" in this root of matter, and this vor- tex of life encased in a film of the root of matter is the primary atom; these and their aggregations, spread throughout the universe, form all the subdi- visions of spirit-matter of the highest or seventh plane. The sixth plane is formed by some of the * Mulaprakriti. t Parabrahman.

t Hence He is called "The Lord of Maya," in some Eastern Scriptures, Maya, or illusion, being the principle of form ; form is regarded as illusory, from its transitory nature and perpetual transformations, the life which expresses itself under the veil of form being the reality.

countless myriads of these primary atoms setting up a vortex in the coarsest aggregations of their own plane, and this primary atom enwalled with spiral strands of the coarsest combinations of the seventh plane becomes the finest unit of spirit-matter, or atom, of the sixth plane. These sixth-plane-atoms and their endless combinations form the subdivi- sions of the spirit-matter of the sixth plane. The sixth-plane-atom, in its turn, sets up a vortex in the coarsest aggregations of its own plane, and, with these coarsest aggregations as a limiting wall, be- comes the finest unit of spirit-matter, or atom, of the fifth plane. Again, these fifth-plane-atoms and their combinations form the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of the fifth plane. The process is re- peated to form successively the spirit-matter of the .fourth, the third, the second, and the first planes. These are the seven great regions of the universe, so far as their material constituents are concerned. A clearer idea of them will be gained by analogy when we come to master the modifications of the spirit-matter of our own physical world.*

The word "spirit-matter" is used designedly. It

♦The student may find the conception clearer if he think of the fifth-plane-atoms as Atma ; those of the fourth plane as Atma enveloped in Buddhi-matter ; those of the third plane as Atma enveloped in Buddhi- and Manas-matter; those of the second as Atma enveloped in Buddhi-, Manas- and Kama- matter; those of the lowest as Atma enveloped in Buddhi-, Manas-, Kama- and Sthula-matter. Only the outermost is active in each case, but the inner are there, though latent, ready to come into activity on the upward arc of evolution.

implies the fact that there is no such thing as "dead" matter; all matter is living, the tiniest particles are lives. Science speaks truly in affirming: "No force without matter, no matter without force." They are wedded together in an indissoluble marriage throughout the ages of the life of a universe, and none can wrench them apart. Matter is form, and there is no form which does not express a life; spirit is life, and there is no life that is not limited by a form. Even the Logos, the supreme Lord, has during manifestation the universe as His form, and so down to the atom.

This involution of the life of the Logos as the en- souling force in every particle, and its successive en- wrapping in the spirit-matter of every plane, so that the materials of each plane have within them in a hidden, or latent condition, all the form- and force- possibilities of all the planes above them as well as those of their own — these two facts make evolution certain and give to the very lowest particle the hid- den potentialities which will render it fit — as they become active powers — to enter into the forms of the highest beings. In fact, evolution may be summed up in a phrase : it is latent potentialities becoming active powers.

The second great wave of evolution, the evolution of form, and the third great wave, the evolution of self-consciousness, will be dealt with later on. These three currents of evolution are distinguishable on our earth in connection with humanity; the mak- ing of the materials, the building of the house, and

the growing of the tenant of the house, or, as said above, the evolution of spirit-matter, the evolution of form, the evolution of self-consciousness. If the reader can grasp and retain this idea, he will find it a helpful clue to guide him through the labyrinth of facts.

We can now turn to the detailed examination of the physical plane, that on which our world exists and to which our bodies belong.

Examining the materials belonging to this plane, we are struck by their immense variety, the innu- merable differences of constitution in the objects around us, minerals, vegetables, animals, all differ- ing in their constituents : matter hard and soft, transparent and opaque, brittle and ductile, bitter and sweet, pleasant and nauseous, colored and col- orless. Out of this confusion three subdivisions of matter em.erge as a fundamental classification : mat- ter is solid, liquid and gaseous. Further examina- tion shows that these solids, liquids, and gases are made up by combinations of much simpler bodies, called by chemists "elements," and that these ele- ments may exist in a solid, liquid, or gaseous condi- tion without changing their respective natures. Thus the chemical element oxygen is a constituent of wood, and in combination with other elements forms the solid wood fibres ; it exists in the sap with another element, yielding a liquid combination as water; and it exists also in it by itself as gas. Un- der these three conditions it is oxygen. Further, pure oxygen can be reduced from a gas to a liquid,

and from a liquid to a solid, remaining pure oxygen all the time, and so with other elements. We thus obtain as three subdivisions, or conditions, of mat- ter on the physical plane, solid, liquid, gas. Search- ing further, we find a fourth condition, ether, and minuter search reveals that this ether exists in four conditions as well defined as those of solid, liquid, and gas ; to take oxygen again as an example : as it may be reduced from the gaseous condition to the liquid and the solid, so it may be raised from the gaseous through four etheric stages, the last of which consists of the ultimate physical atom, the disintegration of the atom taking the matter out of the physical plane altogether, and into the next plane above. In the annexed plate three gases are shown in the gaseous and four etheric states ; it will be observed that the structure of the ultimate physi- cal atom is the same for all, and that the variety of the "elements" is due to the variety of ways in which these ultimate physical atoms combine. Thus the seventh subdivision of physical spirit-matter is composed of homogeneous atoms ; the sixth is com- posed of fairly simple heterogeneous combinations of these, each combination behaving as a unit; the fifth is composed of more complex combinations, and the fourth of still more complex ones, but in all cases these combinations act as units ; the third subdivi- sion consists of yet more complicated combina- tions, regarded by the chemist as gaseous atoms or "elements," and on this subdivision many of the combinations have received special names, oxygen,

hydrogen, nitrogen, chlorine, etc., and each newly discovered combination now receives its name; the second subdivision consists of combinations in the liquid condition, whether regarded as elements such as bromine, or as combinations such as water or al- cohol ; the first subdivision is composed of all solids, again whether regarded as elements, such as iodine, gold, lead, etc., or as compounds, such as wood, stone, chalk, and so on.

The physical plane may serve the student as a model from which by analogy he may gain an idea of the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of other planes. When a Theosophist speaks of a plane, he means a region throughout which spirit-matter ex- ists, all whose combinations are derived from a par- ticular set of atoms ; these atoms, in turn, are units possessing similar organizations, whose life is the life of the Logos veiled

in fewer or more coverings according to the plane, and whose form consists of the solid, or lowest subdivision of matter, of the plane immediately above. A plane is thus a division in nature, as well as a metaphysical idea.

Thus far we have been studying the results in our own physical world of the evolution of spirit-matter in our division of the first or lowest plane of our system. For countless ages the fashioning of materials has been going on, the current of the evolution of spirit-matter, and in the materials of our globe we see the outcome at the present time. But when we begin to study the inhabitants of the physical plane, we come to the evolution

of form, the building of organisms out of these materials.

When the evolution of materials had reached a sufficiently advanced state, the second great life- wave from the Logos gave the impulse to the evolu- tion of form, and He became the organizing force* of His universe, countless hosts of entities, entitled Buildersf taking part in the building up of forms out of combinations of spirit-matter. The life of the Logos abiding in each form is its central, control- ling, and directing energy. This building of forms on the higher planes cannot here be conveniently studied in detail; it may suffice to say that all forms exist as Ideas in the mind of the Logos, and that in this second life-wave these were thrown outwards as models to guide the Builders. On the third and second planes the early spirit-matter combinations are designed to give it facility in assuming shapes organized to act as units, and gradually to increase its stability when shaped into an organism. This process went on upon the third and second planes, in what are termed the three elemental kingdoms, the combinations of matter formed therein being called generally "elemental essence," and this es- sence being moulded into forms by aggregation, the

* As Atma-Buddhi, indivisible in action, and therefore spoken of as the Monad. All forms have Atma-Buddhi as controlling life.

t Some are lofty spiritual Intelligences, but the name covers even the building Nature-spirits. The subject is dealt with in Chapter XII.

forms enduring for a time and then disintegrating. The outpoured life, or Monad, evolved through these kingdoms and reached in due course the physi- cal plane, where it began to draw together the ethers and hold them in filmy shapes, in which life-currents played and into which the denser materials were builded, forming the first minerals. In these are beautifully shown — as may be seen by reference to any book on crystallurgy — the numerical and geo- metrical lines on which forms are constructed, and from them may be gathered plentiful evidence that life is working in all minerals, although much "cribbed, cabined, and confined.** The fatigue to which metals are subject is another sign that they are living things, but it is here enough to say that the occult doctrine so regards them, knowing the already-mentioned processes by which life has been involved in them. Great stability of form having been gained in many of the minerals, the evolving Monad elaborated greater plasticity of form in the vegetable kingdom, combining this with stability of organization. These characteristics found a yet more balanced expression in the animal world, and reached their culmination of equilibrium in man, whose physical body is made up of constituents of

most unstable equilibrium, thus giving great adap- tability, and yet which is held together by a combin- ing central force which resists general disintegra- tion even under the most varied conditions.

Man's physical body has two main divisions : the dense body, made of constituents from the three 4

lower levels of the physical plane, solids, liquids, and gases ; and the etheric double, violet-gray or blue-gray in color, interpenetrating the dense body and composed of materials drawn from the four higher levels. The general function of the physical body is to receive contacts from the physical world, and send the report of them inwards, to serve as materials from which the conscious entity inhabit- ing the body is to elaborate knowledge. Its etheric portion has also the duty of acting as a medium through which the life-currents poured out from the sun can be adapted to the uses of the denser particles. The sun is the great reservoir of the electrical, mag- netic, and vital forces for our system, and it pours out abundantly these streams of life-giving energy. They are taken in by the etheric doubles of all minerals, vegetables, animals, and men, and are by them thansmuted into the various life-energies needed by each entity.* The etheric doubles draw in, specialize, and distribute them over their physical counterparts. It has been observed that in vigorous health much more of the life-energies are trans- muted than the physical body requires for its own support, and that the surplus is rayed out and is taken up and utilized by the weaker. What is tech- nically called the health aura is the part of the etheric double that extends a few inches from the

* When thus appropriated the life is called Prana, and it be- comes the life-breath of every creature. Prana is but a name for the universal life while it is taken in by an entity and is supporting its separated life.

whole surface of the body and shows radiating lines, like the radii of a sphere, going outwards in all di- rections. These lines droop when vitality is dimin- ished below the point of health, and resume their radiating character with renewed vigor. It is this vital energy, specialized by the etheric double, which is poured out by the mesmerizer for the res- toration of the weak and for the cure of disease, al- though he often mingles with it currents of a more rarefied kind. Hence the depletion of vital energy shown by the exhaustion of the mesmerizer who prolongs his work to excess.

Man's body is fine or coarse in its texture accord- ing to the materials drawn from the physical plane for its composition. Each subdivision of matter yields finer or coarser materials ; compare the bodies of a butcher and of a refined student ; both have solids in them, but solids of such different qualities. Fur- ther, we know that a coarse body can be refined, a refined body coarsened. The body is constantly changing; each particle is a life, and the lives come and go. They are drawn to a body consonant with themselves, they are repelled from one discordant with themselves. All things live in rhythmical vibra- tions, all seek the harmonious and are repelled by dissonance. A pure body repels coarse particles be- cause they vibrate at rates discordant with its own ; a coarse body attracts them because their vibrations accord with its own. Hence if a body changes its rates of vibration, it gradually drives out of it the con- stituents that cannot fall into the new rhythm, and

fills Up their places by drawing in from external na- ture fresh constituents that are harmonious. Nature provides materials vibrating in all possible ways, and each body exercises its own selective action.

In the earlier building of human bodies this selec- tive action was due to the Monad of form, but now that man is a self-conscious entity he presides over his own building. By his thoughts he strikes the keynote of his music, and sets up the rhythms that are the most powerful factors in the continual changes in his physical and other bodies. As his knowledge increases he learns how to build up his physical body with pure food, and so facilitates the tuning of it. He learns to live by the axiom of purification: "Pure food, a pure mind, and constant memory of God." As the highest creature living on the physical plane, he is the vicegerent of the Locos thereon, responsible, so far as his powers extend, for its order, peace, and good government; and this duty he cannot discharge without these three re- quisites.

The physical body, thus composed of elements drawn from all the subdivisions of the physical plane, is fitted to receive and to answer impressions from it of every kind. Its first contacts will be of the simplest and crudest sorts, and as the life within it thrills out in answer to the stimulus from with- out, throwing its molecules into responsive vibra- tions, there is developed all over the body the sense of touch, the recognition of something coming into contact with it. As specialized sense-organs are de-

veloped to receive special kinds of vibrations, the value of the body increases as a future vehicle for a conscious entity on the physical plane. The more impressions it can answer to, the more useful does it become; for only those to which it can answer can reach the consciousness. Even now there are myriads of vibrations pulsing around us in physical nature from the knowledge of which we are shut out because of the inability of our physical vehicle to receive and vibrate in accord with them. Unimag- ined beauties, exquisite sounds, delicate subtleties, touch the walls of our prison house and pass on un- heeded. Not yet is developed the perfect body that shall thrill to every pulse in nature as the oeolian harp to the zephyr.

The vibrations that the body is able to receive it transmits to physical centres, belonging to its highly complicated nervous system. The etheric vibrations which accompany all the vibrations of the denser physical constituents are similarly received by the etheric double, and transmitted to its corresponding centres. Most of the vibrations in the dense matter are changed into chemical, heat, and other forms of physical energy; the etheric give rise to magnetic and electric action, and also pass on the vibrations to the astral body, whence, as we shall see later, they reach the mind. Thus information about the external world reaches the conscious entity en- throned in the body, the Lord of the body, as he is sometimes called. As the channels of informa- tion develop and are exercised, the conscious entity

grows by the materials supplied to his thought by them, but so little is man yet developed that even the etheric double is not yet sufficiently harmonized to regularly convey to the man impressions received by it independently of its denser comrade, or to im- press them on his brain. Occasionally it succeeds in doing so, and then we have the lowest form of clairvoyance, the seeing of the etheric doubles of physical objects, and of things that have etheric bodies as their lowest vesture.

Man dwells, as we shall see, in various vehicles, physical, astral, and mental, and it is important to know and remember that as we are evolving upwards, the lowest of the vehicles, the dense physical, is that which consciousness first controls and rationalizes. The physical brain is the instrument of conscious- ness in waking life on the physical plane, and con- sciousness works in it — in the undeveloped man — more effectively than in any other vehicle. Its po- tentialities are less than those of the subtler vehicles, but its

actualities are greater, and the man knows himself as "I" in the physical body ere he finds himself elsewhere. Even if he be more highly de- veloped than the average man, he can only show as much of himself down here as the physical organism permits, for consciousness can manifest on the physi- cal plane only so much as the physical vehicle can carry.

The dense and etheric bodies are not normally separated during earth life ; they normally function together, as the lower and higher strings of a single

instrument when a chord is struck, but they also carry on separate though co-ordinated activities. Under conditions of weak health or nervous excite- ment the etheric double may in great part be ab- normally extruded from its dense counterpart; the latter then becomes very dully conscious, or en- tranced, according to the less or greater amount of the etheric matter extruded. Anaesthetics drive out the greater part of the etheric double, so that con- sciousness cannot affect or be affected by the dense body, its bridge of communication being broken. In the abnormally organized persons called medi- ums, dislocation of the etheric and dense bodies easily occurs, and the etheric double, when ex- truded, largely supplies the physical basis for "ma- terializations."

In sleep, when the consciousness leaves the physi- cal vehicle which it uses during waking life, the dense and etheric bodies remain together, but in the physical dream-life they function to some extent in- dependently. Impressions experienced during wak- ing life are reproduced by the automatic action of the body, and both the physical and etheric brains are filled with disjointed fragmentary pictures, the vibrations as it were, jostling each other, and caus- ing the most grotesque combinations. Vibrations from outside also affect both, and combinations often set up during waking life are easily called into ac- tivity by currents from the astral world of like na- ture with themselves. The purity or impurity of waking thoughts will largely govern the pictures

arising in dreams, whether spontaneously set up or induced from without.

At what is called death, the etheric double is drawn away from its dense counterpart by the es- caping consciousness ; the magnetic tie existing be- tween them during earth life is snapped asunder, and for some hours the consciousness remains en- veloped in this etheric garb. In this it sometimes appears to those with whom it is closely bound up, as a cloudy figure, very dully conscious and speech- less— the wraith. It may also be seen, after the conscious entity has deserted it, floating over the grave where its dense counterpart is buried, slowly disintegrating as time goes on.

When the time comes for rebirth, the etheric double is built in advance of the dense body, the latter exactly following it in its ante-natal develop- ment. These bodies may be said to trace the limi- tations within which the conscious entity will have to live and work during his earth life, a subject that will be more fully explained in Chapter IX., on Karma.

The: astral plane Is the region of the universe next to the physical, if the word "next" may be permitted in such a connection. Life there is more active than on the physical plane, and form is more plas- tic. The spirit-matter of that plane is more highly vitalized and finer than any grade of spirit-matter in the physical world. For, as we have seen, the ulti- mate physical atom, the constituent of the rarest physical ether, has

for its sphere-wall innumerable aggregations of the coarsest astral matter. The word "next" is, however, inappropriate, as suggest- ing the idea that the planes of the universe are ar- ranged as concentric circles, one ending where the next begins. Rather are they concentric interpene- trating spheres, not separated from each other by distance but by difference of constitution. As air permeates water, as ether permeates the densest solid, so does astral matter permeate all physical. The astral world is above us, below us, on every side of us, through us ; we live and move in it, but it is intangible, invisible, inaudible, imperceptible, because the prison of the physical body shuts us

away from it, the physical particles being too gross to be set in vibration by astral matter.

In this chapter we shall study the plane in its general aspects, leaving on one side for separate consideration those special conditions of life on the astral plane surrounding the human entities who are passing through it on their way from earth to heaven.*

The spirit-matter of the astral plane exists in seven subdivisions, as we have seen in the spirit- matter of the physical. There, as here, there are numberless combinations, forming the astral solids, liquids, gases, and ethers. But most material forms there have a brightness, a translucency, as compared to forms here, which have caused the epithet astral, or starry, to be applied to them — an epithet which is, on the whole, misleading, but is too firmly estab- lished by use to be changed. As there are no spe- cific names for the subdivisions of astral spirit-mat- ter, we may use the terrestrial designations. The main idea to be grasped is that astral objects are combinations of astral matter, as physical objects are combinations of physical matter, and that the astral world scenery much resembles that of earth in con- sequence of its being largely made up of the astral duplicates of physical objects. One peculiarity, however, arrests and confuses the untrained ob- server : partly because of the translucency of astral

* Devachan, the happy or bright state, is the Theosophical name for heaven. Kamaloka, the place of desire, is the name given to the conditions of intermediate life on the astral plane.

objects, and partly because of the nature of astral vision — consciousness being less hampered by the finer astral matter than when encased in the terres- trial— everything is transparent, its back is as visible as its front, its inside as its outside. Some experi- ence is needed, therefore, ere objects are correctly seen, and a person who has developed astral vision, but has not yet had much experience in its use, is apt to receive the most topsy-turvy impressions and to fall into the most astounding blunders.

Another striking and at first bewildering charac- teristic of the astral world is the swiftness with which forms — especially when unconnected with any terrestrial matrix — change their outlines.

An astral entity will change his whole appearance with the most startling rapidity, for astral matter takes form under every impulse of thought, the life swiftly remoulding the form to give itself new ex- pression. As the great life-wave of the evolution of form passed downwards through the astral plane, and constituted on that plane the third elemental kingdom, the Monad drew round itself combinations of astral matter, giving to these combinations — en- titled elemental essence — a peculiar vitality and the characteristic of responding to, and instantly taking shape under, the impulse of thought vibrations. This elemental essence exists in hundreds of varie- ties on every subdivision of the astral plane, as though the air became visible

here — as indeed it may be seen in quivering waves under great heat — and were in constant undulatory motion with chang-

ing colors like mother-of-pearl. This vast atmos- phere of elemental essence is ever answering to vi- brations caused by thoughts, feelings, and desires, and is thrown into commotion by a rush of any of these like bubbles in boiling water.* The duration of the form depends on the strength of the impulse to which it owes its birth ; the clearness of its out- line depends on the precision of the thinking, and the color depends on the quality — intellectual, devo- tional, passional — of the thought.

The vague loose thoughts which are so largely produced by undeveloped minds gather round them- selves loose clouds of elemental essence when they arrive in the astral world, and drift about, attracted hither and thither to other clouds of similar nature, clinging round the astral bodies of persons whose magnetism attracts them — either good or evil — and after a while distintegrating, to again form part of the general atmosphere of elemental essence. While they maintain a separate existence they are living entities, with bodies of elemental essence and thoughts as the ensouling lives, and they are then called artificial elementals, or thought-forms.

Clear, precise thoughts have each their own defi- nite shapes, with sharp clean outlines, and show an endless variety of designs. They are shaped by vi- brations set up by thought, just as on the physical plane we find figures which are shaped by vibrations set up by sound. '"Voice-figures" offer a very fair analogy for "thought-figures," for nature, with all * C. W. Leadbeater, Astral Plant, p. 52.

her infinite variety, is very conservative of prin- ciples, and reproduces the same methods of working on plane after plane in her realms. These clearly defined artificial elementals have a longer and much more active life than their cloudy brethren, exercis- ing a far stronger influence on the astral bodies (and through them on the minds) of those to whom they are attracted. They set up in them vibrations simi- lar to their own, and thus thoughts spread from mind to mind without terrestrial expression. More than this: they can be directed by the thinker tow- ards any person he desires to reach, their potency depending on the strength of his will and the inten- sity of his mental power.

Among average people the artificial elementals created by feeling or desire are more vigorous and more definite than those created by thought. Thus an outburst of anger will cause a very definitely out- lined and powerful flash of red, and sustained anger will make a dangerous elemental, red in color, and pointed, barbed or otherwise qualified to injure. Love, according to its quality, will set up forms more or less beautiful in color and design, all shades of crimson to the most exquisite and soft hues of rose, like the palest blushes of the sunset or the dawn, clouds or tenderly strong protective shapes. Many a mother's loving prayers go to hover round her son as angel-forms, turning aside from him evil influences that perchance his own thoughts are attracting.

It is characteristic of these artificial elementals,

when they are directed by the will towards any par- ticular person, that they are animated by the one impulse of carrying out the will of their creator. A protective elemental will hover round its object, seeking any opportunity of warding off evil or at- tracting good — not consciously, but by a blind im- pulse, as

finding there the line of least resistance. So, also, an elemental ensouled by a malignant thought will hover round its victim seeking oppor- tunity to injure. But neither the one nor the other can make any impression unless there be in the as- tral body of the object something akin to themselves, something that can answer accordantly to their vibrations, and thus enable them to attach them- selves. If there be nothing in him of matter cog- nate to their own, then by a law of their nature they rebound from him along the path they pursued in going to him — the magnetic trace they have left — and rush to their creator with a force proportionate to that of their projection. Thus a thought of deadly hatred, failing to strike the object at which it was darted, has been known to slay its sender, while good thoughts sent to the unworthy return as blessings to him that poured them forth.

A very slight understanding of the astral world will thus act as a most powerful stimulus to right thinking, and will render heavy the sense of respon- sibility in regard to the thoughts, feelings, and de- sires that we let loose into this astral realm. Rav- ening beasts of prey, rending and devouring, are too many of the thoughts with which men people the as-

tral plane. But they err from ignorance; they know not what they do. One of the objects of theosophi- cal teaching, partly lifting up the evil of the unseen world, is to give men a sounder basis for conduct, a more rational appreciation of the causes of which the effects only are seen in the terrestrial world. And few of its doctrines are more important in their ethical bearing than this of the creation and direc- tion of thought-forms, or artificial elementals, for through it man learns that his mind does not con- cern himself alone, that his thoughts do not affect himself alone, but that he is ever sending out angels and devils into the world of men, for whose creation he is responsible, and for whose influence he is held accountable. Let men, then, know the law, and guide their thoughts thereby.

If, instead of taking artificial elementals sepa- rately, we take them in the mass, it is easy to realize the tremendous effect they have in producing national and race feelings, and thus in biassing and prejudicing the mind. We all grow up sur- rounded by an atmosphere crowded with elementals embodying certain ideas; national prejudices, na- tional ways of looking at all questions, national types of feelings and thoughts, all these play on us from our birth, ay, and before. We see everything through this atmosphere, every thought is more or less refracted by it, and our own astral bodies are vibrating in accord with it. Hence the same idea will look quite different to a Hindu, an Englishman, a Spaniard, and a Russian ; some conceptions easy to

the one will be almost impossible to the other, cus- toms instinctively attractive to the one are instinc- tively odious to the other. We are all dominated by our national atmosphere, i.e., by that portion of the astral world immediately surrounding us. The thoughts of others, cast much in the same mould, play upon us, and call out from us synchronous vi- brations; they intensify the points in which we ac- cord with our surroundings and flatten away the differences, and this ceaseless action upon us through the astral body impresses on us the national hall- mark and traces channels for mental energies into which they readily flow. Sleeping and waking, these currents play upon us, and our very unconsciousness of their action makes it the more eflfective. As most people are receptive rather than initiative in their nature, they act almost as automatic reproducers of the thoughts which reach them, and thus the national atmosphere is

continually intensified.

When a person is beginning to be sensitive to as- tral influences, he will occasionally find himself sud- dently overpowered or assailed by a quite inexplica- ble and seemingly irrational dread, which swoops down upon him with even paralyzing force. Fight against it as he may, he yet feels it, and perhaps re- sents it. Probably there are few who have not ex- perienced this fear to some extent, the uneasy dread of an invisible something, the feeling of a presence, of "not being alone." This arises partly from a cer- tain hostility which animates the natural elemental world against the human, on account of the various

destructive agencies devised by mankind on the physical plane and reacting on the astral, but is also largely due to the presence of so many artificial elementals of an unfriendly kind, bred by human minds. Thoughts of hatred, jealousy, revenge, bit- terness, suspicion, discontent, go out by millions crowding the astral plane with artificial elementals whose whole life is made of these feelings. How much also is there of vague distrust and suspicion poured out by the ignorant against all whose ways and appearance are alien and unfamiliar. The blind distrust of all foreigners, the surly contempt, extend- ing in many districts even towards inhabitants of another country — these things also contribute evil influences to the astral world. There being so much of these things among us, we create a blindly hostile army on the astral plane, and this is answered in our own astral bodies by a feeling of dread, set up by the antagonistic vibrations that are sensed, but not understood.

Outside the class of artificial elementals, the astral world is thickly populated, even excluding, as we do for the present, all the human entities who have lost their physical bodies by death. There are great hosts of natural elementals, or nature-spirits, divided into five main classes — the elementals of the ether, the fire, the air, the water, and the earth; the last four groups have been termed, in mediaeval occul- ism, the Salam.anders, Sylphs, Undines, and Gnomes (needless to say there are two other classes, com- pleting the seven, not concerning us here, as they are 5

still unmanifested). These are the true elementals, or creatures of the elements, earth, water, air, fire, and ether, and they are severally concerned in the carrying on of the activities connected with their own element ; they are the channels through which work the divine energies in these several fields, the living expressions of the law in each. At the head of each division is a great Being, the captain of a mighty host,* the directing and guiding intelligence of the whole department of nature which is adminis- tered and energized by the class of elementals under his control. Thus Agni, the fire-God, is a great spir- itual entity concerned with the manifestation of fire on all the planes of the universe, and carries on his administration through the hosts of fire-elementals. By understanding the nature of these, or knowing the methods of their control, the so-called miracles or magical feats are worked, which from time to time are recorded in the public press, whether they are avowedly the results of magical arts, or are done by the aid of "spirits" — as in the case of the late Mr. Home, who could unconcernedly pick a red-hot coal out of a blazing fire with his fingers and hold it in his hand unhurt. Levitation (the suspension of a heavy body in the air without visible support) and walking on the water have been done by the aid re-

* Called a Deva, or God, by the Hindus. The student may like to have the Sanskrit names of the five Gods of the mani- fested elements ; Indra, lord of the Akasha, or ether of space ; Agni, lord of fire ; Pavana, lord

of air ; Varuna, lord of water ; Kshiti, lord of earth.

spectively of the elementals of the air and the water, although another method is more often employed.

As the elements enter into the human body, one or another predominating according to the nature of the person, each human being has relations with these elementals, the most friendly to him being those whose element is preponderant in him. The effects of this fact are often noted, and are popularly ascribed to "luck." A person has "a lucky hand" in making plants grow, in lighting fires, in finding underground water, etc., etc. Nature is ever jost- ling us with her occult forces, but we are slow to take her hints. Tradition sometimes hides a truth in a proverb or a fable, but we have grown beyond all such "superstitions."

We find also on the astral plane, nature-spirits — less accurately termed elementals — who are concerned with the building of forms in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms. There are nature-spirits who build up minerals, who guide the vital energies in plants, and who molecule by molecule form the bodies of the animal kingdom; they are concerned with the making of the astral bodies of minerals, plants, and animals, as well as with that of the physical. These are the fairies and elves of legends, the "little people" who play so large a part in the folk-lore of every nation, the charming irresponsible children of nature, whom science has cold- ly relegated to the nursery, but who will be replaced in their own grade of natural order by the wiser sci- entists of a later day. Only poets and occultists be-

lieve in them just now, poets by the intuition of their genius, occultists by the vision of their trained inner senses. The multitude laugh at both, most of all at the occultists ; but it matters not — wisdom shall be justified of her children.

The play of the life-currents in the etheric doubles of the forms in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, awoke out of latency the astral matter in- volved in the structure of their atomic and molecular constituents. It began to thrill in a very limited way in the minerals, and the Monad of form, exer- cising his organizing power, drew in materials from the astral world, and these were built by the nature- spirits into a loosely constituted mass, the mineral astral body. In the vegetable world the astral bod- ies are a little more organized, and their special characteristic of "feeling" begins to appear. Dull and diffused sensations of well-being and discomfort are observable in most plants as the results of the increasing activity of the astral body. They dimly enjoy the air, the rain, and the sunshine, and grop- ingly seek them, while they shrink from noxious conditions. Some seek the light and some seek the darkness ; they answer to stimuli, and adapt them- selves to external conditions, some showing plainly a sense of touch. In the animal kingdom the astral body is more developed, reaching in the higher members of that kingdom a sufficiently definite or- ganization to cohere for some time after the death of the physical body, and to lead an independent exist- ence on the astral plane.

The nature-spirits concerned with the building of the animal and human astral bodies have been given the special name of desire-elementals,* because they are strongly animated by desires of all kinds, and constantly build themselves into the astral bodies of animals and men. They also use the varieties of elemental essence similar to that of which their own bodies are composed to construct the astral bodies of animals, those bodies thus acquiring, as interwoven parts, the centres of sensation and of the various

passional activities. These centres are stimulated into functioning by impulses received by the dense physical organs, and transmitted by the etheric physical organs to the astral body. Not until the astral centre is reached does the animal feel pleasure or pain. A stone may be struck, but it will feel no pain; it has dense and etheric physical molecules, but its astral body is unorganized; the animal feels pain from a blow because he possesses the astral centres of sensation, and the desire-elementals have woven into him their own nature.

As a new consideration enters into the work of these elementals with the human astral body, we will finish our survey of the inhabitants of the astral plane ere studying this more complicated astral form.

The desire-bodies,t or astral bodies, of animals

are found, as has just been stated, to lead an inde-

♦Kamadevas, they are called, "desire-gods."

fKamarupa is the technical name for the astral body, from kama, desire, and rupa, form.

pendent though fleeting existence on the astral plane after death has destroyed their physical counter- parts. In "civilized" countries these animal astral bodies add much to the general feeling of hostility which was spoken of above, for the organized butch- ery of animals in slaughter-houses and by sport sends millions upon millions of these annually into the astral world, full of horror, terror, and shrinking from men. The comparatively few creatures that are allowed to die in peace and quietness are lost in the vast hordes of the murdered, and from the cur- rents set up by these there rain down influences from the astral world on the human and animal races which drive them yet farther apart and en- gender "instinctive" distrust and fear on the one side and lust of inflicting cruelty on the other.

These feelings have been much intensified of late years by the coldly devised methods of the scientific torture called vivisection, the unmentionable bar- barities of which have introduced new horrors into the astral world by their reaction on the culprits,* as well as having increased the gulf between man and his "poor relations."

Apart from what we may call the normal popula- tion of the astral world, there are passing travellers in it, led there by their work, whom we cannot leave entirely without mention. Some of these come from our own terrestrial world, while others are visitors from loftier regions.

Of the former, many are Initiates of various * See Chapter III., on "Kamaloka."

grades, some belonging to the Great White Lxxige — the Himalayan or Tibetian Brotherhood, as it is often called* — while others are members of different occult lodges throughout the world, ranging from white through all shades of gray to black.f AH these are men living in physical bodies, who have learned to leave the physical encasement at will, and to function in full consciousness in the astral body. They are of all grades of knowledge and virtue, beneficent and maleficent, strong and weak, gentle and ferocious. There are also many younger aspi- rants, still uninitiated, who are learning to use the astral vehicle, and who are employed in works of benevolence or malevolence according to the path they are seeking to tread.

After these, we have psychics of varying degrees of development, some fairly alert, others dreamy and confused, wandering about while their physical bodies

* It is to some members of this Lodge that the Theosophical Society owes its inception.

t Occultists who are unselfish and wholly devoted to the carrying out of the Divine Will, or who are aiming to attain these virtues, are called "white." Those who are selfish and are working against the Divine purpose in the universe are called "black." Expanding selflessness, love, and devotion are the marks of the one class; contracting selfishness, hatred, and harsh arrogance are the signs of the other. Between these are the classes whose motives are mixed, and who have not yet realized that they must evolve towards the One Self or towards the separated selves ; these I have called gray. Their members gradually drift into, or deliberately join, one of the two great groups with clearly marked aims.

are asleep or entranced. Unconscious of their ex- ternal surroundings, wrapped in their own thoughts, drawn as it were within their astral shell, are millions of drifting astral bodies inhabited by con- scious entities, whose physical frames are sunk in sleep. As we shall see presently, the conscious- ness in its astral vehicle escapes when the body sinks into sleep, and passes on to the astral plane; but it is not conscious of its surroundings until the astral body is sufficiently developed to function indepen- dently of the physical.

Occasionally is seen on this plane a disciple* who has passed through death and is awaiting an almost immediate reincarnation under the direction of his Master. He is, of course, in the enjoyment of full consciousness, and is working like other disciples who have merely slipped off their bodies in sleep. At a certain stagef a disciple is allowed to reincar- nate very quickly after death, and under these cir- cumstances he has to await on the astral plane a suitable opportunity for rebirth.

Passing through the astral plane also are the hu- man beings who are on their way to reincarnation; they will again be mentioned later on,^ and they concern themselves in no way with the general life of the astral world. The desire-elementals, how- ever, who have affinity with them from their past passional and sensational activities, gather round

* A chela, the accepted pupil of an Adept. t See Chapter XL, on "Man's Ascent." t See Chapter VII., on "Reincarnation."

them, assisting in the building of the new astral body for the coming earth-life.

We must now turn to the consideration of the hu- man astral body during the period of existence in this world, and study its nature and constitution as well as its relations with the astral realm. We will take the astral body of (a) an undeveloped man, (b) an average man, and (c) a spiritually developed man.

(a) An undeveloped man's astral body is a cloudy, loosely organized, vaguely outlined mass of astral spirit-matter, containing materials — both astral mat- ter and elemental essence — drawn from all the sub- divisions of the astral plane, but with a great pre- dominance of substances from the lower, so that it is dense and coarse in texture, fit to respond to all the stimuli connected with the passions and appetites. The colors caused by the rates of vibration are dull, muddy, and dusky — browns, dull reds, dirty greens, are the predominant hues. There is no play of light or quickly changing flashing of colors through this astral

body, but the various passions show themselves as heavy surges, or, when violent, as flashes; thus sexual passion will send a wave of muddy crimson, rage a flash of lurid red.

The astral body is larger than the physical, extend- ing round it in all directions ten or twelve inches in such a case as we are considering. The centres of the organs of sense are definitely marked, and are active when worked on from without; but in quies- cence the life-streams are sluggish, and the astral body, stimulated neither from the physical nor men-

tal worlds, is drowsy and indifferent.* It is a con- stant characteristic of the undeveloped state that activity is prompted from without rather than from the inner consciousness. A stone to be moved must be pushed ; a plant moves under the attractions of light and moisture; an animal becomes active when stirred by hunger; a poorly developed man needs to be prompted in similar ways. Not till the mind is partly grown does it begin to initiate action. The centres of higher activities,! related to the indepen- dent functioning of the astral senses, are scarcely visible. A man at this stage requires for his evolu- tion violent sensations of every kind, to arouse the nature and stimulate it into activity. Heavy blows from the outer world, both of pleasure and pain, are wanted to awaken and spur to action. The more numerous and violent the sensations, the more he can be made to feel, the better for his growth. At this stage quality matters little, quantity and vigor are the main requisites. The beginnings of this man's morality will be in his passions ; a slight im- pulse of unselfishness in his relations to wife or child or friend, will be the first step upwards, by causing vibrations in the finer matter of his astral body and attracting into it more elemental essence of an appropriate kind. The astral body is con-

* The student will recognize here the predominance of the tamasic guna, the quality of darkness or inertness in nature.

t The seven chakras, or wheels, so named from the whirling appearance they present, like wheels of living fire when in activity.

stantly changing its materials under this play of the passions, appetites, desires, and emotions. All good ones strengthen the finer parts of the body, shake out some of the coarser constituents, draw into it the subtler materials, and attract round it elementals of a beneficent kind who aid in the renovating pro- cess. All evil ones have diametrically opposite effects, strengthening the coarser, expelling the finer, draw- ing in more of the former, and attracting ele- mentals who help in the deteriorating process. The man's moral and intellectual powers are so em- bryonic in the case we are considering that most of the building and changing of his astral body may be said to be done for him rather than by him. It depends more on his external circumstances than on his own will, for, as just said, it is characteristic of a low stage of development that a man is moved from without and through the body much more than from within and by the mind. It is a sign of con- siderable advance when a man begins to be moved by the will, by his own energy, self-determined, in- stead of being moved by desire, i. e., by a response to an external attraction or repulsion.

In sleep, the astral body, enveloping the con- sciousness, slips out of the physical vehicle, leaving the dense and etheric bodies to slumber. At this stage, however, the consciousness is not awake in the astral

body, lacking the strong contacts that spur it while in the physical frame, and the only things that affect the astral body may be elementals of the coarser kinds, that may set up therein vibra-

tions which are reflected to the etheric and dense brains, and induce dreams of animal pleasures. The astral body floats just over the physical, held by its strong attraction, and cannot go far away from it.

(&) In the average moral and intellectual man the astral body shows an immense advance on that just described. It is larger in size, its materials are more balanced in quality, the presence of the rarer kinds giving a certain luminous quality to the whole, while the expression of the higher emotions sends playing through it beautiful ripples of color. Its outline is clear and definite, instead of vague and shifting, as in the former case, and it assumes the likeness of its owner. It is obviously becoming a vehicle for the inner man, with definite organization and stability, a body fit and ready to function, and able to maintain itself, apart from the physical. While retaining great plasticity, it yet has a normal form, to which it continually recurs when any pres- sure is removed that may have caused it to change its outline. Its activity is constant, and hence it is in perpetual vibration, showing endless varieties of changing hues; also the "wheels" are clearly visible though not yet functioning.* It responds quickly to all the contacts coming to it through the physical body, and is stirred by the influences rained on it from the conscious entity within, memory and im- agination stimulating it to action, and causing it to

* Here the student will note the predominance of the rajasic guna, the quality of activity in nature.

become the prompter of the body to activity instead of only being moved by it. Its purification pro- ceeds along the same lines as in the former case — the expulsion of lower constituents by setting up vibrations antagonistic to them and the drawing in of finer materials in their place. But now the in- creased moral and intellectual development of the man puts the building almost entirely under his own control, for he is no longer driven hither and thither by stimuli from external nature, but reasons, judges, and resists or yields as he thinks well. By the exercise of well-directed thought he can rapidly aflfect the astral body, and hence its improvement can proceed apace. Nor is it necessary that he should understand the modus operandi in order to bring about the effect, any more than that a man should understand the laws of light in order to see.

In sleep, this well-developed astral body slips, as usual, from its physical encasement, but is by no means held captive by it, as in the former case. It roams about in the astral world, drifted hither and thither by the astral currents, while the conscious- ness within it, not yet able to direct its movements, is awake, engaged in the enjoyment of its own men- tal images and mental activities, and able also to re- ceive impressions through its astral covering, and to change them into mental pictures. In this way a man may gain knowledge when out of the body, and may subsequently impress it on the brain as a vivid dream or vision, or without this link of

memory it may filter through into the brain- con- sciousness.

(c) The astral body of a spiritually developed man is composed of the finest particles of each subdivi- sion of astral matter, the higher kinds largely pre- dominating in amount. It is therefore a beautiful object in luminosity and color, hues not known on earth showing themselves under the impulses thrown into it by the purified mind. The wheels of fire are now seen to deserve their names, and their whirling motion

denotes the activity of the higher senses. Such a body is, in the full sense of the words, a vehicle of consciousness, for in the course of evolu- tion it has been vivified in every organ and brought under the complete control of its owner. When in it he leaves the physical body there is no break of consciousness ; he merely shakes ofiF his heavier ves- ture, and finds himself unencumbered by its weight. He can move anywhere within the astral sphere with immense rapidity, and is no longer bound by the narrow terrestrial conditions. His body an- swers to his will, reflects and obeys his thought. His opportunities for serving humanity are thus enormously increased, and his powers are directed by his virtue and his beneficence. The absence of gross particles in his astral body renders it incapable of responding to the promptings of lower objects of desire, and they turn away from him as beyond their attraction. The whole body vibrates only in answer to the higher emotions, his love has grown into de- votion, his energy is curbed by patience. Gentle,

calm, serene, full of power, but with no trace of restlessness, such a man *'all the Siddhis stand ready to serve/'*

The astral body forms the bridge over the gulf which separates consciousness from the physical brain. Impacts received by the sense-organs and transmitted, as we have seen, to the dense and ethe- ric centres, pass thence to the corresponding astral centres ; here they are worked on by the elemental essence and are transmuted into feelings, and are then presented to the inner man as objects of con- sciousness, the astral vibrations awakening corre- sponding vibrations in the materials of the mental body.f By these successive gradations in fineness of spirit-matter the heavy impacts of terrestrial ob- jects can be transmitted to the conscious entity; and, in turn, the vibrations set up by his thoughts can pass along the same bridge to the physical brain and there induce physical vibrations corresponding to the mental. This is the regular normal way in which consciousness receives impressions from with- out, and in turn sends impressions outwards. By this constant passage of vibrations to and fro the astral body is chiefly developed; this current plays upon it from within and from without, evolves its organization, and subserves its general growth. By this it becomes larger, finer in texture, more defi- nitely outlined, and more organized interiorly.

* Here the sattvic guna, the quality of bliss and purity in nature, is predominant. Siddhis are superphysical powers. t See Chapter IV., on "The Mental Plane."

Trained thus to respond to consciousness, it gradu- ually becomes fit to function as its separate vehicle, and to transmit to it clearly the vibrations received directly from the astral world. Most readers will have had some little experience of impressions com- ing into consciousness from without, that do not arise from any physical impact, and that are very quickly verified by some external occurrence. These are frequently impressions that reach the astral body directly, and are transmitted by it to the conscious- ness, and such impressions are often of the nature of previsions which very quickly prove themselves to be true. When the man is far progressed, though the stage varies much according to other circum- stances, links are set up between the physical and the astral, the astral and the mental, so that con- sciousness works unbrokenly from one state to the other, memory having in it none of the lapses which in the ordinary man interpose a period of uncon- sciousness in passing from one plane to another. The man can then also freely exercise the astral senses while the consciousness is working in the physical body, so that these enlarged avenues of

knowledge become an appanage of his waking con- sciousness. Objects which were before matters of faith become matters of knowledge, and he can per- sonally verify the accuracy of much of the theo- sophical teaching as to the lower regions of the invisible world.

When man is analyzed into "principles," i. e., into

modes of manifesting life, his four lower principles, termed the 'Xower Quaternary," are said to func- tion on the astral and physical planes. The fourth principle is Kama, desire, and it is the life manifest- ing in the astral body and conditioned by it; it is characterized by the attribute of feeling, whether in the rudimentary form of sensation, or in the com- plex form of emotion, or in any of the grades that lie between. This is summed up as desire, that which is attracted or repelled by objects, according as they give pleasure or pain to the personal self. The third principle is Prana, the life specialized for the support of the physical organism. The second principle is the etheric double, and the first is the dense body. These three function on the physical plane. In H. P. Blavatsky's later classifications she removes both Prana and the dense physical body from the rank of principles, Prana as being univer- sal life, and the dense physical body as being the mere counterpart of the etheric, and made of con- stantly changing materials built into the etheric matrix. Taking this view, we have the grand philo- sophic conception of the One Life, the One Self, manifesting as man, and presenting varying and transitory differences according to the conditions imposed on it by the bodies which it vivifies ; itself remaining the same in the centre, but showing dif- ferent aspects when looked at from outside, accord- ing to the kinds of matter in one body or another. In the physical body it is Prana, energizing, con- trolling, co-ordinating. In the astral body it is

Kama, feeling, enjoying, suffering. We shall find it in yet other aspects, as we pass to higher planes, but the fundamental idea is the same throughout, and it is another of those root-ideas of Theosophy, which firmly grasped, serve as guiding clues in this most tangled world.

Kamaloka, literally the place or habitat of desire, is, as has already been intimated, a part of the astral plane, not divided from it as a distinct locality, but separated off by the conditions of consciousness of the entities belonging to it.* These are human be- ings who have lost their physical bodies by the stroke of death, and have to undergo certain purify- ing changes before they can pass on to the happy and peaceful life which belongs to the man proper, to the human soul.f

This region represents and includes the conditions described as existing in the various hells, purga- tories, and intermediate states, one or other of which is alleged by all the great religions to be the

* The Hindus call this state Pretaloka, the habitat of Pretas. A Preta is the human being who has lost his physical body, but is still encumbered with the vesture of his animal nature. He cannot carry this on with him, and until it is disintegrated he is kept imprisoned by it.

t The soul is the human intellect, the fink between the Di- vine Spirit in man and his lower personality. It is the Ego, the individual, the "I," which develops by evolution. In the- osophical parlance it is Manas, the Thinker. The mind is the energy of this, working within the limitations of the physical brain, or the astral and mental bodies.

temporary dwelling-place of man after he leaves the body and before he reaches "heaven." It does not include any place of eternal torture, the endless hell still believed in by some narrow religionists being only a nightmare dream of ignorance, hate, and fear. But it does include conditions of suffering, tempo- rary and purificatory in their nature, the working out of causes set going in his earth-life by the man who experiences them. These are as natural and inevitable as any effects caused in this world by wrong-doing, for we live in a world of law and every seed must grow up after its own kind. Death makes no sort of difference in a man's moral and mental nature, and the change of state caused by passing from one world to another takes away his physical body, but leaves the man as he was.

The kamalokic condition is found on each sub- division of the astral plane, so that we may speak of it as having seven regions, calling them the first, second, third, up to the seventh, beginning from the lowest and coimting upwards.'^ We have already seen that materials from each subdivision of the as- tral plane enter into the composition of the astral body, and it is a peculiar re-arrangement of these materials, to be explained in a moment, which sepa- rates the people dwelling in one region from those dwelling in another, although those in the same re-

* Often these regions are reckoned the other way, taking the first as the highest and the seventh as the lowest. It does not matter from which end we count, and I am reckoning up- wards to keep them in accord with the planes and the prin- ciples.

gion are able to intercommunicate. The regions, being each a subdivision of the astral plane, differ in density, and the density of the external form of the kamalokic entity determines the region to which he is limited; these differences of matter are the bar- riers that prevent passage from one region to an- other; people dwelling in one can no more come into touch with people dwelling in another than a deep-sea fish can hold a conversation with an eagle — the medium necessary to the life of the one would be destructive to the life of the other.

When the physical body is struck down by death, the etheric body, carrying Prana with it and accom- panied by the remaining principles — that is, the whole man, except the dense body — withdraws from the "tabernacle of flesh," as the outer body is ap- propriately called. All the outgoing life-energies draw themselves inwards, and are "gathered up by Prana," their departure being manifested by the dulness that creeps over the physical organs of the senses. They are there, uninjured, physically com- plete, ready to act as they have always been ; but the "Inner Ruler" is going, he who through them saw, heard, felt, smelt, tasted, and by themselves they are mere aggregations of matter, living indeed but without power of perceptive action. Slowly the lord of the body draws himself away, enwrapped in the violet-grey etheric body, and absorbed in the contemplation of the panorama of his past life, which in the death-hour unrolls before him, com- plete in every detail. In that life-picture are all the

events of his life, small and great; he sees his am- bitions with their success or frustration, his efforts, his triumphs, his failures, his loves, his hatreds ; the predominant tendency of the whole comes clearly out, the ruling thought of the life asserts itself, and stamps itself deeply into the soul, marking the re- gion in which the chief part of his post-mortem ex- istence will be spent. Solemn the moment when the man stands face to face with his life, and from the lips of his past hears the presage of his future. For a brief space he sees

himself as he is, recognizes the purpose of life, knows that the Law is strong and just and good. Then the magnetic tie breaks between the dense and etheric bodies, the comrades of a lifetime are disjoined, and — save in exceptional cases — the man sinks into peaceful unconsciousness.

Quietness and devotion should mark the conduct of all who are gathered round a dying body, in order that a solemn silence may leave uninterrupted this review of the past by the departing man. Clsimor- ous weeping, loud lamentations, can but jar and dis- turb the concentrated attention of the soul, and to break with the grief of a personal loss into the still- ness which aids and soothes him is at once selfish and impertinent. Religion has wisely commanded prayers for the dying, for these preserve calm and stimulate unselfish aspirations directed to his help- ing, and these, like all loving thoughts, protect and shield.

Some hours after death — generally not more than thirtv-six, it is said — the man draws himself out of

the etheric body, leaving it in turn as a senseless corpse, and the latter, remaining near its dense counterpart, shares its fate. If the dense body be buried, the etheric double floats over the grave, slowly disintegrating, and the unpleasant feelings many experience in a churchyard are largely due to the presence of these decaying etheric corpses. If the body be burnt, the etheric double breaks up very quickly, having lost its nidus, its physical centre of attraction, and this is one among many reasons why cremation is preferable to burial as a way of dispos- ing of corpses.

The withdrawal of the man from the etheric double is accompanied by the withdrawal from it of Prana, which thereupon returns to the great reser- voir of life universal, while the man, ready now to pass into Kamaloka, undergoes a re-arrangement of his astral body, fitting it for submission to the purifi- catory changes which are necessary for the freeing of the man himself.* During earth-life the various kinds of astral matter intermingle in the formation of the body, as do the solids, liquids, gases, and ethers in the physical. The change in the arrange- ment of the astral body after death consists in the separation of these materials, according to their re- spective densities, into a series of concentric shells — the finest within, the densest without — each shell

* These changes result in the formation of what is called by Hindus the Yatana, or sujffering body, or in the case of very wicked men, in whose astral bodies there is a preponderance of the coarsest matter, the Dhruvam, or strong body.

being made of the materials drawn from one sub- division only of the astral plane; the astral body thus becomes a set of seven superimposed layers, or a seven-shelled encasement of astral matter, in which the man may not inaptly be said to be imprisoned, as only the breaking of these can set him free. Now will be seen the immense importance of the purifica- tion of the astral body during earth-life; the man is retained in each subdivision of Kamaloka so long as the shell of matter pertaining to that subdivision is not sufficiently disintegrated to allow of his escape into the next. Moreover, the extent to which his consciousness has worked in each kind of matter de- termines whether he will be awake and conscious in any given region, or will pass through it in uncon- sciousness, "wrapped in rosy dreams," and merely detained during the time necessary for the process of mechanical disintegration.

A spiritually advanced man, who has so purified his astral body that its constituents are drawn only from the finest grade of each division of astral mat- ter, merely passes through Kamaloka without delay, the astral body disintegrating with extreme swift- ness, and he goes on to whatever may be his bourne, according to the point he has reached in evolution. A less developed man, but one whose life has been pure and temperate and who has sat loosely on the things of earth, will wing a less rapid flight through Kamaloka, but will dream peacefully, unconscious of his surroundings, as his mental body disentangles itself from the astral shells, one after the other, to

awaken only when he reaches the heavenly places. Others, less developed still, will awaken after pass- ing out of the lower regions, becoming conscious in the division which is connected with the active working of the consciousness during the earth-life, for this will be aroused on receiving familiar im- pacts, although these be received now directly through the astral body, without the help of the physical. Those who have lived in the animal pas- sions will awake in their appropriate region, each man literally going "to his own place."

The case of men struck suddenly out of physical life by accident, suicide, murder, or sudden death in any form, differs from those of persons who pass away by the failure of the life-energies through dis- ease or old age. If they are pure and spiritually minded they are specially guarded, and sleep out happily the term of their natural life. But in other cases they remain conscious — often entangled in the final scene of earth-life for a time, and unaware that they have lost the physical body — held in whatever region they are related to by the outermost layer of the astral body; their normal kamalokic life does not begin until the natural web of earth-life is out- spun, and they are vividly conscious of both their astral and physical surroundings. One man who had committed an assassination and had been exe- cuted for his crime was said, by one of H. P. Bla- vatsky's Teachers, to be living through the scenes of the murder and the subsequent events over and over again in Kamaloka, ever repeating his diaboli-

cal act and going through the terrors of his arrest and execution. A suicide will repeat automatically the feelings of despair and fear which preceded his self-murder, and go through the act and the death- struggle time after time with ghastly persistence. A woman, who perished in the flames in a wild con- dition of terror and with frantic efforts to escape, created such a whirl of passions that, five days after- wards, she was still struggling desperately, fancying herself stiil in the fire and wildly repulsing all efforts to soothe her; while another woman who, with her baby on her breast, went down beneath the whirl of waters in a raging storm, with her heart calm and fttll of love, slept peacefully on the other side of death, dreaming of husband and children in happy lifelike visions. In more ordinary cases, death by accident is still a disadvantage, brought on a person by some serious fault,* for the possession of full consciousness in the lower kamalokic regions, which are closely related to the earth, is attended by many inconveniences and perils. The man is full of all the plans and interests that made up his life, and is conscious of the presence of the people and things connected with them; he is almost irresist- ibly impelled by his longings to try and influence the affairs to which his passions and feelings still cling, and is bound to the earth while he has lost all his accustomed organs of activity; his only hope of

* Not necessarily a fault committed in the present life. The law of cause and effect will be explained in Chapter IX., on "Karma."

peace lies in resolutely turning away from earth and fixing his mind on higher things, but comparatively few are strong enough to make this effort, even with the help always offered them by workers on the astral plane, whose sphere of duty lies in helping and guiding those who have left this world.* Too often such sufferers, impatient of their helpless inactivity, seek the assistance of sensitives, with whom they can communicate and so mix themselves up once more in terrestrial affairs ; they sometimes seek even to obsess convenient mediums and thus to utilize the bodies of others for their own purposes, so incurring many responsibilities in the future. Not without occult reason have English churchmen been taught to pray: "From battle, murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us."

We may now consider the divisions of Kamaloka one by one, and so gain some idea of the conditions which the man has made for himself in the interme- diate state by the desires which he has cultivated during physical life; it being kept in mind that the amount of vitality in any given "shell"— and there- fore his imprisonment in that shell — depends on the amount of energy thrown during earth-life into the kind of matter of which that shell consists. If the lowest passions have been active, the coarsest mat- ter will be strongly vitalized and its amount will also be relatively large. This principle rules through

* These workers are disciples of some of the great Teachers who guide and help humanity, and they are employed in this special duty of succoring souls in need of such assistance.

all kamalokic regions, so that a man during earth- life can judge very fairly as to the future for himself that he is preparing immediately on the other side of death.

The first, or lowest, division is the one that con- tains the conditions described in so many Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures under the name of "hells" of various kinds. It must be understood that a man, in passing into one of these states, is not getting rid of the passions and vile desires that have led him thither; these remain, as part of his character, lying latent in the mind in a germinal state, to be thrown outwards again to form his passional nature when he is returning to birth in the physical world.* His presence in the lowest region of Kamaloka is due to the existence in his kamic body of matter belonging to that region, and he is held prisoner there until the greater part of that matter has dropped away, until the shell composed of it is sufficiently disinte- grated to allow the man to come into contact with the region next above.

The atmosphere of this place is gloomy, heavy, dreary, depressing to an inconceivable extent. It seems to reek with all the influences most inimical to good, as in truth it does, being caused by the per- son whose evil passions have led them to this dreary place. All the desires and feelings at which we shudder find here the materials for their expression ; it is, in fact, the lowest slum, with all the horrors veiled from physical sight, parading in their naked * See Chapter VII., on "Reincarnation."

hideousness. Its repulsiveness is much increased by the fact that in the astral world character ex- presses itself in form, and the man who is full of evil passions looks the whole of them; bestial appe- tites shape the astral body into bestial forms, and repulsively human animal shapes are the appropriate clothing of brutalized human souls. No man can be a hypocrite in the astral world, and cloak foul thoughts with a veil

of virtuous seeming; whatever a man is that he appears to be in outward form and semblance, radiant in beauty if his mind be noble, repulsive in hideousness if his nature be foul. It will readily be understood, then, how such Teachers as the Buddha — to whose unerring vision all worlds lay open — should describe what was seen in these hells in vivid language of terrible imagery, that seems incredible to modern readers only because people forget that, once escaped from the heavy and un- plastic matter of the physical world, all souls appear in their proper likenesses and look just what they are. Even in this world a degraded and besotted ruffian moulds his face into most repellent aspect; what then can be expected when the plastic astral matter takes shape with every impulse of his crimi- nal desires, but that such a man should wear a horrifying form, taking on changing elements of hideousness ?

For it must be remembered that the population — if that word may be allowed — of this lowest region consists of the very scum of humanity, murderers, ruffians, violent criminals of all types, drunkards.

profligates, the vilest of mankind. None is here, with consciousness awake to its surroundings, save those guilty of brutal crimes, or of deliberate per- sistent cruelty, or possessed by some vile appetite. The only persons who may be of a better general type, and yet for a while be held here, are suicides, men who have sought by self-murder to escape from the earthly penalties of crimes they had com- mitted, and who have but worsened their position by the exchange. Not all suicides, be it under- stood, for self-murder is committed from many motives, but only such as are led up to by crime and are then committed in order to avoid the con- sequences.

Save for the gloomy surroundings and the loath- someness of a man's associates, every man here is the immediate creator of his own miseries. Un- changed, except for the loss of the bodily veil, men here show out their passions in all their native hide- ousness, their naked brutality ; full of fierce unsa- tiated appetites, seething with revenge, hatred, long- ings after physical indulgences which the loss of physical organs incapacitates them from enjoying, they roam, raging and ravening, through this gloomy region, crowding round all foul resorts on earth, round brothels and gin-palaces, stimulating their occupants to deeds of shame and violence, seeking opportunities to obsess them, and so to drive them into worse excesses. The sickening atmosphere felt round such places comes largely from these earth- bound astral entities, reeking with foul passions and

unclean desires. Mediums — unless of very pure and noble character — are special objects of attack, and too often the weaker ones, weakened still further by the passive yielding of their bodies for the tempo- rary habitation of other excarnate souls, are ob- sessed by these creatures, and are driven into intem- perance or madness. Executed murderers, furious with terror and passionate revengeful hatred, acting over again, as we have said, their crime and re- creating mentally its terrible results, surround them- selves with an atmosphere of savage thought-forms, and, attracted to any one harboring revengeful and violent designs, they egg him on into the actual commission of the deed over which he broods. Sometimes a man may be seen constantly followed by his murdered victim, never able to escape from his haunting presence, which hunts him with a dull persistency, try he never so eagerly to escape. The murdered person, vmless himself of a very base type, is wrapped in unconsciousness, and this very uncon- sciousness seems to add a new horror to its mechan- ical pursuit.

Here also is the hell of the vivisector, for cruelty draws into the astral body the coarsest materials and the most repulsive combinations of the astral mat- ter, and he lives amid the crowding forms of his mutilated victims — moaning, quivering, howling (they are vivified, not by the animal souls but by ele- mental life) pulsing with hatred to the tormentor — rehearsing his worst experiments with automatic regularity, conscious of all the horror, and yet im-

periously impelled to the self-torment by the habit set up during earth-life.

It is well once again to remember, ere quitting this dreary region, that we have here no arbitrary punishments inflicted from outside, but only the in- evitable working out of the causes set going by each person. During physical life they yielded to the vilest impulses and drew into, built into, their astral bodies the materials which alone could vibrate in answer to those impulses ; this self-built body be- comes the prison-house of the soul, and must fall into ruins ere the soul can escape from it. As in- evitably as a drunkard must live in his repulsive soddened physical body here, so must he live in his equally repulsive astral body there. The harvest sown is reaped after its kind. Such is the law in all the worlds, and it may not be escaped. Nor in- deed is the astral body there more revolting and horrible than it was when the man was living upon earth and made the atmosphere around him fetid with his astral emanations. But people on earth do not generally recognize its ugliness, being astrally blind.

Further, we may cheer ourselves in contemplating these unhappy brothers of ours by remembering that their sufferings are but temporary, and are giv- ing a much-needed lesson in the life of the soul. By the tremendous pressure of Nature's disregarded laws they are learning the existence of those laws, and the misery that accrues from ignoring them in life and conduct. The lesson they would not learn

during earth-life, whirled away on the torrent of lusts and desires, is pressed on them here, and will be pressed on them in their succeeding lives, until the evils are eradicated and the man has risen into a better life. Nature's lessons are sharp, but in the long run they are merciful, for they lead to the evo- lution of the soul and guide it to the winning of its immortality.

Let us pass to a more cheerful region. The sec- ond division of the astral world may be said to be the astral double of the physical, for the astral bod- ies of all things and of many people are largely com- posed of the matter belonging to this division of the astral plane, and it is therefore more closely in touch with the physical world than any other part of the astral. The great majority of people make some stay here, and a very large proportion of these are consciously awake in it. These latter are folk whose interests were bound up in the trivial and petty ob- jects of life, who set their hearts on trifles, as well as those who allowed their lower natures to rule them, and who died with the appetites still active and desirous of physical enjoyment. Having largely sent their life outwards in these directions, thus building their astral bodies largely of the materials that responded very readily to material impacts, they are held by these bodies in the neighborhood of their physical attractions. They are mostly dis- satisfied, uneasy, restless, with more or less of suf- fering according to the vigor of the wishes they cannot gratify ; some even undergo positive pain

from this cause, and are long delayed ere these earthly longings are exhausted. Many unnecessa- rily lengthen their stay by seeking to communicate with the earth, in whose interests they are entan- gled, by means of mediums, who allow them to use their physical bodies for this purpose, thus supply- ing the loss of their own. From them comes most of the mere twaddle with which every one is familiar who has had experience of public spiritualistic seances, the gossip and trite morality of the petty lodging-house and small shop — feminine, for the most part. As these earth-bound souls are gener- ally of small intelligence, their communications are of no more interest (to those alread}^ convinced of the existence of the soul after death) than was their conversation when they were in the body, and — just as on earth — they are positive in proportion to their ignorance, representing the whole astral world as identical with their own very limited area. There, as here:

They think the rustic cackle of their burgh The murmur of the world.

It is from this region that people who have died with some anxiety on their minds will sometimes seek to communicate with their friends in order to arrange the earthly matter that troubles them; if they cannot succeed in showing themselves, or in impressing their wishes by a dream on some friend, they will often cause much annoyance by knockings and other noises, directly intended to draw atten-

tion or caused unconsciously by their restless efforts. It is a charity in- such cases for some competent per- son to communicate with the distressed entity and learn his wishes, as he may thus be freed from the anxiety which prevents him from passing onwards. Souls, while in this region, may also very easily have their attention drawn to the earth, even al- though they would not spontaneously have turned back to it, and this disservice is too often done to them by the passionate grief and craving for their beloved presence by friends left behind on earth. The thought-forms set up by these longings throng round them, beat against them, and oftentimes arouse them if they are peacefully sleeping, or vio- lently draw their thoughts to earth if they are al- ready conscious. It is especially in the former case that this unwitting selfishness on the part of friends on earth does mischief to their dear ones that they would themselves be the first to regret; and it may be that the knowledge of the unnecessary suffering thus caused to those who have passed through death may, with some, strengthen the binding force of the religious precepts which enjoin submission to the divine law and the checking of excessive and rebel- lious grief.

The third and fourth regions of the kamalokic world differ but little from the second, and might almost be described as etherealized copies of it, the fourth being more refined than the third, but the general characteristics of the three subdivisions being very similar. Souls of somewhat more progressed

types are found there, and although they are held there by the encasement built by the activity of their earthly interests, their attention is for the most part directed onwards rather than back- wards, and. if they are not forcibly recalled to the concerns of earth-life, they will pass on without very much delay. Still, they are susceptible to earthly stimuli, and the weakening interest in terrestrial affairs may be reawakened by cries from below. Large numbers of educated and thoughtful people, who were chiefly occupied with worldly affairs dur- ing their physical lives, are conscious in these re- gions, and may be induced to communicate through mediums, and, more rarely, seek such communica- tion themselves. Their statements are naturallv of a higher type thon those spoken of as coming from the second division, but are

not marked by any characteristics that render them more valuable than similar statements made by persons still in the body. Spiritual illumination does not come from Kama- loka.

The fifth subdivision of Kamaloka offers many new characteristics. It presents a distinctly lumi nous and radiant appearance, eminently attractive to those accustomed only to the dull hues of earth, and justifying the epithet astral, starry, given to the whole plane. Here are situated all the materialized heavens which play so large a part in popular relig- ions all the world over. The happy hunting-grounds of the Red Indian, the Valhalla of the Norsemen, the houri-filled paradise of the Muslim, the golden

jewelled-gated New Jerusalem of the Christian, the lyceum-filled heaven of the materialistic reformer, all have here their places. Men and women who clung desperately to every "letter that killeth" have here the literal satisfaction of their cravings, uncon- sciously creating in astral matter by their powers of imagination, fed on the mere husks of the world's Scriptures, the cloud-built palaces whereof they dreamed. The crudest religious beliefs find here their temporary cloudland realization, and literallsts of every faith, who were filled with selfish longings for their own salvation in the most materialistic of heavens, here find an appropriate, and to them en- joyable, home, surrounded by the very conditions In which they believed. The religious and philanthropic busybodies, who cared more to carry out their own fads and impose their own ways on their neigh- bors than to work unselfishly for the increase of human virtue and happiness, are here much to the fore, carrying on reformatories, refuges, schools, to their own great satisfaction, and much delighted are they still to push an astral finger into an earthly pie with the help of a subservient medium whom they patronize with lofty condescension. They build as- tral churches and schools and houses, reproducing the materialistic heavens they coveted ; and though to keener vision their erections are imperfect, even pathetically grotesque, they find them all-sufficing. People of the same religions flock together and co- operate with each other in various ways, so that communities are formed, differing as widely from

each other as do similar communities on earth. When they are attracted to the earth they seek, for the most part, people of their own faith and coun- try, chiefly by natural affinity, doubtless, but also because barriers of language still exist in Kamaloka, as may be noticed occasionally in messages received in spiritualistic circles. Souls from this region often take the most vivid interest in attempts to establish communication between this and the next world, and the "spirit-guides" of average mediums come, for the most part, from this and from the region next above. They are generally aware that there are many possibilities of higher life before them, and that they will, sooner or later, pass away into worlds whence communication with this earth will not be possible.

The sixth kamalokic region resembles the fifth, but is far more refined, and is largely inhabited by souls of a more advanced type, wearing out the as- tral vesture in which much of their mental energies had worked while they were in the physical body. Their delay here is due to the large part played by selfishness in their artistic and intellectual life, and to the prostitution of their talents to the gratifica- tion of the desire-nature in a refined and delicate way. Their surroundings are of the best that are found in Kamaloka, as their creative thoughts fash- ion the luminous materials of their temporary home into fair landscapes and rippling oceans, snow-clad mountains and fertile plains, scenes that are of fairy- like beauty compared with

even the most exquisite

that earth can show. Religionists also are found here, of a slightly more progressed kind than those in the division immediately below, and with more definite views of their own limitations. They look forward more clearly to passing out of their present sphere, and reaching a higher state.

The seventh, the highest, subdivision of Kama- loka, is occupied almost entirely by intellectual men and women who were either pronouncedly material- istic while on earth, or who are so wedded to the ways in which knowledge is gained by the lower mind in the physical body that they continue its pursuit in the old ways, though with enlarged facul- ties. One recalls Charles Lamb's dislike of the idea that in heaven knowledge would have to be gained "by some awkward process of intuition" instead of through his beloved books. Many a student lives for long years, sometimes for centuries — according to H. P. Blavatsky — Hterally in an astral library, conning eagerly all books that deal with his favor- ite subject, and perfectly contented with his lot Men who have been keenly set on some line of in- tellectual investigation, and have thrown off the physical body with their thirst for knowledge un- slaked, pursue their object still with unwearied per- sistence, fettered by their clinging to the physical modes of study. Often such men are still sceptical as to the higher possibilities that lie before them, and shrink from the prospect of what is practically a second death — the sinking into unconsciousness ere the soul is born into the higher life of heaven. Poli-

ticlans, statesmen, men of science, dwell for a while in this region, slowly disentangling themselves from the astral body, still held to the lower life by their keen and vivid interest in the movements in which they have played so large a part, and in the effort to work out astrally some of the schemes from which Death snatched them ere yet they had reached fruition.

To all, however, sooner or later — save to that small minority who during earth-life never felt one touch of unselfish love, of intellectual aspiration, of recognition of something or some one higher than themselves — there comes a time when the bonds of the astral body are finally shaken off, while the soul sinks into brief unconsciousness of its surroundings, like the unconsciousness that follows the dropping off of the physical body, to be awakened by a sense of bliss, intense, immense, fathomless, undreamed of, the bliss of the heaven-world, of the world to which by its own nature it belongs. Low and vile may have been many of its passions, trivial and sordid many of its longings, but it had gleams of a higher nature, broken lights now and then from a purer region, and these must ripen as seeds to the time of their harvest, and however poor and few must yield their fair return. The man passes on to reap this harvest, and to eat and assimilate its fruit.*

The astral corpse, as it is sometimes called, or the "shell" of the departed entity, consists of the frag- * See Chapter V., on "Devachan."

merits of the seven concentric shells before de- scribed, held together by the remaining magnetism of the soul. Each shell in turn has disintegrated, until the point is reached when mere scattered frag- ments of it remain; these cling by magnetic attrac- tion to the remaining shells, and when one after another has been reduced to this condition, until the seventh or innermost is reached and itself disinte- grates, the man

himself escapes, leaving behind him these remains. The shell drifts vaguely about in the kamalokic world, automatically and feebly re- peating its accustomed vibrations, and as the re- maining magnetism gradually disperses, it falls into a more and more decayed condition, and finally dis- integrates completely, restoring its materials to the general mass of astral matter, exactly as does the physical body to the physical world. This shell drifts wherever the astral currents may carry it, and may be vitalized, if not too far gone, by the mag- netism of embodied souls on earth, and so restored to some amount of activity. It will suck up mag- netism as a sponge sucks up water, and will then take on an illusory appearance of vitality, repeating more vigorously any vibrations to which it was ac- customed ; these are often set up by the stimulus of thoughts common to the departed soul and friends and relations on earth, and such a vitalized shell may play quite respectably the part of a communi- cating intelligence ; it is, however, distinguishable — apart from the use of astral vision — by its auto- matic repetitions of familiar thoughts, and by the

total absence of all originality and of any traces of knowledge not possessed during physical life.

Just as souls may be delayed in their progress by foolish and inconsiderate friends, so may they be aided in it by wise and well-directed efforts. Hence all religions, which retain any traces of the occult wisdom of their Founders, enjoin the use of "pray- ers for the dead." These prayers with their accom- panying ceremonies are more or less useful accord- ing to the knowledge, the love, and the will-power by which they are ensouled. They rest on that uni- versal truth of vibration by which the universe is built, modified, and maintained. Vibrations are set up by the uttered sounds, arranging astral matter into definite forms, ensouled by the thought en- shrined in the words. These are directed towards the kamalokic entity, and, striking against the astral body, hasten its disintegration. With the decay of occult knowledge these ceremonies have become less and less potent, until their usefulness has almost reached a vanishing-point. Nevertheless they are still sometimes performed by a man of knowledge, and then exert their rightful influence. Moreover, every one can help his beloved departed by sending to them thoughts of love and peace and longing for their swift progress through the kamalokic world and their liberation from astral fetters. No one should leave his "dead" to go on a lonely way, unattended by loving hosts of these guardian angel thought-forms, helping them forward to joy.

The mental plane, as Its name implies, is that which belongs to consciousness working as thought; not of the mind as it works through the brain, but as it works in its own world, unencumbered with physical spirit-matter. This world is the world of the real man. The word "man" comes from the Sanskrit root "man," and this is the root of the San- skrit verb "to think," so that man means thinkers- he is named by his most characteristic attribute, in- telligence. In English the word "mind" has to stand for the intellectual consciousness itself, and also for the effects produced on the physical brain by the vibrations of that consciousness ; but we have now to conceive of the intellectual consciousness as an entity, an individual — a being, the vibrations of whose life are thoughts, thoughts which are Images, not words. This individual is Manas, or the Think- er;* he is the Self, clothed in the matter, and work- ing within the conditions, of the higher subdi-

* Derived from Manas is the technical name, the manasic plane, Englished as "mental." We might call it the plane of the mind proper, to distinguish its activities from those of the mind working in the flesh.

visions of the mental plane. He reveals his pres- ence on the physical plane by the vibrations he sets up in the brain and nervous system; these respond to the thrills of his life by sympathetic vibrations, but in consequence of the coarseness of their mate- rials they can reproduce only a small section of his vibrations, and even that very imperfectly. Just as science asserts the existence of a vast series of ethe- ric vibrations, of which the eye can only see a small fragment, the solar light-spectrum, because it can vibrate only within certain limits, so can the physi- cal thought-apparatus, the brain and nervous sys- tem, think only a small fragment of the vast series of mental vibrations set up by the Thinker in his own world. The most receptive brains respond up to the point of what we call great intellectual power; the exceptionally receptive brains respond up to the point of what we call genius ; the exceptionally un- receptive brains respond only up to the point we call idiocy; but every one sends beating against his brain millions of thought-waves to which it cannot re- spond, owing to the density of its materials, and just in proportion to its sensitiveness are the so- called mental powers of each. But before studying the Thinker, It will be well to consider his world, the mental plane itself.

The mental plane is that which is next to the as- tral, and is separated from it only by differences of materials, just as the astral is separated from the physical. In fact, we may repeat what was said as to the astral and the physical with regard to the

mental and the astral. Life on the mental plane is more active than on the astral, and form is more plastic. The spirit-matter of that plane is more highly vitalized and finer than any grade of matter in the astral world. The ultimate atom of astral matter has innumerable aggregations of the coarsest mental matter for its encircling sphere-world, so that the disintegration of the astral atom yields a mass of mental matter of the coarsest kinds. Under these circumstances it will be understood that the play of the life-forces on this plane will be enor- mously increased in activity, there being so much less mass to be moved by them. The matter is in constant, ceaseless motion, taking form under every thrill of life, and adapting itself without hesitation to every changing motion. "Mind-stuff," as it has been called, makes astral spirit-matter seem clumsy, heavy, and lustreless, although compared with the physical spirit-matter it is so fairy-light and lumi- nous. But the law of analogy holds good, and gives us a clue to guide us through this superastral region, the region that is our birthplace and our home, al- though, imprisoned in a foreign land, we know it not, and gaze at descriptions of it with the eyes of aliens. Once again here, as on the two lower planes, the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of the plane are seven in number. Once again, these varieties enter into countless combinations, of every variety of com- plexity, yielding the solids, liquids, gases, and ethers of the mental plane. The word "solid" seems in- deed absurd, when speaking of even the most sub-

stantial forms of mind-stuff; yet as they are dense in comparison with other kinds of mental materials, and as we have no descriptive words save such as are based on physical conditions, we must e'en use it for lack of a better. Enough if we understand that this plane follows the general law and order of Nature, which is, for our globe, the septenary basis, and that the seven subdivisions of matter are of less- ening densities, relatively to each other, as the phys- ical solids, liquids, gases, and ethers ; the seventh, or highest, subdivision being composed exclusively of the ultimate mental atoms.

These subdivisions are grouped under two head- ings, to which the somewhat inefficient and unintel- ligible epithets "formless" and "form" have been assigned.* The lower four — the first, second, third, and fourth subdivisions — are grouped together as * Vith form ;" the higher three — the fifth, sixth, and seventh subdivisions — are grouped as "formless." The grouping is necessary, for the distinction is a real one, although one difficult to describe, and the regions are related in consciousness to the divisions in the mind itself — as will appear more plainly a little farther on. The distinction may perhaps be best expressed by saying that in the lower four subdivi- sions the vibrations of consciousness give rise to forms, to images or pictures, and every thought ap- pears as a living shape; whereas in the higher three, consciousness, though still, of course, setting up vi-

* Arupa, without form ; rupa, form. Rupa is form, shape, body.

brations, seems rather to send them out as a mighty stream of living energy, which does not body itself into distinct images while it remains in this higher region, but which sets up a variety of forms all linked by some common condition when it rushes into the lower worlds. The nearest analogy that I can find for the conception I am trying to express is that of abstract and concrete thoughts: an abstract idea of a triangle has no form, but connotes any plane fig- ure contained within three right lines, the angles of which make two right angles; such an idea, with conditions but without shape, thrown into the lower world, may give birth to a vast variety of figures, right-angled, isosceles, scalene, of any color and size, but all fulfilling the conditions — concrete tri- angles, each one with a definite shape of its own. The impossibility of giving in words a lucid exposi- tion of the difference in the action of consciousness in the two regions is due to the fact that words are the symbols of images and belong to the workings of the lower mind in the brain, and are based wholly upon those workings; while the "formless" region belongs to the Pure Reason, which never works within the narrow limits of language.

The mental plane is that which reflects the Uni- versal Mind in Nature, the plane which in our little system corresponds with that of the Great Mind in the Kosmos.* In its higher regions exist all the

* Mahat, the Third Logos, or Divine Creative Intelligence, the Brahma of the Hindus, the Mandjusri of the Northern Buddhists, the Holy Spirit of the Christians.

archetypal ideas which are now in course of concrete evolution, and in its lower the working out of these into successive forms, to be duly reproduced in the astral and physical worlds. Its materials are capa- ble of combining under the impulse of thought vibra- tions, and can give rise to any combination which thought can construct ; as iron can be made into a spade for digging or into a sword for slaying, so can mind-stuff be shaped into thought-forms that help or that injure; the vibrating life of the Thinker shapes the materials around him, and according to his volitions so Is his work. In that region thought and action, will and deed, are one and the same thing — spirit-matter here becomes the obedient ser- vant of the life, adapting itself to every creative motion.

These vibrations, which shape the matter of the plane into thought-forms, give rise also — from their swiftness and subtlety — to the most exquisite and constantly changing colors, waves of varying shades like the rainbow hues in mother-of-pearl, ethereal- Ized and brightened to an indescribable extent, sweep-

ing over and through every form, so that each presents a harmony of rippling, living, luminous, delicate colors, including many not ever known to earth. Words can give no idea of the exquisite beauty and radiance shown in combinations of this subtle matter, instinct with life and motion. Every seer who has witnessed it, Hindu, Buddhist, Chris- tian, speaks in rapturous terms of its glorious beauty, and ever confesses his utter inability to describe it;

words seem but to coarsen and deprave it, however deftly woven in its praise.

Thought-forms naturally play a large part among the living creatures that function on the mental plane. They resemble those with which we are al- ready familiar in the astral world, save that they are far more radiant and more brilliantly colored, are stronger, more lasting, and more fully vitalized. As the higher intellectual qualities become more clearly marked, these forms show very sharply defined outlines, and there is a tendency to a singu- lar perfection of geometrical figures accompanied by an equally singular purity of luminous color. But, needless to say at the present stage of human- ity, there is a vast preponderance of cloudy and irregularly shaped thoughts, the production of the ill-trained minds of the majority. Rarely beautiful artistic thoughts are also here encountered, and it is little wonder that painters who have caught, in dreamy vision, some glimpse of their ideal, oft fret against their incapacity to reproduce its growing beauty in earth's dull pigments. These thought- forms are built out of the elemental essence of the plane, the vibrations of the thought throwing the elemental essence into a corresponding shape, and this shape having the thought as its informing life. Thus again we have "artificial elementals" created in a way identical with that by which they come into being in the astral regions. All that is said in Chapter II. of their generation and of their impor- tance may be repeated of those of the mental plane,

with here the additional responsibility on their cre- ators of the greater force and permanence belonging to those of this higher world. The elemental es- sence of the mental plane is formed by the Monad in the stage of its descent immediately preceding its entrance into the astral world, and it constitutes the second elemental kingdom, existing on the four lower subdivisions of the mental plane. The three higher subdivisions, the "formless," are occupied by the first elemental kingdom, the elemental essence there being thrown by thought into brilliant corus- cations, colored streams, and flashes of living fire, instead of into definite shapes, taking as it were its first lessons in combined action, but not yet assuming definite limitations of forms.

On the mental plane, in both its great divisions, exist numberless Intelligences, whose lowest bodies are formed of the luminous matter and elemental essence of the plane — Shining Ones who guide the processes of natural order, overlooking the hosts of lower entities before spoken of, and yielding sub- mission in their several hierarchies to their great overlords of the seven Elements.* They are, as may readily be imagined, beings of vast knowledge, of great power, and most splendid in appearance, radiant, flashing creatures, myriad-hued, like rain- bows of changing supernal colors, of stateliest im-

* These are the Arupa and Rupa Devas of the Hindus and the Buddhists, the "Lords of the heavenly and the earthly" of the Zoroastrians, the Archangels and Angels of the Christians and Mohammedans.

perial mien, calm energy incarnate, embodiments of resistless strength. The description of the great Christian Seer leaps to the mind, when he wrote of a mighty angel : "A rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pil- lars of fire.'** "As the sound of many waters" are their voices, as echoes from the music of the spheres. They guide natural order, and rule the vast compa- nies of the elementals of the astral world, so that their cohorts carry on ceaselessly the processes of Nature with undeviating regularity and accuracy.

On the lower mental plane are seen many clielas at work in their mental bodies,f freed for the time from their physical vestures. When the body is wrapped in deep sleep the true man, the Thinker, may escape from it, and work untrammelled by its weight in these higher regions. From here he can aid and comfort his fellow-men by acting directly on their minds, suggesting helpful thoughts, putting before them noble ideas, more effectively and speedily than he can do when encased in the body. He can see their needs more clearly and therefore can supply them more perfectly, and it is his highest privilege and joy thus to minister to his struggling brothers, without their knowledge of his service or any idea of theirs as to the strong arm that lifts their burden, or the soft voice that whispers solace in their pain. Unseen, unrecognized, he works,

t Usually called the Mayavi Rupa, or illusory body, when arranged for independent functioning in the mental world.

serving his enemies as gladly and as freely as his friends, dispensing to individuals the stream of be- neficent forces that are poured down from the great Helpers in higher spheres. Here also are some- times seen the glorious figures of the Masters, though for the most part They reside on the highest level of the "formless" division of the mental plane; and other Great Ones may also sometimes come hither on some mission of compassion requiring such lower manifestation.

Communication between intelligences functioning consciously on this plane, whether human or non- human, whether in or out of the body, is practically instantaneous, for it is with *'the speed of thought." Barriers of space have here no power to divide, and any soul can come into touch with any one by merely directing his attention to him. Not only is com- munication thus swift, but it is also complete, if the souls are at about the same stage of evolution; no words fetter and obstruct the communion, but the whole thought flashes from the one to the other, or, perhaps more exactly, each sees the thought as con- ceived by the other. The real barriers between souls are the differences of evolution ; the less evolved can know only as much of the more highly evolved as he is able to respond to ; the limitation can ob- viously be felt only by the higher one, as the lesser has all that he can contain. The more evolved a soul, the more does he know of all around him, the nearer does he approach to realities ; but the mental plane has also its veils of illusion, it must be remem-

bered, though they be far fewer and thinner than those of the astral and the physical worlds. Each soul has its own mental atmosphere, and, as all im- pressions must come through this atmosphere, they are all distorted and colored. The clearer and purer the atmosphere, and the less it is colored by the per- sonality, the fewer are the illusions that can befall it. The three highest subdivisions of the mental plane are the habitat of the Thinker himself, and he dwells on one or other of these, according to the stage of his evolution. The vast majority live on the lowest level, in various stages of evolution; a comparatively few of

the highly intellectual dwell on the second level, the Thinker ascending thither — ^to use a phrase more suitable to the physical than to the mental plane — when the subtler matter of that region preponderates in him, and thus necessi- tates the change; there is, of course, no "ascend- ing," no change of place, but he receives the vibra- tions of that subtler matter, being able to respond to them, and he himself is able to send out forces that throw its rare particles into vibration. The student should familiarize himself with the fact that rising in the scale of evolution does not move him from place to place, but renders him more and more able to receive impressions. Every sphere is around us, the astral, the mental, the buddhic, the nirvanic, and worlds higher yet, the life of the supreme God; we need not stir to find them, for they are here; but our dull unreceptivity shuts them out more effec- tively than millions of miles of mere space. We are

conscious only of that which affects us, which stirs us to responsive vibration, and as we become more and more receptive, as we draw into ourselves finer and finer matter, we come into contact with subtler and subtler worlds. Hence, rising from one level to another means that we are weaving our vestures of finer materials and can receive through them the contrasts of finer worlds; and it means further that in the Self within these vestures diviner powers are waking from latency into activity, and are sending out their subtler thrills of life.

At the stage now reached by the Thinker, he is fully conscious of his surroundings and is in posses- sion of the memory of his past. He knows the bod- ies he is wearing, through which he is contacting the lower planes, and he is able to influence and guide them to a great extent. He sees the difficul- ties, the obstacles, they are approaching — the results of past careless living — and he sets himself to pour into them energies by which they may be better equipped for their task. His direction is sometimes felt in the lower consciousness as an imperiously compelling force that will have its way, and that im- pels to a course of action for which all the reasons may not be clear to the dimmer vision caused by the mental and astral garments. Men who have done great deeds have occasionally left on record their consciousness of an inner uplifting and compelling power, which seemed to leave them no choice save to do as they had done. They were then acting as the real men; the Thinkers, that are the inner men.

were doing the work consciously through the bodies that then were fulfilling their proper functions as vehicles of the individual. To these high powers all will come as evolution proceeds.

On the third level of the upper region of the men- tal plane dwell the Egos of the Masters, and of the Initiates who are Their chelas, the Thinkers having here a preponderance of the matter of this region in their bodies. From this world of subtlest mental forces the Masters carry on Their beneficent work for humanity, raining down noble ideals, inspiring thoughts, devotional aspirations, streams of spiritual and intellectual help for men. Every force there generated rays out in myriad directions, and the noblest, purest souls catch most readily these help- ful influences. A discovery flashes into the mind of the patient searcher into Nature's secrets; a new melody entrances the ear of a great musician ; the answer to a long-studied problem illumines the in- tellect of a lofty philosopher; a new energy of hope and love suflFuses the heart of an unwearied phil- anthropist. Yet men think that they are left un- cared for, although the very phrases they use : "the thought occurred to me," "the idea came to me," "the discovery flashed on me," unconsciously testify to the truth known to their inner selves though the outer eyes be

blind.

Let us now turn to the study of the Thinker and his vesture as they are found in men on earth. The body of the consciousness, conditioning it in the four lower subdivisions of the mental plane — the mental

body, as we term it — is formed of combinations of the matter of these subdivisions. The Thinker, the individual, the Human Soul — formed in the way de- scribed in the latter part of this chapter — when he is coming into incarnation, first radiates forth some of his energy in vibrations that attract around him, and clothe him in, matter drawn from the four lower subdivisions of his own plane. According to the nature of the vibrations are the kinds of matter they attract; the finer kinds answer the swifter vibrations and take form under their impulse ; the coarser kinds similarly answer the slower ones ; just as a wire will sympathetically sound out a note — i.e., a given number of vibrations — coming from a wire similar in weight and tension to itself, but will remain dumb amid a chorus of notes from wires dissimilar to itself in these respects, so do the different kinds of matter assort themselves in answer to different kinds of vi- brations. Exactly according to the vibrations sent out by the Thinker will be the nature of the mental body that he thus draws around him, and this men- tal body is what is called the lower mind, the lower Manas, because it is the Thinker clothed in the mat- ter of the lower subdivisions of the mental plane and conditioned by it in his further working. None of his energies which are too subtle to move this matter, too swift for its response, can express them- selves through it; he is therefore limited by it, con- ditioned by it, restricted by it in his expression of himself. It is the first of his prison-houses during his incarnate life, and while his energies are acting

within it he is largely shut off from his own higher world, for his attention is with the outgoing ener- gies and his life is thrown with them into the mental body, often spoken of as a- vesture, or sheath, or vehicle — any expression will serve which con- notes the idea that the Thinker is not the mental body, but formed it and uses it in order to express as much of himself as he can in the lower mental region. It must not be forgotten that his energies, still pulsing outwards, draw round him also the coarser matter of the astral plane as his astral body; and during his incarnate life the energies that ex- press themselves through the lower kinds of mental matter are so readily changed by it into the slower vibrations that are responded to by astral matter that the two bodies are continually vibrating to- gether, and become very closely interwoven; the coarser the kinds of matter built into the mental body, the more intimate becomes this union, so that the two bodies are sometimes classed together and even taken as one.* When we come to study Re- incarnation we shall find this fact assuming vital importance.

According to the stage of evolution reached by

* Thus the Theosophist will speak of Kama-Manas, meaning the mind as working in and with the desire-nature, affecting and affected by the animal nature. The Vedantin classes the two together, and speaks of the Self as working in the mano- mayakosha, the sheath composed of the lower mind, emotions, and passions. The European psychologist makes "feelings" one lection of his tripartite division of "mind," and includes under feelings both emotions and sensations.

the man will be the type of mental body he forms on his way to become again incarnate, and we may study, as we did with the astral body, the respective mental bodies of three types of men — (a) an un- developed man; (b) an average man; (c) a spirit- ually advanced man.

(a) In the undeveloped man the mental body is but little perceptible, a small amount of unorganized mental matter, chiefly from the lowest subdivision of the plane, being all that represents it. This is played on almost entirely from the lower bodies, being set vibrating feebly by the astral storms raised by the contacts with material objects through the sense-organs. Except when stimulated by these as- tral vibrations it remains almost quiescent, and even under their impulses its responses are sluggish. No definite activity is generated from within, these blows from the outer world being necessary to arouse any distinct response. The more violent the blows, the better for the progress of the man, for each re- sponsive vibration aids in the embryonic develop- ment of the mental body. Riotous pleasure, anger, rage, pain, terror, all these passions, causing whirl- winds in the astral body, awaken faint vibrations in the mental, and gradually these vibrations, stirring into commencing activity the mental consciousness, cause it to add something of its own to the impres- sions made on it from without. We have seen that the mental body is so closely mingled with the as- tral that they act as a single body, but the dawning mental faculties add to the astral passions a certain

strength and quality not apparent in them when they work as purely animal qualities. The impres- sions made on the mental body are more permanent than those made on the astral, and they are con- sciously reproduced by it. Here memory and the organ of imagination begin, and the latter gradually moulds itself, the images from the outer world work- ing on the matter of the mental body and forming its materials into their own likeness. These images, born of the contacts of the senses, draw round them- selves the coarsest mental matter; the dawning pow- ers of consciousness reproduce these images, and thus accumulate a store of pictures that begin to stimulate action initiated from within, from the wish to experience again through the outer organs the vibrations that were found pleasant, and to avoid those productive of pain. The mental body then begins to stimulate the astral, and to arouse in it the desires that, in the animal, slumber until awakened by a physical stimulus ; hence we see in the unde- veloped man a persistent pursuit of sense-gratifica- tion never found in the lower animals, a lust, a cruelty, a calculation to which they are strangers. The dawning powers of the mind, yoked to the ser- vice of the senses, make of man a far more danger- ous and savage brute than any animal, and the stronger and more subtle forces inherent in the mental spirit-matter lend to the passion-nature an energy and a keenness that we do not find in the animal-world. But these very excesses lead to their own correction by the sufferings which they cause,

and these resultant experiences play upon the con- sciousness and set up new images on which the im- agination works. These stimulate the consciousness to resist many of the vibrations that reach it by way of the astral body from the external world, and to exercise its volition in holding the passions back in- stead of giving them free rein. Such resistant vi- brations are set up in, and attract towards, the men- tal body, finer combinations of mind-stuff, and tend also to expel from it the coarser combinations that vibrate responsively to the passional notes set up in the astral body ; by this struggle between the vibra- tions set up by passion-images and the vibrations set up by the imaginative reproduction of past ex- periences, the mental body grows, begins to develop a definite organization, and to exercise more and more initiative as

regards external activities. While the earth-life is spent in gathering experiences, the intermediate life is spent in assimilating them, as we shall see in detail in the following chapter, so that in each return to earth the Thinker has an in- creased stock of faculties to take shape as his mental body. Thus the undeveloped man, whose mind is the slave of his passions, grows into the average man, whose mind is a battle-ground in which pas- sions and mental powers wage war with varying success, about balanced in their forces, but who is gradually gaining the mastery over his lower nature. (b) In the average man, the mental body is much increased in size, shows a certain amount of organ- ization, and contains a fair proportion of matter

drawn from the second, third, and fourth subdivi- sions of the mental plane. The general law which regulates all the building up and modifying of the mental body may here be fitly studied, though it is the same principle already seen working in the lower realms of the astral and physical worlds. Ex- ercise increases, disuse atrophies and finally de- stroys. Every vibration set up in the mental body causes a change in its constituents, throwing out of it, in the part affected, the matter that cannot vi- brate sympathetically, and replacing it by suitable materials drawn from the practically illimitable store around. The more a series of vibrations is repeated, the more does the part affected by them increase in development; hence, it may be noted in passing, the injury done to the mental body by over-special- ization of mental energies. Such mistaken direc- tion of these powers causes a lopsided development of the mental body; it becomes proportionately over- developed in the region in which these forces are continually playing and proportionately undeveloped in other parts, perhaps equally important. A har- monious and proportionate all-round development is the object to be sought, and for this are needed a calm self-analysis and a definite direction of means to ends. A knowledge of this law further explains certain familiar experiences, and affords a sure hope of progress. When a new study is commenced, or a change in favor of high morality is initiated, the early stages are found to be fraught with difficulties; sometimes the effort is even abandoned because the

obstacles in the way of its success appear to be in- surmountable. At the beginning of any new men- tal undertaking, the whole automatism of the mental body opposes it; the materials, habituated to vibrate in a particular way, cannot accommodate themselves to the new impulses, and the early stage consists chiefly of sending out thrills of force which are frus- trated, so far as setting up vibrations in the mental body are concerned, but which are the necessary preliminary to any such sympathetic vibrations, as they shake out of the body the old refractory mate- rials and draw into it the sympathetic kinds. Dur- ing this process, the man is not conscious of any progress ; he is conscious only of the frustration of his efforts and of the dull resistance he encounters. Presently, if he persists, as the newly attracted materials begin to function, he succeeds better in his attempts, and at last, when all the old materials are expelled and the new are working, he finds him- self succeeding without an effort, and his object is accomplished. The critical time is during the first stage ; but if he trust in the law, as sure in its work- ing as every other law in Nature, and persistently repeat his efforts, he must succeed ; and a knowledge of this fact may cheer him when otherwise he would be sinking in despair. In this way, then, the average man may work on, finding with joy that as he steadily resists the promptings of the lower nature he is conscious they are losing their power over him, for he is expelling from his mental body all the materials that are capable of being thrown by them

into sympathetic vibrations. Thus the mental body gradually comes to be composed of the finer constituents of the four lower subdivisions of the men- tal plane, until it has become the radiant and exquisitely beautiful form which is the mental body of the

(c) Spiritually developed man. From this body all the coarser combinations have been eliminated, so that the objects of the senses no longer find in it, or in the astral body connected with it, materials that respond sympathetically to their vibrations. It contains only the finer combinations belonging to each of the four subdivisions of the lower mental world, and of these again the materials of the third and fourth subplanes very much predominate in its composition over the materials of the second and first, making it responsive to all the higher work- ings of the intellect, to the delicate contacts of the higher arts, to all the pure thrills of the loftier emo- tions. Such a body enables the Thinker who is clothed in it to express himself much more fully in the lower mental region and in the astral and physi- cal worlds; its materials are capable of a far wider range of responsive vibrations, and the impulses from a loftier realm mould it into nobler and subtler organization. Such a body is rapidly becoming ready to reproduce every impulse from the Thinker which is capable of expression on the lower sub- divisions of the mental plane; it is growing into a perfect instrument for activities in this lower men- tal world.

A clear understanding of the nature of the mental body would much modify modern education, and would make it far more serviceable to the Thinker than it is at present. The general characteristics of this body depend on the past lives of the Thinker on earth, as will be thoroughly understood when we have studied Reincarnation and Karma. The body is constituted on the mental plane, and its materials depend on the qualities that the Thinker has gar- nered within himself as the results of his past ex- periences. All that education can do is to provide such external stimuli as shall arouse and encourage the growth of the useful faculties he already pos- sesses, and stunt and help in the eradication of those that are undesirable. The drawing out of these in- born faculties, and not the cramming of the mind with facts, is the object of true education. Nor need memory be cultivated as a separate faculty, for memory depends on attention — that is, on the steady concentration of the mind on the subject studied — and on the natural affinity between the subject and the mind. If the subject be liked — that is, if the mind has a capacity for it — memory will not fail, provided due attention be paid. Therefore education should cultivate the habit of steady concentration, of sustained attention, and should be directed according to the inborn faculties of the pupil.

Let us now pass into the "formless" divisions of the mental plane, the region which is man's true home during the cycle of his reincarnations, into

which he is born, a baby soul, an infant Ego, an embryonic individuality, when he begins his purely human evolution.*

The outline of this Ego, the Thinker, is oval in shape, and hence H. P. Blavatsky speaks of this body of Manas which endures throughout all his in- carnations as the Auric Egg. Formed of the matter of the three highest subdivisions of the mental plane, it is exquisitely fine, a film of rarest subtlety, even at its first inception; and, as it develops, it be- comes a radiant object of supernal glory and beauty, the shining One, as it has been aptly named.f What is this Thinker? He is the divine Self, as already said, limited, or individualized, by this subtle body drawn from the materials of the ^'formless" region of the mental plane.J

This matter — drawn around a ray of the Self, a living beam of the one Light and Life of the universe — shuts off this ray from its Source, so far as the external world is con- cerned, encloses it within a filmy shell of itself, and so makes it "an individual." The life is the Life of the LoGos^ but all the powers of that Life are lying latent, concealed; everything is there potentially, germinally, as the tree is hidden within the tiny germ in the seed. This seed is dropped into the

* See Chapters VII. and VIII., on "Reincarnation." t This is the Augoiedes of the Neo-PIatonlsts, the "spiritual body" of S. Paul.

t The Self, working in the Vignyanamayakosha, the sheath of discriminative knowledge, according to the Vedantic classifi- cation.

soil of human life that its latent forces may be quickened into activity by the sun of joy and the rain pf tears, and be fed by the juices of the life-soil that we call experience, until the germ grows into a mighty tree, the image of its generating Sire. Hu- man evolution is the evolution of the Thinker; he takes on bodies on the lower mental, the astral, and the physical planes, wears them through earthly, astral, lower mental life, dropping them successively at the regular stages of this life-cycle as he passes from world to world, but ever storing up within himself the fruits he has gathered by their use on each plane. At first, as little conscious as a baby's earthly body, he almost slept through life after life, till the experiences playing on him from without awakened some of his latent forces into activity; but gradually he assumed more and more part in the direction of his life, until, with manhood reached, he took his life into his own hands, and an ever- increasing control over his future destiny.

The growth of the permanent body which, with the divine consciousness, forms the Thinker is ex- tremely slow. Its technical name is the causal body, because he gathers up within it the results of all ex- periences, and these act as causes, moulding future lives. It is the only permanent one among the bod- ies used during incarnation, the mental, astral and physical bodies being reconstituted for each fresh life; as each perishes in turn, it hands on its harvest to the one above it, and thus all the harvests are finally stored in the permanent body; when the

Thinker returns to incarnation, he sends out his en- ergies, constituted of these harvests, on each succes- sive plane, and thus draws round him new body after body suitable to his past. The growth of the causal body itself, as said, is very slow, for it can vibrate only in answer to impulses that can be ex- pressed in the very subtle matter of which it is com- posed, thus weaving them into the texture of its being. Hence the passions, which play so large a part in the early stages of human evolution, cannot directly affect its growth. The Thinker can work into himself only the experiences that can be repro- duced in the vibrations of the causal body, and these must belong to the mental region, and be highly in- tellectual or loftily moral in their character; other- wise its subtle matter can give no sympathetic vibration in answer. A very little reflection will convince any one how little material, suitable for the growth of this lofty body, he affords by his daily life; hence the slowness of evolution, the little prog- ress made. The Thinker should have more of him- self to put out in each successive life, and, when this is the case, evolution goes swiftly forward. Persistence in evil courses reacts in a kind of in- direct way on the causal body, and does more harm than the mere retardation of growth; it seems after a long time to cause a certain incapacity to respond to the

vibrations set up by the opposite good, and thus to delay growth for a considerable period after the evil has been renounced. Directly to injure the causal body evil of a highly intellectual and

refined kind is necessary, the "spiritual evil" men- tioned in the various Scriptures of the world. This is fortunately rare, rare as spiritual good, and found only- among the highly progressed, whether they be following the Right-hand or the Left-hand Path.*

The habitat of the Thinker, of the Eternal Man, is on the fifth subplane, the lowest level of the "form- less" region of the mental plane. The great masses of mankind are here, scarce yet awake, still in the infancy of their life. The Thinker develops con- sciousness slowly, as his energies, playing on the lower planes, there gather experience, which is in- drawn with these energies as they return to him treasure-laden with the harvest of a life. This Eter- nal Man, the individualized Self, is the actor in every body that he wears; it is his presence that gives the feeling of "I" alike to body and mind, the "I" being that which is self-conscious and which, by illusion, identifies itself with that vehicle in which it is most actively energizing. To the man of the senses the "I" is the physical body and the desire- nature ; he draws from these his enjoyment, and he thinks of these as himself, for his life is in them. To the scholar the "I" is the mind, for in its exer- cise lies his joy and therein his life is concentrated.

* The Right-hand Path is that which leads to divine man- hood, to Adeptship used in the service of the worlds. The Left-hand Path is that which also leads to Adeptship, but to

Adeptship that is used to frustrate the progress of evolution and is turned to selfish individual ends. They are sometimes called the White and Black Paths respectively.

Few can rise to the abstract heights of spiritual philosophy, and feel this Eternal Man as "I," with memory ranging back over past lives and hopes ranging forward over future births. The physiolo- gists tell us that if we cut the finger we do not really feel the pain there where the blood is flowing, but that the pain is felt in the brain, and is by imagina- tion thrown outwards to the place of injury ; the feel- ing of pain in the iinger is, they say an illusion; it is put by imagination at the point of contact with the object causing the injury ; so also will a man feel pain in an amputated limb, or rather in the space the limb used to occupy. Similarly does the one "I," the Inner Man, feel suffering and joy in the sheaths which enwrap him, at the points of contact with the external world, and feels the sheath to be himself, knowing not that this feeling is an illusion, and that he is the sole actor and experiencer in every sheath. Let us now consider, in this light, the relations between the higher and lower mind and their action on the brain. The mind, Manas, the Thinker, is one, and is the Self in the causal body; it is the source of innumerable energies, of vibrations of in- numerable kinds. These it sends out, raying out- wards from itself. The subtlest and finest of these are expressed in the matter of the causal body, which alone is fine enough to respond to them; they form what we call the Pure Reason, whose thoughts are abstract, whose method of gaining knowledge is intuition; its very "nature is knowledge," and it recognizes truth at sight as congruous with itself.

Less subtle vibrations pass outwards, attracting the matter of the lower mental region, and these are the Lower Manas, or lower mind — the coarser energies of the higher expressed in denser matter; these we call the intellect, comprising reason, judgment, im- agination, comparison, and the other mental facul- ties;

its thoughts are concrete, and its method is logic; it argues, it reasons, it infers. These vibra- tions, acting through astral matter on the etheric brain, and by that on the dense physical brain, set up vibrations therein, which are the heavy and slow reproductions .of themselves — heavy and slow, be- cause the energies lose much of their swiftness in moving the heavier matter. This feebleness of re- sponse when a vibration is initiated in a rare me- dium and then passes into a dense one is familiar to every student of physics. Strike a bell in air and it sounds clearly; strike it in hydrogen, and let the hydrogen vibrations have to set up the atmospheric waves, and how faint the result. Equally feeble are the workings of the brain in response to the swift and subtle impacts of the mind; yet that is all that the vast majority know as their "consciousness."

The immense importance of the mental workings of this "consciousness" is due to the fact that it is the only medium whereby the Thinker can gather the harvest of experience by which he grows. While it is dominated by the passions it runs riot, and he is left unnourished and therefore unable to develop; while it is occupied wholly in mental activities con- cerned with the outer world, it can arouse only his

lower energies; only as he is able to impress on it the true object of its life, does it commence to fulfil its most valuable functions of gathering what will arouse and nourish his higher energies. As the Thinker develops he becomes more and more con- scious of his own inherent powers, and also of the workings of his energies on the lower planes, of the bodies which those energies have drawn around him. He at last begins to try to influence them, using his memory of the past to guide his will, and these impressions we call "conscience" when they deal with morals, and "flashes of intuition" when they enlighten the intellect. When these impres- sions are continuous enough to be normal, we speak of their aggregate as "genius." The higher evolu- tion of the Thinker is marked by his increasing control over his lower vehicles, by their increasing susceptibility to his influence, and their increasing contributions to his growth. Those who would de- liberately aid in this evolution may do so by a care- ful training of the lower mind and of the moral character, by steady and well-directed effort. The habit of quiet, sustained, and sequential thought, directed to non-worldly subjects, of meditation, of study, develops the mind-body and renders it a bet- ter instrument; the effort to cultivate abstract think- ing is also useful, as this raises the lower mind to- wards the higher, and draws into it the subtlest materials of the lower mental plane. In these and cognate ways all may actively co-operate in their own higher evolution, each step forward making the

succeeding steps more rapid. No effort, not even the smallest, is lost, but is followed by its full effect, and every contribution gathered and handed inwards is stored in the treasure-house of the causal body for future use. Thus evolution, however slow and halt- ing, is yet ever onwards, and the divine Life, ever unfolding in every soul, slowly subdues all things to itself.

The word Devachan is the theosophical name for heaven, and, literally translated, means the Shining Land, or the Land of the Gods.* It is a specially guarded part of the mental plane, whence all sorrow and all evil are excluded by the action of the great spiritual Intelligences who superintend human evo- lution; and it is inhabited by human beings who have cast off their, physical and astral bodies, and who pass into it when their stay in Kamaloka is completed. The devachanic life consists of two stages, of which the first is passed in the four lower subdivisions of the mental plane, in which the Thinker still wears the mental body and is condi- tioned by it, being employed in assimilating the materials gathered by it during the earth-Hfe from

which he has just emerged. The second stage is spent in the "formless" world, the Thinker escaping from the mental body, and living his own unencum-

* Devasthan, the place of the Gods, is the Sanscrit equiva- lent. It is the Svarga of the Hindus; the Sukhavati of the Buddhists; the Heaven of the Zoroastrians and Christians, and of the less materialized among the Mohammedans.

bered life in the full measure of the self-conscious- ness and knowledge to which he has attained.

The total length of time spent in Devachan depends upon the amount of material for the devachanic life which the soul has brought with it thither from its life on earth. The harvest of fruit for consumption and assimilation in Devachan consists of all the pure thoughts and emotions generated during earth-life, all the intellectual and moral efforts and aspirations, all the memories of useful work and plans for hu- man service — everything which is capable of being worked into mental and moral faculty, thus assist- ing in the evolution of the soul. Not one is lost, however feeble, however fleeting; but selfish animal passions cannot enter, there being no material in which they can be expressed. Nor does all the evil in the past life, though it may largely preponderate over the good, prevent the full reaping of whatever scant harvest of good there may have been; the scantiness of the harvest may render the devachanic life very brief, but the most depraved, if he has had any faint longings after the right, any stirrings of tenderness, must have a period of devachanic life in which the seed of good may put forth its tender shoots, in which the spark of good may be gently fanned into a tiny flame.

In the past, when men lived with their hearts largely fixed on heaven and directed their lives with a view to enjoying its bliss, the period spent in Devachan was very long, lasting sometimes for many thousands of years ; at the present time, men's minds

being so much more centred on earth, and so few of their thoughts comparatively being directed to- wards the higher life, their devachanic periods are correspondingly shortened. Similarly, the time spent in the higher and lower regions of the mental plane* respectively is proportionate to the amount of thought generated severally in the mental and in the causal bodies; all the thoughts belonging to the personal self, to the life just closed — with all its ambitions, interests, loves, hopes and fears — all these have their fruition in the Devachan where forms are found; while those belonging to the higher mind, to the regions of abstract, impersonal thinking, have to be worked out in the "formless" devachanic region. The majority of people only just enter that lofty region to pass swiftly out again; some spend there a large portion of their devachanic existence; a few spend there almost the whole.

Ere entering into any details let us try to grasp some of the leading ideas which govern the deva- chanic life, for it is so different from physical life that any description of it is apt to mislead by its very strangeness. People realize so little of their mental life, even as led in the body, that when they are presented with a picture of mental life out of the body they lose all sense of reality, and feel as though they had passed into a world of dream.

The first thing to grasp is that mental life is far more intense, vivid, and nearer to reality than the

* Called technically the Arupa and Rupa Devachan — exist- ing on the arupa and rupa levels of the mental plane.

life of the senses. Everything we see and touch and hear and taste and handle down here is two removes farther from the reality than everything we contact in Devachan. We do not even there see things as they are, but the things that we see down here have two more veils of illusion enveloping them. Our sense of reality here is an entire delusion; we know nothing of things, of people, as they are; all that we know of them are the impressions they make on our senses, and the conclusions, often erroneous, which our reason deduces from the aggregate of these im- pressions. Get and put side by side the ideas of a man held by his father, his closest friend, the girl who adores him, his rival in business, his deadliest enemy, and a casual acquaintance, and see how in- congruous the pictures. Each can only give the im- pressions made on his own mind, and how far are they from the reality of what the man is, seen by eyes that pierce all veils and behold the whole man. We know of each of our friends the impressions they make on us, and these are strictly limited by our capacity to receive; a child may have as his father a great statesman of lofty purpose and imperial aims, but that guide of a nation's destinies is to him only his merriest playfellow, his most enticing story- teller. We live in the midst of illusions, but have the feeling of reality, and this yields us content. In Devachan we shall also be surrounded by illu- sions— ^though, as said, two removes nearer to real- ity— and there also we shall have a similar feeling of reality which will yield us content.

The illusions of earth, though lessened, are not escaped from in the lower heavens, though contact is more real and more immediate. For it must never be forgotten that these heavens are part of a great evolutionary scheme, and, until man has found the real Self, his own unreality makes him subject to illusions. One thing, however, which produces the feeling of reality in earth-life and of unreality when we study Devachan, is that we look at earth-life from within, under the full sway of its illusions, while we contemplate Devachan from outside, free for the time from its veil of maya.

In Devachan the process is reversed, and its in- habitants feel their own life to be the real one and look on the earth-life as full of the most patent illusions and misconceptions. On the whole, they are nearer the truth than the physical critics of theii heaven-world.

Next, the Thinker — being clad only in the mental body and being in the untrammelled exercise of its powers — manifests the creative nature of these pow- ers in a way and to an extent that down here we can hardly realize. On earth a painter, a sculptor, a musician, dreams dreams of exquisite beauty, creat- ing their visions by the powers of the mind; but when they seek to embody them in the coarse ma- terials of earth they fall far short of the mental creation. The marble is too resistant for perfect form, the pigments too muddy for perfect color. In heaven, all they think is at once reproduced in form, for the rare and subtle matter of the heaven-

world is mind-stuff, the medium in which the mind normally works when free from passion, and it takes shape with every mental impulse. Each man, there- fore, in a very real sense, makes his own heaven, and the beauty of his surroundings is indefinitely increased, according to the wealth and energy of his mind. As the soul develops his powers, his heaven grows more and more subtle and exquisite; all the limitations in heaven are self-created, and heaven expands and deepens with the expansion and deep- ening of the soul.

While the soul is weak and self- ish, narrow and ill-developed, his heaven shares these pettinesses; but it is always the best that is in the soul, however poor that best may be. As the man evolves, his devachanic lives become fuller, richer, more and more real, and advanced souls come into ever closer and closer contact with each other, enjoying wider and deeper intercourse. A life on earth, thin, feeble, vapid, and narrow, men- tally and morally, produces a comparatively thin, feeble, vapid and narrow life in Devachan, where only the mental and the moral survive. We cannot have more than we are, and our harvest is according to our sowing. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that," and neither more nor less, "shall he also reap.'* Our indolence and greediness would fain reap where we have not sowed, but in this universe of law the Good Law, mercifully just, brings to each the exact wages of his work.

The mental impressions, or mental pictures, we

make of our friends will dominate us in Devachan. Round each soul throng those he loved in life, and every image of the loved ones that live in the heart becomes a living companion of the soul in heaven. And they are unchanged. They will be to us there as they were here, and no otherwise. The outer semblance of our friend as it affected our senses, wc form out of mind-stuff in Devachan by the creative powers of the mind; what was here a mental picture is there — as in truth it was here, although we knew it not — an objective shape in living mind-stuff, abid- ing in our own mental atmosphere; only what is dull and dreamy here is forcibly living and vivid there. And with regard to the true communion, that of soul with soul ? That is closer, nearer, dearer than anything we know here, for, as we have seen, there is no barrier on the mental plane between soul and soul ; exactly in proportion to the reality of soul-life in us is the reality of soul-communion there : the mental image of our friends is our own creation ; his form is as we knew and loved it ; and his soul breathes through that form to ours just to the extent that his soul and ours can throb in sympathetic vibration. But we can have no touch with those we knew on earth if the ties were only of the physical or astral body, or if they and we were discordant in the inner life; therefore into our Deva- chan no enemy can enter, for sympathetic ac- cord of minds and hearts can alone draw men to- gether there. Scparateness of heart and mind means separation in the heavenly life, for all that is