

Death and After

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

Chapter I

Introduction

In the drama of life, death stands as a door to an unknown and a more or less dreaded mystery. Is it the end? Does it spell disaster to all humanity's fondest hopes and aspirations? Or, is it, perchance, merely the prelude to wider and happier vistas of Consciousness? If only we could feel certainty concerning these questions, how much simpler life would become! Yet, would the simplification of the problems of life bring out the best potentialities which lie hidden within us? Is it not the peculiar office of problems to bring into manifestation our hidden powers? If everything in life were clear and definite then there would be no reason for the exertion of any *effort*. Failure to exert effort, at least for one who is not a sage, leads to degeneration, a sort of "running down" of force by a process of exhaustion. Man still needs the problem of the Unknown to intrigue him so that he will call out from the depths of his nature that which otherwise might remain forever hidden. It has, therefore, been desirable that man in his present stage of unfoldment should not have possessed too great an assurance concerning his future. Great Sages find the world, as it is, to be the manifestation of a profound Wisdom, and in general as the individual gains in Wisdom he is less disposed to be at war with the order which exists. Thus in the historical sense, it has undoubtedly been well that man did not know too much concerning the states which lie before him, as knowledge without the power of Understanding is far too apt to be a curse.

But however desirable a particular state of consciousness may be when taken in its setting, it by no means follows that that state is, in and of itself, permanently good. Thus the wise man may look upon the customs of savagery among a primitive people and find them relatively good, though regarding them as unqualifiedly evil if incorporated into the lives of people who have awakened to at least the external elements of culture. A scaffolding is a necessary structure in the early stages of erecting a building, but if, when the building is finished, the scaffolding is allowed to remain, it becomes an unqualified architectural evil. Thus every form, whether in the objective or psychical sense, must be evaluated with due regard to its setting. No form can ever be completely true or perfect in the absolute sense, for all form exists in a domain which is ever in a process of becoming. Thus all structures can never be completely adequate for more than but a moment. Yet formal structure is necessary, and should never be destroyed until something more perfect and truer is found to take its place. Changing form merely for the sake of change is worse than preserving a structure beyond the day of its real usefulness. It is very unsafe to tear down a scaffolding until the builder has found some other foundation to stand upon. And unless the new foundation is something better than the old, there is no point in making the transition at all. It is real Wisdom which requires the innovator to carry the burden of the proof, although without the builder of new forms stagnation is the result.

Not all peoples stand at the same level in their individual evolution, and as different stages of unfoldment call for correspondingly different forms in thought-structure, in religious and social institutions, the peculiar needs of all individuals can never at any one time be satisfied by the same limiting forms. With their characteristic profundity the East Indian sages of old solved this problem with a social form which gave the maximum freedom to the widest range of relative degrees of evolutionary unfoldment of individuals. In its original sense, caste structure corresponded to actual differences in character and unfoldment of the individuals composing the membership of one caste-form as compared with another. The formal life and religious rites of each form were designed to meet the peculiar needs of that group. At the same time, the formal

barriers of separation between groups made possible autonomous cultures graduated to meet the needs of different stages of development of the psychical nature. The result was that, in the same land and with equal freedom, the primitive Dravidian and the high-caste Brahmin of the very highest spiritual consciousness, together with every degree of intermediate group, were able to live essentially harmoniously, each according to his nature and spiritual needs. The Aryan invasion of India did not spell the extermination of the primitive people which were found in that land, nor did it destroy for them their native culture. On the other hand, the spiritual life of the highest type of man was not made impossible by being forced into a smothering psychical matrix, as would have been the case if the Brahmin had been forced to amalgamate with the psycho-sphere of the low-type Dravidian.

With us in the West, and in America especially, the ideal of equality has actually worked to destroy the freedom which that idea, in theory, was supposed to serve. The tendency here has been the regimentation of institutions, and while this has facilitated the raising of the formal culture of the average man, it has, in general, depressed the life-expression of those whose consciousness-state lies above this regimented dead-level. For those who lie at the extremes, our system has been deadly. Really great men, in the sense of an inner profundity, have not had the protection of the insulation through which alone they can reveal themselves effectively, and our civilization has been much the poorer for this. At the other extreme, the groups which cannot adjust themselves to our cultural forms are destroyed. The humaneness of the Aryan in his relation to the Dravidian stands upon an incomparably higher level than does the spirit which we have manifested with respect to the North American Indian.

Our democratic institutions in America present us with the practical problem of finding some suitable form which lies beyond that which exists currently, and that greatly complicates the issue. The very concept which becomes a liberating force to one portion of the whole group, at the same time tends to wipe away the crutch which is still necessary for the other portions. To have a knowledge which one cannot understand is worse than ignorance. The aggravated criminal problem in this country is an instance in point. Technical knowledge is developed far beyond the wisdom which is necessary to make judicious use of it. The West generally, and America especially, are facing a situation where the external intellect has become too powerful for the soul of the average man. This situation is one fraught with the gravest danger. Our only hope lies in the growth of those movements which tend toward spiritual profundity, as the powers of external intellect, now released, cannot be sequestered by the few who are really wise enough to administer them.

In a peculiar degree, therefore, we in the West are forced to face the necessity of giving open expression to forms of knowledge from deeper levels of the arcana of Consciousness which, while they are probably of a maturity beyond that which best fits the understanding of the average man, yet only in these forms lies the antidote to the over-developed external knowledge. Western civilization has reached a point where it must rise much higher or it will fall to barbarism. Never in the world's history have we been so distinctly in a place where we dare not let Nature take her course. We have forced our way far into Nature's secrets in one direction and we must equally force acquisition of the complement of this knowledge or, by failure to possess the adequate instrument to control the power we have invoked, the latter will arise with destructive violence and overthrow us. In one sense we have dared heroically and we must continue equally heroically in our efforts, until the necessary balance between outer power and inner profundity is achieved which alone makes relative stability possible, or we can hope for nothing short of disaster. Never was there a time when superficial optimism was more dangerous

than now. There is no safety in the automatic continuance of the forces already invoked. Victorious achievement is possible, and if attained, it will probably place the world beyond any point it has ever yet known, in an inner as well as an outer sense, but such victory can only be the fruitage of conscious and intelligently directed effort, heroically continued.

In one of its departments this deeper knowledge is specifically related to the subject of death. When man generally was a less potent outer force it mattered little that his concepts of death and the states after-death were childish. Having precipitated potent causal forces he must be prepared to face equally powerful effects. In so far as these effects involve the states that follow death, it is correspondingly necessary that one has generally an intelligent understanding of those states, at least in so far as the conditions which apply to one form of consciousness can be comprehended by a state of consciousness which is qualitatively different. While a child is still living under the protective sphere of its mother, it may be perfectly sufficient for it to bury its face in its mother's skirt when confronted with what seems to it to be fearful things. The objective inadequacy of the skirt as a protective agency is quite effectively supplemented by the mother's guardianship. At the same time, the hiding of the perceptive faculties of the child when it buries its face does serve as a real protection to the (as yet) overly tender psychic nature. But when at a later stage, the growing youth dares the climbing of trees and the adventuring into strange places involving more or less of real danger, he must face in his own person the penalty of any mistakes made. At this stage safety can be secured only by a greater knowledge of causal relationships, in so far as they bear upon the youth's field of action. Something of this same principle applies to our present humanity in its relationship to the domains of consciousness which lie within this objective plane of action.

A question which often arises in connection with any proposed discussion of after-death states is: Are we really able to know anything about this domain which seems to be beyond the range of empirical determination by anyone while still retaining the power to express that which is experienced? Superficially this difficulty seems to be insurmountable, but it proves not to be so if the student penetrates deeply enough in his investigation. In the first place, adepts in Yoga claim to have made such empirical penetration into the domains of Death, and they have established the possibility of their powers upon such an excellent ground of reason and demonstration, in the domains where objective verification is possible, that they have built a strong ground of presumption for their claim. The reader who raises this objection should do so in a reasonable spirit. No one, whether a Yogi or not, who had actually entered the domain of Death and returned, could prove completely to the satisfaction of a mind that knew only this outer plane of action that the experiences reported were genuine. Explorers of out of the way regions of the earth are really faced with an analogous difficulty. Now could the present explorers of the Antarctic regions really prove to a confirmed skeptic anything which they claim to have discovered? They have experienced states of matter that are outside the range of the empirical knowledge of most of us. If we were unable to offer a presumption of truth for the testimony given, provided the background and the internal structure of the statement is reasonable, then not these nor any other explorers could increase the knowledge of those of us who did not specifically go and do likewise. The situation is not different with respect to those who have given us reports concerning after-death states based upon their own empirical determination. The checks to which we can submit their reports are in principle the same as those which we can and do apply to the records of explorers in unknown fields. These checks are: (a) internal reasonableness of the report; (b) whether the experiences reported are logically possible in the light of known principles; and (c) the credibility of the witness as proven in domains in

which a complete check of his statements can be made. The specific discussion of after-death states which is given in this volume is based upon just such reports which have been subjected to precisely the checks enumerated. The reader, likewise, will have every opportunity to follow the same course.

But in addition to specific empirical testimony, there are ways of acquiring knowledge in terms of principles which can build an understanding of the general form which after-death experience must take. The gate to this form of knowledge is found in a penetration into the nature of Consciousness and Life as such, using the material of Consciousness which is the common property of all mankind. Just as for ages man has lived in the midst of electrical substance without directing electrical energy to his service, so also there lies in our common Consciousness great treasures which most of us have left unused. As electrical genius has revealed something of the potentialities of the ubiquitous electricity and placed it at the service of all men, so also may the deeper values in Consciousness be revealed and used.

It so happens that our experience in the "practical" West has built a strong presumption for a kind of knowledge derived, not from experience, but from Consciousness itself. Mathematics affords by all odds the most certain knowledge that we possess, yet, however much experience may have afforded the occasion for calling it forth into objective form, it is by no means derived *from* experience. A mathematical proof of impossibility is final. A mathematical proof of possibility silences *a priori* skeptics who are worthy of being taken seriously. The fact is that mathematics *is* genuine spiritual knowledge and it is the one all-powerful instrument we have in the West to withstand the spiritual agnosticism which is the natural consequence of consciousness centered too exclusively in empirical externality.

The achievements of mathematics in the domain which our Western, so-called practical, man conceives to be of most importance (i.e., objective, physical accomplishment) have been so overwhelmingly masterly that this science very properly holds the kingly position among our sciences. So much is this the case, that not alone in the spiritual sense, but even objectively it may be said that he who stands sustained by mathematics need tender no respect to any possible foe. If this foe is so stupid that he can be convinced by no intellectual consideration but respects only the argument of brute physical force, then he may be fully convinced by the phenomenon of the calculated trajectory of the cannon-ball. And this is but one of the lesser powers of mathematics. As the consciousness of man rises above this lowest level, then ever in profounder degree is the potency of mathematics recognized.

As already indicated, mathematics is a science which grows out of an analysis of Consciousness as such, and its ground is not found in the material of experience. The record of mathematical knowledge has proven, even in objective terms, the superiority of this type of knowledge as compared with that which rests upon an empirical base alone. Thus we in the West have the very best of reasons to listen seriously to the Eastern Sage who says that the road to certainty lies in the analysis of self-consciousness.

It is possible in principle to penetrate the unknown far in advance of detailed experience. To be sure, there are values resident in the immediate empirical content of knowledge which are not to be attained in knowledge through principle alone. But we are not asking anyone to forego concrete experience. We deny to no one the right of dying as being a privilege which he may experience. But he who has penetrated the empirically unknown in terms of principle stands in an incomparably stronger position when he has occasion to enter that domain in the experimental sense, than is true of one who moves but blindly upon the basis of experience alone.

While it is true that fear of death is very common, there are other facts which stand opposed to this fear and point to motivating factors in the psychic nature of man that clearly rise above this limitation. Over and over again men dare danger which carries the threat of death. Disregarding for the present all those who, because of philosophical realization, have risen superior to death, and considering only that group which so far as its personal consciousness is concerned stands enthralled with the death-fear, the fact that large numbers of average men and women in this group can, in action, rise above their fear of death, is highly significant. These are not instances where conscious thought has risen superior to the personality. And while in many instances, blind faith in a future based upon religious teachings has been the factor which has made possible the rising to a superior consciousness than that limited by the personal consciousness, this is by no means always the case. Many have faced death courageously without the backing of a blind faith or of a superior philosophical outlook.

Now in this fact there lies a profound significance. While it is true that there are individuals for whom life has become so painful that death, even though it means extinction of consciousness in every sense, has become an object of desire, yet this attitude explains only a small portion of the manifestations of physical courage. There are plenty of men who, while possessing a normal love of life and unsupported by a blind faith in religious teachings concerning continuity of consciousness beyond death, yet freely sacrifice their lives for causes that they deem worthy, or for matters of honor, or in the adventurous search of the unknown. From whence comes the power to do all this? It cannot be explained in the instances noted by reference to the knowledge carried by the personal consciousness. It manifestly belongs to deeper elements of human nature.

Not only in the instance of the power to face death freely do we find motivating factors in human conduct which cannot be explained by the elements which lie within the personal consciousness. In fact, it is probably more the rule than the exception that men cannot give satisfactory reasons for their courses of action in the more important affairs of life. Perception of the correct thing to do in the midst of concrete situations without knowing why the given course of action should be chosen is very common. This seems to be peculiarly characteristic of successful men of action. Yet manifestly the power to know the correct thing to do in facing a particular situation comes from somewhere. As decision is a psychic event, the elements which produce decision belong to the psychic domain of man, necessarily. As in the instances given adequate explanation of how a decision was reached cannot be found by an analysis of the elements within the field of the personal consciousness, we are forced in our search for a satisfactory basis of interpretation to penetrate into depths of the psychic nature which lie below the level of personal consciousness. In other words, we are forced to the realization that the complete field of knowledge is much greater than that which lies in the arc of personal consciousness, at least in so far as the average man is concerned. Thus we know more than we personally might realize. Under stress, this knowledge rises to the surface sufficiently to dominate our volition.

Being brought to a recognition of the fact that there is a super-conscious knowledge which, while it generally lies dormant when moving through the commonplace circumstances of life, yet rises into dominance in critical periods such as those which require the sacrifice of life, then we must realize that it is in principle possible to draw out of the depths of man's psychic nature the very certainty of knowledge which will resolve intelligently the unsolved problems of normal personal consciousness. There is thus no absurdity in undertaking to produce in terms of knowledge (and not mere speculation) the nature of life after death, and present the principles

involved in such a way that essentially they are seen as derived from knowledge which in essence every man possesses. To be sure, this is a task which may be successfully essayed only by those having the powers of reflective penetration. To the typical man of action this would be an impossible task, as his energies are concentrated upon the surface aspects of Being. He may be very sensitive to the urgings reaching out from the depths of profundity, but he is least capable of grasping their significance. But a course once charted becomes clearer to those who follow, so that a path which was originally discernable only to "genius" becomes first a blazed trail accessible to cultured talent, and in the end a paved highway which the simplest may follow. The less wise portions of humanity may come to know themselves through the labors performed by their wiser brothers. It is this fact which gives social culture significance.

The Western world has had to await the appearance among us of certain geniuses before the deeper values of life could be made manifest to us. If there had never been a Newton (or any genius who would have performed his service), then how impossible would have been the whole development of our present mechanics, industry and culture! Once a way or procedure is shown, there is a ready supply of others who will follow and perfect the details of the action. But on every side in the vital concerns of our life we find that we have had to await the message of some genius. Now this is not a necessity of life as such but is the consequence of a mode of living which lays its emphasis on the surface aspects of life. Among the races who have centered themselves more in the depths there is not the same dependence upon genius. The fact is that there is an art by which the deeps can be plumbed and that art can be mastered. Thus it is possible for man to rise superior to a dependence upon genius and make for himself an independent determination of the fundamental realities.

The art referred to here is that known as Yoga. There is a science and an art by which the powers of penetration, insight and inspiration, among numerous others, may be acquired by him who chooses to follow the necessary training. This is part of the significance of yoga practice. Thus there is a means by which man can render himself free from dependence upon fortuitous circumstances or bestowal of grace as the necessary means of solving his greatest life-problems. Thus the power to know is not alone the privilege of the few, but all have the right to realize this power if they will but put forth the necessary effort to build it. Blind faith may be completely superseded without falling into the gulf of agnosticism.

In yoga practice there lies a means by which every power or capacity in man can be accentuated, or brought into life, even if at present it lies dormant. This does not mean that every individual after having successfully pursued the practice of Yoga becomes at once complete and all-powerful in every respect. No embodied being can possibly be unlimited. If Being as such could be completely manifested in one form then there would not be a multitude of creatures in the universe. Form necessarily implies limitation, and not even a Christ or a Buddha is an exception to this principle. Thus when the practice of Yoga deepens the nature or extends the power of a man it is in those directions which his nature and his focus of interest make possible. But within these limitations the Yogi is the equal of any genius, while in addition he possesses the superiority which grows out of the fact that he has a method by which he can systematically unfold his potentialities.

It has already been shown that below the level of personal consciousness in general there are domains of knowledge which under conditions of stress come to the surface sufficiently to direct decision and action. These domains can also be penetrated by conscious reflective intelligence, and such is done in the case of every genuine philosopher. In general this power is traceable to the potentialities the philosopher brings with him into this world plus the

constructive effect of reflective study. For knowledge thus derived the Western world has to await the appearance of the philosophical genius. Now through Yoga this domain of super-conscious knowledge may be penetrated with the assurance beforehand that the penetration will be successful. Thus super-sensuous realities may become the material of objective consciousness in an indefinitely extended degree as is already true in the domain of mathematics.

Granting the correctness of the foregoing statement of principles it should be evident that it is possible for man to penetrate the domain of after-death states and thus have knowledge, here and now, of those states. Assuming this as true in principle the reader may pursue the discussion of the after-death states without feeling "hung up in the air," as it were, with respect to the rational possibility of the acquisition of such knowledge.

As a further factor revealing the high importance which death and the after-death states occupy in the consciousness of mankind, reference is made to the place which this subject occupies in the various religions. While in principle religion has a real function entirely apart from the question of continuity of consciousness beyond death, yet in the case of the most popular religion the great driving force of religious interest is centered in that which may happen to man beyond the grave. This is conspicuously true of both Christianity and Islam. The practical concern of the typical Christian is salvation taken in a personal sense. Sublimation of the personal in metaphysical consciousness is not the purpose represented in the forms of orthodox Christianity. The great concern is the securing of a continuity of personal consciousness beyond death in a blissful state. If it could be proven that consciousness was a function of body only, and that with the destruction of the physical body, all individual consciousness was destroyed, then Christian theology would lose its practical significance. It is not said that this is true of the primary teachings of Jesus. On the contrary, the great spiritual principles enunciated in the "Sermon on the Mount," for instance, have a fundamental value which is not at all affected by belief or non-belief in continued existence of the individual after the dissolution of his body. But so far as the great body of orthodox Christian doctrine is concerned, its practical significance is centered around the mystery of death.

In support of this statement consider what is undoubtedly the central dogma of orthodox Christian theology, i.e., the doctrine that by act of belief in the saving power of Jesus *only* is salvation realized. Now this salvation is not moral regeneration, as upright and unselfish life-conduct is regarded as incompetent to effect salvation if not accompanied by the act of belief. On the other hand, the act of belief without practical moral regeneration is effective provided there is "repentance." Thus we have a situation in which reprehensible life-conduct is compatible with salvation, while the highest type of thought and practice may fail of this realization. This implies, as the history of the Christian Church bears out, that the center of emphasis is not in making the life now as perfect as possible, but in preparing the way for a future state beyond death.

The power of the Mohammedan (Islam) religion in producing fighters who so readily abandon themselves to death, is evidence of the importance which the doctrine of after-death states plays in this religion. He who dies in fighting for Islam is assured a place in paradise. This simple assurance regarding the personal future confers an unquestionable power. But that it should have done so simply reveals the important place which thought concerning future states occupies in the minds of most men.

While the attitude toward death in Buddhism takes on a wholly different and much more profound character than applies in the case of either of the preceding religions, yet even here the problem does appear. In the first place, it was the realization on the part of Gautama Buddha at a time when his mind had attained maturity, that mankind was subject to death, which was one of

the factors which set him on the search for the causes and the means of eradicating misery. The solution which Buddha found, while quite in harmony with the thought of Jesus, yet reverses the values of orthodox Christianity. With respect to this problem the essence of Buddha's discovery might be said to be the realization that life bound to personality was really a form of death. Liberation thus came to mean the destroying of this relatively dead state. Thus the Buddhist does not seek perpetuation of personal consciousness as a desirable end. On the contrary, this state is realized as the cause of all misery and all evil, and one which can be destroyed only by a great moral victory. So long as man remains bound to a series of personal incarnations he is failing to realize Liberation. The goal is *Nirvana*, which is impersonal, non-relative Consciousness, a state that is unattainable by personal consciousness. Since *Nirvana* may be realized while the individual is still embodied, although more easily realized after abandoning the physical sheath, it is clear that the event of physical death does not occupy the primary place in Buddhist thought that it does in most other religions. But the problem of the persistence of personal consciousness is vital, although relative values are just reversed when compared with typical Western views.

As an instance revealing how little the securing of the continuity of personal consciousness after death is in principle essential to religion, however much it may dominate in the forms of most religions, attention is called to the Hinayana form of Buddhism found in Ceylon. The interpretation of *Nirvana* by this group is not sustained by the larger Northern form of Buddhism, nor by most Buddhist thinkers. It is practically certain that this Southern interpretation has missed the significance of Buddha's metaphysics in this respect. But the fact that this special interpretation of *Nirvana* exists among the Ceylonese affords an excellent opportunity of studying the value of religion when divorced from all expectation of continuity of consciousness beyond death in any sense, save as a failure to attain. The *Nirvana* of the Hinayana's complete extinction, not merely of personal consciousness, but of Consciousness in every sense. To attain this goal the most high-minded, upright and unselfish life must be lived. And when we come to the practical effect, what do we find? We cannot do better than quote from the words of Count Hermann Keyserling (the author of *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, Keyserling was a Buddhist priest in Ceylon) who offers in his recorded reflections while traveling through Asia probably the most understanding interpretation of the various forms of Asiatic culture afforded by any Occidental who had not had Oriental training. Speaking of the Buddhist priests of Ceylon, Count Keyserling writes:

I must confess that the Buddhist priest surprises me by the level to which he attains. I do not mean his mental level but his human one: his type is superior to that of the Christian priest. He possesses a gentleness, a capacity for understanding, a benevolence, an ability to rise above events which even the most prejudiced person would scruple to describe as characteristic of the average Christian priest. (*Travel Diary*, vol. I, p. 51)

Buddhism emphasizes living the Life and has set a high standard of practical conduct, but the significant claim for Buddhism is that with it, more than with any other religion, the ethics taught is practiced by the people. Count Keyserling's own observations sustain this claim as attested by the following quotation:

Buddhist virtues are the virtues of most Buddhists to an amazingly high degree. (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 55)

To one trained in the highly individualistic culture of the West it might very well seem that Ceylonese Buddhism with its nihilistic interpretation of *Nirvana* must lead to a highly pessimistic state of life. Keyserling finds that quite the reverse is the case, for as he states:

Modern Buddhism lacks every suspicion of pessimism, it transfuses life, quite on the contrary, with the mild glamour of peaceful joy. (Ibid., vol. I, p. 60)

The life and consciousness of a people as revealed by these quotations shows quite clearly that it is possible to attain stupendous freedom from fear of death, not alone on the part of a superior type of man, but even with the simple masses; and this can be done in the face of a concept of personal and individual extinction which but few in the West are able to entertain. It shows how religion can be successfully devoted to building the noblest form of life here and now, entirely apart from any concern with reward in a future life.

However, it remains true of Buddhism that the liberation from misery which it seeks to achieve includes overcoming the fear of death and the pain of separation which death involves. Thus in the broad sense, Buddhism is not an exception to the general statement that death and after-death states affords one of the primary concerns of religion, and is the central concern of many and perhaps most religions. That this should be so is but an index of the importance which the problem of death has in the consciousness of mankind in general. Consequently this is a problem of the very highest practical concern, and if a solution can be made manifest to the present human consciousness which satisfies rational, spiritual and essential emotional demands, there are few accomplishments which would be of greater importance.

It is hoped that this work may be of real service in facilitating the resolution of this problem, at least for those individuals whose consciousness synchronizes with the form which serves as its vehicle. No one intellectual vehicle can meet the needs of all minds. There is no such thing as a universally satisfactory concrete form. Thus every expression is a relative formulation for some group among men, while for others totally different modes of formulation are required. This volume is for those hearts and minds that have need of that which it has to offer.

Chapter II

The Meaning of Death

Very often one hears the assertion that any question which can be asked is capable of being answered. In so far as this relates to a demand of the soul made upon Life it is unquestionably true. There are many vital life-problems which confront embodied consciousness, but for these problems which in their essence grow out of Life, the various modes of Life *are* competent to answer. The demand of the soul is for *understanding*, and it is not primarily concerned with any particular mode of expression. The Pauline statement that "Faith is the evidence of things unseen" means simply that the problems of the soul *are* capable of solution. Yes, in this sense every question that can be propounded is capable of being answered.

But the contention that *all* questions may be resolved is often made in a sense that is not at all true. This occurs when the question is understood in the sense of a specific intellectual formulation of a query. When taken in this sense nothing is easier than the formulating of questions which even the highest Adept power could not possibly answer. Often the background of a question is a false assumption of the truth of some concept that is, in fact, wholly false with respect to reality. The question thus by its form requires an answer in terms of a relativity which does not exist within that context. Or the question may be a hodgepodge taken from concepts contained in distinct universes of discourse and combined in such a way as to be devoid of all sense. Children and idiots continually ask such questions. In fact the less the wisdom an individual possesses, in general, the more unanswerable questions he will ask in the conceptual sense.

An instance in point was a certain epileptic idiot, known to the author, who, while possessed of an extraordinary power of memory, was highly incapable of combining the images in his consciousness in intelligible form, although he was continually striving to do so. The result was a most startling series of questions, such as:

What would Abraham say if he found Ishmael washing his feet in tomato soup?; or

What would the spike from a Chinese pagoda do to your stomach if you ate it?

Let the reader who believes that all questions which can be formulated are capable of being answered try his luck on these!

To be sure, there were answers to be found which satisfied the questioner, but they were not possible answers in the sense of logically following from the question. The question really represented a demand for a certain type of completion on the part of the epileptic idiot, rather than a consistent answer to a specific inquiry. There is thus a resolution of questions only in the psychological sense, which is no answer at all in terms of logic.

Now this tendency to ask the impossible which is found in exaggerated form among children and idiots is, in a less obvious mode, characteristic of the vast majority of human beings in a greater or lesser degree. Some of the metaphysical questions which have remained unanswered throughout history are unquestionably of essentially this type. Beyond all doubt much intellectual and emotional energy has been wasted in the fruitless effort to resolve such impossible queries.

Recognition of the fact that, not only is it possible to ask the impossible but it is indeed one of the very easiest things to express an impossible query, leads to the realization that the asking of fruitful questions is an *art*. In other words, the intellectual task is the formulation of a problem the solution of which will satisfy the real questing of the soul. The placing of a soul-demand into a satisfactory conceptual form is a real art which requires development and training the same as any other art if it is to become adequate to the task at hand. Thus in the intellectual sense it takes something of wisdom and skill to ask an answerable question. The average man is not intellectually skillful enough to give a true conceptual form to the searchings of his heart. He should recognize that there are others who are better fitted to perform this service for him, and he should have patience with a restating of the whole problem which at first may seem to dodge his direct question entirely. If one will but compose himself with the necessary patience to be a pupil for a season, he will find that by the process of reforming of questions and by the molding of his consciousness into new awarenesses, the real problem that was originally troubling him is finally resolved. Over and over again he will find that the resolution is found in terms unimagined and often quite unimaginable at the time the question was first formulated.

The history of science affords many excellent illustrations of this principle. Seemingly insurmountable barriers are removed by simply changing the angle of approach. A classical instance is that of the determining of the relationships which exist between stellar bodies. For many centuries it was assumed that the earth was the center around which all stellar bodies revolved. When it came to the effort of correlating the observed positions of planetary bodies with the assumed paths of movement, enormous difficulties were encountered. No satisfactory solution was ever worked out along this line. But when Copernicus introduced the idea that the sun and not the earth was the center of the solar system, then the problem took on a form which was very quickly resolved, and the door was opened for a rapid expansion of astronomical knowledge undreamed of until then. The key to this change was found in the restatement of a question. The real question was not the earlier one asked with respect to the path followed by stellar bodies when rotating around the Earth, but how to formulate stellar positions so that relationships could be intellectually understood. The form of the earlier question dropped out of consciousness as being no longer significant.

It is probably true that the discovery of a pregnant form in the statement of a problem is, in general, to consummate more than half the task of effecting a solution. It is like finding the key to the successful course out of an intellectual maze consisting for the most part of conceptual cul-de-sacs which lead only to bewilderment. If men in their struggles with their soul problems would bear this fact in mind, many an uncertainty would become clear. This applies especially to the subject of death. Fundamental difficulties have grown out of a false primary assumption as to the nature of death. Our first task here will be the clearing of this field.

The common thought is that death stands as the opposite of life. In other words, death is viewed as a "state." Thus we habitually speak of a man who is no longer in physical embodiment as being "dead." Since this state is the opposite of the living state it naturally follows that one very much doubts the continuation of the most greatly prized values as these are functions of life. The values of consciousness are the values of life, hence how may one feel secure concerning the persistence of these values in that state where life is negated? Approaching the problem in this manner is barren of positive results. Thought on the problem in this form affords little if any comfort. It is but natural, therefore, that men should turn to blind faith and try to cast doubt upon the power of reason, as there seems to many to be no other way to avoid despair.

But the problem as commonly stated is based upon a misconception of the nature of death. Death is not a “state” but a *process*. It is not the opposite of Life, but of *birth*. Thus conceived it takes its place as a mode of Life just as birth does, and instead of negating Life, it is merely the opposite mode to birth. Thus while death is destructive to values which rest upon birth, it is by no means disruptive of values which inhere in Life as such. It does not take much reflection to realize how greatly this change of view as to the nature of death alters the whole problem. If we find that the real concern of the soul is with the modes and significances which are functions of Life, rather than with those which belong to the process of birth, then we would at once realize that our primary concerns were not affected by death at all. Such misery as is really involved in death would be only in relation to values involved in birth. If then there is a way by which these values can be resolved or transcended, then at once the individual soul has mastered death.

The determination of death as the complement of birth at once brings it in principle within the field of empirical study. Such is not the case when it is defined as the opposite of Life, for all the material of experience is of necessity given within the matrix of Life. Hence that which is the negation of Life is of necessity unknowable. But process as a mode of Life is, as a principle, within the field of possible observation, although there may be at any given stage in the evolution of the powers of awareness, concrete manifestations of process which are not specifically within the experiential field. But the vital question in determining whether a given domain is one of possible knowledge, is not that of whether all possible phases of that domain at a given time are within the range of experience, but rather that the given type of material is capable of empirical determination. Once establishing this fact, then the task of perfecting knowledge in the given field is but one of persistent labor and the perfecting of the necessary instruments. In such case man has a possible problem to work upon with the normal assurance of positive results which attaches to any other field of empirical research.

At this stage our task becomes that of analyzing the elements of the world of objective consciousness and tracing the process of birth and death or, in more philosophical terms, the process of Becoming and Becoming-not. As we look abroad upon the world, while we do find some relationships which seem relatively static, yet the dominant fact which confronts us is that of *change*. Concerning certain phenomena this is obvious enough even to the most superficial observer, but some factors seem to be constant. However, as observation and analysis become progressively more profound, more and more of the component elements of experience are seen to be subject to the principle of continuous transformation. Transformation is a process of Becoming, and whenever anything has achieved a state of Becoming, it has at the same time ceased to be what it was. Thus Becoming is not only balanced by Becoming-not, but in fact *is* Becoming-not, when viewed from a different angle. There is nothing more nor less than saying that *birth and death are really the same thing*. Whether or not a given process is called a “birthing” or a “dying” is dependent upon the basis of valuation on which the witness stands.

As the realization of the ubiquity of change both as a metaphysical principle and as a fact of observation is of vital importance to the student who desires to attain mastery over death, we shall proceed to an examination of a number of typical phases of the world of experience in order that the facts may be made more explicit and concrete.

First, consider the manifestations which science commonly designates as living forms. While from the point of view of Yoga philosophy and science the distinction between the organic and inorganic is arbitrary and does not correspond to an essential difference, but only to a difference in mode of manifestation, yet for us of the West who are trained in Western science

this differentiation has a certain pragmatic value and therefore we tentatively accept it. Thus we will discuss under this head vegetable and animal forms, including under the latter the human being considered as a physical entity. Now physical growth and decay are very familiar. We know that the newly-sprouted plant or just-born infant goes through a process of change in order to attain maturity. Thus the seedling which has just broken through the surface of the ground and the mature tree which it has become are two distinctly different empirical facts. But habitually when we think of the tree when observed at any stage we think of it as being in a "state." Thus while we acknowledge that the tree was once different from what it is now and presumptively will be different at some time in the future, yet at any time observed we regard the tree as a given fact. In doing this we fail to realize that the essence of the whole phenomenon is *change*. Never for any period of time, no matter of how short a duration, has the tree remained in a fixed state. No picture of the tree as a fixed form is true of it. It is not now one thing and then at some future date of observation some other thing, in the sense of a fixed and definable form. The tree is a never-ending process, which while it moves in a recognizable mode, so that one type of tree or even individual specimen may be distinguished from another, yet never at any time has a fixed form afforded a true representation of it.

It may be objected that the photograph of a tree taken at a certain time is a true representation of the state it was in at that time. But such a view misses the essence of the tree. The tree as a living thing is simply a process of ever-unfolding. Thus when correctly described it has to be realized as a tendency toward change, whatever appearance of form it may have at any given moment. And even the photograph of the tree is not changeless. The photograph is produced by certain chemical reactions and as we shall show later, no chemical form is forever fixed. Thus the photograph is itself in a process of *becoming*. Further, the psychical complex induced in the observer when viewing the photograph does not remain ever the same. When first observed it may produce some given psychical complex, but when later viewed this complex is different, if for no other reason, than that the second observation has a background of the memory of the first observation, which reacts upon the psychical complex to make it different. Thus in no sense have we ever captured the tree as a fixed fact.

When finally the tree "dies" in the usual sense of the word, even then process does not stop, but it has simply changed its *mode*. No so-called "dead" tree is an eternal form. Disintegration takes hold in both the organic and the chemical sense and ultimately all traces of the tree will disappear so far as ordinary means of observation are concerned.

Now throughout this whole process there has been an *Approaching*, as it were, but at no time an *Arrival*. Every movement toward a completion has also been a destruction of the nascent form which preceded. At every moment the tree was *Becoming*, and yet equally *Becoming-not*. The young seedling had to be destroyed in the time sense in order that the tree of maturity might be. Yet there is no fixed point in time when the seedling ceased to be and in its place stood the mature tree. The young seedling was dying as seedling at the very moment of its sprouting, and the dying-birthing process continued without ceasing to the last point within the range of human observation.

If we penetrate into the significance of this process we find that every concept of the tree as a fixed form or picture is false. The tree is not at any time in the real sense a fixed form. As manifested, it is not *Being*, but rather a *Becoming/Becoming-not* complex. Thus in the sense of a fixed picture or a being, the tree was an illusion or *Maya*. Yet with respect to the tree, *Life* is a reality. *Life* remains the unchanged fact throughout all phases of the process. The birthing-dying

process has not destroyed Life. Birth and death stand as but the modes of Life manifestation which mutually cancel each other so that at all times the balance is never destroyed.

In the domain of animal forms precisely the same principles apply to them as to the vegetable. No form is at any two instants of time precisely the same. The young creature, such as the human child, that was, is no more in the young man of today, speaking of course in the objective and not the metaphysical sense. The child died as child in order that the man could become, and in turn the young man dies to the man of maturity and the latter to old age. We could reverse the perspective and speak of the whole process as a being-born. Either statement is equally true only, when we look at the process as dying it helps to bring the realization that death is not the devastating thing so commonly imagined. We are never separate from death for one moment, but death is only the other side of birth.

One feature of process which differs in the animal world as compared with the tree is that in the former the matter which composes the body is being continually absorbed and thrown off, while in the case of the tree, new matter is being added, but the old material for the most part remains in the trunk and the limbs. This makes the process of becoming, in the case of animal forms, empirically different. After a certain lapse of time the body of the animal becomes completely different in the sense of the matter of which it is composed, as well as in the other senses which also apply to vegetation. With man the cycle of complete renewal is said to be seven years. Thus every human physical body is a wholly different body after a lapse of seven years or more. (This fact is made use of in the phase of yoga-training which bears upon the etherialization of the body.)

For a further instance of the principle of mutation let us turn our attention to that which is commonly called the inorganic world, i.e., mineral forms. At first glance it might possibly seem that the mutatory nature which is characteristic of organic forms does not apply in the mineral world. Rocks are often used as symbols of stability. A life-time may be spent under a granite cliff without there apparently being any alteration in the form. Thus to superficial observation rocks seem to embody that which is static. But a very cursory study of geology will very soon reveal the fact that this is a gross error. Change dominates mineral forms as truly as it does the organic forms. The empirical modes of action are different, and the time-factor as affecting rate of change is of quite another order. But neither of these differences affects the metaphysical significance of the mutatory process.

Geological study has shown that even the most stable rock-form is subject to the action of disruptive agencies. Thus the rushing of water causes the wearing away of mountains. Probably the most spectacular instance of this kind is the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, where the erosive action of the stream facilitated by tools afforded by falling rocks has formed an abysmal gulf in the earth reaching a depth of over a mile in some places. And the Grand Canyon is in a very young stage, geologically speaking! In high Alpine regions frost and moisture combine to provide one of nature's most potent dynamites which relatively rapidly rends asunder the bare rocky peaks. In hot regions heat becomes a potent, if less destructive agency, through the process of exfoliation produced by differential expansion and contraction of rock surfaces. Wind with sand, chemical motion and organic agencies, all contribute their share to these disruptive processes.

In the sum-total the factors at work in the destruction of rock-forms are so great that no mountain range is so massive but that in the end it must face complete annihilation through the agencies of erosion. Many lofty ranges have been thus humbled in the past, and none may ever claim immunity from a similar fate. To be sure, all such action takes such enormous ranges of

time as to seem like veritable eternities to any organic form; but differences in the time-measure of a cycle do not affect the significance of the principle involved. Mountains are also subject to the law of Death.

But this is not all. Mountains also are born and grow. Geologists can designate the ages when ranges were born and the period during which they grew. With the exception of volcanic mountainous forms, mountain ranges are built with extreme slowness. Theirs is a life-cycle of millions of years, but still it is a life-cycle. And while they grow they are also being destroyed. With the first rising above the level of the planes or the sea, erosion starts. Thus, as in the case of the organic forms, birth and death continue side-by-side. When the force of one is strongest in a given direction there is growth that way; when the reverse is the case there is decay.

Now these processes of birth and death of mountains do more than proceed externally side-by-side. The destructive and constructive factors are intimately bound. Thus as the silt from the mountains and highlands is carried to the plains and the sea, weight is reduced in the former region and added to the latter. By a tendency to isostatic equilibrium this produces a deep-seated subterranean flowage from the point of deposition back to the region of erosion, which thus becomes a factor to cause further raising of mountainous districts. Thus the birthing-dying process in the mountains can be seen as but two coordinate aspects of the same mutative principle. They are tied by an inner unity so that the action of the one involves the action of the other.

Again, if we consider the building of river-basins and coastal plains, it is precisely the agencies which are destructive to mountains and high plateaus that are the creative factors producing the former. Thus the mountain-dying process is, on its other face, that which bring birth to the plains. Thus once more we perceive birth and death as being essentially the same thing. Whether a given mode of action is called birth or death depends upon the base of reference or the group of values that stand in the foreground of consciousness. Not any more in geology than among organic forms do we find an absolute significance attaching to either of these terms.

We may say that mountains tend to grow toward a certain form, and this is the ideal construction which geologists so often give to them when outlining the mountainous topography of other ages. At the same time, the growth to this ideal is being continually deformed by the agencies of destruction, so that the goal is never actually realized. Mountains are thus not states of form but transitional processes just as truly as in the case of the tree, previously analyzed. There is a difference in the rate of change in the two instances which, while it has psychical significance for the observer, is of no importance whatever in terms of principle.

If we penetrate into that scientific domain of still profounder time values as compared with geological ages, that is, in the world of astronomical relationships, we find again the principle of mutation dominating. Stars grow and decline. Astronomers recognize several stages of star-maturity ranging from nebulous forms having a density much less than that of the highest vacuum we are able to produce artificially at one extreme, to bodies like that of the companion star to Sirius having a density 3000 times as great as that of platinum. As observed, stars seem to have life-cycles, and this accords with the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom. While the period of duration of these cycles is so enormous that the span of possible human observation is negligible beside it, yet this difficulty is overcome by being able to observe a vast number of stars which furnish us examples in all stages of development. Thus we are enabled to interpolate the typical life-history of any one star. We find that the Law of Becoming is as inviolate in this domain as in any other known to us.

Stars grow and radiate. Thus they continually throw forth their life substance, and in so doing, are dying as stars. The action of the forces in one stage of star history serves as the cause to produce the subsequent stage, and so on throughout the cycle. The sun that we know today is not the sun of the past, nor is it the sun that will be in the future. The time will come when it will pass into its obscurity and become a dark body. However, this affords no immediate cause for worry, as both the calculations of science and the statements emanating from Arcane Science agree in giving the sun a duration of some billions of years yet as a radiant body.

The astronomy of recent decades has in an astonishing degree given us an astral picture having the characteristic features of *living being*. Ever more and more we seem to be facing a living, rather than a mechanical phenomenon. In this connection a suggestive question placed by J. H. Jeans, the eminent British astronomer becomes quite significant. At the close of his article "Recent Developments of Cosmical Physics," he asks this question:

Is it (life) the only reality, which creates, instead of being created by, the colossal masses of the stars and nebulae and the almost inconceivably long vistas of astronomical time?

Our studies in the almost inconceivable immensities of the stellar world has, in recent decades, become intimately bound with the opposite extreme, the world of the most minute or the domain of the atom and the electron. To the student of the Wisdom Religion or Arcane Science this is a fact of profound significance, for one of the primary principles of that science is the Hermetic axiom "As above, so below." This implies that the macrocosm and the microcosm are reflections of each other, so that by fully understanding one, the other is known. While it is not true that physical science has as yet gone so far that it has realized this principle completely, yet in the present instance it is making a distinct approach to that consummation. The stars in the depths of space constitute the laboratories by which we are enabled to observe much in the behavior of the most minute of all things; that we are unable to do, at the present at any rate, under humanly controlled Earth-conditions.

It is thus especially fitting that in our elaboration of illustrations of the Becoming/Becoming-not process we should step from the stars to the atoms. Today we know that the atom is compounded and therefore not an element as implied by the etymological meaning of the term. The component parts of atoms are known as positive and negative electrons, and sometimes as electrons and protons. As the group of intra-atomic relationships will be elaborated upon in some detail in Chapter IV, only the general significance of the atomic processes will be considered here. Now various combinations of electrons and protons produce the atoms of the some ninety-odd chemical elements at present known to science. All protons are conceived to be alike, and all electrons are thought to be alike and the two are regarded as being the corpuscular units composing positive and negative electricity. Thus, today we have come to regard all matter as but the manifested forms of electrical energy. Energy and matter stand thus as one compound reality and not as two independent domains.

A few decades ago we regarded the chemical elements as irreducible forms of matter, but with the discovery of radioactivity, about the beginning of this century, this whole idea was brought into question and finally proven to be false. In radioactivity it was found that matter was spontaneously sending forth a form of radiant energy of a magnitude so great that it would have been (previous to that discovery) considered inconceivable. At the same time, the chemical element producing this energy was evolving entirely different chemical elements. This implies two facts: first, that these supposed elements were really compounds and, second, that matter and

energy were not two discrete domains. This discovery revolutionized our concept of the constitution of matter and opened the way to the most interesting period in the unfoldment of physical knowledge that has ever been known. In this field much of our knowledge has been derived from the study of the stars, in fact this is so to the extent that it is said that we really know more of the processes taking place on the stars than we do of our own earth-processes. Now what we find to be the rule on the stars, supplemented by specific observation of certain of the heavier earth-elements, is that atomic forms are subject to a process of continual transformation. Given elements become modified into other elements, and even atomic or material forms are subject to becoming pure disembodied energy which is radiated off into space. On the other hand, some of the latest determinations of science indicate that the reverse process has been found in a reforming of ponderable matter within the depths of space. There is thus outlined a cyclic process that is basically analogous to that which exists among recognizably living forms.

Clearly, then, the ultimate units of ponderable matter, i.e., the atoms, are subject to the principle of Becoming even in the observable physical sense. This process in some forms of matter is unquestionably very slow, perhaps so slow as to make geological transformation seem relatively rapid by contrast, but, as previously stated, the rate of change does not affect the significance of the principle of mutation. No more than the living plant or animal, can an atom of gold, for instance, be regarded as a fixed or static fact. In reality it is a mode of mutation ever tending to become other than itself. The atom is simply another dying-birthing process. As it tends to become one form it dies to the nascent form it had been. Yet its substantial reality, the electronic substratum, remains unaffected by any transformation.

Turning our attention to the more specifically human domain we find here no exception to the law of unceasing transformation. Consider, for instance, the civilizations of the world. While in the historical sense change has been evident in civilizations, there has been imperfect recognition of the fact that this mutatory feature was an essential aspect of civilization as such, and not merely an incident. In America we have been trained to believe in the inherent soundness of the governmental form known as "democracy," not merely as a stage in a process, but as an ultimate or fixed form, any deviation from which involves an essential failure in governments. We have thus a more or less fixed concept as to what civilization should be, even though we are forced to recognize the fact that that ideal is not actually realized in practice. Now one of the most significant productions of scholarship since the world-war is the work entitled *The Decline of the West*, by the German scholar Spengler, in which by a most stupendous analysis of the whole of history, it is shown that the idea of a fixed form for civilization is wholly unsound. There have been as many as nine great cultures which we can trace more or less perfectly, and they all show a tendency to undergo process just like a living organism. In broad outlines the same pattern of development applies to all, but there is much detailed variation. Now the significant fact is that each tendency toward the perfecting of a given stage in the historical process of a culture, produces the conditions which lead to the destruction of that stage and the substitution of another form which, in its turn, is equally mutatory. Democracy is one of the stages which has appeared again and again at the same point of the life-cycle of cultures, and like all other stages, has produced the very forces which tend to destroy it and lead to another form. Thus the soundness of the concept of a fixed ideal form for a culture is wholly discredited by history.

If we examine the processes taking place in democratic and parliamentary forms today we find a most remarkable confirmation of Spengler's findings. The stage next following

democracy is what he calls the “Caesar” or dictator stage. Well, just note the number of dictators that have appeared in the governmental arena today! The parliamentary form seems to be breaking down. In our own government the signs of weakening are far from being hard to find. Democracy has cluttered us with something like 2,000,000 laws all supposed to be active! The situation produced by that one fact alone is so utterly impossible that it has not only made “Liberty” an empty word in this land as truly as though it were conquered by an alien people, but it affords a sufficient explanation of the present breakdown of law that is so serious. It is a situation produced by uncentered responsibility, as the people, which in theory *are* the government, do not constitute a self-conscious entity. Responsibility cannot be therefore placed upon the head of any specific, individualized consciousness. Thoughtful people recognize the impossibility of the situation, but no individual nor any responsible body has the power to change it. Yet if the condition continues it must lead inevitably to chaos and subsequent weakness. Then is the time that the strong executive type of individual steps in and dominates the situation. Whether she will or no, America is departing from her old forms and ideals.

This is not a question of “should” or “should not.” It is but simply a manifestation of the principle that no form whatsoever can possibly be static. Civilizations become and become-not at the same time. The effects produced by each nascent form become the factors which destroy it and tend to produce another and so on to the close of the traceable cycle. Thus the living reality in a civilization is not something seen or attained, but is a Life-stream on which these various passing forms are but the play of the waves upon the sea. The forms become and are destroyed, really at the same moment, but the underlying current remains, at least relatively eternal.

But how about an historical event that is “finished”? Is not that a fixed and eternally changeless fact? Such questions the reader may very naturally ask, for it certainly seems that the events of the past are today unalterable. But what is an historical event? Is it simply something which happened sometime entirely apart from our having any knowledge of it? Analysis shows that it cannot be such an independent existence. History is simply that which we know of the past and none other. That which is not now known, but later becomes known is not history until it enters the field of knowledge. The domain in which history exists is in the memory of conscious, living beings. It thus does not have a being independent of the nature of the knowing process of living creatures. Now memory is a living and present reality. We say that it is memory about the past, but the fact is that the past lives in the *present* memory, and whatever coloring that memory throws on the past, that past becomes. *There is no independently real or existent past with which the memory of the past can be compared.* All checking and comparison is in terms of one phase of memory with another. If it is objected that the record of the past is given objectively in the various written forms, attention is called to the fact that written record is, after all, but a form of memory. The external symbols which represent words and sentences do so only because those words and symbols already have a place in organized consciousness. The written word is but a form of social memory. So the real past is a present existence in memory.

As human consciousness passes through its kaleidoscopic transformations memory is correspondingly altered. The past, through memory, being a part of the present consciousness, is molded by all processes affecting the current states. It becomes seen differently in the light of a different conscious complex. Thus if we take the classical statement “Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C.” we do not have in this a fixed and unchanging fact. Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon involved a crucial change in the course of Roman history which has been influential with our culture since then as so many of the roots of our civilization are found in the old Roman Empire.

What that crossing meant to Rome in the middle of the first century B.C. and what it means to us today are by no means the same thing. The significance of the event has been subject to development. Now a fact and its significance cannot be rigidly separated. All facts are subject to being made over in the light of the development of the significance associated with them. Facts exist for some percipient consciousness and they have no other real existence. As different percipient consciousnesses have different degrees of richness of background, so the same objective event comes to have quite a different factuality. A given event is not the same fact to a dog as it is to an intelligent man. Thus the material of memory comes to have a changing factual value as the psychical complex of the percipient consciousness is modified in one direction or another. History, having existence only in memory, is subjected to all the living processes which affect the form of memory. History is thus a living, present reality.

A specific instance which may help to give this principle a greater clarity is afforded in the above mentioned illustration of Caesar's crossing the Rubicon in 49 B.C. If we take the more familiar interpretation of the process of civilization which regards it as progressive development from the earliest period to the present, with spasmodic and unfortunate depressant interludes, we may very well attach a purely accidental significance to this act on the part of Caesar. While on the other hand, in the light of Spengler's thesis of a cyclical developmental pattern basically characteristic of all life-cycles of civilizations, the crossing of the Rubicon becomes a step in a drama having an archetypal plan. The moment had come when the Roman Republic was due to be transformed into a dictatorship. What a different significance is implied in the latter as contrasted to the former point of view! This bit of history has simply grown like any other living thing.

History grows and decays with the modification of our various psychical states. It is not a finished fact, but lives in memory, being made anew continually, and equally ceasing to be as it had seemed to be. Again, we are confronted with a dying-birthing complex. History is a stream, not a finished fact.

In the inner psychical life of man, mutation is a much more evident fact than is the case with many of the instances already analyzed. However, we should not gloss over this field as the purpose of this elaboration is to drench our consciousness with the realization of the ubiquity of the becoming/becoming-not process in every domain within the whole field of awareness. Once we can fully realize in every mode of our consciousness that death-birth is an eternal mode of the awareness having content, then the nature of death must become clearer and the dread of it will be destroyed.

Saint Paul said "As a child I thought as a child, but now that I am a man I have put away childish things." Anyone who stops to analyze his personal consciousness will find that this is true of himself. One grows away from old systems of values and new ones take their place. For the boy who finds in the fireworks displays of a Fourth of July celebration a kind of seventh heaven of delight, there comes (sooner or later) a time when the familiar explosives have lost their power to give delight. At this moment he will probably feel a void, but the fact is, he has grown and the old forms have become empty, do what he will. The characteristic interests of each stage of life may well become all compelling in their own peculiar periods, but the time comes when they lose their power, for the field of conscious interest has shifted. Certain groupings of friends fill the arc of a given portion of the life-cycle but only to pass on as the various ports-of-call on the voyage of life call for diverging courses. For those who are caught in the doldrums of the ocean of life (and they are many), these separations may take place infrequently, but sooner or later they inevitably come, and for those who are voyaging swiftly

they are fast and frequent. As one sails through the different currents of his psychical nature so he draws to himself different groupings of friends and the peculiar complexes of consciousness that are formed through them. As we look back over the span of our past lives we often find the man of yesterday quite a stranger to the man we find ourselves now to be. Similarities there are, of course, but the old fields of interest are gone, except for their presence in the life of one's memories. The man of yesterday has died as the man of today is born, and so it continues throughout the span of observable life.

Life in terms of the emotional, the intellectual and the desire nature of man constitutes more truly his real life than any of the purely bodily concerns. Death of the body is of no concern whatever, save in so far as it affects this psychical field. Accordingly, it is in this domain that the crucial problem lies. So, the analysis of process in this connection comes closer to the real problem of death than any of those phases previously discussed. Consider especially the already noted fact that the man who was in some past period of life, no longer is in the present day. Assuredly, there is a continuity of consciousness which forms a sort of inner identity between the two, yet at the same time we cannot say that the two men taken as perceptive fact are the same. A young man, for instance, in the typical instance is impelled largely by romantic desire and normally his mind is idealistic. In middle life he is apt to view his married life in very matter-of-fact terms and have his thought colored by much disillusionment from his contact with human nature and the practical action of affairs. His romance may have flowered into moral dignity and an emotional strength to face the practical problems of human relationship. His intellectual life will have probably become more or less hardened and restricted to specific detail. In general he will have become more competent in affairs, but cares less about far visions. Old age may mean emotional quietude and the building of intellectual forms which combine something of the idealism of the youth with the practical lessons of middle life. Now as such an individual looks back from a later stage to an earlier one, it will seem to him (at least if he is analytically introspective) that the earlier forms of himself were other men, sometimes almost strangers, where the transitional stages have been especially strongly marked. The earlier forms have really died as the later forms were brought into manifestation. The phenomenon of death, and of birth *pari passu*, has been taking place all this time.

That the psychical forms of characters of the different stages in the life of a man are like different entities is further revealed in the analysis of friendship relationships. During an earlier cycle certain companions may have been very close. Now let us suppose that external circumstances, such as moving to a distant point, have separated the given individual from his friends. His life goes on developing and so does that of his earlier companions in their various ways, and finally after a number of years, let us suppose he comes in contact with one or more of them. He will have had throughout these years a certain memory of these friends, and if they were close that may be a fond and cherished memory, but when he meets them anew he may very well be shocked to find them total strangers in everything save name. Interests have become different, modes of reacting altered, and in general so modified that there may be no longer anything in common between those who were once friends and perhaps very close to each other. Even in relatively continuous relationships, such as that of marriage, psychical development often reaches a point where the divergence between the two becomes real incompatibility, even though in the beginning they may have been highly complementary. One of the reasons for the great instability in the marital relationships today as compared with the past, lies in the fact that we are now moving in a cycle of accelerated activity in the psychical sense as well as in the physical. Since the combination of individuals developing on parallel lines, at the same rate, and

at the same time closely associated is so rare, the result is that in a period of general acceleration of all forces, the various human relationships, including marriage, must become very unstable. But this very intensification of experience, with all of its disadvantages and hardships that it brings, does afford the positive value of providing superior opportunity of observing the action of forces. The mutatory character of all life-concerns is simply driven into consciousness with a force that cannot be disregarded. The result is highly educational if the soul of the individual is strong enough to stand the strain of the process.

In our present day we are dying much more rapidly, and with corresponding motion, coming to birth more swiftly than has ever been known in past history. The result is that many individuals are living several incarnations in one. That is, in the psychical sense they are passing through two or more cycles of radical change of life-mode, a single one of which would constitute the usual developmental form for the period from the first birth to the final death of the physical body. These shiftings of mode mark changes in life-relationships and interests that are equivalent to a shift to a new incarnation. This affords an especially excellent opportunity to study the phenomenon of death in the psychical sense. It shows how old forms and interests can die almost completely and yet continuity of self-identity and memory persists. The dying-birthing which forms this intensified process does not imply loss of continuity of consciousness, even though the individual changes so greatly that he would hardly recognize himself. In this lies the significant fact in which lies the key to mastery over death.

In the domain of concepts or philosophical thought there are forms possessing far higher stability or permanence than any other form which may be an object of consciousness. Yet even the most highly metaphysical concept is not superior to transformation. Most of all philosophy is concerned with meaning or significance. Now meaning is vitally affected by the psychical mode in which the thinker is moving. Thus the same idea as an objective formulation may afford the basis of pessimism for one man, while for another it may mean the substantial fruition of the highest hope. As an example consider the concept that the objective world is a *Maya*, or illusion. To the typical Occidental consciousness this seems like a destruction of reality as such and hence involves the highest pessimism. On the other hand, it carries none of that force to the Eastern sage. Recognition of the illusive character of the objective world becomes for him an important aspect of the means for Liberation from bondage and the realization of abiding Reality. He finds nothing really pessimistic in the concept. Now the psychical background in these two cases is wholly different and hence the same idea, so far as external form is concerned, comes to have wholly different value. If the individual who has the pessimistic view undergoes certain psychical transformations he will progressively move toward the valuation of the Eastern sage. Thus that which to him in the first instance is wholly painful becomes the basis of his happiness or bliss. Accordingly transformation of philosophical value has taken place. The same concept does not really mean the same thing in the two sages. There thus has been transformative development in the concept.

In mathematics we do have the nearest approach to an absolute form. It would seem that in a form such as, two plus two equals four, we have something for all time fixed. But if we but proceed deeply enough in our analysis we will find that even this is not strictly static. The deeper one proceeds into mathematical analysis the more he has a sense of a profound *motion*. Concepts are not ambiguous and mathematicians do not have differences of opinion when any conclusion is proven. The motility of mathematics is much subtler than that. There is, of course, in the philosophical evaluation of mathematics a place for development and divergence in thought in the more familiar sense, but even in the more purely mathematical sense there is a movement in

reason-structure, as it were, so that the student with peculiar intensity finds himself in a state of Becoming. Mathematical activity has the peculiar character of not requiring an *outer* fulcrum. The mathematician rises above gravity and sustains himself by his own bootstraps, to use a homely simile. But just as the stability of the gyroscope is attained through the most rapid physical motion, so also the relative stability of mathematics is attained by a similar inner motion on a plane of mental consciousness, realized by but few of the units among men.

When we ask ourselves the question "What is this thing called number?," then we begin to realize the motility in the relationship expressed in the equation two plus two equals four. There is a principle of growth in number itself, but this is a very subtle matter, the mastery of which would lead the student into profound realms of the occult. It is much more difficult to perceive the Becoming/Becoming-not character in mathematics than in any other instance, yet it is there for the analyst who penetrates but deeply enough.

To many it seems essential that stability should mark religious forms to give them value. One of the greatest thinkers in the Roman Catholic clergy suffered excommunication because his able and honest scholarship had proven the reality of evolution in church-dogma. This act on the part of ecclesiastical authority reveals the importance attached to the idea that the religious form is eternal and unchangeable. But this point of view can be maintained only by refusing to draw obvious conclusions from history. It is a denial of a really evident reality and it is not necessary for the preservation of religious vitality, as Brahmanical India has so thoroughly proven. It does not take profound analysis to show that religious forms and values *do* change.

Brahmanical religious thought recognizes the impermanence of all form, in the religious and philosophical sense as well as in more exoteric phases. Typically the Hindu recognizes that no form truthfully represents metaphysical Reality. Thus while no country has such variety and richness of religious forms as does India, yet metaphysically speaking none of these forms are taken seriously. They are recognized as convenient instruments for facilitating Realization, but yet possessing only pragmatic value. Since all objectivity is subject to the principle of impermanence, it follows that the effective religious form for any age or state of consciousness is almost certainly to differ from that requisite for other ages and states. The result is a very high degree of religious tolerance in India, and this is something almost unknown in the West.

But we do not need to turn to India to realize the mutative character of religious concepts and institutions. The Christianity of Jesus, even as we find it revealed in the skimpy records that we have, is something very different from the various forms of institutionalized Christianity that we have today. Thus, while Jesus was characteristically a pacifist in principle and practice, yet the Christianity of the West is among the most militant of religions. This simply shows that the native character of Western peoples has made over the original spirit and teachings of Jesus into a wholly new form. While it is true that every religion passes through more or less radical transformation, yet the change in the case of Christianity is especially striking since in many respects it involves a reversal of spirit. However, this point is not here made in the spirit of criticism, but rather to illustrate the ubiquity of a principle by a striking instance. Religions grow, and in the case of Christianity the mutation has been especially violent. Thus the Christian who insists on the permanence of his peculiar forms simply reveals in that attitude a peculiar lack of historical sense and of introspective ability.

The primitive religion of Jesus has had to die in order that modern Christianity could become. Similar developments mark the history of Buddhism as it has been transformed from its primitive stage, first into the Hinayana form of Southern Buddhism and finally into the more synthetic character of the Mahayana of the North. No religion can be free from the action of

mutation, however fanatically fixed some of the devotees of given forms may be. Religious concept and structure *becomes* as truly as any other feature of the objective world. And *becoming* always means destroying of the old to bring to birth the new. Yet there is a continuity behind all the forms which persists in the face of all change, and this is the undying and unborn Reality.

At this point it is very possible that the reader may say “Yes, I grant you that change is ever-present in the whole world of experience whether taken in the sense of the outer sensuous or inner introspective domains. I grant that it is true that transformation implies a continual dying and becoming, and thus is not to be interpreted as a state but a process which complements birth. Yet there is a sense in which I think of death that seems peculiar, and that is the final disintegration of the visible form of those whom we have known, where there has been a break in the continuity of a living process which I have been able to observe. It is concerning this that my problem arises.”

This problem is recognized, but if the analysis has been followed so far we think that it will be realized that we are dealing with an event in the case of death in the ordinary sense which is not different in principle from the transformation of ponderable matter into pure energy. In this transformation, sensible matter becomes super-sensible, but does not cease to be. It is still possible to determine that it is, *but a different perceptive technique has to be employed*. If this principle is recognized, then we should expect and, perhaps, even have the assurance that the solution of the problem of continuity of being beyond death in the ordinary sense requires only the development of requisite technique. As a matter of principle it is far more difficult to think discontinuity at this point than it is to think continuity of being, since continuity is the rule as far as our common means of observation are able to go, at least at present. Thus if an explorer in a new country came to a mountain range beyond which no foot had trod so far as he knew, there are certain things which he would nonetheless claim to know about that unknown country before ever entering it. Specific details he would not know until after exploration, of course, but he would know, for example, that if there were any streams of water, that they would run downhill instead of uphill. Knowing also the general principles of erosion, he would know certain limits within which mountain forms would have to fall. In fact, if he took the time to classify and list, he would find that he already knew a great deal of the unexplored land. Never for one moment would he think that the mountain barrier indicated a point where Nature’s laws, proven everywhere else, would cease to function. The same principle applies at that critical point in the becoming-dying process where the physical body disintegrates as a whole.

When the newborn child leaves the mother’s womb a critical event takes place which is the analogue of ordinary death of the body. The child when it is born also dies cataclysmically, for it dies to the prenatal life. We recognize the factuality of the prenatal life and as a matter of course we are cognizant of the postnatal life. The transition between the two involved a radical change, *yet that transformation did not involve a break in the continuity of life*. Is there then any good reason for believing that the radical transformation involved in the final death of the body is an exception to the principle and involves discontinuity of life?

Recognition of the fact that impermanence is an attribute of all that is an object of consciousness by no means implies that impermanence is the only reality. In the relative sense, movement can only be determined by reference to a standard which is taken as fixed or static. Thus a train moves relative to the ground, and in determining the rate of motion of the train we regard the ground as stationary. In the astronomical sense the Earth is viewed as being in a rapid state of motion, but again only in reference to the sun and stars which are taken as fixed. This principle is applied everywhere. The significance is that motion in the concrete is known by

contrast with relative immobility. It is universally true that no state or quality can be known save by contrast with its own opposite. Thus mutation as a principle operative in every aspect of objective being, implies as the basis of its very possibility, its own opposite or immobility. Hence impermanence is inconceivable apart from permanence.

The whole sensuous domain of life is subject to mutation, therefore it is in the super-sensuous that we must search for that which remains changeless in the midst of all change. And in this we find the reality which abides through all birth and death. Mutation and immutability are two complementary realities and not merely mutually destructive contradictions.

In the history of philosophy these two aspects of the world have played central parts. There are those thinkers who have placed their emphasis upon the instability and multiplicity of all things, even, as in the case of Heraclitus, going so far as to maintain that permanence does not exist at all. In contrast, there stands the thinker of the type of the Greek, Parmenides, who denies all change and multiplicity and asserts the reality of immutability and unity alone. To this day this difference has divided philosophers into two principle schools or philosophic currents. There is thus the pluralism and philosophy of change as found in pragmatists of the type of William James and the monism and philosophic permanence of the Monistic Idealists. Both persist, and therefore imply that each has a substantial basis and that the opposition between the two is not in reality a contradiction. They appear contradictory, but often an apparent contradiction inheres in an inadequacy of expression or in an insufficiency of conceptual penetration. That multiplicity and change is an empirical datum cannot be denied, whatever interpretation may be placed upon empirical knowledge as such. As has been extensively shown in this chapter, change, and therefore multiplicity is found on every side as one looks out on the world. But another fact remains which is equally impossible to deny, and that is the fundamental intuition of unity. We realize unity in continuity of self-identity through all experience of change. In the scientific endeavor to reduce all phenomena to law there is involved the background of an intuition that unity underlies the phenomenal multiplicity. Experience gives change and multiplicity while the intuition of the primary synthetic unity of apperception gives a unitary and stable Reality. Certainly these two are modes of Life, however much conceptual penetration has failed to reconcile them explicitly.

It is significant that Heraclitus and Parmenides come so close together on the Greek stage of thought as to be almost contemporaries. Heraclitus precedes and Parmenides follows. It is as though Life acting behind the screen of manifestation sent these two forth as supplements of each other, neither having the whole truth, but the two together, if synthesized, giving the true picture in principle. It is also highly significant that in the Indian arena of philosophical and religious thought at almost the same time, though slightly preceding the Greek thinkers, the same phenomenon occurs. First there is Gautama Buddha, preceding Heraclitus, who formulated the famous phenomenology in which the whole world of experience is pictured as impermanent and sorrowful. Buddha's formulation dealt with this empirical fact and a practical method of liberation from the sorrow which follows necessarily from consciousness enmeshed in the empirical. But Buddha revealed himself as far more profound than Heraclitus in that he asserted the reality of *Nirvana* which is permanence and Liberation, although he refrained from the logical absurdity of trying to describe it. About fifty years after Buddha's *Nirvana*, there appeared another figure, this time in a Brahmin body. This was Shankara, the great exponent of radical Monism. Shankara's message was that of the sole reality of *Brahman* and the identity of the Self with *Brahman*. He scarcely looked at the external world save to classify it as *Maya*, or Illusion and the creation of *Avidya* or Ignorance.

Shankara's one concern was with the development of Self-knowledge. From a superficial point of view these great Hindus seem to contradict each other, and the religious sects which follow them respectively largely are incompatible. But in reality to even a less extent than in the case of Heraclitus and Parmenides, are they really contradictory? The difference was one of emphasis with many indications in the records that they were decidedly conscious of this fact. The highest exponents among the followers of these two thinkers do actually attain essential agreement, as in the Yogacharya school of Mahayana Buddhism and the Advaita Vedantists.

Now the essential key to the mastery of death lies in realizing the reconciliation of these two apparently incompatible concepts. It really requires something like a super-conceptualism, that is, an attaining of a state in consciousness which is in its own nature above expression, but from which it is possible to formulate in either the terms of Pluralism or Monism, and yet realizing the two as not contradictory. There are certain illustrations which may be drawn from experience that will help to clarify the idea, but no illustration can in the very nature of the case carry the whole synthetic realization. For all illustrations must be taken from experience and therefore cannot truly represent the super-experiential.

In our present knowledge of the constitution of matter we have, probably the best objective analogue which exists. Ponderable matter, that is matter made up of atoms and capable of being perceived by the senses, is known to be a compound of energy, which is not perceived, save indirectly through its effects. This matter is composed of positive and negative electrons as previously stated. Under certain conditions, as those which exist in the hot stars and in certain of the heavier elements on earth, we are able to observe a breakdown of matter from which radiant energy is thrown off. In other words, we find that matter can become energy. Further we have evidence of the reverse process in which energy becomes matter again. Now let us liken the primary electronic energy to Life. Then the forming of this energy into atoms of ponderable matter would correspond to birth; the various transformations of this matter from one chemical element to another would be like the becoming/becoming-not process in the living human being. When an element was destroyed and gave birth to another element we would have an example of a dying-birthing complex. The final disappearance of an atom of ponderable matter, when the component material became pure energy, would correspond to the cataclysmic form of death when the body enters final disintegration. Now throughout all this process electronic substance remains electronic substance. The negative electron remains the same whether in a circuit about the nucleus of an atom or as part of a pure energetic stream. Thus there is a sense in which we might say that electronic substance continues unaffected whether manifested as ponderable matter or remaining in imponderable form. It is thus analogous to the super-sensuous and permanent Reality, within the matrix of which plays impermanent phenomenalism. It is Life as opposed to the Birth-Death process. *And just as the destruction of an atom of ponderable matter does not destroy the electrons which compose it, so Death does not destroy the real man since he is one with Life.*

Once the student of Life has realized the fact that death does not destroy life, but is a process which negates its own opposite which is birth, and also realizes that that which is called death from one point of view is seen as birth from some other basis, as in the case of the child dying to prenatal life in the act of being born to post-natal life, then he has a basis for reaching a solution of the problem of Death. If one fully realizes this fact, then without going any farther he has removed the sting from Death. Specific problems of death-processes and states of consciousness disassociated from gross matter remain, it is true, but they become like scientific problems which when resolved extend knowledge and facilitate practical action, but have no

bearing upon metaphysical certainty. The main purpose of this volume is the discussion of some of these practical problems, while this chapter was designed to define the general nature of the problem of death and give it the setting which properly belongs to it. Death, in reality, is not a disaster but an adventure into new domains of Life. And *Life is Consciousness*, as we shall endeavor to show in the next chapter.

Chapter III

Life and Consciousness

In the history of human thought many problems have arisen on the relation of Consciousness to Life or to the objective world. As these problems have been typically presented by Western thinkers they have become involved in many difficulties which no philosopher has resolved to the satisfaction of all. Almost certainly these difficulties grow out of the way of approach to the problem. Unquestionably it is true as Keyserling has reported on his observations while traveling in the Orient, that many very ordinary Orientals, especially the Indians, can grasp easily and as commonplace truth, certain metaphysical concepts which the Occidentals of highest culture understand only with extreme difficulty. This simply means that the difficulties do not necessarily lie in the problem as such, but may inhere in the psychical background of approach. If the Western mind could bridge the chasm between Indian metaphysics and mysticism, on one hand, and its own highly developed intellectual power in relation to the manipulation of objective phenomena, on the other hand, it is almost certain that many a difficulty which presents itself to our present intellectual organization would vanish in the light of a wholly different mode of reflection. It is probable, though, that this task involves much the same order of difficulty involved in the endeavor to solve the classical problem of the squaring of the circle. In conceptual terms it is found impossible to express the circle in terms of the square or *visa-versa*. Yet there is no question but that the square and the circle both *are*, and do exist. Perhaps their coordination lies in some third principle not yet brought into conceptual realization. And it is highly probable that the bringing into manifestation of this third principle is the most important task which lies before us today.

We who are born in the West find ourselves in a thought-matrix where the external world of form or things is taken as the given reality. Reflection, of course, has long since forced us to a recognition of the fact of Consciousness. But this recognition seems to have afforded more ground for embarrassment than comfort. How simple it would be to build a mechanical picture of the universe if Consciousness did not have to break in and “gum up the works”! But if there were no Consciousness, there would be no one to build the picture nor anyone to care whether or not there was any picture built. So whether we like it or not we do have to reckon with Consciousness as a fact. Several efforts have been made to dispose of Consciousness which may be classified into three general headings, but none of these have proven to be really satisfactory. To place the problem more clearly before the mind of the reader who is not familiar with philosophical reflection as it has developed in the Occident, these three typical suggestions for the solution of the relationship of Consciousness to phenomena will be briefly outlined.

The interpretation which represents most fully the point of view of materialism is that known as Epiphenomenalism. This is the view that Consciousness is a mere incident or accident in the causal sequence of Nature. Consciousness is conceived in “some such way as the foam thrown up by and floating on a wave”; or “a mere foam, aura or melody, arising from the action of the brain, but without reaction upon it.” One writer has said of Consciousness that it was but a “wart on the log of evolution.” In other words, Consciousness, according to this view, is wholly irrelevant. This view would unquestionably facilitate the building of a purely mechanistic interpretation of Nature, but it affords certain very obvious difficulties. In point of fact we do not know anything about the world save in so far as it exists in Consciousness. We cannot then, with

any real soundness thus cavalierly dispose of Consciousness, as the Epiphenomenalists attempt to do.

A point of view, widely held, is that known as Parallelism. This is the view that the sequence of states in Consciousness parallels, but does not causally affect, the series of corresponding objective events. In this view, the series of conscious states may or may not be causally connected, but one thing is certain, conscious states *do not* affect external events. Thus no objective action could be interpreted as the effect of a conscious volition. The point which seemed to be served by this interpretation was the preserving of the mechanical objective system while the immediate experience of a conscious state producing subsequent states would not be violated. Conscious volition could be effective, but only in producing a state of Consciousness. The difficulty that arises is how a harmony may be established between the two sets of causal series. How can the two always agree if they are not causally interrelated?

The third view is known as Interactionism, i.e., the view that there is a causal interaction between conscious states and objective events. This view admits of attaching real causal power to conscious volition as affecting the external world. It is thus the only one of the three views which makes possible the attaching of moral responsibility in relation to external events. Practically men act as though such were the case. It fits the form of our immediate experience in which it seems as though our thinking, feeling and willing did affect events. But it affords certain real difficulties. If external nature is of a type such that subsequent states can be deduced from antecedent states, or can be reduced to mathematical equations, how can something like Consciousness, which is wholly different from things, yet affect those things? If it does, then the equations must be violated. If such is the case, the whole structure of physical science must fall, as in principle it is based upon such equations. Yet science has gone a long way in proving itself practically which leads to the presumption that its basic structure is sound.

It should be evident that in none of these interpretations have we found a satisfactory solution of the problem of Consciousness in its relation to Life or Nature. If one feels forced to accept one of the three alternatives he really faces a dilemma, in that in any case something of vital importance is sacrificed. The best he can do is to make a compromise, and yet no compromise is philosophically satisfactory.

Now there is one feature characteristic of these three theories which is almost certainly the primary cause of the difficulties inherent in them. They are all built in a conceptual background such that the objective or sensible universe is taken as the primary reality. It is Consciousness which is being explained in relation to an objective system. In other words it is Consciousness which is on trial, not the system. There is, however, the reverse approach to the problem in which Consciousness is taken as primary and all else is derivative. In principle this view is not unknown in Western philosophy as it is the basis of the Idealistic systems. But Idealism in the philosophical sense has not afforded the background of our science nor has it afforded the basis of typical life-practice in the West. On the other hand, in Yoga philosophy Consciousness is taken as primary and not merely in the sense of a speculative theory. Yoga is preeminently concerned with practice and while the yogis are not much interested in the manipulations of Nature in the purely external sense, yet they have demonstrated on many occasions that they can exert external control of a most astonishing degree and form, if they but desire to do so. Thus in Yoga science we have that type of science which grows out of Idealism, and this is something quite different from our Western science which has a materialistic basis. Now the very domain in which physical science has been barren of results is just the field in which the yogis have manifested the greatest power, and this field includes Death and after-death

states. It is accordingly from this angle that we propose to approach the problem of Consciousness in relation to Life.

We are in the habit of thinking that the external world is the most obvious and immediately given fact with which we have to deal. However, analysis very quickly shows that such is not the case. The only world with which we can possibly have any dealings, whether in a practical, scientific or philosophical sense, is a world that is known. An unknown and unknowable external world has no significance for us whatsoever. To predicate being or non-being of it is wholly academic in the worst sense of that term. The world that is real in any sense of the term is a world that is known or knowable. Thus the world that possesses significance, even for the most physical of physical science, is a world that is given in Consciousness. Accordingly the most primary fact with which we have to deal is not something external, but simply the reality that *I am a conscious being*, or at least the bare fact of awareness itself.

That Life is Consciousness may not be a proposition which can be formally proven in terms of external conceptual forms, but that does not mean that it fails of being an immediate realization, once man has divested himself from the presupposition that objective form is primary. Only habit stands between us and the ready acceptance of the proposition as something which is true as a matter of course, and it is by no means necessary to wait for a formal demonstration in order to give this view a pragmatic test. Simply because this view is natural to East Indians is the reason that the average Indian can grasp ideas which even the most cultured Occidental can comprehend only with difficulty. However, the Westerner who has the willingness to “try on” this idea, as it were, even though only tentatively, is in a position to prove, in some measure at least, the practical value of it. There are those who have had the courage to do this and have found that this is precisely the shift in the evaluation of the elements composing the given world which makes possible the easy comprehension of propositions which otherwise seem hopelessly transcendental. In this connection the reader should bear in mind the characteristic feature of the pedagogic method of the yogis as contrasted with Western educational systems. In the former the student is told to follow a certain life practice and then certain powers of awareness will develop so that he may know immediately that which is beyond his present powers. We in the West simply train the commonly possessed intellectual powers, but we neither seek to unfold nor even recognize the existence of the latent powers. We leave the student essentially unchanged as he comes to us, save that he becomes a more proficient technician. On the other hand, the yogi stimulates and cultivates growth in the student or *Chela* so that he becomes *a different kind of man with new powers unfolded*. Now the West can never hope to understand the Wisdom of the East if it will not submit, in at least some degree, to this process of developing in our people the different apperceptive powers. A first step in such a process is the taking as true, as least tentatively, the idea that Life, Consciousness and Nature are *one*. By the practical values which follow from this view it may be proven in the pragmatic sense, and there does not seem to be any other practical mode of procedure.

There is one form of psychological power already familiar to the West in some of its manifestations that helps to confirm the view that Consciousness is primary, and the external or perceived world is derivative. This is the power known as *hypnotism*. It is a relatively familiar experience that an hypnotic operator can induce in a subject states of perceptive consciousness which do not at all correspond to the environmental forms experienced by witnesses who may be standing by. Thus a subject in a room may be told that he is in the midst of a forest or any other outdoor environment, and the subject will not only experience that which is suggested to his consciousness, but he will proceed to act with respect to it in the same way he would if he really

were in such a setting in the ordinary sense. This is a highly significant phenomenon. It simply proves that the perceptive field does not depend upon a given external something. The world perceived by the subject had as its antecedent merely the idea which existed in the mind of the operator. Can we be sure that the world commonly perceived by man is qualitatively different from that experienced by the hypnotized subject? If it is contended that the world generally experienced is verified by the observation of men in general, while that of the hypnotized subject is unique, the answer is found in the fact that groups may be submitted to hypnosis as well as individuals and such groups will have common experiences. In such cases we can have verification by confirmatory testimony yet the objective reality of the experienced world is not proven.

Undoubtedly the hypnotic state is abnormal, but even an abnormal condition cannot be produced save by the action of principles that exist. Abnormal phenomena are not explained away by simply calling them abnormal. On the contrary, they throw light upon normal forms by a process of amplification and segregation of specific phases. Thus, the fact that in hypnotism a field of consciousness can be produced that is so similar to the ordinary world of external perception that the hypnotized subject regards it as such and acts accordingly, simply implies that a sensible domain can be produced for experience merely by a conscious projection from an idea. If such a field in a given instance can be so created centrally with respect to Consciousness, it follows that in principle the notion of a real peripheral source of the world of perception, as commonly experienced, can be discredited. It is not contended that the phenomenon of hypnotism by itself forces the abandonment of the idea that there is a real objective world that stands as the source of perception, but it does show that such a given external something is not necessary to make experience possible. But if we assume that the source of the experience of the hypnotized subject, on one hand, and that of common experience, on the other, are essentially different, then we take a position requiring a dual or complex explanation, where a unitary and therefore simpler interpretation is possible.

This violates a primary canon of science that any hypothesis or theory which unites all the elements of a given domain of study in a simple or unitary concept has the presumption of truth in its favor as contrasted to any hypothesis which requires complexity of interpretative principles. Hence, if we take the position that the difference between the experience under hypnosis and ordinary or common experience is not one of difference in type, but simply of degree or mode of manifestation of the same principle, we will be proceeding in perfect accord with the best scientific method. If, in addition, this common explanatory principle accords essentially with that which is the philosophical basis of practical Yoga technique, then the very strongest presumption is built in its favor.

If we take the view that the field of Consciousness, or the world of experience, is produced centrally from Consciousness, and therefore has no existence as a "thing-in-itself," the phenomena of hypnotism and or ordinary experience can be brought under the same principle of interpretation. The hypnotic operator has simply produced in an exaggerated form a parallel of a mode of action which is common to all Nature. That the effect produced by the hypnotist is limited and passing is no criticism; it simply reveals a limitation of power. Increase this same power sufficiently and perfect the technique of operation and it becomes possible to destroy forever the present world of experience for a given center of Consciousness. The primary abnormal and objectionable feature concerning hypnotism is that it generally involves an invasion of one center of Consciousness by another. If, with sufficient understanding, the same law is applied by the individual to himself, it becomes in principle possible, for the given

individual to destroy for his consciousness the present world and replace it by another which he himself creates. In turn, this new world can be destroyed at will and be replaced by still another and so on indefinitely. Now, which of all these worlds is “real”? In the last analysis, there is no criterion by which any one can be chosen as being more “real” than any other. If it is objected that the world which is experienced by most is therefore more real, the answer is that majority vote is no criterion at all. Perhaps the majority of humanity is insane and under a delusion which has many features in common. The vote of such a majority would mean nothing.

Yoga philosophy has no difficulty in determining which of the given worlds are unreal. Taken as self-existent or objectively “real,” they are all unreal. By reason of certain common modes of action the human race has produced our common world of objective experience. It should be born in mind that from the standpoint of Yoga, Consciousness in the last analysis is not multiple-centered, so that every man is an independent self, but is *one* so that there is such a thing as a unitary racial projection in Consciousness, upon which individual centers of consciousness produce their multiform and peculiar nuances. These nuances become decided overtones and undertones when the differences between various human races are taken into account. But there is a substratum of a common theme, and only because of this is intercommunication in the world possible. But in some cases the differences between the effects produced by under- and over-tones is so great that cross-racial understanding is very limited. An outstanding instance of this is the utter failure of the Anglo-Saxons and the East Indians to understand each other. Their two racial sub-worlds are so different that it is almost impossible to find a common denominator of coordinate action. While these two worlds overlap in some degree (else there would be no contact at all) yet in a very large sense the two peoples in question are living in totally different domains. The objective demonstrations of the engineer, who is perhaps the best symbol of the peculiar Western genius, has no bearing whatsoever on the largely psychical domain in which the Indian consciousness finds a more primary reality. The Indian may, with great faithfulness to the essential truth with which he is concerned, express himself in forms that are not literally true in the objective sense. To the typical engineering mind such statements seem like nonsense since he is concerned with a very objective world; but in turn, the engineer seems to the Indian type of mind to be continually falsifying the greater reality in being concerned with a merely external shell. We do not by any means all experience the same world!

If now, any world, as given to the senses is in itself unreal, where then does Reality abide? Again, by analysis, we can find the essentials of the answer to this question. Given a power by which a world of experience can be produced centrally from Consciousness and then be transformed indefinitely, there must be some base or fulcrum from which that power acts. The man who can create at will his perceived world, is obviously not centered in his creations, but on some level of Being of a type so radically different from the produced worlds that it is not affected by the given creative power. Such a level would be the domain of Reality, or at least it would be real relative to all sensible domains. Yoga philosophy recognizes such a level of Consciousness and has names for it. Buddha called it *Nirvana*, concerning which he simply said, “It is,” and with rare philosophical discrimination avoided all effort to describe it in terms of a produced or sensuous world. It is known as *Moksha*, as the *Turiya* state and *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. In any case, this is the super-sensible domain from which all perceptible worlds are produced, if we take the basis of projection from Consciousness as the explanation of the manifested universe.

Now although the reader cannot be logically constrained to accept this view as proven beyond all question, yet the fact remains that it is the most fruitful interpretative principle known to human consciousness. The best means of practically proving it is by assuming it as true and then studying the powers which that view unfolds. It certainly is inferior to no other view in logical dignity. If it is in fact sound, as Yoga philosophy maintains it is, then it reveals how in principle man can be master of his environment in the sense which is commonly ascribed to Divinity alone. Sickness can be destroyed, material forms produced, including food, etc., and various states of consciousness created at will. "Miracles" in the ordinary sense of that term, will be seen not only as possibilities but, and this is the most important fact, *they will be realized as simply the action of law in a form not now generally understood*. Birth and Death, as modes of action in the stream of Life, through the identification of Life with Consciousness, become therefore phases in the play of Consciousness. Thus, in principle, they can be first understood, and then mastered.

Undoubtedly habit makes this view of Nature difficult to accept. For a long, long time we have accepted the primacy of the external world and it is not easy to take on a radically different view. But it should help if we can realize that we are not shifting ourselves to some strange and distant basis from one that is closer. The materialistic view is really the "artificial" and "strange" one. Habit alone has made it seem natural. As a matter of fact, Consciousness is the most intimate thing that we have and in it lies the Key to the Universe, yet we persist in our search for power out in the peripheral phases of that Universe. The Key does not lie in the distant stars but *in man*, that is, in Consciousness as manifested through the form which we call "man." An illustration may help to make this point clearer.

Let us suppose that intelligent beings from some other domain of consciousness were observing the phenomena of our present civilization, but did not recognize men as intelligent creatures. Let us further assume that these beings have a scientific interest in what they are observing and are seeking an explanatory principle, but view the world under a materialistic perspective, of the type of a familiar school of biologists. We will take for a specific problem the interpretation of the phenomenon of the automobile. Under the supposed case the observers will have noted and recorded all the characteristic behaviors of automobiles: They are found to run on wheels when associated with a certain form having two nether and two anterior appendages. When the automobile runs, this form occupies a position in the midsection of the vehicle behind a fifth wheel, which is grasped by the two anterior appendages. While the vehicle is transported by four rotating disks, the secondary form which has capacity for independent motion, and when separated from the former, progresses by a kind of rhythmical motion of its nether appendages. Obviously there is an interrelation between these two forms, as the wheeled vehicle almost never moves, save when the bifurcated form is associated with it, but it is not clear which one is of primary importance. Now the problem is, "How has this highly complex organism been produced?"

Initially there is given a mass of atoms in space subject to certain principles of motion. In the course of time these atoms produced all sorts of combinations, but purely fortuitously. By a principle of natural selection certain combinations persist while others are destroyed. After the lapse of time by a process of spontaneous variation combined with natural selection, Nature evolved the automobile and its bifurcated concomitant.

Does this explanation satisfy the men who invented and produced the automobile? Obviously not. They know that the automobile existed first as an idea in consciousness, and that from this, by a series of steps, all of which were consciously directed, the final physical structure

was produced. And so it is with every structure for which man is responsible. Intelligence in every instance initiates and directs the construction. Is it not, therefore, sounder in principle to assume that the processes in Nature which we are not able to follow in all their courses are produced in essentially the same way as that which man understands in all its steps, rather than by some wholly different method resting upon a purely speculative basis? The creative process which man fully understands is directed by conscious intelligence. This alone makes the presumption that Nature in its other phases follows the same course, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary.

The idea that all manifested Being is a projection from Consciousness, instead of being something strange and far-fetched, in reality is far closer to our experience than the reverse view. The trouble is that habit has led us to think that the materialistic interpretation of Life is the simpler, while the truth is that the expression of material phenomena as a manifestation out of Life or Consciousness is much the more natural view to an unsophisticated mind. Most of our seemingly unsolvable Life-problems have grown out of this false basis of interpretation.

Chapter IV

Birth and Death in Relation to Consciousness

Having identified Life with Consciousness in the foregoing chapter, it now becomes necessary to enter into a fuller determination of the nature of Consciousness. Consciousness understood in the sense of awareness by some perceiving subject is, of course, not sufficiently broad to cover the meaning implied when life is identified with Consciousness. It is not meant that the whole significance of Life is contained in simple awareness. Consciousness in this broader sense must have a substantiality in order to comprehend the field of consciousness, which is commonly known as the objective world. The idea is that the very play of Being is not merely something perceived, but is produced within the very substance of Consciousness itself. Thus, no object of perception would be regarded as itself unconscious. Perceiver, perception and thing perceived represent different aspects of the plenum of Consciousness.

This interpretation of Being is by no means a merely speculative concept, arbitrarily created. It is implied in the language of the mystics and, in fact, helps to make this language far more intelligible. Mystics very commonly identify symbols with qualities. Thus, while in ordinary conceptual processes we speak of a symbol representing such and such a quality, the Mystic would say that the symbol *was* that quality. If, for instance, we were to say in the usual conceptual sense that a stone wall symbolizes protection, the mystic dealing with the same idea would state that the stone wall *was* protection. Such statements sound like confused mental states, and undoubtedly they often are, but genuine mystical consciousness cannot truly express itself in our regular conceptual forms, as language is the peculiar province of a non-mystical level of consciousness. To the Mystic, the symbol and its meaning are one, a living or conscious fact. To the mystical state of consciousness the symbol and the thing symbolized are not two discrete realities, but one reality. Now on the more familiar view of the nature of Consciousness, this mode of identification in Consciousness is quite incomprehensible, for in that case, consciousness as the mere power of awareness must ever stand as distinct from that which rests in the field of awareness. But if we view Consciousness as the plenum of all Being then, in principle at least, the difficulty is resolved.

Another familiar form of expression of mystical Consciousness is that of identification of the perceiver with certain given qualities. The following are familiar phrases: "I am Truth"; "I am Goodness"; "I am Love"; etc. In the ordinary use of language these sentences do not make sense. If predicate adjectives were used there would be no difficulty as it is perfectly correct to say "I am truthful"; "I am good," etc., for this means that I practice "truthfulness," etc. But to identify the "I" or self with abstract qualities like "Truth" is simply nonsense as language is commonly employed. However, once we view Consciousness as being substantial and all-inclusive, then the identification of the self with abstract qualities is comprehensible, in principle, although the practical difficulties which lie between ordinary and mystical states of Consciousness would still remain. For to understand a Mystic one must have some degree of mystical realization.

Consciousness in the more familiar usage involves a subject who stands in the relationship of perceiver, thinker, etc., to an object or concept. Thus, "I perceive this typewriter" is a phrase expressing an instance of the familiar perceptive consciousness. There is in this type of consciousness a quality which we may call polarization, to borrow and somewhat extend the meaning of a term used in optics. "Polarized" light is light which has certain unique properties. It

is not necessary to take this term in its detailed technical significance, but simply in the sense that light is propagated as a ray from a source in a straight line outward so that when it is reflected or filtered in a certain given way, it becomes polarized. Common human consciousness may also be said to be “polarized” by a process of reflection. The perceiving subject is the ego, or that which carries individual self-identity in contradistinction to other selves. From this proceeds the usual intellectual and perceptive consciousness which is like the beam of polarized light. But just as the beam of polarized light is but a particularized phase of the universal light-plenum, so is intellectuo-perceptive consciousness but a special phase of Consciousness *per se*. In ordinary usage it is only this intellectuo-perceptive form which is called consciousness while everything else is regarded as unconscious.

It is a familiar fact that a wide range of processes, essential to man as an organic being, function entirely apart from human awareness. This includes the whole field of involuntary bodily activity. At times events in this field are forced up into the field of consciousness, but generally this is so only in case of some abnormal condition such as a disease or injury. Now this involuntary domain exhibits all the earmarks of a truly wonderful workmanship. The skill in its operation is distinctly superior to that which is manifested in most that we do consciously. Our best worked-out conscious organizations only approach to this degree of perfection. In other words, the involuntary domain in its functioning appears to be the workmanship of an extraordinarily high degree of intelligence. Yet we are generally unconscious of these processes. But while such unconsciousness is the rule it yet remains true that it is possible to become aware of this involuntary or so-called “subconscious” domain. This is one of the achievements of the lower Yogic practices. It is a well attested fact that practitioners of Hatha Yoga can consciously control the involuntary domain and in doing so, they have clearly made that domain one within the field of consciousness.

An important key to the understanding of the psychic life of animals and the primitive types of men is recognition of the fact that generally they are not aware on the conceptual level, which we have called “polarized” Consciousness. The characteristic domain of the animal is that which has been termed instinct, and this is really that which is largely subconscious for the more evolved man. The consciousness of primitive man has, of course, developed beyond that of the animal and is reaching up into the conceptual level, but there remains a very important phase in primitive man’s psychic life which the more cultured races find beyond their understanding. Primitive men have ways of foreknowing events in nature which our scientists with all their labor have not been able to duplicate. But this foreknowing is through an *attunement* with Nature, not regarded as a mechanical structure, but realized as living-being with which conscious communion is possible. Since this communion is on another level than that of polarized consciousness, it is not realized by the man whose consciousness is restricted to the intellectual-perceptual type. Thus to the latter the peculiar psychic life of the animal and primitive man is entirely a mystery even after experience has forced him to recognize the fact of its existence.

Almost certainly the explanation of much of the ceremonial practices of the less evolved peoples is to be found in their living in a mode of consciousness more closely related to instinct than to the intellectuo-perceptive consciousness. Much, which to us seems like purely superstitious practice may very well prove to be a mode of communication with the different phases of Nature. Language in the familiar sense calls for the development of the reflective type of consciousness. Communication with non-reflective consciousness quite naturally would require a different *modus operandi*. The purpose of ceremonial enactment is just such communication. Who is qualified to deny its efficacy? That the scientific or reflective type of

mind has not the power of such direct communion by no means proves that it is impossible in principle. Also the fact that by the methods of physical science we have been enabled to develop a considerable degree of control over Nature by no means proves that no other method of control exists.

As our beam of polarized consciousness is bounded on one side by the subconscious domain which includes involuntary body actions and the field of instinctive action manifested especially among animals and lower types of men, so also on the other side there abides a domain, frequently called the super-conscious. Most men are not directly aware of this higher domain though polarized consciousness is affected by it in many ways. That which is known as “conscience” has its roots in this region. Religion in the higher sense is based upon the realities of the Super-consciousness. All motivation based upon something that transcends self-interest inheres in the Super-consciousness. Mere egoic, or “polarized” consciousness affords no basis whatsoever for any altruistic act. The very possibility of self-abnegation implies a motivation inhering in a basis that transcends egoism. If egoism were the all-in-all of Consciousness then it would be unthinkable that any creature could ever will to sacrifice itself. Further, many individuals have at least moments of relative illumination when they are taken out of their ordinary limited field in Consciousness. These moments are regarded as having a supreme value and afford the real root of religious life. There are finally the mystics and the yogis to whom Super-consciousness is Primary Consciousness. These groups having to a lesser or greater degree established their habitat in the Super-conscious domain, realize polarized consciousness as only partial and in many respects essentially deceptive. For them, language in the usual sense is but a crude and utterly inadequate means of communion. The power to identify the center of percipience with the object of consciousness makes all the technique of polarized consciousness seem utterly inefficient. This is why the mystic and yogi so often seem incoherent to the individual who is completely centered in intellectuo-perceptive consciousness.

The purpose of yoga training is the building of the power to penetrate the domains below and above polarized consciousness. The lower, or Hatha Yoga, technique is largely concerned with the subconscious domain, and while this practice is, in general, to be frowned upon, it is none the less of philosophical and psychological significance, for it does reveal the fact that the ordinary margin of consciousness can be crossed. Yoga, in the higher sense, is concerned with penetration into Super-consciousness. *Samadhi* is a state in which this level of Consciousness is realized. But a most significant fact is that a prerequisite of awakening this transcendent state is the progressive weakening of the sense of egoism; in other words, the rising out of the limitations of reflective or polarized consciousness is absolutely necessary for super-conscious realization.

The more common mode of thinking divides our being into the conscious and the unconscious, the latter in turn being divided into the sub- and super-conscious. Our thesis is that the whole field of Being should be viewed as Consciousness and our intellectuo-perceptive consciousness should be distinguished by the modifying term “polarized consciousness.” Thus Consciousness *per se*, like light, is not polarized, but it may manifest in the polarized form. Also, just as polarized light is a very restricted form of light, even though it may be indefinitely intensified, so too polarized consciousness is limited to but a restricted mode of Consciousness as such, even though it may be developed to a high degree of power. Polarized consciousness involves the sense of egoism and it therefore automatically eliminates all possibility of experiencing modes of consciousness not centering in the one given egoic pole. Each beam of polarized consciousness, *qua* polarized, is not only eternally separate from other such beams, but

it excludes non-polarized consciousness. Yet its roots abide in non-polarized consciousness just as the beam of polarized light is taken from non-polarized light. It is therefore not self-sufficient and thus can never find contentment within itself. This is the reason why it is an absolute impossibility to attain the Bliss of *Nirvana* without first destroying egoism. However, the destruction of egoism does not necessarily imply the loss of the power to produce and function in polarized consciousness.

We may liken Consciousness to a sea which in essence is homogeneous and includes all. But in this sea are currents and waves built on various patterns. These afford concrete manifestations within the sea and are necessary to make possible the realization of the sea as such. Now the various currents and the waves are not other than the sea in essence though they employ the principle of contrast which is a condition of specific awareness. If Consciousness as such is the sea, then the waves and the various currents would correspond to polarized consciousness. Another analogy, and one which is especially effective, is afforded by the relationships observed in the physics of the atoms. As this illustration will prove of especial value in the present discussion we will develop it at some length.

The older idea relative to the constitution of matter, which dominated physico-chemical thought up to the close of the nineteenth century, was that the chemical atom was an ultimate and indestructible unit. The very term "atom" carries this connotation. Most substances with which we are familiar were known to be chemical compounds which could be broken down by appropriate chemical processes. But there remained certain forms of matter which could not be so reduced and these were called the "elements," of which oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, gold, iron, sulphur, etc. were instances. At the present time there are some ninety-odd of these so-called elements known to science.

But with the discovery of radioactivity at approximately the opening of the twentieth century it was found that, in at least certain clearly noted instances the chemical atoms were subject to transformation. Thus it was found that atoms of uranium actually were destroyed leaving in their place a series of more or less stable elements, including radium, helium and lead. This proved very definitely that the chemical atom was *not* an ultimate unit after all. It showed that transmutation of elements was in principle possible and thus confirmed the main thesis of the old alchemists. Another fact of prime importance was also made evident. It was found that in the process of transmutation that a radiant form of energy was transformed into other elements, and there was a certain residue which was lost as ponderable matter. Thus, also, the older concept of the conservation of matter was found to be unsound. However, the matter destroyed became energy so that the principle of conservation as such remained unaffected, save that whereas formerly it had a dual form of the "conservation of matter" and the "conservation of energy," it now has a more unitary character and may be called the "conservation of matter/energy." The phenomena upon which these determinations were based have opened up a realm of physical research of revolutionary potentialities as compared with that which existed previously. One result has been the extensive analysis of the constitution of the atom, and while this work is still in a formative stage, yet results of the first magnitude of interest have been already achieved.

The atom is now realized as consisting of a central nucleus about which rotates one or more extremely minute "particles" of matter moving at almost inconceivable rates of angular velocity. In fact the present picture of the atom is a most striking analogue of the relationships which exist in the solar system. Now the nucleus of the atom and the orbital particles compose forms of varying degrees of complexity depending upon the chemical element which is under

consideration. The simplest instance is that of hydrogen consisting of a nucleus composed of one positive unit which, following Millikan, we will call a “positive electron,” and about this rotates one negative electron.* In all other instances the nucleus consists of a number of positive electrons and neutrons surrounded by a number of orbiting electrons. Thus helium is given as composed of two positive electrons and two neutrons in the central nucleus, and two electrons rotating about the nucleus. The number of positive electrons and the number of negative electrons are thus equal in the atom under normal conditions. These two units form the smallest component parts of positive and negative electricity. Thus ponderable matter and electricity are found to be the same thing in essence.

As we go up the series of atomic weights the composition of the nucleus of the atoms becomes progressively more complex until in the case of uranium, the nucleus consists of 92 positive electrons combined with 146 neutrons. About this nucleus there are 92 negative electrons in orbit. Now one fact which is of especial interest in connection with the correspondences, which will be given presently, is that these more complex nuclei are composed of either an exact number of helium nuclei, or of as many of these nuclei as is possible plus one, two or three hydrogen nuclei. Thus when the number of positive electrons plus the number of neutrons in the nucleus is just divisible by four it consists only of helium nuclei, but otherwise contains a few hydrogen nuclei. In the first instance the element is highly stable, while in the latter it is much more subject to transformation.

The arrangement of the rotating negative electrons is also a matter of a wide range of complexity. In the case of hydrogen there is but one negative electron and therefore but one orbit, which is not, however, always of the same radius. When there is more than one negative electron, the orbits form a series of circular or elliptical rings of progressively greater diameters. A given ring or orbit may have two or more electrons. The outermost ring may have from one to eight electrons, but not more. When the number of electrons increases above the latter point a new ring is added of larger diameter. Now, a fact of considerable interest is that the number of rings increases with the various octaves of Mendeleev’s periodic table of the elements. There is one ring for the first octave, two for the second, three for the third octave, etc. Thus the very heaviest elements, such as uranium, have a large number of rings in which the rotating electrons are arranged.

The various properties of the elements have been definitely correlated with these various rings and the nuclei of the atoms. Ordinary chemical phenomena and energy are functions of the outermost rings; X-ray phenomena are properties of the various interior rings; while radioactivity emanates from the nucleus itself. Of these three forms of phenomena, chemical activity manifests the least energy, while that involved in radioactivity is so stupendous as to be almost beyond comparison. In fact, the potential radiant energy of matter, such as coal for instance, is calculated as 10,000,000 times that which is released by ordinary combustion of coal.

It is possible, by certain highly technical methods, to remove one or more of the electrons moving in the orbits. In that case the element is not transformed into another element but is made electrically positive, or “ionized.” When thus ionized it has a strong tendency to draw to it an electron that may be free or by association with other atoms. When positive electrons are thrown

*Editor’s note: At the this time manuscript was written, the term ‘positive electron’ was commonly used to refer to what we now call a proton. Since protons are a different type of particle than positively charged electrons, now called “positrons,” Wolff’s terminology is obviously dated.

out from the nucleus of an atom, the latter is transformed from one form of matter to another. This is a process which goes on spontaneously and with great activity in certain of the heavier and less stable elements, and presumptively occurs among all elements, though not so subject to observation among the lighter and more stable elements.

A very striking analogue for the various relationships of Consciousness is afforded in the above facts relative to the constitution of the atom. Let the raw electrical energy represent Life or Consciousness in its primary and non-polarized state. This electrical energy may manifest as matter when its positive and negative components stand in certain relationships as just described, but these material manifestations are subject to transformations from one element into another and finally back into pure energy itself. The primary electrical reality has nowhere been made more or less in this process. When manifested as matter it is restricted and relatively static, otherwise it is a free and highly fluidic plenum, but the electrical reality remains unaffected through these various states. The same is true of primary Consciousness. Particularized or polarized consciousness corresponds to the ponderable, material manifestation of the primary electrical energy. But whether or not this form is transformed into another or returned to the primary state, the essential reality of Consciousness is not affected. Only mutation through and in a mode of appearance is involved.

The two primary components of our familiar form of Consciousness are the perceiving subject and the objective world which is perceived. These correspond to the positive electrons and the negative electrons, neither of which can exist without the other. Hence we will call the positive electrons in the nucleus of the atom the Higher Self, or *Atman*. This is an elemental and therefore eternal and unchanging reality. The single positive electron or the sum-total of all positive electricity may be regarded as essentially the same thing. Thus we say that the *Atman* of the individual is one with the Supreme and all-inclusive *Atman*. All positive electrons are exactly alike and so also the Higher Self of every man is the same as the Higher Self of every other creature. In Consciousness this is the basis of the power of awareness. Similarly the negative electron is the complement of the positive one and is thus the analogue of the field of Consciousness, or that which fills awareness.

With the exception of hydrogen, the nuclei of the various elements consist of both positive electrons and neutrons. This furnished the analogue of the Egoic principle as this term is used technically. The egoic nature of different men has by no means the quality of sameness, as is true of the pure *Atmic* principle which is the bare power of perception or awareness in any sense. Individuality is related to egoism. Now individuality is something of which we are objectively aware. It is not difficult to distinguish the individuality of one man from that of another. There is thus something of the objective element or the field of Consciousness involved in it. This is represented by the negative electrons which enter into the constitution of most nuclei.* Only in the case of hydrogen is the central sun “pure.” In every other instance that purity

*Editor’s note: It was once thought that “negative electrons” exist (independently) inside the nucleus of an atom. The idea was this: one put together enough protons to correspond to the mass of the nucleus; then added enough electrons to neutralize part of the positive charge and yield the net positive charge observed; and thus one accounted for both mass and positive charge. But, after many observations of nuclear decay were made, it became clear that it was misleading to regard the electron as existing independently inside the nucleus. It is true that the neutron is not a stable particle outside the nucleus. When it is passed outside the nucleus, it has a relatively short half-life (about 13 minutes), before disintegrating. When it does, it forms an electron and a proton with a large amount of energy.

is diluted by something of the negative element which we regard as representing the principle of matter or objectivity. So among the mass of men, the central sun or focal point is Egoism, not the Higher Self or pure Spiritual Consciousness.

It has already been pointed out that one form of the compound nucleus is especially stable, i.e., that of helium where the nucleus consists of two positive electrons and two neutrons. Some elements have compounds of helium nuclei only in the composition of their nuclei, while others have in addition one or more hydrogen nuclei and necessary additional neutrons. The former are the more stable elements while the latter are more or less unstable. In these two types of nuclei we have the correspondence of the two aspects of egoism, i.e., the Higher Ego and the lower ego or personality. The helium nucleus or compounds of helium nuclei alone thus correspond to the Higher Egoism, which is more stable and persists from incarnation to incarnation. But the forms of nuclei involving helium nuclei and additional positive and negative electrons correspond to a compound of higher and lower egoism, and the instability of such elements is the beautiful analogue of the unstable, personal egoic consciousness.

In this analogical scheme the correspondences of helium and hydrogen are of especial interest. The nucleus of helium being a stable form which we have correlated with the Higher Egoism, would thus represent the state of individualized consciousness where personal egoism was entirely destroyed, yet manifested form was still retained. This corresponds very beautifully with the man of Wisdom or the Sage, or one who has risen above all personal attachments yet functions as a thinking intelligence. Since hydrogen has a nucleus of one positive electron and no negative electron it represents a state of consciousness where egoism in every sense is transcended. However, since through the presence of its orbital negative electron hydrogen is “manifested” or ponderable matter, it represents a state of consciousness that is manifested in objective form. This would be what is commonly known as a selfless consciousness of the type represented by the Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This form of consciousness has the highest degree of spirituality and impersonality which is compatible with any degree of manifestation. Now the tendency of both the Higher Egoic and the pure Spiritual types of Consciousness is away from earthiness. None of the concerns of the world of the senses have any attraction for men who have realized either of these states. This is again symbolized in the fact that helium and hydrogen are the levitational elements *par excellence*. It is precisely hydrogen and helium that are used for the raising of balloons. Of all the possible forms of ponderable matter, gravity has the least action upon these two forms.

Since negative electrons represent objectivity, it follows that the various orbital rings of negative electrons of the different atoms constitute objective fields or planes. As already noted, diverse properties attach to the outer and inner rings, chemical energies belonging to the former, and the various X-rays to the latter. These correlate very well with the two main fields of Consciousness, the objective or physical and the psychical using the latter term in its general sense. The psychical field of Consciousness is again subject to a number of subdivisions into planes, but the discussion of this will be undertaken in the next chapter. It is of particular significance to note that the X-ray has the power of interpenetration into what ordinarily is opaque matter. This very well represents psychical energy which possesses just such a power. Thus on the psychical plane of dreaming sleep, although the sleepers body remains at a certain point in our physical space, yet polarized consciousness occupies another field having a totally different spacial filling from that which coexists with it on the physical plane. In other words, this psychical level is unaffected by the impenetrability of matter as it exists for waking consciousness. Other forms of psychical experience which are, however, less commonly realized

would even more effectively illustrate this principle of penetrability, but for many individuals the reality of such states may stand in doubt, while concerning the dreaming state there is no question.

Now it is possible, as previously stated, for an atom to lose one or more of its rotating electrons. When this occurs, it becomes positively electrified or “ionized.” Its mode of manifestation becomes distinctly different. This stands (in the case of the loss of the outer ring only) as the analogue to the loss of the physical body through death in the ordinary sense. It means loss of power of action or awareness on the corresponding plane, until a new outer instrument of action and perception is reacquired. If the electrons of other rings are removed or thrown off, the effect is analogous to the passing of conscious activity and awareness on the corresponding psychic plane. But none of these removals of the outer electrons destroy the atom. It remains an atom of the same element that it was before, only it is in a different state, which is commonly called “ionized.” In other words, applying correspondences, removing one or more fields of consciousness does not destroy the perceiving individual.

In the transformation which takes place in radioactivity, one element is destroyed and another stands in its place together with a releasing of radiant energy. This corresponds to death in the sense that leads to spiritualization. Spiritualization always requires destruction of personal egoism and, in the ultimate sense, of all egoism. Thus in the personal sense all religious discipline requires self-abnegation. Success in this leads to transformation towards the spiritual state with the release of a quality known as *Radiance*. Great spiritual victors such as Jesus or Buddha are always represented as *radiant*. This radiance is an energy that is a blessing to all those who come into its presence, whether or not the radiant individual speaks or otherwise expresses himself. In fact, this quality is so valued in India that an individual who has taken the vow of silence in all forms of expression, including even charitable action as we understand it in the West, but who is succeeding in the process of transformation, is looked upon as an object of high reverence and a blessing to all in his vicinity. The analogue of radioactivity should make the rationale of this clearer to our Western understanding.

Now, in this transformation consciousness as such is not destroyed. In fact, in the more familiar stage which is represented by the transformation of one element into another, not even intellectuo-perceptive or polarized consciousness as such is destroyed. A new form of polarization has simply been achieved. In the case where matter is completely destroyed as ponderable matter, it still is in the form of the freed electronic energy. So is it also in the step to *Nirvanic* Liberation. In this step egoism or intellectuo-perceptive consciousness (or “polarized” consciousness) is finally transformed back or on into pure and deathless Consciousness *per se*. Just as polarized consciousness is but a restricted mode of awareness out of the infinite plenum of Consciousness in itself, so when this polarization is removed the restricted individual that was now becomes not simply aware of the infinite totality, but in a veritable reality, *becomes* that totality Itself. Thus *Nirvana* involves a “blowing out” of a restriction only.

Death to polarized consciousness is birth to unpolarized consciousness. In its own nature, the Sea of Consciousness remains ever unchanged. Process ever dominates the polarized domain, yet at the same time, the matrix of all this process, Consciousness *per se*, remains stable and eternally unchanged. The essence of the fear of Death is the fear of loss of consciousness. Once man can realize that Consciousness in the primary sense of the root of all, and in fact is All-in-All, then death and its complement, birth, are reduced to their true status of phenomenal modes of the transitive aspect of *Being*. Only that can be destroyed which becomes, but that which simply IS, is superior to all process. Thus when man frees himself from the delusion that he, as

conscious-being, is identical with a product of mutation, such as body, then we will realize his superiority to (and therefore mastery over) all death, all birth and all change. All that remains is the practical problem of mastery of the manifold arcana of Consciousness.

Chapter V

The Constitution of Man

The purpose of the first part of this discussion has been that of clearing the ground and defining the field, as it were, so as to prepare the way for the more detailed presentation of death processes and after-death states. It is thus to be regarded as affording an orientation of the problem. Most that will be said in what follows would not be intelligible on the basis of the widely current materialistic views of Being. We have therefore prepared the way by presenting Consciousness as the line of approach to the problem. It is not claimed that we have succeeded in constraining acquiescence in this point of view by formal logical demonstration. The endeavor has been simply to show that this approach had at least strong presumption in its favor in principle. Therefore, in the case of the reader who is not already convinced of its soundness, we simply request that this position be assumed for the purposes of the discussion and thus be tested pragmatically as to whether or not it opens wider doors of understanding and life-control. As was shown, the point of view already has not only a theoretical ground which has important representation in Western philosophy, but in addition is the basis of actual practice in Oriental Yoga. The phenomena of at least certain phases of yoga *Sadhana* (practice) are gaining today a wider and wider factual recognition in the West. Therefore the theoretical background of that practice does acquire a claim upon the attention of Western students it did not possess a few decades ago.

At some length we have shown that death is to be interpreted as a process which is the complement of birth or becoming, rather than a state which negates Life. This process we have endeavored to show as continuous in all phases of manifested Being, and therefore widely experienced even by ordinary intellectuo-perceptive technique. Consequently the phases of this phenomenon which do not fall within the range of such observation are not to be regarded as something peculiarly unique in type. Thus, in principle there is no reason why an extended power of awareness should not be able to interpret even these phases.

We have identified Consciousness with Life, and then differentiated consciousness in the ordinary sense by calling it “intellectuo-perceptive” or “polarized” consciousness. The plenum of Consciousness consists in addition of two fields commonly known as the *subconscious* domain and *Super-consciousness*. While different types of polarized consciousness are possible, and in fact can be shown to exist by reference to widely familiar as well as extraordinary forms of experience, yet primarily sub-consciousness and super-consciousness are not polarized. Now the mode called polarized consciousness comes from the unpolarized plenum of Consciousness, but being only an aspect of the latter, cannot completely represent it. Thus many a problem of Life has grown out of the restricted form of polarized consciousness as such and in such cases the solution must be reached by penetration, in some degree at least, into the unpolarized plenum. This is precisely the penetration which the technique of Yoga is designed to accomplish.

Some proponents of Yoga maintain that penetration into Super-consciousness requires the abandonment of reason. In other words it requires a realization more nearly on the order of *feeling*. Now unquestionably this step does require a rising above reasoning as a process, for such reasoning is characteristic of the relationships inherent in polarized consciousness. But it equally involves a transcendence of all other aspects characteristic of this mode of consciousness including the sensory form of feeling. Feeling and intellectualization are the two primary complementary modes of functioning in polarized consciousness. Of necessity both are relative

processes. Thus in principle, neither feeling and its form, the percept, nor intellectualization and its form, the concept, can truly portray non-polarized Consciousness. *Silence* is the only logically sound representation of metaphysical Reality. But if ever the bridge between polarized and non-polarized Consciousness is to be crossed, an approximate representation of the latter in terms of the former must be attempted. There is thus a practical necessity for attempting a representation of a super-sensuous and super-conceptual Reality, in either sensuous or conceptual terms, even though at best some degree of misrepresentation is logically unavoidable. Thus the student striving to penetrate metaphysical Reality in terms of polarized consciousness has to be prepared to “unlearn” in a later stage everything which has served him previously. Yet this does not mean that each step is not relatively sound in its place. It simply grows out of the fact that polarized consciousness is being made to serve a function beyond its natural limitations.

Schools of metaphysics tend to fall into two principle types according to whether the mode of relative representation of the non-relative is in terms of percepts or concepts. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. As pointed out, neither can claim essential soundness. The basis of choosing either the one or the other method is really pragmatic rather than theoretical. In general it is a question of temperament as to which school a particular student is attracted. But recognizing this fact, the proponents of one school should not discredit the methods of the other.

Both are relatively “right” and yet both are equally inadequate, so far as principle is concerned. Now these two schools correspond to the two complementary types of Yoga known as *Bhakti* and *Jnana*, respectively. *Bhakti* is based on devotion and stands particularly close to feeling. *Jnana* is based on knowledge or Wisdom and thus finds its best relative vehicle in intellection. Other terms which are often used to represent this distinction are “Mysticism” and “Occultism.” This usage is technical and especially in the case of the word “occult,” which carries more than the etymological meaning of “hidden,” in that it implies the intellectual rather than the perceptual presentation of the “hidden,” in so far as that is possible.

In principle, then, Feeling is no more adequate as a vehicle of transcendental metaphysical Reality than is Reason. But every teacher or rather student/teacher (since none can claim *all* knowledge) must use one vehicle or the other according to whether it is the natural means of expression of his particular nature. Since Sri Ramakrishna was a *Bhakti* naturally his disciples follow the form of feeling and this should explain the position taken by Swami Vivekananda in his book on “Raja Yoga.” Those who follow the Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya or the Yogacharya School of Mahayana Buddhism, since these are supreme representatives of Jnana Yoga, will naturally use the conceptual form of representation, as is the case in the *Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky. The present writer follows the latter school and shall accordingly make his presentations in conceptual rather than perceptual forms. In other words, Reality will be viewed as Reason rather than as Feeling, with, however, the conscious recognition that no mode of presentation can be entirely true due to the limitations of polarized consciousness as such.

Since the following discussion penetrates a domain which ordinary “relative” or “non-Yogic” consciousness cannot of itself enter, it is necessary that the basis of specific knowledge should be that presented by attained Adepts. Accordingly, it cannot be completely checked by a non-Adept. But a rational presumption can be builded for it, which will justify the student in accepting it, at least, for trial; and it is the primary purpose of this work to build that presumption. The reader is asked to accept what follows in that spirit.

From the farthest reaches of the dim vistas of the past down to the present day the Arcane Schools have always taught that man was a being having a compound constitution. The terminology in these different schools has very naturally varied. The mode of dividing the principles which form the human constitution has also been in different forms. Some of these variations are readily reconciled since they are designed for different purposes. In other cases, exoteric statements were given that did not pretend to be more than partial presentations. In still other instances, there have been exoteric malformations, due to the loss of Spiritual Light upon the part of the teachers. But all agree in representing man as not just a simple being. If we turn again to the outline of the constitution of the atom given in the last chapter, we find again an analogue of the constitution of man. We have already shown the correspondences for the distinctions between the Higher Self (or *Atman*), the Higher Egoism and personal egoism. Thus the positive electron (i.e., the proton) corresponds to the *Atmic* principle, the helium nucleus corresponds to the Higher Ego, while the compound and unstable nuclei involving electrons other than those forming a helium nucleus, correspond to personal egoism. Now the rings of rotating electrons correspond to the various vehicles of knowledge and action which form man. The outer ring corresponds to the physical body, and the inner rings to the various principles of his psychic constitution.

The Arcane school, whose teachings are followed in this work, give to man a septenary constitution. Casually considered, such a division may seem arbitrary. The student might very well wonder why here should not be three, five, ten or any other number of principles. However, there are certain considerations which, while they fall short of a completely adequate explanation of a septenary division, have the advantage that they are grounded in facts of common experience. Analysis of human consciousness (i.e., that which we have designated as “polarized” consciousness) reveals three elements. There is first that which is the *subject* to all perception or cognition. This is variously called the *self*, the perceiver or the knower. All awareness whatsoever in this form of Consciousness involves someone who is aware. But equally, there must be an *object* of perception or thought. Awareness as a bare form or state in itself is no real existence but is an abstraction. There is no perceiver or knower who does not perceive or know *something*. These two modes are inseparable. But more than that is involved. Somehow or other the knower and the thing known are related, and the relating principle is distinguishable from the termini which it binds together. This third element we commonly speak of as the “knowledge” or the “perception,” depending upon whether we are speaking in terms of the “knower” or the “perceiver.” Clearly knowledge and perception partake of the character of both subjectivity and objectivity. No man’s knowledge is the knowledge of any other man. Two men may have similar knowledge, or a man may formulate his knowledge in written or spoken form, but the formulated knowledge and the knowledge which is possessed are by no means the same thing. Nothing that I write, for instance, can be said to be *my* knowledge, although the former is derived from the latter. The knowledge possessed has an inner or subjective quality which no second party can realize. At the same time, knowledge partakes of objectivity in that it always has a content. In other words, all knowledge involves necessarily an object known.

Now in this trinity there is a certain completeness that was lacking if we considered any of the component elements either singly or in pairs. Thus there is a sense in which we can say that the Three form a self-sustaining unit. This fact is symbolized in Geometry by the triangle. No complete or closed figure can be formed with less than three sides if simple or straight lines are used. Over and over again the Three are represented in the religions and philosophical systems of the world. These Three macrocosmically are the Three *Logoi* that produce and sustain

the Universe. Three thus stands as a foundation number in Occultism. Simpler division exists for the purpose of analysis, but nothing less than a Trinity can stand as a concrete or real existence.

If now, we take any three things and arrange them in their various permutations we obtain six different combinations, in which the order of arrangement of the three elements is considered. These six combinations taken as discrete facts form six, and when added to the original three form a seventh, as a synthetic whole. This gives to the septenary organization a completeness that is peculiarly self-sustaining. Again, this is portrayed in geometry in the fact that about a given circle exactly six circles of the same size can be circumscribed, all of which are tangent to the adjacent circles. The six circles plus the central circle again yield seven.

There is another geometrical portrayal of this idea in a little more complex form. Three points define a plane or a triangle. This represents “ideal form,” which however, as triune alone is not objectively manifest. Three-dimensional space represents the world of perception. All matter, that is, all that is sensuously apparent, is three-dimensioned. Now the simplest three-dimensioned form is the tetrad, or tetrahedron, a figure defined by four points taken at random, and bounded by four planes. Thus the combination of the Ideal or the Archetype and the objectively manifest give us the sum of three and four, or seven. It is important that the reader does not lose sight of the fact that all classifications of planes of Being, states of Consciousness, and Principles in the constitution of man are to be regarded as structure within the plenum of Consciousness in its primary sense. They are not to be taken as something material in the sense of being in contradistinction to Consciousness. Accordingly, while a certain kind of knowledge may be acquired by external methods where the objective world is viewed as independent of the perceiver, yet never by this method can the realities of the present domain of discourse be realized. The requisite process is far more intimate. It consists of a penetration into Consciousness directly. It is therefore called “Self-knowledge.” While this form of knowledge may not be able to substitute for the methods of external science when applied to the external field, yet it is a master Knowledge which can utterly destroy the value of external knowledge by destroying or transforming its whole field. This is the reason why the yogi calls mere external knowledge *Avidya*, or “ignorance,” as it is entirely ephemeral and dependent upon the powers of Self-knowledge. The knowledge of the various planes of Being, etc., can be derived only by penetration into Self-knowledge, and can be outwardly verified only to the extent that the two fields overlap. Final verification can only be realized through building the power of inner penetration.

In the specific classification of the component principles of man a Sanskrit terminology will have to be employed for the most part, as modern Western languages do not include adequate equivalents. However, the significance of these terms will be developed so that there should be no difficulty in the understanding of them. From a spiritual point of view the approach to the septenary classification should be from the most subjective element outward, but owing to the fact that in the Western world awareness is centered primarily in objective forms, the best approach for Western readers is from the most objective inward. Thus the first principle we shall consider is the physical body.

The physical body is known in Sanskrit as the *Sthula Sarira*, or “gross,” material body. In the strict sense of the word it is not a principle but an effect from the conjunction of principles. Thus, if we were to take a disk composed of a number of sectors of distinct colors and rotate it rapidly the resultant impression would be of a color which is in general different from any of the component colors. We might call the color effect produced by the rotating of the disk an “illusory” or *Mayavic* appearance. The relatively real principles from which this *Maya* was

produced would be the sectors of the various colors. Save in the lower forms of yoga practices and in “black” magic, it is not used as an occult agent at all. True occultism ignores it. The material of the physical body is relatively inert matter. When left to itself, as in the case of a corpse, this matter very soon falls apart. It is to be regarded merely as an irresponsible and passive effect of the causes which produced it.

Another illustration which may help to convey the idea as to the status of the physical body, is afforded in the instance of a statue. Is it the clay or marble which constitutes the essence of the statue, or is it the *form* into which the clay or marble is cast? Clearly it is the latter. Either crude or superb workmanship may have been applied to the clay or marble, yet the latter would be precisely the same material in either case. However, it is the superb workmanship applied to the unfolding of a beautiful *idea* which draws the attention of the admiring public. The marble or clay affords a point of focus for a perceptive consciousness dependent upon physical instruments of observation, but it is the beautiful idea which is the real object of interest. Make this power of perception subtle enough and all need for the marble or clay would be destroyed. The same is true regarding the physical body. Only in an exoteric sense is it called a constituent of man.

The next vehicle is the really important part in the constitution of the outer form of man. This principle is known by a number of different names. It has been variously called, the “Ethereic Body” or “Double,” “Astral Body,” “Vital Body,” “*Ka*,” “Subtle Body” and “*Linga Sarira*.” The term “Ethereic Body” might be alright if the word “ether” could be given any clear meaning. But this word is used much among scientists without a clear agreement as to its meaning; while in some quarters its existence is brought into question. Again, in the occult use of this word we have still another meaning from those found in physical science. The result on the whole is distinctly confusing, and the writer, accordingly, prefers not to use the term. “*Ka*” is an Egyptian term which is not inherently objectionable, but if a non-English term is to be used, it is far better that it be selected from the language which is the chief vehicle of occult and spiritual teaching, i.e., the Sanskrit. Of the English terms used “Vital Body” is probably the best as it is a partially descriptive term. But it is by no means sufficiently descriptive. The compound word “Vital-paradigmatic Body” would be descriptively far more satisfactory, though it would still fall short of being comprehensive. *Linga Sarira* is the true technical term. *Linga* carries the etymological meaning of “anything attached to an object.” Thus *Linga Sarira* carries the meaning of a body that is attached. This is a very important aspect of this principle, the failure to understand which has led to important mistakes on the part of some students. The best practice is that of learning to use this Sanskrit term. A fully descriptive term would be “attached-paradigmatic-vital Body,” but probably most would agree that this term is far too clumsy.

The *Linga Sarira* is the mold of the physical Body and the carrier of life, in the specialized or particularized sense of *Prana*. A little analysis should show that this principle is a necessity. Why is it that the bodies of man, animals and plants tend to take certain recognizable forms? The same matter in the chemical sense may enter into the composition of any of these objective bodies, but in each case it is formed according to the nature of the creature embodied. There must be something which serves as a “pattern” or “paradigm” and this is clearly not inherent in the physical matter itself. This pattern is precisely the *Linga Sarira* which carries the impress of the man from his past more or less modified by the nature of the parents.

Numbers of individuals who have developed a high degree of clairvoyant power have seen this vehicle. It is the “wraith” that is sometimes seen about cemeteries. At times it is seen more or less separated from the physical body. Some individuals have been conscious of moving about in it for limited distances separate from the physical body. It is, however, attached to the

physical body throughout life. In any case where an individual functions in this body apart from the physical he will be attached by a fine chord of etherial substance to the latter. If ever this chord is broken, then death will follow inevitably. Independent action in the *Linga Sarira* should never be cultivated.

The *Linga Sarira* is also the vehicle of life in the sense of *Prana*. The analogy in this case is found in the wires which conduct electricity. In the generic sense Life is universal, and so also is electricity as it composes all matter. But electricity in a form which produces controlled manifestations, such as power, light, heat, etc., requires insulated conducting media such as wires. The same principle applies to Life in the modified form of *Prana*. In this case the vehicle which serves as the insulated conductor is the *Linga Sarira*.

The third principle is *Prana* or “life.” As already hinted, Life in the universal sense, which is sometimes called *Atma* and *Jiva*, becomes *Prana* only when particularized and specialized. The analogy of electricity holds here. The electric current on a wire is a particularized and directed form of the universal electricity. Positive and negative streams of electrons must be kept in separate courses until they perform a desired work such as rendering a tungsten filament incandescent. If the positive and negative electrons were perfectly free they would unite and produce neutral forms at once. But being placed under a certain directed restraint, they produce certain desired manifestations, such as the familiar mechanical power of a motor, light, heat, etc. So it is also in the case of *Prana*. As a differentiation from primary Life or *Jiva*, directed under control, *Prana* produces manifested living forms. *Prana* in its turn differentiates into a number of functional forms, corresponding to the anabolic and catabolic processes in the body, among others. There is a very complex science of the *Pranas* which plays an important part in certain forms of yoga practice. *Prana* is also necessary to the subtle as well as the gross man. However, for the purposes of the present discussion it is not necessary to enter into this detail.

The Fourth Principle, like the Third, is also variously designated. It has been called the “Astral Body,” “Astral Shape,” “Desire Body,” “*Kama Rupa*” and sometimes “Animal Soul.” As the term “Astral body” has by some writers been applied to the *Linga Sarira*, its use has become ambiguous and confusing as already pointed out. The distinction involved between “body” and “shape” is not sufficiently clear to make the use of the latter term generally desirable. “Animal Soul” has also been employed to represent the Fifth Principle and thus involves some confusion. Probably the best use of the term “Soul” is in connection with the principle of intelligence rather than with a form or *Upadhi*. “Desire Body” and “*Kama Rupa*” are nearly equivalents and thus either may be as well used, save in view of the fact that Sanskrit terms are by far the most satisfactory for some of the principles, it serves unity of terminology to use the Sanskrit terms throughout. However, neither of these terms is satisfactorily descriptive of this principle as both convey the idea that it is a form, whereas it only becomes a form after death. Some care will have to be used to come to a clear understanding of this principle.

As indicated by the word “*Kama*,” this principle is concerned with Desire. It is the seat of animal and personal desire, the passions and animal sensation. Through it operates the will, in the sense of a personal exercise of will. It is not Desire or Will in the Cosmic or Universal sense, but the transformation of these into the limited, personal form. Personal self-assertion is based upon this power. Spiritual Will is something very different. It moves impersonally and is far more likely to act through a personality that has conquered the *Kamic* nature than in one where that nature is very strong. Emotional power centers in this principle. In fact, it is the basis of

personal power as opposed to intellectual power. During life this is to be regarded as a principle of action rather than as a vehicle.

This principle becomes a *Rupa*, or “form,” after death in the ordinary case, and when purified, may form a constituent part of a Subtle Vehicle which an Adept may use. The becoming a *Rupa* requires the drawing together of certain subtle matter which is formed on the pattern of the living man. In the later discussion of after-death states, this vehicle occupies a very important place. In the moral sense this principle is the lowest in man. It is the seat of man’s worst qualities. The first three principles are ethically entirely neutral. Purification with respect to them in connection with yoga practice may be called purely technical. Purification with respect to mind, taken in separation from the principle of *Kama* or “Desire,” is also technical. But the basic purification for the elimination of psychic and moral uncleanness is preeminently connected with the *Kamic* principle.

The Fifth Principle is known as *Manas* or “Mind,” and is sometimes called in one aspect, “Human Soul” and in another, “Animal Soul.” In the concerns of human evolution as such this principle is the most important. In one sense it is the battlefield of life, where is fought the battle which eventuates in man’s descent or rising. This is the basis of Consciousness functioning as formed Intelligence. From it is derived both the Higher and the Lower Egoism. The “second-death,” in after-death states, cuts right through this principle as it stands in the border region between the higher and lower nature of man. Accordingly understanding of this Principle is of prime importance.

Now while *Manas*, or the form through which intelligence manifests, is in essence one, it actually is drawn two ways by the adjacent principles of *Kama* and *Buddhi*. Thus there is a distinction to be made between higher and lower *Manas*. In some more esoteric systems of classification where the physical body is disregarded, the lower *Manas* is called the Fourth Principle and named *Kama Manas*. As *Kama Manas* it becomes Mind led by personal Desire and Will. In one sense, Mind or *Manas* is a neutral principle capable of gravitation either to the heights or the depths. The attractive principle to which it responds lies either in *Kama* or the higher quality, *Buddhi*, the Sixth Principle. That is the reason why it is called sometimes, the battle-field. This neutral quality of mind can be verified by an analysis of familiar experience. Thus, take for instance an expert in any field of knowledge. He would represent pure *Manas*, and as such would not be concerned with how his knowledge was used. On one hand, the soldier might call upon him to devise instruments of destruction, while on the other, a philanthropist might ask him to devise a means of controlling a disease like malaria. The purely technical power may be exercised in either direction equally well, and from the point of view of the pure expert either action would be of indifferent value. The soldier would symbolize the lower nature carried by the *Kamic* Principle, while the philanthropist would represent the more spiritual nature of *Buddhi*. The power of moral decision or evaluation does not exist for pure *Manas*. But it provides the intelligent forms by which action must be directed. And although it is not the basis of moral evaluation and decision, it none the less provides the form which makes moral responsibility possible.

Since *Manas* is the form which carries the Light of Intelligence it is the basis of Egoism. The pure Light of Intelligence is non-Egoic, but when it becomes restricted to a container, it takes on an individualized quality. This is in two respects corresponding to the Higher *Manas* and the *Kama Manas*, and these are known as the Higher Individual Egoism and the lower personal egoism respectively. The latter is often known as the self of matter which must be destroyed before the Higher Egoism can be effectively realized. The first battle of man consists

of the conquest of this lower egoism. Later (but this practically concerns only the few at present) there is another struggle in which the Higher Egoism is also overcome.

There are three phases of *Manasic* activities that can be distinguished, corresponding to *Manas* led by *Kama*, to *Manas* in its own nature, and *Manas* led by spiritual Being through *Buddhi*. All use of Mind for the service of self-indulgence or the furthering of personal self-interest is *Kama-Manasic*. This describes the largest portion of human use of mind. The man who is in business for the money he can get out of it is a good instance of this type. The use of Mind in the search for structural and substantial Truth for its own sake is characteristic of relatively pure *Manasic* activity. This is represented in large degree by the pure scientist or mathematician, and by artists who serve art for its own sake. Where Mind is used in the service of a cause which transcends the interest of the personal self, we have an instance of the action of *Manas* led by *Buddhi*. This is illustrated best by such men as Jesus and Buddha. It should thus be apparent that this distinction in the phases of *Manas* is not arbitrary, but follows actually distinguishable differences in the modes of action of men.

However, the differentiation between the different types of *Manasic* activity should not be taken as absolute. In the involutory and in the macrocosmic sense, *Manas* is the vehicle (*Upadhi*) of *Buddhi*. In this sense *Manas* is but a passive vehicle and is no more capable of active functioning by itself than can a lamp continue to radiate light after the flame within it has been extinguished. If, now, we elaborate this figure of the lamp and assume that the latter is made of a material which can absorb light which again is radiated in a secondary sense, the latter would correspond to pure *Manasic* activity if it is directed toward an impersonal field, such as pure science, and to *Kama Manasic* activity if it is directed toward objects of personal desire. When, however, this secondary radiance is turned back upon and unites with the original light we have the analogue of *Buddhi-Manasic* activity. Thus in every case the original Light is the pure Intelligence which is *Buddhi*, although it may undergo one or more *Manasic* transformations. In the strict sense there is no *Manasic* activity apart from *Buddhi*.

Another mode of representing the function of *Manas* is in terms of polarization as was developed in connection with Consciousness in a preceding chapter. *Manas* stands as the agent of polarization, so that *Manasic* Consciousness is polarized consciousness. Polarized consciousness was identified with Egoic or individualized consciousness and this is just the effect of Mind upon the principle of Consciousness as such. *Buddhi* does *not* represent polarized consciousness. Thus the active union of *Manasic* with *Buddhic* Consciousness would be equivalent to a fusing of polarized with unpolarized Consciousness. This implies a synthesis of individuality with universality, and this is something quite different from the original pure universality itself, at least as objectively considered.

It should be quite evident that there are two radically different ways of viewing *Manas*. In the involutory and Macrocosmic sense it is a passive vehicle of *Buddhic* Intelligence. But in the evolutionary and microcosmic sense, *Manas* is active and *Buddhi* passive. In the latter sense Being is viewed from the perspective of human consciousness and activity. From this perspective man is striving for metaphysical realization, while the sixth and seventh principles from the standpoint of that activity are purely passive. Yet, as already pointed out, *Manas* by itself is a neutral principle so that speaking of striving with respect to it seems contradictory. The point is that striving is introduced into *Manas* only as it is blended with *Kama* or Desire. And while the downward tendency of Desire has absolutely to be mastered, yet purified Desire and Will remain, and these united to *Manas*, become the active force to realize the Union with *Buddhi*.

This may all seem very complicated to the reader, but this cannot be avoided without giving a false simplicity. It must be born in mind that we are dealing with a realm that is almost beyond the reach of our common linguistical forms of expression. We are dealing with a problem of building a new thought habit and of finding the power to shift the base of observation. This is no easy task.

The Sixth Principle is *Buddhi*. While this term is sometimes translated “Reason” or “Intelligence,” it yet involves much more than those words commonly connote. Two additional definitions of *Buddhi* materially help in distinguishing the nature of this Principle. These are “discernment” and “judgment.” Part of the definition of “discernment” is especially helpful in throwing light on the nature of *Buddhi*. It is defined as, “acuteness of powers of discrimination; a considerable power of perceiving differences in regard to matters of morals and conduct; also the faculty of distinguishing.” Further, “discernment” involves both penetration, or insight into the heart of a subject, and discrimination which marks the differences which it finds. With respect to “judgment,” part of its meaning is the power to recognize the true or just relation between ideas, and of correct, sound and acute intellectual perception. Thus the power to make the determination that a given idea is “true” involves the presence of *Buddhi*. Likewise *Buddhi* is involved in the discrimination between right and wrong. Individuals who have reached to the point where their lives are governed by their own reflective moral thinking rather than by conventional rules have the principle of *Buddhi* especially active. With the mass of people and especially the primitive types, where conventional moral rules govern rather than individual perception of moral values, *Buddhi* is to a greater or less degree inactive.

An important aspect of the difference between *Buddhi* and *Manas* is revealed in considering the distinction between “judgment” and “proposition,” in the logical sense. A judgment involves a determination as of true or untrue, good or not-good, beautiful or ugly, etc. When a judgment is expressed in language it is called a proposition. Now a proposition is simply a form which attaches certain qualities as belonging to a given subject. As for instance, the classic proposition “All men are mortal.” For purposes of purely logical analysis the question of the truth of this proposition is not involved. All that could be said about it in a logical discussion could be said by one who had no knowledge as to whether it was true or not, provided he had sufficient logical competence. Thus a proposition as a proposition does not involve any judgment as to whether it is true, untrue, good, bad, etc. A false proposition or a meaningless proposition will serve the purposes of pure logical analysis as well as one that has meaning and is true, provided it is what is known as a logical proposition. Now this type of activity is almost purely *Manasic*. When, however, judgments are made of truth, goodness, value, etc. then the Light of *Buddhi* is present.

It will be seen from this analysis that in all real philosophy *Buddhi* is very active, as philosophy is especially concerned with judgment, discrimination, evaluation, and penetrative determination. Of course, there are the “choppers” of philosophic concepts of whom this is not true, and some of the latter are very clever and are well represented in print. But they are not philosophers as is shown by their inability to provide positive evaluations. They can do critical work, which may very well be of value, but they fall short of the true *Buddhic* activity of genuine philosophy.

Scientific activity is, in general, less *Buddhic* as, broadly speaking, it is concerned with determinations of fact rather than evaluation. Scientific theory does not involve evaluation in this deeper philosophical sense. It is but a determination of an apparent order in nature. It is thus descriptive rather than evaluative. However, while scientific activity as such is less *Buddhic* than

philosophy, yet it does not take much penetration to realize that the greatest scientists are generally possessed of an active *Buddhic* nature.

An able mathematician may be highly *Buddhic* or almost wholly *Manasic*. If mathematical processes and forms are but instruments which he can manipulate cleverly without their involving any essential judgment of their truth, then his activity is almost wholly *Manasic*. But if on the other hand, mathematics comes with the compelling force of being pure truth, as nearly as that may be, so that the doubting of it is unthinkable, then the *Buddhic* element is the dominant force back of his mathematical work. Mathematics is both form and essence. Many only realize the form, but some have found the soul. The latter have found a key, perhaps the greatest key, to the Inner Mysteries.

The guiding principle in Religion, in the higher sense, is preeminently *Buddhi*. True religion and philosophy are very closely allied, and are really supplementary. It might be said that religion is concerned with *penetration* while philosophy is chiefly concerned with *discrimination*. It will be noted that these are the two aspects of discernment which is one of the translations of *Buddhi*.

In some individuals of marked *Buddhic* development, penetration may be strongly unfolded while the discrimination is relatively weak. In such cases judgments of value, truth, etc. are very quickly made but with a high degree of unsoundness in manifested form. In such cases there is a genuine realization of value, truth, etc., but the outer correlations of that realization are defective. These individuals belong more to the religious wings than the philosophical. The opposite type is much more objectively accurate in its determinations, but forms them a great deal more slowly. Its strongest development is in discrimination.

In its relation to *Manas*, *Buddhi* is rational, while *Manas* is irrational, just as for the principles which lie below mind *Manas* is rational while they, by themselves, are dark and blind. But when we consider *Buddhi* in relation to the Seventh Principle its relative character is changed. In the macrocosmic or involutory sense, *Buddhi* is the vehicle of *Atma* which is pure Light, or formless Reason. In this sense *Buddhi* is a passive vehicle, and thus relative to *Atma* is irrational. In other words, its rationality, or Light, is derived and not original, but for the aspects of man's nature that stand below it, it is the source of Light. It thus follows that none of the intermediate principles are absolutely positive or negative. A given principle may be negative in one relationship while positive in another. The lowest principle (*Sthula Sarira*) is always negative, while *Atman* is the positive pole *per se*.

As a vehicle (*Upadhi*) of *Atman*, *Buddhi* may be likened to a lens which collects and focuses light. Through a properly chosen lens, ordinary physical light may be concentrated into a beam which thus stands in contradistinction to the general mass of light, although it is entirely derived from that light. Thus in one sense it is the original light and none other, yet it is so directed that it stands out as a distinguishable beam. Light as a whole may be called a unified plenum, but if we gathered it through a multitude of lenses we could then speak of the light as it appeared through the resultant beams as manifold. It is in something of this manner that there are produced through *Buddhi* a multitude of spiritual beings, although Spirit in itself is unitary and indivisible.

While the *Atmic* Light is focused through *Buddhi*, it yet remains the unpolarized, original Light. That is, it is not particularized but remains what we might call focused universality. Thus pure *Buddhic* Consciousness is not only impersonal but it is also not individualized. It is wholly without an egoic quality. It would be concerned with evaluation but only in an impersonal sense unconnected with any individual concern. *Buddhic* Consciousness is thus above all conflict. The

best representative of this state of whom we have any extent of record is Gautama Buddha in that portion of his life following his Realization. This is also true in the life of Jesus following the Resurrection, but concerning this period our records are extremely skimpy.

As already pointed out in the discussion of *Manas*, this principle serves to polarize Consciousness, and this we have identified with the Egoic or individualizing quality. Polarizing of light picks out a certain wave phase out of an infinity of wave phases, while the focusing lens, of the type assumed in this discussion, does not. In carrying out this analogue, *Buddhi* carries the Light of *Atma* including all aspects or phases, while *Manas* particularizes on one phase. Thus, while Light in the *Manasic* form may by correspondence represent other phases than its own, it cannot immediately realize those phases. Egoization necessarily implies limitation, or the being of one thing at the price of being separated from all other things. Thus for particularized consciousness to become complete it must transcend Egoism. *Buddhic* Consciousness is thus transcendent, and while it is evaluative and discriminative, it is not particularized or self-centered.

The seventh and highest Principle is known as *Atma*. In the more correct usage of terms this is not a principle, though common practice does so designate it. Principles are really components in a compound whole. They are thus, in at least the metaphysical sense, objective and can constitute the material for thought. This is not true of *Atma* however much it may seem to serve as an object of discussion. *Atma* is pure subjectivity and thus in its own being as *Atma is never an object of Consciousness, but is the eternal subject to all Consciousness. This is the pivotal point on which all the principles are hung.* It is accordingly synthetic rather than a constituent part of a compound whole. Most thinking relative to *Atma*, at least among us of the West, is philosophically unsound.

Atma is the pure Light of Consciousness as considered apart from form in any sense. It is the basis of the power of perception or awareness however considered. Being perfectly formless it is not subject to division, for divisibility can be predicated only of objective material. Accordingly, in the Unity of *Atma* the whole domain of Consciousness becomes an Universe which means a oneness. These facts are revealed by Self-analysis. Any individual unites the whole world that he perceives by the synthetic, apperceptive power of the center of awareness which he is. It is this fact which makes the world of any individual an *universe*. But this synthetic center is not itself an object of consciousness in any sense, as it is always the substratum of any field of awareness. Whatever may be an object of consciousness, however subtle, it is not this center as it really is, for it is ever that basis from which the observation is made. It thus follows that *Atma* being perfectly non-objective, is not subject to the qualities which characterize objective material as such. Of these, the most important are mutability and divisibility, the former being the basis or effect of Time, the latter of Space. Thus, *Atma* is not to be interpreted as having either a temporal or spacial nature.

Atmic Consciousness is Consciousness as considered apart from form or attribute in any sense. It does not involve either evaluation or discrimination. It thus stands superior even to ethics in any sense. On this level Being is the only predication that can possibly be made. Since pure subjectivity is an abstraction when considered apart from objectivity it follows that *Atma* is in reality inseparable from its own other or the *noumenal* substantiality out of which all objective form is constructed. From this it also follows that the latter has the same super-spacial and super-temporal Reality which applies to *Atma* when taken in its noumenal sense. In the constitution of man this metaphysical principle is reflected in the fact that *Atma* and *Buddhi* are inseparable, save for analysis. These two are therefore called the eternal Monad, which while in the relative

sense appearing to be two, are in reality neither one nor two but transcend both multiplicity and unity.

Bringing together the principles as just elucidated, we have the following classification:

1. *Sthula Sarira*: Physical or gross Body.
2. *Linga Sarira*: Astral or etheric Body; the vehicle of Prana.
3. *Prana*: The Life Principle or Vitality; vital electricity.
4. *Kama Rupa*: The principle of Desire and personal Will. This becomes the Desire Body at death.
5. *Manas*:
 - a. Higher *Manas*: the higher Ego or Mind; Human Soul.
 - b. *Kama* or Lower *Manas*: the basis of personality; animal soul.
6. *Buddhi*: The vehicle or Upadhi of Atma; Spiritual Soul.
7. *Atma*: Eternal, indivisible Spirit, the SELF.

In the arrangement of this classification it should be born in mind that the numerical order is not absolute. The Sixth and Seventh principles are always the highest, but the relative dominance of the other principles varies with the individual. Thus, with a man of very great vitality and physical health, *Prana* would stand first, in the lower group; while in the case of a man of a very sensual nature, or of strong personal assertiveness the *Kamic* principle would be of most importance. In the intellectual types the *Manasic* principle comes first.

The student should also bear in mind that a given classification of principles is dependent upon the plane from which the constitution of man is viewed and the purpose which is at hand. It is a familiar principle that the same objective substratum of a fact may have radically different appearances as different bases of reference are taken. Thus the path generated by the movement of a point on the circumference of a car wheel that is rolling on a track is a circle if viewed from the car itself, but is a cycloid if viewed from the earth. In determining whether discrepancies in different systems are really contradictions, this principle must be born in mind.

Many seeming contradictions are really not such when once differences of bases of reference are taken into account. The above classification is probably the best for Consciousness that is polarized objectively. As this is the typical state of the Occidental it follows that on the whole the above classification is the best for us.

The most important feature characterizing most principles is that they are vehicles or *Upadhis* which carry Consciousness in a certain mode of awareness or manifestation. Thus without a physical body there can be no consciousness of physical phenomena. Thus the microscope is the *Upadhi* for Consciousness which is aware on the microscopic plane. Likewise the fluoroscope is the *Upadhi* of Consciousness when aware, directly, of X-ray phenomena. Thus every *Upadhi* in man's constitution represents an instrument of potential or actual awareness or action on the corresponding plane of Consciousness. This is a principle of the very highest importance to reach an understanding of the limitations and powers of after-death states of Consciousness.

In the case of the classification we have outlined, some, but not all of the principles are *Upadhis* or vehicles. Thus *Atma*, *Prana* and, save after death, *Kama Rupa* are not *Upadhis*, nor for that matter, is the physical body if taken in separation from the *Linga Sarira*. However, these are component elements in the human constitution and therefore are listed with the true *Upadhis* as principles, at least for exoteric purposes. There are, though, other classifications which are

concerned only with *Atma* and its vehicles or *Upadhis*. But, as explained, this does not involve necessarily any contradiction with the classification just made. They simply serve other purposes. As one of these classifications will also be of value in the following discussion it will be briefly outlined.

One of the best, if not the most advanced of school of Raja Yoga in Southern India, gives a four-fold classification which is of peculiar significance in connection with the development of conscious and independent functioning in inner vehicles. This classification is correlated with the one already given as follows:

QUARTENARY CLASSIFICATION

1. *Sthulopadhi* (Gross Vehicle)

2. *Sukshmapadhi* (Subtle Vehicle)

3. *Karanopadhi* (Causal Body)

4. *Atma* (Spirit; Higher Self)

SEPTENARY CLASSIFICATION

Physical Body (Sthula Sarira)

Linga Sarira (Vital Body)

Prana (Life Energy)

Kama Rupa (Desire Body, Will, etc.)

Kama Manas (Mind as led by Desire)

Higher Manas (Higher Mind)

Buddhi (Spiritual Soul)

Atma.

The first three principles in the four-fold classification are vehicles of action and awareness for Consciousness in three corresponding planes of Being. It is possible for *Atma* (Pure Consciousness) to function with all three vehicles, or with (2) and (3) apart from (1), or also in (3) apart from (1) and (2), and do this without destroying the man. This is not true of all the principles in the sevenfold classification as each of the *Upadhis* is a compound of more than one of them. To be sure, the power to separate the Subtle and Causal vehicles and consciously function in them is only latent in most men. It is a developed power only in the case of those who have attained to a greater or lesser degree of Adeptship. The significance of this classification is largely in connection with training designed to unfold this power of inner functioning. But there are certain correlations of these vehicles with after-death states that will be of significance in this work.

It will be seen that the physical body, the *Linga Sarira* and Life Energy form a unit as might logically be expected. The physical body being drawn together and held by the binding power of the *Linga Sarira* the former cannot persist with the breakdown of the latter. In that case, Life departs returning to the general stream of Life, no longer having a specific vehicle to hold it. Of course, in cases of premature deaths, such as accidents, the physical body may be destroyed while the *Linga Sarira* still retains its coherence. The effect of this will be specifically

discussed in its place. This is one of the conditions which, while very common, is still considered “abnormal.”

The Subtle Vehicle or Body is the real carrier of personality and is of far more importance in the life of the occult student than the physical one. The term “*Sukshmopadhi*” or “*Sukshma Sarira*” as it is sometimes called, is in some writings identified with the “*Linga Sarira*.” That is a different usage and must not be confused with the present one. This is simply one of the many difficulties which serve to confuse students and general readers because of the lack of definite and consistent terminology where such is possible. This confusion has helped to encourage a very dangerous practice which can be induced rather easily but should never be indulged. The Subtle Body (*Sukshma Sarira*) as here defined is an instrument of potentially safe independent action on the intermediate planes of Being. It takes serious effort to attain this power, but it is potential in every human being. Now, it is also possible for the *Linga Sarira* to drift away or be sent from the physical body for limited distances remaining, however, attached to the latter by a cord of subtle matter. (This is the significance of “*Linga*,” which means that which is attached to something else.) It requires no particular skill or protracted training to do this. In fact, it happens with some people spontaneously with or without their knowledge. In any case it is to be classed either as a dangerous weakness or practice. For injury incurred by the *Linga Sarira* reacts by repercussion upon the physical even to the extent of producing death. This vehicle is much employed in black magic both consciously and unconsciously.

The theory of forming this Subtle Vehicle (*Sukshmopadhi*) so that it may be used independently of the physical does not bear upon the present work, and so will not be here discussed. This vehicle, however, with a somewhat different character as contrasted with its form when consciously developed, forms spontaneously after death. This has a bearing on the “Second Death” which is of prime importance, and also with most of the genuine, though negative, phenomena of Spiritualism. All this is a matter of the highest practical significance and will be elaborated later in its place.

The Causal Body (*Karanopadhi*) is relatively eternal, but deliberate and independent action in it is the realized power only of advanced degrees of Adeptship. Still it has a definite correlation with the more interior after-death states and thus had significance for us here.

There is a further correlation of these three *Upadhis* which may be mentioned in passing as it ties in this portion of the teachings with other important phases. The Wisdom Religion teaches that the evolution of man is threefold, and this constitutes the basis of its most important deviation from the concept of evolution as developed in physical science. These three aspects of evolution are Physical or Lunar, Mental or *Manasic* and Spiritual. These phases are directed by three orders or hierarchies of intelligences. The physical, which includes the Lunar Form or *Linga Sarira*, is projected, according to the teaching, by the Lunar *Pitris* (gods). When the latter have sufficiently prepared the lower or animal vehicles there is a projection or incarnation in them of a wholly different order of Being or Consciousness known as the *Manasaputri* or Sons of Mind. This represents peculiarly the human evolution *qua* human. This stands correlated with the Subtle Body. The Spiritual Evolution is of a still higher order, being connected with the Causal Body. It is possible for man to function on all three planes, corresponding to these three evolutions, at once, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Chapter VI

Planes of Consciousness and Being

How, in a given continuous and universal plenum a discrete manifold can possibly be is a problem that never ceases to intrigue the mind. It is the old problem of the "One and the Many." That being is somehow One seems to be our most primary intuition, yet discrete manifoldness is a fact of experience which is not destroyed by simply ignoring it, as did Parmenides. Problems of this type which are perennial in philosophy almost certainly persist for the reason that polarized Consciousness has not become sufficiently intensified, or else the resolution of the problem transcends polarized consciousness as such. Problems exist for the intellectuo-perceptive form of Consciousness, but not for pure Consciousness in its primary state. Yet it is the service of problems never to leave man at rest in any relative state. Let him resolve one problem and another is born out of that very resolution, and he must perforce drive on in his endeavor to reach the ever-disappearing rainbow's end of the perfect all-embracing solution. Intellection has served to bring the rainbow out in very clear relief, but never has it succeeded in embracing the rainbow itself. At the frontier of the highest problems of man there is an all-enveloping Silence into which no polarized Ray can penetrate. Beyond this point there is no "knower" but only Knowledge. The Voice of the Silence is heard only by *becoming* the Silence itself.

There is no system that can possibly comprehend All, since to do so it would have to comprehend itself and its source. All systems are necessarily objective to the knower of the systems, and hence are comprehended within that which is essentially beyond knowledge. The *consummatum est* of all knowledge is the Unknowable. The end of all relative knowledge is the transcendence of knowledge in that sense.

As primary as is the principle of contradiction, yet it is true that more synthetic views of Reality reconcile factors that from a narrower view are incompatible. Reality, naturally, is not self-contradictory, but many contradictions exist only for given restricted domains and are resolved in higher and more synthetic concepts. It is for this reason that the competent critic of any system of thought must himself have risen to the level of consciousness on which that thought was produced. Only so can he distinguish between real failures in the system and the appearance of contradiction which stands out to the perspective of a narrower power of awareness. Young students of philosophy can very easily tear down the details in any philosophic system, let the originator be ever so competent. Yet this criticism fails to touch the heart of any such systems, simply for the reason that the immature critical students have as yet failed to realize the altitude of consciousness on which the constructive work of the systems was produced. Concepts are as little free from mutatory transformation as are any other existences in the relative world. Hence in philosophical transformation, concepts inevitably become other than what they were. Accordingly, criticism from lower levels touch surfaces only, and all too often serve to confuse the real issues.

Criticism undoubtedly serves as a function of very high value. There is no question as to the existence of error, and it is the part of criticism to serve as the pruning knife to remove the false from the true. But just as the man who is not familiar with the nature of the tree and has not the proper discrimination may well wield the pruning knife to the destruction of productive wood and the preservation of worthless structure, so also the critic who is not abreast of the constructive thought which lies before him may be unwittingly wasting himself and his followers in hacking at that which is essentially sound. It is therefore a very good rule to seek first to

understand the thought of a system that may lie before one and postpone the passing of judgment as to soundness until this is accomplished.

In the case of the system of thought of the type of the one which lies before us, the reaching to the level of the constructive production implies a transformation of the whole plane of life of the student who begins the study with his life centered in objectivity. From the level of a purely external view, such that the student leaves himself unchanged, he can never grasp the significance of the system and therefore is in no position to judge of its soundness, save perhaps, in incidental detail. And from such failure in detail alone it is manifestly not valid to infer the essential unsoundness of the system as a whole, unless such detail can be shown to be a necessary part of the system, and not merely an extraneous element added through the limitations of the expositor of it.

The method followed in this work is that of developing the philosophy logically, as far as possible, in terms of already existent conceptual formulae. But as the roots of the system inhere in a level of Consciousness transcending those formulae, an explicit and completely systematic picture of the structure cannot be developed. All that we can hope to do is to show that in logical dignity this system is in no wise inferior to any other, while on the other hand, it meets more effectively the needs of the heart and soul than most systems with which I am familiar. Further, it does not controvert any "fact" of science however radically it may diverge from interpretations particular scientists may have constructed upon those "facts." Realization of this philosophy as Truth involves much more than the intellectual apprehension of it as being only possibly true. But the step from intellectual apprehension to Realization requires an act of so devoting the individual life that birth is attained on new levels of consciousness. No book or essay can ever perform this task for any student, but it may destroy prejudices and point out the direction of penetration which has been successful in the experience of others. To go farther requires the active labor of the student himself.

If it is not yet possible to develop a concept which explicitly unites in logical form indiscrete Being with discrete manifoldness, yet the coexistence of these two qualities in the same domains of science is an empiric fact. Thus in the domain of organic evolution some of the facts seem to be very well interpreted by Darwin's hypothesis of selection in a field of continuous variation, yet other facts with equal cogency point to the validity of the principle of discrete "sporting" developed by the Dutch biologist, DeVrees. Development of "fighting tusks" in a boar, or the elongation of the trunk of an elephant may very well be by a protracted continuous process, but the step from a three to a four-leafed clover is most certainly discrete. Students of biology are well aware of the fact that from the emphasis of one or the other of these two sets of biological data, diverse schools of theory relative to the origin of species have developed and persist side by side. The significant fact is that neither school has been able to establish itself so well as to successfully discredit the other. In other words, discreteness and continuity are equally methods of variation in the domain of biological experience.

In the fields of physics and astronomy the greatest systematic expansion came as the result of the development of that supreme instrument for the analysis of the continuum, namely, the differential and integral calculus. This is true simply for the reason that in large part physical process is continuous. Yet among the outstanding and most significant developments of modern physics is the evidence of discrete qualities attaching to ultimate physical units. Thus today electricity is not regarded as a continuous stream of energy but as a collection of definite unit charges known as electrons. In other words, the continuous stream is replaced by a discrete or "granular" mass. Again, consider the phenomena of light. Certain facts such as the phenomena of

interference and diffusion seem to imply a continuous quality in light, best interpreted by the undulatory theory; yet other facts, like the deflection of light rays in a gravitational field would point toward a granular or corpuscular structure. It certainly seems impossible to build a true picture of the physical universe either in terms of the continuum or of discrete manifolds alone.

If, then, in our philosophy we posit a manifested lamellar structure of Consciousness all within a continuous Absolute Consciousness, we are not in principle asserting more than is found in nature as a familiar experience of science. That we are not now able to logically reconcile these two qualities by no means implies that they are necessarily incompatible. The difficulty simply is that our conceptual consciousness has not yet reached the altitude of awareness with respect to which these apparently antithetical qualities are realized as being complementary. It is probable that this step cannot be taken until the union of Reason and Intuition is realized as coordinate modes of awareness.

As a symbol let us imagine a circle of undefined radius rotating about its center at an indeterminate rate. This circle would symbolize Absolute Consciousness, in a space without dimension or measurement in any sense. Space stands as but the measure of Consciousness, and not merely as a preexisting objective emptiness. The undefined radius of the circle marks it as being unlimited in its own nature in any sense. Yet that radius may appear as forcibly limited from the perspective of any particular relative center of consciousness. Hence any concrete manifestation begins with assuming the circle as possessing a definite magnitude. The rotation of the circle marks its character as ceaseless motion which is yet indistinguishable from immobility. Motion may be called the one supreme attribute of Consciousness. Analysis of relative awareness will show that only by contrast or process is Consciousness active. Absolute Motion is thus Absolute Consciousness which has reached that supreme intensity that is indistinguishable from immobility. The indeterminate rate of the motion shows that it is not ultimately measurable from any finite standpoint though from any given perspective it may appear as defined and definite.

Let us now assume the circle is projected into dimensional or measurable space, let us say, on a straight line. With respect to Absolute Space there is no difference between motion about a fixed point or along a line in any direction, as in the absolute sense no significance attaches to these relative terms. Hence the circle in its own Being remains unaffected; but in the relative sense motion along a line does have significance. Let us now take any point on the periphery of our circle, which we now regard as of a definite finite magnitude, and consider its path with respect to the line along which the circle is rotating. It will take the following form which is technically known as a "cycloid." Thus the circle with center O rotates along the line AB and the path of the point A is the cycloid AANB. From the standpoint of the center O the point A has been continuously rotating in a circle, but from the standpoint of the line AB the path is the discontinuous curve AANB. Curves of this type are discontinuous for the reason that at the critical points such as AN, small motion along the line AB involves a discontinuity in direction. The path from A to AN is continuous and so also is it from AN to B and so on indefinitely. But at points such as AN there is a radical discontinuity.

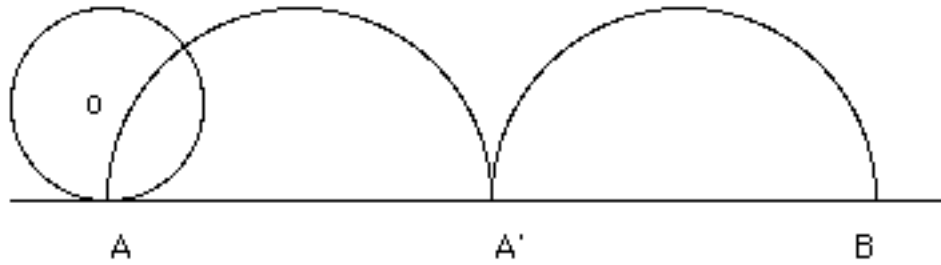


Figure 1. Drawing of a cycloid

The point on the circumference of the circle represents Consciousness polarized objectively. For such Consciousness, periods of continuity are broken by points of discontinuity. This represents, among other things, such cataclysmic transitions in consciousness as that of final death of a given physical body, or the step from waking to dreaming consciousness. From the standpoint of Consciousness taken as the center O there never has been at any moment a break. This symbol really carries the whole solution of the problem of the mastery of death. It lies in simply shifting the polarization of Consciousness from A to O. All discontinuity is merely an appearance produced by our perspective.

As an implication of the basic view that the unity of the universe lies in Consciousness it follows that Space itself is simply the form under which Consciousness is manifest. Thus geometry is simply a description of primary psychological laws. Geometrical symbolism is therefore peculiarly intimate. When properly understood it is much more than a convention or a figure of speech, but indeed an actual manifestation of modes of Consciousness. The real value of these symbols is realized by a process described as “becoming the symbol.” It is very difficult for one trained in the habits of materialistic thought to make sense out of a statement of this kind, since from that standpoint all symbols are regarded as conventional representations only. They are not realized as being direct manifestations themselves. However, there are grounds for giving this view serious attention even from the standpoint of science. These are found in the testimony of mystics that they do habitually identify themselves with the symbols. The values in consciousness of the mystic are manifestly of a different order from those of the scientist, but that fact in no wise discredits the former with respect to the latter as an empiric actuality. And science, if it is to be conscientious, must give factual recognition to every empiric existence.

There are, however, theoretical considerations from the field of science itself which build a presumption for the view that geometrical forms have a substantial reality. These grow out of the field of mathematico-cosmical thinking with which the name of Einstein has been peculiarly associated. Of peculiar significance in the Einsteinian concept is the indissoluble synthesis of space, time and matter. This implies, among other things, that the structure of geometry is *substantial* as well as formal. If, then, the universe is interpreted as a mode of Consciousness, then geometrical organization becomes a substantial manifestation of Consciousness, *per se*.

“Space” becomes, in fact, one of the best representations of Consciousness whether taken in the relative or Absolute sense. In the Absolute sense Consciousness is Space without dimension in any sense, that is, without any metrical properties. In this sense it is indiscrete or continuous. On the other hand, relative consciousness is measurable or dimensioned space. Of this kind of space there are many forms as defined by the various systems of geometry, but they all have this in common: that they have a determinate structure.

Physical science in one very important respect, in recent years, has developed a view that accords with that of Occult Science. This is that the universe, considered as the manifold of perceivable phenomena, is finite in extension. Thus from a consideration of mathematico-optical properties it has been proven that the stellar universe cannot be infinite. The theory of Einstein definitely requires a finite universe which in view of the synthesis of matter and space involved in that theory, implies that space must be finite. Owing to the principle of symmetry which requires that space shall be unbounded, this necessitates that the space shall be of the type known as circular or elliptical. Einstein found a geometry descriptive of this type of space in the system originated by the German mathematician, Reimann, about the middle of the last century.

The grasping of a picture of Reimannian space in three dimensions is very difficult, but in two dimensions it can be illustrated roughly by the surface of a sphere. The two-dimensional space of the surface of a finite sphere is manifestly limited but unbounded, since at any point there is no restriction to motion in any direction. The great circles on the surface of the sphere correspond to the straight lines of plane geometry. Now, motion along the source of a great circle if continued far enough always returns to the starting point. In the elliptic geometry of Reimann all straight lines have just this property: that in a finite distance they return into themselves. If then, we regard a straight line as the path of a ray of light, then in the cosmical system of Einstein all such rays ultimately return to their source. Thus if we had powerful enough telescopes, by directing them at any point in the heavens we would perceive the island universe, of which we are a part, as a very distant nebula.

Occult Science, some decades before Einstein first announced his Special Theory of Relativity, gave public statement of enough of its system to reveal an essential agreement with the above view insofar as the cosmical picture is presented as circular. Whether or not the specific geometry of Reimann accords in detail with that of Occult Science is not the important point. The vital point is the agreement in the circularity of the systems.

From the standpoint of cosmical physics it would seem that the cosmic picture must be circular, else a finite universe needs must exhaust itself. Energy poured forth in an unbounded rectilinear space must ultimately lead to exhaustion. On that view it would be simply an accident that the universe is not now "run-down." It would imply an original starting point at a finite distance in the past, and such is inconceivable both to science and philosophy. But the circular cosmical picture admits of an universe with no point of origin in time and, though finite, is capable of indefinite extension into the future. For all energy poured forth ultimately returns to its source.

Occult philosophy posits circularity as a necessity partly for the above reason, but also for the more fundamental consideration that any modification in the universal plenum of Consciousness must stand balanced by its own complementary other so that the sum of the two leaves the original plenum unaltered. Circular motion synthesizes diametrically opposite motions, so the completion of the cycle realizes the perfection of balance of all states. Hence "periodicity" is the most fundamental of all laws.

Returning to our diagram of Figure 1, we are prepared now to so modify our figure as to unite circularity in spacial extension with discreteness in extended or manifested modes of Consciousness. Let the line AB be transformed into a large circle on which the smaller circle with center O rotates. The cycloid AANB becomes what is known in mathematics as an "epicycloid." The following figure illustrates this configuration.

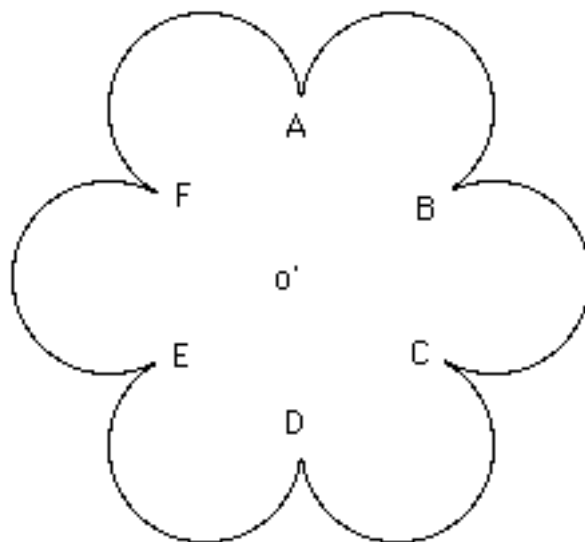


Figure 2. Drawing of an epicycloid

In Figure 2 the circle with center O corresponds to circle center O in Figure 1; the circle center O corresponds to the straight line AB; the cycloid AANB becomes the epicycloid ABCDEF.

In the macrocosmic sense circle O represents the finite circular or elliptical space of the Cosmos. This would be represented by the cosmical picture associated with Einstein's theory on one hand, and with the manifested Universe of Occultism on the other. In the microcosmical sense this circle may represent the space of an island universe, a solar system, a planet, a race or for that matter, any of the lesser occult organic subdivisions. The circle O represents Consciousness manifesting in that Space. As this Consciousness rotates through the boundaries of its Space the point A generates the epicycloid ABCDEF. Now in addition to the points brought out in the interpretation of the cycloid in Figure 1, this figure illustrates cyclic return so that the motion starting at A returns to A again. Furthermore, this epicycloid is so drawn as to give exactly six lobes. We have therefore represented a process of six minor cycles, AB, BC, CD, etc., and the major cycle ABCDEF; in all seven cycles. This figure therefore illustrates the Septenary principle that was developed in Chapter V.

As already pointed out, the epicycloid lobe such as AB, represents a period of continuity of Consciousness taken in the peripheral or objective sense. But the points A, B, C, etc., are points of discontinuity or breaks in this form of relative Consciousness. Lobe periods like AB may accordingly be called "planes of Consciousness or Being." Perhaps it would be more accurate to call them zones of continuous relative consciousness and let the points A, B, C, etc. represent separative planes between these zones, but the practice of calling the zones "planes" is already well established and accordingly we will follow that terminology.

Each lobe represents a period of continuity for consciousness centered in the peripheral point A of circle center O, but for consciousness in this sense there is not a continuity from one lobe to the next. But as pointed out in the discussion of Figure 1, Consciousness centered in the center O remains unbroken throughout the whole period. From the standpoint of O the whole cyclic process represented by the epicycloid is a *Maya*, or illusion, although relatively real from the standpoint of A.

A geometrical property that has an interesting bearing upon the Septenary principle is found in connection with a circle circumscribed by circles of the same size. If the circumscribing circles are drawn tangent to each other there will be just exactly six. These six together with the original circle give seven, as shown in Figure 3.

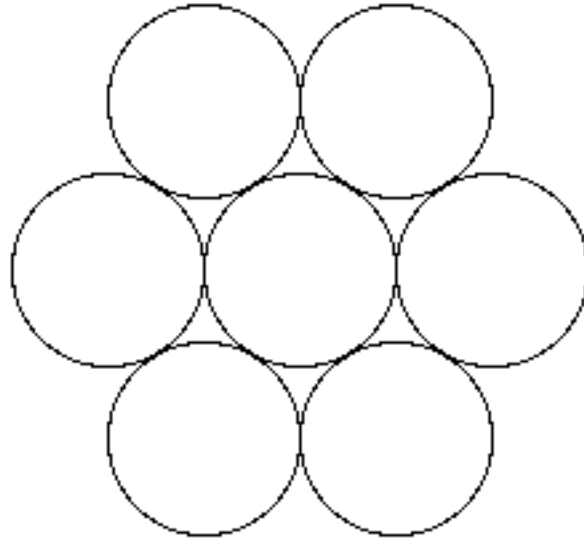


Figure 3. The Septenary Principle

We have shown in the above discussion how geometry reveals to us an analogue of continuity synthesized with discontinuity in terms that rather beautifully illustrate the teaching of our philosophy. The significance of this is that mathematics gives us a ground for apprehending the possibility that a laminated structure in manifested Being may subsist in Unmanifested Being as a continuous matrix.

Furthermore, the mathematical background of the Septenary Principle builds the presumption in favor of a division in planes of Being and consciousness that is guided by Seven as the most important factor. But the actual determining of what these planes are can only be partly sustained by a reference to familiar experience. For the rest our information is derived out of occult sources, although a considerable measure of verification is possible from considerations of analogy or correspondence, and also to some degree from the testimony of those who have reported mystical experience.

The occult division of the cosmos is in the form of seven grand planes or levels of Consciousness. To be able to cognize any of these planes as such requires the powers of Adeptship for this is a phase of genuine Cosmic Consciousness. Only four of these planes, it is said, are cognizable by even the highest Adepts. The three highest are inconceivable even to the highest relative consciousnesses. The experience and knowledge of mankind outside the very limited ranks of Adeptship is not concerned with any of these grand planes as objects of immediate awareness.

Within these grand planes there are still finer subdivisions. Thus the lowest Cosmic plane, which has been called the Cosmic body, is divided, as it were, into seven “sheaths.” Each of these, again, is divided into a sevenfold form. It is only with this lowest septenary that the

objective personal man is concerned. The whole cycle of human experience, whether on our objective physical plane (the period commonly called “life”) or indrawn into relative subjectivity (the states after physical death) is confined to the planes of the Cosmic Body. Awareness of the higher Cosmic planes requires a degree of detachment from form that is almost beyond our power of imagination. Accordingly, we shall not introduce them any further into the present discussion, especially as they do not bear upon the problem of after-death states.

Because the principle that the Microcosm reflects the Macrocosm applies not only to monadic entities but also applies to the different planes, it is, in principle, possible by a sufficiently astute analysis to derive the seven planes of consciousness from the modes of objective consciousness. These planes correspond to, and are reflected in, the seven principles of man. Hence the analysis in Chapter V which showed the action or presence of the seven principles in the modes of objective consciousness is also evidence of seven planes of consciousness. This is the field of study to which the objective brain-mind is largely confined.

There are three planes of consciousness of which we have direct evidence from the common experience of most men. At least two of these planes are experienced nearly every 24 hours by everyone. First, there is the plane of our common waking consciousness. But when we go to sleep our consciousness leaves this plane and generally enters a state of dreaming. This is another plane of consciousness. Less frequently we experience states of very profound sleep from which we return without memory of any dream. This is known as dreamless sleep which usually has an extraordinary power of refreshment. Thus we have altogether three states of consciousness experienced by nearly everyone.

While it is undoubtedly true that in a large measure dreams may be traced to causes which originate in waking consciousness, yet this by no means invalidates the fact that the state of consciousness of the dream is a wholly different plane from that of waking consciousness. Dream states rarely include a continuity with waking consciousness. They stand on their own level with a fact value entirely independent of the value of waking states. From the standpoint of the latter, the dreams as remembered may be, in large degree, correlated with practices or inhibitions induced while awake; but from the standpoint of the dream consciousness itself this causal relation does not exist, save in certain rare cases of overlapping of consciousness. Now, dream consciousness on its own plane stands as an immediate empirical fact as truly as does any experience of our more familiar objective consciousness. The dream state seems unreal to the memory of the waking state, but that sense of unreality does not attach to the dream state itself on its own level. So from the standpoint of dispassionate philosophical valuation, the dream state must be accorded relative reality on its own level, as truly as is the case with the waking state on its plane. We have thus in these two states, equally, two distinct planes of consciousness as an empirical fact. The judgment which gives more reality to the waking state but which is based purely upon the standpoint of that state has no absolute significance.

It may be objected that the dreaming state proves itself as essentially unreal as compared to waking consciousness for the reason that dreams are so erratic and irrational. But this objection does not hold for the following reasons: first, that we are not comparing dream states at their own level with waking states, but simply the memory of the former as carried over into the latter. In this process of carrying-over all sorts of distortions are possible, just as images from variously curved mirrors may take strange and erratic shapes. Further, the memory is thrown into a mental field complicated with all of the associations of waking consciousness, and the result is an hybrid complex instead of a pure memory. The second answer to the objection lies in the principle that there is no reason to expect that the laws of order on different planes should be the

same. The domain of a non-Euclidian geometry may very well appear erratic and senseless to the student well trained in Euclidian geometry and who knows of no other; yet the non-Euclidian system will be as logically complete as the latter and perhaps fully as applicable for the interpretation of physical phenomena. This simply shows that nonconformity of a domain to familiar modes of order by no means proves that that domain does not possess perfectly sound structure.

The third state of consciousness, i.e., that of dreamless sleep, is not so easily shown to be a state of consciousness as is the dreaming state, yet real (though subtle) evidence does exist. This statement is almost an unconscious recognition of being present in that state. If "I" were not present in that state then I could not truthfully say that I experienced sound sleep. It is true that, in general, we do not carry through concrete memory of this state of consciousness, but we do awaken with a very significant feeling and that is that the continuity of self-identity has not been broken in the profound sleep. This is a very important, though subtle, fact.

It is true that we generally take the position when awakened after experiencing dreamless sleep that no one was present in that state. But this sort of testimony automatically contradicts itself. There is a story that illustrates this point: In an Indian court a witness was giving testimony in a trial when on being questioned relative to a certain place he said "Nobody was present in that place." The judge asked him "How do you know nobody was there?" He answered: "I was there and so I know!" Thus he proved the falseness of his first statement.

This story brings out a fact which we Occidentals with our strong polarization toward objectivity all-too-easily neglect, and that is that in any testimony not only the objective phenomena are revealed more or less accurately, but also the perceiving subject. The witness reveals himself in his testimony as well as his experience. When the objective content of experience thins to the vanishing point it does not mean that Consciousness has ceased, but rather that the state is approached where consciousness is without content. When this state is realized, self-identity persists, though there is no concrete experience. It is, therefore, a state of consciousness.

We do not mean to imply that dreamless sleep is a state of consciousness without content, necessarily. In fact, it probably rarely is, since such a state is very difficult to attain and is one of the highest powers of yoga training. It is a deep *Samadhi*. On the other hand, the apparent lack of content in dreamless sleep is due, it is maintained, to the inability of the untrained brain-mind to receive impressions from the experiences on this level, hence there seems to be a blank in the content of consciousness. Through certain processes of yoga training, it is said, such power of recollection of these deeper states can be developed.

The foregoing analysis of sleeping and waking states has been for the purpose of showing that more than one discrete state of consciousness is a fact of experience. Hence common empirical evidence supports the general theoretical considerations supporting the idea of lamination in the manifested form of consciousness. To be sure, familiar experience does not reveal to us seven planes as are given in the occult teachings, but it does reveal enough to show that categorical denial of the possibility of the septenary classification of the planes is "out of court."

For the purpose of a discussion of after-death states specific knowledge of the seven planes of consciousness is not necessary as the cycles of common human experience do not involve so many planes. Self-conscious awareness on the higher planes is possible only for those who have attained Adeptship. The cycles of non-Adept human consciousness is, in general, confined to the lower three planes, with occasional adumbrations of the next higher plane. These

three planes which comprehend the cycles of objective embodiment together with after-death states are directly correlated with the three states of consciousness already discussed, i.e., waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. Hence we are not dealing with a wholly unknown realm even for those who have no access to occult sources of knowledge. Much of the material is available from ordinary sources to serve for the derivation of a general outline of that which will be given in the following chapters, provided the student has developed his power of analysis acutely enough.

The three planes of consciousness and being which are, for our present purposes, of most importance, are: first, the ordinary plane of our waking (*Jagrata*) consciousness; second, the plane of dreaming consciousness (*Svapna*), which is known as *Kama Loka*, or the place of desire; third, the plane of dreamless sleep (*Sushupti*) designated generally as “*Devachan*” or “*Devaloka*,” which literally means the plane or place of *Deva-consciousness*. There stands next above these another plane which is rarely contacted by any save those who have attained true Yoga-power or Adeptship. This plane is known as the *Turiya* state, *Nirvana*, or *Moksha*. This last may be regarded as a general designation to include all of the four planes which lie superior to the first three. Differentiations between these planes would be useless as they would be without significance for those who have not realized the *Turiya* state.

The *Turiya* state or *Nirvanic* consciousness represents Liberation for the great mass of mankind cycling almost endlessly within the limits of the three lower planes, or the “three worlds” as these planes are often designated. “*Turiya*” is a Sanskrit word which literally means “fourth,” hence the *Turiya* state is simply the fourth state. “*Nirvana*” has the root meaning of “Blown out” or “extinction.” But the meaning of this term is not literal extinction in the sense of absolute destruction--a notion which is not philosophically thinkable--but is the extinction of the segregated personal consciousness. In other words, this is a form of consciousness which transcends the limits of form and individuality.

A common mistake made by students, in fact one which it seems almost impossible for a student with a Western education to avoid, is that of viewing these planes as superimposed zones existing in objective space. Diagrammatic representations designed to aid the student in grasping the relationships of planes are necessarily spread out in the two-dimensional plane of a sheet of paper, or in the three-dimensional space of some model, but all of these diagrams falsify the idea owing to the limitations of the media. Such diagrams are not in any sense a picture of the reality, but simply what might be called geometrical conceptual forms for expressing relationships between planes. If properly understood, these diagrams are an aid for the clarifying understanding, but if they are taken as in any way portraying concretely or actually the structure of the planes, the student is thrown entirely off the track of true comprehension.

The concept of the fourth dimension is a help for securing a better understanding of the nature of the planes, provided that this dimension is not interpreted as simply an unperceived aspect of objective extension. It should be regarded as the line uniting subjective with objective space. Thus, the various *Lokas* or planes are equally as near to any given point in objective space as to any other. Objective forms, such as various celestial bodies, may have a corresponding correlation with particular *Lokas*, but they are not the *Lokas* themselves. Frequently blinks in semi-occult literature exist in the form of treating a corresponding entity as though it were the reality itself. Here is one of the places where the student must employ his intuition to derive the real meaning out of statements which, when taken literally, are not true. The various spaces of the *Lokas* must be regarded as interpenetrating, so far as space in the objective sense is concerned. We may regard all *Lokas* above this objective plane as constituting the “withinness”

of space. A form of subjective travel which would afford a survey of the familiar scenes of our terrestrial space, is not really on another plane but simply a sub-plane of this plane. In such a case the vehicle of action would be matter in the physical state, although it might be sufficiently ethereal to be invisible to the ordinary observer.

Consciousness, moving in *Kama Loka* or *Devachan*, is entirely cut away from this plane and is active in the midst of a totally different kind of nature, even though that nature may appear in forms that are replicas of terrestrial scenes. From the standpoint of this philosophy we must regard objective forms or environment as projections with respect to polarized consciousness within the universal matrix of pure Consciousness. On certain planes these forms have a higher degree of immobility than on others and in such cases we may speak of them as frozen consciousness. The objective plane is the one of the highest degree of immobility. But as we move inward to more subjective planes the mobility of projected consciousness becomes progressively greater. This is the prime reason for the great flexibility of experienced forms on the plane of dream consciousness. Actually, those forms are largely produced from the ideas in the mind of the dreamer, though in part the influence of other minds is present also. In the next deeper state the purity of the causal action of the individual's ideation becomes much greater.

It is not very difficult to find evidence which will verify the self-produced nature of the forms experienced in dreaming consciousness. It is possible relatively easily to find individuals who have had the experience of dreaming who, at the same time, knew that they were dreaming. In such cases there is an overlapping of objective and dream state consciousness. Now among these individuals there is a smaller number, consisting generally of students in this field, who have deliberately experimented (while in such conscious state of dreaming) with the molding of the course of the dream with a greater or less degree of success. In such cases, forms and scenes are more or less perfectly transformed at the will of the dreamer. Or again, there is the experience where an individual may have been thinking intently along some line of action at the time he fell asleep and continued in the same line when in the dream state and, when awakened, is enabled to impress his memory with the process he experienced. In such cases it has been reported that the processes of thought on the waking plane became the corresponding actions in the dream state that followed. Thus the idea could be seen as actually molding the experienced state in the dream.

As a summation the following points have been developed in this chapter:

1. That continuous primary Consciousness when manifested appears in discrete laminated structure.
2. That the laminated form is developed through cyclic motion of such a type that while Consciousness polarized objectively is subject to breaks in its continuity, yet Consciousness polarized centrally has persisted in unbroken continuity.
3. That Space is identical with Consciousness, and hence in a profound sense the principles of geometry are psychological laws.
4. That the division of planes is guided by the Septenary principle, in major and minor divisions.

5. That the planes are not to be regarded as superimpositions in objective space, but as being laminated stages between extreme objectivity and pure subjectivity. Hence the various *Lokas* are to be regarded as being equally near all points of objective space.
6. That existence of the three planes which are pertinent to the discussion of after-death states can be at least partially verified by reference to common experience, i.e., in the states of waking, dreaming sleep, and dreamless sleep.
7. That the objective forms which constitute the material of experience are projections from central consciousness within the matrix of universal consciousness. Empirical verification of this is in part afforded by certain experiences in dreams where the progress of the dream is consciously molded by the dreamer.

Chapter VII

The Constitution of Man in Relation to the Planes of Consciousness

It should be apparent that there is a definite correlation between the planes of Consciousness and the component principles in the constitution of man. The principles are really the instruments of action or perception for Consciousness moving upon the corresponding planes. The real man is the central power of awareness, the *Atman*, the principles are the vehicles by which that power of awareness functions upon the respective planes, and the planes of Consciousness constitute the various fields of awareness, thus forming the different objective worlds. It follows that the principles are essentially inseparable from the corresponding planes, though the two may be distinguished in terms of function. As an analogue we may consider any given chemical element, such as iron, in relation to the various states of matter, such as solid, liquid, gaseous, etc. The various states of matter would correspond to the planes of Consciousness, and the element iron to the individual center of consciousness. Now iron at ordinary temperatures is in the solid state and thus is part and parcel with that state of matter as such. Speaking in terms of consciousness, iron as solid is aware in terms of solidity, just as consciousness in man when active in the physical body is conscious in terms of the physical plane of Consciousness. Likewise, when, at a higher temperature, iron is liquid it is then one with the liquid state of matter, and so also with respect to the gaseous state and all others. In the lateral sense iron, when solid, is one with the state or plane of solidity; when liquid it is one with the plane of liquidity, and so on. But in the transverse sense iron remains ever the same regardless of its transition from one state to another for in all cases it remains the element iron. Thus also, man remains ever identical regardless of the planes of consciousness on which he may be moving by reason of his identity with *Atman*, yet by reason of his consciousness functioning through a given principle, he is one with the corresponding plane.

By reason of the transverse and lateral unities it is true that man both persists beyond cataclysmic physiological death and yet at the same time is annihilated in that death. The materialistic atheist is quite correct when he says that at death he will enter the silence of annihilation six feet underground, for he identifies himself with psycho-physiological consciousness. Psycho-physiological consciousness is destroyed when the organized brain and nervous system on which it is dependent ceases to be.

The physiological psychologist is quite correct when he says that this type of consciousness cannot exist apart from a living brain, but he is on indefensible ground when he asserts that this type of consciousness is identical with Consciousness *per se*. Consciousness in the transverse sense through its unity with the *Atman* remains unaffected in its continuity however many instruments of action on the various planes of Consciousness may be destroyed. This principle may be illustrated by a white beam of light projected through a red filter upon a screen. Destroy the filter and it is perfectly correct to say that the light on the screen has been destroyed--provided that by "light" we mean "red-light," but not otherwise. For when the filter is destroyed, though it is true the red light ceases to manifest on the screen, still light as a white beam remains. Hence, light *per se* has not been annihilated in the destruction of the red filter. Not all of the Seven Principles of Man are identical with substance of the corresponding seven planes of Being and Consciousness. Some of the principles merely correspond to certain of the planes and hence are reflections of, rather than identical with, those planes. Only in the case of certain highly evolved men known as *Bodhisattwas*, are all the principles the actual substance of the corresponding planes. The evolution of the average man is far from reaching this point.

Accordingly, while every man has seven principles in his constitution, not all of these are distinct vehicles for consciousness on discrete planes.

In Chapter V, in addition to the Septenary classification, we outlined a four-fold division which is employed by a school of Raja Yoga in Southern India. It was shown that this division was not a contradiction of the sevenfold classification, but simply a grouping based upon vehicles of independent action of consciousness. The fourfold division, it will be remembered, consists of *Atma*, the Causal Body (*Karanopadhi*), the Subtle Body (*Sukshmopadhi*) and the Gross Vehicle (*Sthulopadhi*). *Atma* is the Spiritual Being or the Self, the Subject to all consciousness, and the three *Upadhis* (or Vehicles) are its instruments of action on three corresponding planes. As was explained in Chapter V, it is possible for an Adept to function in the more subtle vehicles in separation from the grosser without destroying his organization, while such is not true in the case of the seven principles. The non-Adept person has not the power of conscious separate action in these different *Upadhis*, but the three states of consciousness discussed in the last chapter (waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep) have a definite correlation with the planes of action of these principles. Furthermore, as the after-death states are still more closely correlated with these planes and these corresponding *Upadhis* they are therefore peculiarly pertinent to the purpose of this work.

As a means of correlating the different planes involved in objective and after-death states with the three *Upadhis* in a form which unites continuity of consciousness from the level of the *Atman* with consciousness passing through discrete states or levels, the diagram of Figure 4 was developed. This diagram may seem rather complex, but if carefully studied it will make the relationships involved in the various states much clearer than would otherwise be the case.

The center "O" of the four concentric circles T, L, M, and N represents the subjective pole within Absolute Consciousness. This is known variously as the SUPREME SELF, the *Logos*, *Ishwara*, etc. The various circumferences indicate the limits of the fields of consciousness on the four planes considered in this discussion. Thus N represents the outermost boundaries of objectivity or the physical plane. In the Cosmical sense this would correspond to the finite space analogous to the Einsteinian concept. When applied to any individual, such as man, it would represent the limits of his field of physical awareness. The range of this field is indicated by the space between circles N and M, which is designated in the diagram as the "Earth Plane." Circumference "M" represents the boundaries of the next plane within. From the standpoint of the zone MN it is a subjective plane, though from the perspective of more interior planes it is still relatively objective. In terms of the states of consciousness, M is the boundary between waking and dreaming sleep. The zone LM represents the range of the various states or sub-planes of the dream consciousness of which there are a great number. This plane is designated on the diagram as "*Kama Loka*," or the Plane of Desire. Frequently this has been called the "Astral" plane, but for reasons already given, we do not find this term satisfactory and will employ the more accurate descriptive designation "*Kama Loka*."

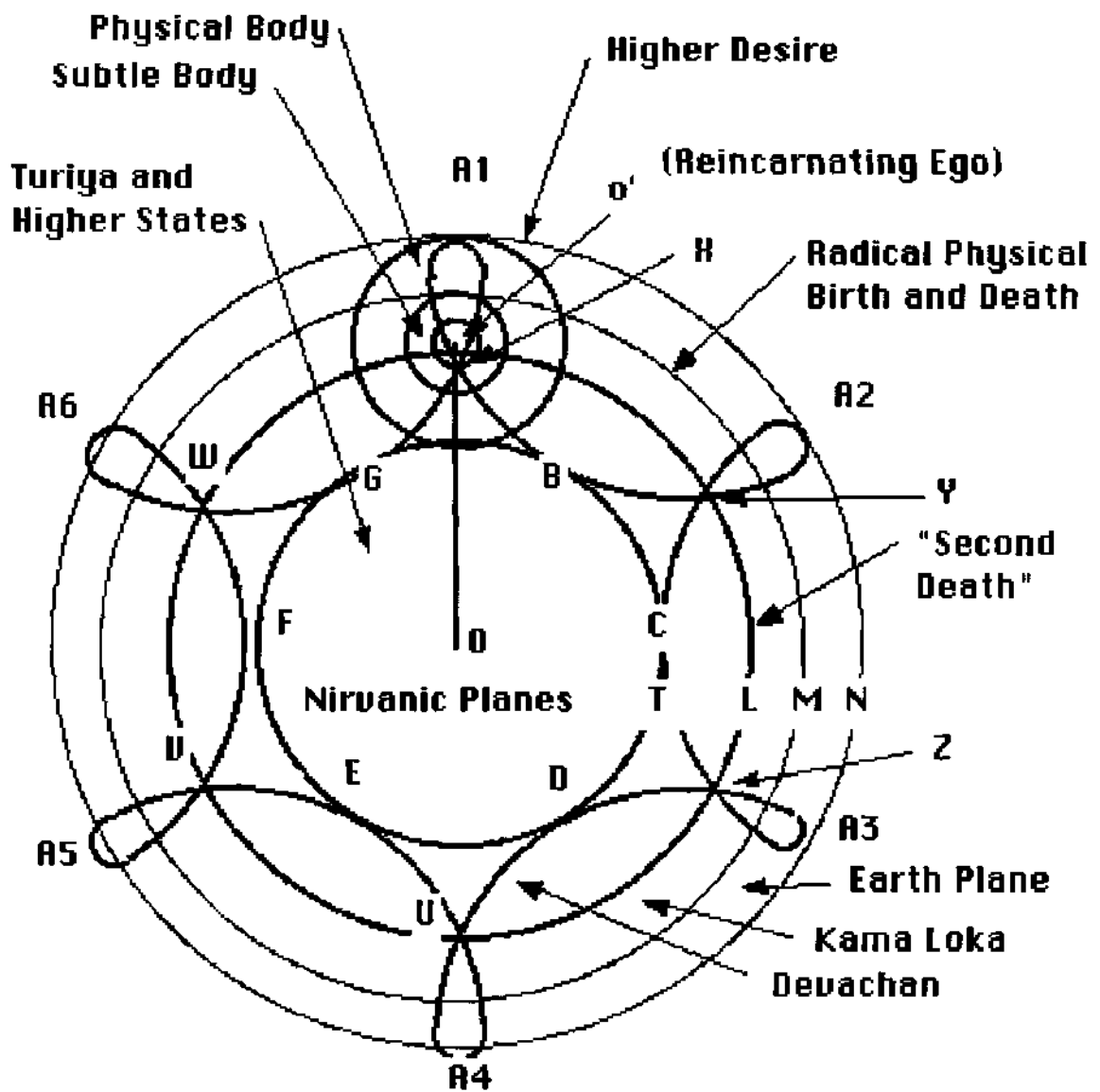


Figure 4. Correlation of the Different Planes involved in Objective and After-Death States with the Three Upadhis

The circumference L is drawn more heavily than either M or N to indicate that the gulf or separation between *Kama Loka* and the next interior plane of *Devachan* is wider and more difficult to cross than that which separates the Earth Plane from *Kama Loka*. The zone TL or *Devachan* corresponds to dreamless sleep and the Heaven world though it is not identical with the latter as generally conceived in most exoteric religions. The fact that memory from dreamless sleep is rarely carried across to the waking state is again indicated by the heaviness of the circumference L. Circumference “T” is the bounding line between *Devachan* and the *Turiya* state or *Nirvana*. As already explained this represents a state of consciousness rarely experienced outside of adeptship. Zones interior to T are not represented as they have no bearing upon the present discussion and are inconceivable to the individual consciousness that has not awakened to the *Turiya* state because of the extreme subjectivity involved.

Each more interior concentric circle in the diagram is necessarily of smaller radius than is the case with more exterior circles. This would seem to suggest that the range of consciousness in the outermost circle is much the largest. This is not the correct meaning. Distance from the center indicates the degree of objectivity in consciousness. Inner degrees or stages are less objective, but are more intense and comprehensive. As a matter of fact the outermost zone is the one of least freedom, while the range of freedom increases as we move toward the center.

The smaller circles with center “oN” correspond to the microcosm which, more specifically, in our present discussion is man. There are in this case, three concentric circles: l, m, and n. The zone mn represents the outermost *Upadhi* or the group of principles that make up the physical body, the *Linga Sarira* and *Prana*. This ring is tangent to the large circle N. The zone lm represents the Subtle Body, or the *Sukshma Sarira*. m is tangent to M and l is tangent to L, so the zone of the Subtle Body just corresponds to the zone in the larger circle designated as *Kama Loka*. The innermost circle l represents the Causal Body or Reincarnating Ego. This is tangent to the circle L. “oN” corresponds to *Atman* viewed as the Higher Self of the individual. The heavy bar oNO represents the identity between the *Atman* in this sense and the SUPREME SELF, or *Paramatman*.

The zones between the circles with center “O” represent the spaces of the different planes of Consciousness. On the other hand, the zones between the circles with center “oN” represent the instruments of awareness and action of the individual or *Jivatma* corresponding to the respective planes or spaces of Consciousness. Thus the zone mn corresponds to the senses of knowledge (*Jnanendriyas*) and the action senses (*Karindriya*), the brain-mind, etc., of the physically embodied man.

The movement through the cycles of the individual soul is represented by the rotation of circle l along the circular line L. As already explained in the preceding chapter this process involves no discontinuity of consciousness from the standpoint of the *Atman* or center “O.” From the perspective of the reincarnating ego or *Karanopadhi* which would be represented by the periphery of circle l, consciousness would move in a path similar to that given in the epicycloid shown in Figure 2. This particular path is not given in Figure 4, as it would lead to unnecessary complicating of the diagram. The path of this epicycloid would have the points X, Y, Z, etc., as points of discontinuity in consciousness, yet in this case they are not to be taken as *breaks* in consciousness but rather in the sense of *changes in direction* in the rhythmical series of incarnations and indrawings. The Higher Egoic consciousness as represented by “l” would be subject to rhythmical pulsation while passing through the stages of embodiment and disembodiment yet remains continually in the same space of Consciousness, i.e., that represented by the zone TL.

It will be noted that the circle n consists of a heavy arc in the zone MN and a light line throughout the zones LM and TL; also circle m has a heavy arc in zone LM but is drawn light in TL. This is done to represent the fact that the gross vehicle (*Sthulopadhi*) is actually manifest only over the portion of the cycle corresponding to the Earth Plane; in other words, the cycle from physical birth (or rather conception), to the final death of the physical body. The rest of the cycle represents a continuation of a potency in a potential or *Laya* state which tends to recur again in a kinetic form at a subsequent period as a new physical vehicle which stands as a causal consequence of its predecessor. Similarly, in the case of circle m, the heavy portion represents the manifested aspect of the Subtle Body (*Sukshmopadhi*), though manifestation in this case is not in the physical sense but upon the relatively subtle plane known as *Kama Loka*. The light portion of this circle likewise corresponds to an indrawn or *Laya* state in the cycle. The circle l is drawn heavily in its entirety since throughout the duration of the cycles which we are here considering the Reincarnating Ego (*Karanopadhi*) remains active and continuous. It is not intended to convey the idea that Higher Egoism constitutes an exception to the cyclic process of indrawing and outpouring, but the cycles governing this process are on a relatively grand scale and are not the concern of the present discussion.

The point “A₁” represents personal consciousness, or more correctly, Consciousness “polarized” in the personality. This is consciousness of the familiar type among the masses of humanity including many intellectual men who are not metaphysically awake. Those who view consciousness as a sort of physiological secretion would dogmatically assert that this is the only consciousness that there is. Now as the circle l rotates along the line L, the point A₁ generates the epicycloid “A₁, B, A₂, C, A₃, etc.” It will be noted that this epicycloid is in certain respects different from that in Figure 2. Instead of the lobes terminating in points of discontinuity, loops XA₁, YA₂, ZA₃, etc., are formed. This is analogous to the cycloid which is formed by a point on the periphery of the flange of a train-car wheel which is rotating along a railroad track. It must be born in mind that the whole group of circles l, m, and n are regarded as fixed with respect to each other so that the rotation of l on L is also a rotation of m and n at the same angular rate. The epicycloid produced by this process has obviously two important distinguishing parts, i.e., the lobes such as XBY, YCZ, etc., and the loops XA₁, YA₂, etc. The loops represent periods of personal embodiment while the lobes are indrawn or discarnate portions of the whole series of cycles.

In the strict sense of the word, personality is not a function of the three outer principles (*Sthulopadhis*), i.e., *Prana*, *Linga Sharira*, and Physical Body, alone, but in a more fundamental sense is a function of the Lower Mind (*Kama Manas*) and the emotional, desire nature (*Kama Rupa*) which compose the Subtle Body (*Sukshmopadhi*). Hence the incarnated cycle of the personal self really begins at X in the loops of the type XA₁ and continues around through A₁ back to X again where the final discarnation, known as the “second death,” takes place. The portion of the loop in the zone MN represents the cycle of physical incarnation or “enrobement” proper, while the portion in the zone LM represents a phase of relative subjective embodiment which, when severed from the physical vehicle, carries all the force of personal desire but lacks the instruments of expression. This subtle aspect of the personality might be called the “under-clothing” of the soul. Now just as a man in his underclothing is almost invariably either in a process of becoming completely dressed, or disrobed for retirement, and only exceptionally persisting for a time actively functioning in his under-clothing, so also the portion of the cycle in zone LM is generally only transitory, either in the process of becoming more completely

embodied in objective states, or of withdrawal to the more subjective state, designated in the diagram as “*Devachan*.”

In this diagram the epicycloid “ $A_1, B, A_2, C, A_3, D, \text{etc.}$,” is not employed to represent a coordination of continuity with discontinuity, as in the case of Figure 2, but rather it portrays a cyclic process which, since it is taken from the standpoint of the circle I (the Higher Ego), is in fact, continuous. The planes of discontinuity between the zones of Consciousness are represented by the circular lines M, L, and T. As an illustration we may regard the zone MN as the field of waking consciousness, and similarly, the zone LM as the field of dreaming sleep, and TL as the field of dreamless sleep. In point of fact, these fields much more than correspond to physical life and after-death states, as there is a considerable degree of identity between the two series of states. Now this discontinuity between waking and dreaming sleep is a very familiar experience. In general, we do not know when we go to sleep and when dreaming we are not aware of having left another plane of consciousness, though when we awaken we are conscious of shifting planes of awareness, but the discontinuity between the two planes leaves us with a sense of unreality so far as the just-experienced dreams are concerned. This clear discontinuity between the two states is represented by the circular line M.

The discontinuity L is not so marked in the series of sleeping-waking states but is fundamental in after-death transitions in consciousness. “T” represents the discontinuity of birth and death in the more profound or metaphysical sense. This transition is attained only by those who have attained Spiritual Realization, and the number of these is extremely limited. In general, this requires a profound state of *Samadhi* (trance) which is accessible only through the higher yoga disciplines. There is a very high degree of Adeptship where Consciousness while in *Nirvana* is yet correlated with an active physical vehicle. It is said that Gautama Buddha is the one individual known to history who attained this power. It should be, therefore, quite clear that the discontinuity T does not at present practically concern mankind so far as commonly experienced states are concerned, although Liberation is the supreme objective of Life for those that are wise.

Among other meanings the epicycloid conveys the significance of causal connection. All of the loops $XA_1, YA_2, \text{etc.}$, are precisely the same in shape and magnitude. This is not intended to mean that every embodied state of life is an exact duplicate of its predecessor, but simply the causal resultant of the latter. Whatever the objective incarnation XA_n may have been, the course of the life YA_{n+1} in its given circumstances is determined by XA_n together with its antecedents. Further, the course in Consciousness represented by the lobe XBY is determined by the causes set up in the objective cycle XA_1 and so on in the case of other loops and subsequent cycles. In the diagram each of the lobes XBY and YCZ, etc., are represented as tangent to the circle T. This is not meant to convey the idea that the effect of any individual objective life XA_n necessarily carries the consciousness to the threshold of *Nirvana*, but rather that this is the highest limit to which the subjective efflorescence of the personal consciousness may reach. The causes which force the door of *Nirvanic* realization are superpersonal and are thus outside the norm of common human life. Actually the inner effects of life-cycles XA_n rarely rise to the subjective altitudes indicated by the point B as an example. This is simply the level of the highest humanistic idealism. Lower types of humanity such as but little evolved savages would rise but little above the more peripheral levels of zone TL. The mass of humanity would rise to various intermediate levels.

An important point implied in the last paragraph is the presence of sub-zones within the general zone TL. This principle is true of both LM and MN. The system divides each of these

zones into seven principle sub-zones, and the latter into an indefinite number of sub-sub-zones. In the last analysis the plane of consciousness of every individual is a unique sub-sub-plane, though occasionally as in the case of identical twins, these sub-sub-planes come very near to being identical.

This is the reason why in all human discourse mutual understanding is never more than approximate. No two human beings speak exactly the same language even though using the same words and sentence construction. The meaning intended is not precisely the same. All this grows out of the fact that no two individuals are on exactly the same plane of consciousness, and fundamental to this whole notion of planes or zones of consciousness is that the boundaries involve discontinuities. But since the discrete universe is finite, the number of the possible sub-sub-planes or zones is not infinite. In other words, while the possibilities in the evolution in individual forms are enormously great, yet they are still less than infinite. The diagram of Figure 4 is capable of a variety of different applications. We have employed it so far in connection with the interpretation of the series of objective-subjective states in the life-course of an individual human being. This will also be our principle interest in the subsequent discussion, but the student should bear in mind that the process (in general outlines) is duplicated on both grander and more minute scales. Thus the epicycloid might represent the cyclical process of races, of nations, of worlds, etc. This is simply an application of the Hermetic axiom "As above, so below." Accordingly, we may regard the portion of the loop XA_n which lies in zone MN as a physical world, such as this Earth, as well as the physical incarnation of an individual human being. This is the reason why MN is called the "Earth Plane." Generalizing the term, we may call each zone a "world" or "sphere." Hence the zones we have designated "Earth Plane," "*Kama Loka*" and "*Devachan*" may be called three "worlds," each occupying its special place in the subjective-objective scale. This practice actually exists in Vedantic and Occult literature. Thus when Shankara speaks of destroying the three worlds he means a step in consciousness which leads to a breaking out of the endless cyclic series represented by the epicycloid.

In addition to occupying different positions on the subjective-objective scale these three worlds have certain vitally important distinguishing characteristics. The Earth Plane is fundamentally a world of *causes* while *Devachan* is principally a world of *effects*. *Kama Loka* is essentially transitional, a sort of room in which one dresses and undresses, but does not occupy as a place of sojourn. To a degree it corresponds to the concept of purgatory, though it is the place of reassembling at the beginning of a new incarnation as well as that of purging at the close. It follows that the primary concern of man is with the worlds of the Earth Plane and *Devachan*, as only these two worlds are genuine abodes, at any rate, so far as man is concerned.

If we let $A_1, A_2, A_3, \text{etc.}$, represent a series of incarnations on the Earth Plane or a series of objective worlds of causes, and $B, C, D, \text{etc.}$, represent the series of corresponding subjective worlds of effects, then combining the two series we would have a group of worlds which we would designate as " $A_1+B+A_2+C+A_3+D, \text{etc.}$ " In this series the plus sign would correspond to the transitional plane or world of *Kama Loka*. As a physical symbol we might represent this compound series of worlds as a string of beads, with alternate beads being of different colors, such as black followed by white for example. Thus the worlds $A_1, A_2, A_3, \text{etc.}$, would be black and the series $B, C, D, \text{etc.}$, would be represented as white. Between these beads we would have connecting hooks which would serve to represent the transitional zone of *Kama Loka*. This symbol will help to elucidate certain very important principles in the relationships between the two series of worlds.

Now while we speak of the series A_1, A_2, A_3 , etc. as being worlds of causes and B, C, D , etc., as worlds of effects, this distinction is not absolute but relative. The circumstances of A_2 , by which is meant the environment, the kind of body, disposition, tendencies, etc., are determined by causes set up by A_1 and other more antecedent embodiments, although the carrying of these effects from A_1 to A_2 is indirect. It is thus evident that there is a sense in which the worlds A_1, A_2 , etc., may be regarded as effects, but they are primarily worlds of causes, for only on this sphere is the individual fully principled and therefore able to initiate action. On the other hand, while B, C, D , etc., are primarily worlds of effects, yet the fruits of the flower of consciousness which is realized in these worlds are the subsequent projected worlds, A_2, A_3, A_4 , etc. Thus in this sense, B, C, D , etc. stand in a causal relationship to A_2, A_3, A_4 , etc., respectively. But B, C, D , etc. are primarily worlds of effects for the reason that the states of consciousness therein realized cannot be reorganized and redirected by an effort initiated on that plane.

Between the causal world such as A_n and the corresponding world of effects, B, C, D , etc., in addition to the primary coordination involved in the causal relationship, there is also a profoundly important antagonism. Part of this is due to the presence of certain elements in the consciousness complex of A_n which are purged away in the transitory zone of *Kama Loka* in the process which brings B, C, D , etc., to birth. These elements are wholly discordant with those of the types of consciousness possible to the *Devachanic* zone. This involves an antipathy between A_n and B, C, D , etc., save in the case of a few highly purified individuals. There is another reason for this antagonism which we might call a phase of transcendental physics. This principle may be illustrated by a phenomenon in the domain of ordinary physics. If an electrified glass rod is held sufficiently close to a number of small pieces of paper lying on a table, say, the pieces of paper will be drawn to the rod and will adhere to it for a short period of time, when they are suddenly thrown back from the rod. This happens when the pieces of paper are sufficiently charged with the static electricity held in the rod. We may say, then, that when this charging has reached a certain point, the piece of paper has become "antagonistic" to the rod. Later when the paper has lost its charge to the table, it is drawn back to the rod, and the process is repeated until finally the original charge in the rod is completely exhausted. Now the worlds represented by the white beads or "B," "C," "D," etc., are analogous to the pieces of paper. The cycles represented by the lobes XY, YZ , etc., correspond to the period that the pieces of paper are driven away from the rod and are drawn back again. We must therefore regard the zone TL (*Devachan*) as "antagonistic" to zone MN (the Earth Plane). This is a fact of the very highest importance in connection with the problem of communication between those living on this plane, and those existing in after-death states.

The zone TL , which is called *Devachan* in the diagram, really should consist of two aspects each of which is subdivided into sub-planes. To adequately portray these phases would require a three-dimensional model. The reader is asked to imagine a sphere of which Figure 4 is a cross-section along a great circle which we might call an equator. One half of this sphere would rise above the sheet of paper and the other half would lie below. The upper pole would be positive and the lower negative. The shell of which circle N is a cross-section would be drawn as a sphere, but the shells corresponding to M, L , and T would not be spheres but ellipsoids having the axes uniting the positive and negative poles in common, and all the ellipsoids and the sphere would be tangent at the poles. Each of the zones, then, would be a sort of three-dimensional sector that tapers to vanishing points at the poles.

The diagram in Figure 5 is a section of the supposed sphere passing through the poles and therefore at right-angles to the section given in Figure 4. The line QR is the axis uniting the

positive and negative poles, the former of which is at the upper edge of the circle and the latter diametrically opposite. The line ANANN is the plane on which the diagram of Figure 4 is taken. Circle NN corresponds to circle N in Figure 4 as the outer boundary of the Earth Plane. Similarly ellipses MN, LN, TN correspond to circles L, M, and T as the outer boundaries of *Kama Loka*, *Devachan* and *Turiya* zones. These zones are now to be regarded as three-dimensional sectors bounded by ellipsoids and in the case of Earth Plane on the outer boundary by a sphere, instead of being rings as in the case of Figure 4.

The positive pole is designated as “Self-consciousness Consciousness” and the negative pole as “Consciousness not Self-conscious.” The axial line QR is to be regarded as identical with point O in Figure 4, or in other words, represents *Paramatman*, the Supreme Self. All of the sectors in their highest positive and lowest negative reaches terminate in contact with axis QR. This represents the fact that all planes whatsoever hinge upon or rest upon *Paramatman* as a primary Root. There is no zone or plane of Consciousness as well as no particularized Being but what centers in that which is the center of the whole Universe whether manifested or unmanifested. There is nothing in the Universe not united to *Paramatman*, though that union may be a self-conscious or known fact or, on the other hand, unconscious in the sense of not being either perceptively or apperceptively realized. Hence the positive pole may be called Light or Knowledge (*Jnana*) and the negative Darkness or Cosmic Ignorance (*Avidya*). In moral terms the positive pole is “Good” and the negative “Evil,” though the Absolute center O is neither Good nor Evil. There is an occult saying that all roads lead to Union (Yoga), whether the path followed is that of Ignorance and Evil, or that of Wisdom and Good. But there is a world of difference in the kind of Union attained by these different roads. The goal of the higher road is Self-conscious Divinity, while the road of Ignorance and Evil leads to utter destruction of self-consciousness.

Particular attention is called to the sector corresponding to *Devachan* in Figure 4. In Figure 5 this corresponding sector is designated “*Avitchi-Devachan*”; “*Devachan*” applying to the region above the plane of line ANANN, and “*Avitchi Devaloka*” to the region toward the negative pole. In the terminology familiar to the Christian world, *Devachan* roughly corresponds to the Heaven-world and *Avitchi* to Hell, but the common Christian concept is so highly anthropomorphized and materialized that this correspondence is far from being adequate. *Avitchi* is a state of consciousness which may be found in all zones from the Earth Plane to *Nirvana* itself where in *Nirvana Avitchi* there is what might be known as the Hell of complete extinction. *Avitchi* is not confined to *Kama Loka* as some students have been led to believe. For *Kama Loka* is the plane of purging in which all conditions are transitory although it includes a refuse heap (Eighth sphere) in which unusable structural material is disintegrated into its primary elements for reassembling in later construction. There are degrees of *Avitchi* where individualized consciousness persists for great ages before the consummation of final extinction. In the case of *Avitchi* corresponding to *Devachan* there is a state of consciousness corresponding to the more or less complete moral failure of the Higher or Reincarnating Ego. The distinction between *Kama Loka-Avitchi* and *Devachan-Avitchi* may be said to correspond to the difference between “venial” and “cardinal” sin, though the occult definition of these two forms of evil would not accord with that of orthodox theology.

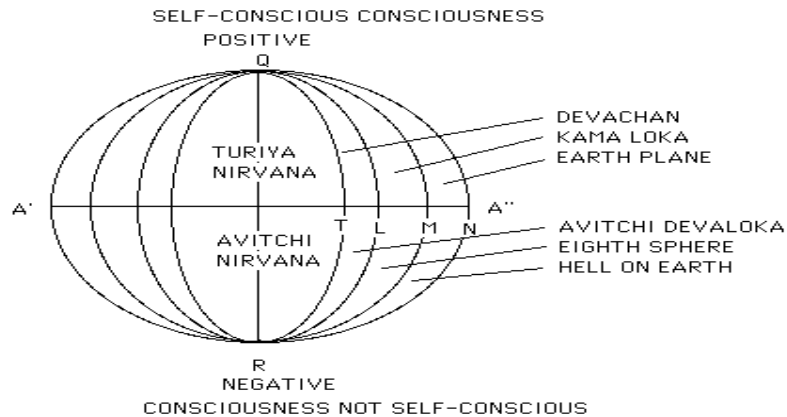


Figure 5: Cross-Sectional View of the Spherical Lokas

That there are states of consciousness in the general Earth Plane zone of Consciousness that are a form of *Avitchi* or Hell is a fact that is highly obvious. What is war but a Hellish state of consciousness? Then too there is the consciousness of the gangster, of the torture chamber, and of degraded misery in general. All of this is a sort of *Avitchi*. On the other hand, there are relatively blissful states experienced on this plane though they are rarer in this cycle than the states of misery. These, in their more exalted form partake of a *Devachanic* nature. The experience of the average man is a mixture of these two types of consciousness, with pain and misery outweighing quantitatively the more blissful states.

In the diagram of Figure 4, the epicycloid is drawn with six loops and six lobes symmetrically spaced. This is not a specific representation of actual cycles of incarnation and indrawing, but is an idealized diagram. For reasons already given the number “seven” plays an important part in this system hence the diagram is given in a form revealing the Septenary Principle. There are, it will be noted, six minor cycles, such as A_1, A_2, A_3 , etc., and the grand cycle of rotation from A_1 - A_6 to A_1 again. This gives a total of seven cycles. Further, since in actual incarnations, the intervening period may be from almost no time up to millions of years it is clear that in general the spacing from A_1 to A_2 and from A_2 to A_3 would not be uniform. The spacing as given is to be taken as ideal. Another important point is that cycles of incarnation and embodiments are not to be taken as synonymous, necessarily. Primarily, a cycle of incarnation is a period devoted to the development of a specific quality on the part of the Reincarnating Ego,

just as a grade in school marks a certain degree of knowledge rather than a period of time devoted to study. The average student requires an academic term to cover a grade, but especially bright students may cover more than one grade in that time, while dullards may require two or more terms to cover the same work. A cycle of Incarnation corresponds to a “grade,” and an Embodiment to a “term.” A very large number of human embodiments fail of being a completion of the Incarnation. In fact, it is said that the number of such failures is so great in this humanity as to afford a serious strain between the movement of Cosmic cycles and the stage of consciousness attained by mankind on the average.

When an embodiment fails of its possibilities in this sense there may be a number of embodiments required to perfect the quality of the unfolding for which a given cycle of Incarnation is designed. Thus in a cycle such as A_1 , A_2 there may be one or more intermediate embodiments, and correspondingly shortened *Devachanic* interludes. On the other hand, it is possible for an embodiment to have been so successfully lived that the value of two or more cycles of incarnation has been achieved. In this case the corresponding *Devachanic* period would be proportionately extended.

There is another modification in the diagram that will briefly discussed. Figure 4 has been taken as an equatorial cross-section of the diagrammatic sphere. This is again an ideal representation, as the actual cycles of the epicycloid may be either in latitudes toward the positive pole or in latitudes on the negative side of the equator. There are grand type cycles called “*Yugas*” or Ages ranging from *Satya Yuga* (Golden Age) to *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age). In the Golden Age the epicycloid would be placed toward the positive pole, while in the Iron Age it would have moved toward the negative pole, intermediate ages occupying intermediate positions on the sphere. Since at present humanity, for the most part, is passing the *Kali Yuga* it is closer in consciousness to the *Avitchi* half of the sphere than to the upper or Divine half. This has a very important bearing upon the dangers of mediumship and certain practices which shall be discussed later.

Chapter VIII

Kama Loka

Most of the concrete material which is given in what follows, as well as much in the preceding chapters, is based upon information given to the Western world in the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. These letters are from two men who are adept in the Eastern Wisdom. Much of the material They have given cannot be verified by ordinary means of perception as it consists of knowledge concerning planes of Consciousness beyond the range of our familiar perceptive apparatus. With respect to the general system of thought itself much can be verified by acuteness of analysis of the material of our common consciousness, and this we have endeavored to do in the preceding chapters. But specific matters of fact relative to planes of Consciousness other than those which fall in the range of our common objective power of awareness cannot be verified directly in terms of the latter. Such verification must naturally require the development of the appropriate instruments of consciousness for functional awareness on the given planes. Does this fact, then, place us in a position where we must blindly accept or reject all that may be said in concrete terms regarding planes that are not commonly experienced and remembered by those now dwelling on this plane of Life? While at first glance it seems that we are forced to choose between the horns of this dilemma, a deeper study shows that we possess both an empirical and theoretical basis for building a presumption for or against the teaching.

On the empirical side we have a growing mass of testimony growing out of the psychological phenomena of psychological mediumship. Though critical research in this field has, unquestionably, discredited the reliability of most of this testimony yet there does remain a body of empiric material that challenges the serious attention of competent students. There is also a considerable literature from the past giving the testimony of Seers which bears definitely upon modes of life other than that commonly experienced on this plane. Finally, in more systematic form, there is a very extensive literature out of the Orient and more especially India, which in addition to recording the testimony of seership actually has developed an extensive systematic structure in the organization of the more subjective planes. It is by no means scientific to rule this material out as being unworthy of serious attention simply because it is unfamiliar to the domain of the developed perceptive technique out of which Occidental empiric science has grown.

The primary test of the validity of a philosophical or scientific system is internal consistency. Any system that is self-contradictory is *ipso facto* false. A mere collection of philosophical or scientific propositions does not offer a systematic whole and may, therefore, in part prove to be valid while at the same time other propositions are unsound. This is not true of a system. A single contradiction proves the invalidity of the whole system, provided the contradiction is inherent in the system and not a mere defect due to imperfect skill in formulation. The best commendation of any scientific or philosophical offering is that it is so coherently systematic that it stands or falls as a whole. The present body of thought is offered as such a system although it may have many defects due to the lack of skill in formulation on the part of the writer. The principle claim that it makes upon the serious attention of the reading public is that it is offered as a more comprehensive and coherent whole than any alternative existent system.

The second theoretic test of a system is its agreement with empiric determination so far as such determination has been extended in the experience of the race. A single fact which has

been unequivocally determined and which stands incompatible with the system under examination at once proves the system unsound. It was by this method that the Newtonian mechanics was proven to be inadequate and the Einsteinian system has at least tentatively replaced it. And as Einstein has himself said, his own system will fall if in the future any fact arises that is incompatible with it. Our present system is offered as an interpretation both of the categories of facts which fall within the range of our common developed perceptive technique and also of those forms of experience reported by the genuine seer and medium.

It is possible that other systems may meet the requirement of internal consistency and yet fit the data of common perception. In instances of this kind other criteria afford the basis of choice that have been developed in the pragmatic theory of truth. If a systematic concept successfully meets the tests of internal consistency and of perception while full demonstration of its validity has not been realized, there are other considerations that may build a presumption for it which, while having little or no theoretical value are of enormous practical importance. Thus if a concept which has passed the theoretic test has the effect of liberating the consciousness of the individual, giving him more of a sense of being at home in the universe and above all strengthens the place of moral values it is his right both philosophically and practically to assert the "will to believe." This is all the more true since in such a case the assertion of the will to doubt has no greater validity, while through the "will to believe," positive values are produced. Furthermore, action proceeding in accordance with the chosen "will to believe" is the very best means of attaining either positive proof or disproof of the assumed position. For in this way new perspectives of awareness are unfolded.

Some students may think that this process is not sufficiently critical, but the answer to that is that even the most scientific and philosophical among us must perforce follow that course in some of the affairs of life every day. There is no valid reason why the same principle should not be extended into a field of such preeminently vital interest as that of the after-death states. There is no virtue in uncritical skepticism, even though it may carry more of the aura of blasé sophistication. There is no virtue in negationism as such. To continue to believe in a proposition in the face of its clearly discredited status is theoretically, of course, a weakness. But when on theoretic ground a proposition may equally well be true as not true, then pragmatic considerations of "sentiment" and "general utility" are valid in determining a practical attitude toward such a proposition. It is a familiar fact that every explorer must treat ideas that are possibly true as though they *were* true or he will never reach the position of certain determination. In all situations where in the light of critical discrimination one must say "I do not know," if the proposition involved is of vital concern the strongest course is action directed by the "will to believe" until a position of definite knowledge is reached. The alternative of chronic negationism leads to decay and is therefore pragmatically unsound.

The writer submits that the present system has been sufficiently well established to justify invoking the will to believe on the part of the reader who stands in a position of uncertainty, until such time as his knowledge may become clearly defined.

Kama Loka is the "Place or Zone of Desire," a phase in the complex organization of the manifest aspect of Universal Consciousness. It is the zone which immediately surrounds and interpenetrates the most objective phase of consciousness known as physical matter. Since this zone is only relatively subjective it is also composed of a form of matter, but this is, however, so subtle as not to be apparent to the objective senses. As a designation for this form of matter the term "Astral" has been employed, but this is not a wholly satisfactory word. Astral means "starry" and such a meaning is in no way fundamentally descriptive of the *Kama Loka* zone.

There is, however, this much in common, i.e., that the matter composing stars is in a more primary state than that of non-radiant planetary bodies and accordingly more nearly partakes of the nature of Cosmic matter, that is, matter not possessing the defined organization that is found in the physical state.

Since in this discussion we are generally avoiding the terms which have grown out of the habit of regarding matter as something real and apart from consciousness, we will call this zone *Kama Loka* and not the Astral Plane. This term emphasizes the fact that the zone is the place of Desire which is manifestly a conscious quality.

The projection of Life or Consciousness into objective form requires the action of the principle of Desire. Reflection will show that this is a fact familiar to our experience. Thus, no animal body is born, or in other words no consciousness is enrobed in objectivity, until desire has first opened the doors to birth. Without sex-desire there would be no physical life produced, and without desire for food there would be no physical life sustained. These two forms of desire constitute the acme of the Desire-principle, and they are in reality two phases of the Great Desire which is desire for Life or *Tanha*. Desire or *Tanha* is accordingly the matrix of objective Being. Desire is the womb of man, of the world, and of the universe. Destroy this desire and the whole objective plane of Being would go out of existence. This is why the key to the Liberation from bondage to objectivity lies in the mastery of *Tanha* or desire for Life, in the embodied sense.

Kama Loka surrounds all objective matter and hence is present in all portions of Space where objective matter abides. But as the density of matter in the objective sense covers a wide range, so the intensity of the enveloping *Kamic* principle is correspondingly variable. The *Kamic* principle is much less intense and much more abstract and general, or “spiritualized” in the outer reaches of the earth’s atmosphere than it is in the dense lithosphere. In the same way, the phase of this *Kamic* sphere which most concerns man is most intense where human aggregates are densest both in point of numbers and grossness of desires. From this it follows that *Kamic* intensity is greater in the lowlands and cities than in high altitudes and in the country. This fact leads to a consequence of the highest practical importance to the student of the Hidden Wisdom. Since strong desire distorts the plane of the mind so that it is difficult to perceive and think clearly and discriminatingly, the most favorable environmental condition for the deeper study is in high altitudes and in relative solitude.

The very essence of Desire is restless activity. It can never be satisfied save temporarily. There is no such thing as exhaustion of desire by indulgence. Desire satiated in one direction is born again in another and thus leads its victim ever deeper and deeper into the trammels of bondage. Desire is *Kali*, the Goddess which binds the Soul within the restrictions of form. And it is *Kali* who is the eternal enemy of the ascetic who is striving for the Liberation of true Spiritual Consciousness.

Kali brings forth her children but only to dance upon them and to rend and slay them. She is the arch enemy of Peace. To be sure, she is bound to her consort *Siva* (or Consciousness) by unbreakable bonds, yet her will is unalterably opposed to the force of *Siva*. *Kali* must be mastered if man would cease to be a slave, and since this is the peculiar age of *Kali* her power is especially hard to subdue. From the embrace of *Kali* has been spawned the wars of man, and the soul-destroying delights of elusive seduction. The servants of *Kali* are the living dead, those who are bound to the chain of endless transmigration. But he who has risen in power and unveiled *Kali* by his resistance of her seductions finds hidden behind the outer horror of her another face. For him who has become her lord and master she becomes the Initiator.

In its involutory aspect *Kama Loka* is the mother of manifested form, and thus brings men to birth in embodied Consciousness. In the cycles of the Reincarnating Ego, *Kama Loka* therefore plays a fundamental role. Within her womb are assembled all the qualities generated out of the individual's past lives and from these a new living vehicle is produced which is the true heritage of the person, man or woman. These qualities have been called "*Skandhas*," a Sanskrit word literally meaning "effusion" or "dropping." This term is descriptive of what happens to certain qualities attaching to the individual that is passing into the disembodied state. Certain qualities of an essentially earthy nature are "shed" or "dropped off," and while they are composed of living or conscious substance as is everything else in the universe, yet upon being separated from their animating source enter a state of living latency. In this state they are very much like spores of certain kinds of plants which can persist quiescent for indefinitely extended periods of time until the proper conditions are produced reawakening them to active growth. In the case of the *Skandhas*, this condition is normally produced upon the arrival of the reincarnating soul, which was their generator, on its return to *Kama Loka* in the course of its progress to a new cycle of outer life.

In the evolutionary cycle, i.e., the process of movement inward toward the subjective root, the function of *Kama Loka* is just the reverse of that which it serves in the involutory movement. Just as we view the process of coming to consciousness on the physical or objective plane as birth and the leaving that plane as death, so also from the level of *Devachan* the entering of that plane is viewed as birth and the leaving it as death. In fact, being born in *Devachan* is preceded by a gestation period which is the analogue of the gestation that is antecedent to physical birth. Now from the standpoint of the *Devachanic* birth the whole period of the soul's envelopment in *Kama Loka* from the commencement of the involutory cycle to final delivery on the plane of *Devachan* is analogous to the prenatal period in physical birth. The physical man living on the objective plane is like the embryo and is sustained in a placenta of *Kama Lokic* substance. Thus in one sense we may regard the whole cycle of objective life as a grand gestation period which culminates in the *Devachanic* birth. The evolutionary period in *Kama Loka* would thus correspond to the transitional function of parturition. After the birth of a child on the physical plane there is a secondary event involving the throwing off of the placenta which has served as the organ of nourishment of the fetus during the prenatal period. In the *Devachanic* birth the analogue of this event takes place in *Kama Loka*. An astral shell is thrown off, out from which the real man has been born on *Devachan*. In the case of the placenta the organic compounds of which it is formed quickly break up and return to nature as organic raw material for other uses. In the same way the astral shell or after-birth of *Devachanic* parturition in a relatively short though variable period becomes disintegrated and the subtle material of which it is composed is returned to the nature of the *Kama Lokic* plane for further use. But as this material has been stamped with the impress of the Reincarnating Ego and thus has a natural affinity for this inner man it is drawn to the latter in subsequent objective incarnations. In general, this subtle material is stored, as it were, in the *Kama Lokic* storehouse in a quiescent form known as the *Skandhas* or the various emotional and other qualities related to the personal or earthy consciousness. In certain exceptional cases, analogous to still-births, the *Skandhic* material gradually returns to Nature's general storehouse.

We have already pointed out that Consciousness on the manifested planes has a discrete or granular structure rather than being in a continuous plenum. This is reflected in the atomic form of our more familiar physical matter. Recently the physicists have found that the fundamental energy, known as electricity, is also granular rather than fluidic. Thus electrical

energy is found to consist of ultimate minute unit charges known as electrons. Using the terminology of Consciousness, regarded as the substance-essence of the Universe, energy is but an active mode in Consciousness, and the component unitary elements, such as the electrons, are elemental conscious beings. All through nature on all the planes of discrete consciousness these elemental forms exist, either in relatively free states, or as entering into the composition of compound beings of greater or less degrees of complexity. Accordingly, every plane of Being has its denizens which collectively form the Substance and Energy aspects of the corresponding mode of Consciousness. In their simplest forms these beings constitute the rudimentary elements of Consciousness. But in their almost infinite elaborations in compounds they enter into the formation of the more or less completely individualized modes of Consciousness which include in their higher reaches the greatest intellects among men and the forms of Consciousness transcending man in the scale of evolution.

The principle underlying the Buddhist philosophy of *Nirvana* as being the only Reality is that the elementary alone is eternal. All compounds are appearances subject to the law of Becoming and Becoming-not. But throughout the transformation of compounds the root element remains unchanged. Hence this element alone is Real since it is the only thing which is self-existent or permanent. In this respect Buddhism accords with the more critical Realistic philosophies. But since Realism posits Reality in the unconscious or rather non-conscious, and hence is fundamentally materialistic, it stands in the most essential point diametrically opposed to Buddhistic philosophy. For Buddhism the primary element is Consciousness taken in the homogeneous rather than the organized sense.

Applying this principle to *Kama Loka* it follows that in this zone, however transitional or instrumental it may be with respect to adjacent spheres of Consciousness, there are denizens native to it. With respect to the involutory portion of the compound cycle these beings serve as builders, but with respect to the opposite movement from objective or earth-consciousness to *Devachan* they serve as scavengers. As is recognized in human society, the function of the scavenger is really that of purification and of salvaging, and accordingly birds and animals that serve this purpose are generally protected. At the same time men generally find scavengers too disgusting to make pets of them or otherwise come into close association with them. This is, of course, elementary wisdom, but unfortunately the same rule is all too often not applied by men in the cases of certain abnormal contacts with the denizens of *Kama Loka* as are afforded in the case of certain of the commoner mediumistic transactions. There are forms of psychic awareness which penetrate into sub-zones of *Kama Loka* involving vile odors and the sight of disgusting creatures. The individual who has had this experience has simply penetrated into one of nature's zones of disintegration, a sort of psychic sewer-disposal plant. These zones serve very useful functions but they are the places of the vilest psychic contagions and should never be entered. The wise man will guard himself from this sort of psychic contact with far more care than he would apply to mere physical disease.

In addition to the beings native to *Kama Loka*, there are other forms of more or less conscious entities which are in the nature of the as-yet undecomposed material. These are the placenta-like remains of the individuals born to the *Devachanic* state. In the case of man such entities are formed on the human mold and reflect, both in appearance and in intellectual and emotional forms, their prototype, i.e., the man who has passed through the portal of death. Left to themselves these entities more or less rapidly fade out or disintegrate as organized forms producing the spore-like *Skandhas* which serve as the carriers of the various elemental qualities which the original man had developed while in incarnation. As already stated, these *Skandhas*

remain quiescent until the given Reincarnating Ego returns on another involutory cycle to take up again the problems of objective life. They then spring to life and form the material of his personal nature.

The processes which follow the final physical death of the human body subsequent to the completion of a cycle of incarnation are by no means always the same. The relative strength and weakness of the qualities belonging to the *Kamic* nature has a very important bearing upon these after-death processes. There is thus no one description of the various stages which covers all cases. We shall, therefore, outline the course of a typical case and then proceed to the consideration of exceptions to the general rule that are of the most importance. It should be born in mind that these special cases are by no means exceptions to the action of law, but simply stand out in contrast to the usual manifestations of law as do extraordinary phenomena in nature, such as volcanoes, when contrasted to the far more important gradual geological developments.

As a typical case we will assume an ordinary man who is neither very bad nor very good nor markedly developed or underdeveloped in his intellectual qualities. Such a man will have his higher aspirations following which he strives somewhat, but not overly well, towards that which is noble and selfless. He will have his share of weaknesses and vices, such as selfishness in possessions and a moderate indulgence of his sensuous nature. Such men make up the mass who follow leaders both for good and for ill, but do not themselves have the strength to either go alone or lead others save, perhaps in a subordinate sense. They make up the rank and file of parties and the mass membership of conformist churches, or if thrown under adverse influences, become the followers of racketeer leaders, etc. Such men have not yet the power either to soar high as do the saints and sages, nor to descend low with the fiends among men. Nature neither condemns nor approves these men. She tolerates and in a certain sense protects them during a certain great cycle of probation. Ultimately they must become strong enough to become pure either in Good or Evil or they will be cast out as experimental failures, for nature has no enduring place for the "lukewarm." But the period of this great cycle of probation is long, though far from endless.

For this average man death means, first of all, a going to sleep without any awareness of the transition. There is an awakening to individual consciousness that comes later, but it takes time to establish the new center of percipience where the individual has not prepared himself during physical life. For the untrained individual the transition of physical death involves a violent discontinuity and such discontinuities involve gulfs of unconsciousness in the sense that self-conscious consciousness is not active. In the case of the average death there is as little knowledge of having passed that portal as there is knowledge that one is no longer awake when he is sleeping. In fact, the problem of dying consciously is very similar to that of entering sleep consciously. The skill required to endure the shift in the center of percipience without break in consciousness in either case is something of a fine art. It can be acquired by the appropriate effort but it is not something which happens by itself without effort any more than a child acquires the ability to walk without conscious striving.

The reason why death should involve at first loss of consciousness in the case of the average individual should be evident from a study of the usual relations between waking and sleeping. For there is, in fact, a fundamental similarity between dying and going to sleep, so far as the event in the consciousness of the individual directly involved is concerned. When we fall asleep there is so radical a break with our usual modes of awareness that we pass through a gulf of unconsciousness then find ourselves in a domain--the dream-world--in which the base of reference or center of percipience is so radically at variance with that of the waking state that it

seems a world entirely apart from the waking plane and having no relationship to the latter. Upon awakening we know, in general, that we have been having experiences in the dream-state; but on entering the dream-state from waking consciousness rarely do we remember that our consciousness has left the objective plane. In other words, we do not generally know that we are asleep while we are actually sleeping. Now it is a familiar fact that in large part, at least, dreams as remembered in waking consciousness seem quite irrational. It is a type of consciousness which when coordinated with our usual waking states that simply does not make sense, although while experiencing the dream the so-called chaotic sequence of events seems to be perfectly natural. This discordance between the two states is due to the gulf between the respective centers of percipience upon which they are based. To cross this gulf consciously requires a centering of consciousness upon a level which can comprehend within its focus both the waking and sleeping states. Such a level does exist and is commanded by the trained adept and, indeed, is experienced occasionally by individuals who though less than adepts, still as a result of their efforts are beginning to awaken to levels of awareness that are closed to the average man. For the ordinary individual, however, this more synthetic level of consciousness is a *terra incognita* and the result is that the states of waking and dreaming sleep are separated by a gulf in which the continuity of self-consciousness is broken.

If, now, the frequently experienced transition between waking and dreaming involves a passing through a gulf of broken consciousness with loss of knowledge of the transition, then it should not be expected that the more intensified dislocation of the center of percipience involved in physical death should be accomplished with full conscious awareness.

The completion of death in the physical sense involves more than the discontinuance of observable organic process. After death is complete in the organic sense there is a recapitulation of the whole life by the departing ego. This experience has often been reported by men who have been drowned but who were later resuscitated. This recapitulation serves as a sort of final inventory of the whole life for the purpose of carrying the garnered values into the memory-storehouse of the relatively permanent Ego. The sum-total of the whole life-experience becomes synthesized in one dominating value which becomes the primary keynote of the later *Devachanic* cycle and greatly influences the subsequent incarnation. The experience of the whole life contributes to the forming of this keynote but the thought and motivation of the later years has the dominating influence. Thus the man who is wise will not allow himself to drift in his latter years but will take pains to fill his consciousness with thought and aspiration which will bring to him the largest and most desirable fruition possible in future states. The last dominating thought is of the greatest importance though it is not a voluntary thought but the fruitage of the whole life.

It is said that the period of recapitulation involves a lingering of the life-spark in the brain after all objective evidence of life has disappeared. The individual still is conscious and is susceptible to environmental influence and disturbance. This is a time when attending friends should tread softly and speak in whispers. Most of all there should be no psychic disturbance through the expression of passionate grief lest the recording of the summation of the just-closed life be distorted. Friends can facilitate this process by doing all that is possible to build an atmosphere of physical and psychical quietude and peace during the first hours immediately following the passing of the last evidence of life.

Immediately following the recapitulation there is the period of unconsciousness already referred to. This period is of variable duration depending upon the causes set up by the individual. It may last for a few minutes to a number of years. There is a world of difference in

the length of this period depending upon whether the life has completed its allotted cycle and death has followed the normal and generally gradual withdrawal of the *Pranic* principle, or whether there has been a premature closing of the life as through violence or by sickness induced through unwise habits of living. The length of predetermined objective cycles has a very important bearing upon the length of the period immediately following physical death. In Figure 4 the length of these objective cycles is represented by the loops such as XA_1 . Just what the time of these periods may be is determined by Karmic causes preceding the incarnation part of which are racial and part individual. In general, the cycle from the point of leaving *Devachan* to the return at X is fixed, but the portion of that cycle intercepted in the zone MN (objective or earth-plane) may be shortened by causes set up during the current objective life-period. Consequently, the remaining portion of this cycle must be, either exhausted by a protracted lingering in zone LM (*Kama Loka*), or absorbed in an immediate reembodiment without a *Devachanic* interlude. Disregarding for the present the second alternative since it constitutes one of the exceptions to the general rules, it is easily seen that there is abundant ground for wide variation in the first post-death period.

In general the average man will not experience the very short post-death interludes of a few minutes or a few hours as these are the rewards of extraordinary purification or virtue. On the other hand, long interludes may be experienced which approach the length of the allotted objective life-cycle, for death by accident might occur in infancy. We will first consider the average man who has been so happy as to experience the natural death of old-age. In this case the post-death interlude of unconsciousness will not be of very extended duration.

In our present case, very soon after the death of the physical body the *Linga Sarira* (or so-called Astral Body) begins to disintegrate and to form two secondary astral counterparts or functions. In one aspect it enters a state of quiescence or *Laya* from which it is awakened to form the new *Linga Sarira* upon the future return of the Ego from *Devachan*. On the other hand, it furnishes the material or rather mold of that which becomes a little later the *Kama Rupa* or Desire Body, or, to use a designation we have already suggested, the placenta-like shell. The *Linga Sarira* is very close to the physical body and is not completely separated from the later until disintegration is complete. Numbers of persons possessing only a low order of clairvoyant vision have seen these phantom bodies in the vicinity of cemeteries, both as possessing definite form and as cloud-like wraiths. The perception of these forms requires but a slight development of subtle vision.

Owing to the fact that so long as this wraith and the physical body are not completely disintegrated there is a certain sympathetic bond which more or less ties the more interior principles to the former and thus interferes for a time with the more subtle after-death processes. In view of this circumstance many students recommend the rapid disintegration of the physical body after death as by the use of fire. In any case, retardation of this process by artificial means such as embalming is unquestionably injurious.

With the disintegration of the *Linga Sarira*, the Life Principle or *Prana* returns to the general sea of Life to be used again in other living forms. This Principle, as was already said in Chapter V, may be regarded as a kind of electricity, and like ordinary electricity is an impersonal energy capable of diverse uses. It is not destroyed by physical death but is simply freed from the channels of particularized functioning to which it has been bound for a season.

With the breakup of the lower principles which occurs at or soon after physical death, the man is reduced to a four or five principled being depending upon whether *Manas* is considered as one principle or as dual. Though in the higher metaphysical sense it is true that *Manas* is

unitary, still from the standpoint of after-death processes there are practical reasons for considering this principle as dual and accordingly we shall regard the physically disembodied man as five-principled. At this stage the principle of Desire becomes a form by the assimilation of a subtle aspect of the *Linga Sarira* and thus is a *Rupa*. This is the reason why the principle of Desire is called "*Kama Rupa*," a designation which is not strictly correct during the period that the man is a seven-principled being. Desire now has two aspects, one as form and the other as Mind led by Desire or *Kama Manas*. This pair of principles forms the real personality for which the lower principles serve merely as vitalized carriers during the period of embodied life. Here lies the seat of the lower self or false ego. These two are known as the intermediate principles which in the Adept are the basis of the Subtle Body or *Sukshmopadhi*.

Subsequent to the unconscious period which immediately follows physical death there is a gestation process, usually of considerable duration, that culminates in the separation of the intermediate and higher principles and the birth of awareness in the zone of *Devachan*. This is a critical period in which memory gradually returns both to the real man and to that which once was his personality. This event is far more critical than physical death itself since it entails the segregation of antagonistic qualities which have been bound together during the period of objective incarnation. Only that can possibly enter into the state of *Devachan* which is of a nature concordant with that plane of consciousness. Those desires and interests, such as eating and drinking and the acquisition of material possessions etc., that belong only to the physical plane have nothing whatsoever in common with *Devachanic* consciousness and therefore can never enter this state. Yet Desire is a force which is not destroyed by physical death but simply finds itself severed from all facility for its satisfaction, save under certain abnormal conditions which will be later discussed. This force must persist and yet cannot enter *Devachan*, so under normal conditions it enters a *Laya* or potential state in which condition it persists until the return of the Higher Ego upon a new cycle of incarnation. It is thus evident that the culmination of the gestation period must be the division of the five-principled being into two parts, the higher of which, carrying the real man, proceeds to *Devachan*, and the lower becoming a sort of remains which we have already called a "placenta-like shell."

The struggle between these two aspects of the man is of the gravest import. If the life of the man has been very materialistic and selfish, there may be little or nothing that can qualify for *Devachanic* experience. However, in the case of the average man there always are worthy and unselfish elements which afford a basis for experience continued on the *Devachanic* level. But with the general run of humanity in this day the loading of the lower nature is sadly heavy, so that the residue which remains in *Kama Loka* forms far too large a part of the whole being of the man. Since this gestation period involves such a vital weighing and sorting of the nature of the man, the particular sub-zone of *Kama Loka* in which it occurs has been designated the "Zone of Doubt." The man may be tried in this crucible and found wanting.

That man has a dual nature is evident without entering into a great profundity of analysis. There are few persons, indeed, who when submitting themselves to self-examination will not find two types of characteristics. There is within us a nature that is purely self-seeking. The inhibitions of civilization as well as self-discipline serve to impose a greater or less degree of restraint upon this side of us. We often act like ladies and gentlemen when our impulses are quite unladylike or ungentlemanly. Clearly there is a conflict within us. Probably most of us are ashamed of these more selfish impulses and do honestly strive to correct or at least restrain them, but the fact remains that those impulses are very much alive and, under abnormal conditions where the usual restraints are removed, come to the surface and produce very ugly showings. In

Robert Louis Stevenson's famous story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this conflict has been very successfully portrayed in an exaggerated form. Although the Mr. Hyde in most of us is not as strong or vicious as the monster in the story, still he is there, as we must admit if we are but honest in our self-evaluations. But the very fact that we can recognize the presence of and feel shame for this Mr. Hyde in our nature reveals that we have also a higher nature. The individual who was nothing but a Mr. Hyde would have no inner struggle and would be totally incapable of any unselfish feeling.

Few indeed are the individuals who do not have at least moments in which they genuinely strive for emulation in unselfish action. Often crises reveal such qualities in individuals where we least expect them. So, if there are few men who are wholly good, it is equally true that there are not many that are completely bad!

Physical embodiment involves an encasement of such a degree of inertia that a large range of antagonistic elements may be bound within it. In some cases where the clash between the dual aspect of the nature is too strong even this encasement may be shattered producing insanity or some such effect as that pictured in Stevenson's story, but such instances, fortunately, are the exception rather than the rule. But when the man stands after physical death, freed from his denser sheath, he finds his subtle organization far too weak to bind together for long his warring elements, unless the preponderance of the lower elements is unduly strong. The different aspects of his nature gravitate to their own natural zones. It might well be imagined that this process would be very painful since often the noble and base within us is closely intertwined, but fortunately in most instances the separation has proceeded far before the return of remembrance and the awakening to self-conscious consciousness. Normally, therefore, the second-death is not one of pain. The man awakens gradually to his real self in *Devachan* and temporarily in a shadowy personal sense in his shell.

In the typical case, the reawakening of consciousness involves no knowledge of death to the physical plane of awareness. This grows out of the fact that the disembodied man is only a cogitating and remembering entity without the power of perception, since with the dropping of the physical body the organs of perception have been lost. The usual after-death state, accordingly, does not include the power to perceive a difference in the current state of existence as contrasted with physical consciousness. In this it is the analogue of dream-consciousness where usually there is no realization on the part of the dreamer that he is no longer awake. The departed individual is thus unaware of any separation from those he once had loved. In the higher state of *Devachan* he abides with them in unalloyed bliss and harmony. In his *Kama Loka* shell he is but a waning personal remembrance which, if left undisturbed, is, as stated, incapable of any observation.

The real man is but a three-principled being whose course continues in *Devachan*. The conditions of this life will be discussed in the following chapter. The remains in *Kama Loka* are a gradually waning form that possesses for a time a sort of shadowy or reflected consciousness. Since this shell is divorced from the *Atman*, which is the originating or subjective center of Consciousness, it has not true self-consciousness of its own. The particularized consciousness which it does possess for a time is analogous to the light thrown out by fluorescent substances. Thus when certain gases, for instance, are submitted to the action of light for a sufficient time, then when the light is turned off or obscured, the gas in turn will emanate light for a limited period. This fluorescent phenomenon continues only until the original light-energy stored in the gas has been exhausted. Similarly in the case of the shell. The shadowy consciousness that remains is but a fluorescent after-effect from the original *Atmic* Light. When this is exhausted the

shell loses all particularized consciousness and awaits in the spore-state for the subsequent return of its father-Ego.

Now the memory of neither of these two aspects of the man is complete. Each retains only that which is in accordance with its own nature. The physical man was a more or less intense Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde complex. The *Devachanic* entity knows only that which belongs to the Dr. Jekyll aspect, and the shell, the Mr. Hyde residue. (This last statement will be partly modified later as there is a form of evil which, since it is spiritual, reaches above *Kama Loka*. The Mr. Hyde in the present case is what we might call the earth nature, that which in its intensest form is gross brutality, but yet *fails* of being able to reach to the depths of monstrous evil.)

The man, while living objectively might have been a sensual-idealist but yet not carry either aspect of himself in the after-death state. The *Devachanic* entity could never be a sensualist and could have no memory or concept of that kind of consciousness. It would be equally impossible for the shell to be an idealist.

A very large proportion of humanity never lives to experience death from the natural cause of old age. It is probably far more common that accidents or disease induced by the violation of the laws of health bring the objective career of the individual to an end prematurely. In such cases the first period of the after-death states would be as a rule extended to an extent sufficient to absorb the balance of the cycle which properly should have been expended upon the objective plane. While the shortening of the life-cycle through accidents or disease induced during the current incarnation is generally due to causes set up by the individual himself yet, except where the motive was that of an early termination of the incarnation, the karmic responsibility of willful self-destruction is not involved. It is the motive of the act which is of fundamental importance. So if a man is careless of the laws of health merely through thoughtlessness or an interest in a cause which leads him to forget himself, while he must face the penalty of violated natural law, yet he does not incur the infinitely more serious consequences of moral dereliction. The same principle is true in the case of death through accident in the performance of duty or even where undue or unnecessary risks have been taken without the desire to seek death. Clearly, also, where the death has been induced by causes entirely outside the individual's control at the time of the event the moral responsibility of self-destruction is not incurred. This class of premature deaths thus forms a group in which we may regard those concerned as being innocent so far as motive was concerned although they may incur the responsibility of unwise action.

The case of those who seek self-destruction is very different and far more serious. Accordingly the consideration of their cases will have to fall under another heading.

Our present group, which we may call the victims of accident of the ordinary type of man, enters the *Kama Lokic* state with neither the earned right of special protection which applies to man of high moral qualities, nor do they face the harsh conditions that are the lot of the vicious. In every case the first stage in *Kama Loka* is one of unconsciousness. This period of unconsciousness may continue up into the gestation cycle as in the case of those who die from old age. This is by all odds the happiest outcome and is probably the course followed by the majority of individuals in this group. There are two other possible alternatives both of which are injurious to the discarnate individual. In one case the victim may awaken before the gestation period to wander about consciously in the *Kama Lokic* plane without incurring any contact with those left upon the earth plane. This is the least harmful alternative. In the second case he may

fall into the vortex of mediumship and thus set up communication with the objective plane of consciousness. This condition is fraught with the very gravest consequences.

In the case of the victim that awakens in the pre-gestation *Kama Lokic* period without falling into the vortex of mediumship, while the consequences are not grave, the condition is far from happy. The contact with his higher principles is not broken and consequently his individual consciousness is much more than the merely fading light of the shells. He is thus in a position where he can suffer as the shell does not. It should be born in mind that since he lacks the physical body he has none of the organs of perception or action. At the same time he has with him all the forces of his desire nature, and, instead of these becoming less active with the loss of the physical case, they are, on the other hand, vastly intensified. It is easy to understand this by recalling to our minds certain dream experiences which occur now and then. The usual dream becomes vague after awakening and has very little influence on the waking state, at least not so far as we can consciously observe. There are some dreams, however, involving a sensual or an emotional intensity far surpassing even the strongest objective experiences. Such dreams often leave an after-effect upon the waking consciousness that may be felt for days, causing the latter state to seem dull in its relative intensity when compared with merely the memory of the dream, let alone the actual immediate experience of the dream itself. This suggests something of the intensity of the feeling of the man awake in *Kama Loka* but disembodied, only in this case there is no means of satisfying the intense feeling and desire. Clearly it is a state of torture. Further, the companions in that plane are shells, nature elementals and other unfortunate beings like himself. He knows nothing of objective earth conditions as they are proceeding subsequent to his death, and he is not in a position to perform any useful function.

The falling into this state of abnormal awareness is not due to arbitrary circumstances but to factors which are under the control of the individual while yet alive. This victim of accident awakens prematurely owing to strong earth-attachment during life. The man who practices, even in moderate degree, detachment from earthy things and the cultivation of interest in values which reach beyond earth-consciousness will never be in any danger of the unhappy state of abnormal *Kama Lokic* wakefulness even though meeting death by accident. It is intense attraction for earthy things, such as one's material business, particularly at the moment of death, which serves to force this state of consciousness.

If the abnormally conscious *Kama Lokic* dweller (in addition to his wandering on that plane) is drawn into the vortex of mediumship, his evil state is vastly intensified. The medium affords a sort of means of vicarious living. Hence the already intense forces of desire, which if left unsatisfied would tend to wane, are stirred into renewed life and expression. There is thus a certain blending of the *Kamic* nature of the discarnate entity with that of the medium. This produces new *Skandhas* that are a sort of bastard progeny since they are not indigenous to the individual himself. They contribute to the forming of the group of qualities which he will have to face in his subsequent incarnation, and since they are not his own natural children, as it were, his problem of self-control and regeneration will be enormously aggravated. It might result even in his final failure in the battle with his lower nature. In any case, it produces for him a condition of life far worse than would have been his normally. Further, the intensification of *Tanha* through the vicarious life afforded through the medium may very possibly result in a failure to consummate the birth into the relative spiritual state of *Devachan*.

The next sub-group under the general class of average men is that of those who have voluntarily destroyed their physical vehicles. The condition of the suicide is by far the worst since his act has involved a moral responsibility. The immediate effect of this is a partial and,

normally, temporary separation between his intermediate principles and his higher or spiritual nature. Further the suicide faces a greater intensification of his desires and feelings than would be the case with the innocent victim. Since his correlation with his higher nature is for the time inactive he is more helpless in the face of this conditions than is true with the victim. It is with these that the contact with the medium does the greatest damage. The consequences of this abnormal liaison is the final parting of the spiritual or higher nature from the personality forever. This is soul-death. On the other hand, if the mediumistic outlet has not been afforded then the suicide can later regain his full correlation with his higher principles, experience his earned *Devachanic* rest, and then face consequences of his act in a future life where he will have an opportunity to correct his mistake.

There remains a special sub-class composed of those who abandoned the incarnation before it had been completely established. This consists of the deaths of children in general under seven years of age, whether pre-natal or post-natal. The incarnation is not completely affected until some years after the birth of the physical body. This is largely for the reason that the nervous and mental development of the child has not been sufficiently completed to carry the higher Egoic entity. Consequently, during this period the child is not a responsible entity and does not during this time set up causes which would produce effects in the *Devachanic* state. (The fact that the child is not responsible during these early years is reflected in the legal practice. The child of less than six or seven years is not held legally responsible for its acts.) Hence these early deaths are not followed by the usual series of after-death processes which generally culminate in a *Devachanic* birth. So the child-death is soon followed by a new incarnation with the same *Linga Sarira*. This might be regarded as a second incarnation of the same personal entity and thus in one sense constitutes an exception to the general rule that the personality does not reincarnate. In the strict sense both of these embodiments are part of the same incarnation.

This same phenomenon happens in the case of some individuals who are much older than seven years, but they constitute special instances which do not properly fall under the class of the average man. Thus in the case of idiots, there is not what we would call "responsibility," although some idiots have not broken the connection with their higher or spiritual nature. In the case of the true idiot, there is no *Manasic* or rational nature that is active and since without *Manas*, there is no responsibility, it follows that the idiot cannot produce causes which will work out as *Devachanic* effects. Hence the idiot must return to incarnation without a *Devachanic* interlude.

Among men who are not conscious Adepts, either in good or evil, there are two classes besides that of the average man: one of these groups consists of those who are predominately brutal and extends in a descending scale to those who have left within them no shade of good or noble qualities; the other group is just the opposite. It is composed of those having predominant nobility and purity of soul. The conditions of the after-death life of these two groups, as may well be imagined, are as different as night differs from day. We shall consider first the less happy group.

The man of highly selfish, brutal or bestial instincts is precisely the one in whom the intermediate principles are most strongly developed. Such a man's nature is predominantly earthy and hence all his natural gravitation is toward earth-consciousness. For this reason he will have a peculiar power to resist the tendency toward unconsciousness following death, especially in the case of accidents. Rarely, if ever, is the unconscious period entirely avoided, but the strong gravitation tends to produce a shortening of it. After all, will is the all-powerful force, and it can

be employed by one who is properly trained so that the tendency to unconsciousness is completely overcome. The brutal types are not, of course, so trained, but their will to physical life has been so intensely developed that they effect a partial modification of the normal course of nature. They thus tend to awaken in *Kama Loka* where the normal man would continue in unconsciousness. Their natural gravitation is to the most earthy levels of *Kama Loka* and as their desire for sentient life is extraordinarily intense, they will seize any opportunity for objective contacts. They gravitate very readily to the impure type of medium and constitute one of the gravest dangers of mediumistic practices. It is thus precisely in the case of these most animal-like men that mediumistic communion is most apt to involve genuine contact with the real discarnate entity. Because of their extraordinarily high development of *Tanha* in the more brutal disembodied men they may even succeed in effecting a more or less permanent embodiment in the physical vehicle of someone else, even in a few extreme cases achieving a semi-embodiment in animals. This is the phenomenon of "obsession" and plays an important part in the psychological studies of the field of insanity.

The brutal type is by no means always wholly bad since, save in certain extreme cases, the correlation with the higher nature still remains. Under the right conditions the higher instincts may be awakened at times leading to acts of a greater or less degree of unselfishness. Such acts would build toward a *Devachanic* realization and, if sufficiently strong, may produce brief periods in that state. But if the preponderance of the lower nature is too great there will not be enough of the efflorescence of the personal consciousness left to effect an awakening of *Devachan*. In such cases after a period of greater or lesser duration spent in *Kama Loka* in a state of earth-bound consciousness there is a subsequent reembodiment on earth. This does not necessarily mean that all the values of the last incarnation are lost to the higher Ego. It is as though the personal being were given a new trial in the hope that perhaps at last the latent good might flower and come to effective grips with the lower animal nature. There is no foreknowing the latent possibilities in even the worst of characters, provided the contact with the Higher Nature has not been finally broken.

Accidents and suicides in this class abide in *Kama Loka* in a state of intense suffering. With them not only is desire intense in its lower aspects but they are also the very ones who have made least progress toward the control of their *Kamic* nature. In fact, the brutal man is preeminently the individual who has allowed his desires the freest play with the result that in the highest degree he is the slave of them. Thus the intensified state in *Kama Loka* is for him peculiarly intense. Particularly is this so if the moment of death is filled with some strong passion such as the lust to kill or the desire for revenge. This feeling is not only intensified after death but becomes a persistent dominating force which tends to act entirely apart from the exercise of any directive will. Since the individual directly involved has no objective instrument of action he becomes a sphere of force which tends to influence in the appropriate direction any one who may be responsive to it and who is still functioning on the objective plane. For this reason the discarnate vicious man is a far greater social danger than he was while still living objectively.

This subtle action of released malicious psychic forces has a very important bearing upon the social practice of capital punishment. The executed criminal is almost certainly to be filled with a feeling of intense resentment and a desire for revenge. When this entity is thrown out on *Kama Loka* he becomes largely an irrational force seeking action in the direction that the resentment and the desire for revenge would naturally dictate. Now among incarnated man there are always those who have been tempted to criminal violence but who, either through

considerations of prudence or the restraint exercised by their better nature, have been able to resist the temptation. In such cases the impingement of extraneous vindictive impulses often is just what is needed to turn the scales in the direction of violent action. Hence the normal effect of capital punishment is towards increased violence throughout the social body. A really wise society would be especially careful to guard against the violent discarnation of just precisely its most brutal members. It would be far safer to kill off the sages and saints.

One of the most serious costs of war comes in this connection. In the midst of the battles, large numbers of men are destroyed while filled with an intense desire to kill and generally with at least some degree of hatred. This feeds on a wholesale basis the corresponding desire forces on the *Kama Lokic* plane. And what is the result? Simply protracted post-war periods in which crimes of violence abound. The wave of violent crime today is but the natural fruitage of the Great War. Large numbers of men have simply carried into private life the courses of action that their war-instructors trained them in as soldiers. The logic of nature does not recognize the purely arbitrary social convention which makes that quality a virtue in war which is a crime in private life.

The worst sub-group within this class constitutes a very important exception to the general rule governing the subtle life of mankind. As already stated the more brutal and vicious types of men are not necessarily always wholly bad. But there are some instances in which the lower qualities have attained a complete victory over the higher. Fortunately this group does not form a large percentage of the whole, but it is one that must be reckoned with. When in the sorting of the qualities in the territory of Doubt there is not found one redeeming feature, then there is a complete and generally final separation between the personality and the Higher Nature. With the vast majority of men there is at least a fair balance of worthy and unselfish qualities and these form the basis of the *Devachanic* experience. For *Devachan* is experienced by the personal man, although it is only the efflorescence of his better nature that proceeds on to that state. And while in subsequent incarnations among those who are not Adepts there is no specific memory of previous personalities, yet the garnered fruitage of each personal life is carried over and enters into the formation of the gradually developing complete man. Later at the end of great cycles, or earlier if Adeptship is attained, full memory of all the personal lives *is* recovered. But this is not so in the case of those personal lives that are wholly lacking in any redeeming quality. The loss of the Higher Nature in these cases is Soul-death.

It must be born in mind that only extreme conditions bring about this dread result. If the seed sown on the field of the lower personality bears any positive fruit at all, then that life will not be found lost from the pages of the final book of memory. But if the failure of the harvest is complete then the husbandman (*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*) abandons the field entirely and at some later time puts forth a new effort in a wholly different soil. In this case, instead of there being a cycle of *Devachanic* experience, the higher Triad sleeps for a season in the depths of space and then ultimately returns for a new effort. Meanwhile the abandoned lower or personal nature has a store of unexpended egoic energy which is much larger than the case of a "shell" for two reasons. First, the shell-like remains of a *Devachanic* entity retains only a part of the full lower egoic energy, the balance having gone to *Devachan*, while in our present case the full egoic energy remains with the entity in *Kama Loka*. In the second place, the more brutal and vicious types of men are just those in whom the energy of personal egoism is most intensely developed. The consequence is that the energy of the remaining personal nature is very apt to be too strong for the disruptive action of the destroyers in *Kama Loka*. Further, in these cases *Tanha* or life-desire is especially potent. The result is a quick reembodiment, for one or more life-cycles

depending upon the strength of the initial lower egoic nature. In time this energy is exhausted and disintegration follows with a complete extinction of the personal consciousness forever.

These soulless men are incapable of any desire which reaches beyond the animal life. They are not always of low mentality but if their intellectual nature is at all developed it is wholly directed to the satisfaction of the lowest instincts. In such cases they are dangerous, and in all instances they are irredeemable men. For there is remaining in them no higher nature which could respond to any ennobling stimulus. They represent the true criminal class, speaking in the occult rather than in the merely legalistic sense. They might be in some cases diverted from criminal action by considerations of expediency, but they are quite incapable of understanding moral control in action. They are the dregs among men, but they are far from being the worst. Their evil is of the animal or “earthy” sort. They are little more than brutes in human form. They are not on the level of *spiritual evil*. Those who fall in this latter group are the real monsters among men, but their basis of consciousness centers in a zone far higher and of a much more far-reaching influence than that of *Kama Loka*. Hence the discussion of them does not belong within the limits of this section.

There is a statement credited to Jesus which occurs in all of the Gospels in slightly modified forms which to superficial consideration seems contradictory. In the book of Saint Luke (XVII, 33), it is given in the form: “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.” In this form the statement is far from self-explanatory, but the corresponding quotation from Saint John (XII, 25) affords the interpretive key. In this Gospel we find: “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” This shows that the term “Life” is employed in two distinct senses. If man is attached to life objectively, he destroys his correlation with the aspect of Consciousness which persists from incarnation to incarnation. This latter aspect of Consciousness is the relatively eternal life of Egoic Consciousness. The extremely brutal type of man is the ideal instance of the individual who through his intensity of life-attachment, or *Tanha*, has destroyed its correlation with the Self-radiating source of all Life and hence has brought upon himself destruction of the very thing he desired most. The opposite extreme among men is found in the individuals who have burned up their attachment to life through absorption of their interest in the well-being of other selves. Their very self-abandonment has led to a sublimation of their egoic nature so that they find themselves living more or less completely in the lives of all creatures about them. The result is that the fortunes of their egoic self-identity are not bound to the limited history of their personal vehicles. In other words, they have found themselves egoically on a more synthetic level of Life or Consciousness.

The real meaning of “Goodness” as opposed to the brutal type of evil is life-motivation which does not center about the personal ego. Taken in this sense, there are many conventional virtues which would not qualify as “good.” Thus the business man who is honest as a matter of policy alone, no matter how scrupulous his practice is, yet is not good or virtuous in the present meaning of the term. His actuating motive is merely self-interest and accordingly if he found himself in a situation where dishonesty would serve his ends, he would change his policy. His moral level is by no means superior to that of the unsophisticated rogue, although his perception of the expediency value of honesty shows him as standing on a higher intellectual altitude. For the practice of honesty to be virtuous it must be a matter of principle. The man who follows this course will be honest even though he knows it will cost him all his possessions and his life. Such an individual has gone far in the transcendence of personal egoism and has found his center of life on more synthetic levels, thus rising superior to the dangers of *Kama Lokic* death.

Fortunately the vast majority of men have experienced something of the motivation that involves transcendence of personal egoism. This is, of course, the basis of all *Devachanic* experience. Now there are those individuals in whom this type of motivation predominates and they are the ones that we classify as the good or virtuous men. It is not necessary that members of this class shall be entirely free from the weaknesses of the lower nature. In fact, men of this degree of purity are very rare in this age (*Kali Yuga*) owing to the peculiar conditions of the cycle which are more favorable for the expression of the lower rather than the higher qualities. The important point is that the higher motivation shall be predominant.

With men of this type, if physical death follows from old-age the first or unconscious period in *Kama Loka* is quite short, in some cases lasting for but a few minutes. The gestation period supervenes promptly resulting in an early separation of the intermediate and higher principles and the initiation of the *Devachanic* cycle. The extent of recollection in *Devachan* is much more complete than in the previous types for the reason that a larger proportion of the objective life was dominated by a motivation having *Devachanic* value. As a complement to this, the shell consciousness is correspondingly weaker and the consummation of the disintegration of the intermediate principles is much earlier. As a result, mediumistic contact with this type of shell is much less frequent than in the case of the more gross shells.

In the case of death from accident the victim is drawn immediately into a state of *Akashic Samadhi* or sleep involving a pleasant dream-life until the life-term of the cycle is completed, when the gestation period is entered followed by birth on *Devachan*. This is a case of special dispensation since the individual, whether good, bad, or indifferent would tend to awaken in *Kama Loka*. But there are certain Guardians of *Kama Loka* who throw a sphere of protection about those individuals who through no fault of their own are thrust out into a zone of Consciousness with which they are wholly unprepared to cope. These guardians are known as *Dhyan Chohans*, or beings who have completed the cycle of human evolution ages ago and are now functioning and evolving on levels beyond the range of human imagination.

In the classes considered so far death, in every case, is followed by a period of unconsciousness which may last for from a few minutes to several years. With the possible exception of those individuals who are earth-bound through a strong attachment for earth conditions, there is no more knowledge of the fact of having passed through physical dissolution than there is of having left the waking state when in the midst of dreaming sleep. It is, however, possible to cross the gulf of death consciously and to function on the more interior planes, knowing them to be different from the physical. This capacity is either the result of the conscious cultivation of a power or by a special projection of the power by one who has acquired it. This group forms a very special and limited class which we will now consider.

The distinguishing characteristic of this class taken as a whole is not its virtue-type whether positive (“good”) or negative (“evil”), but rather is the possession of Knowledge, in the sense of knowledge of the inner or hidden Nature. The class divides into two sub-classes or groups distinguished by the most marked virtue-qualities. The higher class consists of Adepts who work with Nature consciously and constructively and hence are virtuous in the positive or good sense. The lower class is just the opposite in that its members work with Nature (again consciously) but in the destructive sense and hence they are Adepts in evil. The first tends toward pure “good”; the second towards pure “evil.” There is no place in this class of the intermediate or “lukewarm” types that correspond to the average man.

The Adept who works with Nature constructively is the highest type of man. His is the state of self-conscious consciousness, and the corresponding levels of Knowledge and Power,

which will be the heritage of average Humanity at the culmination of long ages of evolution--at least of that portion of Humanity that has not failed in the interim. But in the case of the present-day Adept this attainment has been reached long in advance of the masses through self-directed effort intensely applied. Most of mankind is moving in a state of largely blind response to the urge of evolutionary forces which proceed in accordance with cyclic stages. The Adept has proceeded in this same direction consciously and with an intelligent direction of his own individual energies in the same course as that laid down by Nature, or rather of the directive Intelligences that stand behind Nature. First, by conservation of individual energy, which is so scandalously wasted by the average man, and then by the concentration of this energy in the appropriate direction it is possible in the course of a few short incarnations to cover the ground which normally requires millions of years and thousands of incarnations. The men who have followed this course and who have successfully met all the tests which fall in their way become Adepts or Masters who, proportionate to Their degree of Adeptship, are one with the Intelligence of all Nature. This implies realization of continuity in Consciousness where the average man faces discontinuities. Hence there follows, among other powers and as one of the least of them, the capacity to pass through the portals of physical death without there being any break in the continuity of individual consciousness.

The crucial barrier to self-conscious action with Nature is personal egoism (*Ahankara*). Personal egoism has neither primary being nor existence. It is an induced effect of the compound structure of man. It might be called the reflection of spiritual Selfhood (*Atman*) in the personal nature. Then when this reflection of the Real Self is taken as a center or base of reference, we have the phenomenon of false or personal egoism which is the parent of the illusion of separateness which in its turn is the foundation of all suffering and the sense of limitation. It follows that the supreme requirement or prerequisite for the attainment of Adeptship is the destruction of *Ahankara*. The primary purpose of the tests faced by the candidate for Adeptship is the proving of the destruction of this personal egoism. Many who aspire fail to meet this test, since in them the power of personal egoism has proven greater than the force of their aspiration to the transcendental. Now the effect of the concentration (Yogic) discipline that is a fundamental part of the line of effort which eventuates in Adeptship is the intensification of power in whatever direction it is focused. Thus, if in the trial, *Ahankara* wins then it becomes greatly intensified as compared to what it was before. It follows that the failures among the ranks of would-be Adepts on the constructive side of Nature, become adepts of greater or less degree in the reverse, or destructive aspect of Nature. If we may call the positive pole absolute synthesis, the negative pole would be absolute segregation or annihilation in unconscious absorption which is nothing more nor less than the separateness of *Ahankara* carried through to its perfection. Segregation is a part of Universal nature as truly as synthesis, but it is the destructive aspect. Hence the Adept failures do not return to the relatively irresponsible (and therefore temporarily indulged) condition of average Humanity, for they have invoked the powers of Nature. For them there remains only action with nature in her destructive aspects.

But since the Adept in evil does work with Nature he has accordingly attained a kind of continuity of consciousness that is the exact opposite of that achieved by the positive Adept. Whereas the latter has attained his immortality (or relative immortality) through transcendence of personality, the adept in evil has acquired a degree of immortality by so greatly intensifying his egoism that it is highly, though not perfectly, resistant to the forces of disintegration. Hence these negative adepts have also the power to cross the gulf of physical death and know their state without a break in consciousness.

Kama Loka is not a field of action for the positive or “white” Adept save under exceptional circumstances, for *Kama Loka* is mostly a domain of the purging or destructive aspect of Nature. There are, unquestionably, subtle planes on which such Adepts do work but they are other than *Kama Loka*. (There is the special case of the *Bodhisattva* which persists undestroyed on the level of *Kama Loka* owing to a purity of principle that is so great that disintegrative agencies have no power over them. This is a phenomenon connected only with the more spiritual sub-planes of *Kama Loka*.) On the other hand, *Kama Loka* is a zone in which the negative adepts or at least those of the lower degrees, find themselves quite at home. They are resistant to the disintegrative power of this plane because of their possessing a high degree of negative purity, i.e., purity in evil. Hence on this plane their nature accords with the nature of their environment. And, whereas the positive Adept is outside the sphere of his most effective action on this plane, the negative adept, on the other hand, finds himself in the midst of forces which he can direct effectively toward his perverse ends.

As the vast majority of our common humankind have a *Kamic* nature that is far from purified, it follows that the mass of human units are in a greater or less degree responsive to influences emanating from the plane of *Kama*. Thus *Kama Loka* is a wonderful field of action for the negative adept as it is through the weaknesses of the human desire-nature that he attains his ends predominantly. This is one of the reasons why the student must watch his feelings with great care. Otherwise when he feels anger, hatred, envy or some other negative emotion he will find it at once enormously intensified as compared with the degrees of feeling he experienced when largely an irresponsible man in and of the world. Through the indulgence of this negative feeling the door is opened for the action of the negative adept who thus is enabled to concentrate energy in the focal point that has been formed. It is possible for this negative action to become so intense that the student is thrown off his base entirely with more or less disastrous results. Safety lies in watching negative emotions with an eagle-eye and throttling them as quickly as possible when once they appear. The student will always have sufficient strength to do this if he but invokes it.

Adeptship is not an absolute designation. There are Adepts of high and low degree and some who are called very high Adepts. In its root meaning the term has the significance of “one who has attained knowledge or proficiency.” The Sanskrit root “*Ad*” carries the meaning of “obtaining” or “attaining.” Hence the word has the general meaning in common usage of “one who has attained proficiency or is fully skilled in some field of endeavor.” But specifically as applied here, and especially when spelled with the initial letter capitalized, it means one who is proficient in the hidden knowledge of Nature which, of course, implies corresponding skill in the manipulation of Nature. This knowledge and skill developed in only one small department of Nature would constitute the individual as an Adept to that extent. Hence one who is still but a *Chela* (i.e., a student in the Esoteric knowledge) of a full Adept may himself be called an Adept although he has by no means met all his tests and trials. But in this case manifestly the degree of adeptship would be very low. Further, an individual who working by himself has mastered some minor department of Nature could in this sense be called “adept” to that extent. These facts must be born in mind or the student may often be thrown off the track by attaching to the term a more transcendental significance than is intended in the given case. This term has a far more general significance than such terms as “Initiate,” “*Mahatma*” or “*Buddha*,” all of which refer to definite events, such as initiation, or discrete degrees of attainment.

The minimum degree of adeptship requisite to the realization of conscious death is not considerable, but it can be attained only as the result of a definite training or discipline. As

already stated, the capacity to go to sleep consciously or to dream and be aware of the fact that one is in the dreaming state represents a step in the direction of conscious dying. The definite power to function in the Subtle Body in the sense of *Sukshmapadhi*, and not the attached Astral or *Linga Sharira*, implies the power of conscious death. But this capacity does not simply happen to an individual without his putting forth effort in the appropriate direction and, at least generally if not universally, has come under the protection of a competent Guru. There is no arbitrary barrier closing off these powers to any individual, but there seems to be very few who are willing to put forth the requisite effort to attain them. Hence conscious death is very much an exception to the general rule.

There is a technical designation for an entity called a "*Bodhisattva*" which means literally "one whose nature is knowledge." Exoterically this term is applied to the stage of soul-development that is just inferior to Buddhahood. Our present sense of the term is the more technical esoteric usage. This *Bodhisattva* is a highly beneficent force and is active within the sphere of human consciousness. It is, however, essentially passive in its action as it is not an ensouled entity but is what has been called a "remains." But it gravitates to those human centers that are in a sufficient degree like it. Hence, earnest selfless striving on the part of a human being will also often find itself unaccountably reinforced just as is all-too-often the case in the reverse instance. Effort in the direction of the common human good becomes supported by a power far greater than that which could be generated by the individual alone. This influence is of tremendous importance. It may as a general effect envelope extensive numbers of people at the same time. On the other hand, it may function intensively in the phenomenon of *Avatarship* where suddenly an individual, perhaps even in extreme youth, blossoms forth with the wisdom of great spiritual maturity. There is an esoteric tradition that both Shankara and Jesus were instances of such *Avatarship*. In both men, extraordinary degrees of spiritual Wisdom manifested without the appropriate prior self-induced effort that would be required where Adeptship was acquired by the normal means. Gautama Buddha is the outstanding example of such an Adept.

It should be apparent by now that a question of the very highest practical importance is: How is it possible to free oneself from the attachment to desires of the *Kama Lokic* realm? In certain Yoga-disciplines there is a course which may be followed effectively by any individual that is based upon the nature of Desire itself. To say that a man is ruled by his desires is to say that he is governed by his likes and dislikes. If such a man is influenced exclusively by his likes and dislikes he is unable to withstand the dominance of the *Kama Lokic* level of consciousness. On the other hand, if he has brought his likes and dislikes into subordination to a spiritual level of motivation, then he has completely destroyed the adverse *Kama* influence so far as he is concerned. The degree to which an individual has freed himself in this sense is simply measured by the extent to which spiritual motivation dominates liking and disliking.

For man on the lower levels, as for all the animals, the motivating force to action is necessarily liking and disliking. In such cases the animal soul is just about the only active aspect of the general principle of Soul. But as man rises, first to the truly human and then to the spiritual level of Soul, he must transcend his likes and dislikes progressively so far as they have any influence on his motivation and action. "What, then, takes the place of liking and disliking as a basis of motivation?," it may be asked. At this point there is a principle that comes into play for which we have no term in English that is at all adequate. It is called "*Dharma*," and is considered as a conscious moving force. We call this in English "duty," but duty with us implies too much of external compulsion to be a satisfactory term. *Dharma* involves the notion of doing that which accords with the individual's status in the spiritual sense. The perception of individual *Dharma*

depends upon the awakening of the power of Intuition in the truest sense. With most men there is a battle between *Dharma* and Desire with Desire winning most of the time. But beyond a certain point the struggle becomes less and less severe until finally there is no happiness or peace for the individual save that he has the sense that he is moving within his *Dharma*. Then the satisfaction of desire adverse to his *Dharma* comes to have negative value and may even be disgusting. At this stage, an individual, instead of following his likes and avoiding his dislikes, has reached the point where fundamentally he likes to do what he knows he should do and is not content with anything less.

Now there is a very simple discipline by which an individual can build to the point where movement within his *Dharma* becomes natural for him. It lies in the discipline of one's likes and dislikes. It is excellent then every day to perform religiously some action which one knows he should do or is good for him to do, but which may be distasteful. The effect of this is to weaken the dominating power of Desire and to build the Will in a most healthy and desirable sense. This practice alone, if followed consistently, will make even a weak character strong. And character is the foundation stone of all Mastery. Ritualistic discipline of any kind may serve this end, provided it is followed without any regard for one's likes and dislikes in the matter. On the other hand, if an individual follows an intermittent course dictated by his impulses he will not make any progress in this mastery of Desire. It is of the highest importance to recognize that Desire unmastered is man's worst obstacle to spiritual realization.

Some object to this discipline on the ground that if they do not follow their impulses they lose all urge to action and have no inspiration. This may be the result at first, but if the training is followed consistently, it is found that a much higher power takes the place of what is lost. The individual will find his urge to action in a spiritual basis rather than a *Kamic* one, and instead of being an instrument of Inspiration he will attain command of Inspiration. Thus he will have asserted the superiority of his spiritual Manhood and the essentially servant status of all qualities to which formerly he permitted himself to be subservient. It is true that there is a period of darkness between the two states. But is it not worthwhile to face this relatively brief period with courage and become master of oneself rather than remain an indulged child, however brilliant?

The effect of this training is to render the individual progressively superior to the adverse conditions and influences of *Kama Loka*. On the other hand, it brings him into closer rapport to the *Bodhisattvas* which abound in the purer levels of the psychosphere of the earth. It is well worth its cost in effort.

Chapter IX

Devachan

This zone or world is sometimes called “*Devachan*” and at others “*Devaloka*.” The latter term means in the strict sense the “abode of the gods.” “*Chan*” carries the significance of “gladden” or “rejoice.” Thus these two designations are descriptive to a degree of the zone represented. For *Devachan* is a locality or rather a state in Consciousness where a condition of Bliss persists unalloyed by any pain, be it physical, emotional, mental or moral. This is not true of the companion zone which we might call *Avitchi-Devaloka* since, like *Devachan*, it transcends *Kama Loka* and stands on relatively the same spiritual level. But what *Devachan* is in terms of Good and Bliss, *Avitchi Devaloka* is in the complemental negative aspect of Evil and Misery. There are instances of subjective states that overlap these two zones where bliss would be alloyed by a kind of spiritual pain. But it would still remain true that the *Devachanic* state *qua Devachanic* is one of pure bliss. The phrase “abode of the gods” carries a meaning that is probably rather difficult for students brought up with the typical Western training both scientific and theological. The phrase is in a measure poetical, but by no means wholly so. The application of the granular or “block” principle to the structure of manifested Consciousness implies, as already previously stated, that Consciousness manifests on every plane of its laminated form through the appropriate groups of Beings ranging from simple or elemental forms up to highly organized entities which in their higher reaches transcend man in the spiritual scale. The *Devas* or “gods” are complex or compounded Beings that stand spiritually superior to man in his present state. Some of them are ex-men, others have not yet descended into the involutory cycle of the less spiritually superior to man while remaining rationally his inferior. The *Deva-level* of consciousness is that of *Devachan* and hence this is called the “abode of the gods.”

The notion of “*Devas*” or “gods” does not imply polytheism any more than does the Christian and Jewish concept of the angelic host. Polytheism and for that matter also monotheism are really attitudes of mind or ways in which man has related himself to superambient Being. The theistic view in either case involves the notion of extra-cosmic Being or Beings that stand superior to the domain of Law which governs the Cosmos both in the subtle as well as in the objective sense. The present philosophy is not polytheistic nor monotheistic nor, in the strict sense, pantheistic for the simple reason that *it is not theistic at all*. It does, however, comprehend those elements within it which for psychologically immature forms of human consciousness do afford a basis for each one of these various theistic views.

But all such views are partial and both scientifically and philosophically incorrect, however much they may be justified pragmatically as historic crutches for “crippled” forms of consciousness. This philosophy has far more in common with the best in the spirit of modern science than it has with theology. But inasmuch as the former has been predominantly materialistic it stands therefore in that respect at the diametric opposite pole. Whereas the assumed philosophy of our science has been what we might call “impersonal mechanism,” our present philosophy is “impersonal Spiritualism” to employ in its strictly correct sense a much-abused term. In other words, the basis of the Universe is not found in a being nor even in Being to be perfectly exact, but rather *in that which is the root of both Being and Non-Being*.

Hence, within this system there may be, and is, an elaborate hierarchy of beings reaching from the lowest possible entity up to centers of compounded Consciousness so high as to far transcend the highest God-concept which the imagination of man has ever been able to reach

even in its most exalted adumbration of transcendental Consciousness. But all of these from the highest to the lowest are as but humble creatures in the awful presence of THAT which to all alike is Unknowable. So our *Devas* are not “gods” which the wise man would ever approach in the attitude of worship, though the foolish majority rarely fail to make this mistake. Alone is the God-within, the “God prayed to in secret” that lies within the innermost consciousness of every being worthy of worship. As for the rest, they may deserve honor, respect, and even reverence, but never *worship*.

The Indian pantheon includes some three hundred million gods reaching from the very elemental, though entitized, nature forces up to highly transcendental Beings. But the Indian metaphysical sense is far too acute to find a real pluralism in this. The flower of both Indian philosophy and religion is the acme of Monistic Metaphysics, yet this is achieved without a denial of the gods any more than any other empiric fact. For it must be remembered that these gods are empiric realities for the Indian. Does the Western reader laugh? If so, let him pause a moment to reflect. Is the man born blind in some part of his sensorium in any position to laugh at the reports from experience on the part of those who are not limited by such blindness? We see Indians largely blind in a domain, i.e., the external practical, where we are to a peculiar degree wide awake. But they too have long been awake in a zone of awareness where mostly we find naught but a blind-spot. Yes, the gods are real, but not in any sense which invalidates the differential equations of modern science.

If *Devachan* is the abode of the gods, how does it relate to man? A pertinent question. It is the abode of the gods for the reason that it is the state of Consciousness which is the persistent or enduring condition of the *Devas*. Theirs is the happy state of unbroken bliss. Man represents what we might call the synthetic motif in the grand symphony of Consciousness. He bridges the gulf between misery and bliss and there lies before him the potentiality of transcending both. But equally well he may slip into either state as a relatively permanent condition; that is, he can join either the *Devas* or the Demons, both relatively spiritual entities, and thus fail of realizing temporarily or permanently his highest possibilities (i.e., that glorious possible heritage which St. Paul had in mind when he said: “Man made a little lower than the angels shall in glory reign higher than the angels”). Most men touch something of the state of the angels and of the demons as a fruitage of the causes they have sown in each objective life. The fruit of man’s actions and thought actuated by motives of nobility prepare for him a day when he lives in the unbroken blissful state of the gods. From the Consciousness-level of this noble company he drinks of the sustaining *Amrita* which gives to him the strength for new engagements on the (nowadays) harsh battlefield of objective Consciousness.

Devachan is not a sort of specially distant heaven-world as is sometimes conceived. While it bears a certain correlation to the heaven-concept, it is not any heaven as conceived in any exoteric religion. For in general the notion of paradise is of an already created place that bears a definite relationship to objective space. Now while it is true that the devotee of an exoteric religion may very well seem to be experiencing the sort of environment he expected yet, actually, he himself produced this appearance through his own imagination and expectation. *Devachan* really is a state of consciousness and is not an already-given external construction.

As already stated, space is not to be conceived of as a real external existence independent of all Consciousness. Kant has familiarized us with the view that space is the *a priori* form of perceptive consciousness and not simply an externally given world. While the present treatment of space as a whole does not entirely accord with the position of Kant, yet there is conformity between the two positions to the extent that space is viewed as a form imposed upon experience

from the substance of Consciousness itself. As viewed by Kant, the space of his objective plane is not the independent projection of individual consciousness, but the perceptive form imposed by Consciousness as such on this plane. Hence, so far as the individual is concerned, this space is objective and a common field for all units. To this extent there is nothing in this view that is incompatible with experience nor with occult philosophy. But the same principle does not apply to space taken in all senses and this distinction has a vital bearing upon the formal and spacial type of *Devachanic* Consciousness: *Devachan* is a subjective and non-perceptive state. That is, there is no given external world experienced perceptively by the *Devachanee*, as is already found preexisting in the empiric sense by the child born on this plane. This plane is reached by a withinward movement in Consciousness away from the whole domain of perceptive relationships. In principle it is, in fact, not inaccessible to the individual who still retains embodiment, for a certain aspect of his own subjective being always abides on this level, only it generally sleeps during objective life. But *Devachan* is really within every man. It is thus not a domain outside the limits of *Cosmos*. It is no nearer to the further reaches penetrated by the telescope than to any point where any individual may now be located. It is very important to understand this fact so thoroughly that even the semi-conscious habit of thinking in terms of objective distance is destroyed, so far as the *Devachanic* realm is concerned. Otherwise the student may fall into the predicament of the man who looks everywhere, high and low, for the spectacles he has been wearing all the time.

For the understanding of the *Devachanic* state a prior familiarity with the dominant Indian philosophies and with that current of thought in the West which found its first great exponent in Plato, then was continued through the Neo-Platonists, and today flows through our more spiritual philosophic systems will be of profound assistance. Plotinus gave the principle an especially clear formulation, i.e., that man possesses in a fundamental sense a dual nature. The outer and more familiar nature may be called the “sensible” man. This is the man of earth possessing physical senses. Within that sheath is a higher super-sensible man whom we may call the man of *intelligence*. Consciousness in this form does not operate as a result of stimulation derived through the senses, or, perhaps more correctly, this form of awareness is purely an intelligent existence. Now the fact of fundamental importance is that the inner Intelligent Nature is not to be regarded as a sort of epi-phenomenon that has grown upon the back of sensible existence, but is a pre-existence and is relatively primary. The stimulation of the perceptive or sense-life may very well serve to arouse in outer consciousness a greater or less degree of recognition of the Intelligent Order, and it unquestionably does afford the forms for expression, but the sense data are not the source of knowledge. It is thus the sensible nature rather than the Intellectual Nature that has a sort of epi-phenomenal existence.

It is just precisely the habit of viewing the sensible world as primary that has served to hide from us realization and understanding of the more subjective states of Consciousness such as those entered beyond the portal of death. We continually make the mistake of viewing knowledge as coming to us from external impressions. That knowledge is largely *aroused* by external impressions there can be no doubt, but to assert that knowledge *comes from* these impressions is quite another matter. This fundamental mistake leads us to view Reality as a presentment to perception, and thus we blind ourselves, like the men in Plato’s Parable of the Cave, and we spend all our time in the contemplation of shadows instead of facing the Light without which not even the shadow would be possible. Could we but realize the source of Knowledge as within our Inner Being then we would find the key to that Understanding which would destroy the misery and tragedy that enters so largely into the compound of objective life.

This is also the key to *Devachan*, not alone as an after-death state of consciousness, but as a realization at will during embodied life.

Devachan is literally an abode of Consciousness within us. For man living on the objective plane this is a subjective domain, but for him who has successfully passed through the inner gestation period it is his most objective state. One consequence of this--which will be more fully developed later--is that the embodied man can, by the proper means, awaken his latent *Devachanic* consciousness while the *Devachanee* cannot possibly reach down to the objective planes as he no longer has the necessary vehicles of action. The objective world is the domain of *perception*. When the vehicles of action on this plane are withdrawn, as in death, perception is no longer possible, and thus the function which perception plays with respect to knowledge is no longer served. This function we have spoken of as the arousing to recognition of a latent knowledge. On the level of *Devachan*, therefore, no essentially new knowledge can be made manifest. In *Devachan*, there is no awareness of new development in the empiric domain. But the elements implicit in the knowledge aroused in the just-completed objective cycle unfold in various degrees of elaboration dependent upon the intensity of the awakening and penetration that was involved at the time of the stimulation on the objective plane. These implicit elements are the raw material from which the *Devachanee* constructs his world of bliss. If these elements require form, in the sense of objective appearance, then the *Devachanee* will live in the corresponding space seemingly as objective to him as ever was the plane of embodied consciousness. But it will be his private space, self-created, not shared by the consciousness of anyone else, save where sympathetic attunement brings two or more into precisely the same Consciousness mode.

Lest the student may fall into an all-too-common error of far too greatly undervaluing *Devachanic* consciousness since it affords no further contact with perceptive data, it is well to bring out the importance of the unfoldment of implicit knowledge. Every experience that any individual may have is fraught with elaborations of implication and with significance which only the Sages among men develop *pari passu* with the process of experiencing, in anything like a complete degree. Incidentally, the consequence of this for the Sage is that He has little or no after-death *Devachan* for the simple reason that He has assimilated the value of *Devachan* while still embodied. But in the case of most men, especially of those who have led lives of extraordinary richness of sheer experiencing and of those Saints who are not also Sages, the hidden values of their experience are but slightly unfolded during the current incarnation. This leads to a corresponding elaboration and extending of *Devachanic* consciousness provided that the enveloping motivation of the experiencing was of a type that would lead to elaborations in the Intelligible world. Now, experience in and of itself is wholly valueless save in so far as it eventuates in the unfoldment of the elements implicit within it. Thus without the function of *Devachan* all experience is wholly wasted. And for most *Devachan* is almost solely an after-death state. Hence it is just precisely *Devachan* that affords the harvest of the fruits of objective life in so far as those fruits have enduring value. Accordingly, the *Devachanic* state is of the utmost importance in the evolution of that portion of the Life of Soul which passes through the "three worlds."

Just how far the elaboration of implicit elements may extend is well illustrated in the field of mathematics. All mathematical systems are elaborations based upon a small number of fundamental propositions popularly known as *axioms*. Now the axioms imply the complete systems which may be elaborated from them, hence he who knows the axioms in the implicit sense knows the whole of the systems. But to make this implicit knowledge explicit takes, as

every student of mathematics knows, an enormous amount of work. Further, the making of this knowledge explicit is precisely that which gives it both practical and theoretical value and unveils the hidden significance. The result is that the recognition of the primary propositions is by far the smallest part of the task involved in forming the completed structure of knowledge and value. The same principle is true with respect to objective experience as contrasted with the elaborative and assimilative period of *Devachan*. The development in this period is far more intensive and has far greater expansive value for consciousness than any other period or cycle.

The duration of the *Devachanic* cycle experienced by the individual is variable, but is proportional to the causes initiated during objective life. In connection with the question of *Devachanic* duration there is another error that must be guarded against. Subjective duration is as little like objective time as is *Devachanic* space unlike objective space. Our objective time is measured by a succession of cycles which really are successions of states of consciousness. We distinguish one day from another through the sequence of day-and-night alterations caused physically by the rotation of the earth relative to the sun. But day and night are simply two contrasted modes of perceptive consciousness. The sequence of these modes gives us a sense of lapse of time. In the same way the year is formed by a movement through the seasons which in their turn are states of perceptive consciousness marked by qualitative differences. This sequence we have synchronized with mechanical timepieces to which we commonly refer for our time-determinations. But the real basis of time-perception is not the time-piece but the natural sequence with which it is coordinated. Objective time, therefore, is nothing more nor less than a sequence of qualitatively variable perceptive states.

There is also a subjective time, but in this case the basis of measurement is an “affective tone,” rather than “perceptive contrast.” A given period of objective time may have quite variable values in terms of subjective time. If the affective tone involved in the experience of such a period is painful enough, then a very short period of time in the objective sense may seem like an age. On the other hand, in relatively blissful states of consciousness long periods will seem to have passed in almost no time at all. In this connection Einstein once gave a very pat answer to the question of what Relativity meant given in simple terms. He said: “When a man talks to a pretty girl for an hour, it seems to him only a minute. But let him sit on a hot stove for only a minute, and it seems longer than any hour! That is Relativity!” This is a beautiful illustration of the difference between subjective (or affective time) and objective perceptive time.

Since *Devachanic* consciousness is non-perceptive, objective time has no application there. There can be no sense of a measurable time as we understand it on the objective plane of Consciousness. A thousand years may be as a single day, and also a day may be filled with all the values of a thousand years. Hence when we speak of duration on the *Devachanic* level we are dealing with something wholly different from time as we know it in the timepiece sense. The nearest we reach to that sense of duration is realized during those periods when we are so happily occupied that we have lost all awareness of the lapse of the hours. In one sense we might call it a timeless state, but it is a state within duration since it has developmental value.

The only sense in which time-measurement may be applied to *Devachanic* interludes is by a relating of these periods to successive cycles of embodiment for the same Ego. In this sense great lapses of time may have transpired which, when considered with respect to the affective tone quality of the consciousness of the *Devachanee* may have seemed as but a short interlude. But since objective processes are slaves of perceptive time, the extent of these interludes is of importance and may have serious bearing upon the degree of evolutionary development effected within a given major objective cycle. There is such a thing as precious time wasted in *Devachan*

completing the assimilation of what we might call “side-track” activities. This point has a vital bearing on the fact that the highest course possible to man is not that which leads to the greatest possible extension of the *Devachanic* interludes, however valuable moderate periods may be.

It is said that the average time spent in *Devachan* is from one thousand to fifteen hundred years as measured in objective time. But this is only an average from which the individual variation may be extreme. In an individual case the period may vary from the barest contact with almost instantaneous return, to enormous periods of millions of years. The extent of the period is determined by the number and the intensity of causes sowed in the objective cycle of Consciousness that are of a nature which bears *Devachanic* fruit. The unevolved primitive man will experience but short periods as will also the more developed civilized man who has sown very sparingly of the seed which brings a *Devachanic* harvest. On the other hand, the saint who is not also a sage, that is, the good and pure types who are lacking in Wisdom and who therefore may have fallen under the influence of the more spiritual *Rupa Devas*, may experience periods that are on the order of geological ages. The mass of men, however, have a more moderate experience of something probably more than a thousand years.

In objective-time terms it is thus evident that the *Devachanic* cycle is several-fold longer than the antecedent objective cycle. This proportion is analogous to the difference in time-lapse in sowing a field with some grain and the period required for the maturing and fruiting of the crop. Or, again, consider the difference in time required to apprehend the axioms of the mathematical system, and that which is necessary for the complete unfoldment of it in explicit terms. It is a quite familiar fact that it takes far less time to initiate a process than it does to carry it on to final fruition. It is therefore simply in accord with our common experience that we should find the objective time correspondence of the *Devachanic* cycle so much greater than the embodied period of life.

The laminated structure of Consciousness taken in its grand manifested aspect is repeated within the limits of the *Devachanic* zone, as indeed is the case with all differentiated planes. Thus, corresponding to the various planes of objective human consciousness which are of a type that eventuates in a subjective harvest having permanent value, there will be the appropriate sub-zone within the limits of the grand zone of *Devachan* itself. A classification of the general modes of human consciousness on this plane of Being would give us a key to the lamina of *Devaloka*. Consonant with the septenary principle the grandest divisions would be seven in number, but under this subdivision would be indefinitely, though not infinitely, extended. In the last analysis each center of human consciousness--indeed the same is true for every creature--is itself a unique plane which may be approximated but is never quite identical with any other plane. This is the reason why communion between individuals is never complete. Similarly, and in fact as a necessary implication, there are as many states in *Devachan* as there are denizens, both of the native and transitory groups. Every individual has his own unique *Devachanic* state which to a limited extent may overlap such states of other individuals, but in no case are any two such states exactly coextensive. This follows from the fact that individuality implies differentiation, and the existence of two identical persons is inconceivable.

On the planes of perceptive relationships, i.e., the objective planes, conflict of forces is possible in a sense that cannot exist in a subjective state. This grows out of the external character of perception, or at least its relatively external character. Thus on the objective plane the individual is forced into a cognizance of forces that are not concentric with himself considered as an individualized center, however true it may be that in the ultimate metaphysical sense all forces are concentric. Hence dissonant personal relationship is possible and thus a more or less

complete breaking of the “Chinese Wall” of individual insularity is possible while in the incarnated cycle. While it is true that there is a powerful tendency for all such breached walls to reform themselves, they almost invariably are formed to embrace a larger inclusiveness until ultimately in the more successful instances the insular individuality takes on continental scope in the form of the grandest human types. Conflict between the dissonant and discordant, while one of the curses of the outer plane, yet serves the vitally important function of so widening barriers that the overlapping of individual spheres of consciousness is vastly extended. Through our associates on this plane we contact that which is not like ourselves and thus are forced to expand, often in spite of ourselves. But in *Devachan*, this is impossible.

Devachan essentially belongs to the intelligible nature of man and is far too subjective to be perceptive. Nothing can be known in that state of the state of consciousness of anyone else save to the extent that such states may intersect. We carry our friends with us into *Devachan* only to the extent that we have become one with them in consciousness while incarnated. To this extent the friends may be said to abide in us in a deathless sort of intimacy, but this union does not comprehend incongruent elements. The result is the *Devachanee* has with him in his subjective space all of his friends to the extent he has sympathetically understood them, but lacking all of the features in which they have been mysteries to him or have been incompatible. The *Devachanee* does not therefore contact the full nature of anyone else. But this fact by no means decreases his joy as the relationships are naturally those of the greatest harmony. There are none of the unhappy disillusionments that so largely roughen the fair field of personal relationships on this plane.

The function of *Devachan* is not the expansion of the Ego but rather that of deepening it in the dimension of intensiveness. It serves the function of allowing the penetration into significance and meaning of expansive processes set up on the objective level, but rarely completed while in the embodied state. Thus the *Devachanee* cannot acquire knowledge save in the sense of the unfolding of that which he already carries with him as an individual center. To many it may seem that this is not an ideal state and in the metaphysical sense this criticism is well taken. But neither is the objective plane what might be called “ideal,” yet it is the absolutely necessary supplement of the *Devachanic* plane. There are states that transcend *Devachan* but they equally transcend the more inferior worlds of *Kama Loka* and earth-consciousness. The problems of such transcendence will be discussed in the last chapter.

The various subdivisions of *Devachan* fall into two very important classes. These are known as the *Rupa* (having form) and *Arupa* (formless) levels. The latter are much the higher and border on *Nirvana*. The vast majority of humankind are not yet able to set up causes which will eventuate in subjective consciousness on the formless levels. The vast bulk of imagination, thinking and aspiration is in terms of form as is revealed by a study of the various heaven-concepts that mankind has evolved. These worlds are almost invariably built in terms of things seen, heard, felt, or otherwise in forms of sense-perception. The *Devachanic* state corresponding to this stage of consciousness is one where the subjective structures are in terms of form. Apparently the familiar objective environment of the incarnated cycle is again experienced in *Devachan*. To be sure, this reconstruction however much self-produced is not self-consciously formed. It appears as though it were an already given world to the *Devachanee* and, in fact, he can have no awareness of having departed from earth-consciousness. In one sense, he is in a dream-state in which there is no possibility of correction as there is no friction between the subjective stream of ideation and external impression, since there is no possibility of the latter. No creature within his created world ever behaves in such a way as to produce a dissonance that

could have an awakening/shock value. Hence, to the consciousness of the *Devachanee* there has been no death or break in the continuity of the life that was lived on earth. To be sure, he is in a state that is shorn of all purely earthy elements, but he cannot be aware of this as the very memory of this is lost in the process of *Kama lokic* parturition. Hence, if he lives in a world where there is no evil nor pain (while the earth-plane in point of fact is predominantly colored by these qualities), he is aware of no incongruity, as is likewise the case with the dreamer who feels no difficulty or strangeness in the so largely topsy-turvy world of *Svapna*.

But while the *Devachanic* state is in one sense dreamlike, it yet has an intensity that makes it far more real than any dream. Indeed the life there is far more intense and enlivens the inner consciousness far more than does any experience in objective earth-life. We might say that the investment of Egoic man with a gross physical body is like enclosing a sensitive cell in a relatively non-conducting sheath. The result is that the electric interplay between the cell and the environment is largely retarded though not completely prevented. So also with man, the inherent sensitivity of his more subtle nature while aroused into activity by external contact, yet moves under the restriction of an inhibiting dullness. In more subjective states this dullness is removed and the result is a far more intense state of consciousness. There are occasional dreams in which we experience this intensification of life. While the average dream has but little effect upon the waking consciousness, yet in these exceptional instances the waking state seems by contrast very dull and obtuse. Such dreams often produce effects that are felt for days and at times produce the impression that it is the objective state that is really the dream. Sometimes in this way exalting states of consciousness are experienced that not only have a protracted after-effect on waking consciousness, but even affect what we might call the philosophical perspective of the individual, perhaps permanently. Clearly these experiences are empiric evidences of an inner subjective reality transcending anything belonging to the objective domain.

So if we call *Devachan* a dream-like state, it is not to be confused in any way with the ordinary dream which is a sort of consciousness that may be likened to the dim light reflected by the moon during its total eclipse by the earth. This dim light is a secondary reflection, and so are most dreams. As we have shown, *Devachanic* states are effects of causes produced during earthly incarnations, and so they may be regarded in one sense a “reflection.” Now, if we can imagine that reflection carried closer to the central sun than its original on the objective plane ever was, it would acquire a quality of Light and Radiance far transcending its earthly original. Hence *Devachanic* experience is at one and the same time derivative from the earth, and yet is far more primary and far more alive. Hence we have a state that is both a dream *and* an accentuated reality. In contrast to the experience of the vast majority of mankind there is that of the few who have lived more or less in terms of abstract principles. Such lives produce effects upon the *Arupic* levels of *Devachan*, and in some instances even penetrate to a degree into the *Turiya* state. This is the subjective domain of the philosopher, *par-excellence*. The philosopher is near to Liberation as his reflections have carried him much farther than most attain toward a realization of Reality. The grip of form and appearance upon him has been weakened and hence something of self-conscious awareness is carried with him into after-death states. The result is that he is not so much enveloped by the forms of his subjective creations and thus has something of what might be called an “objective” view toward his self-produced states. Yet, since the philosopher who is not also a Sage has only partially effected his Liberation, he does not completely transcend the power of *Devachan*. Thus his subjective habitat becomes that zone of consciousness which borders upon (yet does not fully enter) the Fourth State where liberation from Illusion is complete. This is the higher or *Arupic* level of *Devachan*.

There is a question as to what it is which experiences the *Devachanic* state. On one hand we have shown it as related to earth-experience since the concrete subjective state is an elaboration of modes of consciousness initiated on the level of objective life. At the same time *Devaloka* is on the level of the intelligible nature of man which stands as antecedent to the sensible nature. Thus in that actual experience of the subjective state there is something of both natures. What aspect of the man is it, then, that actually passes through these inner modes of consciousness?

It is the personal man that was on earth though not the whole of his personality is carried on to *Devaloka*, as was shown in the chapter on *Kama Loka*. This is necessarily so for the reason that the elaboration of the earth-initiated experience must necessarily have the same egoic base of reference in order that a continuation of the same consciousness-mode can possibly be. Thus the life-experience of John Smith necessarily has its peculiar form and significance because it centers around the personal ego known as John Smith. Eliminate this center and the peculiar and essential basis of the experience as a concrete or particular existence is destroyed. The same principle is true when applied to the *Devachanic* state. The subjective continuation of the objective life-experience of John Smith does not become mere experience in general unrelated to any center since the peculiar form of that experience inheres essentially in the personal apperceptive center around which it was originally builded. So it is the John Smith that was which still is the apperceptive center in *Devachan*, save that the purely earthy part of his personal nature has been pruned off so that not even the memory of it continues in *Devachan*.

There is an element of fundamental justice in this. The personal man, the John Smith who says "I am this John Smith and none other" has been newly created when the Higher Ego enters incarnation. To be sure this personal nature has been formed out of the tendencies or *Skandhas* carried over from the old personalities that in past incarnations clothed the Higher or Reincarnating Ego. But this material has been worked over so that the lower egoic identity of the new personality is wholly different, just as a new house of new design may have been constructed out of the lumber produced by the wrecking of an old building. In this new incarnation the Reincarnating Ego reaps the rewards and penalties of action in past lives and thus garners Wisdom. In this process the new personality incurs what for it is unearned suffering since being a new entity, it can have no responsibility for the past. This would entail an absolute injustice unless nature afforded some means for recompense. It is in *Devachan* that this balance is struck.

The period in *Devachan*, whether long or short, ultimately in every case reaches the point when the force of the originating causes is exhausted. Then the *Devachanic* life begins to wane and the apperceptive center of this subjective experience is gradually indrawn. The energy which formed the vortex of this particular personal ego has spent itself, and it now becomes simply a part of the larger Egoic whole which has served it as a matrix. The old personality in so far as it was an egoic center gradually dies out, this time forever. It is not however lost to memory through eternity as there comes a culminating time in the grander cycles of the Higher Egoic life when all the personal lives are gathered together as beads on the string which forms the unbroken course of the life of the Reincarnating Ego. But the personal self, the John Smith that was, is no more as a continuing center of consciousness. We might say that these personal egos are like compound molecules possessing variable degrees of stability. Some remain stable for but brief periods such as some of the subtle organic compounds, while others persist for even geological ages as is the case with certain (usually quite simple) inorganic substances. But all ultimately are decomposed. Yet the atomic components remain unaltered for immeasurably greater periods.

This persistence of atomic identity may be likened to the continuity of higher Egoic consciousness. It persists through multitudes of molecular compounds, which in our figure, corresponds to personal embodiments.

As the personal egoic life in *Devachan* wanes it is as though it were drawn into a final sleep from which it never awakens. Then it is that the real Inner Man is again drawn forth into a new cycle of objective life where it is once more clothed in a new persona which is no longer the John Smith that was, though possessing such similarity to that old personal self that there is a qualitative continuity between the two. Thus, it is not the personal man that reincarnates, but a far more permanent being that lies within the personality.

As has already been stated in an earlier part of this chapter, the state of *Devachan* is one of unbroken bliss. It is not true, however, that all consciousness which reaches beyond *Kama Loka* is of a blissful nature. There is the more enduring evil as well as the more lasting good. It is not correct to identify the *Kama lokic* shell with the evil in nature as a whole. That remains in *Kama Loka* which is of too earthy a nature to penetrate into the deeper and purer levels of Consciousness. Much of these more earthy remains would have to be classed as neither "good" nor "evil," but rather simply "gross" or "animalistic." The eating, drinking and brutish passion-filled man is simply an animal, and "evil" does not attach to these qualities, *per se*. They become "evil" only under a misuse that is possible by association with an intelligent being. By themselves they are no more good nor evil than are the same qualities existing in any of the animals. They are of the earth (and therefore "earthy"), yet necessary for the maintenance of objective living vehicles, but having no part whatsoever in the higher or inner life of the human being. Hence that part of the human nature connected with these functions and desires remains with the *Kama lokic* shell. Since man has so largely misused and made vices out of these desires he has enveloped them in large measure with the aura of evil. Hence, more often than otherwise, the *Kama lokic* relics are evil in their tendencies. But the quality of evil does not attach exclusively to this lower nature. There are, unfortunately, far worse manifestations of evil possessing the degree of purity necessary to reach beyond the limits of *Kama Loka*. The corresponding subjective state of consciousness is obviously not *Devachanic*, but it is on an analogous inner level.

Again referring to the diagram of Figure 5, it will be noted that the portion of the third sector above the line A''' is designated *Devachan*, while below the line it is called "*Avitchi*" *Devalokic*. These are two zones which stand upon the same spiritual level and yet are the complementary opposites of each other. The mode of Consciousness in these two zones is of the same general type in that they are subjective-intelligible and not perceptive, but they are diametrically opposed in that while *Devachan* is a state of unbroken bliss, *Avitchi-Devaloka* is an equally sustained condition of misery. It is a mistake, often made, to identify the spiritual aspect of Being with Bliss and the material aspect with its opposite, Pain. Absolute Spirit or pure Subjectivity cannot be described by any qualitative adjective. It is not simply the positive aspect of the various pairs of opposites, such as good rather than evil, bliss rather than misery, etc. It is that which is the synthesis or apperceptive root of all qualities whatsoever. Hence concerning pure Spirit we can predicate Being only. It follows that in the movement toward the spiritual Center we will find every quality existing upon any intermediate level dogged by its own opposite on a corresponding level. In the diagram, the positive qualities are represented as lying above A''' and the negative below, and further, the arrangement of the diagram with respect to A''' is perfectly symmetrical. In other words, darkness matches Light exactly. Accordingly, *Avitchi-Devaloka* is the perfect mirror reflection of *Devachan*.

We have already shown that noble and altruistic motivation in action initiated on the objective plane is the primary basis of planting a crop of causes which will lead to a harvest of effects in *Devachan*. We might define these causes in more precise and philosophical terms, but this will do for the present. Now it is the qualities of nobility and altruism that lead to *Devachan*, but it is action involving personal ego-transcendence which leads to the fruition of conscious effects upon the general level of *Devaloka* whether in the sense of *Avitchi* or *Devachan*. To make this distinction clearer, we might say that the condition of extended continuity of self-conscious consciousness--such as John Smith continuing in his own identity as John Smith--is the cultivation of that activity and interest which transcends the zone of personal egoism, while the condition of the realization of a subjective state of bliss is dependent upon the practice of virtue during the embodied cycle. There are two fundamental ways in which personal ego-transcendence may be achieved: the positive road leading to *Devachan*, the negative to *Avitchi-Devaloka*.

The general actuating principle underlying the positive qualities is love. This term is very unfortunate as it is employed with quite diverse meanings and it will be necessary to define the sense in which it is used here to avoid misunderstanding. In its most common usage "love" means the attractive aspect of the great biological passion, i.e., sexual-desire. While something of love in the more fundamental sense is involved in this, (since love is "attraction" in one aspect) yet love in the sense that has significance for *Devachanic* consciousness involves infinitely more than is possible in the field of an earthly passion. We mean the term in the sense in which St. Paul employed it, and which was translated as "charity" in the King James version of the New Testament. The significance of love lies in its power to produce self-abnegation by identification with a wider zone of interest. Thus through love as patriotism, men sacrifice themselves by suffering and dying freely for their country, though from the standpoint of the personal-ego, this is simple abnegation. Likewise they give themselves for their friends, for causes, for ideals, in the love of Truth, etc. In all genuine instances of love the personal ego and its interests are forgotten in a devotion to a wider field. The effect of this is identification with that which transcends personal egoism, and as a consequence self-identity persists beyond the limits of personality. This is the rationale of Jesus' statement: "He who loses his life shall find it." He who loses his life by transcendence of personal egoism shall find his life in the new egoic center from which the new circumference of interests radiates.

But love is not the only quality that leads to personal ego-transcendence. Its negative aspect, or hate, does the same thing. It is a familiar fact that men forget their personal interests in hatred. This is the fundamental reason why no judicial punishment, however severe, can ever control acts of violence dictated by hatred, provided the hatred is sufficiently strong. In the actions dictated by hatred, men forget the cost to themselves as persons, or rather they become quite indifferent to the cost. This is nothing more nor less than personal ego-transcendence which is the analogue on the negative side of the self-sublimation produced by love. Through the binding power of hatred men build a more or less transcendental self-identity which involves a corresponding degree of personal self-abnegation. Hate is thus as truly a spiritual power as is love, but its harvest is as horrible as that derived from love is blissful.

He who hates well earns *Avitchi-Devaloka* which is a continuation of self-identity in the subjective state. But such a state of consciousness as this is continuous horror prolonged almost endlessly. It is a veritable nightmare seemingly lasting throughout eternity. He who murdered in hatred and was hung will spend ages killing his victim and facing execution. Dante got the idea pretty well and gave it a beautiful typical portrayal in his "Inferno," provided his theological

nonsense is expurgated out of the picture. The state is, of course, not eternal as it is a compounded mode of Consciousness and that which is compounded has only limited duration regardless of whether its dominant quality is negative or positive. But just as the effect of bliss is to make time seem short, so likewise misery produces the reverse effect and may give the value of great ages to what is but a short interval in objective time. So in one sense Dante is correct in speaking of a state of suffering infinitely extended. For this may very well seem to be the case relative to the affective tone of the state of consciousness in question. However, in the objective sense the time interval is limited and would be of similar orders to those applying to the *Devachanee*.

It is probably only very rarely that an individual attains the degree of sustained monstrous evil that would eventuate in a subjective cycle within *Avitchi-Devaloka* alone. Predominantly, the character of men is mixed and only rarely have individuals attained purity in either good or evil. The man who was actuated by even a strong hatred in one set of relationships may very well have shown noble motivation in others. Likewise those who have loved well and unselfishly at times lapse into the negative aspect of this quality. For instance, it is difficult for a people suffering under a harsh alien government not to feel hatred for their rulers, yet the same people may very well manifest noble feelings in most relationships. The complete elimination of all tendency toward hatred on one hand, and on the other extending from mild regret and remorse for a relatively small wrong done another to the sustained intensity of unfathomable misery, the fruitage of conscious and monstrous evil. The actual subjective state which a given individual may experience may be an actual blend of *Devachanic* and *Avitchi-Devalokic* qualities. Thus, for instance, he who has cruelly wronged another for the love of some one may well find his corresponding subjective bliss that has grown out of his love distinctly salted with pain which is the efflorescence of the wrong done.

There is a consideration of the highest importance growing out of the fact that incarnated man has within his subjective being that level of consciousness which we have called *Devaloka*. It cannot be too strongly urged that this *Loka* is not a place where man goes after passing through the portal of death. It is a state within his own depths of consciousness. Hence it is, in principle, possible for a physically incarnated man to penetrate this level before physical dissolution occurs. Indeed, this does happen at times during sleep though unconsciously so far as the personal mind is concerned in most cases. But it may happen consciously and deliberately although the power to do this fully is a phase of Adeptship. Yet individuals of high purity and noble aspirations do, at times, unknowingly enter the *Devachanic* levels within themselves and sometimes within the corresponding level of their close friends who are discarnate. It is, however, possible for the student to make conscious use of the latent power consciously in a modified form that does not involve the possession of Adept power. The significant fact to bear in mind is that *Devachan* serves primarily the function of assimilation. A life full of generating causes are fruitful in *Devachanic* values, but where these values have been but little understood and assimilated during the outer life period, they will be followed, as a rule, by a very extended subjective cycle. The reason why this is so is, of course, clear. On the contrary, a life that has been well filled with meditative thought devoted to drawing out the values and significance of current experience may even dispense entirely with the necessity of a subjective *Devachanic* cycle after death. The reason for this is that the *Devachanic* function has been exercised *pari passu* with the outer life, and there remains at death little or nothing more to assimilate. This latter course is by all means the most effective for securing the most out of life within a given objective time-interval. The aspirant for Adeptship finds this course practically a necessity.

The course indicated for the student is to employ appropriate means for penetrating into as nearly as may be the full values of his experience as it proceeds. Using the term in its broad sense this is the practice of meditation, by which is not meant those technical processes designed for the inhibition of thought. The latter serve a special function but are an unwise practice, save under exceptional circumstances rarely met under the conditions of our modern complex life. Meditation in the sense here recommended implies the use of thought for the delving into the values of experience. To a certain extent (and especially to the new student) at first it seems it is a process involving the outer mind only, but with continued practice, it progressively involves the deeper powers of the mind that belong to the persisting subjective levels. The consequence of this practice is that from an outer point of view the life seems to be lived very slowly, for it is naturally less concentrated in external activity. In point of fact in terms of time lived over long cycles involving several incarnations it is much the most rapid method of assimilating life-values. It rapidly ceases to be necessary to extensively repeat the same form of experience to unveil the significance contained within it. This manifestly becomes a very important factor in the saving of time, or rather in causing time to render the largest possible harvest for a given period.

An age, like the present one in human affairs, where there seems to be an almost insensate desire to rush toward no place in particular, just so long as the process is fast enough, is one of the very best imaginable to produce greatly extended subjective periods. The seed of causes are being sown on a mass-production scale, and scarcely any time is taken off for penetration into the value and significance of the process. The result must be tremendous accumulations for later assimilation on the subjective or *Devalokic* levels, except where the activity is of too low a level to produce effects beyond *Kama Loka*. The consequence is that our tremendous rush really means an actual slowing down when we come to the final settling of the account. He who races to free himself from Time has but strengthened his bondage to Time! Only by taking time to penetrate into the significance of events is genuine Liberation from Time realized.

Chapter X

Mediumship and Spiritualism

Within the past sixty or seventy years there has developed in a marked degree a form of abnormal psychical phenomena which has come to be generally known as mediumship. Repeatedly the question has been raised regarding the genuineness of these phenomena yet, in the fact of a vast number of fraudulent practices designed to capitalize on the gullibility of a considerable portion of the public, there remains a sufficient mass of well-established evidence to show beyond reasonable doubt that there does exist unusual psychical powers which are extraordinarily enveloped in some individuals. A number of thoroughly competent scientists have seriously investigated this field and reported themselves convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena however incomplete our knowledge of its significance may be. Among these men stand out conspicuously the names of Sir Oliver Lodge, the well-known British physicist; Zollner, a German physicist; and Baron Schrenk-Nottzing. The American philosopher William James devoted much time to this field, and while he found much manifest fraud, yet there remained a residue of phenomena which, he was convinced, was genuine. There exist at the present time scientific societies devoted to the study of this field and even some University Chairs have been set up and funded for this purpose. There is, accordingly, no reasonable ground to question the fact that these phenomena do exist, whatever the interpretation of them may be.

A study of medieval and ancient religious and magical literature reveals the fact that the mediumistic type of phenomena is by no means new. In earlier days it was known as a form of sorcery, and has always been frowned upon by the Sages, not because of any question as to its factual status, but for the reason that it was deemed an injurious practice. It is well known in India under the name of *Bhut-bali* worship and is firmly opposed by responsible Brahmanical leaders. Hence we are not witnessing today a fundamentally new psychical phenomenon, but simply the latest cycle of its strong manifestation.

In designating these phenomena as “mediumship,” a distinctly special or technical use of the term is implied. In the general sense as applied to a human-being, the term “medium” means “a person through whom, or through whose agency, another acts.” In this sense everyone, at some part of the time, is a medium as an unavoidable consequence of social life. There is nothing necessarily invidious in this connotation. But in the specific and technical sense it means control in speech and action by the will of another person or disembodied being, whether human or not. In this sense a hypnotized subject is a medium for the hypnotic operator, and in that case both are incarnated human beings, at least in general. But the application most generally made of the term is in the case where the control is either disembodied or, if not, operates upon the medium from a subjective level.

“Spiritualism” is another term having both a general and specific connotation. In the philosophical sense it is the doctrine that Spirit is the only Reality, matter possessing only a derivative existence. Spirit in this sense is pure essence and never manifests save through the instrumentalism of matter. It is identical with Consciousness in the absolute sense and is indivisible since divisibility is exclusively a quality of matter. The philosophical background of this work is Spiritualism in this sense, as is also the case with the great philosophical systems known as Monistic Idealism. This is the strictly correct usage of this term, but is not the sense implied when employed in connection with mediumship as commonly understood. In the latter usage, the word designates an interpretative doctrine relative to the phenomena of mediumship.

It is the doctrine that mediumistic communication involves actual contact with disembodied spirits, together with cognate theories founded upon this belief. Spiritualism in his sense has come to have more religious than philosophical significance.

Practice of mediumship and belief in the reality of mediumistic phenomena by no means necessarily implies spiritualism. There are animistic interpretations of these phenomena which in a greater or less degree diverge from the standpoint of spiritualism. However little standing animism may have with the majority of scientists it nevertheless represents a point of view relative to mediumship that is far more scientific in spirit than is spiritualism. In this case mediumistic phenomena may be viewed as having little or no religious significance. It should thus be clear that one can accept the reality of mediumistic phenomena and yet wholly disagree with fundamental spiritualistic doctrine. Such, in fact, is the position taken in the present work. Our position would be classed in philosophy as a form of *Animism*.

It is not our purpose at present to make an extensive analysis of the different interpretative standpoints relative to mediumship but to present the position maintained in our system and to controvert the main thesis of spiritualism. When understood much in current spiritualism becomes almost as objectionable as primitive devil-worship, and manifestly if this fact were realized many sincere devotees of spiritualism would be saved from the folly of honoring that which all too often is fundamentally base. Through spiritualism the manifestation of phenomena that are largely the result of a form of psychical pathology is encouraged, and as the indulgence of these abnormal tendencies often produces mental and moral disintegration, the consequence is that the effect of spiritualistic belief is largely invidious. So the primary purpose of this chapter is to present a warning against a widespread but very dangerous belief. As the primary doctrines of spiritualism constitute a theory of after-death states the discussion of this subject is in a large degree related to the main thesis of the present work.

One of the most important reasons for an insistence upon an understanding of the constitution of man lies in connection with this subject of mediumship. In genuine psychic mediumship, the personal vehicle of man is brought under a more or less complete control of extraneous centers of consciousness. If man were not a compound being there could be no such control. But as a concrete being man is not a simple entity. The real spiritual being acts through a compound instrument, as has already been described. And as the instruments or vehicles employed are living and therefore conscious organisms they have their own sphere of spontaneous action apart from the direction originating in the ensouling spiritual entity. Thus the relationship between the latter and the former is roughly similar to that between a horseman and his steed. The skilled horseman gains a high degree of control over his mount approaching, in some cases, the perfection where but a single will animates the two. But initially there are two distinct wills and with most riders some measure of conflict persists to the end. The difference in the case of man in relation to his *Upadhis* lies largely in a greater intimacy than ever exists between a rider and his horse, though there well may be a sense in which originally this difference was negligible. Now very few horsemen train their steeds so that they will refuse to tolerate other riders. Hence, the rule is a broken horse may be ridden by anyone who has riding skill. This suggests what can happen in the case of some mediumistic controls.

The most fundamental initial training on the path of *Chelaship*, which leads to the goal of Mastery, is a discipline designed to effect a high perfection in control over the intermediate and physical vehicles (*Sukshmopadhi* and *Sthulopadhi*). It is of primary importance that the Higher Ego gain undisputed rulership over these two aspects of the lower nature, so that one will dominate the whole man, and that will centers in the Higher Ego. When this is effected, two

important results follows: first, the lower nature ceases to control, even part of the time, the actions and thought of the incarnated man, and second, extraneous centers of consciousness cannot use this lower nature as a vehicle, save under very special conditions and then only with the active consent of the ensouling Higher Ego. The discipline that effects this control achieves this result by a process which knits the various principles very closely together, and while the training includes the development of the power to function in the subtle vehicle (or *Upadhi*), separately from the physical form, yet this is done in such a way that the latter remains closed to any extraneous invasion. The effecting of this closely cemented condition of the principles requires the building of a rigorous autonomy of the personal psycho-sphere and the unequivocal assertion of the individual will in this domain. A most essential feature in this training is the forming the habit of viewing the Higher Ego as in no sense extraneous. It is most emphatically not a practice of identifying oneself with the lower self or ego and then holding this self-passive before the supposed influence of the Higher Ego regarded as something outside or beyond one's self even though on a subjective plane of Consciousness. Rather the *Chela* is required to identify his self-consciousness with his Higher Ego and from that level command his personal nature. Thus the primary discipline is not for the development of receptiveness, but rather of true self-determined assertiveness. When this foundation-stone has been well laid, it is time enough to develop the receptiveness which is then freed from the danger of becoming negative passivism. Now a very important purpose served by this training is that it guards against the pitfall of mediumship, a condition which makes Adeptship impossible until it has been mastered. When the *Chela* has gained this degree of control over his personal and physical nature, he is like the master-rider whose will has become the will of his steed, and who, in addition, has so trained the latter that it will not allow anyone else to ride it.

Mediumship may be either natural or acquired, though in the former case it is the result of causes produced in earlier incarnations, and so in the strictest sense we may say that it is always acquired. But relative to a given incarnation it may be "natural," and thus develop spontaneously. However, the condition of its most effective practice, or of its development if it is to be acquired, is the practice of passivity. This means at least the temporary abnegation of Higher Egoic self-rule so that outside influences may dominate the vehicle which includes the lower mind, the *Kamic* nature and the living physical organism. This is simply like throwing wide open the stable-doors so that strange beings may have access to and ride the steed of the personal vehicle. The result is that the real owner of the horse is either partly or completely unhorsed, temporarily and sometimes permanently. Herein lies one of the explanations of multiple personalities.

A very pitiful fact is that often sincere and aspiring individuals enter the practice of passivity, thinking that this is the noble course of self-abnegation whereby spiritual Realization is attained. But true self-abnegation is *not* passivism by any manner of means. It is rather the positive identification of one's selfhood with the Higher Egoic nature and the active rooting out of all elements of the lower nature that stand as incompatible. This is true Self-assertion and is positive from the level with which selfhood has been identified. It *seems* like abnegation to those whose selfhood is still centered on the personal plane, and at times also does it so seem to the striving individual when temporarily he has dropped back to the lower level. But the more he maintains himself on the higher level, the less sense he has of renunciation or abnegation as he stands identified with the triumphant victor in the issue. He begins to realize his will as one with the Universal Will and thus he comes progressively to find contentment under all conditions. But his path all the while has been positive and truly Self-assertive, never negatively passive. The

distinction involved here is of the very highest importance, as it is precisely on this difference of emphasis the paths of Life diverge, one leading upward through *Chelaship* to ultimate Adeptship, the other descending into the morass of mediumship in one or another of its various phases.

There is a vast range of forms of mediumship. It is by no means confined to those more striking cases where an extraneous center of consciousness, more or less intelligent, takes over the personal vehicle of the medium for the expression of ideas or the performance of action not at all natural to or even possible for the mediumistic individual normally. There is also a mediumship with respect to ideas. Ideas are seed-like living entities capable of growth when planted in the appropriate soil, and they develop into structures consonant with their own inherent nature. And just as ordinary plant-seeds may develop into noxious weeds or useful plants, so also ideas are potentially constructive or destructive. The Self-centered man as truly as the non-Self-centered is responsive to ideas flowing in the common mind-plasm, but owing to the fact of his Self-centered condition his response is controlled by his own Self-directed discrimination. Thus his relationship to ideas is not mediumistic but consciously selective and thus while the idea he may formulate may not be actually original with him, yet through the positive selection it *is* genuinely his idea. On the other hand, the mediumistic carrying of ideas is not selective under a Self-directed discrimination. Such individuals are mere involuntary carriers of anything which may enter their individual consciousness. Any experienced teacher readily recognizes this type. They receive what he may put forth with the minimum of resistance, yet he realizes that he has effected no permanent result as the real Self of the individual involved has not acted upon the idea. Incompatible ideas are received with equal readiness and all flows through the mind impartially. Such persons become extensions of the teacher's thought so long as they are directly under his influence, but so soon as the latter is removed, they become mediums for other currents indiscriminately.

Mediumship with respect to ideas is very widespread and is probably even more the rule than the exception. A great deal and possibly a majority of the religious and political following is of this type. Within this group, self-directed thinking is really exceptional. The result is that the gravitational pull of the mass of humanity is toward mediumship rather than in the direction of Adeptship. It is easy to be a medium, but it is very difficult to be an Adept. Accordingly, spiritual relaxation results in an easy flow downward into mediumship, while Adeptship may be attained only as the result of a stiff row upward toward the source of the stream. The superficial similarity between true *Chelaship* and mediumship that has confused so many lies in the fact that both represent courses in the stream of spiritual ideation, but whereas the *Chela* travels up the stream through energetic self-propulsion, the medium floats downward passively. If the latter course is maintained persistently and indefinitely, the result will be extinction in the sea of primitive formlessness, just as the smallest river eventually reaches the ocean. It is true that this primitive formlessness is a kind of synthetic state, but it involves a kind of consciousness that is not self-conscious. The synthesis of the Adept is symbolized by the mountain-peak. From the mountain top the vista of the world stands united in one grand view, hence the peak is a synthetic symbol as truly as the ocean. But the peak is relatively fixed and pointed and thus it also symbolizes Self-centered and self-conscious consciousness.

One of the primary attractions that spiritualism holds for the masses is that it seems to afford an avenue of communication between the deceased individual and his family and friends who remain embodied. The reader who has understood the thesis of the two preceding chapters will readily see how this is not the case, except for only the rarest of instances. The rule is that

the conscious ego of the departed friend takes no part whatsoever in the mediumistic communications. Hence spiritualistic mediumship involves a fundamental deception, whether conscious or unconscious, however genuine the phenomena may be in the scientific sense.

We have already shown how the first stage following physical death is one of unconsciousness in the vast majority of cases. If at the moment of death the inward-drawn individual has a strong desire to see someone on the physical plane who is not actually present, the effect of that desire may be the production of an elusive and temporary form (*Mayavi Rupa*) which may be apparent to the individual whom it desired to see, provided the latter has some degree of clairvoyant capacity. But unless the former has developed some degree of adept power, his consciousness will not be carried in that illusive form. It is a mistake to regard these forms as the “real man,” or actual person. In fact, they bear to the latter something of the relationship of a photograph to a viewer, save that whereas a photograph is inert, the *Mayavi Rupa* is formed out of living substance. So these illusive appearances do not constitute true exceptions to the rule that an unconscious sleep-like state normally follows death. Now if the real man is in a state of “sleep” after death, he is manifestly as unable to communicate with any individual on this plane as would be one who is in the ordinary state of dreaming sleep. If the objection is raised that the subject-matter of mediumistic communications in such instances affords information known to be possessed only by the deceased individual and hence proves the genuineness of the communication, the answer simply is that this by no means follows. For in order that such information may be identified, someone on the physical plane must already possess it, and generally that someone is also a sitter at the séance. One phase of mediumistic power is the capacity to tap into the knowledge of those present at such séances. In fact, the typical demand that the sitters must make themselves “passively negative” provides just the condition necessary for such tapping of information. Of course, a scientific control could be provided for, prior to the death-transition, so as to eliminate this form of telepathic reading of minds, as for example, the prearranged leaving of a sealed statement by the deceased party, the contents of which were unknown to any second party. But there are very few individuals who face death with the necessary prior scientific interest to meet this condition and evidently where they have done so, positive results are extremely rare. But beyond this consideration there remains the fact that a repetition of information possessed by the deceased while on earth is by no means a proof of his self-conscious egoic presence. Thus, for instance, we might listen to a phonograph record of a part sung by Caruso, yet hardly any of us would make the mistake of assuming that Caruso in his own proper person was actually present simply because his characteristic vocal tones were being reproduced. It requires much more than such a repetition to confirm the presence of the conscious ego.

Consider the case of the historian of philosophical ideas. The good historian, it is true, makes it a professional virtue to keep his work (as nearly as possible) uncolored by his own philosophic point of view. Thus, in the generic sense of the term, he is acting as a “medium” for the formulation of the thoughts of other thinkers. But there is no mental passivity in this work. In fact, quite the contrary; worthwhile historical work requires a very positive mental discipline and an active development of *discrimination*. So there is nothing weak or invidious in serving as a “medium” of ideas in this sense. The outstanding differentiation between this activity and ideational mediumship lies in the fact that the historian knows the distinction between the ideas he is formulating and his own ideas. If it so happens that his individual thought accords with that of a particular philosopher who may be under consideration, it yet remains true that this accordance is achieved by self-conscious and independent reflection. There is no ideational

mediumship involved in this. In every case the ideas of others are formulated explicitly as their ideas and not as the expression of the thought of the historian himself. In contrast, ideational mediumship involves acceptance or expression as one's own thought, without independent reflection, of the ideas which are really the fruitage of another's thought.

In the case of the student who stands on the border-land of occult knowledge, the difficulties arising from a tendency to ideational mediumship becomes peculiarly aggravated. In the case of the individual moving in the sphere of ordinary exoteric consciousness, this mediumship does not involve immediate dangers of grave import. He is largely reduced to the status of a mere unit in the ordinary mass of humanity possessing no individual significance, but he may continue through as a mere member of the common herd for many incarnations without incurring any especial danger that would threaten such autonomy as he has. But the student who has opened a little the door to the occult side of his nature stands in a very different position. While on one hand, he comes within the range of new powers of consciousness, at the same time he stands face to face with what, for him, are unknown dangers. If inclined toward mediumship, he may become a channel for currents of consciousness and force that may rot the very substance of his inner nature. That is, provided such tendency is not checked in time. The fundamental danger of mediumship does not lie in the negative or "dark" character of the specific current channeled at a given time. It lies rather in the *tendency toward passivism*. This is just the respect in which mediumship can become so insidious. It is true that profound, noble and beautiful ideas enfolded in an aura of illuminating energy have, on occasion, been transmitted by mediumistic methods. So far as mankind in general is concerned, the value of these ideas and currents is not reduced simply because they have come through a mediumistic channel. They stand before the bar of human intelligence on the basis of their own inherent value. But for the individual medium, the case is quite different. Unless he continuously protects himself, he may equally well serve as a channel for dark and destructive ideas. His inherent passivism is the weakness that makes this possible. Furthermore, regardless of whether the current playing through him is light or dark, noble or ignoble, the persistent practice of passivism tends toward intellectual suicide and the loss of individual autonomy. If the medium is sufficiently pure he will be saved from descent into the pit of the evil or disintegrative side of Nature, but nonetheless he will gradually fade away as a self-conscious individual. This is the fundamental danger of mediumship.

It should be readily seen that for students of the occult the dangers of mediumship of passivism are little if any inferior to those arising out of over-developed and hardened egoism. They are the Charybdis and Scylla of Occultism. The man of overly developed and hardened egoism escapes the dangers of mediumship, it is true, but on the other hand he runs the risk of self-conscious identification with Evil. His autonomy as an individual may remain sharp and clear for great cycles of time, but if he has become identified with Evil, he stands eternally separated from Good, which is simply "God" taken in the positive sense. The penalty of passivism carried to the limit is loss of autonomy as an individual, or, in other words, loss of self-consciousness. The consequence of strong and hardened egoism, carried also to the limit, is individualized consciousness living through eternities in darkness. However, since the concern of the present chapter is with mediumship and its problems, the development of the significance of this second danger of the Path does not properly belong here.

In general, the subtle aspects of passivism constitute a problem of more importance than its more obvious phases. The medium who has gone far down the path of psychological debauchery is, in his own person, a sufficient danger signal to warn away all but the densest and most stupid of men. But such is not the case with the level where passivism may have all the earmarks of

virtue. For here those who possess real nobility of heart and inherent refinement may be seduced into the fatal bye-path, provided their wisdom has not been sufficiently alert to perceive the danger. Undoubtedly self-abnegation is a relative virtue, but there is also a sense in which it is a kind of “sin.” Abnegation of earthy or separative personal prerogatives undoubtedly means spiritual advancement, and since the bondage of man to matter inheres in attachment to such prerogatives, it follows, naturally, that self-abnegation in this sense *is* of high importance. But when it comes to the abnegation of those qualities that give to man his real dignity as a man and as a spiritual being, the case is quite different. Such abnegation is then a “sin.” Now, just as on certain levels most frequently manifested, men cling to the assertion of personal egoism, there are other levels where men seek to abandon themselves with equal intensity. Here self-abnegation takes on a form that is almost a passion and consequently tends to step beyond virtue into a sort of sublimated “sin.” For those attracted by this level, abnegation even of manly qualities may become tempting. This explains how many natures respond readily to demands not to resist, but to become a “passive” instrument.

The view is widespread that man, the thinker, is a rebellious entity standing in opposition to “God” and to spiritual consciousness. Hence, for man to realize “God” or to become spiritually awakened he must abnegate himself as a self-directed thinker. The “ideal” is to reduce himself to an instrument through which God-consciousness or Spiritual Light may stream. Thus by renouncing himself as the conscious thinker he becomes sublimated as an instrument of Divine Inspiration. Now all of this contention is so close to a fundamental truth (and further owing to the fact that occasionally individuals of exceptional purity *do* function by this means as channels of Spiritual Light), it follows as a consequence that many students possessing the finest motives are led to follow this course of training. The all-important fact is overlooked that by this procedure, if followed sufficiently far, individual self-consciousness is forfeited, and the individual fails of realizing the highest destiny of man. Abandonment in Spirit is not man’s destiny, but rather *self-conscious spirituality* is our true destiny, and this is the vital distinction.

The truth is that the mind or *Manas*, like every other vehicle of man, is in reality an instrument for the expression of his *spiritual* being, but not for himself as the conscious thinking entity. This differentiation may seem subtle, but it makes all the difference between true mastery and a sort of sublimated mediumship. Wherever man’s apperceptive unity of self-consciousness may be centered, whether on a low or high plane of Consciousness, that is the point where he must maintain his autonomy unbroken. The plane of the “I am I” may be anywhere from the lowest level of personal egoism up to the level of the true *Atmic* Self, but the important consideration is the preservation of the integrity of this “I am I” at all times. This means that the “I am I” or self-identity must never at any time be regarded as instrumental even with respect to the highest form of spiritual consciousness. It should never abnegate or renounce its status as the ruling Lord even in the presence of the grandest of Beings that stand as objective on any plane. To do so is to be guilty of the great sin against the “Holy Ghost” or, in other words, the Divinity that is man’s own true self.

It should now be clear that even the noble Light of Inspiration can become a force leading to man’s undoing if he relates himself to it in a negative way. Inspirational thinking can, and often does, become a sort of spiritual vice which, while it spiritualizes, at the same time undermines the individual integrity of the man. This happens when the individual holds himself as a mere passive instrument or medium for Inspiration. Inspiration is a force which the ruling Lord, Self-identity, can and should seek to control. If the Self-identity is centered on the levels of

personal egoism this control is, of course, impossible, but such is not the case when it is centered on the higher planes.

Inspiration may be regarded as a formless Light of Insight which is an essentially spiritual quality. It is not, however, a self-directed spirit that “comes and goes as it listeth,” as is so often imagined. It may be likened to the light of the sun which shines continuously, whether or not that light is received upon the surface of the earth. If the surface of a portion of the earth is turned away from the sun, or if clouds enshroud it, then the light is not received there. As the earth turns further upon its axis, openings appear in the clouds, and then the light shines through and is realized. Now this appearance and disappearance of the light might well seem (to those who have an insufficient knowledge of the laws of nature) like a self-directed coming and going of a spirit that is entirely independent of the operation of law. But for those who have knowledge, it is known that the sun shines in unbroken continuity and further, the appearance and disappearance of its light is due to earth/sun relationships. The alternation of night and day is but a manifestation of the law of periodicity, which may be understood and future periods of light may thus be foreseen and planned for accordingly. The darkness of enveloping clouds may be overcome by the appropriate effort either by moving to another point of the earth’s surface where there are no clouds, or by rising above them in an airship. The same principle is true with respect to the Inner Light of Inspiration. It shines eternally in the inner Consciousness of man, but at times, it is hidden from the outer consciousness more or less completely; partly through the action of the periodic principle and partly through the enveloping clouds of *Maya*. It is true that for the mass of mankind these clouds rarely break and consciousness moves mostly in the relative darkness of the external world. But this does not mean that the Light of Inspiration shines one whit less brightly on its own level. So by winning the power to pierce the clouds of *Maya* at will, Inspiration can also be commanded.

Of course, it is not true that Inspiration can be commanded in any sense such as that of being ordered-about as one might command his subordinates. But it can be commanded just as any resource of nature can be mastered by understanding the natural laws involved and acting in the appropriate way. In this manner it is possible to reach the level of Inspiration at will by understanding the aspect of the periodic principle involved and by being able to remove obscuring veils. This is merely one of the powers of Yoga which may be consciously invoked. It is manifestly much more important to be able to command the resources of Inspiration in this sense than it is simply to be inspired. To hold an attitude of waiting upon inspiration is to tend toward mediumship, while to seek command of Inspiration is to progress toward Mastery. The one course, at its best, leads toward spiritual negativism; the other toward positive Lordship.

This brings us to a phase of consciousness-technique which is both the most powerful instrument for reaching transcendental levels of Consciousness and at the same time may weaken the fiber of an immature capacity for individual Self-direction. This is the practice of *meditation*. In the strict sense of the word, meditation is the same power as the limb of Yoga known as *Dhyana*. This is the door to immediate apperceptive consciousness in which the Knower, the thing Known, and the Knowledge are dissolved into one synthetic whole. It is the level of omniscient, and therefore certain, knowledge of Being. It is not knowledge of Becoming, which is necessarily relative. This knowledge is, of course, identical with the plane of the Light of Inspiration. It is the level that constitutes the normal habitat of the Buddhas. But not all meditational effort reaches to this plane. In fact, meditation in this strict sense is very difficult to attain and is realized only after mastering all the lower steps on the ladder of Yoga. Among these are *Pratyahara* and *Dharana*, or the power to control the modifications of the mind (*Manas*) and

to direct it in contemplation upon any chosen object, for as long as may be desired. It should be very clearly understood that this is not an act of side-stepping the mind, as it were, but quite to the contrary, it is a most positive development and control of it. There can be no maintenance of individual self-identity without this development of mind.

Now the most common practices of meditation (so-called), are either the active directing of the mind into a given field of contemplation, or else an effort to side-step the mind in an endeavor to reach Inspiration. Neither of these practices are to be regarded as meditation in the sense of *Dhyana*, but stand upon a distinctly lower level. They may or may not be harmful. Meditation in the sense that involves an active use of the mind as something consciously self-directed does not involve any danger of becoming mediumistic and, in general, is a safe and wise practice. It does not weaken, but tends to strengthen the power of individual self-direction. There are but few individuals with whom such strengthening is not desirable, and for the vast majority of mankind, it is a grievous need. There is, in fact, but a small number among men in whom the power of self-directed thought is developed to the degree necessary to secure the preservation of individual self-identity throughout all stages of the Path. An active mind is, in fact, a necessity for the would-be occultist. In this connection it is well to note carefully the words of one of the now leading occultists of the present day. This Master has said: "We do not 'require a passive mind,' but on the contrary are seeking for those most active, which can put two and two together once they are on the right scent . . ." (From *The Mahatma Letters*, First Edition, p. 277). This is very significant and should be noted well by all who have mediumistic or passivistic tendencies.

The third aspect, or sense, of meditation involves holding the mind passive. When this is done under the right conditions, ideas may be received into the mind that are not actively thought. They may be regarded as something like photographs where the mind plays the part of a purely receptive sensitive plate. There is no active discrimination involved here. Now the ideas thus received may reach all the way from the grossest modes of consciousness to concepts of very high spiritual value. The purity and motive of the individual or group sitting in meditation combined with environmental conditions are the factors which determine the type of result attained. Under the right combination of these factors it is undoubtedly true that contributions may be made to human consciousness that are of genuine spiritual value. But this fact, nonetheless, does not make it less true that such practice does tend toward passivism and the consequent weakening of individual self-identity. Special conditions may justify the use of such forms of meditation, but their extended use is fraught with the very real danger of awakening and strengthening mediumistic tendencies.

There are two modes of transformation in consciousness that are frequently confused, and that have radically different significances. These are "spiritualization" and "etherialization" of consciousness. "Spiritualization" is the penetration into timeless and Super-spacial Reality or, in other words, the realm of genuine metaphysical Consciousness. In terms of polarized-consciousness, this takes on the form of realization of Significances. This may or may not be associated with the subtle energy known as Radiation. If a radiant quality is felt as likely as not it will seem irritating and unpleasant rather than soothing and delighting. As a matter of fact, the truly spiritual man is more irritating and disposed to arousing antagonism among those of his own generation than the reverse. This is due to an inherent clash between Spirit and Matter. Accordingly those individuals who have found a comfortable berth in a group of habitual forms of consciousness will find the truly spiritual man to be a distinctly unpleasant disruptive reagent. At a later period when the reagent has had time to do its work it will be felt by the same individuals as a most beneficent force. But this will be due to changes that have been effected in

the latter such that their nature becomes consonant or synchronous with the original Spiritual Force. Now “etherialization” of consciousness is essentially pleasing in its effects. It is like a rare wine which frees the sluggish mind so that it is born aloft on the wings of imagination. In the beginning its taste is sweet and men naturally crave it, but in the end, it may lead to the “drugged” sleep and the awakening with the bitter taste in the mouth. This subtle wine of etherialization sends forth joyous and seductive rays of sparkling light, filling the senses with rare delights. Those who know of this wine naturally desire it, and having drunk, ever return for more. But as they return, subtlety but inexorably their strength goes from them, until in the end they float down the stream of Life to the Ocean. It is not by that means that the Mountain Tops are scaled.

Etherialization involves the experiencing of one stage or another of the state known as *Ananda*, or “bliss.” Herein lies its enormous attractive power. It is unquestionably natural that men should desire bliss rather than misery and in principle there can be no objection to this. But there is a world of difference between super-sensuous Bliss, the accompaniment of Spiritual Realization, and the various forms of subtle sensuous bliss. The qualities of seduction or intoxication do not attach to the former, while they are very marked in the case of the latter. In the Orient they speak of the “God-intoxicated man,” and in this we have a very significant phrase. God-intoxication is *not* Adeptship. And while the Adept does win to Bliss in the higher sense, it is a self-conscious Bliss rather than that of self-abandonment. It is not the indulgence of oneself in the enjoyment of “vibrations.” All the lower blisses are at the command of the one who has achieved Mastery, but those who center their desires upon them and linger in their enjoyment run the risk of never attaining to Adeptship. Now in the cultivation of abandonment in the lesser blisses (*Anandas*) we have a form of mediumship, for in the act of abandonment, conscious self-rule is forfeited. In the practice of passive meditation we have a technique that readily opens the door to the blisses growing out of etherialization of consciousness, and in this lies its principle danger. If the individuals engaged in the practice are sufficiently pure, they may realize realms of Consciousness corresponding to the higher levels of *Devachan* but this is done at the price of postponing self-conscious attainment of the *Turiya* state and, perhaps, of forfeiting that possibility entirely. By following this Path, the student may become a *Deva*, but he fails of man’s great heritage, i.e., of becoming “greater than the angels,” for such is the realization of the Adept.

In this discussion, the most attention has been given to forms of mediumship that are of a more subtle character. The dangers of the grosser and more pathological phases of mediumship are so obvious that this practice is not apt to be a temptation to the less evolved among men. But in its subtler forms, mediumship is so disguised, or may to so large an extent take on the seeming of a virtue that men of fine motivation and real nobility of character may easily be drawn aside from the true Path to Mastery unless they cultivate what has often been called the “Wisdom of the Serpent.” The obvious dangers become their own signal of warning, but when danger appears in subtle guises, safety lies only in keeping ever alert the kingly power of the crest-jewel of *Discrimination*.