

# *Cycles of Psychism*

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## PSYCHIC EVOLUTION

**F**OR some years now the idea that the human race is on the verge, even in the midst, of a great change, has been gaining popular currency. This theory is by no means limited to political prophets and workers for an international order. Nearly every branch of thought has its version of the world of tomorrow. While sober scientists are predicting that specialized progress will revolutionize still further our present ways of life, there are scores of exotic cults which anticipate more miraculous alterations in the future, and are now attempting to gather supporters for their particular program of social reform. It is as though the whole world were in labor, utterly confused as to the meaning of the physical and moral suffering of all humanity, and longing, with the intensity born of desperation, to believe that, somehow, the millennium is not far off.

The scientific and other serious literature of the age is full of descriptions of this unrest, but little or no explanation is offered—at least, no explanation that is at all adequate to the great psychological upheaval before us. The fact of change is readily acknowledged, but its meaning remains obscure. It is for this reason that the ancient Theosophical view of human evolution is here presented.

No special claim to authority is made for the doctrines that will be offered in explanation of the emotional turmoil we are experiencing. Theosophy is not made public as a “revelation,” nor is mere “belief” in these teachings solicited. It claims consideration on the ground of inherent reasonableness, and its clear application to the facts as they may be observed by anyone. If it be taken only as a “working hypothesis,” much can be gained from an impartial study of Theosophical teaching, and consistent judgment and comparison of these doctrines with all other views of life is sure to result in a just appreciation of the great contribution of the Teachers of Theosophy to the modern world.

Naturally, little more than “intimations” of the scope of the Theosophical philosophy can be presented in the compass of these few pages. However, should the suggestions here provided arouse the inquirer to pursue his studies further, he will find in the basic texts of the philosophy a field of research that will challenge his highest faculties and reward even the most extravagant hopes.

The great scientific discovery of the nineteenth century was the Law of Evolution. It was not a really "new" idea, but one well known to the Teachers of antiquity, of both India and Greece, and rather than discovered, was "revived" in a new form. Few men of the West are aware that the original of this modern doctrine may be found in so ancient a scripture as the *Laws of Manu*. There is, however, a vitally important difference between ancient and modern theories of evolution.

As everyone knows, the Darwinian Theory, which may be taken to represent the scientific view of evolution, was developed to explain the many changes in form which various species of plants and animals have undergone through millions of years in the past. Darwin studied the changes and evolution in *bodies*, as though no other kind of progress were possible, and all the scientists who have since added facts and theories to our understanding of evolution followed his example. The result has been that we think of evolution as simply a physical process, in which the powers developed are physical, wholly a product of the growth and perfection of animal bodies.

But there is another kind of evolution than that common to the lower kingdoms of nature—an evolution peculiar to man, which is intellectual and moral. The lines of physical, intellectual and moral evolution are all three present in human beings, and it is possible to distinguish between them and to realize how essentially different they are, one from the other. A man may have an excellent body, yet be intellectually weak; and the same man may have either a good or a bad moral nature. A wise man may live in a puny, diseased body, using his understanding to overcome the limitations of his physical organism. In the same way, remarkable mental powers may be joined to moral goodness, in which case we have a sage; or intellectual ability may be the servant of calculating selfishness in another man, with quite different results for his fellow human beings. All in all, taking men as we find them in our own experience, it should be plain that they differ one from another far more in these *psychic* qualities than in any distinctions of body, and that the true evolution of mankind lies in the further development of their mental and moral powers.

This view of evolution takes our inquiry into a sphere of experience and study that is quite unfamiliar to western thought. The whole question of "the psychic" and abnormal powers and phenomena has for several centuries been almost entirely neglected by the scholars and scientists of European and American civilization. Not until the

past twenty years or so has there been any real willingness on the part of the leaders of western thought to admit even the possibility that soul- or mind-powers may exist and act independently of the physical body and the laws of external nature. And even now, with the most forceful evidence of powers of a psychic character before them—telepathy, clairvoyance, and even pre-vision are now generally accepted by impartial investigators—our scientists are for the most part still reluctant to consider that there may be laws of mind and soul action which should be studied as principles distinct in themselves, not dependent on the laws known to physicists and biologists.

The facts are plain, and are increasing with each year of research. Ultimately, in the course of this century, they will be recognized as realities, and an attempt will have to be made to explain them, even if this requires complete revision of all our western theories of life and evolution. It was in anticipation of this general trend in modern thought—indicative of the next great step in *human* evolution—that the Third Object of the Theosophical Society was stated as :

The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

Suggestion has been given of what some of the “psychical powers latent in man” may be, but what about “unexplained” laws of nature? The admirer of modern science asks quite naturally, Are not the laws of nature themselves the explanations? As a matter of fact, they are not. Lest there be misunderstanding on this score, a passage on the law of “Gravitation” may be quoted from a recent scientific writer :

Just because the effects of gravitation are so familiar and because Newton’s law accounts so completely for the motions of the heavenly bodies, except for a few minute effects which Einstein’s theory represents better than Newton’s, we are apt to forget how mysterious gravitation is and how little our so-called explanations penetrate the mystery. . . . Our so-called physical explanations are almost always mere descriptions of one sort or another.<sup>1</sup>

Newton himself made no pretense of being able to “explain” the cause of gravitation, and said so quite frankly, and it has remained a mystery from that day to this. Thus there was every reason in the world for Theosophy to propose another approach to the great questions of the laws of nature and the powers in man. The method of physical science had, it is true, given us much practical knowledge concerning the use of the forces of nature, enabling western nations

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<sup>1</sup> Lambert, Walter D., *Scientific Monthly*, May, 1925.

to raise a great civilization upon this foundation, but the meaning of life remained a secret that Science could not discover, and it is now evident to all thoughtful persons that the real meaning and purpose of existence is by far the most important thing for human beings to investigate. The teachings of Theosophy are in the world to meet this need.

Man has now reached a point where he is beginning to inquire what more there is for him to know. He has ceased to think exclusively of the material side of life; he is sensing his own nature, feeling within the slow awakening of powers long hidden and asleep, and he asks: What am I, whence came I, whither do I go?

There is no possible way of understanding or explaining the answers to these questions except through Evolution, and for Man this is evolution of the Soul. Man is a spiritual being, and his evolution is an unfolding from within outward, the expression of spirit or consciousness through the intelligence he has acquired by experience. *All* evolution involves the growth of intelligence through experience, and the consequent further expression of the powers of Spirit, but in man is manifested a type of intelligence that is higher than that seen in the lower kingdoms of nature.

The development of intelligence proceeds very slowly in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, more rapidly in the animal kingdom. Evolution in these three kingdoms is represented by changes in physical form, by adaptation to external conditions and the elaboration of organs for specialized functions. Human evolution is of another sort. Man is not simply concerned with states and conditions of matter; the evolution of intelligence in him has reached that stage where the being himself knows that he is, that he is conscious, that he can understand to some extent his own nature and the natures of the beings below him, and recognize the interrelation of all.

Two-thirds of a century ago, H. P. Blavatsky wrote on the opening page of *Isis Unveiled*:

Is it too much to believe that man should be developing new sensibilities and a closer relation with nature? The logic of evolution must teach as much, if carried to its legitimate conclusions. If, somewhere, in the line of ascent from vegetable or ascidian to the noblest man a soul was evolved, gifted with intellectual qualities, it cannot be unreasonable to infer and believe that a faculty of perception is also growing in man, enabling him to descry facts and truths even beyond our ordinary ken. We believe in no Magic which transcends the scope and capacity of the human mind, nor

in "miracle," whether divine or diabolical, if such imply a transgression of the laws of nature instituted from all eternity. Nevertheless, we accept the saying of the gifted author of *Festus*, that the human heart has not yet fully uttered itself, and that we have never attained or even understood the extent of its powers.

The two large volumes of this work are devoted to a demonstration of the hidden powers in man and to an exposition of the philosophy of evolution which alone can explain their presence. All past history is the author's witness, brought upon the stand of impartial inquiry and made to show that there have been literally thousands of men and women in whom the powers of soul have flowered more fully than in ordinary persons, whose lives gave evidence of the course of evolution of the race as a whole in the future.

It was not Madame Blavatsky's purpose to arouse a mere curiosity about the wonderful, to raise up a generation of seekers after powers by which the world might be amazed and even enslaved. On the contrary, she desired only that men might grow into realization of their own potentialities as spiritual beings, *naturally*, with an appreciation of the enormous responsibilities which the possession of such powers places upon their user. She knew that in the course of the present cycle there was destined to be a vast unfoldment of the subtler faculties of perception in the human race; that powers hitherto the endowment of only the seer and the sensitive would tend to become more common, until finally, to be without them would be a mark of atavism and retrogression.

Clearly, so complete a development of psychic powers among humanity at large will occupy many hundreds, or rather, thousands of years. In the scheme of evolution offered in the Theosophical philosophy, human and all other progress proceeds in accordance with great cycles, some of them lasting through almost incalculable periods of time, during which the hosts of human souls involved in this great period of manifestation return again and again to earth, according to the law of Reincarnation. By this process the collective experience in the school of life is carried on, each cycle of incarnation bringing the soul into contact with new relations of matter and intelligence, thus awakening to action in the beings the powers and faculties potential in that cycle. The end of all this learning is the progressive spiritualization of mankind, through a growing realization of universal brotherhood, and the achievement of conscious divinity for each human soul by the natural development of the powers common to all.

# LAWS AND PHENOMENA

## I

**P**SYCHISM is a term used in Theosophical literature to denote very loosely every kind of mental phenomena, such as mediumship and the higher sensitiveness, hypnotic receptivity, inspired prophecy, simple clairvoyance or seeing in the Astral Light, and truly divine seership; in short, the word conveys every phase and manifestation of the powers and potencies of the *human* and the *divine* Souls.

The psychic or soul nature of man has powers of its own, which may be studied in relation to the physical organism. The coordinated functioning of psychic and physical powers results in the familiar processes of waking life—perception, feeling, thinking, remembering, imagining and willing. Modern psychology has studied these processes with such devotion, and on the assumption that the soul or ego has no powers of its own separate from the body, that the educated person of today knows little or nothing of the higher psychology of the spiritual man, and is even ignorant of the subtle forces which have their play in the lower psychic or astral man. Hence the mysteries with which present study of psychic phenomena is surrounded. It is safe to say that not one of the modern investigators of the psychic world, scientist or some other, has perfected his control of the inner faculties and powers with which every man is endowed, so that he may exercise them independently of the body, or, at least, free of the illusions of sense perception. How, then, can there be knowledge of these things, without the control which is the prerequisite to knowledge in every branch of science?

Mediumship is the abnormal manifestation of psychic powers, and is generally the result of disease of some sort, or prolonged psychological malpractice. The few determined individuals who have developed themselves to the point where these powers are obedient servants of the human will, have been known through history as *adepts*. As Madame Blavatsky has written:

The exercise of *magical* power is the exercise of powers *natural*, but superior to the ordinary functions of Nature. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people. Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world. Spiritualism in the hands of an Adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an



experienced medium, Spiritualism becomes unconscious sorcery; for, by allowing himself to become the helpless tool of a variety of spirits, of whom he knows nothing save what the latter permit him to know, he opens, unknown to himself, a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of nature lurking in the astral light, as well as good and bad spirits.

To doubt magic is to reject History itself, as well as the testimony of ocular witnesses thereof, during a period embracing over 4,000 years, beginning with Homer, Moses, Hermes, Herodotus, Cicero, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon the Magician, Plato, Pausanias, Iamblichus, and following this endless string of great men—historians and philosophers, who all of them either believed in Magic or were magicians themselves—and ending with our modern authors such as W. Howitt, Ennemoser, G. des Mousseaux, Marquis de Mirville and the late Eliphas Levi, who was a magician himself.

Madame Blavatsky reveals the ridiculous character of the claims of spiritualists that such sages and great teachers were “mediums”:

Fancy Christ, Moses, or an Apollonius of Tyana, controlled by an Indian guide! Spiritual mediums were better known in those days to the ancients, than they are now to us. The inspired sibyls, pythonesses, and other mediums were entirely guided by their high priest and those who were initiated into the esoteric theurgy and mysteries of the temples. Theurgy was Magic; as in modern times, the sibyls and pythonesses were mediums; but their high priests were magicians. That is the reason why no trash was allowed to be given by unprogressed spirits in the days of old. The oracles of the sibyls and inspired priestesses could never have affirmed Athens to be a town in India, or jumped Mount Ararat from its native place down to Egypt.

At the same time, the ancients had their illegal mediums—those who belonged to no special temple—and thus the spirits controlling them, unchecked by the expert hand of the magician, were left to themselves, and had all the opportunity to perform their capers on their helpless tools. Such mediums were generally considered *obsessed* and *possessed*, which they were in fact. According to Bible phraseology, these mediums were ordered to be put to death, for the intolerant Moses, the magician, who was learned in the wisdom of Egypt, had said, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Alone the Egyptians and the Greeks, even more humane and just than Moses, took such into their temples, and, when found unfit for the sacred duties of prophecy, cured them in the same way as Jesus Christ cured Mary of Magdala and many others.

Thus Magic exists, and has existed, ever since prehistoric ages. Beginning in history with the Samothracian Mysteries, it followed its

course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of Christianized Greece; then reappeared for a time again with the Neoplatonic, Alexandrian school, and, passing by initiation to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the medieval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such Adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and finally died out in Europe with the Count St. Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from frozen-hearted scepticism in its native country of the East.

While *knowledge* of the laws governing psychic phenomena was lost to the western world with the rise of Christianity, the phenomena themselves did not cease occurring. From biblical days until the present, religious history is full of accounts of psychic inspiration. The crudely emotional "speaking in tongues" is with us yet, and just as the ancient Jews were guided by prophecy, so there are today Christian sects who turn for guidance to the vaticinations of a select few of the sensitives among their members. The visions and visitations experienced by so many of the Christian Fathers were especially *psychic*. The demonology of the Dark Ages, the witch-hunting and heretic-baiting for hundreds of years by "Christian" priests, the periodic outbreaks of wild enthusiasm for this, that or the other practice or belief—these are the evidences of psychism through western history. When the manifestations have been associated with genuine religious devotion, and personal purity, then a kind of spiritual vision, a *higher* psychism, reveals itself in the clairvoyant perception and unmistakable prophetic power which develop in sensitive individuals. But psychism in company with evil ways and low habits of thought always leads to unspeakable moral degradation. The fate of mediums who employ their unnatural gifts for pay is sufficient evidence of this. The bartering of psychic powers for material gain is a kind of prostitution that Nature finds intolerable, and the price paid by the medium for his weakness is often the loss of personal immortality.

The lives of the saints of the Catholic Church are an almost uninterrupted history of psychic phenomena. Unquestioning faith in the reality of the other world, coupled with child-like belief in Christian dogmas, brought intense psychic experiences to thousands of loyal Christians. As the historian, Ennemoser, relates:

Visions were most frequent in convents, where solitude, ascetic practices, fasting, uncared-for diseases, as spasmodic convulsions, the unoccupied, often dreaming and overflowing imagination, gave numerous opportunities for the formation of these objective pictures. The history of the middle ages, even as far as the sixteenth century,

is scarcely more than a history of magnetism and a universal system of so-called witchcraft and magic. Visions were so common that rules were given to distinguish those of divine origin from false delusions and the temptations of the devil.

Many of the "witches" burned at the stake by the Church were simple psychics, mediums, who knew only that they suffered inward experiences that they could not understand and could not control. In other cases, these manifestations took the form of what the sensitive imagined to be divine inspiration, leading to a life of consecration in the service of this spiritual guidance. Joan of Arc was such a pure psychic, suffering the usual fate of the reformer who dares to oppose the "spiritual" monopoly of established religion. It is characteristic of every psychic vision that the medium sees the apparition, or hears voices, which seem to confirm or elaborate upon the beliefs of the medium himself. Thus even the great Swedenborg, whose visions startled all Europe, and whose clairvoyant report of the Stockholm fire convinced even Emmanuel Kant of the existence of this power, was subject to misconception and error. The invisible world of psychic perception is as diverse in its aspects as the physical one, and infinitely more difficult to understand. Thus Swedenborg, claiming to have met the inhabitants of Mercury in the spirit-world, described them as being dressed in clothes such as were worn in Europe at that time. No psychic ever sees quite correctly, however remarkable may be the approximations of his sight.

## II

There are laws of psychic perception taught by Theosophy, some of which may be stated as follows:

*Thought* passes to and fro from man to man. At a higher level it does the same from higher intelligences to man, and all in a sphere beyond the material. Men, from different causes, rising to different levels above their ordinary outer selves, come into the psychic plane where all is spread out before them. They see and read only that for which they are fitted, and comprehend only that for which they are prepared. Through conscious or unconscious exaltation they rise into or come in contact with some current of thought or unspoken word which enters their brains by divers roads. Comprehended partly, perhaps, but being entirely foreign to their normal personal manner of thinking,—knowing they have heard a voice—it is ascribed to a Spirit, although in fact it may be the thought of a living man they hear, feel, see or are repeating. All men who by effort or training lift themselves consciously, or are lifted uncon-

sciously above the material, secure the wisdom, knowledge and inspiration of other planes. How much they understand of these visions will depend upon their knowledge of occult philosophy.

Clairvoyant perception, unless supported by philosophical perspective, is absolutely unreliable. Clairvoyants have on innumerable occasions given correct descriptions of events and persons they could never have known or seen, but other innumerable times they have failed. If it were not always a matter of doubt and difficulty, natural clear-seers would have long ago demonstrated the unerring range of their vision by discovering uncaught criminals, by pointing out where stolen property could be recovered, by putting a finger on a moral plague-spot which is known to exist but cannot be located. Yet this they have not done, and theosophists are confirmed in the old teaching that the field of clairvoyance is full of delusions.

The prime cause for delusion is that the thought of anything makes around the thinker an image of the thing thought about. And all images in this thought-field are alike, since we remember an object by our thought-image of it, and not by carrying the object around in our heads. Hence the picture in our aura of what we have seen in the hands of another is of the same sort—for untrained seers—as our ideas on the subject of events in which we have not participated. So a clairvoyant may, and in fact does, mistake these thought-pictures one for the other, thus reducing the chances of certainty. If an anxious mother imagines her child in danger and with vivid thought pictures the details of a railway accident, the picture the seer may see will be of something that never happened and is only the product of emotion or imagination.

Mistakes in identity come next. These are more easily made on the astral plane, which is the means for clairvoyance, than even upon the visible one, and will arise from numerous causes. So numerous and complex is this that to fully explain it would not only be hopeless but tedious. For instance, the person, say at a distance, to whom the clairvoyant eye is directed may look entirely different from reality, whether as to clothing or physiognomy. He may, in the depths of winter, appear as clad in spring clothing, and your clairvoyant reports that, adding probably that it symbolizes something next spring. But, in fact, the spring clothing was due to his thoughts about a well-worn comfortable suit of this sort, throwing a glamor of the clothing before the vision of the seer. Cases like this have been verified. The lover, dwelling on the form and features of his beloved, or the criminal upon the one he has wronged, will work a protean change and destroy identification.

Another source of error will be found in the unwitting transfer to the clairvoyant of your own thoughts, much altered either for better or for worse. Or even the thoughts of someone else whom you have just met or just heard from. For if you consult a seer on some line of thought, having just read the ideas on the same subject of another who thinks very strongly and very clearly, and whose character is overmastering, the clairvoyant will in all likelihood feel the influence of the other and give you his ideas.

### III

In the light of these principles, it should be plainly evident that psychic visions are usually dressed up by the imagination of the seer, and the history of psychism gives full support to this explanation. In the Middle Ages, sensitives saw angels and devils. Nuns had visions of Christ, and suffered from strange delusions of heavenly marriage, showing the close relation between the sexual instinct and the psychic or astral plane. The correlation of sex aberrations with religious mania is well-known to psychiatrists, and the similar connection of the commoner types of obsession has been observed by physicians who have tried in vain to bring some relief to weak-willed victims of spiritualistic practices. One has simply to turn the pages of mediæval books on witchcraft, such as *Malleus Maleficarum*, the "Witch-hammer," published in 1489, to see that the Incubi and Succubi which so horrified pious Christians of that day, became, in the nineteenth century, the "spirit" brides and grooms of modern Spiritualism.

The form taken by psychic manifestation is determined primarily by the moral level of those to whom it comes, and in bright relief to the commoner types of psychic experience are the great healing powers born to certain philanthropic physicians of the past. Such a man was Valentine Greatrakes, who lived in Ireland in the seventeenth century. In 1662 he discovered that he had mesmeric power, and was able to cure diseases of all sorts simply by the laying on of hands. After healing thousands in his native country, he went to England, exercising his beneficent power for the relief of many eminent persons, all of whom testified to the miraculous nature of his cures. The famous scientist, Robert Boyle, was among those who acknowledged the healing power possessed by Greatrakes.

The seventeenth century was quite literally a continuous drama of psychic phenomena. The visions of such religious leaders as George Fox and John Bunyan began at about the middle of the century. Fox made it clear that he believed himself inspired by the

Deity, and the Quaker doctrine of Inner Light, a pure and ennobling form of psychism, has continued to the present day. Bunyan, more extravagant in his emotionalism, seems to have gone mad under the influence of "the spirit." Soon after his marriage, in 1649, "he prayed to trees, to a broomstick, to the parish bull. He tried to work miracles, ordering the puddles in the road to dry up and staking his salvation on the result." His later life was more rational, although *Grace Abounding*, which Bunyan wrote in 1666, is in these days said to contain "particulars sufficient to fill up the certificate and case-book of a mental specialist." One of the founders of the Philadelphian Brethren, an English mystical society of the seventeenth century, was Dr. John Pordage, whose visions were even more dramatic than those of the more famous religious leaders of that day. Pordage relates that he and the members of his society witnessed daily scenes in heaven and hell. "They beheld the Prince of Darkness, and damned souls in the shape of men, pass by in grand procession in chariots of clouds, and surrounded by lesser spirits in swarms." The visions, claimed the Philadelphians, continued for months.

George Fox often performed "spiritual" cures, and many of the early Friends manifested clairvoyant and prophetic powers. The Quakers certainly discovered some minor secrets of occultism, for Cotton Mather relates that they used in his time to proselyte people by merely stroking or breathing upon them. Persecuted as they were, mesmeric powers must have grown among them as one result of their constant devotion to what they believed to be right.

The rappings, movement of objects and other wonderful occurrences that have come to be associated with modern spiritualism, have been known in every age. In 1716-17, the home of John Wesley, who was later to found the sect of Methodism, was the theater of knockings, groans and even apparitions. Full accounts of these happenings have been left by the Wesley family. Later in the eighteenth century, about a hundred years before the phenomena of 1848, Germany and Switzerland had their spiritualists, developing, or believing in phenomena identical almost in all particulars with those of America. Among the various manifestations were so-called "spirit writing," and other forms of intercourse with what many thought to be the spirit world. In 1756, Emmanuel Swedenborg sat in a house in Gottenberg and described the great fire that was then raging in Stockholm, 300 miles away. Two days later a courier from Stockholm confirmed Swedenborg's account in every detail, from the time the fire started to when it was put out, even as to the particular houses that were destroyed.

# PSYCHISM AND SPIRITUALISM

## I

**E**ACH century of western history is marked by waves and outbursts of psychic experience and phenomena. The cycle has its premonitory symptoms during the early decades of the century, and usually flowers at the midpoint, continuing and spreading its influence for a time, then diminishing gradually until the beginning of the next cycle. An interesting illustration of this cycle is provided by the Shakers, an ascetic Christian sect of which scarcely a dozen members are today alive. The psychological history of the Shakers really begins with George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, who in 1647 became filled with the conviction that he was a chosen instrument of Providence. He felt that the voice of God spoke within him. The religious reforms accomplished by the Quakers are well known, and the theosophist has nothing but respect and admiration for the nobility of purpose which animated George Fox and so many of his self-sacrificing followers. But we are presently concerned with the fact that his inspiration, whatever its origin, took the coloring of the emotional nature of George Fox—was filtered through his *psyche*—and the significance of the moving force he felt in his heart was given an interpretation he thought to be the true one. George Fox made no impartial comparison of his psychological experience with the psychological experiences of other men. Instead, he interpreted what he *felt* according to the prevailing religious beliefs of his times. This fact identifies his experience as essentially *psychic* in character.

So it was with Ann Lee, the "Mother Ann" of the Shakers. She was a member of "The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing," a small Quaker sect which was led by James and Jane Wardley in England at the middle of the eighteenth century. This group of religious enthusiasts had been formed under the inspiration of some Camisards, French Huguenots who, years before, had fled to England to escape the persecutions which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Like so many who suffer for their beliefs, the Camisards believed they had clairvoyant inspiration. Mrs. Wardley was subject to seizures of "the spirit," bringing her, as she thought, special illumination, and she predicted the second coming of Christ in the form of a woman. Ann Lee, who joined the Wardleys in 1758, was born of poor Manchester parents and in her girlhood suffered from hysteria and convulsions. She preached in the streets of Manchester, accompanying her moving exhortations

with shouting, the unintelligible "speaking in tongues," and other physical manifestations. Hence the name, "Shaking Quakers," which later became simply "Shakers." Imprisoned for this behavior, Ann Lee claimed that Jesus appeared to her in her cell and became one with her "in form and person," which led the Wardleys and their followers to recognize in her the female Christ—the Bride of the Lamb. Persecutions only excited her to another revelation—that America would be the scene of Christ's Kingdom on Earth. Emigrating to the New World in 1774 with a handful of followers, "Mother Ann" established the first Shaker community near Albany. A few years later they were joined by a number of Baptist converts living in Lebanon, and from that time the community grew and branched out in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Shakers were perfectionists, believing that they had established a veritable heaven on earth, and if their conduct is any criterion, this conviction was well founded. Some writers have likened them to the ancient Essenes. Their personal lives were models for a successful communistic enterprise. It is curious that as a sect, Shakerism survived and flourished for more than 100 years—longer than any other attempt at a communistic society—despite the rule of complete chastity established by Ann Lee. They lived on a simple fare, few of them eating meat, and were almost never ill. Celibates all, their numbers were augmented only by conversion, and by 1860 some 6,000 Shakers were in America, living in communities in New York and New England. Of peculiar interest is the Shaker community dance, which was a sort of shuffling march to one of their hymns, varied by occasional "whirling" for a considerable time.

Although the Shakers always professed to have intimate intercourse with the "spirit world," special intimations of the psychological upheaval which was to occur in America came to the Shakers in 1837. There were at that time sixty Shaker communities. The children of the Lebanon settlement were the first to experience the development of clairvoyant powers, and were seized with trances. It was not long before nearly all the members of the various Shaker settlements found themselves in communication with "spirits." Much of their music they professed to have learned from "spirits." Realizing, however, that these manifestations would have marked them as insane in the eyes of a sceptical world, they maintained complete secrecy about their intercourse with "spirits"—most of whom were Indians—until after 1848. After the remarkable phenomena of the Fox sisters and other mediums had attracted widespread interest, an elder of the community, Frederick B. Evans, related the visitations



experienced by the Shakers, which had begun eleven years earlier. He said that the spirits had told the Shakers that the phenomena were destined to spread throughout America and Europe. Nearly every Shaker was a medium, according to their own word, and for seven years after the first "invasion" of the spirits whole houses of Shakers were periodically obsessed by Indian "spirits."

The experiences of the Shakers were more or less unique in their collective anticipation of the psychic phenomena which flooded over America, marking the mid-century cycle of psychism. There were, however, several individuals to whom religious revelations of a spiritualistic character came during this earlier period. In 1830 Joseph Smith and six of his followers organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to spread the teachings which had been revealed to him in a series of visions. He was, he claimed, personally visited by two persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father and Son. Later it was made known to him that he had been selected to preach a new gospel, and an angel who appeared to him directed the discovery of the gold plates on which the *Book of Mormon* was engraved in an unknown language. Enabled to translate the scripture by means of glasses provided by the Lord, Joseph Smith became the prophet whose new revelation was regarded as of equal authority with the Jewish and Christian scriptures. In thirty years the Mormons were well established in Utah and elsewhere, their number totalling some 200,000. Today there are 750,000 Mormons, serious men and women who are universally respected for their honesty, industry and sobriety. The head of the Mormon Church is believed by the Mormons to receive revelations direct from God, obtained through dreams or waking visions, "by voices without visional appearance, or by actual manifestation of the Holy Presence before the eye."

Joseph Smith's first vision followed his attendance at a religious revival held in Wayne County, New York. These outbursts of religious psychism resulted in several such "inspirations." The fierce revival of 1831 began the moody meditations of John Humphrey Noyes, who was to found the community of "Bible Communists" at Oneida Creek. He abandoned law and took up the study of theology. Finding no light in his course in divinity at Andover, he went to Yale, and there he learned through dreams that God had a divine plan which he, Noyes, was to realize in its perfection on earth. There followed a re-interpretation of the Gospel of Paul, which led to the formation of the Perfectionists according to the program revealed to this prophet of Christian communism. Like the Mormons, the

Noyes community suffered many vicissitudes, but due to the indefatigable labors so frequently exhibited by those who think themselves divinely inspired, it achieved a success in economic and social organization that is today well known. The Oneida Community is famous for the silverware produced in its factories. Both communities have held unconventional ideas on the subject of marriage—the Mormons as part of their religious doctrines, the Oneida communists as practical eugenists attempting to improve the race physically as well as “spiritually.”

Another forerunner of the spiritualistic cycle of the nineteenth century was the famous seer of Poughkeepsie, Andrew Jackson Davis. Born in 1826, as a boy he heard voices which gave him advice and comfort. He developed clairvoyant powers and it was discovered that he could diagnose disease. His powers were studied and fostered by a travelling mesmerist, William Levingston, and in 1844 Davis began to report long flights of soul experience while in trance. He claimed to have two venerable instructors whom he later identified as Galen and Swedenborg. In his nineteenth year he began writing about his psychic experiences, the Rev. William Fishbough acting as his amanuensis, who took down the revelations declared by the young man after he had been placed in a trance condition. During the course of his life Davis wrote twenty books, including a remarkable autobiography giving account of his clairvoyance and his psychic adventures, and his visions of the meaning of death and the states after death. His *Harmonial Philosophy* comprised a series of volumes and became virtually the bible of the spiritualists, passing through forty editions. This work contains a remarkably coherent theory of cosmogony similar to that of Swedenborg, and a detailed description of the “spiritual world.” It also expounds a theory of evolution. Davis predicted the coming cycle of spiritualism, writing in 1847 that “the world will hail with delight the ushering-in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established. . . .” He should, however, be regarded as a *seer* rather than an ordinary medium, for he specifically renounced the idea of “control” by spirits, although admitting their aid.

## II

It should be realized that the abnormal states of consciousness which had grown familiar to the people of Europe through the work of Mesmer and his disciples were not unknown in America. The doctrine of animal magnetism and its curative power first taught by the Viennese genius had various embodiments in America under other

names. As early as 1830 John Bovee Dods lectured in New England on "Electrical Psychology," proclaiming electricity to be the connecting link between mind and matter. A Frenchman, Charles Poyen, began giving public demonstrations of Mesmerism in America in 1836. Wandering through New England in 1838, Poyen met Phineas Quimby, at Belfast, Maine. Quimby, who was then thirty-six, soon discovered that he, too, had unusual mesmeric power. Obtaining a sensitive, Quimby began to diagnose the ills of the people of the village, using the clairvoyant perception of his subject. He found by experiment that it made little difference what medicine he advised, becoming convinced that his cures were effected by mental influence. On the basis of such experience Quimby evolved the theory that all disease is a mental delusion which can be eradicated by thought. After years of successful practice at Portland, Maine, he received in 1861 a letter from a Dr. Patterson, asking that Quimby exercise his "wonderful power" to free Mrs. Patterson (later Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy) of her invalidism. The essential ideas of Dr. Quimby's therapy, which he began to record in 1859 in the now famous "Quimby Manuscripts," are best known to the world as Christian Science.

New Thought, too, derives principally from the doctrines of Phineas Quimby. In 1869 a Swedenborgian minister of New Hampshire, Warren Felt Evans, pupil and patient of Quimby, began the flow of New Thought literature with publication of *The Mental Cure*, which, it appears from comparison, was little more than a religious version of Quimby's understanding of what he had learned from his own practice of Mesmerism. Thus, what had originally been the scientific revelation of the eighteenth century, Mesmer's rediscovery of the nervous fluid of the human *psyche*, and its extraordinary curative power through the will of the adept-physician, slowly became, by filtering through the untutored and materialistic minds of the age, spread by wandering quacks, and interpreted by ignorant though honest enthusiasts, the source of a hundred and one psychic cults and sects, each cherishing a fragment of the truth, but more often misusing it than not.

Much of modern psychoanalysis, too, traces indirectly to Mesmer. Janet and Charcot, who both exercised great influence over Sigmund Freud, developed their doctrines in the atmosphere of the decadent mesmerism practiced by the French schools of psychologists. There is little, of course, in modern psychoanalysis that Mesmer would recognize, but the basic principle of all psychoanalytical therapy, the

*influence* wielded by analyst over the patient, remains as the shadow of Mesmer's great contribution. Modern hypnotism, too, is a limited adaptation of Mesmer's technique, shorn of its moral and meta-physical significance.

### III

We turn, now, to the origins of modern spiritualism in the nineteenth century.

In December, 1847, John D. Fox and his family moved into a small house in the little village of Hydesville, in Wayne County, New York. Almost at once "knocks" or rappings began to occur during the night. The sounds could not be explained as the result of any natural cause and seemed to proceed from a bedroom or the cellar beneath. The three girls, the youngest of whom was twelve-year-old Kate, complained of being touched by cold hands. On the night of March 31, 1848, the family retired early, being exhausted from these increasing disturbances which interfered with their rest. The rappings, however, came louder than ever. Kate Fox, sitting up in bed, was amused by the sounds, and snapping her fingers cried out:

"Here, Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do!"

This led to the startling discovery that the invisible agency which caused the rappings would respond to intelligent direction. Raps accompanied her movements. "Only look," cried Kate; "look, it can see as well as hear!" The sounds corresponded to her noiseless motions. It was soon discovered that it was possible to communicate with this agency, questions being answered by raps which numbered the letters of the alphabet. Neighbors were called and excitement swept the community of Hydesville. Messages purporting to come from the "spirit" of a murdered pedler were obtained in this way. From information thus received investigators discovered the remains of a man who had been buried in the cellar. By this strange event, and by the correct guessing of the ages of persons, a measure of veracity was established for the "spirits." Interest in the phenomena spread and soon the Fox children were made the subject of an unending series of experiments and public exhibitions, for it had been observed that the manifestations seemed to require their presence. It became evident that the communications were not limited to those from the deceased pedler, but included messages from a host of "spirits," one of them claiming to be Benjamin Franklin. In order to escape the throng of curious wonder-seekers who gave the family no peace, and to avoid the persecutions of the sceptical and unbeliev-

ing, the Fox family moved to Rochester. Mrs. Fox, a sincere Methodist, was much disturbed by the abnormal manifestations which everywhere followed Kate and her older sister, Margaretta. The distracted mother prayed continually that the torment might cease, and during the early days of the "rappings" her hair turned white in a single week. Both she and the children strove in vain against the "spirits," which kept demanding public exhibitions. The oldest of the girls, Leah, who was then a music teacher living in Rochester, wrote many years later:

The general feeling of our family . . . was strongly adverse to all this. . . . We regarded it as a great misfortune which had fallen upon us; how, whence or why we knew not. We resisted it, struggled against it, and constantly and earnestly prayed for deliverance from it. . . . If our will, earnest desires and prayers could have prevailed or availed, the whole thing would have ended then and there, and the world outside of our little neighborhood would never have heard more of the Rochester Rappings, or of the unfortunate Fox family.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the return of the rappings after a cessation of two weeks is said to have been greeted with joy by the family. Reluctantly, they undertook to follow the demands of the "spirits" and become public mediums. To this occupation they devoted the rest of their lives.

Meanwhile, following the publicity given to the Fox children, it became known that similar manifestations were taking place elsewhere. In the words of Alfred Russel Wallace, ". . . at the same time other mediums were discovered in different parts of the country, as if a special development of this abnormal power were then occurring."<sup>2</sup> This seemed, in effect, a confirmation of the assurance given by the "spirits" to the Fox sisters that the manifestations were not to be confined to them, but would go "all over the world." Rappings occurred as far west as St. Louis and Cincinnati, and in Maine, Massachusetts and New York. By 1850 séances arranged according to the direction of the "spirits" were being held in California, Oregon, Texas, and in several southern states. Religious-minded men and women formed Spiritualist sects, claiming messages from the apostles and the Hebrew prophets of old. Thomas Lake Harris, writer and preacher, joined with Spiritualists to found the "Apostolic Brotherhood," which culminated in a spiritualist community known as the Mountain Cove Movement. Many clergymen developed psychic capacities and became leaders of small bands of spiritualists.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism* (London: Cassell & Co., 1926), I, III.

<sup>2</sup> *Chamber's Encyclopedia*, "Spiritualism" (1902 ed.).

Despite vicious attacks on the new "revelation" by sceptics and orthodox Christians, interest in Spiritualism spread rapidly. Here and there men of cultivation and learning were attracted to séances. A few well-known scientists began to investigate the alleged phenomena. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune*, sat with the Fox sisters in New York, saying in a sympathetic article,

Whatever may be the origin or cause of the "rappings," the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly, and to our entire satisfaction. Their conduct and bearing is as unlike that of deceivers as possible; and we think no one acquainted with them could believe them at all capable of engaging in so daring, impious, and shameful a juggle as this would be if they caused the sounds. And it is not possible that such a juggle should have been so long perpetrated in public.\*

Among the eminent men who became convinced of the reality of spiritualistic phenomena was Judge J. W. Edmonds, a justice of the Supreme Court of New York, known for his honesty and fearlessness. He publicly defended the mediums in letters to the press. N. P. Tallmadge, a former governor of Wisconsin, was another who supported the claims of the mediums after attending a séance given in Washington by the Fox sisters. In the years 1851 and 1852 several spiritualistic journals were established, in which all manner of supernatural communications were recorded. While the original phenomena of Kate and Margaretta Fox had been limited to "rappings," other phases of the phenomena developed with the multiplication of mediums. Automatic writing became common; messages alleged to be from the illustrious dead were given by entranced sensitives, and "spirit lights" and the movement of heavy bodies were repeatedly reported.

From these beginnings modern Spiritualism spread all over the world. Few scientists were willing to jeopardize their reputations by deigning to recognize even the possibility that the phenomena were not fraudulent. Notable exceptions, however, included the celebrated Dr. Robert Hare, professor of chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, who in 1854 published *Spiritualism Scientifically Demonstrated*, an account of the elaborate experiments which convinced him that the manifestations were genuine. He had originally undertaken the task of investigation in order to destroy scientifically "the gross delusion called Spiritualism," but was soon overwhelmed by evidences of the supernormal. However, even so eminent a man

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\* Quoted by Emma Hardinge (later Mrs. Britten) in *Modern American Spiritualism*, New York, 1872.

as he was unable to persuade the American Association for the Promotion of Science to consider the subject of psychic phenomena. That body at one of its annual conventions turned down all the proposals for investigation which he presented. No more successful in gaining a hearing from the scientific world was Prof. James J. Mapes, president of the Mechanics Institute, a distinguished chemist who had been honored by numerous scientific bodies here and abroad. Beginning his study of spiritualistic phenomena in order to redeem respected friends who, he declared, were "fast running to mental seed and imbecility," he ended as an advocate of spiritualism.

#### IV

It must not be supposed that because Theosophy admits the reality of these phenomena, it also approves the theories of the Spiritualists. Nothing could be further from the truth. A full explanation of the identity of the seance "spirits" and of spiritualistic phenomena generally is provided in the pamphlet, *Where Are the Dead?* (published by Theosophy Company). This pamphlet, which is made up of statements taken from the basic teachings of Theosophy, should be studied carefully in connection with the whole problem of Spiritualism. Theosophy does not deny the existence of disembodied spiritual intelligences, but it shows that such beings cannot be reached by the methods of the Spiritualists. As Madame Blavatsky explains in *The Secret Doctrine*, it is only "by paralyzing his lower personality, and arriving thereby at the full knowledge of the *non-separateness* of his higher Self from the One absolute SELF," that man can, during his terrestrial life, arrive at that state of consciousness in which such soul-communion with high spiritual beings is possible.

Theosophy teaches also that the spirits of the dead cannot return to earth—save in rare and exceptional cases (see *Where Are the Dead?*), nor do they communicate with men except by *entirely subjective means*. That which does communicate, through the medium, or appear objectively as a "materialization," is nothing more than the phantom of the *ex-physical* man, his more or less coherent psychic remains. The spiritual individuality of the disembodied *cannot materialize*, nor can it return from its own exalted mental sphere to the plane of terrestrial objectivity. The idea alone that the intellectual conscious souls of one's father, mother, daughter or brother find their bliss in a "Summer Land" is enough to make one lose respect for one's departed ones. To believe that a pure spirit can feel happy

while doomed to witness the sins, mistakes, treachery, and, above all, the sufferings of those from whom it is severed by death and whom it loves best, without being able to help them, would be a maddening thought.

Everything depends on the view taken of Spirit and Soul, or *Individuality* and *Personality*. Spiritualists confuse the two into one; Theosophy separates them, and says that no *Spirit* will revisit the earth, though its former "animal soul" may. The "spook" that visits the seances, mistakenly called a "spirit" by the Spiritualists, is only the lower animal intelligence of the man that has died. The gross physical memories of this entity, which is the psychic corpse of the deceased, may be drawn to a seance and acquire artificial life from the vital psychic atmosphere surrounding the medium. In the medium's aura it lives a kind of vicarious life and reasons and speaks through the medium's brain, deceiving the sitters with fragmentary recollections of the past. But such communications are no more "spiritual" than the playing of a cracked phonograph record.

Other manifestations, such as "rappings," slate-writing, and the so-called "materializations," are produced by the medium's astral body. (See section on Hypnotism.) The laws governing such phenomena are given in greater detail in the portions of the Theosophical literature devoted to this subject. What is important to be noted here is the grave danger to both medium and sitters in exposing themselves to the degrading influences of contact with these "shells" or psychic remains, which have been separated from the higher part of the soul and remain in the earth's atmosphere, slowly disintegrating, and spreading psychic infection and moral disease among those who become passively open to their influence.

Mediumship and dabbling in Spiritualism, on the supposition that such practices are "spiritual," can bring only suffering, and even mental and physical break-down, in the end, to the psychically inclined. Theosophy, from the earliest days of the Movement, has always warned against experimentation and curiosity-hunting in the field of psychic phenomena, as an ignorant playing with sinister forces that act invisibly and destructively on the victims of spiritualistic delusions.

While interest in Spiritualism gradually died out during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and was seldom heard from in the first decade of the twentieth century, the loss of loved ones occasioned by World War I brought a sudden revival of the doctrines of the Summer Land of spirits. The spiritualistic writings of



the eminent physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, came into prominence, and the pitiful account of his "communications" with his son Raymond, killed in the war, won the sympathy of the few and the curiosity of the many. A study printed by the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (July, 1942) reports that the number of American magazines devoted to Spiritualism grew from fifty-two in 1915 to a peak of 136 in 1920, then falling off to fifty-eight in 1930. English publications dealing with the same object increased from seven to seventy during the same period and fell off to fourteen in 1925.

Similar increases occurred for journals in the more dignified field of "psychic research." One of the effects of this revival of interest was the *Scientific American* investigation of "Margery," famous Boston medium, which, while probably increasing the circulation of that worthy magazine for a short period, accomplished little for the science of psychic research. The committee of scientists, headed by Dr. Harlow Shapley of the Harvard Observatory, who sat with the medium, officially reported nothing of importance, although the eminent psychologist, Dr. William McDougall, who served on the committee, a few years later was instrumental in establishing the program of study of telepathy (now called Extra Sensory Perception) at Duke University. Dr. McDougall's motives in undertaking psychic research were almost unique among scientific men in that they approximated the reason that H. P. Blavatsky gave for the intelligent investigation of supernormal phenomena. He said in 1923:

Unless Psychical Research can discover facts incompatible with materialism, materialism will continue to spread. No other power can stop it; revealed religion and metaphysical philosophy are equally helpless before the advancing tide. And if that tide continues to rise and advance as it is doing now, all signs point to the view that it will be a destroying tide, that it will sweep away all the hard-won gains of humanity, all the moral traditions built up by the efforts of countless generations for the increase of truth, justice and charity.

In 1937, just one year before his death, Dr. McDougall repeated his appeal for the rejection of materialism with some leading questions in the first issue of a journal devoted to the investigation of the supernormal powers in man. "What," he asked, "are the relations of mind and matter?"

Are mental processes always and everywhere intimately and utterly dependent upon material or physical organizations? Do the volitions, the strivings, the desires, the joys and sorrows, the judgments and beliefs of men make any difference to the historical course of the events of our world, as the mass of men at all times have believed?

Or does the truth lie with those few philosophers and scientists who, with or without some more or less plausible theory in support of their view, confidently reject well-nigh universal beliefs, telling us that the physical is coextensive with the mental and that the powers and potentialities of mind may be defined by the laws of the physical sciences?

The *philosophic* interest in psychic research harbored by Dr. McDougall has been all too rare. Even the somewhat trivial methods introduced in the Duke program of investigation—the “guessing” of cards stamped with symbols—have been imitated in forms of parlor entertainment, and too often the telepathic powers discovered by individuals in themselves have stimulated a course of mediumistic “development.” It is a pity that Dr. McDougall did not realize the importance of “metaphysical philosophy” as the all-important guide to investigation of psychic phenomena. Nothing short of philosophy has the power to prevent the blind rushing of multitudes after the will-o-the-wisps of “spirits,” and to sharpen the discrimination of those who find hidden capacities blossoming within themselves. The increasing instances of psychism in the late thirties and early forties of the present century are but preludes to a mighty storm of phenomenalism and wonder-seeking, destined, according to the law of cycles taught by Theosophy, to become a psychological hurricane during the period that is now almost upon us.

While the nineteenth century cycle of psychism did not show its real strength until 1848, there was at that time no planetary war to hasten the longing for communication with those unnaturally cut off from life in the full bloom of youth. Then, as now, premonitory symptoms occurred, as among the Shakers, and there were the experiences of the American seer, Andrew Jackson Davis, and of Daniel Dunglas Home, the English medium, but no foundation for extensive acceptance of the phenomena existed before 1848. Only the heterodox followers of Anton Mesmer had any intimation of the psychological laws which might have helped to explain the mediumistic “miracles,” and these few outcasts soon joined the Spiritualistic movement, of which they became some of the leaders and interpreters. It remained for Madame Blavatsky, in 1875, to give voice to the essential warnings which spiritualists so sorely needed.

There is a law of occult development that works its inexorable way with all such children of their age who dare to raise the veil of Isis:

It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the inten-

tion is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the Astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it.

It was not for nothing that Jesus urged his disciples, "Come ye out and be ye separate." Unless the heart be purged of all impurity, all compromises with human weakness and desire set aside, no door will be found to the sacred temple of truth, and the terrible occult reality will inevitably destroy all those who rashly approach without learning first the rule of obedience to time-honored laws.

## V

The "scientific" investigation of psychic phenomena, as distinguished from the religious sects of Spiritualism, has been going on for many years, adding little knowledge of the laws of the phenomena, but at least convincing all those who have honestly looked into the field that supernormal events are a reality, whatever may be their meaning. While psychic research is still a somewhat sectarian *cultus* on the fringe of orthodox and accepted science, it cannot be denied that these conductors of psychic autopsies have slowly been gaining recognition. The first study of spiritualistic phenomena by a respected man of science was Prof. Wm. Crookes' *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, published in the 1870's. Since his day other leaders have lent their names to psychic research, the most outstanding in America being William James, the eminent psychologist. Charles Richet, the French biologist, admitted to a belief in the fact of psychic phenomena, candidly confessing his inability to explain them. In 1920 Baron von Schrenck Notzing's *Phenomena of Materialization* appeared, a weighty volume which left little doubt that materializations of subtle psychic forms do occur under propitious conditions. Another highlight in this progressive "naturalization" of psychic science was the award in 1937 by Duke University of a doctoral degree in Philosophy to John F. Thomas, whose contribution to "knowledge" was a 320-page record of spiritualistic communications from his deceased wife!

The work of investigators like J. W. Dunne, whose *Experiment With Time* (1927) brought the scientific world convincing testimony of the fact of prophetic dreams; of Dr. Charles Jung, who made the startling discovery that dream symbols often have the same pattern as alchemical figures of the Middle Ages; of Prof. Bart J. Bok, eminent astronomer of Harvard, who now admits that there is some truth in astrology, and of many other workers in re-

search, has been undermining the scepticism of scientists for a decade or more. Dr. Einstein's qualified approval of Dr. Gustav Stromberg's attempt to provide a scientific basis for immortality in *The Soul of the Universe* must also have had its effect.

Meanwhile, literary figures, all the way from minor luminaries like Nina Wilcox Putnam and Stewart Edward White to writers in *True Story*, have been purveying their psychic revelations to a growing crowd of enthusiasts and believers. The noted author of *Credo*, years later, in *The Unobstructed Universe*, revealed a life-long interest in Spiritualism, and set forth claims to receiving from the spirit of the late Mrs. White, herself a sensitive, a new psychic cosmology and philosophy of life.

The Spiritualist cults are gaining a new lease on life by the recent appearance of several child mediums, innocent victims of psychic curiosity, whose achievements have been thoroughly exploited by the sensation-seeking press. Picture magazines, avid for circulation-getting material of this quality, have reproduced the more extraordinary of "spirit" photographs, drawn from private collections. Lilydale, New York, the Spiritualist Mecca, has more than once received dramatic presentation; notably, in *Life* for Aug. 2, 1937, when the whole mythology of nineteenth century spiritualism was revived and illustrated, with appropriate description in the quip-like style of the *Life* editors.

Teachers of hypnotism abound, and despite warnings by physicians high in their profession, the fascination of this conjuror's art is interesting otherwise sober medical men in techniques that are broadly advertised by these modern Charcots. Especially pernicious attempts are being made in scientifically authoritative quarters to dispel the popular idea that hypnotism is "Black Magic," while the cures it has supposedly brought about are recounted in glowing terms.

Volumes could be devoted to description of these symptoms of renascent psychism, of the unbelievable naiveté of modern cultists, and of the tragic ignorance of the occult laws that men who imagine themselves scientists are on the verge of violating in extreme degree. Suffice it that the evidence is ample to show that the world of psychic interests and undertakings is a veritable jungle of confusion, full of fascinating sights and sounds, and rich in the attractions of escapism so longingly sought by a world strained almost to the breaking point by the fierce selfishness and competitive struggle for existence which dominate modern "civilization," and by the unrelieved tensions of periodic wars.

## HYPNOTISM AND "YOGA"

**T**HE real character of hypnotism and hypnotic phenomena is difficult for the average man to recognize, not only because of the admitted ignorance of scientific investigators in this field, but also, because of the unknown areas of human nature which are involved. All present practice of hypnotism traces directly or indirectly to Anton Mesmer, the great healer and occultist of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately for modern medicine, however, Mesmer's doctrines were not accepted in professional circles, and the development of hypnotism fell into the charge of men who were either ignorant of occult law, or irresponsible in the use of the mesmeric force. Today the medical historians of hypnotism rejoice that hypnotism has been divorced from Mesmer's theories, as though the separation were a great step of progress, little realizing that Mesmer had knowledge of the psychological constitution of man that enabled him to use his power in a way not open to ordinary men.

Recent years have witnessed a rapid increase in the practice of hypnotism. In the name of "science," students in scores of colleges and universities are being used as subjects in hypnotic experiments, while physicians are more and more turning to this method of controlling the minds of their patients. Amateurs, often lacking the skill of more experienced practitioners, are introducing hypnotism as parlor entertainment. Meanwhile, "experts" are claiming that hypnotism is "harmless" for normal persons. One such writer, Dr. Paul Campbell Young, had the temerity to maintain, in the *Psychological Bulletin* for September, 1926, that "books that point out the dangers of hypnotism are far more dangerous than hypnotism itself." Echoing such allegedly "scientific" pronouncements, popular writers for the mass magazines are carrying to the uninformed and defenceless public the news that hypnotism is capable of miraculous "cures" in many cases of mental and physical ills. In the *Reader's Digest* for October, 1943, an article named "Hypnotism Comes of Age" makes the unqualified statement: "*You will suffer no harmful mental or physical after-effects.* It's quite possible that hypnosis will fail to produce the desired results in your case, but you'll be no worse off for the trial." The pernicious falsity of this statement would be difficult to equal. It suppresses facts that are well known and is merely propaganda for hypnotism.

The dangers of hypnotism were better understood fifty years ago than they are today. Jean Marie Charcot, the famous French investigator of hypnotic states, wrote in the *Forum* for April, 1890:

For several years the principal towns of Europe have been overrun by persons . . . bearing high-sounding titles, who invite the people to hypnotizing performances given in the local theatres. . . . We can track a showman magnetizer of this sort by his victims everywhere. When he has gone, it is noticed that subjects . . . with whom he succeeded best become nervous and irritable. Some of them fall of their own accord into a deep sleep, out of which it is not easy to awaken them; thereafter they are unfitted for the performance of the duties of every-day life. Others, and they the majority, are seized with convulsions resembling the crises of confirmed hysteria.

Charcot maintained that the practice of hypnotism should be limited to trained physicians. William Q. Judge, co-founder, with Madame Blavatsky, of the Theosophical Movement, in commenting on Charcot's view, added his own opinion that hypnotism should be prohibited by law. "No one," he urged, "but some few high-minded and learned physicians should be allowed to practice it. I would as quickly prohibit the general mass of physicians from using it as the general mass of the public, for I regard it as a dangerous and injurious power. In the present age I would vote for its total seclusion from use for the present."

The following analysis of hypnotism, taken from Mr. Judge's writings, gives the Theosophical reasons for condemning the practice.

\* \* \*

One theory for use in explaining and prosecuting hypnotic research is about as follows. Man is a soul who lives on thoughts and perceives only thoughts. Every object or subject comes to him as a thought, no matter what the channel or instrument, whether organ of sense or mental center, by which it comes before him. These thoughts may be words, ideas, or pictures. The soul-man has to have an intermediary or connecting link with Nature through and by which he may cognize and experience. This link is an ethereal double or counterpart of his physical body, dwelling in the latter; and the physical body is Nature so far as the soul-man is concerned. In this ethereal double (called astral body) are the sense-organs and centers of perception, the physical outer organs being only the external channels or means for concentrating the physical vibrations so as to

transmit them to the astral organs and centers where the soul perceives them as ideas or thoughts. This inner ethereal man is made of the ether which science is now admitting as a necessary part of Nature, but while it is etheric it is none the less substantial.

Speaking physically, all outer stimulus from nature is sent from without to within. But in the same way stimuli may be sent from the within to the without, and in the latter mode is it that our thoughts and desires propel us to act. Stimuli are sent from the astral man within to the periphery, the physical body, and may dominate the body so as to alter it or bring on a lesion partial or total. Cases of the hair turning grey in a night are thus possible. And in this way a suggestion of a blister may make a physical swelling, secretion, inflammation, and sore on a subject who has submitted himself to the influence of the hypnotizer. The picture or idea of a blister is impressed on the astral body, and that controls all the physical nerves, sensations, currents, and secretions. It is done through the sympathetic nervous plexus and ganglia. It was thus that ecstatic fanatical women and men by brooding on the pictured idea of the wounds of Jesus produced on their own bodies, by internal impression and stimulus projected to the surface, all of the marks of crown of thorns and wounded side. It was self-hypnotization, possible only in fanatical hysterical ecstasy. The constant brooding imprinted the picture deeply on the astral body; then the physical molecules, ever changing, became impressed from within and the *stigmata* were the result. In hypnotizing done by another the only difference is one of time, as in the latter instances the operator has simply to make the image and impress it on the subject after the hypnotic process has been submitted to, whereas in self-hypnotization a long-continued ecstasy is necessary to make the impression complete.

When the hypnotic process—or subjugation, as I call it—is submitted to, a disjunction is made between the soul-man and the astral body, which then is for the time deprived of will, and is the sport of any suggestion coming in unopposed, and those may and do sometimes arise outside of the mind and intention of the operator. From this arises the sensitiveness to suggestion. The idea, or thought, or picture of an act is impressed by suggesting it on the astral body, and then the patient is waked. At the appointed time given by the suggestor a secondary sleep or hypnotic state arises automatically, and then, the disjunction between soul and astral body coming about of itself, the suggested act is performed unless—as happens rarely—the soul-man resists sufficiently to prevent it. Hence we point to

an element of danger in the fact that at the suggested moment the hypnotic state comes on secondarily by association. I do not know that hypnotizers have perceived this. It indicates that although the subject be dehypnotized, the influence of the operator, once thrown on the subject, will remain until the day of the operator's death.

But how is it that the subject can see on a blank card the picture of a object which you have merely willed to be on it? This is because every thought of any one makes a picture; and a thought of a definite image makes a definite form in the astral light in which the astral body exists and functions, interpenetrating also every part of the physical body. Having thus imaged the picture on the card, it remains in the astral light or sphere surrounding the card, and is there objective to the astral sense of the hypnotized subject.

The great question mooted is whether there is or is not any actual fluid thrown off by the mesmerizer. Many deny it, and nearly all hypnotizers refuse to admit it. H. P. Blavatsky declares there is such a fluid, and those who can see into the plane to which it belongs assert its existence as a subtle form of matter. This is not at all inconsistent with the experiments in hypnotism, for the fluid can have its own existence at the same time that people may be self-hypnotized by merely inverting their eyes while looking at some bright object. This fluid is composed in part of the astral substance around everyone, and in part of the physical atoms in a finely divided state. By some, this astral substance is called the *aura*. But that word is indefinite, as there are many sorts of aura and many degrees of its expression. These will not be known, even to Theosophists of the most willing mind, until the race as a whole has developed up to that point. So the word will remain in use for the present.

This aura, then, is thrown off by the mesmerizer upon his subject, and is received by the latter in a department of his inner constitution, never described by any Western experimenters, because they know nothing of it. It wakes up certain inner and non-physical divisions of the person operated on, causing a change of relation between the various and numerous sheaths surrounding the inner man, and making possible different degrees of intelligence and of clairvoyance and the like. It has no influence whatsoever on the Higher Self, which it is impossible to reach by such means. Many persons are deluded into supposing that the Higher Self is the responder, or that some spirit or what not is present, but it is only one of the many inner persons, so to say, who is talking or rather causing the organs of speech to do their office. And it is just here that the



Theosophist and the non-Theosophist are at fault, since the words spoken are sometimes far above the ordinary intelligence or power of the subject in waking state. I therefore propose to give in the rough the theory of what actually does take place, as has been known for ages to those who see with the inner eye, and as will one day be discovered and admitted by science.

When the hypnotic or mesmerized state is complete—and often when it is partial—there is an immediate paralyzing of the power of the body to throw its impressions, and thus modify the conceptions of the inner being. In ordinary waking life everyone, without being able to disentangle himself, is subject to the impressions from the whole organism; that is to say, every cell in the body, to the most minute, has its own series of impressions and recollections, all of which continue to impinge on the great register, the brain, until the impression remaining in the cell is fully exhausted. And that exhaustion takes a long time. Further, as we are adding continually to them, the period of disappearance of impression is indefinitely postponed. Thus the inner person is not able to make itself felt. But, in the right subject, those bodily impressions are by mesmerism neutralized for the time, and at once another effect follows, which is equivalent to cutting the general off from his army and compelling him to seek other means of expression.

The brain—in cases where the subject talks—is left free sufficiently to permit it to obey the commands of the mesmerizer and compel the organs of speech to respond. So much in general.

We have now come to another part of the nature of man which is a land unknown to the Western world and its scientists. By mesmerism other organs are set to work disconnected from the body, but which in normal state function with and through the latter. These are not admitted by the world, but they exist, and are as real as the body is—in fact some who know say they are more real and less subject to decay, for they remain almost unchanged from birth to death. These organs have their own currents, circulation if you will, and methods of receiving and storing impressions. They not only keep them but very often give them out, and when the person is mesmerized their exit is untrammelled by the body.

They are divided into many classes and grades, and each one of them has a whole series of ideas and facts peculiar to itself, as well as centres in the ethereal body to which they relate. Instead now of the brain's dealing with the sensations of the body, it deals with something quite different, and reports what these inner organs see

in any part of space to which they are directed. And in place of your having waked up the Higher Self, you have merely uncovered one of the many sets of impressions and experiences of which the inner man is composed, and who is himself a long distance from the Higher Self. These varied pictures, thus seized from every quarter, are normally overborne by the great roar of the physical life, which is the sum total of possible expression of a normal being on the physical plane whereon we move. They show themselves usually only by glimpses when we have sudden ideas or recollections, or in dreams when our sleeping may be crowded with fancies for which we cannot find a basis in daily life. Yet the basis exists, and is always some one or other of the million small impressions of the day, passed unnoticed by the physical brain, but caught unerringly by means of other sensoriums belonging to our astral double. For this astral body, or double, permeates the physical one as colour does the bowl of water. And although to the materialistic conceptions of the present day such a misty shadow is not admitted to have parts, powers, and organs, it nevertheless has all of these with surprising power and grasp. Although perhaps a mist, it can exert under proper conditions a force equal to the viewless wind when it levels to earth the proud constructions of puny man.

In the astral body, then, is the place to look for the explanation of mesmerism and hypnotism. The Higher Self will explain the flights we seldom make into the realm of spirit, and is the God—the Father—within who guides His children up the long steep road to perfection. Let not the idea of it be degraded by chaining it to the low floor of mesmeric phenomena, which any healthy man or woman can bring about if they will only try. The grosser the operator the better, for thus there is more of the mesmeric force, and if it be the Higher Self that is affected, then the meaning of it would be that gross matter can with ease affect and deflect the high spirit—and this is against the testimony of the ages.

The mesmeric fluid brings the paralysis about by flowing from the operator and creeping steadily over the whole body of the subject, *changing the polarity of the cells in every part* and thus disconnecting the outer from the inner man. As the whole system of physical nerves is sympathetic in all its ramifications, when major sets of nerves are affected others by sympathy follow into the same condition. So it often happens with mesmerized subjects that the arms or legs are suddenly paralyzed without being directly operated on, or, as frequently, the sensation due to the fluid is felt first in the forearm, although the head was the only place touched.

There are many secrets about this part of the process, but they will not be given out, as it is easy enough for all proper purposes to mesmerize a subject by following what is already publicly known. By means of certain nerve points located near the skin the whole system of nerves may be altered in an instant, even by a slight breath from the mouth at a distance of eight feet from the subject. But modern books do not point this out.

When the paralyzing and change of polarity of the cells are complete the astral man is almost disconnected from the body. Has he any structure? What mesmerizer knows? How many probably will deny that he has any structure at all? Is he only a mist, an idea? And yet, again, how many subjects are trained so as to be able to analyze their own astral anatomy?

Disjoin this being from the outer body with which he is linked, and the divorce deprives him of freedom temporarily, making him the slave of the operator. But mesmerizers know very well that the subject can and does often escape from control, puzzling them often, and often giving them fright. This is testified to by all the best writers in the Western schools.

Now the inner man is not by any means omniscient. He has an understanding that is limited by his own experience, as said before. Therefore, error creeps in if we rely on what he says in the mesmeric trance as to anything that requires philosophical knowledge, except with rare cases that are so infrequent as not to need consideration now. For neither the limit of the subject's power to know, nor the effect of the operator on the inner sensoriums described above, is known to operators in general, and especially not by those who do not accept the ancient division of the inner nature of man. The effect of the operator is almost always to colour the reports made by the subject.

Body, soul, and astral man properly in relation give us a sane man; hypnotized, the relation is broken and we have a person who is not for the time wholly sane. Acute maniacs are those in whom the disjunction between astral man and soul is complete. Where the hypnotized one remains for months in that state, the astral man has become the slave of the body and its recollections, but as the soul is not concerned no real memory is present and no recollection of the period is retained.

The varied personalities assumed by some subjects brings up the doctrine of a former life on earth for all men. The division between soul and astral man releases the latter from some of the limitations

of brain memory so that the inner memory may act, and we then have a case of a person reënacting some part of his former life or lives. But a second possibility also exists,—that by this process another and different entity may enter the body and brain and masquerade as the real person. Such entities do exist and are the astral shells of men and women out of the body. If they enter, the person becomes insane; and many a maniac is simply a body inhabited by an entity that does not belong to it.

The process of hypnotizing is as yet unknown in respect to what does happen to the molecules. We claim that those molecules are pressed from periphery to center instead of being expanded from the inside to the surface. This contraction is one of the symptoms of death, and therefore hypnotizing is a long step toward physical and moral death. The view expressed by Dr. Charcot that a subject is liable to fall under the influence at the hands of anyone should be admitted, as also that in the wake of the hypnotizer will be found a host of hysteriacs, and that it all should be regulated by law is unquestionable. I go still further and say that many persons are already in a half-hypnotized state, easily influenced by the unprincipled or the immoral; that the power to hypnotize and to be sensitive to it are both progressive states of our racial evolution; that it can and will be used for selfish, wicked, and degrading purposes unless the race, and especially the occidental portion of it, understands and practises true ethics based on the brotherhood of man. Ethics of the purest are found in the words of Jesus, but are universally negated by Church, State, and individual. The Theosophical doctrines of man and nature give a true and necessary basis and enforcement to ethics, devoid of favoritism or illogical schemes of eternal damnation. And only through those doctrines can the dangers of hypnotism be averted, since legislation, while affixing penalties, will not alter or curtail private acts of selfishness and greed.

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There is no question but that hypnotism brings “results” of a sort, but so will partial knowledge of any of the laws of nature. A savage may be taught to set off a charge of explosive that is miles away. He will hear the report and conclude by highly scientific reasoning from cause to effect that he knows what happens when he presses the plunger. But not until he is led to the place of the explosion does he discover that the charge has torn away the side of a hill, or reduced a human habitation to ruins. Modern scientific ignorance

of the psychological constitution of man completes the analogy, for the effect of hypnotism may be just as catastrophic as the more violent effect of an explosion. One is external and physical, the other internal and psychic, attacking the inner organism of man with a subtle disintegration that remains unperceived until its ravages are far advanced. It is not contended that hypnotism invariably produces this result, but that, in view of the nature of the process, such is the common effect. Many factors, among them the motives of both practitioner and subject, enter in. The real causes of disaster are the non-moral approach to man's subtle psychological nature, and the blinding ignorance of the semi-occult character of the forces that are invoked.

Dangers similar to those involved in hypnotism confront those who indulge in the Eastern psychological practices that have recently become popular in the West. Many people begin "breathing exercises" and postural disciplines under the delusion that they are "spiritual." Suffice it to point out that the Oriental teachers dispose of this idea by calling all such practices *Hatha* Yoga, which means, simply, *physical* discipline. There is nothing spiritual about it.

The hazards of Hatha Yoga are undreamed of by the average westerner. A few years ago, an English writer, Gerald Heard, spoke of breathing exercises as "the most instant and powerful of all the physical methods of affecting, altering and enlarging consciousness." While tempering this judgment with some warnings against the consequences of this physical kind of "yoga," he adds that "it is a risk we have no choice except to take."

For those who are attracted to taking this "risk," the following experiment, conducted by Wm. Q. Judge, is described. Mr. Judge wrote:

The persons present were myself, a well-known physician whose name I can give, and the practitioner. The physician first took the person's pulse for three minutes and found it to be running at ninety-six beats per minute; and then the experiment began with the practice with the following result:

First minute. Pulse fell to 91 beats.

Second minute. Pulse fell to 81 beats.

Third minute. Pulse remained at 81 beats.

A delay of five minutes then occurred, when the practice was begun again for six minutes, with the following result:

First minute. Pulse running at 91 beats a minute.

Second minute. Pulse fell to 86 beats.

Third minute. Pulse remained at 86.

Fourth minute. Pulse fell to 76.

Fifth minute. Remained at 76.

Sixth minute. Remained at 76.

This shows a reduction in the pulse action of twenty beats in fourteen minutes. It also shows that after the first three minutes the intermission of five minutes was not enough to enable the pulse to go back to ninety-six beats, at which it started. The first three minutes showed a fall of five beats in the first minute and ten in the next minute, making fifteen beats reduction for the three minutes.

It therefore appears that one of the accompaniments of this practice is a distinct effect upon the action of the heart, and as all the Hindu books invariably state that great caution should be used and that there are dangers, we can see here a very great danger found in an effect upon the heart's action, resulting in a reduction of pulse beats of twenty beats in fourteen minutes. The Hindu books to which I have referred, and which are the only works through which inquirers have heard about these practices, also say that a guide who is fully acquainted with the subject is necessary for each student, and that every one of these practices requires an antidote for its effects through other regulations tending to neutralize the bad physical effects. Students have been too anxious to try these experiments without paying any attention to the cautions given out, and I know of some cases in which, while well remembering that the cautions had been uttered, persons have pursued these practices by themselves without assistance.

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Discussing so-called "practical yoga" in another place, Mr. Judge called attention to the fact that the directions found in the *Upanishads*, with regard to breathing and postural exercises, should never be practiced except under the following conditions: (a) a complete knowledge of all the consequences, with a knowledge of correctives to be applied when changes take place; and (b) the possession of a thoroughly competent guide to point out errors, to restrain endeavour and to indicate danger, as well as to cure troubles that ensue.

Yet in the face of all this, and of repeated warnings, there are those who will foolhardily begin the practices in complete ignorance.

They do not even pursue the ethical regulations that accompany all the others, such as the doing away with all vices, bad habits, uncharitable thoughts and so on; but go in for the practices, merely in the hope of procuring psychic powers. It is time it were stopped, and time that those who give out this literature looked into what they give out to a grasping and stiff-necked generation. That damage has been wrought cannot be contested, in face of actual experience. It is well known that these postures, even when ignorantly used, bring on physiological changes in the body, with great nervous derangements.

The need of the West is not for Hatha Yoga, but of that other and higher discipline, known in the Orient as *Raja* Yoga. Hatha Yoga is a practical mortification of the body, by means of which certain powers are developed. Raja Yoga, on the other hand, discards those physical motions, postures and recipes relating solely to the present personality, and directs the student to virtue and altruism as the bases from which to start. Besides the higher objective presented by Raja Yoga, there is the enormous danger which the western student exposes himself to by attempting Hatha yogic development. Even though he may follow rules given by a teacher more or less informed, he will inevitably arouse about him influences that do him harm, and he also carries his natural functions to certain states now and then when he ought to stop for a while, but, having no knowledge of the matter, may go on beyond and produce injurious effects. The greatest objection to it, however, is that it pertains to the material and semi-material man,—roughly, to the body, and what is gained through it is lost at death.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ANCIENTS

**W**HILE the phenomena and beliefs known today under the general name of "Spiritualism" are often thought to be of recent origin, dating back less than one hundred years, a study of history will show that these abnormal manifestations have been present among all peoples and in all times. Actually, it would be difficult to find an epoch in which psychic phenomena were not better understood than they are today. Our ignorance of these matters is due to the materialism of both science and religion, the one denying the phenomena altogether, the other ignoring them, or, in the case of the Catholics, making the devil and his fiends the scapegoats for all unnatural events, excepting, of course, the "miracles" performed by loyal Christians, which are explained by divine intervention!

The ancients, however, thought otherwise. Belief in spirits and invisible worlds, and in the possibility of intercommunication between men and intelligences existing on other planes was, until quite recently in our history, common to all mankind. The religions and philosophies of the ancients are filled with allusions to "gods" and "spirits" of various kinds. The symbolic and legendary accounts of creation found in the Puranas of India describe an almost infinite diversity of such beings known by the generic name "*Devas*." Their total number, according to the Hindus, is 330,000,000. H. P. Blavatsky described them as "the embodied powers of states of matter, more refined than those with which we are familiar." While the term *Devas* may be rendered "Gods" in English, it must not be supposed that they are all degrees of being far above man. They represent the various powers and forces in nature, each class possessing a degree of intelligence, but the kind of intelligence we see manifested in the various kingdoms.

Personification has always been the method of teachers who have had to deal with the mind of the masses, and hence we find tales of the "Gods" in every land, of beings who have been anthropomorphized by the popular imagination, and then worshipped. The secret teachings of the great religions of the world explain the inner meaning of these allegories, of which we have a familiar example in the Mysteries of Greece. St. Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, says, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels," making clear that he had been initiated by the Pagan philosophers of his time. For the angels of Christianity are but the devas of India, the



daimons of Greece, borrowed from the past by the Christian Fathers and Catholic theologians. Jehovah himself, the personal God of the Old Testament, was but one of the subordinate powers of Nature, the tutelary spirit of that great prophet-medium, Moses, whose personal ambition led him to pass off his "familiar" as the very Spirit of God!

Belief in "spirits"—legitimate because resting on the authority of experiment and observation—vindicates at the same time another belief, also regarded as a superstition, namely polytheism. The latter is based on a fact in nature; spirits mistaken for Gods have been seen in every age by men: hence belief in many and various Gods. Monotheism, on the other hand, rests upon a pure abstraction. Who ever saw God?—that God, we mean, the Infinite and the Omnipotent, the one about whom the monotheists talk so much? Polytheism—when once man claims the right of divine interference on his behalf—is logical and consistent with the philosophies of the East, all of which—whether pantheistic or deistic—proclaim the One to be an infinite abstraction, an absolute Something, which utterly transcends the conception of the finite. Surely such a creed is more philosophical than the religion whose theology, proclaiming God in one place as a mysterious and an incomprehensible Being, shows him at the same time so human and so petty a God as to concern himself with the breeches of his chosen people<sup>1</sup> while neglecting to say anything definite about the immortality of their souls or their survival after death!

The mere presence, however, of doctrines relating to the existence of invisible beings, or "spirits," of itself offers little in rational explanation of spiritualistic phenomena. Otherwise the blanket charge of diabolism made by the Roman Catholics such as de Mirville and des Moisseaux, and more lately by Montague Summers,<sup>2</sup> would suffice. Actually, there is plenty of evidence to show that the ancients had *knowledge* of those many classes of beings which the Spiritualists so loosely denominate "spirits of the dead," that they were in many cases masters, instead of merely the passive mediums, of the occult powers. They knew from a profound metaphysical philosophy and discipline that there are many classes of spirits, some good, some bad. Of the latter all too many mediums have learned to their

<sup>1</sup> "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness, from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach." (*Exodus* xxviii, 42.) God a linen-drafter and a tailor!

<sup>2</sup> Author of *A Popular History of Witchcraft* (Dutton, 1937), and several similar books.

sorrow . . . and too late. Jakob Görres, a German author of the last century, conversing with some Hindus of the Malabar Coast, asked if there were ghosts among them. They replied that there were, but recognized them as "bad *bhuts*," principally the remains of suicides and murderers, or of those who died violent deaths. These spirits flutter about and appear as phantoms. Night-time is favorable to them, they seduce the feeble-minded and tempt others in a thousand different ways. (*Mystique*, iii, 63.)

When Madame Blavatsky told her Hindu friends of the efforts of European and American Spiritualists to communicate with the dead they exclaimed in undisguised horror: "Communion with *bhuts*—communion with souls that have become wicked demons, to whom we are ready to offer sacrifices in food and drink to pacify them and make them leave us quiet, but who never come but to disturb the peace of families; whose presence is a pollution! What pleasure or comfort can the Bellate (white foreigners) find in communicating with them?"

This does not mean that the sages of antiquity disbelieved in beneficent spiritual influences, but only that they distinguished clearly between the material and earthly shades known in the East as *Bhuts* or devils, and the purely subjective spiritual intelligences that work for the elevation and inspiration of mankind. The Eastern teaching, however, is that such communion is possible only after a long period of extreme discipline, through which the disciple attains by successive stages the powers of inner perception which belong to the adept or initiate. First of all, in this training, the slightest tendency to passivity must be destroyed. Unless this is done the aspirant may become the victim of malicious entities which inhabit the lower psychic atmosphere of the earth. Passivity, note well, is the *sine qua non* of successful mediumship, which in the ancient view exposes the sensitive to the baleful emanations of the lowest of the invisible spheres.

The Gods or Devas of the Orient were known to the Greeks as *Daimons*. Their view of the invisible world and its various inhabitants was essentially the same as that of the Hindus. In Platonic philosophy the souls of exalted men were literally "gods," in that they participated in the One. In many places Plato shows his familiarity with the ancient Aryan philosophy. In the *Phaedrus* he describes the highest initiation of the Mysteries, whereby one became the spectator of "entire, simple, immovable, and blessed visions, resident in a pure light." The *Timaeus* gives account of the "*Daimons* who inhabit the air, are always near to us, . . . inter-

mediate between gods and men." The *Bhuts* of the Hindus are identified in the *Phaedo* as "ghostly apparitions of souls which have not departed pure." Xenocrates, a Platonist who expounded many of the unwritten theories and teachings of his master, taught that the Daimons are intermediate beings between the divine perfection and human sinfulness, and he divides them into classes, each subdivided into many others. But he states expressly that the individual or personal Soul is the leading guardian Daimon of every man, and that no Daimon has more power over us than our own. Thus the Daimon of Socrates is the God or Divine Entity which inspired him all his life. It depends on man either to open or close his perceptions to the Divine voice.

Heracleides, who adopted fully the Pythagorean and Platonic views of the human Soul, its nature and faculties, speaking of Spirits, calls them "Daimons with airy and vaporous bodies," and affirms that *Souls* inhabit the Milky Way before descending "into generation" or sublunary existence.

The fact is that the word Daimon was applied by the ancients, and especially by the Philosophers of the Alexandrian school, to all kinds of spirits, whether good or bad, human or otherwise, but the appellation was often synonymous with that of Gods or angels.

Under the general designation of fairies, and fays, the spirits of the elements appear in the myths, fables, traditions, or poetry of all nations, ancient and modern. Their names are legion—peris, devs, djins, sylvans, satyrs, fauns, elves, dwarfs, trolls, norns, nisses, kobolds, brownies, necks, stromkarls, undines, nixies, goblins, ponkes, banshees, kelpies, pixies, moss people, good people, good neighbors, wild women, men of peace, white ladies—and many more. They have been seen, feared, blessed, banned, and invoked in every quarter of the globe and in every age.

These nature-spirits, or elementals, as they have been called, must not be confused with human ghosts or the psychic remains of those who have died. Proclus has written explicitly of the "second death," by which these remains of the psychic man are left behind:

After death, the soul continueth to linger in the aerial body, till it is entirely purified from all angry and voluptuous passions . . . then doth it put off by a second dying the aerial body as it did the earthly one. Whereupon, the ancients say that there is a celestial body always joined with the soul, which is immortal, luminous, and star-like. . . .

This is obviously the "spiritual body" spoken of by St. Paul, whose triune division of man—body, soul, and spirit—was in perfect accord with the Greek conception. The aerial body mentioned by Proclus is, like the physical, mortal; it is the *psyche*, "from elements it was formed—to elements it must return." The *nous*, or understanding, according to the Greeks, is the eternal spirit in man. Plutarch wrote of the fate of the *psyche*, or lower human soul:

And of these souls the moon is the element, because souls resolve into her as the bodies of the deceased do into earth. Those, indeed, who have been virtuous and honest, living a quiet and philosophical life, without embroiling themselves in troublesome affairs, are quickly resolved; being left by the *nous* and no longer using the corporeal passions, they incontinently vanish away.

The more coherent of these psychic "corpses," made so by an intensity of the passions during life, are the Elementaries of the Kabalists, the Incubi and Succubi of the Middle Ages. Especially to be feared were the victims of suicide and sudden death, for whom the natural terminus of life had not come. Of these the Neoplatonist, Porphyry, wrote:

The soul, having even after death a certain affection for its body, an affinity proportioned to the violence with which their union was broken, we see many spirits hovering in despair about their earthly remains; we even see them eagerly seeking the putrid remains of other bodies, but above all freshly-spilled blood, which seems to impart to them for the moment some of the faculties of life.

These entities were known to the Romans as "larvae," or malignant spirits of the dead. Good human spirits became "gods." The Roman celebration of *Lemuria* included rites which were supposed to rid the home of lingering shades or shells.

The Magi and theurgic philosophers objected most severely to necromancy, or the "evocation of souls." "Bring her [the soul] not forth, lest in departing she retain something," says Psellus, a Neoplatonist of the Byzantine Renaissance. "It becomes you not to behold them before your body is initiated, since, by always alluring, they seduce the souls of the uninitiated"—says the same philosopher in another passage.

The ancients objected to necromancy for several good reasons. "It is extremely difficult to distinguish a good Daimon from a bad one," says Iamblichus. If the spell of a good man succeeds in penetrating the density of the earth's atmosphere—always oppressive to it, often hateful—still there is a danger that it cannot avoid; the soul is unable to come into proximity with the material world with-

out that on "departing, she retains something," that is to say, she contaminates her purity, for which she has to suffer more or less after her departure. The evil terrestrial "Daimons" seek to introduce themselves into the bodies of the simple-minded and idiots, and remain there until dislodged therefrom by a powerful and *pure* will. Jesus, Apollonius, and some of the apostles, had the power to cast out "devils," by purifying the atmosphere within and without the patient, so as to force the unwelcome tenant to flight.

Although Aristotle himself, anticipating the modern physiologists and behaviorists, regarded the human mind as a material substance, he fully believed in the existence of a "double" soul, or spirit and soul. He laughed at Strabo for believing that any particles of matter, *per se*, could have life and intellect in themselves sufficient to fashion by degrees such a multiform world as ours.

Of the gross terrestrial shells, Porphyry remarked:

These invisible beings have been receiving from man honours as gods; . . . a universal belief makes them capable of becoming very malevolent; it proves that their wrath is kindled against those who neglect to offer them a legitimate worship.

He said further,

Daimons are invisible; but they know how to clothe themselves with forms and configurations subjected to numerous variations, which can be explained by their nature having much of the corporeal in itself. Their abode is in the neighborhood of the earth . . . and when they escape the vigilance of the good Daimons, there is no mischief they will not dare commit. One day they will employ brute force; another, cunning. . . .

It is a child's play for them to arouse in us vile passions, to impart to societies and nations turbulent doctrines, provoking wars, seditions, and other public calamities, and then tell you "that all of these are the work of the gods." . . . These spirits pass their time in cheating and deceiving mortals, creating around them illusions and prodigies; their greatest ambition is to pass as *gods* and *souls*.

Iamblichus, the great theurgist of the Neoplatonic school, and instructor of Porphyry in sacred magic, wrote in *The Mysteries of the Egyptians* that the bad Daimons "manifest themselves but under the shadowy forms of phantoms." They "require darkness. . . . The sensations they excite in us make us believe in the presence and reality of things they show, though these things be absent."

A careful reading of *Isis Unveiled*, supplemented by independent research into the psychological teachings of the ancient Hindus and Greeks, cannot fail to show, first, the basic uniformities in the de-

scriptions of various sorts of psychic phenomena, and, second, the essential identity of the explanations offered. If the investigator will make the entirely justifiable assumption that the ancients may have had psychological knowledge, based upon personal experience, which far transcends our own, such research will undoubtedly lead him to discoveries that confirm in principle and in many details the Theosophical teachings regarding these phenomena. It should be recognized and admitted that while western civilization may have reached new heights in the field of technology and mechanical invention, it is childish and even arrogantly provincial to assume that a knowledge of the psychic, intellectual and moral constitution of man, superior to our own limited understanding in these departments, could not have existed in the past.

Unless some such recognition is made, and a respectful hearing accorded to the representations made for the great psychologists of antiquity, it may well happen that the flood of psychic irregularities resulting from the emotional cataclysm of war, and the natural turning of public interest to things psychic, will deliver millions of gullible victims into the hands of charlatans and exploiters of the "psychic." There *is* a science of these things, there are principles to be known, laws to be grasped, and warnings to be issued and observed. But that science will never grow from the materialism of modern psychology, nor from *dilettante* undertakings in spiritualism and "magic" by sophisticated curiosity hunters.

The moral science of psychology has its foundations in a spiritual conception of man, developed in terms of strict metaphysical principles, with clear doctrines of the migrations and changes of the soul in relation to embodied existence. The proofs and tests of that science are not available to those who refuse to conform to the ethical precepts on which it is founded, or who will not look in the direction from which the evidence of its verity is forthcoming. Little can be done for such as these, nor has the theosophical student any particular obligation to them. The teachings of Theosophy, whether as anciently expressed, or in their modern exegesis, are for those who *want* them; who, genuinely bewildered by the claims and counter-claims of mediums, pseudo-occultists, and "yogis" from the East, puzzled by the agnosticism of science, and the apathy of religion, are determined to find out if there are such things as psychic phenomena, and hidden or occult powers in man, and what, if any, may be the meaning of them all. Theosophy is primarily a philosophy of life, but it is also practical psychology which comprehends in its purview all the strange and inexplicable experiences that come to men.

# PSYCHISM TODAY

## I

**I**T is quite evident to everyone who reads the newspapers and magazines of the day, and who notes the character of books being published for popular circulation, that there is a growing interest in so-called "psychic" subjects. The rigidly materialistic outlook of yesterday's science, once regarded by most people as the final authority in all important questions, no longer prevails—a change in attitude which is as much due to the philosophical, even mystical, tendencies among leading scientists themselves as to anything else. The vast unexplored area of supernormal psychological powers resident in man is receiving the attention of orthodox scientific investigators, and these workers, while not without their opponents, are slowly gaining the approbation of thoughtful men and women. Concurrently with these developments in the scientific and academic world has come a renaissance of popular interest in the "occult," the mysterious and the supernatural. Although lacking the scholarly sanction of modern university authorities, this widespread attraction to psychic wonders, spiritualistic phenomena and the like is far more significant of the trend of human thought and activity than the erudite and guarded speculations of a few scientists. Some broad tendency of human nature is gradually emerging, finding expression through various channels and at different levels of intelligence. So numerous are the indications of this change in attitude, and so far-reaching its effects on modern life, that one is justified in proposing the question: Is it mere coincidence that men and women in all walks of life are turning to the psychic and occult, whether it be for purposes of religious satisfaction, scientific inquiry, or even amusement, or can there be discerned some unifying principle, some broad psychological conception which will account for this almost universal trend?

Perhaps the most telling indication of the supremacy of psychism lies in its negative aspect—the breakdown of the rational method of dealing with human problems. This we find to a startling degree in recent political events in Europe. Democracy, which is the spirit of rationalism embodied in government forms, is a thing of the past on the European continent. During the medieval period, Philosophy, as historians have said, was the handmaiden of Theology. Now, in the modern age, Science, which was to have been the liberator of all mankind, has taken its place beside both Theology and Philosophy, and all three minister to that supremely emotional

entity, the totalitarian state. The utterances of the dictator are oracular and final for many millions who have abrogated their right of independent thinking.

In America, the religious groups which have been most successful in gaining adherents in recent years are those which relegate reason to an unimportant position in the scheme of moral life. There is, for example, the Oxford Movement headed by Dr. Frank Buchman. The Buchmanites "talk with God." God tells them what to do. This, of course, makes everything very simple, once you get a wire through to the supreme Deity. One need not think for himself when one has God for his personal *daimon*. "God has a Plan," say the Oxford enthusiasts, untroubled by the searching investigations of philosophers who have not as yet been able to convince either themselves or anyone of intelligence that a personal, thinking and planning "being" can at the same time be omnipresent and universal—the highest there is. The ethics of the Oxford Movement are indeed admirable—Absolute Love, Charity, Honesty, Truthfulness—but one cannot help remembering that the same Robespierre who as head of the Committee of Public Safety in the Paris Commune murdered thirty men a day, twelve years previously had retired from the judge's bench in the city of Arras because his conscience would not permit him to pronounce the sentence of death. What if God's plan should change? The crusades were one of "His" designs, and so was the Spanish Inquisition.

What of the hundreds of oriental seers, yogis and "spiritual teachers" who have invaded the shores of America during recent years, gaining for themselves immense personal followings? Almost without exception, their prospectuses read, "Gain health, wealth, happiness by this new, easy, *secret* method! Develop your will, your secret powers, by learning from *me!*" The emotional exaltation produced in the devotees of these pseudo-spiritual teachers often ends in insanity and it cannot fail to warp the intellectual powers almost beyond repair. The native sages and prophets are not less numerous, nor less wily in their methods of exploiting the religious nature of their fellow men. Correspondence courses in spiritual development do a thriving business. The ignorant, the naïve and the miserable pay an annual toll of millions of dollars to purchase the "secrets of the ages." There is literally nothing that these merchants of psychic glory will not promise for a modest fee.

There is no index of modern psychism superior to the magazine news-stand. Psychic Science, Mysticism, Psychology, Spiritualism,



Astrology, Mental Healing, Hypnotism—these are but a few general labels to indicate the contents of scores of national magazines with aggregate circulations running into many millions. The appetite of the wonder-seeking psychic is insatiable. Nothing but the promise of new and more mysterious miracles will satisfy. Garnished with terms borrowed from the vocabulary of both science and religion, often spiced with veiled sex appeal, written in the sensational style of yellow journalism, these publications cater to the most susceptible area of human nature—the psycho-religious hunger for miracles, for personal salvation, personal power and aggrandisement. More insidious than frank prostitution of the body, the panders to psychic intoxication are perverting minds and souls *en masse*.

There are affinities between these psychic periodicals and the numerous picture magazines which have recently flooded the country. The latter are essentially “psychic” in character, holding the attention of the reader through a vivid sense impression instead of intellectual content. The reading matter is succinct, definitive, and impresses the mind of the reader with conclusions which he rarely questions. No thought is required of the picture-magazine fan; he sees, is entertained, and he believes. Actually, the picture magazines have appropriated a technique carefully developed through many years of experience by advertising experts. Picture magazines use the same principles of attention-getting, fascination, and conversion to the “message” of the advertiser that have made fortunes for so many of these exploiters of the foibles and weaknesses of human nature—the *psychic* nature. The methods of the radio advertiser are similar, the only difference lying in the fact that the impression is auditory instead of visual. The oily, patronizing tones of the announcers—little better than confidence men who have been naturalized into respectability by the “bigness” of the business enterprises they represent, and by the degrading standards of commercial honesty which we accept unthinkingly—lull the listeners into passive acquiescence. It is all so easy, so effortless! Moving pictures combine both auditory and visual impressions to make wish-fulfillment dreams for the masses. This is Hollywood’s contribution to the stultification of independent thought in America and elsewhere. Why should—*how can*—men think, be rational, or survive as a democratic society, when practically all of their leisure time is spent in absorbing, like so many psychic sponges, the persuasive and sensation-producing sights and sounds readily provided by the “practical” psychologists of this psychic dispensation?

A catalogue of the various brands of psychic intoxicants could be continued indefinitely. The gamut of emotionalism in modern life includes the familiar exhortations of the revivalist and the responding ecstasy of his listeners; the uninhibited abandon of youthful swing enthusiasts in their dervish frenzy; the tense appeals of political partisans arousing the dogs of class hatred, the clamor of unsatisfied greed, and all the springs of outraged selfishness on which the demagogue depends for his success. Wherever there is human action based on the instinctive drives of the animal man, on the hunger for sensations, on the satisfaction of desires without regard for the consequences, there is psychism unleashed and enthroned. When the psychic nature reigns, reason never serves as a check, being called upon only to justify, to *rationalize* the fiats of the emotions.

What are the consequences of an unregulated emotional life? Of imagination or fantasy run wild? Of dabbling in "magic," in spiritualism and the "occult arts"? Ask a psychiatrist this question, and, ignorant as he may be of the realities which these labels conceal, he will relate horrors that would make the tales of Poe sound like bedtime stories. A writer in *Harper's* recently described our time as "The Age of Schizophrenia," of split-personality, so named because of the splitting apart of the emotional from the intellectual life which characterizes the mental state of literally millions of people. We learn that "schizophrenic patients occupy one-fifth of all the hospital beds in the United States, reckoning in general hospital as well as in mental hospital beds." Turn to the literature of psychiatry on the subject of "Obsession," a term retained from the theories of obsessing demons believed in in the Dark Ages, and see what proportion of the victims of this kind of insanity are or have been spiritualists or mediumistically inclined. Find, if you can, the line between religious fanaticism and actual madness. In the wake of the visiting yogis and psychic seers are to be found human beings with emotionally shattered lives. They were told that a certain kind of breathing would bring them knowledge—they would "see things." They did the breathing exercises, and now they can't stop seeing things, are going crazy, or have gone. Others, who thought Hatha Yoga was "spiritual," find that their organisms break down under the insidious discipline. In many such cases, insanity may be a blessing in disguise, deferring until a later incarnation the moral trial which may then come at a time when the character of the victim has grown stronger and more able to withstand psychic temptations.

New forms of psychism are evidenced by bizarre new arrivals in the field of religious cults. The newspapers teem with advertise-

ments of swamis, yogis and "paramahamsas" who claim to be in touch with all manner of celestial beings and teachers, whose wisdom is now for sale, generally on the easy payment basis. Psychic apostles vie with one another in their claims of knowing the unknowable, doing the impossible, and revealing every last secret of the universe. The more fantastic the claim, the more are attracted as followers, it appears. We have lately been favored with incarnations of Saint Germain, Jesus, and George Washington. From Tibet comes a "white lama," formerly of Arizona, who promises to relieve the sophisticated of their *ennui* by instruction in Asiatic Mysteries never before made public. Others join religious with political appeals, and allege that a corps of statisticians and researchers are now perfecting the blueprints for a new "planned" (magic word!) society. Who can wonder that, a few years ago, when Orson Welles produced a Martian invasion on his radio program, listeners from Florida to Oregon rushed distractedly about, wondering how to protect themselves from these horrid visitors out of the sky, and even a college professor or two went out to look for them somewhere in the Jersey meadows!

In 1939, Walter Lippmann, with a wisdom he could hardly have himself understood, named the tragic victims of modern psychism "the spiritual proletariat of the modern age." They "hear all the latest news and all the latest opinions, but have no philosophy by which they can distinguish the true from the false, the credible from the incredible, the good from the bad." And, he adds, "the eruption of their volcanic and hysterical energy is the revolution that is shaking the world."

## II

Here, in America, a great psychic mutation is under way, the full developments of which may not disclose themselves for scores of years. Now, at its outset, little more is visible than the paroxysms of the decline of an old order, the backwash and carnage of a world that has lost its sense of legitimate purpose. Modern writers have habituated themselves to think of this transition in political terms, founding their judgments of what the future holds on theories of society which had their beginning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But the change which the human race is entering upon is more profound by far than any mere political alteration. When it is complete, new concepts of reality will have emerged and won acceptance, and tomorrow's social order will have adapted itself to laws of human relations as yet only guessed at by the few.

The biological analogy of "mutation" is a good one, for this change, according to the Theosophical view, will mark a fundamental alteration in the inter-relation of the principles of man's psychic organism. One of its results will be general recognition that man is not merely a physical being, but is more essentially an embodied *mind*, embodied feelings, hopes, aspirations and desires. These principles, in the cycle to come, will be acknowledged as the primary attributes of *human* beings, and the orbits of scientific and religious investigation will thus attain new orientation. But, as with every re-alignment of the evolutionary forces, an epoch of confusion, of false starts and misguided attempts to anticipate the course of natural development, will inevitably precede the final adjustment of the race to this new period of human growth and self-expression.

Destruction and failure will seem to be predominant characteristics of the cycle, and despair the watchword of the many. For those whose horizons are circumscribed to the past, whose philosophies are rigidly committed to the old assumptions of western civilization, the change will seem to mark the "end of the world," and indeed it will, for them. Like the dreamer too suddenly awakened from his slumber, like the miser impoverished by a single miscalculation, like the child called upon to be and act as a man when he has neither the knowledge, nor the courage nor the strength, the opening of this new vista in human affairs will drive many into the current of efflux, where they will cling to the shattered fragments of the past as the only symbol they know of the life that was.

But for others, the epoch will be recognized as a mighty challenge to their moral resources and their self-reliance. The ascending torch of human intelligence will meet the intenser flame of egoic divinity in its descent to a more complete participation in the life on earth. An age of builders will dawn, of educators and healers, without precedent or comparison in the history of present humanity. This is the message and the prophecy of Theosophy, brought to the world to lighten the way to the "new order of ages," and to ease the travail of its birth.

Hence the warnings, the strict injunctions of the Teacher, H. P. Blavatsky. She took no morbid delight in spreading a Jeremiad doctrine of fear and retribution. She but repeated what she knew of the eternal law of cycles, upraised and proclaimed out of the lore of the perfected men of the race, whose wisdom and practical knowledge of cyclic evolution alone can bring humanity through the terrible dangers of the transition age. Speaking to American theoso-

phists of the last century, she told of these dangers, and of the opportunities for service that are unfolding in the present:

As the preparation for the new cycle proceeds, as the fore-runners of the new sub-race make their appearance on the American continent, the latent psychic and occult powers in man are beginning to germinate and grow. . . . Your position as the fore-runners has its own special perils as well as its special advantages. Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outrun the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of Those whose good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves. . . .

Theosophy alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can save it from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done. In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

There is nothing "evil" or "wicked" in the psychic nature itself. The evil results from lack of control, from the free indulgence of desire which, when unleashed and increasingly gratified, becomes *insatiable* in its demands. The more the powers of mind are developed, the more extensive become the responsibilities of man, and the greater the crimes of which he is capable. Misuse of mental powers, and here misuse means *selfish* use, is incalculably more far-reaching in its destructive effects than the abuse of physical powers.

Uncontrol, which is the veritable root of psychism, leads to progressive stages of irresponsible exercise of powers, ending in brutal lack of concern for the welfare of others, if for no other reason than that the existence of those others has been forgotten during the ever more engrossing pursuit for satisfaction. The selfishness and narrow partisanship of a civilization founded on material and physical powers are as the petty sins of children when compared with the

possible applications of psychic powers for selfish ends during the cycle to come. A point is reached in the union of desire with intellect and the subtler forms of psychic perception, when rationalization of selfishness becomes absolute. This is the death of all morality, and the beginning of a deliberate career in evil for evil's sake. The only protection against such a fate for the human race is the practice of moral discipline, and the study of Theosophy, the philosophy which will convince mankind that such discipline is both necessary, just and desirable. Comprehensive grasp of the hidden laws of nature, even intellectually, is not possible without thorough investigation of the Theosophical teachings as a whole.

For example, the *cyclic* character of psychic manifestations is dependent on the Theosophical teaching of the three lines of evolution, and the successive emphasis which the course of human development places upon the principles involved in these divisions. A passage from the *Ocean of Theosophy* will illustrate:

We find Theosophy teaching that at the present point of man's evolution he is a fully developed quaternary with the higher principles partly developed. Hence it is taught that to-day man shows himself to be moved by passion and desire. This is proved by a glance at the civilizations of the earth, for they are all moved by this principle, and in countries like France, England, and America a glorification of it is exhibited in the attention to display, to sensuous art, to struggle for power and place, and in all the habits and modes of living where gratification of the senses is sometimes esteemed the highest good.

But as Mind is being evolved more and more as we proceed in our course along the line of race development, there can be perceived in all countries the beginning of the transition from the animal possessed of the germ of real mind to the man of mind complete. This day is therefore known as the "transition period," when every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society is changing, and men's minds are only preparing for an alteration. Man is not yet fully conscious, and reincarnations are needed to at last complete the incarnation of the whole trinity (the higher, spiritual man) in the body. When that has been accomplished the race will have become as gods.

The mysteries of psychic phenomena are to be accounted for by the as yet imperfect incarnation of mind, which is a *progressive* descent, and which requires a corresponding aspiration and striving on the part of mankind. It is because the full powers of mind are not yet active in the race that the scientist is wandering in the dark, confounded and confused by all that hypnotism and other strange things bring before him. Because these powers are withheld until the appro-

priate evolutionary cycle, the learned are compelled to speak of the "subconscious mind," the "unconscious," and the like. Hence, also, the bewilderment of both scientists and theologians, when, in the last century, the flood tide of psychism broke loose over the American continent. But, as in each cycle more and more of the higher powers of man will become accessible, greater knowledge, and power, too, will become possible. Finally, with full power and responsibility, with minds fully illuminated, all men will be compelled to choose between good and evil ways, the one leading to heights of spiritual achievement in the common brotherhood of man, the other path, dark with selfishness, to moral ruin.

Writing in 1893, William Q. Judge expressed the hope that "by the time the next tide begins to rise, the West will have gained some right knowledge of the true philosophy of Man and Nature, and be then ready to bear the lifting of the veil a little more." That tide is now upon us, and to help on the progress of the race to a better knowledge of psychic evolution—its extraordinary promise, if understood, for the good of mankind, and its terrible dangers, if allowed to proceed in ignorant selfishness—is the object of this pamphlet.