

The Science of the Eternal

The subtle soul desire to lift the veil of Isis and peer into the hidden mysteries of the universe leads to a temptation which few students in the first steps of occultism can resist. The invisible, the mysterious, and the impenetrable attract with a commanding force. The soul flutters within, expectant with the joy of a voyage of exploration into the infinite. Drunk with the desire for attainment, one does not perceive the magnitude of the undertaking. Many a sincere but misguided soul thus flounders on the rocks hidden beneath the deceptive surface of the teachings of pseudo-mystic schools. The promises held out by their so-called teachers of the inner secrets of nature are certainly alluring. A wave of the magic wand, the vibration raised by the repetition of a formula, an exercise performed in a certain posture, the formal ritual of initiation, and many other similar practices are said to reveal to the aspiring student the marvelous secrets of nature.

The whole range of knowledge and progress according to some of these teachers is divided into that of the visible and the invisible. The student's knowledge of the visible world being taken for granted, he is introduced into the invisible by the

opening of his clairvoyant faculty by one or another of the many means. He is then left to adjust himself to the new conditions, which in the majority of cases results in dire disaster, his entrance into the higher planes being forced and premature. Some become the victims of evilly disposed denizens of the lower regions of the Desire World, or are taken by elementals and used as instruments for their pleasure. Others are prostrated mentally and physically by the reaction for

the rest of their earth life. The more cautious, desisting from the reckless adventure before any serious danger results to themselves, learn a salutary lesson, very helpful in their future progress. The chimera vanishes before the eyes of these fortunate ones. They realize that the prize of spiritual power cannot be won by

the performance of an exercise actuated by curiosity, nor by the elimination of certain foods or even total abstinence from food for a prescribed period, but that preparation during many lifetimes, involving self-discipline, mental, moral, and physical, is required to make one worthy to demand entrance even to the outermost court of nature's mysterious halls of Knowledge and Attainment.

Only the learned know their ignorance, and the broader our knowledge, the clearer its

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insignificance compared to the Infinite. Nature's secrets are closely guarded; no presumptuous intellect, no curious daring can wrest them from her. There is but one safe way to attain, and that way is the way of love, service, and humility.

Nature's progress is most methodical, her range of activity extending to infinity. She shows no partiality but demands obedience from the small and great alike. Man is a link in nature's chain, and he must respond to the laws pertaining to his own plane of being. Any attempt to skip an intermediate stage would be futile in the extreme. The spiritual, mental, and physical sides of his being must all grow legitimately, naturally. A false growth would be akin to a superstructure built on a weak foundation and must result not only in the loss of the newly gained advancement, but also of the previous growth.

The doors of the invisible will be opened to one when he has acquired the necessary soul growth; when the required mental poise, the control of the desire nature, and the purification of the physical body have been accomplished. No power on earth nor in heaven or hell can obstruct his progress when he has earned the right to proceed. "When the ears of the student are ready to hear, then cometh the lips to fill them with wisdom," is the Hermetic maxim.

Our Elder Brothers, who function mostly on the invisible planes, are anxiously watching our growth. There is much rejoicing in their hearts when one of their younger brothers puts his foot upon the Path. He becomes from that moment the subject of their study and care. Every aid for his progress is readily given. Nor should one ever fear being overlooked; such a thing is impossible.

The path of the true student therefore lies not in curious attempts to function on the inner planes but in applying himself to gaining knowledge of the visible universe, in acquiring strength of mentality by observation and meditation on the phenomena around him, in obtaining control of his desire nature by self-denial, moderation, and well-ordered habits, and in purifying his physical body by pure food.

"As above, so below." The visible universe to the thoughtful student gives the key to the understanding of the secrets of the invisible realms. God



Engraving, 1514, Albrecht Durer (1471-1528)

St. Jerome in his Study

Through deep study and full control of the emotional self (represented by the docile lion and dog), the saint has attained a holy serenity and a powerfully focused interior life.

is not so hidden that the sincere, humble, and loving soul is deprived of a glimpse of His wonderful Being even though looking through the veil of matter of the lowest of His worlds.

It is the purpose of the writer to discuss a few universal phenomena with a view to assisting the aspiring student to comprehend the nature of God and the universe as far as is permitted from observations on the form side, and as a preparatory step for acquiring knowledge of the invisible planes. If we study the physical from a certain angle, it is as mysterious and as fascinating a study as we would suppose the invisible to be; nay more, it naturally is the only right way that leads to the proper understanding of the invisible.

God is spirit, declare the Holy Scriptures, but in another aspect He is also matter. "All is in clod and God is in all." The material universe is crystallized spirit. The personality or mask (*persona*) is formed

of the lower vibrations of spirit substance. The evolution of form in its infinitude of grades from the grossest physical to radiant matter, building the higher from experience extracted from the lower, is going on throughout the universe. It is the effort of the crystallized spirit, the God manifest in matter, to regain its original spirit state. The problem that presents itself at the outset to the student who contemplates the nature of the universe is the constant conflict of two forces. The one is ever struggling to create, to attract, to blend, to amalgamate to bring order and beauty out of chaos—the constructive force in nature. The other is breaking down, dissolving, and decomposing—the destructive force in nature. The incessant play of these forces forms the basis of consciousness, joy, and suffering.

The thoughtful student is led seriously to inquire into the purpose of this expenditure of force and the pain and joy involved in the making and remaking of organisms, of planets, and of solar systems.

We observe the nebula in the heavens, apparently clouds of stardust hanging in ether. Science teaches and our investigations verify that within this substance works a hidden force which in process of time will evolve the nebula into a mighty solar system. Think of the incalculable period occupied and the tremendous energy expended in this gigantic world-forming.

One may well ask to what purpose, to what end this is done if some day the whole structure will be resolved into its original dust. Observe a planet, an empire, a civilization, or coming nearer, an individual human being: the same law operates with unwavering persistence, with unmerciful exactitude. The little protoplasm, protected in the womb of the mother, nurtured from her own substance, gradually grows into a replica of her own kind, and one day comes into life and sunshine—a wonderfully perfect organism. Under the loving protection

of its guardians it grows through the stages of childhood and youth to adulthood.

The combination of strength and beauty, wisdom and love, the perfect health and brave spirit are a living challenge to death and decay; but nature's law is no respecter of persons. The despoiler lays his hand upon the youth when least expected. In the bloom of vigorous manhood, in the full enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, in the height of social position, the axe is laid at the root, and the form and its beauty are obliterated. Many a heart that revered and loved him is darkened with sorrow. For what end, what useful purpose? The same may be said of all events in the phenomenal world.

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In this play of the constructive and destructive forces in nature is hidden a great secret. Close observation and sound logical reasoning reveal to us a subtle inner force, an imprisoned life struggling for expression, building form after form of gradually increasing efficiency; a mighty, hidden genius creating millions of

loopholes in the matter that veils his countenance; a subjective universal life principle striving by objective manifestation to gain universal self-consciousness.

This ever struggling onward is called evolution. Its pathway is strewn on the one side with used-up, discarded forms in the process of decay, and on the other hand the improved products gradually nearing perfection. The succeeding always embodying improvements suggested in the course of the life of the preceding, nature patiently and persistently by repeated efforts goes forward in the conquest of matter. This is the law of birth and rebirth, and it is a universal law operating in all forms and in the expression of all grades of life.

Studying this law of form building in its various stages we again find wonderful wisdom displayed in its methods. If we consider all forms from the

microscopic germ to the gigantic sun, we find that in the initial stage the seeds of all are similar and potentially contain similar powers. The difference between them therefore lies in the individual faculty of expression which the seed atom of each has gained by experience in past lives. They differ therefore in degree but not in kind.

That a human seed atom produces a human body and that a plant seed atom produces a plant is not an arbitrary law laid down by a creator, but is the fulfillment of a just and loving universal law. The degree of unfoldment depends upon the peculiar characteristics imprinted on each seed atom. In each succeeding life the physical form is built on a slightly improved plan. Thus from unconscious mineral and plant to conscious animal and man upward to angelic and divine heights of expression the selfsame seed supplies by unfoldment the required organisms.

The law of repetition or recapitulation of all the previous stages before arriving at the plane of the particular unfoldment in a life is universally operative in nature. That a child's body reaches that stage in the mother's womb after going through all the inferior stages represented by mineral forms, plant forms, and fish, bird, and mammal types is a scientifically proven fact. This is a further confirmation of the unity of life, though expressed in diverse forms.

The purpose of form and nature's method of accomplishment having been set forth, we will study the life that works through the bodies as far as is evident to us from outer knowledge. Light, whether expressed physically, mentally, or spiritually, is a fascinating and universally attracting force. Planets move around a sun, which is a self-luminous centre. Men of ignorance crowd around those who are gifted with the light of knowledge. Men aspiring to higher and nobler ideals are drawn by spiritual luminaries. Even in



Michael Angelo Buonarroti (1474-1563), Fresco (detail), Sistine Chapel, Rome

Creation of the Sun and Moon

the animal and plant world we see the potency of light.

Science teaches that all life depends on sunlight and heat; that deprived of these for even a few minutes the whole world would be a barren waste. This assertion is amply supported by our daily observations. The plants reach out towards the light; animals are drawn by light and sunshine and show symptoms of disease when deprived of them. Man owes his health and his cheerfulness to the sunshine. All bodies absorb sunlight and heat in greater or lesser degree according to their capacity, and this may be said to be the basis of life. Animal and man further absorb sunlight and heat indirectly through the food they consume. We cannot conceive of the possibility of life in any form without the benevolent action of light. Even the tiniest insect in the ocean bed receives its quota through the light rays that penetrate the water.

When John the Evangelist, the dearest disciple of the Christ, whose closeness to the Master earned the privilege to delve deeper into the world mysteries than any other, in his first Epistle declares that "God is light," he gives the nearest possible expression to the true nature of God. It may be truly said that the whole evolutionary process, the universal struggle for life, is the persistent effort of

imprisoned light to pierce the veil of matter. It is the one omnipresent light that struggles to shine in its glorious naked effulgence by gradually thinning the texture of the material obstruction. But this true light, the “Ineffable Spirit luminous,” is not visible to the human eye. We only apprehend it by its activity in trying to penetrate matter.

The solar light is but a reflex of the Invisible Central light. It is darkness compared to the Inner Light, yet there is a close affinity between the two. The sun is an outward expression of the creative energy of God. It is His visible body and is indispensable for the maintenance of the life of all beings until they reach the degree where they can draw power from the Original Source, which is within.

Physical science is mute and must ever remain so before the two impenetrable mysteries, the infinity of space and the infinity of time. No human mind however highly developed can arrive at any satisfactory solution of these problems. We speak of solar systems, zodiacs, and universes but no conceivable number of these gigantic space measurements can in any way affect or lessen infinity by their occupation; nor do millions of years make any mark in the ever-flowing current of time. How can the presumptuous Tower of Babel, the human mind in its toddling infancy, challenge the mighty secrets of the eternal and omnipresent God? Break through one horizon that circumscribes the human mind and another of a greater circumference limits it, and so on *ad infinitum*. The all-space is God’s material kingdom, and all-time is the duration of His reign. But He in His essential nature dwells in inaccessible Light in infinity within. Let us inquire into this truth.

Among the many privileges denied the human mind are the conceptions of “nonbeing” and “absolute nothingness.” These terms convey only a relative meaning. The former proves the immortality of the spirit and the latter the plurality of

worlds. The matter with which we work and of which our bodies are made is of varying degrees of density. These range from the density of the grossest crystals to that of such refined, subtle force-matter as electricity, radio waves, etc. But the known gradations of density are very limited and as nothing compared to infinity. Density and fineness as we know them are only relative. In reality they extend to infinity in any direction. God is light, and matter is darkness, which is the cloak that hides His glory. The infinity within, the infinitely fine, the infinitely distant centre of all space is therefore the kingdom of the true Light.

Between are innumerable planes of matter forming the fields of activity for beings higher or lower in the scale of spirituality according to their proximity to the centre; yet all have proceeded from the only true centre and are children of the same Omnipresent light. Within each one is the spark of the original Fire, and as

they progress onward, their life experiences fan the tiny sparks into bright flames which, penetrating through the matter sheaths, make them luminous beings, one with the Father in power and glory.

Meditation on these great secrets of the universe will reveal to the student a glimpse of the hidden life. Thenceforth there is nothing in the world which he would not willingly sacrifice for its sake. It is the individual light within that will lead us to the Universal Light.

Cardinal Newman’s beautiful prayer is in harmony with this thought:

Lead kindly Light amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on.

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see

The distant scene—one step enough for me. □

—Nicholas Peris

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