

## *Life and Form*

*“Spirit in manifestation is dual; that which we see as form is the negative manifestation of Spirit — crystallized and inert. The positive pole of Spirit manifests as Life, galvanizing the negative Form into action.”—Cosmo 248-9*

*“Life gathers Form about itself and gains consciousness thereby.”—Cosmo 223*

**F**ROM THE PERSPECTIVE of material science, form must precede life before the latter can mysteriously, unaccountably manifest. However, the student of the occult, the scientist of Spirit, knows that Life ever precedes the Form and is its immediate formative cause. Formerly, in time, mineral earth pre-existed the genesis of the plant kingdom. But in the higher world of causes, where abide creative archetypes, the highest principles of being pre-exist the forms in which they embody. Life as Truth antedates all Life’s externalized forms. As expressed in John 1: “All things were made by Him (the Word) and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was Life and the Life was the Light of men, and the Light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.” To what does “the darkness” refer? It is the human brain as it is exclusively sense-oriented, binding man to the world of ephemeral forms and blinding him to the reality of invisible causes.

The work of the spiritual aspirant is consciously to concentrate and build his energies into expressive forms that are more fully revelatory of higher life impulses. The first step in this process consists in the cultivation of the two higher ethers of the



*In this naive conception from a 13th century French bible, God the Creator is separate from His creation. The Cosmos shows the sun, noon and stars at the periphery (difficult to see in the copy) and inchoate earth in the center. The design bears a striking resemblance to an embryo in the womb.*

four-fold vital body (also called the body of formative forces). His eventual ability to wakefully transfer his consciousness to this “soul body” (body in which the Ego may enter into the desire world; i.e. world of the psyche or soul—and worlds above) involves a dissociation of the aspirant’s higher vehicles from the cross of the dense physical body, which continues to be interpenetrated and sustained by the two lower (chemical and life) ethers. The point being that consciousness which identifies life with form *per se* is dead to life, for the phenomenon of mineral existence has no inherent life. Life calls it to itself, inhabits it,

wears it like a garment. Form (as discrete atoms) does not create life in the Darwinian sense. Life creates form. In the high language of Christ Jesus' teaching: It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing (John 7:63).

Life may be described as that which is possessed of the power to grow and move (Motion is the Third Person Emanation of the Supreme Being.) and perpetuate its essence. It is ever abiding. Life invents and invests form in order that Spirit may acquire experience, and experience develops consciousness whose consummation is Self-identification with/as God.

As the indomitable urge to grow residing in the germ of an awakened seed can break stone and raise boulders, so life is infused with, is itself, a divine impulse. It is light-directed, ever seeking to elaborate and raise the form it inheres in above and beyond its original confines. It is in the encounter of formal limitations that the investing life, through the pain and suffering incident to that stricture-structure, grows in awareness of its immanent divinity. Form is the midwife, the paraclete in the evolution of consciousness. Having served its purpose, the form, the configuration of atoms, reverts to the dust (*Chaos, arche*) from whence it came, and the Spirit returns to God Who gave it.

Be assured. All is not vanity. But living in form thinking it is the seat and source of life *is* vanity and efforts founded on this delusion will prove vain. Vanity derives from Latin *vanus* meaning "empty," and truly form is the empty crucible in which the life impulse, through the purging fires of experience, undergoes successive heightenings of itself in degrees of consciousness, is burned into interior recognitions and learns to detach from all the forms through which it plays, realizing them, one after another, as mediums, masks, and modes of self-confrontation and self-enlightenment. Thus, not only is the dense physical body *not* the life (including the physical universe which is its extension); nor is it the vital forces sustaining the body; nor yet is life identical with the wishes, feelings, passions, and emotions expressing through that body; nor again are our thoughts our life, the idea of who or what we think we are.

Life is not dependent upon any of these vital-emotional-mental matrices for its being. On the contrary, we experience that which persists above and beyond mental consciousness (as paradigmmed in the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am), and this experience is made possible through the Christ impulse which confirms the reality of I AM, of authentic Spirit consciousness above any forms or outpicturings that I AM may take. It is an embracing realization that defies any conceptualization (which cannot but demote and diminish its true nature). The tetragrammaton, (YHVH) the unpronounceable Hebrew name of Deity (Jehovah, third-Person God), was the safeguard of this identity and points to the transcendence of Spirit-Being above all its outformings and definings.

The I AM is the Spiritual light-burst, the Love-surge of life-immortal. It is that which persists as Spirit or Ego through any and all formal impress.

Temporal man is inclined to set up home in forms. But home is no less than divine consciousness, consciousness of being in God as our source and true I-identity. Home is where we came from—not in this earth life, but before the beginning when God created Cosmos: There we were in Him as that which was before the world was. Mortal man is a satellite, a moon circling the spiritual sun of his Self, his home. He is a planet, in the original sense of "wanderer." As a pilgrim journeying through the wilderness of Form, the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay his head.

Form crucifies consciousness into dyings, rebirthings, enlargings. Again and again the Spirit of man dies to itself and wakes into a space-time body. The stress and suffering imposed by this contraction and eclipse of spirit-consciousness quickens spirit into a remembrance of its true nature, as distinct from the form in which it finds itself. Spirit Self says, I am none of these things; I die to this lower life. I find no enduring value in and therefore dispossess myself of the desire to acquire material riches, temporal powers, social distinctions, even personal excellences. The evolving Ego is able to say with the Apostle Paul, none of these things move me.

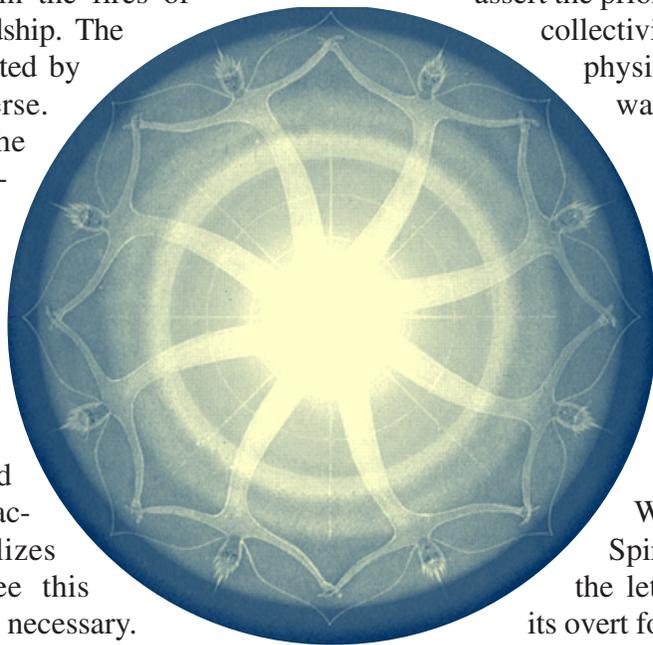
At this juncture man may align himself with

purpose and effort beyond the personal reflex, with the larger Plan affecting his entire life wave. The dedication of what faculties and energies he has evolved to the unfoldment of planetary consciousness constitutes a Self-finding, a fulfillment of his larger being as that exists in the planetary mind of Christ. Here we appreciate the virtues of childlike pliancy and receptivity. We nourish and encourage those impulses that maximize our usefulness to human need. We are at once amenable to good influence, wisely impressionable, while we are spined by a will fused in the fires of instructive pain and hardship. The smoke and sparks generated by self-willed living disperse.

We become purer, the flame burns quieter, clearer. Fear engendered by the anticipated loss of life is overcome because we do not locate our life or living truth in the forms through which they manifest. Fear isolates consciousness and rigidifies our knowing faculty; that is, it formalizes experience. To a degree this process is healthy and necessary.

But forms imprison consciousness as well as impart truth. When we regard form as primary and determinative, we live in a cemetery (whether plotted out for people, feelings, or thoughts) where we reverence the historicity and mere literalness of phenomenon.

Life enters into the forming body of what will be a sinner or a saint and in time it leaves that body. Spiritual impulse playing down through the faculty of mind as it works in brain matter through the reflecting ether fashions truths that are a third remove from their living source. When the creative act is accomplished the winged power lifts off to descend again or elsewhere. The form it inspires or engenders retains, for a time, the mark of vital contact with living truth and vibrates with authentic force. But without renewal, the form's relevance and potency declines.



*Birth of Angels*

Yet the Spirit of Truth is ever ready to be invoked, to redescend, and may and will illumine all who call upon it and are ready to receive it.

Thus, to venerate the form, rather than the living, ever-giving spiritual force creative of all form, is to abstract consciousness from the creative, living present and to deny spiritual impulse access to our immediate awareness.

Identifying exclusively with form always introduces an element of division and potential conflict, for form is finite and relative. When then humans assert the priority of one system of truth or collectivity of persons over all others physical and mental mental civil war ensue.

The only solution to the dilemma posed by formalism is to adopt the attitude that recognizes forms always as contingent on the formative (i.e., life) impulse, as therefore secondary and at best partial.

One posits the invisible living impulse as primary. With regard to truth, it is the Spirit of truth that is true, not the letters carrying the weight of its overt form. Consciousness is poised to receive the living truth from whatever

quarter it may make its entry into our field of awareness. Prejudice to human form is but a part of the mechanism of intolerance. The same process works with respect to ideas, when the validity of a thought is judged on the basis of its mode of delivery or the presenter's character rather than on what the truth within speaks as one receives the outward exposition.

If, as we continually affirm, mankind is a unity in Christ, likewise must truth have its source in the same One Truth, even as the Holy Spirit (The Spirit of Truth) gives it manifold expression.

In man, feelings, thoughts and perceptions founded on physical realities *in toto* make up the human personality, whose nature is to wax and wane from moment to moment. The moon is a symbol for the personality as it gathers light and

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increases in the youth of earthly life, comes into full ripeness and then decreases in life's later years. But the moon's light is borrowed, reflected. The word *personality* derives from *persona* (literally, to sound through), which was a face mask worn by Greek actors who would speak through that guise or appearance. What sounds through is the inner being whose life creates and animates our worldly being. That is the true light, the Sun of our Individuality, our eternal life which takes on now this, now that human form. This is the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The pathos of the Christ's ministry on Earth as He worked out of the Jesus body was that He as life incarnate walked as a stranger among men. He was known only as the Nazarene. It was said of Him, "Is this not Jesus, the carpenter, son of Joseph, brother of Simon and Juda and James, whose sisters we know? How can this be which he professes—that He is the Son of God?" So it is that a prophet may be without honor in his own country and in his own family. Meaning? That there is that tendency in each of us to minimize the value and be blind to the divinity in both ourselves and others, in part as given by the phrase "familiarity breeds contempt"; that is, we reduce the being of a person to what we know about and can readily discern in them, judging by appearances. We forget and ignore the infinite possibilities of Spirit-being in each human and restrict awareness to formal concerns and eye assessments.

Thus it is said of the Pharisees (historical and contemporary) that having eyes, they see not, and having ears, they hear not: And the Light shone in the darkness of the sense-oriented, form-based consciousness, and that darkness comprehended it not. If Christ lives not in the hearts and minds of men, neither exists the Life beyond form. A smug pronouncement, always in vogue with the foolish wise, declares that God is dead, which is absurd since God cannot die, nor, as we know it, can He be born. The assertion projects a state of inner poverty, exposes a consciousness that is unaware of, or dead to, God. Yet God is there, making the life and vain negations of the godless possible.

Peter was commended by Christ Jesus for perceiving His true identity as the Son of the living

God, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to him. Yet Peter struggled with his literalist tendency: He was the dependable rock. But the well-meaning disciple was at times too solicitous for the outer person of his Master, so that he would not suffer harm done Him, forgetting the Spirit's invincibility and that forms may and must be rendered up and sacrificed that the light of the Spirit may grow stronger and brighter: "The oftener we die, the better we live." Individually, we too, like Peter, may tenaciously hold on to the form through which life, truth, and beauty manifest, equating the former with the latter, as if, with a change of form, the essential qualities are diminished or lost; whereas the contrary is the case: Life is ever recreating, transmuting its outwardness to more closely and correctly convey its essential divinity.

It is helpful to recur to Paul's injunction: Be ye not conformed to the world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. As our thoughts, feelings and words organize themselves along lines of higher vibrational patterns, we attune our being to the love-wisdom that is the creator of these thought-feeling patterns. Always the aim is not to possess the form, but to so atone and attune ourselves with its formative source that we raise our spirits to the abode of living Spirit and are invested with its light and power.

In the light of our understanding, what may we say about death? From a higher plane it is the confining of life energy in a form: Incarnation is incarceration. Seen from below (from the physical plane), death is a release of spirit-being from material captivity resulting in the experience of liberation, birth into finer spheres, ex-stasis.

As spiritual aspirants we move from outer-directedness to inner-directedness, from Pharisaical formalism (which heeds the letter and kills the spirit) to true Christian openness and compassion (the "soft heart" suffers *with*). We ever more clearly understand the separative tendencies inherent in a purely formal consciousness and we urge ourselves to live out of the living impulse of spirit-consciousness, out of love, which integrates particulars into their original unitary context, which heals and makes whole. □

—C.W.