

Rays From The Rose Cross Magazine

The Pairs of Opposites

Most attributes are dual or two-sided in their nature, and when looked at superficially, each side or half appears to be contradictory and even diametrically opposed to the other. When considered more fully, however, they are found to constitute one harmonious whole. These attributes may be described as "pairs of opposites."

We may say that the study of the pairs of opposites tends to logical reasoning one cannot advance very far along any line of thought without coming to grief. Especially is it useful in helping us to avoid the pitfalls which await us when we take up the study of occultism and astrology. We will enumerate some of the "pairs," and then consider a few in greater detail: astrology and astronomy; altruism and selfishness; art and science; belief and doubt; cause and effect; cosmos and chaos; day and night; eternity and time; health and disease; involution and evolution; joy and sorrow; macrocosm and microcosm; optimism and pessimism; opulence and penury; pleasure and pain; truth and error.

We may consider these pairs of opposites from various points of view. First from the view of opposing forces or the powers of Light

and darkness; second, as it were, from the reverse sides of a medal, each side different and distinct from the other, yet each side different and distinct from the other, yet each incomplete without the other; third, in terms of astrology, from opposite characteristics such as given by Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter is known as the great benefic and Saturn as a malefic planet, but both the Jupiterian and Saturnian influences are necessary to make the fully developed, useful, and powerful character. Some astronomers speak of astrology with scorn and derision, but astrology is spoken of by its adherents as the soul of astronomy. Astronomy gives us very valuable facts about the starry spheres, but astrology gives the spiritual meaning of these facts. Astronomy may be likened to the body and astrology to the soul; both, however, of value, one to the other. The so-called malefic planet Saturn gives steadfastness, endurance, fortitude, patience, chastity, and fixity of purpose. The opulence and impulsiveness of Jupiter would run riot but for the restraining influence of the slower vibrations of Saturn.

Therefore we see, if we delve beneath the exterior or surface of things, that everything in the universe is good and ruled by unerring wisdom. It is only when we allow ourselves to be influenced by the personality, with its likes and dislikes, that we become ruffled by the conduct of others or by distasteful circumstances. What does it signify if we are rudely jostled in a bus or spoken to slightingly in a shop or have to encounter disagreeableness? Nothing whatever can hurt us or ruffle our Spirit unless we **allow** it to do so; the fault, if we do become antagonistic to our conditions, it is a sure indication that we still are bound by the pairs of opposites; otherwise we should know that whatever occurs to us each day is what is needed for our Spirit's advancement, and also that we have **chosen** this

particular incarnation. So we should not be annoyed or perturbed by what we ourselves have chosen to experience.

We all desire and strive to possess joy and happiness, each in his own particular way. These attributes are considered the most desirable, and their opposite, sorrow, the least so, to be shunned if possible. But does joy teach us many valuable lessons? Probably not many. Ask one who has passed through seas of trouble which state has taught him the most, and he or she will admit that sorrow has taught him or her all he/she knows of fortitude, endurance, sympathy, patience, and compassion. Lessons learned from joy are fleeting, but those learned from sorrow endure. Therefore, sorrow, as well as joy, is good.

Then let us consider the states of night and day, sleeping and waking. The student, the philanthropist, and the very busy person in any walk of life are apt to regret and curtail the hours spent in sleep, forgetting in their eagerness for action that during the hours of sleep, when the Ego is released from the bondage of the physical body, far more work both for oneself and one's fellow creatures can be accomplished than could be done in the waking hours. In the darkness and in sleep our vital functions are renewed. The poisons from destroyed tissue, which have been caused by the mental and physical activities of the day, are eliminated. Also during sleep the Ego takes the mind and desire body into the Desire World, there to restore their rhythm and harmony. These two bodies, when strengthened, restore the vital body, which in turn works upon the physical body, bringing to it renewed life and vigor for the next day's activities. When the physical body sleeps and the Ego is released from the lower vehicles, much more work can be done in healing and comforting the sick and troubled when awake. Those who are doctors and those who study and practice the art of nursing, if spiritually

developed, are able to do their greatest work of healing during what we call the sleeping hours. Sleep, then, instead of being so many wasted hours, is to be desired and cultivated for the restoration of the Ego's several vehicles and for the help which through it we can give to mankind.

The first half of each pair of opposites corresponds to the positive principle and the second half to the negative. If we take each pair separately and meditate upon it sufficiently long and earnestly, a host of enlightening thoughts will flood the mind. For instance, consider involution and evolution. To the average mind, the former word conveys little or no meaning, and the latter is applied only to the physical body. But in esoteric philosophy involution describes the flight or journey of the Virgin Spirit through revolutions, periods, epochs, and aeons of time until at last it reached the Earth as we now know it and became enmeshed in the physical body. The Spirit, having reached the nadir of materiality, then began the upward and return journey. We are now upon the ascending arc, the evolutionary stage, and shall by a gradually accelerating process, reach our zenith at last, having then the added knowledge, experience, and power which we shall have acquired during this long, long journey.

Words are sacred, and many have a spiritual as well as a literal meaning. Small and seemingly insignificant pairs of opposites, such as up and down, to and fro, back and forth, high and low, far and near, ebb and flow, all typify in their esoteric or spiritual meaning the involution and evolution of the spirit, or man's gradual unfoldment from a trance-like state to the stature of a god.

For a moment, let us consider health and disease. Health we regard as one of the greatest blessings, and illness as a calamity.

But in sickness, how frequently the soul of the sufferer advances by leaps and bounds. Experiences are then gained on the higher planes which influence all the remainder of life and teach as no earthly experience could. Also, those who attend the sick often mature in gentleness and patience. Therefore, we do not call sickness evil.

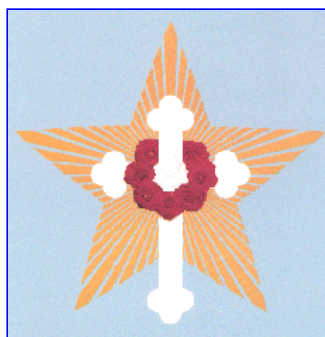
We, especially those of us who still to some extent are bound and who have not quite freed ourselves from the narrower teaching of early childhood, are apt to think that the period spent in chaos is one of inactivity, a time of utter uselessness. But in the light of greater revelation we know that cosmos is the *manifested* order of Creation, and that when the Earth passes through a period of chaos, it is far from being a state of uselessness and inactivity, for "chaos is the seed ground of cosmos." It certainly gives a rest from manifestation, and it is a time of assimilation of cosmic experiences which enable the Earth to evolve and emerge into a higher and fuller development when the dawn of the next great Cosmic Day arrives.

The aim and intention of life is not happiness, as we are so prone to think, but experience. To gain this, we must of necessity pass through ALL phases of emotion and thought, through all the experiences which the pairs of opposites bring. As the plant and grain are brought to maturity by the interplay of sunshine and rain, so the Spirit reaches perfection by experiencing both joy *and* sorrow, elation *and* depression, faith *and* doubt, truth *and* error. But when we have gained all the experience which these seemingly opposing forces can teach us, and when we can transcend them, then will come the time when we no longer shall be stretched upon the cross of the pairs of opposites. We shall be able to cast off the conditions that fetter the Spirit as with bands of iron, and we shall be loosed forever from the thralldom of the pairs

of opposites. Then for us there will be no longer any darkness, for all will be light. Doubt will be swallowed up in belief, ignorance in knowledge, sorrow will be merged into perfect joy, and hate will give place to love. Then shall we have freed ourselves from the Wheel of Destiny, and we shall become pillars in the Temple of our God, whence we shall go no more out. —I.J.R.

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