

An Elementary Note on the Seven Principles

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Reprinted from "Theosophical Siftings" Volume 4

The Theosophical Publishing Society, England

PROBABLY there are few subjects of occult learning more essential for the beginner to acquire a firm grip of than what are commonly known as the seven principles, and few, so far as my own experience goes, so generally and persistently either utterly misunderstood or abandoned as a hopeless tangle by the elementary student. The cause, I believe, lies partly in the want of careful preliminary agreement as to the use of words, partly in the attempt of teachers to expound too much at once. Nearly invariably one finds the explanation of the seven principles of humanity set forth together with that of planetary rounds and chains, with foot-races and life-cycles, till the luckless student's brain begins to swim, and he wonders whether he is in fact living on the Sun or Saturn, or whether he has swallowed the moon, a conclusion which the lunacy of some of his ideas lends colour to.

My aim in this paper is to obviate a few of these difficulties, and by attempting only to treat a very small portion of the subject to render that portion sufficiently clear to enable the student to read with understanding some of the more advanced works on occultism. With this view I propose to proceed on the method which is certainly the best for teaching, though not the most logical or philosophically correct, *viz.*, proceeding from particulars to generals, and in the present instance from the known to the unknown.

Every fact of everyday life is a special example of some general principle of science, and; even so, every principle of science is but a special example of the *Scientia Scientiarum* — Occultism.

A professor delivering a course of lectures on some special subject, will probably lay down first his general principles, then deduce his formulae, and throw in some experiments by way of illustration. But not thus do we teach a little child. We familiarise the mind with the experiment first, then lead it gradually upward to grasp the cause and the cause of that cause, *etc.*. The bulk of mankind are, towards occultism, as little children, and indeed most students have to grasp it in this way if they would get it at all.

I propose, therefore, freely to use the terms and formulae of science wherever they suit the purpose, showing how the more profound insight of the occultist widens or restricts them, and I shall attempt to explain the nature of the seven principles by reference to that which each one knows [Page 2] best, *viz.*, his own personality. When the student can realise thus much he will be fit to understand something of the great doctrine of correspondences, and to attach some meaning to the Planetary Rounds and Chains, *etc.*.

The first step is to grasp firmly the idea in more or less detail of what each Principle is. When this is done

it will be found useful to affix to it its Sanscrit name, partly because these names are commonly used in books on occultism, and partly because, not being in common use in the West, these names have not, as it were, become worn by popular use, have not acquired a string of connotations which the student has to banish from his mind, and are therefore more fitted for technical terms.

Everyone is probably familiar with the division of the material and spiritual natures of man (by whatever names they may be called), the division which regards the body as a tool or instrument which some force or power, which, for the time being, we may call unknown, uses during the term of their association. This division becomes evident on considering the difference between a dead man and a living one. In the former case the tool is there but the user is away. This, it will appear, is not by any means a precise analogy, for before the user has *entirely* left the tool is also gone, but for the present it is near enough. Now it is precisely the tool which is the lowest of the seven principles, and the one therefore on which the attention must first be fixed.

In the South Kensington Museum and other places you may see the constituents of the human body — a large jar of water and various packets of chemicals. These, however, are but the constituents — the elements — reduced not indeed so far as chemistry can reduce them, for the water for instance might be decomposed into Oxygen and Hydrogen, and the other salts, *etc.*, might be decomposed further, still the reduction is sufficient for the purpose. Now when a dead body lies before us, we know that it is an accumulation of these materials, of these elements, which are in fact similar to those which form the earth; and with regard to the arrangement of these science can give us material help. Science tells us, for instance, that the human body is composed of an aggregate of differentiated cells, carriers of a substance termed protoplasm (the chemical constituents of which it also tells us).

But in the body before us, the instant life departs (or even before) what is termed decomposition sets in, *i.e.*, the cells begin to part company, and the bond restraining them into the shape and formation of a human body is loosened, the cells however still retain vitality and a potential capacity for going into other forms of life. If this renewal of cell-life in other forms and conditions be artificially prevented, or rendered impossible by heat or otherwise, the condition of the packets of chemicals in the [Page 3] museum is reached. If we can conceive this condition to be reached without disintegration of a single cell of the body, merely retaining the chemical elements in the position they held during life, but without leaving in any cell any more potentiality of life than there is in the museum packets, then the condition is attained of the tool without the user.

The well-known case of the mammoth entombed in Siberian ice, or the bodies of monks in the Great St. Bernard, or the dried-up corpses in the Capuchin monastery at Palermo, are examples, probably the nearest we can get, to the hypothetical conditions.

If the student will carefully realise this conception, examining by the light of material science everything which the idea connotes, he will have a rough sort of notion of the lowest principle of the Septenary, and having formed and firmly grasped this conception, he may affix to it the name of *Sthula Sharira*. Whether this be spoken of as the tool or the vehicle, or the basis of the higher principles, matters but little. The student must, however, notice that it connotes every possible or conceivable thing which is, or can be made, perceptible to the ordinary five senses by any scientific apparatus. All modes of matter are therefore merely parts or functions of *Sthula Sharira*, and science fixing its attention solely on this leads

us at last to a blank wall, for no possible mode or combination of the elements of *Sthula Sharira* can produce any higher principle.

At the same time, by the doctrine of correspondences, every fact belonging to the lowest principle is the analogue, and reflection of a fact on each higher principle, every discovery of science and every recorded fact interpreted by the fuller and deeper insight of the occultist, may be of a value far transcending anything which the scientist who discovered it ever dreamed of. Thus the chemist can tell us much of the elements of which this *Sthula Sharira* is built; he can decompose them, predicate something of their qualities, and set down what he calls their combining numbers.

Yet these very combining numbers, if the chemist were but also an occultist, would give him the clue to the great science of proportion and mystery numbers, which is at the root of all sciences, and is the very mystery of Creation itself.

In fact, the positive teachings of science, so far as they represent the careful study of facts of our material world, truthfully and honestly set forth, with sincere devotion to truth, and not garbled or tinkered to fit in with the scientist's own theories, are of infinite value. It is only when in the arrogance of his own vanity, leading him to assume that his own little measure of knowledge represents the height and depth of final and uncontrovertible wisdom, the scientist takes on himself to limit and to deny, that he becomes pernicious.

Let us then conceive of *Sthula Sharira* as the lifeless chemical elements [Page 4] simply put together in the form, down to the minutest details, of cells and nuclei of the human body. It is plain that the whole form is but like a child's sand castle, which merely holds together till the first wash of the wave passes over it. There must be some principle in the living man which holds these elements together, that principle in fact which, separating from *Sthula Sharira* at death, allows the elements to fall apart and decompose. As the body maintains its form during life, and decomposes at death, this force must in fact be the life principle.

Considering now the phenomena of death in the human or animal being, we see that the decomposition of the form occurs first, but the life of the separate cells continues, and this passes into other forms of life. If the cell be subjected to heat or other influence which would destroy its life, the cell-form itself disintegrates, and thus becomes pure *Sthula Sharira*; the life in fact leaves the body in inverse order to that in which it came, for it is now fairly well established that the primordial cell was a very early, if not the first, form of life on this planet, and that the multicellular organisms with a corporate life of their own gradually evolved from cell-colonies, and that, such corporate life ceasing at the death of the organism, the cells are released from the bond whereby the body was composed, and they promptly decompose.

The life principle is then confined to each separate cell, which is in fact itself a highly differentiated organism, built in all probability of multitudes of cellules (if we may coin a new word for a conception not yet within the purview of modern science).

This in its turn will decompose when the life-principle leaves it, or is driven out, but in the meantime it

may go to form some other body. And even after death or destruction of the cell, the protoplasmic substance (rashly assumed by some scientists to be some kind of primordial life matter) may pass into and vivify other cells of different organisms.

The function of the life principle then, first and chiefly, is to hold together the elements composing *Sthula Sharira*, and to prevent decomposition, and to this principle the name of *Prana* is given. [Such was the teaching of H. P. B. and of learned Orientals, the modern transposition of *Prana* and *Linga Sharira* is very confusing to those trained on H. P. B.'s system, without any very obvious gain]

But since there is a broad distinction between a marble statue and a living man, though the molecules of both are prevented by some force from falling asunder, and in the latter case the force involves a continual throwing off of waste matter and taking in of fresh, and therefore involves also powers of perceiving and responding to impulses from without (though it be but in the automatic way that a flower expands its cup in the sunshine); therefore all this vital functioning belongs to *Prana*, the faculty, that is, of [Page 5] responding to those etheric thrills (no more appropriate name probably would be intelligible to the beginner) which Easterns term *Tatwas*, and which Westerns may recognise as the means whereby external objects appeal to their five senses, there being a *Tatwa* (or scheme or system of thrills) for each sense. *Prana* therefore, like *Sthula Sharira*, is manifold: indeed, it is broadly septenary, each of its divisions being susceptible of subdivision. A conception may now be formed of the relation of *Prana* and *Sthula Sharira*, for if protoplasm were what it was originally supposed to be, an undifferentiated homogeneous primordial matter endowed with life, this would present these two principles in their simplest form. It is needless however to say that protoplasm (so-called) though a highly interesting form of matter from a scientific point of view, is not within many thousand miles of being the primordial "life-stuff"; it is something gained that the scientist can conceive of the existence of such life-stuff and try to find it.

As the labours of the chemist and anatomist were essential to the study of *Sthula Sharira*, so those of the biologist and physiologist prove a great assistance at the present stage. Science indeed tells us very little as to the constitution of cells, but tells us many facts of supreme importance as to the association of cells in organic bodies, from which by analogy we may infer much concerning the probable constitution of the primordial cell. Thus Weissmann, after postulating the primordial cell as the origin of life on this planet, and unicellular organisms such as Rhizopoda and Infusoria as among the earliest forms, assumes (as he is probably justified in doing) that in the course of development of the organised world it must have happened that certain unicellular organisms did not separate from each other, but lived together, at first as equivalent elements, each of which retained all the animal functions, including that of reproduction.

Now be it carefully noted that reproduction in these single-cell organisms proceeds by means of fission. Each cell grows to a certain size and then divides into two parts exactly alike in size and structure. There is no suggestion of sex here, it would be absurd to term such a unicellular organism male, or female, or even androgynous or hermaphrodite, this comes later in the life of the cell-colony.

It is thus clear that the division of sex belongs only to the development (not to the primordial forms) of *Sthula Sharira*, the lowest principle. And though these pages are really intended for the most elementary beginners, I warn them as they proceed with their studies, to be very careful in the interpretation of the words male and female, as applied to supersensual qualities and powers. [See " Transactions of the

Blavatsky Lodge"]

It is true the terms are used, and by some of the most advanced occultists, and that, as I believe, not from any inherent fitness in the terms [Page 6] but because some words expressing a distinction were necessary and these seemed as good as any; much the same reason in fact as induced electricians to use the terms positive and negative in relation to electricity. But to writers on occultism I would respectfully plead for the use of some terms less likely to confuse the ordinary mind, so that we might at least be spared the vulgar immoralities (to say no more or worse) of the *soi-disant* Spirit-brides, *et hoc genus omne*, including the very questionable twin-soul doctrine; for, as there can be no sex above *Sthula Sharira*, nor in the primal forms of that, the sexual attributes bestowed on spiritual existences are either purely metaphorical, which is the case in a Master's writing, or an impure and gross imaginary product of the lowest dregs of Astral light poisoned by emanations of human licentiousness, which is the case with some ninety percent of readers. The gradual decadence and corruption of the bisexual pantheon of ancient Greece, so pure and noble in its original symbolism, so gross and filthy in its latter corruption, should be a warning. [Compare also the history of the H. B. of L, the Lake Harris Community and the like]

The precise point of evolution of sex is well shown in "Die Entstehung der Sexualzellen bei den Hydromedusen" by Weismann, Jena, 1883.

Returning from this digression we find that after such homogeneous cell-colony had lived together for some time, division of labour would produce a differentiation, thus certain cells would be set apart for obtaining food, others for locomotion, etc., while some would be exclusively reproductive. We thus get the Somatic and the Germ plastic cells, what in popular language we call an united life of the cell-colony; in other words, a new and collective *Prana* binding the cells as such into a corporate life, as each separate cell is itself bound together as an organic unit.

Such a cell colony may reproduce by fission or gemmation, or in any other way; it may be androgynous or hermaphrodite or bisexual, oviparous or viviparous, or various types by turns, as the Polypi and the Medusae for instance, but though the reproduction and the birth of a new cell-colony depends on the tiniest speck of a germ-plastic cell, the progeny will accumulate around itself somatic and germ cells with the same arrangement, the same functions in a word, as the parent colony.

It is evident therefore that there must be some scheme of arrangement, some ideal plan, according to which the cells, whether somatic, or germ-plastic, and the molecules of the body, are directed to their proper places; equally certain that *Prana*, whose functions merely consist in retaining all the elements together, and assuming or casting them out in accordance with such plan, could never of itself generate such plan, this would be as absurd as to conceive of *Sthula Sharira* itself evolving *Prana*. To use a somewhat suggestive analogy, the magnetic currents, raying from a magnet, sweep [Page 7] steel filings into ordered lines, but the direction of these currents, and the form of these lines, is determined by other forces, above and beyond the magnetic currents and controlling them.

Science, strictly so called, gives very little help here, for the ideal plan or scheme of arrangement does not appeal to the five senses nor even respond to any test applicable to matter. But the phenomena of hypnotism, now being subjected to the strictest scientific investigation, has familiarized the mind with the

conception of thought-forms, which without any material presentment can be made perceptible to the consciousness of another. Discussions on thought transference, on telepathy and kindred subjects, have helped in the same direction, and honest inquirers among the spiritualists have done something, so that now the conception of the existence of any ideal but imperceptible form is no strange one.

If may be said that a thought-form postulates a thinker, though some schools of philosophy deny this. But it will be well for the student to pass by this question for the present, and taking the simple fact that any particle or molecule taken into the body can rest nowhere but in its appropriate place, reflect that this postulates the pre-existence of some ideal scheme, some plan on which that particular body was built. Further that as that same plan on which that particular body was built existed before the material body it will continue to exist after, yet it is not immortal. This plan or scheme is the next principle and is called in Sanscrit *Linga Sharira*. According to occult philosophy it has an existence, apart from the particular body of which it is the plan or ideal, as a separate entity; any modification of the material body takes place first in *Linga Sharira*, then by means of *Prana* the chemical constituents of *Sthula Sharira* are made to respond and to follow as nearly as may be the modification produced in *Linga Sharira*.

An artist's vision of the picture he is about to create, a musician's dream of the divine harmonies of oratorio and opera to be composed, are in a certain sense examples of *Linga Sharira*. Since this is the plan in accordance with which *Prana* restrains the material molecules, this is obviously the principle which fears and resists death, the principle which is operative in the Darwinian "struggle for existence".

The unicellular organisms or monoplastides above referred to which have but these three principles are accordingly, as Weismann has shown, immortal. "Each individual of any such unicellular species living on earth today is far older than mankind, and is almost as old as life itself" (Weismann on *Heredity*, page 72).

This principle appears in popular language as instinct of self-preservation.

It may assist the student somewhat in forming a conception of this rather difficult subject, to consider the illustration of a regiment, say for [Page 8] instance the Black Watch. The regiment is composed of a certain number of men, who apart from the organization of the regiment would be simply a chaotic incoherent mass of human beings, as it is the discipline and *esprit de corps* representing the regimental *Prana* which hold them together, assigning to each his proper place in the scheme or organization of the regiment (its *Linga Sharira*), thus giving it a corporate life as a distinct entity, separate from any of the men who compose it or from the aggregate of them all; for all these perish but the Black Watch goes on, with its history, its memories, its hopes, aspirations, and triumphs, wherein every man who composes that regiment has a share, but which are quite independent of his own personal memories, hopes, etc..

Such are the three lower principles, constituting, it has been said, a vegetable existence. This, however, must not be taken literally, for every vegetable now growing has more than these three principles, as will appear. In fact every vegetable has not only the three lower, which may be called the vegetable principles, constituting an existence which simply lives (so far as metabolism or the taking in of fresh molecules and casting out waste can be called life, unconscious, without thought or desire, a mere automatic machine), but has the dormant but just awakening faculties which belong to the higher life, and

eventually would link the vegetable and animal kingdoms. A careful study of the lowest known forms of life throws much light on this point.

Enquiring now what man has beyond this simple vegetable existence, the answer would almost certainly be volition and self-consciousness. This probably appears to nearly everyone who thinks out the subject thus far, the real man who uses the three lower principles as a workman uses his tool. To produce any physical effect (setting aside for the moment the question of occult, falsely called superhuman, powers) physical means must be employed, *i.e.*, the body must somehow be set to do something. To use the tool in this way we see now that *Linga Sharira* is the key. If a man should wish to operate any change in *Sthula Sharira*, his physical flesh and blood, even to the extent of changing his position, or carrying a book from the shelf, or even moving a single muscle, he must first operate that change in *Linga Sharira*, in other words perform the act mentally; then when *Linga Sharira* is modified the action of *Prana* is to produce a corresponding modification in *Sthula Sharira*. Again, any knowledge apprehended by the senses which are the gates of *Sthula Sharira* must, by the mediation of *Prana*, affect *Linga Sharira*; otherwise "seeing he sees not and hearing he hears not," which is the case in what we term abstraction or inattention, or in the case of a somnambulist or hypnotized subject who, with wide open eyes, is yet unconscious of the images that fall upon them.

The principle then, which can perceive the modifications of *Linga* [Page 9] *Sharira* proceeding from without, and can by will-force produce modifications therein, to affect *Sthula Sharira*, is the next principle. How is this done? How does the workman handle the tool? By what means is he able to produce what, in ordinary language, are called physical effects? We have grown so familiar with this phase of the great problem that most of us fail to see where the difficulty lies. It seems so simple for instance to desire that a thing should be done, and to go and do it. Yet it is absolutely necessary for the student to realize what the problem is, and how very far from obvious is the solution. We need only ask ourselves — "how does a single muscle move?" We wish an arm thrust out, and promptly it goes; we wish it drawn back and it comes; but how? To say that the will can affect the material fabric of the body is an obvious truism, but the realization of the operation, and all it involves, is a great occult lesson which cannot be taught, but which can be learned by any student whose faculties are sufficiently developed and who will take the trouble.

We arrive then at the faculty called *Will*, and in considering this several correlative ideas at once attach themselves. *Will* implies a choice between two possible courses. It is needless confusion to presuppose more than two; everything which we can possibly do at any moment is either "A" or "not A". Unless there are two possibilities there is no will, it is necessity, and the man is an automaton. Further, the impelling force must come from within and be personal to the man. Thus a jelly fish is washed to and fro by the currents external to itself, the vertebrate fish swims whither it wills by internal resolve.

What is it then which determines the choice? The Utilitarian philosophy gives an immediate answer, "Pleasure or Pain" — to acquire the one and to avoid the other is the spring and source of every action. Carefully reasoned out it is evident that this means simply the endeavour to establish a different condition in *Sthula Sharira* from that which exists, *e.g.*, being cold the endeavour to get hot — and if the student should ask himself "why?" the question will appear so absurdly irrelevant as hardly to be worth stating, yet the more the student meditates the more difficult will the answer seem. There are certain groups of sensations affecting the nerves which he will at once desire to inhibit, and others which in the same way he will desire to repeat, but careful and concentrated analysis will modify both these desires, even if it

does not actually reverse them. Further, on carefully studying them, the sensations will begin to differentiate themselves. Pain for instance will divide itself into the pain actually felt, and which the man will desire to cease feeling, and the fear lest that pain should continue indefinitely, or increase in intensity, the latter being the image of a future pain added to the present existing pain which he [Page 10] feels. If a man can only succeed in separating the pain presently felt, from the pain dreaded, he will often be surprised to find how little real difference there is between actual pleasure and pain.

A good classification of pleasures and pains as motives of action will be of considerable assistance to the student at this point, such as may be found in Jeremy Bentham's *Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Having this classification in his head, if the student will once more consider the springs of his own actions he will be able to realise how the brain causes the muscular action in obedience to the dictates of the will, which latter now appears as a blind force travelling in the line of least resistance, avoiding pain and following pleasure. (*Note*, of course these terms are here used in the sense the Utilitarians ascribe to them, of well-being and ill-being, thus the helping of another is according to this philosophy the avoidance of one's own sympathetic pain at another's misfortune, the attainment of one's own sympathetic joy at another's rejoicing; these being, to sympathetic persons, more keen than mere self-regarding joys and sorrows.)

Most thinkers will now be able to see at once that these motives of pleasure and pain are not the chief factors in directing human action. In order to obtain a clear mental image it was necessary to study these first by themselves, and get a clear idea of their effect on the will, and the effect of the will under their influence on physical actions, but the great sources of energy, known popularly as the passions, were for the time being left out of count.

These, such for instance as gluttony, drunkenness, personal vanity and ambition, contentiousness, or pugnacity, sexual appetites, and the like, will be recognised almost at the first blush, as producing effects utterly dis-proportioned to, and sometimes having no possible relation to, the amount of pleasure or pain involved.

It may be that a man, impelled by passion, knows perfectly well that no satisfaction but the reverse must infallibly result from his indulgence in his passion, yet he is unable to restrain himself. These passions have been well termed by some writers "The Whirlpools" or vortices, and they must be accurately investigated, and marked as dangerous currents at sea; such investigation, however, is no more for the elementary student than the investigation of physical whirlpools is for the novice at swimming — knowledge, strength, a clear cool head, and perfect self-control, are the equipment absolutely necessary for the explorer of these dangerous localities. As to the investigation and treatment of the passion whirlpools, the student may very profitably consult Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, a work which contains far more real occultism than is generally supposed.

It is further said that these whirlpools have a well defined subjection to planetary influences, and that they are differently developed in different [Page 11] individuals; and further, that the particular vortices which are specially developed are indicated in various ways, by marks on the body, the lines on the hand, the position and character of moles, etc.. Lavater found indications of the relative strength of various passions in the features of the face (for character is really nothing but the resulting balance of all the passions, changing as each one is conquered or developed), and phrenologists find the same in the

bumps of the head; but these are somewhat empirical sciences as compared with the indications of the hand, whereon the vortices are mapped and measured for all who can read the chart.

To these vortices also belong the influence which the elementals, famous in occult literature, exercise over human beings; they are the slaves of those who have learned to rule themselves, but the cruel tyrants of those who are helplessly dragged along in the vortex.

Meantime, the student's task is to realise that the influences which use and guide the force which we call *the will*, are either the sane and rational ones of pleasure and pain, each being of various degrees of higher and lower, or the insane and irrational domination of the passions; other motives there are of a still more important kind, which cannot be fully understood till, after the study of the higher principles, this fourth principle is once more taken up.

Having thus far realised what this fourth principle is, let the student now attach to it the name of *Kama Rupa* (literally the body of desire) and consider carefully the nature of its relations with the three principles already studied.

It is obvious at once that *Kama Rupa*, the seat of the will, is also the seat of the conscious perception (this is obvious if we reflect that all the three lower principles may be operative while the body is in a state of unconsciousness), it is in fact "*the self*". This is clear even from popular language, for a man speaks of *my body, my life, etc.*, but when he means *Kama Rupa* he says *myself*.

Let us now trace the image of a sense-impression producing all action. An image falls, say, on the eye, and the arrangement of lenses causes a picture to be projected on the retina, as in a *camera obscura*; this belongs to *Sthula Sharira*, it would be the same in a dead eye as a living one (until disintegration commenced). By *Prana* this picture is translated into nerve-thrills and conveyed to the brain, and by *Prana* also the image becomes incorporated into *Linga Sharira*, producing a modification thereof. To assist in following out this somewhat complex process these considerations may be found useful — living nerves carry sensations by thrills; nerves of a body just dead, *i.e.*, without *Prana*, do not; therefore the force whatever it is which traverses the nerves is a function of *Prana*; the *Linga Sharira* or image of the ideal man must include *inter alia* every picture on his brain, [Page 12] every sound that greets his ear, *etc.*, and since these vary from moment to moment they may appropriately be called modifications of *Linga Sharira*). This modification *Kama Rupa* perceives, receives as it were into its own sphere (for it must be noted that sensations may traverse the nerves without affecting the consciousness, as a patient with a broken back does not feel conscious of his feet being tickled, yet the feet are jerked away, showing that there has been nerve action). The said modification being subjected in *Kama Rupa*, to the test of pleasure or pain, or stirring into action one of the vortices, the determination of the will is affected, and this force acting on *Linga Sharira* produces a fresh modification thereof, the modification being in fact the mental image of the act to be done; this mental image always really preceding the actual doing of the act, whence the saying that a good workman should always see his job done before he begins, meaning that the mental image should be clear and of the whole, not a part only, of his finished work. The modification will be more or less clear according to the amount of will-force exerted and this usually depends on the amount of concentration. (In very many cases the formation of the mental image and the doing of the act are practically so nearly simultaneous that the former can hardly be perceived at all; very careful attention will however show to the sensitive student that it always in fact exists.)

The amount of will-force which practically lies at a man's disposal is enormous, only a very small proportion being usually exerted. Sometimes, under the influence of a vortex, an involuntary concentration occurs, whence the saying that a man in a passion has superhuman strength, and the like.

The modification produced from within by will-force on *Linga Sharira* is faithfully translated and conveyed by *Prana*, and receives what is called physical effect in *Sthula Sharira*.

It will be found a useful exercise to follow this complex series of mental and physical operations in such a simple action for instance as looking at a ball and picking it up; after carefully going over and over this, the student will begin to realize *Kama Rupa*, and to see *inter alia* that he can perceive nothing but modifications of *Linga Sharira*, effect nothing but the production of modifications of *Linga Sharira*.

So he knows not his friend, he knows only the image of his friend produced in his own *Linga Sharira*, taken up and examined by *Kama Rupa* and therefore become a part of himself, and so the whole objective universe, the Cosmos, is to each man part of *Kama Rupa*.

To fully explain this in words is wholly impossible, but careful and concentrated meditation will bring it home to the diligent student, and the above words may then be for him the symbol of a truth, for he will have won an elementary initiation (which every student must win for [Page 13] himself, it cannot be *given* except to those who by diligent striving and long and careful thought have fitted themselves to receive the knowledge) but without such initiation these words will appear the veriest nonsense.

Here it may be useful to note that the anatomist, the physician, the naturalist, are working diligently at the elucidation of *Sthula Sharira*. The biologist and physiologist are exploring *Prana*. The spiritualist, so far as he is an honest enquirer and not a money-seeking professional charlatan with a few easy psychic tricks as his stock-in-trade wherewith to bewilder a drawing-room audience, is doing useful work in investigating the phenomena connected with *Linga Sharira*. While metaphysicians, theologians and ethical philosophers of every kind are endeavouring to indicate the powers and dangers of *Kama Rupa*, each of these looks with distrust and disfavour on the work of the others, and the epithets "Materialist", "Superstitious Dreamer", "Sacerdotalist" are freely thrown about. The occultist alone in virtue of his wider range of thought and clearer insight understands the work of all, knowing that their relative value depends on the principle they are investigating; the higher the principle the more valuable the work, and knowing also that by the system of correspondences; the labours of each are mutually illustrative.

Yet once more, we have seen that in *Sthula Sharira* we have matter in its primordial state, emerged from nothingness, but as yet without form; or even if accidentally, as it were, laid together in a form, with no binding principle to retain it there — chaotic in fact. *Prana* gives the principle which binds these chaotic molecules into form, — usually this is a magnetic or some kindred force such as gravitation, — from this principle we have all forms of matter, the mineral kingdom in fact — elementary in stones, more highly developed in crystals. *Linga Sharira* gives an ideal form with a special power of its own, perhaps most nearly described by the word "arrangement"; this gives, in the first place, individuality and separateness, it may be seen in its elementary form in crystals, more highly developed in vegetables; from this principle springs what is properly known as the Darwinian "instinct of self-preservation" and the struggle for existence so important to the development theory as usually understood, for it is this principle which most

dreads and resists the disintegration of physical death. *Kama Rupa* gives us the self-conscious perception and energizing will, with the desires actuating it, both the sane wishes and the insane vortices of passion; this principle is common to the whole animal creation, in what we call the lower animals *Kama Rupa* is popularly called instinct. Strictly speaking man also has instinct; the constitution of *Kama Rupa* is the same throughout the animal kingdom, the difference becoming perceptible only in the consideration of the higher principles.

Once more, in the light of what we have now arrived at, we may consider [Page 14] the phenomenon of physical death. The body, whether of a man or an animal, is composed of enormous multitudes of cells, each a perfect and to some extent a semi-independent, organism, each fulfilling a certain appointed function in the mechanism of the body. Each of these cells has also its seven principles, therefore of course its *Sthula Sharira* or molecules of matter which compose it; its *Prana*, or principle which retains the cell in form, its life-principle, as we should say; and its *Linga Sharira*, or ideal form of the cell, without which it could not fulfil its appointed function in the economy of the body. Neglecting, for the moment, the higher principles, which in low organisms may often be considered to be dormant, it is clear that we have here a *Prana* of the cell, and also a collective *Prana* of the whole body, built up, so to speak, of these cells; also that the *Prana* of the cells being the principle tending to separateness will resist the action of the collective *Prana* which tends to hold the cells together; in old age then or physical weakness the strength of the *Prana* of the separate cells is increased, and that of the whole body (the collective *Prana*) proportionally diminished, till at last the latter is no longer strong enough to prevent the disintegration resulting from the more abundant life and consequent separateness of the cells. The body as an entity then ceases to be, its *Prana* has in fact passed into the separate cells which formerly composed it, and these having no longer any bond of union naturally disintegrate. The cell however is itself composed of cellules, if we may coin the word, held together by the cellular *Prana*, and these will in their turn disintegrate by a precisely analogous process. If fire or other destructive agency has passed over the body, it may be that the *Prana* of the body and the *Prana* of the cells is dislodged from the material particles, or *Sthula Sharira*, simultaneously. The *Linga Sharira*, however, does not perish because *Prana* is loosed from *Sthula Sharira*, any more than an architect's conception of a sublime cathedral is lost because the material edifice embodying his dream has been burnt down. The clearer conceptions the student can form of *Linga Sharira*, *Prana*, and *Sthula Sharira*, the easier will he find the more advanced subjects of planetary chains and the *Tatwas*. He should recognize *Prana* to be a universal force like electricity, acting on every material body, and acting in different ways according to its different modifications.

Thus the luminiferous ether uniting the whole of the visible universe may in one sense be considered as a cosmic *Prana*, and the thrills of light passing through it, whereby objects become visible to us, a modification thereof; thus this, which is called a *Tatwa*, is seen to be a modification of *Prana*, perceptible to us, because through the material molecules or *Sthula Sharira* of our bodies it affects the *Prana* which holds them together, just as the currents of electricity running through the world affect the electricity, in the charged needle. [Page 15]

These four lower principles constitute an animal, that is to say, more accurately, constitute man's conception of an animal, which is not necessarily a true one. The will, result of self-consciousness and belonging to *Kama Rupa*, acts in obedience to motives which may either be the sane ones of pleasure and pain or the mad force of the passion whirlpools. Laying the latter out of count for the moment, the motives of pleasure and pain belonging to *Kama Rupa* are only those operating *immediately*, and that

whether they be higher or lower. A man or an animal feels hungry and at once sets about procuring food; feels cold and sets about getting warm. Or the sight of a friend in distress from hunger or cold may suggest the greater pleasure of relieving that friend, and thus produce an action *apparently* contrary to the law; — apparently, but *not really*, unselfish, for it belongs to *Kama Rupa*, which is self, and so it can only be a higher or lower type of selfishness.

As soon, however, as we come to estimate pleasures and pains not directly presented to us as motives but future or contingent, we get the first glimpse of a new principle which is not animal. To make this clear by an illustration, no one ever knew animals to barter or exchange. Monkeys have been constantly kept with men, and monkeys are the most imitative of all animals. Monkeys may be, and have been, taught as a trick to light a fire, yet no one ever knew a monkey to light a fire for the purpose of warming himself. In popular language we say this implies the possession of reason, but this reason is so mixed in our ideas with the ordinary operations of *Kama Rupa*, that for the most part we strive vainly to disentangle them. This in fact can only be done by an exercise at once most difficult and most valuable, termed "casting out the self".

In all consideration of, or philosophy founded on, the lower principles, the key note is the leading axiom in Professor Ferrier's *Institute of Metaphysics*, viz., "Along with whatsoever any intelligence perceives it must have cognizance of itself. Self is an integral and essential part of every object of cognition".

In the study of the higher principles that axiom has to be thrown overboard, and henceforth every self-element in every conception has to be diligently eradicated if the student wishes to make anything like satisfactory progress.

To show how general and how persistent these self-elements are, let the student endeavour to form a conception of so simple an object, for instance, as a wooden cube — he will at once perceive some elements relating to self. It has, for instance, a side turned towards *himself* and a side turned away, a side to the right of *himself* and a side to the left, an upper and a lower side as regards *himself*; these are all self-elements, let him endeavour to form an idea of the cube from which these elements are absent.
[Page 16]

A study of Hinton's *New Era of Thought* will show the great difficulties of forming such an idea as is above indicated, so obstinate are the self-elements; the final conception when reached is such as by no skill of writer can be embodied in words, but perhaps may be dimly indicated as a state wherein the student find himself alone in absolutely void space with only that cube, and the student himself becomes, fills, *is* absolute space; here there is no up nor down, for there is nothing to measure by, no right nor left, no inside nor out; for the student having now, in idea, freed himself from all material limitations, is all mind (as it were) and has no material form, but surrounds, occupies, permeates, and embodies that cube in void immensity. These words are but a faint attempt to express that which is really inexpressible, and have no value whatever, save in so far as they may serve to raise some vague idea of what is, for the majority of mankind, well-nigh unthinkable.

In this region of thought the only subject which is really to be comprehended is pure mathematics, such as is found in the first six books of Euclid, which in fact are an occult revelation to those who are able to

read them in this light, and which are intelligible precisely in the ratio in which the reader is able to reach this condition. For this gives an abstract faculty, occupied with abstract matters, pure and simple, and all the self cast out. Now, as before, having this faculty in its pure condition, let the student affix to it the name *Manas*, this is also the Latin *mens* or mind, though not what is ordinarily designated "mind" in popular language.

It is plain that this selfless thinking will get rid, among other things, of the idea of size, for size being purely relative is of necessity a self-idea; thus that which appears enormous to the gnat, seems puny to the elephant, and hence the whole expanse of the starry heavens will have no more of the elements of awe or magnificence than a whirl in the waters of a tiny brook or the motions of an ant-hill. When this much is gained the student will begin to find that ideas of time are self-ideas also, and that the doctrine of an eternal present, so often insisted on, so little understood, becomes an actual and patent fact.

This explanation of the functions of *Manas* should give a clue to the real meaning of that terrible stumbling-block to so many, called "the fourth dimension". When the functions of *Manas*, which in the mass of mankind are almost dormant, can be fully stimulated into action, so that pure thought without any self-element becomes possible, it will also be possible to think in the fourth dimension. But those (and they are by far the greater part of humanity) to whom this is impossible, must always find the fourth dimension a foolish dream, without any substantial reality expressed thereby.

The definitions of what by a somewhat confused, but still comprehensible, [Page 17] metaphor are called "Planes," really involve and require the notion of other dimensions; this appears very clearly in *The Key to Theosophy*, hence the possibility of obtaining an entrance to other planes depends on the power of thinking in the fourth dimension. In other words *Manas*, if fully developed, is able to pass to other planes, and when there to modify *Linga Sharira* according to circumstances and to the conditions of the plane on which it is, so as to impress the consciousness in *Kama Rupa*, for this is practically what takes place when a fourth dimensional problem becomes thinkable. It is common, but profoundly unphilosophic, for the mass of mankind, to whom selfless thought is impossible, to assert roundly that it is impossible for all, and that those who pretend to have made any progress towards it are either liars or under a psychic delusion. As well might a blind man assert that all the world is blind.

It is now necessary to observe the workings of *Manas* on the lower principles. *Manas* is the judge, the comparer, the arranger of the images presented to it; it has indeed a faculty of creating impressions, but these are pure abstractions, like the propositions of Euclid; and even as to these it would probably be more correct to say that they are external verities perceived by *Manas*, but with no self-regarding element. In fact, the difficulty of distinguishing between perception and creation is enormous in the higher principles, and in the highest the two are one. The images presented to *Manas* from the lower principles are more familiar and more easy to deal with. If the student will take any ordinary intellectual operation of the day, and disentangle the sense-images, which belong to the three lower principles, and differentiate them from the operation of immediate pleasure and pain, noting carefully whether a stream from any of the whirlpools of the passions has been felt; and having extracted all this, observe carefully the intellectual operation which sets the will in motion, he will have a conception of the function of *Manas* more or less clear in proportion to his power, of mental analysis. The development of *Manas* gives us the man of science, the materialist, the agnostic, the rationalist in religion; it is, in its highest development, selfless, and therefore may form the basis of altruism. It is plain that a very high degree of moral goodness may be reached by the development of *Manas* alone, and this is the goodness we are often

bidden to admire in the agnostic, atheist, materialist, and other types of rationalist, including the bulk of Unitarians, Socinians, and the like. Many of the Oriental faiths, exoterically at all events, owe their goodness to the development of *Manas*, which is often a very high one in their case, far higher in fact than we in the West have any idea of.

Manas is said by the Oriental occultists to be dual; in fact, like all the other principles, it is sevenfold, but the student will do well to defer the consideration of the sub-divisions of the principles till he has mastered the [Page 18] elementary conception of the principles themselves. Meantime he may understand that what is called the higher *Manas* corresponds in the subdivision of the principle to the three higher principles, the lower *Manas* to the four lower principles. The higher *Manas* reflects the higher principles and is in itself purely selfless, the lower *Manas* reflects and has to do with *Kama Rupa*, is therefore tangled (so to speak) with self, and is the selfish intellect, forming, if not counteracted by the other principles, a Mephisto of this type was Margrave in *The Strange Story*. Soulless, because all the principles above the lower *Manas* had become detached from the *Monad*, and nothing was left but the selfish intellect developed to an abnormal extent.

As in the animal nature there can be no conception of the pure intellect, so in the nature wherein *Manas* alone is developed, it is clear that *Manas* can recognize nothing higher than itself, in fact the God of the lower *Manas* is simply the higher *Manas*, an intellectual abstraction, and prayer therefore becomes an absurdity; indeed we are told that the Southern Buddhists so regard it, and frankly acknowledge it to be a hindrance, and that all outward ceremonies are vain, religious dogmas absurd; that there can be no such thing as conscience or love of God; that every good action is the result of a pure intellectual process.

Most Westerns, however, at all events, will agree in thinking that in the average human being certain motives of action may be discovered, referable directly to conscience or love of God, and which cannot possibly be resolved into any intellectual process. Indeed it may be safely laid down that such motives exist in every human being who was ever born into the world (with the exception of those soulless persons, the Margraves, to whom allusion has already been made), though occasionally it is so dormant as to be unrecognizable; and it is from these motives that we derive the next highest principle. Of course there can be no proof of their existence to those who are unconscious of experiencing the action of such motives; if these choose to deny their existence it would be as useless to try and convince them as it would be to try and convince a blind man who denied the possibility of sight. Be it remembered that denial is the easiest of all things to make, the hardest to refute. Dr. Johnson's celebrated words to Boswell when the learned Doctor showed how easy it would be to support a denial of so patent a fact, at that time, as that Canada had been taken from the French, may be studied with advantage on this point.

Seeing that in many of the Oriental systems the development of *Manas* has been pushed to its extremest point, to the exclusion (or rather the suppression) of everything, beyond, it is only natural that this next highest principle, to which they give the name of *Buddhi*, should be shrouded in mystery. It is stated that the mysteries of *Buddhi*, which involve the highest occult powers, are only communicated to pledged chelas, who may be trusted [Page 19] to make no bad use of them. [See the "Key to Theosophy" also "Secret Doctrine" on this point]. Such is the Oriental system, and a very little thought makes it evident that this is the only possible system for peoples of the particular type of development which is associated with the East.

In the West also it is impossible to set down in writing the functions and properties of this principle; Christians, those at least who have learned the esoteric aspects of their own faith, term it the indwelling Spirit of Christ; others call it the higher self, a term open to many objections, for in the first place it is by hypothesis selfless, also the Spirit (according to the classification of St. Paul) as far more properly represented by the three highest principles, the upper triad, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*.

Passing by this, however, we know that to the sincere Christian who tries to live the Christ life, conscience and the love of God are a power more or less, and a power moreover which, if sufficiently developed, claims to dominate the entire body and to direct all the other principles down to *Sthula Sharira*, in other words to be incarnated.

There are some who say that there is no other Christ-soul than the higher Ego in man, it would be as wise to say that there is no magnetic current except that which is in the needle of the compass; when the Christ within is sufficiently developed *en rapport* with the Christ without can be established, exactly in proportion as the professing Christian lives the Christ-life of prayer, self-abnegation, self-command, universal love, purity, *etc.*, does he develop the Christ within, and acquire the power of communicating with the Christ without — "the Master" — by whom his initiation proceeds by gradual stages, and therewith his powers, according to the promise "Greater works than these shall ye do" and "Nothing shall be impossible for you".

It is, however, useless to pursue this branch of the subject further; those who are not Christians will not either believe or understand, because these things cannot be seen from outside and they refuse to come in, in order to learn. Those who are Christians will have already gathered enough from these few words to realize the true meaning and functions of *Buddhi*.

One principle, the highest of all, obviously not to be expressed in words, save by some such abstraction as the "Universal Soul", the "All-Father", the "Divine Spark". How this can be universal and yet a principle in each individual man is a mystery only to be solved by the knowledge of *Buddhi* — "No man cometh unto the Father but by me". Yet though a mystery it plainly must be the case, for union with this Universal Soul is the hope of all great religions, the Nirvana of the Buddhist, the Eternal Hope of the Christian; and unless such Universal Soul were already somehow part of ourselves, no such idea would be possible. The union in fact already exists, but is rendered imperfect by the separatenesses, and the [Page 20] separatenesses proceed from self, whose home is in *Kama Rupa* (the Body of Desire), but whose chief manifestation is in *Sthula Sharira*,. To this highest principle of all is given the name *Atma*, and *Atma* is to the individual man what God the Father of the Christians or Parabrahm of the Easterns is to humanity. Easterns, and more especially Europeans with an Eastern bias, will object here that Parabrahm does not correspond to the Christian's God the Father. The only answer to this is that if the correspondence of the *Atma* of man to the Parabrahm of the Cosmos is clear to them, they may be content to leave the analogy belonging to a system which they repudiate for the use of those to whom it may be helpful.

Thus in the higher triad of the principles of man we get a reflection as it were in the microcosm of the Trinity of the Cosmos, which has been known and recognized by every great religion in the world in some form or another, more or less fully, and only denied in comparatively modern times by ignorant eccentrics in search of a new idea with which to tickle the ears of their followers.

I have said that the common metaphor of planes is somewhat confused; in fact planes and spheres and globes are all measurements of space like the stories of a house, and novices are apt to ask *whereabouts* the spiritual plane is situated, just as some Christians might ask *where* the kingdom of heaven was; it is not easy to find any terms which are free from objection, but the student should bear this difficulty in mind.

To conclude, since *Atma* is the highest, the universal Union, and *Sthula Sharira* is the most utter separateness, we see how the one is as it were the inverse image of the other. "*Daemon est Deus inversus*" — so *Prana* is the inverse image of *Buddhi*, just as the Christian Fathers tell us that Adam is of Christ. So also *Linga Sharira*, the senseless form, the mere spook of the *séances*, is the inverse of *Manas*, the pure intellectual concept, and thus the Divine sees itself as in a mirror inverted, and the mirror is *Kama Rupa*. A useful image may be drawn of a man sitting under a penthouse on an island, in the midst of a clear lake, fixed it is true to his island and unable to stir off it, unable also by reason of his penthouse to look up, yet in the lake he sees mirrored the real objects beyond, the stars of heaven on the one side it may be, on the other a dung-hill; give him power by speaking to those on shore to affect the realities of the things whose reflection he sees, and the analogy though rough is workable. When the self, which is the bar that separates the higher from the lower, is finally cast out, when the atonement is accomplished, and Nirvana is won, then there is no more need for the penthouse, the man is let loose from his island, and thenceforth is able to see all things clearly, not as in a glass reflected, but with straight vision, as they are.