

Manuscript Lecture

No. 8



Children of the Elements
Subject: Part One
The Nature Spirits

BY

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The Children of the Elements - Part One

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The ancient philosophers peopled the elements of nature with races and species of creatures absolutely unheard of by the average individual and the wise men of all ages have claimed that nature works through intelligent forces and not mechanical laws. Upon this hypothesis we have built the doctrine of the Nature Spirits and Elemental Larvae. Paracelsus, the great Swiss Hermes and the greatest physician of modern times, has given us the most complete analysis of these strange creatures who live, move and have their being unseen and unrealized by mortal man. We see their works but have never learned to know the workers who, day and night, swim and exist in nature's finer forces.

For the sake of clearness, we will divide the study of these elemental spirits into three general groupings: First, the elementals of the four elements or ethers which we commonly know as the Nature Spirits. Secondly, the man-created elementals of the astral and mental planes. And third, the Dweller on the Threshold or the individual elemental. These three groupings are the same that have been used in the ancient wisdom for thousands of years. This first lecture will be given over to the analysis of the first group of the elementals of the ethers.

The Four Elements

According to the ancient doctrines, the universe is composed of four principal elements, that is of course, the tangible universe. These four elements are under the rulership of the Lords of Form who are sometimes referred to as the four-headed Cherubim - the four-headed Cherubim who stood at the gates of the Garden of Eden; the four-headed cherubim which, with its brother creation, knelt upon the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant; the four beasts of the Apocalypse; the four aspects of the great Assyrian Sphinx, the Babylonian Man-bull; - all of them are symbolical of these four primal elements. In a larger work, at a later time, we will go more deeply into this wonderful problem, but suffice it to say here that from the beginning of time man has divided form into four basic essences. These four basic essences are the basis of all things cognizable by human, material body centers of consciousness and all things superior to these four essences can only be cognized by spiritual vision. All of the many complex forms which appear in this world as the products of the geometrical outpourings of the Lords of Form, or the great body-building Devas, are the expressions of four streams of life. These four are referred to as the rivers of life pouring out of the garden of the Lord and they have as their source the great creative Hierarchy which the

ancients referred to as the Kings of Edom. Physical bodies are animated above cosmic root substance by these streams of life-giving ether - which ether is that part of the body of the Universal Logos (or something even higher which we do not know) which occupies the position of a carrier or container, for it passes through itself in four streams the powers of the creative Logos. From its essences are extracted the four creative principles which at the present time are the basis of the human fourfold vehicle: (1) dense or physical, (2) etheric or watery, (3) astral or fiery, (4) mental or airy.

These four vehicles have been symbolized by the ancients as the arms of the cross and form the basis of the sacred doctrine of the crucifixion. Grouped together, these four, being the primal basis of bodies, are under the control of the body-building qualities and signs known astrologically as the four fixed signs of the zodiac. There are three crucifixions in the zodiac - the cross formed of the four cardinal signs, the cross of the four fixed signs and the cross of the four common signs. These in turn represent the three major crossings of the vital forces in the human body. The entire etheric world with its many crossing currents has its seat in the solar plexus of the human body and is often referred to as the molten sea or the laver of purification, for in its watery and liquid depth the soul of man has to be washed in its pilgrimage to immortality. These four elements are the basis and life behind the four physical, material elements of earth, fire, air, and water, and the power from the unseen causal worlds works through the four material elements in order to express itself in bodies, cells and molecular combinations.

As each kingdom in nature has a series of lives evolving through it and each plane is a schoolroom of a great natural outpouring, so it is claimed that these four divisions of ether, expressing themselves in matter as the four elements, are inhabited by groups of intelligences evolving through the elemental essences. According to the ancients, these elementals are created solely out of the one substance - that of the ether or element in which they exist. They have no compound body and therefore are not capable of immortality, having no germinal life essence other than their respective elemental essence. On the other hand, being composed of only one substance, they are free from the destructive influences of cross currents and therefore live for many hundreds, some thousands, of years as the active principles of elemental essences. Among the classics of the various authors, we find many references made to those elementals. In Pope's poem "Rape of the Lock" we find the elementals playing the most important part; in the Abbe de Villars' "Comte de Gabalis" (a remarkable book) we find a very exhaustive thesis on these strange people of nature. They are of varying shapes and sizes, according to their works and duties, and their bodies are of varying degrees of density, according to the element in which they work; the gnomes being the most dense consequently

more subject to the laws of mortality, while the sylphs being the most attenuated, preserve themselves the greatest length of time.

The Nature Spirits in the Elements

There are four general classes of Nature Spirits, according to Paracelsus and the Count de Gabalis:

First the Gnomes. Under this general heading we find those creatures we know as the tricksies, hobgoblins, elves, forestmen, brownies, dwarfs, little old men of the rocks, and many other similar titles. They live in the element of earth and are said to work among the rocks and to some degree with trees and flowers. They live in the rocks and among the trees and are said to be of dwarfed size, rather heavily built, with their garments growing as part of them. According to Paracelsus, they marry and have families, living in a strange world which the Norse people called Elfheim. They are said to have come out of the earth and that now they penetrate it to the very core. They also live in caves and work with the molding of stalactites and stalagmites, those great pillars of lime that are found in subterranean vaults. These little people are often seen by children who remain clairvoyant up to about the seventh year. In the forest and woods we often see them storing up provisions for the winter, a great band of busy little people who are given charge of the molding and forming of earth, and under the direction of wiser ones, have charge of all the solids, bones, tissues, etc., of the human body which they labor with and restore. No bones that are broken would be set were it not for the assistance of the gnomes.

They have their king whom they obey and respect; he is called Gob which is the basis for the word goblin. It is said that one of these elemental kingdoms dwells at each of the corners of creation, and the gnomes, who work with the most crystallized of all the elements, have been given the North corner of the creation as their home. The ancients said that the gnomes governed the secret treasures and hidden things of the earth and that those who would seek for material treasures hidden in nature must gain the support and assistance of the gnomes who will either unveil it for them or else so conceal it that they cannot find it. Each species has its own traits, and the gnomes are very miserly, greedy and fond of good things to eat; but on the other hand, they work incessantly, are very patient and faithful, and would be called in our world steady and temperate. Occasionally they meet in great conclaves in the heart of some dark forest or among the rocks, and from them came that wonderful story of Rip Van Winkle in "The Legends of Sleepy Hollow". They serve mankind all the time, striving to assist him in his work. They work intuitively through the elements and while they have a certain germ of mentality, it is much less than ours. They are not capable of expressing

themselves or manifesting through any substance except their own element; and that hypothetical ether, which pervades solid crystallized substances as the first etheric essence, is the only substance in which the gnomes can function. They are a very busy little people and play a great part in the development of man. Certain forms of gnomes dwell in old ruined castles and they are one of the reasons why old buildings are overgrown with vines and creepers, for they are eternally seeking to beautify nature. They work in rocks and corals under the sea and also with the shell fish. Some of them attain great size, others have the quality of changing size at will, as long as they remain in their own substances; but the majority of them are very much smaller than human beings. The gnomes are not pretty but usually resemble small deformed dwarfs, rather too heavy, with large heads, and strange waddling walks. As they dwell down in the darkness and gloom, they are said to have a certain effect upon human disposition, and so the gnomes govern the Saturnine melancholia, gloom and despondency.

The Undines

The Undines are the nymphs, naiads, mermaids, sirens, harpies, sea-daughters and sea-goddesses of the ancients. They are the elementals whose home is in the water and are said to live in the oceans, lakes, streams and rivers of the earth; and incidentally they govern the liquids and vital forces of the human body. As the gnomes represent the sign of Taurus in the zodiac, so the Undines are Scorpio, having to do with the life and vital forces of nature. They are said to be very beautiful and in their kingdoms beauty seems to be the keynote of power. They have many qualities similar to the gnomes, dwelling as they do in a world of their own, but they are generally considered to be amicable and fortunate, nor are they dangerous in any way to man but serve him in the spirit of love and sincerity. They have their rulers, as the gnomes, who are supposed to be very superior and the most wonderful of them and is call Necksa whom they obey and reverence very highly. All of these beings revere God and know of Him and seek to obey Him in every way. The Undines have been given the Western corner of creation and are said to sometimes whisper through the West wind, which is their power. They work with the creatures living in the sea and also are said to have an important part in rain. The ancients, especially Paracelsus, considered that storms were caused by the battles of the nature spirits and that the crossing of their qualities resulted in great wars in the heavens which we know as storms and upheavals. These Undines are of about the same size as human beings, usually of great beauty, and are symbolized generally as maidens draped in sea-foam or riding on the sea-horses, or as mermaids with the tails of fishes. They live much longer than the gnomes, being composed of a subtler essence and a finer quality of ether, but they are also subject to the laws of mortality. They seem especially interested in plants and flowers, probably because the plant

is composed in etheric double of the same quality of ether. The Undines are of a cheerful but not very emotional quality, being vital in temperament and very beautiful, therefore they have considerable influences upon the vital temperament of the human being.

The Nature Spirits are sometimes visible to the human eye but can only be managed or ruled by those who are perfect rulers of the elements in which they live. The mastery of elements by man gives him rulership over these kingdoms of being. According to the ancients these creatures were originally under the dominion of the Adamic man and are always under the influence of the man or creature who is master of their element. They serve sincerely, though they do not realize or recognize the needs of the race they serve. Under the wise guidance and assistance of higher hierarchies these creatures are the intelligent basis of natural phenomena, assisting in the placing of qualities and powers in plant, mineral, animal and man.

In the second part of this lecture we will take up the analysis of the Sylphs and the Salamanders which are the two higher tribes of groups of nature spirits, having charge of the two higher elements of fire and air. Many will not care to accept the reality of these creatures but as they form part of the great occult hierarchy and are the incarnation of natural principles, it is necessary that we give them attention and a certain amount of study. Under certain conditions these creatures have attached themselves to man and served him faithfully and well, as in the case of the demon of Socrates, and in many cases have been mistaken for angels, demons and other supernatural larvae. They are said to also exist in essence in the chemicals of nature and not only are there elementals of our earth and scheme of things but of other planets and solar systems as well, there even being star and sun elementals. The main difference between them and man is that the evolving kingdoms that we know consist of complex organisms composed of spirit and a chain of vehicles, while the elementals have no substance in their composition save the one ether from which they are formed, and the only evolution they can have is in the compound evolution of their ether from which they cannot disassociate themselves.

(This will be continued in Part II)

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