

Man's Relation to the Phenomenal World as Viewed by Transcendental Philosophy and by Occultism

by Oswald Murray

A Paper read before the Adelphi Lodge, T.S. 7 Duke Street Adelphi. W.C. in 1892

Reprinted from "Theosophical Siftings" Volume 5

The Theosophical Publishing Society, England

[Page 3] THE object of this paper will be to distinguish between the real and the unreal aspect of life; to endeavour to show that all phenomena, time, space, matter, individuation, are contents of consciousness; are modes, self-determined by consciousness for its own manifestation; that the only reality in these phenomena exists in the consciousness which contains them and renders them possible.

Having determined that consciousness is the ultimate Reality in life, it will be shown that our normal state of consciousness may be expanded, or transcended.

This position will be shown first as maintained by the transcendental school of philosophy; that of Hegel and Professor Green, Kant, etc., and subsequently as taught by occultism.

The result of our education, of the influence of the opinions current in our surroundings, is that we are led to look on ourselves as something apart and separate from all else, as having separate self-existence; and of the world in which we live, as something standing outside of us, apart from us. We speak of this world outside of us as the tangible world, and infer thereby that the objects thus spoken of, have a reality in themselves, apart from and independent of consciousness. In fact most people consider the phenomenal world to be real, and thought to be comparatively illusory.

We are led to think of the Deity as a gigantic person, existing somewhere in the sky, and of our relation to him as of that of a culprit towards an omnipotent judge.

Thus we grow up without any conception of the unity of the Universe, of the fact that the Universe in all its manifold variety is the external manifestation of one all-pervading universal element, of which we ourselves are individualisations, and of which our surroundings are other aspects.

Most people go through life satisfied with the popular conception. Some, however, are led to analyse for themselves, what "existence" means, and to seek to understand in what man's relation to the world around him consists.

The first thing that such a man will realise is, that he is, that he exists as a self-conscious centre of thought; he realises further that there is a world of objects, or phenomenal world, around him, with which his senses bring him in relation. He will realise further, that there is a world of thought which wells up within him, and which we describe as reflection, or re-presentation. [Page 4]

By further analysing his own thinking, he will find that the phenomenal, or so-called "tangible" world, has to be translated into the subjective in order to be perceived by the mind. Objects appeal to the senses, to the physical impermanent element in man, whereas the thought-symbols into which they are translated by the mind and conveyed to the apprehension, represent the principles which are behind or within the objects, and which principles appeal to that element in man which is of the same character. Cognition infers an identical element in the knowing act and the object known. But for this identity, or common element, cognition would be impossible. That which perceives its other aspect contains it and must be the ultimate Reality.

The consideration of the phenomenal world leads us to the conclusion that the reality to us of an object in presentation, consists in its presence in this common element, consciousness. A sensible world independent of sense-perception is a baseless assumption.

If not present to a particularised mode of consciousness, an object is still necessarily present to the universal. But our minds cannot cognise things in themselves. To perceive a thing in itself would be to perceive it neither in time nor in space, as these are furnished by the constitution of our perceptive faculties, and our minds are fettered by the limitations of the senses. Our minds only cognise certain symbols or thoughts of a thing presented to our self-consciousness by the senses.

Science teaches us that we do not perceive the objects which we sense, but only certain vibrations transmitted to our brain. Vibrations are radiated from objects and impinge on our senses. They there set up other vibrations in our nerves, which are transmitted to our brains. What it is that perceives these vibrations in the brain, gathers and transmutes them into thought, science does not analyse.

It is well known that our senses are not invariably reliable, and do not always transmit true pictures of objects. Thus to some people the fields and trees carry the appearance which to us would be red. The scale of our sense perceptions is very limited in comparison with that of many animals. Science has shown that there are vibrations which pass through us unperceived. For these and another reason to be referred to shortly, philosophy describes the phenomenal world as the hypothetical world. It is thus evident that the order of nature, as exhibited to particular minds, is an order of knowing, and that to attribute a validity to objects, apart from consciousness, would be fallacious.

Some schools of philosophy consider that the objectifying function of the mind is identical with the ultimate fact presented to consciousness. This must be a misconception. While valid of the fact it is not identical. The objectifying function of the mind is adjectival only; the discursive [Page 5] intelligence can never represent the wealth of the Reality which lies beyond immediacy. Only by transcending the modal consciousness would that be possible. At the same time, we cannot think of any reality as the ultimate ground of our apprehension that is not in immediacy, or actually present in thought as self-reference.

It is difficult to distinguish between the perception in consciousness of objects of thought, of reflection, or representation, on the one hand, and the perception of actual concrete objects on the other. The reality of both to self-consciousness consists in the experience. Objects conceived in reflection are integrated experiences. "Actual concrete objects in presentation are formed by a quasi-judgment, wherein past experiences are associated with present sensation and regarded as present in time and space". But actual and concrete experience must not be confused with experience reflected on.

There is another aspect of the conditions of life which is generally the subject of fallacious conceptions.

Time and space are very often considered to have a reality in themselves by which they are supposed to condition and determine our experience. This is a fallacy. Time exists only in, and for, thought. In reflecting on a state, it is already past and reproduced in reflection.

Relations of sequence are thought and as present in actuality, they are relations, not of sequence, but of co-existence. Time is not perceived, it is conceived.

Similarly space may be defined as an order of relations co-existing in perception, in thought. The consideration of a series of states forces us to the conclusion of their essential identity in the particular experience. Time and space, it will thus be seen, are modes used by consciousness for its own manifestation, having their only existence for it and in it.

It is evident that the phenomenal world, or actual concrete experience, does not account for itself, therefore we conclude that there is a ground outside human consciousness which makes it possible. But such a ground must itself be consciousness (though not our limited and discursive consciousness) for existence means Being-in-experience.

The manifestation in us of the faculty of being able to consciously link our surroundings to ourselves, is due to the presence in us of that common element which we have shown to be the basis of the phenomenal world, and which will be shown to be the Ultimate Reality of Being cognisable to our minds. This common element, or element of identity, which we share in common with all, is the basis of everything. We thinkers are ourselves this universal element individualised, particularised Universals, communicated into physical conditions, looking through the small focal point of our limited self, at the other focal points [Page 6] contained in our greater, our true self — the Universal. Individuations are determinations of this Universal, knowing itself in manifold variety.

Reflection will show that this Universal, as Universal, that is as static, unchangeable, undeterminate, can have no expression. No cognition or experience is possible apart from particulars, or differentiation. Hence the Universal by self-determination "becomes", impels itself into objectivity, for self-cognition, self-realization, and manifests in process.

The transcendental school considers that the ultimate Reality is immediately present in experience, of which it is the ground, and which it relates to itself.

Experience is analysed into three aspects, which may be distinguished but cannot be separated.

It is.

It is something.

It bears self-reference.

It ever is, and this is-ness is the ultimate Reality, the ground and basis of Being, of existence; the universal element which wells up and is immediately present in thought.

It is something, *viz.* it has actuality, particularity, "I" presence.

It bears self-reference; that is, it carries self-relation. Being immediately present in thought as its ground, it relates the particularity, the actual, the "I", to itself, and thus binds the Universe into one whole.

From this it is argued that Being and Being-in-experience are identical.

The Universe is a Universe of experience. Human spirits are limited, and cannot wholly account for themselves therefore, but limitation in experience has no meaning unless there is an experience which knows itself as limiting, that is to say, as ground and fulfilment. Hence Being and Being-in-experience may be said to be identical, or the Universe is a Universe of experience.

TRANSCENDING OR TRANCE-SENDING

The philosophical position which has thus been defined is constructed on the introspection and analysis of thought. It seeks the attainment of truth; the identification of knowledge and Being, by the way of reason and logic: the analysis of consciousness, which it finds accounts for itself and is the basis and explanation of the Universe; the ground and Reality of self-included Being.

But the only consciousness actually cognisable in thought is the modal, the particularised, the self-consciousness. Binding itself by the laws of empiricism, metaphysic refuses to admit that the modal consciousness [Page 7] may transcend its self-determined conditions; that human perception may transcend its normal limitations. It formulates the Universal as a postulate, in order to construct the Universe into a logical whole. But the ground of Being remains an inferential and abstract proposition, with which the mind can never consciously commune. The Universal ever recedes behind the individual thinker. Every attempt to grasp it ends negatively, as the subject identity slides ever behind the regarding mind, habituated as this is to dependence on sense and empiricism. Metaphysic is thus obliged to leap with a single jump from the Universal to its particularisations, which alone come within the field of its cognition, without attempting to deal with the intermediary process; or to relate the individual to the Universal except in terms of abstract thought.

Occultism agrees with this philosophy that the human consciousness is in its innermost the Ultimate Reality itself, but proceeds to teach that being thus of the potentiality of the Universal, it may by the same will which impelled it into conditions of limitation, transcend those conditions and stand liberated and free, in conscious contact with its causal source, and entering into communion, know itself as a whole where before it could cognise but parts of its nature.

The difference between the two schools lies in the fact that metaphysic limits its introspection to the state of modal-consciousness, while occultism affirms the possibility of volitionally liberating consciousness from self-restrictions and, reverting to its original state of freedom, impel itself into conscious communion with its basic source, and from there regard its circumference transitively and know, not as in the state of individuation, where things are known apart, in separation of subject and object, but in identity. Conjoining with its basic source, consciousness ceases to distinguish by intellection, by discursive processes, but passing into identic-union, becomes its own ultimate object as it was before the subject, in simultaneous accord. Returning subsequently to normal states of mentality, consciousness brings with it the memories of its experiences, and the knowledge of intermediary states between the ground of being and personality; or in other words, of the process of "becoming".

That the normal limits of consciousness may be transcended finds literal illustration in the facts of clairvoyance, which are today too well known to be disputed. Numerous experiments made in different medical schools may be consulted; notably those of Dr. Charcot, of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris; and of Dr. Bernheim, of Nancy.

There are standard medical works, such as those of Dr. Luys and others, which deal with these subjective phenomena, and may be referred to. The Psychical Research Society and Mr. Stead have accumulated evidence also. But it is well to remember that in all cases of hypnotised [Page 8] subjects the will of the sensitive is made subject; the consciousness of the sensitive acts under the dictates of an outsider's will, and consequently does not carry its own self-directing, its dynamic force, with it. The result is apparently that such consciousness, while it transcends the normal limits of space and time, while it may look into the past and the future, or perceive things which exist at very considerable distances, it still functions within "relative" states of time and space. It is probable that consciousness when so propelled cannot transcend the astral plane or state.

Clairvoyance, or the expansion of the field of consciousness, may however be developed under certain modes of training. In such cases the consciousness is projected volitionally, propelled by its own dynamic will-force. It then transcends the field of perception attainable by the hypnotised sensitive, whose will does not accompany his perception.

This possibility is sketched out in the Yoga system of Patanjali, but the system is never given in its entirety to the public. Such information is never printed, and only imparted to accepted students, after many trials and tests of unselfishness of purpose.

The impelling of human consciousness into conscious contact and communion with its causal-source, has always been considered as "the great work" in occultism, and as the highest achievement possible to initiate in the mysteries. It is referred to under curious veils in the various systems. In alchemy it is

described as the conjunction of the sun and the moon, for which must be read the Soul and Spirit. In Hermeticism it is the "mystic marriage" of soul and mind, by which man becomes the Christos, and the Kingdom of Heaven becomes on earth (that is, in man).

Boehme refers to it as the revivification by mind and will of the divine image in which man was made by the Elohim, or seven spirits of God. This Spirit image, the "Spouse of the Soul", becomes obscured by the projection of the Soul into the wrath-fire, or astral-sense plane, and has to be re-vivified with Spirit.

A similar conception is found in some Rosicrucian works, which state that the vitalising of the Divine Ideal within the soul, entails the possibility of conscious action above the conditions of normal mental states, and consequently of transcending their limitations. In Theosophy this is referred to as the result following upon the conjunction of the Manas and Buddhi states of consciousness.

Alchemy, however, asserts that the normal states of consciousness cannot be transcended without theurgic assistance. "Things pertaining to the Gods are moved by themselves, and not by inferior natures. The union of Soul and Spirit is not attainable by metaphysical abstraction, or theoretic philosophy, but by a Divine work. By no ordinary process of [Page 9] rational contemplation is the mind able to conceive the nature of the Infinitude of true Being, as our consciousness is separated off from its antecedent identity. To discover the *one* principle, the perceiver must first become assimilated to it". Also did the Chaldaic oracles declare that there is no other means of strengthening "the vehicle of the soul", but by material rites. Plato therefore in *Alcibiades* calls the magic of Zoroaster, "the service of the Gods".

In support of this alchemists assert that the separation of the human consciousness from the original spirit, is enacted in generation. "By the fact that the corporeal-sensual nature is predominant in physical conception, the Divine original is obscured". The individual thus subsists, as a distinct particularisation, from that fontal Reason whence it springs. By regeneration (an alchemic process) the Ultimate Reality may be discovered as it is after death.

Were it possible for generation to take-place without subjection to the sense-nature in conception, our Divine origin would not be obscured. This is the "fall" of the soul, by which the "Divine Image" becomes obscured, and the soul subject to the astral-sense-nature. Only by rising above this plane, or state of bondage, to sense-nature, whether in life or death, may consciousness commune with its antecedent cause and basic source, the ground of Being.

The "Kabbala" also teaches that the descent of consciousness into the astral sphere entails bondage, and is equivalent to the "fall" of the soul, which is crucified in the quadruple cross of the elements (Body). The regeneration or resuscitation into the consciousness of essential Being and freedom, is a "process" in accord with the plan of the Divine Archetype. This is illustrated in the Chaldean myth, in which Eve, the soul, is made a derivative from Adam, the spirit, through which it is brought into external manifestation, and descends into contact with the sense-nature, with which, as "the serpent", Soul or "woman's seed" remains for ever in conflict and enmity.

The regenerated life, on the other hand, is pictured in the New Testament, under the allegory of Jesus, or

"Jehoshua" = the life, which descends by "immaculate conception". This refers to the life which has undergone the process of re-birth, of regeneration, by which the sense-nature has been subdued and conquered, in which consciousness consequently communes with "the Father" or ground of Being, and which is signified by the term Christ, or Christos, *i.e.*, the state of union of soul and spirit. The "virgin mother" refers to the inner states of purity of mind, by which regeneration, or re-birth, are rendered possible.

Similarly was this illustrated in the old Egyptian myth, in which Isis (spirit) and Osiris (soul), sister and brother, were conjoined in marriage. [Page 10] Their kingdom was usurped by Typhon, the sense-nature, who malignantly crucified Osiris and cut his body into pieces, and scattered his members to the four winds (elements). Isis, however, re-collecting these, preserved them in a chest (body), which floated in the Nilotic waters in safety, until the period arrived for a restitution, when the King Horus was thenceforth resuscitated and came forth more powerful than he was before. (Horus, the son, stands here in the same relation as the "son of man" to "the Father".)

It is clear that these different systems all agree that it is the descent of the soul, or individuated consciousness, into the astral light, in an envelope of which it is imprisoned as in a body, which prevents it, while in that astral body from communing with the ground of Being.

To learn how to penetrate the astral light is therefore to learn the mode of communing in identic-union with the Ultimate Reality.

The alchemists make it very clear that this transcending is only possible during trance.

"The dark dominion of the self-hood has to be dissolved, and the senses entranced. But the vital spirit must first be purified by certain theurgic processes in the ceremonies of the Mysteries. Otherwise the unprepared consciousness might be made captive in the astral sphere; the kingdom of Pluto; the waters of Lethe; Hades; by the allurements of its own reflections; taken captive by deluding desires, in the vaporous images of its own imagination, where desires are images and will their act".

This was illustrated in the old myths by the picture of Orpheus *turning backwards* in his upward ascension, and thus imprisoning his soul, Euridyce, in the allurements of the astral Hades. So also Prosperine or Persephone, the soul, was imprisoned in the kingdom of the senses, or Pluto's wiles. Thus in the Aeneid, as Proclus explains, was Theseus unable to obtain the *golden apples*, being detained by his passions, his love of beauty, in the sea of sense.

Of the danger of his descent to Tartarus, was Aeneas warned by the Sybil, who tells him to take the *golden bough* to guide him, the same which Apuleius tells us the ass carried in the Mysteries sacred to Isis, where it is identified with the Caduceus of Mercury, that pregnant symbol. Nor could Theseus have tamed the Minotaur (senses) but for the assistance of Ariadne (soul); Jason would not have found his way out of the labyrinth but for the *golden thread* of his soul, Medea. Thus also was Andromeda, the soul, sacrificed to the Gorgon, the hydra of many eyes, or allurements of the senses, till Perseus, the spirit, liberated her.

There are methods by which an ascent may be effected from oblivious bondage of existence, through a gradual assimilation, to a survey, more or less immediate, of the causal source, but the necessity is evident that the [Page 11] will be first freed by purification from all sense-inclination, before it becomes fit to penetrate the astral-sphere.

The descent of the soul into the astral body may be introverted; it may be made to rise to the zenith of the Elysian-Light, and returning thence to the body again, become to it as is the sun to the earth, illuminating it with life celestial, with energy and power almost immortal.

Judging from Boehme, this possibility appears to depend on the vivifying of the "Divine Image" within the soul.

A few words on his position will be necessary in order to understand the possibility referred to. Matter must be understood to be spirit densified; Soul, to be a spherical vehicle polarised by Divine Idea and will, or negative and positive forces (the twin serpents of Egypt and of the Caduceus of Mercury). This polarisation being effected in the astral light, the Divine Idea, or sphere of the Soul, becomes surrounded by an envelope of astral-fire, which separates it off from the ground of Being, as previously stated.

The purpose of this descent of the Divine Idea, which is also referred to as a spark of divine light, is that it may obtain corporeal form, in which consciousness may manifest, as the radiation or effulgence from the radiant point, the Divine Idea, from which it is inseparable. Mind is the result of this effulgence, in contact with matter, an effect of organisation, developed by the soul in contact with the body, with which it forms the connecting link. It is the mode of action, of manifestation, of soul. That portion of the effulgence which remains within the astral state, constitutes the permanent mind. That portion which penetrates and is absorbed by the astro-sidereal body, is impermanent, as regards the individual.

But the emanation absorbed by these elements contributes to their spiritual growth and evolution, and is in fact to them, what sunlight is to the life of the earth. The soul is to the atomic-lives of the body, what the sun is to the earth, illuminating them with light and life.

Soul is thus the medium by which the Universal Spirit, or Consciousness, is individuated and becomes concrete; and life may be said to be a process for the elaboration of the soul, or vehicle of consciousness, by which process God-the-one becomes God-the-many.

By being immersed in the astral light, or sidereal body, the Divine Image becomes obscured and has to be substantiated by spirit during life in the physical body. The process by which the divine spirit, with which the Idea has to be substantiated, is distilled 'from denser spirit in the alembic of the human body, must be discovered by the "seeing eye" from the purposely obscured jargon of the alchemists.

One thing Boehme makes quite clear is that the outer personal will or astral-will, must "die" daily, must become tintured by the will of the unity, which acts from within the Soul. This tinturing of the personal will [Page 12] by the inner light, not only constitutes a state of mind and heart, but is a creation; it is re-

birth.

Considerable insight into this process may be obtained from Dowd's "Temple of the Rosy Cross", which while not based on Boehme specially, yet runs on very similar lines. Hermeticism refers to the same conception in other terms. A "genius" or flame may be polarised by the united action of will and mind, as the essence of oil passes into and becomes a flame, as a flame is to its candle, and which flame will function in a higher state of consciousness.

This was illustrated in the ancient myths, when Aeneas, having passed the Stygian border, goes forth to meet his "father" in "Elysian fields". Thus Hercules dragged Cerberus from hell, or liberated the individual entity and established it in the Hesperidian islands, or Elysian fields. Thus Jason is joined in marriage with his bride, the soul Medea, when he had won the "golden fleece". Perseus, the "Son of God", rescues Andromeda his soul, and bears her to heaven, to shine for ever beside him, redeemed and glorious.

So the re-arisen Osiris appears in shining garments; so Apollo is all over radiant; so Bacchus appeared in splendour when married to Ariadne; so "divine" Achilles shone refulgent in *golden* armour.

"Take the flying bird" (or Soul), says Hermes, "and drown it flying" (birth in body), "separate it from its redness which holds it in death" (sense), "draw it forth that it may live, not by flying away to the region above" (death), "but by forbearing to fly" (returning to body). "If thou shalt deliver it out of its prison" (body) "thou shalt afterwards govern it according to reason, and it will become a companion to thee".

PERSISTENCE OF INDIVIDUALITY

While the philosophic position already defined shows that consciousness is the only Reality in man and the Universe, that it is the permanent element and cause of manifestation, it cannot solve the question of the persistence of individuality after death. The only consciousness it can cognise is self-consciousness, and cognition it maintains is inseparable from particulars. Hence, the Universal not being able to cognise as Universal, particularises itself, in order to make cognition possible.

But this philosophy has to leap from the ground of Being, Universal Consciousness, to its manifestation, self-consciousness, and the converse of this position is that when any particular individuated expression of the Universal is withdrawn from manifestation, by death, it must immediately merge again into the Universal, and individuality cease at death.

Theosophy, on the other hand, teaches that there are seven aspects, or [Page 13] states, of the one consciousness, instead of the two above referred to. Each of these is related to a cosmic state or plane, in which it functions.

As self-consciousness has its physical organism, so likewise each of these aspects, or states of consciousness, have their more or less ethereal bodies, of which the atoms interpenetrate those of the

next grosser form, and through these respective bodies each aspect of consciousness is related to the respective cosmic states or planes of the Universe. Death may thus be said to be but the shedding of the outer atoms, or withdrawing of consciousness to an inner plane, to which it finds itself related through an inner, ethereal form, that body indeed which held together the physical atoms during life.

Further there is, says Theosophy, what is equivalent to a second death, in which consciousness withdraws from, or within, the astral state, through which it had previously emerged into physical life. Only when liberated from this astral form, whether during life or after death, can it cognise the ground of Being, the Ultimate Reality.

Theosophy thus presents a chain of interlinked intermediary states, connecting its manifestation of self-consciousness with the ground of Being, and explains the *modus operandi* by which individuality may and does persist after death.

These aspects of consciousness may, as already stated, be awakened into activity during life, and by transcending the astral-sense prison, consciousness may commune in identic-union with its basic-source, may cognise states that otherwise would only be known after the liberation of death, and thus realise during life that we are not dependent on our bodies for conscious existence.

Similarly Alchemy teaches that if man vitalizes the Archetypal Image within his soul during physical life, his consciousness is drawn into contact with its ground of Being, and is then informed from within by revelation or subjective union, oneness of spirit and Being, instead of being instructed from without.

Consciousness then functions in the state to which it is thereby related, whence it was impelled into manifestation, and to which it will return when liberated from the body at death.

Thus man may cognise, while yet connected with the body, the states to which his consciousness will return when connection with the body is severed. All dread of death must then cease, when it is realized to be but an indrawing of the field of action, to a state which may actually be cognised during life.

Further, when the portal of death has thus been penetrated during life, man's consciousness may, when being finally severed from his body, not to return again to it, pass through that portal consciously and with power of [Page 14] self-direction; taking with it the memories of its acquired experiences on earth.

Such consciousness then becomes free to act on any of the inter-related planes which have been awakened into activity within, including even, under certain conditions, this external one.

The theosophical seven aspects of consciousness may be viewed as a ray, connecting the ground of Being with its physical manifestation, or as a seven-platformed ladder, on any of which platforms consciousness may concentrate (or focus) itself, from that of mere physical sensation, feeling, emotion, intellectual self-assertion, to communion with the ground of Being. In other words, the perceptive point is

mutable, and may be focused in the several aspects of individual consciousness, which while distinguishable are not separable.

The "Kabbala" attributes four aspects to consciousness, as also does Alchemy and the Hermeticism of ancient Egypt. But it is easy for the student to reconcile and identify these four, with the theosophic seven.

THE REAL AND IMPERMANENT ASPECTS OF EXPERIENCE

While Occultism would agree with Transcendentalism that the Universe is a Universe of experience, it does not admit that all the experience of a human person is real, in relation to the individual consciousness. Occultism asserts that man is much more, complex than transcendentalism admits, and relates much of his experience to the impermanent element in man. As such elements are, however, present in the Universal Consciousness, they and their experiences are real as related to the Universal; yet they are impermanent, hence unreal, in their relation to the individual. Experience is permanent or real in relation to individuality, in proportion as it is related by man to the ground of Being. Experience is unreal in relation to individuality, in proportion as it is related to the impermanent element in man, that is, to the physical organism which dissolves and is shed at death, and the astral personality which also dissolves at the second death already referred to. Such experiences are real and permanent in their relation to the elements (as Universal Consciousness) which are used to build up the physical and the astral organisms, while they are impermanent in their relation to the individual who used them.

All experience is real to the consciousness which relates all experience to the Ultimate Reality; which is able to transcend the astral personality and commune with the ground of Being; which is able to focus itself on any of its seven aspects or states; which passes through the portal of death with self-directing power.[Page 15]

Occultism teaches that the elements, or atoms, which are built into the astral and physical forms, and associate in co-operation to form the human personality, are lives, and have a relative degree of consciousness of their own. This is polarised during life into an astral focus, in which is centred the feelings, passions, emotions, the resultant of the various elements, each seeking satisfaction and fulfilment, and impelling the man who lends himself to their cravings in ever-varying directions. It is the consciousness of these lower elements, seeking satisfaction through man and impelling their cravings into his perception, by means of their relation with this through his organism, of which they form the outer sheath, which constitutes the war between his higher and lower self, the conflict between passions, desires, self-seeking, and the inner voice of his own divine principle. The alternative is ever presented as to whether man shall give way to the temptation thus thrust upon him by the cravings of these lower elements, and lend himself to indulgence in sense, or control these elements (lives) into subordination and preserve the body as a mechanism for the ultimatum of the Divine inner will.

Hence does Boehme say: — "The outer will has to die daily"; that it must be "tinctured by the radiation of the Divine Will from within. The personal or outer will (cravings of astral elemental lives) is our enemy. Let it not take the soul captive. Strive against every lust. Do not the pleasure of the flesh. Our capacity depends on our drawing on the central will within us. With its assistance we can do all things".

At death the magnetic polarity which focused the consciousness of the atoms into a personality is withdrawn. The organism dissolves, the elements fall asunder, and all physical and passional associations are disaggregated, among the participating elements.

In focusing consciousness in the life of the senses, in the self-hood, and making it the seat of the will, man obscures the vibration from the central radiant point of Divine Light within, the basis of Being, and revolts against the influx of the higher will, which, leaving us free, consents to its temporary effacement. In thus obscuring the radiation of the Divine Will from within, man entails suffering of mind and body upon himself, and practically establishes the hells within himself.

Consciousness, then, swings hither and thither, swayed by sensations, emotions of the personality, which domineers in physical or intellectual self-assertion and conceit, inebriated with the intoxication of self-expression. In proportion as personal self-expression is sought, whether in the satisfying of physical desires, or in intellectual ambition, in proportion as the self-hood is asserted in personal supremacy, in pursuit of self-interest, or selfish gratification, does man cut himself off from the Real, from the ground of Being, and live in the impermanent, in the illusive and dissolving personality. [Page 16]

Hermeticism teaches similarly that by ever giving preference to the inner life of the Spirit, man accentuates the force which originally polarised his rudimentary Soul out of homogeneous undeterminate spirit, and his soul then continues to polarise towards the Supreme. By dwelling in thought in the centre of Being, that is, by ever remembering that the Reality of his Being is the presence of the Universal within it, by contemplating the Unity and Identity of the particularised being with the Universal, by presenting our life as an offering to that inner Reality; by endeavouring to bring that central principle into our thoughts by ever relating these to *It*; by thus subordinating the will of the personality to the inner guidance, ultimately the inner Light will radiate through man's mind, from the centre to the circumference, the central point of perception will become the focus of all convergent radii; then an inner voice will speak within (the theosophical "*Voice of the Silence*") and man will commune with his divine source.

Thus experience is real to us according to occultism, in proportion as we intentionally relate our thoughts to the ground of Being which wells up within us, in proportion as we make the self-hood transparent, and focusing our consciousness towards the inner Light, the radiant central spark of Divine fire within; rising towards that central ray, seek to unify ourselves with the source of its light, aware that we are but prisms for the reflection of the God within.

By conquering the elemental-lives which constitute his external personality, by surrendering his exterior will with all its exclusively material and selfish desires and preferences, by steadfastly listening to and following the guidance of the God within and seeking to ultimate its Divine light, man's body constitutes itself in harmony with the interior will, the Divine law, and every element in the body or lower nature comes under the control of that mode of Being. The body becomes sensitive and responsive to the dictates of the inner spirit, at one with and reflects forth the central will. Man's body then becomes the temple of the living God, in which the God within and the God without may consciously commingle and the Supreme may speak through man.

By obtaining control over the elements in himself, man has power over his body, as the Supreme has

over the Universe. Man, states occultism, is a synthesis of the Universe, and symbolises within himself all states of Being, and may ultimately relate himself consciously to all. Being a synthesis of elements, vegetable principle, animal principle, as well as the Universal Reason, by knowing himself he shall thus know all things and directly; he may then obtain control over the same elements, or principles in nature, outside of his body. [Page 17]

It is evident that inasmuch as consciousness is *one*, identical and universal, that its individualisations remain the Universal in their ground of Being, and further, as will is but the dynamic aspect of consciousness, so therefore the will expressing itself in the individual self-consciousness and the will expressing itself in the elements, or elemental lives, used as its organism by the self-consciousness, are still this *one* will of the Universe, or Universal Will.

So the relation between the elements of the organism and the will of the directing individual self-consciousness of the organism, must in reality be one of harmony. The conflict or contest between these two wills is a fallacy, existing in appearance only. Though it has several aspects there is only one Will, and the Universe must be one of order and harmony, or unity would dissolve into chaos. The Universal determines and enacts the process of spiritual evolution by its contact with matter through man. Matter, it must be remembered, is spirit densified, and the result of the contact of the spark of Divine fire within man with the denser spirit of his organism, is that matter is refined and upraised, or "distilled" into a higher state.

Thus it may be said that the Universal ever impels itself into states of density, and thence refines itself again through man, for the purpose of self-realization, of experience.

Thus man, all unconsciously to himself, co-operates with Deity. He is the "miracle of the Universe", the instrument by which Deity manifests, by which Deity evolves from the abstract to the concrete, from abstract Being into manifested existence, cognition and experience. Thus the *one* Supreme, the Infinite spirit of Love, becomes "man in states of progression", Spirits, Angels, Archangels, Planetary-Gods.

Therefore let no man judge another for his apparent state of obscurity. It may be that the ascending rebound may be proportionate to the depth of the descent of the spirit, into states of density in this life.

Occultism teaches that the individualised consciousness, or spark of Divine Light, re-ascends after life in the physical organism, through the successive states or planes, which it passed through in its descent, till it reaches the state of identic-union with the ground of Being, whence it originally descended, but carrying with it a form related to that which it obtained by ultimatum in matter, and thus persisting in its individualisation. It is stated that this spark of light takes on a vehicle in each of the states of Being, through which it passes in its descent; in the same way as it builds up a physical body from the minute ovum, in this most external existence. These vehicles are co-existent, it is affirmed, within the physical body. But the Divine-original is obscured, as also the recollection of the intervening states, by the superposing of these vehicles. Unless these separating barriers are broken through, that is to say, unless these interior states of [Page 18] Consciousness are awakened into activity during life in the organism and constituted into a continuous interlinked chain, connecting the outer expression of self-consciousness with its Ground-of-Being, then the memories of earth-life are left behind, as

consciousness re-ascends, or recedes within, to the inner state whence it issued, in the process of "becoming".

SUMMARY

While these divergences between the philosophical position defined, with that of occultism, are important, there remains nevertheless a considerable basis of unity between the two schools. To both schools consciousness is the sole Reality in the Universe; the Ultimate Reality of Being. To both, the only Reality in the phenomenal world, is its presence in consciousness. To both, a sensible world, independent of sense perception in consciousness, is a baseless assumption. To both, consciousness is the permanent element, and phenomena temporary and impermanent. To both, time, space, individuation, are modes, and the phenomenal world is the plane of manifestation, self-determined by consciousness, for experience and self-realization. To both, therefore, the Universe is a Universe of experience. To both, man is an individualisation of Universal Consciousness, which to both, is the equivalent to what in the popular conception is termed "God". Man may thus be defined by both schools as "God in states of progression". Both relate their ethics to their first principle and formulate their conduct, in accord with what they know of the Universe.

It is thus evident that there is a considerable basis of identity, between occultism and transcendental philosophy. The bond is very much closer than it ever can be with either the Churches on one hand, who exalt the unbalanced, jealous Jehovah of the Hebrews into the Supreme, and assert the self-destructive proposition of an infinite God limited to one personality; or with evolutionists on the other hand, who deify matter into their first principle, from which thought is made to evolve as an inherent potentiality, thus abolishing God from out of man and the Universe.