

THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 5A No. 1-2 Boulder, Colorado January-February, 1990

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Vol. 5 No. 1

Boulder, Colorado

January, 1990

JANUARY MEETINGS

WHEN: Sunday January 14th at 9:30 A.M., brunch; bring food to share.

WHERE: Barbara Ginsberg's home in southeast Denver. For directions, call 696-0794 evenings.

TOPIC: Cheryl Thompson, PhD, will discuss transcendental meditation; she has studied and taught meditative techniques for over twenty years and will be happy to answer your questions.

WHEN: Monday January 22nd at 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305.
Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on 13th. Call 494-5482 for details.

TOPIC: The discussion will continue, based on John Algeo's study guide: **GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE SECRET DOCTRINE.**

WHEN: Saturday January 27th, at 1:00 P.M.

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in the Wyer Auditorium. Call 494- 5482 for details.

TOPIC: Bing Escudero will present a free public talk at 1:00 P.M. on "Transformation and Transcendence." When external challenges are met from our spiritual center, we learn to transcend our problems. Our struggles become our strengths.

Following the public lecture, members are invited to join us in taking Bing to dinner at 5:00 P.M. We will have a members' meeting at 7:00 P.M. at the home of Bob and Tessa Goldhamer where Bing will talk on "Self to Non-Self: Transformation." Our inner conflicts arise when the many "selves" within us clamor for attention, each claiming to be the true "self." We will examine paths and pathless approaches to resolution of these conflicts. Transformative states of consciousness await our discovery. There is beauty and understanding that makes life a living spiritual celebration. Call 320-0838 for directions.

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

A SECOND PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA -- INSTALLMENT II

After spending a few days at Adyar getting used to India, we planned to take a short trip south to Pondichery, a former French colony on the southeast coast to visit Auroville where we hope to spend several days. From my 1984 visit I had these impressions:

I went on a tour bus from Adyar to Pondichery, which is about 100 miles south of Madras on the coast. Pondichery is an old French settlement and now is an Indian state, politically separate from Tamil Nadu which contains Madras. The main attraction there is the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the Auroville new age community.

We arrived at 11:30 am and had a really excellent lunch at the Aurobindo Ashram in the city and afterward I walked about but soon got bored with sightseeing. I prevailed on the tour leader to take us to the Auroville community, some 10 km north of the city and this made the whole trip worthwhile for me.

A year or so ago, I read an article about the progress of the new age sister communities of Findhorn (Scotland), Arcosanti (in Arizona) and Auroville. The portion of the article about Auroville was quite disheartening because the community was at that time locked in a battle with the Aurobindo foundation; the community wanting to be self governing according to the principles of its founder, the "Mother" (Aurobindo's chief disciple), and the foundation trying to control the community through the withholding of financial support. The battle was taken into the courts and the community won. Now they are self governing as well as independent of financial support.

The principle point of interest at Auroville is the Matri Mandir, which is the temple of the "Mother" and is located at the center of the community. It was conceived by the Mother in a vision and is a stupendous undertaking. Its magnitude and sheer grandeur can

well be compared with the Egyptian Pyramids. Work on it proceeds slowly, with no fixed timetable for completion, but the progress is well along. I was inspired to contribute Rs 50 to the building fund and am glad to feel that I have contributed to the effort.

The aims, work and focus of community energy are quite similar to those of Findhorn. The Auroville lands cover 20 square km and it is truly enormous. They, like Findhorn, started with a virtual desert; a waste land of sand and red clay, devoid of trees and vegetation. In the years since the founding in 1967, they have been working hard on land reclamation and have actually planted about a million forest trees, hedge trees, fruit, nut and fuel wood trees. What I saw was a beautiful scene with forests of young growing trees, tall waving grass and fields under cultivation. The spiritual energy and the loving presence of the nature spirits (Devas) was powerful and unmistakable to anyone with even the beginnings of sensitivity on the higher planes.

Over the grounds are many small communities of people of many and varied nationalities, each working on some phase contributing to community life. Some are engaged in crafts: pottery, weaving, clothing; some in community schools and education; some in theatre, music and dance; some in community food growing and processing; some in environmental work, reforestation and erosion control, etc.

From an Auroville related group in Boulder, I obtained the 1988 Auroville yearbook in which the reforestation of the ravaged land they inherited is movingly described:

The Auroville plateau in 1968 was a prime example of a desolate, mis-used, and virtually barren piece of land. The first Aurovilians discovered some thorn shrubs, a few scattered trees, and a badly eroded and scarred plateau stretching as far as the eye could see -- a bleak beginning to say the least.

Soon it was obvious that a few shade trees to block the burning sun would be insufficient: what was really needed was to heal the ravaged landscape. How could Auroville, the city of the future, manifest on a dead piece of earth?

And so, Auroville greenwork was born. In the beginning, water had to be carried 3 km to the first settlement. Some of the original seedlings, and people, survived the hot sun and sent roots down into the red soil. Greenwork became a major endeavor of young Auroville. The enthusiasm and zeal of this hardy group of souls was contagious, and many who came afterwards picked up the bug. (Today in Auroville there are 30 settle-

ments involved in forest work.) Tree planting, soil and water conservation, and organic agriculture became a part of life. What was inspiring was that despite the difficulties and near impossibilities, things were living and growing.

The necessity and spirit behind the work carried Aurovilians through many mistakes. In those early years, for example, as a first attempt at water conservation, a large masonry dam was built in one of the canyons. Much money was spent, and soon a completed dam stood there proudly. The first rain washed it totally out! We learned from that about the force of moving water. Afterwards we concentrated most of our work above and around the canyons, retaining rainwater on the land and preventing or slowing the movement of water into the canyons. Contour bunding was the backbone of this approach, with the result that much of the watershed area in Auroville today is networked with countless kilometers of embanked red earth, or bunds.

The avid will to manifest an alive and green skin for the Auroville plateau led us into many conflicts with hungry goats, grazing cows, belligerent shepherds, women foraging for food and fodder, and of course, the local villagers' cutties. A "cuttie" is a large, usually heavy knife used for cutting anything -- including young and old trees. Many a devoted forester can recount tales of chasing after those ever-elusive chopping sounds in the distance.

As the momentum behind the earth-related work accelerated, so also did interest in our work from people and institutions outside Auroville. Financial assistance began to materialize, and although the money available never seemed enough, it was as if the work were destined to happen. Greenwork funding came not only out of our own pockets, but from Germany, Holland, England, Belgium, Switzerland, France, the U.S.A., and other countries as well.

One of the most important grants for Auroville was given by the Government of India's Department of the Environment. This was a five year program started in 1982 that provided funds for tree planting and soil and water conservation. Our success with this grant helped pave the way for further relationships with governmental programs, both on the central and local levels.

There came a point when it became clear that in order to enhance the work already begun on Auroville soil it would be necessary to help our neighbors green their own fields. In the early years we had tried the missionary approach and failed miserably. However, after the local people had watched our quiet and dedicated work for some years, they saw that what they had considered foolish efforts were having results they had not expected at all. Auroville lands were looking better and better, growing more healthy and vital each year. Trees that to the villagers appeared useless and unfamiliar seemed less strange. While we had learned to be silent and not push our ways, the villagers were becoming receptive through observation. They looked at their fields and ours and began to wonder if they could enrich their traditional methods with some Aurovilian ideas.

At this point some of them allowed us to bund their fields. We explained that their soil and their water stayed on their fields. Since Auroville lands were often below theirs on the watershed, and surface runoff from their fields would then not damage ours, everyone was happy in the end. We found that it was in the interest of everyone to work together. Slowly, as our neighbors learned the value of bunding, windbreaks, and firewood plantations of nitrogen-fixing trees, their attitudes began to change.

Presently the Auroville Forest Group organizes and assists the villagers as much as it can, although requests far outnumber our labor and financial resources. Lately the government has made available, through banks and social forestry schemes, new possibilities for small landholders to improve their holdings. We have offered to guide our village friends into these programs.

Coupled with the practical assistance offered by the Auroville Forest Group is education, another aspect of reaching out to our neighbors and beyond. Environmental awareness is necessary to bring to light the problems facing humanity. This is especially important for us in India. In the Auroville area, old folks can still remember large tracts of trees. A few generations before them, old folks spoke of forests. Today's young adults talk of buildings and industrial estates. Farmlands that were once forested are still being "developed" as urban sprawl engulfs the land it touches. Other fertile areas have de-evolved into wastelands, eroded and barren. Yet for most of India's rapidly multiplying population, this is the accepted reality of now -- the status quo, their "karma." People born in a desert know the earth only as a desert.

Auroville's role in this story is, practically speaking, relatively small but symbolically significant. Auroville is a living demonstration site, a tangible example of what can be done. Having become somewhat conscious of the ecological situation, we try in our education programs to inform people of what is happening around them, what are the implications of present trends, and possible ways to meet the challenges. Environmental classes have been initiated in several local schools. Seminars and workshops are organized with increasing regularity, and it has become evident that environmental education is in itself a necessary part of forestry. Ideas sown in people's minds today will germinate into efforts to propagate and protect the forests of tomorrow.

Varanasi and T.S. Indian Section Headquarters

Returned by bus to Satna and from there took the train to Varanasi, arriving at 4 am. By the time I got the bike checked out, it was 5:30 and I had an omelette for breakfast at an open air cafe across from the station. Paid a rickshaw wallah Rs 15 to lead me to the Theosophical Society. I later found out that the customary and reasonable price for a rickshaw is Rs 3.

I met Dr. Agrawal, the Indian Section Secretary, who provided me with a room in the Surya Ashram for the incredible price of Rs 5 a day.

I got thoroughly lost and utterly frustrated trying to find the main Post Office and after two hours of wandering about, I finally paid a rickshaw wallah Rs 10 to lead me there. Even though I made a sketch map of each intersection after leaving the P.O., I got lost again and couldn't find my way back to the TS. I prayed to Maharaji for help and finally went to the Diamond Hotel where an English speaking travel agent gave me precise directions and I was back home in 15 minutes.

The T.S. grounds here are as beautiful and peaceful relative to the city outside as is the Deodars T.S. headquarters in Pasadena. Tomorrow I will take some pictures here, visit the T.S. library and rest a little as I spent last night on the train from Satna. I think I rode 25 miles today between 9:45 am and 4:30 through crowds not unlike the Boulder mall on Halloween! There is no possible way to describe the experience. Varanasi is the first Indian city I have gotten totally lost in. It may have something to do with the fact that it claims to be one of the world's oldest cities -- some 4000 years!

Dec. 15. I went to Sarnath today to see the site and Buddhist ruins and temple

where the Buddha preached his first sermon. On my return, I found my way back to the Post Office, having a little more trouble because approaching by an unfamiliar route and got all tangled up in narrow twisting alleys.

Last night I stopped in and had a nice talk with Dr. Agrawal who is Secretary of the Indian Section. He is a Phd in applied chemistry and a beautiful person. I told him of my quest and of the purpose of my trip and that I wished to enter the service of the Masters of the Theosophical Society. We had a good discussion along these lines and he lent me 2 books by I.K. Taimni who had been a valued thinker with a scientific background (Oxford University) and worker for the Theosophical cause. The first book "Principles of Theosophical Work" seemed to point the way for me. In it, he very clearly points out how those who wish to serve may guide their efforts in order to best fulfill and carry out the work of the Masters on the material plane.

For example, he shows that while organizations such as the Red Cross, dedicated to relieving suffering caused by war do help to alleviate suffering, they fail to work to eliminate the root cause of the suffering. The work of those who would serve the Masters in their cause of guiding and advancing human evolution is to help to change the wrong habits of thought and perverted attitudes which are in reality the causes of war and hatred. Such workers then must learn to trace these evils back to their source and work to eliminate the causes.

Sunday, the night before I left Varanasi, they had a service of the Mystic Star which was one of the most moving and beautiful religious services I have ever attended. It was highly symbolic and a group of youths and young girls representing the disciplines of Science, Will, Love, Knowledge, Service, etc. (about 8 in all) paid respects in symbolic fashion to the World Teachers of the 4th and 5th Races Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Christ, Zoroaster and Mohammed (although I think that the latter was regarded more as a messenger than as a World Teacher). The thing that made it so moving and beautiful was that it honored in equal fashion all the founders of the major world religions. The narrow sectarianism on many religions has always been a source of great discomfort to me and here was open and loving recognition of the brotherhood of all of the family of mankind, not only world wide in our present time, but down through the ages long before the dawn of recorded history, encompassing civilizations only hinted and guessed at by the sciences of archaeology and history!

Such a presentation fills one with a sense of the majestic sweep and great purpose of the evolution of humankind on this planet down through the ages, utterly dwarfing the usual historical viewpoint. And yet the most inspiring and satisfying realization is that we, as spiritual entities, play our parts over and over again in this pageant.

Excerpts from the South India tour of January 1985

From Adyar to Kanchipuram by bike:

The umbrella works fine, but trying to find a dry place out of the wind to check the map is hard to do. The compass is an absolute essential when the sky is overcast and the roads have a way of gradually and subtly changing direction. Once this morning, I thought I was headed North but the compass said West! Eventually, after somewhere missing a turn or a jog and riding through a cemetery and hitting 2 or 3 dead end alleys, I finally found my route #5 to Kanchipuram.

There was an obscure little paragraph in my “India Travel Survival Kit” booklet that I missed reading under “climate; some regional variations”. The constant rain is the “Northeast Monsoon which brings rain to the SE India coast from mid October until the end of December”. All right already! It’s January now, so dry it up. Fenders would have been a great asset, although they probably have gotten smashed on the trains and buses. As it is, the bike is just about bomb proof.

Today as I was riding with a nice tail-wind, there was a nasty grinding noise in the rear bearings - undoubtedly some Adyar sand got blown in by the monsoon winds. At some point, I’ll try to repack the rear wheel.

I arrived here sweaty and dirty and the bike and bags were covered with mud and grit. So the shower in my Rs 18 hotel room is as much for the benefit of my bike as for me. First, I dragged my bike into the shower, removed the wheels and washed the frame, then scrubbed the wheels with my hair brush (should have brought a brush for the bike), then showered me, washed my shirt and then my toiletries kit which was growing mold in the 100% humidity at Adyar.

I didn’t take many pictures on the way because of the wet roads at first. Later, I shot a few. One interesting thing is how the people spread their grain out on the highway pavement to dry. I did get a picture of that.

I’ll bet you can’t pronounce my location. I can, only approximately; like Teer’-oo-vahn-na-mal-eye. It is my second city on my southern India itinerary.

I went to the bus station for the noon express bus for Tiruvannamalai and I just barely got aboard. The bus driver was very impatient and wouldn’t give me time to get the

bike on the roof. He was pulling away until I went and stood in front of the bus. Then a young Indian and I hauled the bike up the ladder with the panniers still attached, and I hurried aboard. The driver would do well at the Indy 500.

Prakash, my Nepalese room mate at Adyar recommended that I stay at the Ramanashram here which is a few km out of town. It is the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi. Ram Dass says he is a great Indian saint. The grounds are peaceful, well kept and beautiful.

When I took my bike off the bus, the right hand rubber grip was missing - it apparently was pulled off in the excitement at noon. The humidity had gotten into it and it had gotten loose but fortunately I got a splendid new set at a bike shop here for Rs 20. I decided to tackle the rear wheel with the time that was left of the day, so I gathered all my tools after settling into the ashram and returned to the bike shop. The Nashbar sprocket removers are barely adequate for the job and the attached chain collapsed. Fortunately I had enough spare chain links to replace it. I almost gave up trying to get the 11 tooth cog off but finally it yielded. The grease was black as tar and full of sand and grit. Picture me squatting in front of this small cycle shop, with 15 or 20 curious onlookers learning how an American bicycle is made. Fortunately a pan, kerosene and grease were available - but no brush, just rags. It all went back together ok, and the grinding is gone. Amazingly, the proprietor refused to take any money, in spite of my profuse gratitude.

“Tiru” is in a fairly arid foothill area, at the base of a 500 foot high mountain - a really beautiful setting. There are more beautiful temples here which I will visit tomorrow as it was too late after the bike work. Now I am really glad I came to see the south India temples. I’m sure there is much more to see that I’ll be missing - a reason to return I guess.

Tiruchchirappali, Tamil Nadu
January 6, ‘85

“Tirichi” for short. I left Tiru on the 1:00 pm bus without too much hassle. After a few experiences, you start to get wise to the bus station hustlers. The 1 o’clock bus was late and a young Indian told me all the seats would be taken on the bus, that it was loaded already with 90 passengers, but for 10 rupees he could get me a seat in front. He said he was an “agent”. O.K., I said to myself, let’s wait and see. When the bus arrived, there were about 10 passengers. Meanwhile, another Indian carried my bike to the roof and “demanded” 10 rupees. I said; “No, only 5”, as the bus was pulling out. So he wound up taking his 5 and jumping off. Meanwhile, my “agent” is trying to get me to sit in front to justify his 10 rupees, but I took a seat by the window halfway back that I liked just fine. He said; “You give me 10 rupees” and I say; “No way”. He says; “I’ll get angry!”, and I say;

“O.K., get angry.” As we reached the edge of town, the “agent” jumped off the bus.

On the way, a nice couple with 4 young children got on; three little girls and a boy. Three of the children sat next to me and they were delightful. The 10 year old girl spoke a little English that she is learning in school and in addition Hindi - plus her native Tamil. Before long, the wife was feeding me cake and shoestring potatoes. So it was a pleasant 5 1/2 hour journey. I shot several pictures out of the window at 1/1000 of a second. The scenery was beautiful.

We arrived just after dark and one of the passengers helped me find a hotel near the bus station for Rs 35, but I turned it down because they had no single rooms on the ground floor. At this point I thanked him and let him go on his way. Another young Indian knew a hotel with ground floor rooms. So, I put him on the crossbar of the bike and we rode to the hotel. It was nice at 19 rupees. He wants “baksheesh”; 10 rupees. I then say I want a vegetarian restaurant, so he finds a nice one. At this point, I think I know the game, so I give him the 10 rupees - too much probably - but he did help me a lot. When the bill came, it was 6 rupees - my chapatis were only 3, so I tell the waiter; “No, he’s paying for his out of the 10 rupees I gave him”. You begin to understand the game now?

Monday Jan. 7, 12:00 noon. I have just returned from seeing the SRIRANGAM temple. Last night during supper, I struck up a conversation with 3 young Indians at a table behind me, and one of them, Balan, offered to take me to the temple at 6:30 am. He arrived at my hotel at 6:30 on a borrowed bicycle and we rode to the temple together. From him I got an excellent guided tour. He wants to go to Madurai with me but I think I’ll decline. He tells me his father died of alcoholism a year ago and he is now working to save 300 rupees to enter the university school of mathematics and electrical engineering. I do feel inclined to give him 100 rupees toward his education because he strikes me as honest and earnest. But travelling, I think, is better alone.

Yesterday afternoon at 4 o’clock, I went to see the 2nd main attraction of Tiruchchippalli - Rockfort - (the other being the Srirangam temple which I mentioned in the previous letter.)

Rockfort is a temple built on a 273 foot high monolithic rock, overlooking the city in all directions. It is reached via a 473 step staircase, partly cut in a tunnel through the rock. Atop is a temple honoring Ganesha, the elephant headed Hindu god. It is restricted to Hindus inside, but a walkway around the outside gives excellent views of the city. Just below the temple is an expanse of gently sloping rock and grass looking north, east and south, overlooking the Cauvery River. The views are breathtaking and the feeling of spiritual energy combine to make it an ideal place to sit and meditate.

There is a camera charge of Rs 5 and an entrance fee of .50 and .10 for shoes, which must be left at the bottom entrance. Again, watch out for self appointed guides who will immediately attach themselves to you. One latched on to me and kept up an incessant chatter until I gave him 5 rupees just to be rid of him. A way around this nuisance would be to establish a fee you would be willing to pay beforehand, if you want a guide and I think 2 rupees would be enough. The natives jack up their prices, especially to American tourists. They could then bargain or take it or leave it. The same goes for luggage porters, rickshaws and hotel agents - although you are usually much better off getting the advice of a disinterested native who is travelling with you, or finding your own hotel.

When I was at Rockfort, I met a young Australian woman about 25, sitting on the steps near the top. She had a mandolin she was carrying and didn't know how to tune it. So I tuned it for her and showed her how - and we got into an interesting discussion about the moral and dharmic implications involved in giving to beggars and other types of Indians - specifically the 18 year old Indian who had guided me through the Srirangam temple. I found him very intelligent, ambitious, friendly and generally likeable. He called for me at my hotel at 6:30 am on a borrowed bicycle and rode with me to the temple.

While on the way, he told me how he was trying to save money in order to enter college to take mathematics and electrical engineering. He said his father had died last summer of alcoholism and he was also helping to support his mother. Now one can believe all this or not - I believed him to be sincere and decided to give him a contribution. If it was a hype, it was his karma, my intention was sincerely to help.

The Australian girl disagreed with me, saying that she believed that people such as he who was healthy and able bodied was able to help himself. She took the position that in giving to the destitute beggars, even a few paise would keep them from starving. I felt that perhaps I could help him materially and significantly to better himself, whereas in giving to the beggar you don't change his situation with the few paise you give him. I think there is a valid argument on both sides of the question. Basically, my position was that I felt that one can do more good in helping to eliminate the cause of the suffering than in mitigating its effects.

THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 5 No.2

Boulder, Colorado

February, 1990

FEBRUARY MEETINGS

WHEN: Sunday February 11th at 9:30 A.M.

WHERE: Dick Slusser's Kiva Co-op, 140 S. 33rd St. Boulder. 494-5482 for directions.

TOPIC: Brunch meeting — bring food to share. We will have a slide show of Dick and Marty's recent trip to India in which they will share their travel experiences: the Theosophical Convention at Adyar, their visit to Auroville and of the many new friends they made there. All are welcome.

WHEN: Monday February 26th at 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 313. [NOTE ROOM CHANGE] Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on 13th. Call 494-5482 for details.

TOPIC: In the January meeting, we covered "The Three Fundamental Propositions" of the Secret Doctrine — Part 7 of John Algeo's Study Guide GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE SECRET DOCTRINE. We shall continue with Part 8, The Recapitulation of Volume 1 of The Secret Doctrine.

On Hypnotism

While Marty Lyman and I were recently in India, we met two Theosophists of the United Lodge of Theosophists (U.L.T.) in Bangalore. Anand Kundaji, in addition to his U.L.T. affiliation, is connected with the Indian Institute of World Culture and Sophia Tenbroeck, also a U.L.T. associate, is administrator of a Montessori school. The four of us spent a most interesting afternoon in a discussion which ranged from channeling, to hypnotism, presentation of the Mahabhrata epic on Indian TV, and the Keely motor. A tape of our discussion is available for loan.

It had been my understanding that there is much difference of opinion in the popular mind as to whether hypnotism, as it is understood today, is a dangerous practice or not. Sophia said that; “according to H.P.B., the danger of hypnotism is that the subject is put into a cataleptic trance in which the connection between the person and his body is broken and in between is juxtaposed the suggestions, orders and will of the hypnotist.” A popular assumption is that no one can be hypnotized against their will and furthermore cannot be induced to commit acts under hypnosis which they would not consider in their normal consciousness. Whether or not a person can be hypnotized against their will depends upon whose is the stronger will, was Sophia’s viewpoint.

In an interesting and relevant letter [M.L. 28] to A.O. Hume, Mahatma K.H. warns Hume: ... “if Mad. B., (H. P. Blavatsky) a sickly woman, must be credited with such powers, are you quite sure that you yourself would not also be made to succumb to a trained will, ten times stronger than hers? I could come to you tomorrow, and installing myself in your house — as invited — get an entire domination over your whole mind and body in 24 hours, and you never aware of it for one moment. ... If the power of exoteric mesmerism alone were employed — a power acquired with equal ease by the bad as by the good man — even then you could hardly escape the snares laid out for you, were the man you invited but a good mesmerizer, for you are a remarkably easy subject — from the physical standpoint.”

The following article by William Q. Judge considers some of the questions raised in our discussion.

What is the hypnotic force or influence? What really happens when a hypnotic experiment is performed? What is proved by it? What force is exerted that, after making a man sleep, rouses him to a false wakefulness in which he obeys a suggestion, seems to lose his identity, becomes apparently another person, speaks a language he knows nothing of, sees imagined pictures as real ones? How is it that in this state his physical body follows the operator's suggestion and becomes blistered by a piece of paper which possesses no blistering power, sneezes when there is no actual titillation of the olfactory nerves, shivers over a hot stove, and perspires if it be suggested that a block of ice is a mass of fire?

All this and very much more has been done in hypnotic experiments, just as it was done many years ago by mesmerizers, electro-biologists, and wandering fascinators of all sorts. Then it was outside the pale of science, but now since physicians re-named a part of it "hypnotism," it is settled to stay among the branches of psychology theoretical and applied. The new schools, of course, went further than the first did or could. They added a species of witchcraft to it by their claim to be able to externalize and localize the nerve-sensitiveness and hence mental impressionability of the subject; to put it in his photograph or within a glass of water, so that if the former be scratched or the latter touched, the patient at once jumped or screamed. This is the old way of making a wax image of your form and sticking pins in it, whereupon you pined and died; men and women were burned for this once. This, while interesting and important if true, possesses the interest of a nightmare, as it suggests how in the near future one's picture may be for sale to be blistered and stabbed by an enemy, provided the extraneous localization of sensibility is first provided for. But the other experiments touch upon the great questions of identity, of consciousness, of soul, and of personality. They raise an issue as to whether the world be physical and mechanical, as Descartes thought, or whether it is fleeting and a form of consciousness existing because of thought and dominated by thought altogether, as Theosophists modern and ancient always held.

Professor [William] James of Harvard has published his conclusion that experiments in hypnotism convince him, as they have convinced many, of the existence of the hidden self in man, while the French schools dispute whether it is all due to one personality mimicking many, or many personalities wrapped up in one person and showing one phase after another. Facts are recorded and wonderful things done, but no reasonable and final explanation has been made by the modern schools. Except here and there, they, being ignorant of man's hidden real nature and powers, or denying the existence of such, see no cause for alarm in all these experiments and no danger to either society or the individual. As the true evolution of man's inner

powers at the same rate and time concurrently with all other racial and planetary evolution is not admitted by these schools, they cannot perceive in the future any possibly devilish use of hypnotic powers. The Theosophist, however, suggests an explanation for the phenomena, points to similar occurrences through history, and intimates a danger to come if the thinking world does not realize our true nature as a being made of thought and consciousness, built in and on these, and destructible by them also so far as his personality is concerned. The danger is not in knowing these things and processes, but in the lack of morality and ethics in the use of them both now and in the future.

One theory for use in explaining and prosecuting hypnotic research is about as follows. Man is a soul who lives on thoughts and perceives only thoughts. Every object or subject comes to him as a thought, no matter what the channel or instrument, whether organ of sense or mental center, by which it comes before him. These thoughts may be words, ideas, or pictures. The soul-man has to have an intermediary or connecting link with Nature through and by which he may cognize and experience. This link is an ethereal double or counterpart of his physical body, dwelling in the latter; and the physical body is Nature so far as the soul-man is concerned. In this ethereal double (called the astral body) are the sense-organs and centers of perception, the physical outer organs being only the external channels or means for concentrating the physical vibrations so as to transmit them to the astral organs and centers where the soul perceives them as ideas or thoughts. This inner ethereal man is made of the ether which science is now admitting as a necessary part of Nature, but while it is etheric it is none the less substantial.

Speaking physically, all outer stimulus from nature is from without to within. But in the same way stimuli may be sent from the within to the without, and in the latter mode is it that our thoughts and desires propel us to act. Stimuli are sent from the astral man within to the periphery, the physical body, and may dominate the body so as to alter it or bring on a lesion, partial or total. Cases of the hair turning grey in a night are thus possible. And in this way a suggestion of a blister may make a physical swelling, secretion, inflammation and sore on a subject who has submitted himself to the influence of the hypnotizer. The picture or ideas of a blister is impressed on the astral body, and that controls all the physical nerves, sensations, currents, and secretions. It is done through the sympathetic nervous plexus and ganglia. It was thus that ecstatic fanatical women and men by brooding on the pictured idea of the wounds of Jesus produced on their own bodies, by internal impression and stimulus projected to the surface, all the marks of crown of thorns and wounded side. It was self-hypnotization, possible only in fanatical hysterical ecstasy. The

constant brooding imprinted the picture deeply on the astral body; then the physical molecules, ever changing, became impressed from within and the stigmata were the result. In hypnotizing done by another the only difference is one of time, as in the latter instances the operator has simply to make the image and impress it on the subject after the hypnotic process has been submitted to, whereas in self-hypnotization a long-continued ecstasy is necessary to make the impression complete.

When the hypnotic process — or subjugation, as I call it — is submitted to, a disjunction is made between the soul-man and the astral body, which then is for the time deprived of will, and is the sport of any suggestion coming in unopposed, and those may and do sometimes arise outside of the mind and intention of the operator. From this arises the sensitiveness to suggestion. The idea, or thought, or picture of an act is impressed by suggesting it on the astral body, and then the patient is waked. At the appointed time given by the suggestor a secondary sleep or hypnotic state arises automatically, and then, the disjunction between the soul and astral body coming about of itself, the suggested act is performed unless — as happens rarely — the soul-man resists sufficiently to prevent it. Hence we point to an element of danger in the fact at the suggested moment the hypnotic state comes on secondarily by association. I do not know that hypnotizers have perceived this. It indicates that although the subject be dehypnotized the influence of the operator once thrown on the subject will remain until the day of the operator's death.

But how is it that the subject can see on a blank card the picture of an object which you have merely willed to be on it? This is because every thought of any one makes a picture; and a thought of a definite image makes a definite form in the astral light in which the astral body exists and functions interpenetrating also every part of the physical body. Having thus imaged the picture on the card, it remains in the astral light or sphere surrounding the card, and is there objective to the astral sense of the hypnotized subject.

Body, soul, and astral man properly in relation give us a sane man; hypnotized, the relation is broken and we have a person who is not for the time wholly sane. Acute maniacs are those in whom the disjunction between the astral man and soul is complete. Where the hypnotized one remains for months in that state, the astral man has become the slave of the body and its recollections, but as the soul is not concerned no real memory is present and no recollection of the period is retained.

The varied personalities assumed by some subjects brings up the doctrine of a former life on earth for all men. The division between soul and astral man releases the latter from some of the limitations of brain memory so that the inner memory

may act, and we then have a case of a person reenacting some part of his former life or lives. But a second possibility also exists, — that by this process another and different entity may enter the body and brain and masquerade as the real person. Such entities do exist and are the astral shells of men and women out of the body. If they enter, the person becomes insane; and many a maniac is simply a body inhabited by an entity that does not belong to it.

The process of hypnotizing is as yet unknown in respect to what does happen to the molecules. We claim that those molecules are pressed from periphery to center instead of being expanded from the inside to the surface. This contraction is one of the symptoms of death, and therefore hypnotizing is a long step toward physical and moral death. The view expressed by Dr. Charcot that a subject is liable to fall under the influence at the hands of anyone should be admitted, as also that in the wake of the hypnotizer will be found a host of hysterics, and that it all should be regulated by law is unquestionable. I go still further and say that many persons are already in a half-hypnotized state, easily influenced by the unprincipled or the immoral; that the power to hypnotize and to be sensitive to it are both progressive states of our racial evolution; that it can and will be used for selfish, wicked, and degrading purposes unless the race, and especially the Occidental portion of it, understands and practices true ethics based on the brotherhood of man. Ethics of the purest are found in the words of Jesus, but are universally negated by the Church, State, and individual. The Theosophical doctrines of man and nature give a true and necessary basis and enforcement to ethics, devoid of favoritism or illogical schemes of eternal damnation. And only through those doctrines can the dangers of hypnotism be averted, since legislation, while affixing penalties, will not alter or curtail private acts of selfishness or greed. William Q. Judge. [*Echoes of the Orient* Vol. I, pp. 392-96.]

The following Questions and Answers given by H.P.B. throw light on the distinction between Mesmerism and Hypnotism.

Q. What is Hypnotism: how does it differ from Animal Magnetism (or Mesmerism)?

Ans. Hypnotism is the new scientific name for the old ignorant “superstition” variously called “fascination” and “enchantment.” It is an antiquated lie transformed into a modern truth. The fact is there, but the scientific explanation of it is still wanting. By some it is believed that Hypnotism is the result of an irritation

artificially produced on the periphery of the nerves; that this irritation reacting upon, passes into the cells of the brain substance, causing by exhaustion a condition which is but another mode of sleep ... ; by others that it is simply a self-induced stupor, produced chiefly by imagination. It differs from animal magnetism where the hypnotic condition is produced by the Braid method, which is a purely mechanical one, i.e., the fixing of the eyes on some bright spot, a metal, or a crystal. It becomes “animal magnetism” (or mesmerism), when it is achieved by “mesmeric” passes on the patient, and for these reasons. When the first method is used, no electro-psychic, or even electro-physical currents are at work, but simply the mechanical, molecular vibrations of the metal or crystal gazed at by the subject. It is the eye — the most occult organ of all, on the superficies of our body — which, by serving as a medium between that bit of metal or crystal and the brain, attunes the molecular vibrations of the nervous centres of the latter into unison (i.e., equality in the number of their respective oscillations) with the vibrations of the bright object held. And, it is this unison which produces the hypnotic state. But in the second case, the right name for hypnotism would certainly be “animal magnetism” or that so much derided term “mesmerism.” For, in the hypnotization by preliminary passes, it is the human will — whether conscious or otherwise — of the operator himself, that acts upon the nervous system of the patient. And it is again through the vibrations — only atomic, not molecular — produced by that act of energy called Will in the ether of space (therefore, on quite a different plane) that the super-hypnotic state (i.e., “suggestion,” etc.) is induced. For those which we call “will-vibrations” and their aura, are absolutely distinct from the vibrations produced by the simply mechanical molecular motion, the two acting on two separate degrees of the cosmo-terrestrial planes. Here, of course, a clear realization of that which is meant by will in Occult Sciences, is necessary.

Q. In both (hypnotism and animal magnetism) there is an act of will in the operator, a transit of something from him to his patient. What is the ‘something’ transmitted in both cases?

Ans. That which is transmitted has no name in European languages, and if we simply describe it as will, it loses all its meaning. The old and very much tabooed words, “enchantment,” “fascination,” “glamour” and “spell,” and especially the verb “to bewitch,” expressed far more suggestively the real action that took place and during the process of such a transmission, than the modern and meaningless terms, “psychologize” and “biologize.” Occultism calls the force transmitted, the “auric

fluid,” to distinguish it from the “auric light”; the “fluid” being a correlation of atoms on a higher plane, and descent to this lower one in the shape of impalpable and invisible plastic Substances, generated and directed by the potential Will; the “auric light,” or that which Reichenbach calls Od, a light that surrounds every animate and inanimate object in nature, is, on the other hand, but the astral reflection emanating from objects; its particular color and colors, the combinations and varieties of the latter, denoting the state of the gunas, or qualities and characteristics of each special object and subject — the human being’s aura being the strongest of all.

Q. What is the rationale of “Vampirism”?

Ans. If by this word is meant the involuntary transmission of a portion of one’s vitality, or life-essence, by a kind of occult osmosis from one person to another — the latter being endowed, or afflicted rather, with such vampirizing faculty, then, the act can become comprehensible only when we study well the nature and essence of the semi-substantial “auric fluid” spoken of just now. Like every other occult form in Nature, this end- and exosmotic process may be made beneficent or maleficent, either unconsciously or at will. When a healthy operator mesmerizes a patient with a determined desire to relieve or cure him, the exhaustion felt by the former is proportionate to the relief given: a process of endosmosis has taken place, the healer having parted with a portion of his vital aura to benefit the sick man. Vampirism, on the other hand, is a blind and mechanical process, generally produced without the knowledge or either the absorber, or the vampirized party. It is conscious or unconscious black magic, as the case may be. For in the case of trained adepts and sorcerers, the process is produced consciously and with the guidance of the Will. In both cases the agent of transmission is a magnetic and attractive faculty, terrestrial and psychological in its results, yet generated and produced on the four-dimensional plane — the realm of atoms.

Q. Under what circumstances is hypnotism “black magic”?

Ans. ... Whenever the motive which actuates the operator is selfish, or detrimental to any living being or beings, all such acts are classed by us as black magic. The healthy vital fluid imparted by the physician who mesmerizes his patient, can and does cure; but too much of it will kill.

Q. Is there any difference between hypnosis produced by mechanical means,

such as revolving mirrors, and that produced by the direct gaze of the operator (fascination)?

Ans. This difference is, we believe, already pointed out in the answer to Question 1. The gaze of the operator is more potent, hence more dangerous, than the simple mechanical passes of the Hypnotizer, who, in nine cases out of ten, does not know how, and therefore cannot will. The students of Esoteric Science must be aware by the very laws of the occult correspondences that the former action is performed on the first plane of matter (the lowest), while the latter, which necessitated a well-concentrated will, has to be enacted, if the operator is a profane novice, on the fourth, and if he is anything of an occultist on the fifth.

Q. Why should a bit of crystal or a bright button, throw one person into the hypnotic state and affect in no way another person?

Ans. Science has offered several varied hypotheses upon the subject, but has not, so far, accepted any one of these as definite. This is because all such speculations revolve in the vicious circle of materio-physical phenomena with their blind forces and mechanical theories. The “auric fluid” is not recognized by the men of Science, and therefore, they reject it. But have they not believed for years in the efficacy of metallotherapy, the influence of these metals being due to the action of their electric fluids or currents on the nervous system? And this simply because an analogy was found to exist between the activity of this system and electricity. The theory failed, because it clashed with the most careful observation and experiments. First of all, it was contradicted by a fundamental fact exhibited in the said metallotherapy, whose characteristic peculiarity showed (a) that by no means every metal acted on every nervous disease, one patient being sensitive to some one metal, while all others produced no effect upon him; and (b) that the patients affected by certain metals were few and exceptional. This showed that “electric fluids” operating on and curing diseases existed only in the imagination of the theorists. Had they any actual existence, then all metals would affect in a greater or lesser degree, all patients, and every metal, taken separately, would affect every case of nervous disease, the conditions for generating such fluids being, in the given cases, precisely the same. Thus, Dr. Charcot having vindicated Dr. Burke, the once discredited discoverer of metallotherapy, Shiff and others discredited all those who believed in electric fluids, and these seem now to be given up in favor of “molecular motion,” which now reigns supreme in physiology — for the time being, of course. But now

arises a question: “Are the real nature, behavior and conditions of `motion’ known any better than the nature, behavior and conditions of the `fluids’?” It is to be doubted. Anyhow, Occultism is audacious enough to maintain that electric or magnetic fluids (the two being really identical) are due in their essence and origin to that same molecular motion, now transformed into atomic energy, to which every other phenomenon in nature is also due.

[Note: In Occultism, the word atom has a special significance, different from the one given it by Science. See editorial, “Psychic and Noetic Action,” B.C.W. Vol. XII pp. 350 et seq.]

Indeed, when the needle of a galvano- or electrometer fails to show any oscillations denoting the presence of electric or magnetic fluids, this does not prove in the least that there are none to record; but simply that having passed on to another and higher plane of action, the electrometer can no longer be affected by the energy displayed on a plane with which it is entirely disconnected.

The above had to be explained, in order to show that the nature of the Force transmitted from one man or object to another man or object whether in hypnotism, electricity, metalotherapy or “fascination” is the same in essence, varying only in degree and modified, according to the sub-plane of matter it is acting on; of which sub-planes, as every Occultist knows, there are seven on our terrestrial plane as there are on every other.

Q. Is Science entirely wrong in its definition of the hypnotic phenomena?

Ans. It has no definition, so far. Now, if there is one thing upon which Occultism agrees (to a certain degree) with the latest discoveries of physical Science, it is that all the bodies endowed with the property of inducing and calling forth metallographic and other analogous phenomena, have, their great variety notwithstanding, one feature in common. They are all the fountain heads and the generators of rapid molecular oscillations, which, whether through transmitting agents or direct contact, communicate themselves to the nervous system, changing thereby the rhythm of nervous vibrations — on the sole condition, however, of being what is called, in unison. Now unison does not always imply the sameness of nature, or of essence, but simply the sameness of degree, a similarity with regard to gravity and acuteness, and equal potentialities for intensity of sound or motion: a bell may be in unison with a violin, and a flute with an animal or a human organ. Moreover, the rate of the number of vibrations — especially in an organic animal cell or organ, changes in accordance with the state of health, and general condition. Hence the cerebral ner-

vous centers of a hypnotic subject, while in perfect unison, in potential degree and essential original activity, with the object he gazes at, may yet, owing to some organic disturbance, be at the given moment, at loggerheads with it, in respect to the number of vibrations. In such case no hypnotic condition ensues; or no unison at all may exist between his nervous cells and the cells of the crystal or metal he is made to gaze at, in which case that particular object can never have any effect on him. This amounts to saying that to ensure success in a hypnotic experiment, two conditions are requisite; (a) as every organic or “inorganic” body in nature is distinguished by its fixed molecular oscillations, it is necessary to find out which are those bodies which will act in unison with one or another human nervous system; and (b) to remember that the molecular oscillations of the former can influence the nervous action of the latter, only when the rhythms of their respective vibrations coincide, i.e., when the number of their vibrations is made identical; which, in the cases of hypnotism induced by mechanical means, is achieved through the medium of the eye.

Therefore, though the difference between hypnosis produced by mechanical means, and that induced by the direct gaze of the operator, plus his will, depends on the plane on which the same phenomenon is produced, still the “fascinating” or subduing agent is created by the same forces at work. In the physical world and its material planes, it is called MOTION; in the worlds of mentality and metaphysics it is known as WILL — the many faced magician throughout all nature.

As the rate of vibrations (molecular motion) in metals, woods, crystals, etc., alters under the effect of heat, cold, etc., so do the cerebral molecules change their rate, in the same way: i.e., their rate is raised or lowered. And this is what really takes place in the phenomenon of hypnotism. In the case of gazing, it is the eye — the chief agent of the Will of the active operator, but a slave and traitor when this Will is dormant — that, unconsciously to the patient or subject, attunes the oscillations of his cerebral nervous centers to the rate of the vibrations of the object gazed at by catching the rhythm of the latter and passing it on to the brain. But in the case of direct passes, it is the Will of the operator radiating through his eye that produces the required unison between his will and the will of the person operated upon. For, out of two objects attuned in unison — as two chords, for instance — one will always be stronger than the other, and thus have mastery over the other and even the potentiality of destroying its weaker “co-respondent.” Take the “sensitive flame” as a case in hand. Science tells us that if a note be struck in unison with the ratio of the vibrations of the heat molecules, the flame will respond immediately to the sound (or note struck), that it will dance and sing in rhythm with the sounds. But Occult

Science adds, that the flame may also be extinguished if the sound is intensified. Another proof. Take a wineglass or tumbler of very fine and clear glass; produce, by striking it gently with a silver spoon, a well determined note; after which reproduce the same note by rubbing its rim with a damp finger, and, if you are successful, the glass will immediately crack and be shattered. Indifferent to every other sound, the glass will not resist the great intensity of its own fundamental note, for that particular vibration will cause such a commotion in its particles, that the whole fabric will fall in pieces. [*Blavatsky Collected Writings* XII 394-401]

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