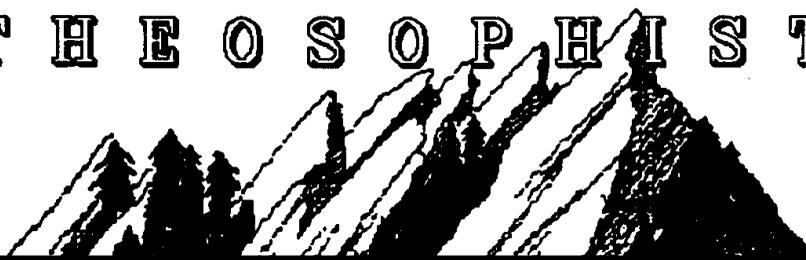


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In years past we have had the privilege of printing

several contributions from David Pratt. Recently we discovered that David has his own web page. A sampling of his Web page topics impresses us with his ability to explain some abstruse theosophical concepts with clarity and depth, using the writings of H.P. Blavatsky and G. de Purucker as source material. Here then, reprinted with permission, is

### **The Nature of Reality by David Pratt**

#### **Something vs. Nothing**

*What would be a good place to begin a discussion on the nature of reality?*

It's essential to draw a clear distinction between concrete objects and entities on the one hand and abstractions on the other. Concrete things are made of substance or matter, and fall into two main categories: natural systems, such as atoms, humans, stars, and galaxies; and artifacts, such as cars, houses, and space rockets. All concrete things are finite in size, composed of smaller parts, subject to change, and ultimately impermanent.

Anything that can be conceived of that does not have concrete existence is an abstraction, such as good and evil,



happiness, colour, beauty, philosophy -- which are obviously not concrete objects. It's important to emphasize that concrete things do not have to be perceptible to us, or even detectable by our instruments.

*You mean that there may be states of matter invisible to our physical senses?*

Yes. The key difference between materialistic science on the one hand and the ageless wisdom or theosophic tradition on the other, is that the latter speaks of worlds and entities composed of grades of substance so much subtler or denser than physical matter that they're invisible and intangible to us, though they occupy the same space as our physical universe and interpenetrate it. So concrete things do not have to be made of physical matter.

Wherever we are in infinitude, that cross-section of the universe that is visible to the senses of the body we are then inhabiting would be for the time being the 'physical' universe.

*Are you saying that there are many universes?*

If by 'universe' we mean 'all that exists', then obviously there can only be one, and there can be nothing outside it. But the infinite universe consists of countless finite universes, worlds, objects, and entities of every conceivable size. The infinite totality of all these worlds or systems makes up boundless space.

The theory that space popped into being

out of nothingness in a 'big bang' a few billion years ago and then proceeded to expand to its present vast but supposedly finite size cannot be taken seriously. Nothing comes from nothing, and if space is finite, where does it end and what lies beyond?

Big bang theorists claim that space might curve back upon itself so that it is both finite and boundless -- but this is clearly just an illogical, mathematical fantasy. It's much more reasonable to assume that the universe is boundless, beginningless, and endless, but subject to constant transformations.

*Does the infinite universe have concrete existence?*

Only things that are measurable can have concrete existence; infinitude is immeasurable and is therefore an abstraction. An infinite universe basically means that there are literally numberless finite, concrete, substantial systems, which continue limitlessly and endlessly in all directions, inwardly and outwardly.

*You've said that concrete things or systems are by definition substantial or material, but what exactly is substance?*

Substance is that which can be perceived and touched -- though not necessarily by ourselves. Matter basically means the same thing, though it's often used to refer to only physical grades of substance. Concrete things are therefore something rather than nothing, whereas abstractions are in themselves nothing, though they may be represented in a concrete form, e.g. as words

on paper, electrical patterns in our brains, or as ethereal thought-forms, which are visible to some clairvoyants.

*But what is substance in and of itself?  
What's it made of?*

We could say that matter particles of one grade are temporary, relatively stable condensations of an underlying medium, composed of finer particles which are condensations of a deeper substantial medium, and so on, ad infinitum.

Ultimately everything can be resolved into motion or vibration, but motion is just an empty abstraction unless it is motion of something, and something by definition is substance. Every grade of substance is generated by motion of a more ethereal grade of substance, and consists of particle like discontinuities, though it may seem relatively homogeneous and undifferentiated to beings on other planes.

*Are the inner worlds or planes extra dimensions?*

No. In its broadest sense, a dimension is any measurable property or quantity, such as length, mass, temperature, time, etc. Strictly speaking, infinite space has no dimensions because it can't be measured.

Only finite units of space, or concrete objects and entities are measurable. It seems reasonable to suppose that on every plane of reality, size can be measured in only three directions, corresponding to length, width, and height -- which are often referred to

loosely as 'spatial' dimensions. But the inner worlds themselves should not really be called dimensions.

## **Four worldviews**

*How does consciousness fit into all this?*

If the universe is one in essence, consciousness and substance must be fundamentally identical. This view is called objective idealism or materio-idealism.

*What alternative points of view are there?*

There are only a very limited number of basic worldviews, and the fundamental difference between them lies in their attitude to mind and consciousness. There are four basic positions:

1. Materialism: consciousness is a byproduct of matter, an epiphenomenon of electrochemical activity in the brain;

2. Idealism: consciousness is the ultimate reality and gives rise to matter (or at least the illusion of matter);

3. Dualism: consciousness and matter are independent but complementary aspects of reality;

4. Materio-idealism: consciousness and substance are fundamentally one.

Each of these positions has different variants. For example, dualists may regard

consciousness either as a type of substance distinct from physical matter, or as a property of matter, but one which cannot be reduced to the activity of matter.

Nonmaterialists can either follow materialists in postulating one basic grade of substance -- physical matter (existing in the four states known to science) -- or they can postulate many grades of substance.

The theosophical brand of materio-idealism proposes that consciousness-substance is infinite and eternal, and exists in infinitely varied grades of materiality or ethereality, forming numberless interpenetrating and interacting worlds within worlds, systems within systems.

*Is there any evidence for this?*

Consider the electromagnetic spectrum: although we can detect only about 100 octaves of electromagnetic radiation, ranging from radio waves through visible light to x-rays, gamma rays, and cosmic rays, there's no reason to assume that there is any limit to the range of possible frequencies. An important property of electromagnetic energy is that waves of sufficiently different frequencies do not interfere or interact.

If matter is condensed energy, it seems reasonable to suppose that the infinite spectrum of energy gives rise to infinite grades of matter, and that grades of matter of sufficiently differing densities or rates of vibration can pass through one another without noticeably interacting.

This suggests that our physical universe is just one octave in an infinite spectrum of matter-energy, and is interpenetrated by innumerable other worlds, both denser and more ethereal than our own, but beyond our range of perception.

Paranormal phenomena provide plenty of evidence for nonphysical states of matter, forces, and entities. In fact, even our normal mental powers cannot be explained satisfactorily in terms of the physical brain alone. Further evidence for subtler levels of reality is provided by research into out-of-body and near-death experiences, and memories of past lives.

And even the basic concepts of the scientific worldview -- matter, energy, fields, space -- point to the existence of other planes of being, unless we allow ourselves to be fobbed off with mathematical fictions and empty abstractions.

Take the concept of 'empty space' for example. If space were sheer nothingness, it would not exist, and nothing could be located in it or move through it. Logically, space must have some kind of structure and therefore consist of substance, and unless this substance is assigned impossible, abstract properties (such as absolute continuity and structureless homogeneity), space must consist of endless levels of consciousness-substance, in infinitely varied grades and forms. What to us is 'empty' space is simply those regions of space containing no matter perceptible to our physical senses; there is no such thing as an absolute void.

*But don't scientists believe that space is*

*full of fields?*

Yes, they say that space is filled with electromagnetic and gravitational fields, and with the all-pervading zero-point field or quantum vacuum -- which in some respects amounts to a resurrection of the once-popular ether.

A field is defined as a region of space where a force is felt, and forces are said to be mediated by force particles or messenger particles. But what exists between these particles? Either they are separated by an absolute void, or they are separated by a more ethereal grade of substance, consisting of particles separated by an even deeper grade of substance, and so on, ad infinitum.

*How do the various worldviews explain the origin of life?*

Materialism regards life as a byproduct of matter, a property that emerges when matter reaches a certain level of complexity.

Idealism and dualism generally take a similar view, though they may regard consciousness as a contributing factor in its emergence.

And materio-idealism says that although the degree of manifest life and manifest consciousness depends on the relative complexity of the organism in question, life itself is primordial -- you can't make life out of dead matter.

Any self-regulating entity that exchanges energy and matter with its

environment is alive, including atoms and subatomic particles. Philosophically speaking, life is inseparable from consciousness and substance; the three are one.

*Idealism and materio-idealism are clearly monistic as opposed to dualistic, but what about materialism?*

Modern scientific materialism is not truly monistic. 'Energy' is an important unifying concept, but in some respects a rather vacuous one: it's officially defined as 'the capacity for doing work'.

Matter is regarded as a specialized form of energy that has the attributes of mass and extension. Matter particles are said to interact through the exchange of force particles, which are another form of energy. It's believed that all types of matter and force will become unified at higher energies -- just as they supposedly were in the extreme temperatures and pressures following the hypothetical big bang.

This is typical of orthodox science's heavy-handed approach to unification: smash things together violently enough and they'll merge into one!

Although energy is often associated with the movement of material bodies, it's also said to exist independent of matter, in the form of radiant energy -- i.e. electromagnetic radiation or light.

Although electromagnetic radiation can exchange energy and momentum with matter, and colliding matter particles can

disappear in a shower of radiant energy, many scientists deny that electromagnetic energy itself is a form of substance.

However, it makes much more sense to regard radiant energy as a manifestation of a subtler, nonphysical grade of substance. From this point of view, physical matter is concentrated energy not only in the sense that it can be made to do work, but also in the sense that it is congealed radiation or crystallized light.

*According to idealism, then, everything is a manifestation or modification of consciousness, whereas according to materio-idealism everything is a manifestation or modification of consciousness-substance (or consciousness-life-substance). Is the difference really that important?*

Yes. One thing cannot give rise to another thing that is absolutely and completely different from itself. Consciousness cannot give rise to something that is fundamentally different from the essence of consciousness. The position taken by materio-idealism is that matter is crystallized consciousness, which means that matter and consciousness are essentially the same.

Materio-idealism therefore adopts a middle way between materialism and idealism, and advocates monism rather than dualism. It recognizes only a relative duality between mind and matter.

*Dualists might say that consciousness is not matter but that which works through matter.*

What we call consciousness is certainly intangible to us and works through the vehicle of what we normally call matter. But how could consciousness affect matter if it were absolutely intangible and therefore completely different from matter?

Trained adepts who are able to obtain direct experience of the inner realms tell us that there's a scale of energy-substance running from the densest matter of our own hierarchy or world-system to the purest consciousness, and that the difference is not one of essences but of differentiation and vibration. If the universe is indeed one in essence and origin, how could it be otherwise?

Spirit and matter are relative terms: the lowest pole of our hierarchy would be pure spirit to entities in hierarchies below ours, while the highest pole of our hierarchy would be dense matter to entities in hierarchies above ours. This is certainly what would be expected on the basis of analogy -- as above, so below; and as below, so above.

*In other words, the infinite universe consists of nothing but innumerable finite manifestations of consciousness-substance in continuous interaction.*

That's right. If consciousness has no substantial nature, i.e. if it is not something, then it is by definition a pure abstraction -- nothing, a nonentity. And nothing, because it is nothing, does nothing and affects nothing.

Strictly speaking, of course, consciousness, life, and substance are abstractions, in the sense that they are generalized expressions

for hosts of entities manifesting aggregatively. a unity in diversity.

Each such entity is a concrete unit of consciousness-life-substance, and each unit is made up of smaller units and forms part of larger units.

Dualists might argue that consciousness is something but falls into a different category of something than substance, or alternatively - if we define everything that is something as substance -- that consciousness is substance but of a different kind than matter.

This brings us back to the question of whether these two types of something are absolutely different or only relatively different. If they are absolutely different, what is the nature of the difference, and how do they manage to interact?

And if they are only relatively different, they are really fundamentally one. If consciousness is completely different from matter, it would have to be absolutely homogeneous, indivisible, and structureless - in which case it would be nothing but an empty abstraction. There's no halfway house between something or substance on the one hand and nothing on the other. And something cannot come from nothing or be influenced by nothing.

*So you're saying that behind the incredible diversity we see in nature there's an underlying unity?*

Yes. There is, after all, only one infinitude. The universe is monistic in essence, but pluralistic in manifestation; it is

Strictly speaking, of course, infinity does not become a multitude of finite systems, because the infinite is an abstraction, not an entity that does things. Infinity, symbolized by a circle or zero, comprises an infinite number of 'ones', or concrete systems.

We can also call the highest planes of any particular world-system 'the One', though from a theosophical viewpoint it's actually composed of countless seeds or consciousness-centres from previous cycles of activity.

On awakening from a period of rest, the One gives birth to the many (the lower realms and their inhabitants) through a process of progressive emanation, differentiation, and concretion, and the many ultimately resolve themselves back into the One, in a never-ending cycle of evolution and involution, outbreathing and inbreathing, activity and rest.

The One is therefore the collective entity forming the spiritual summit of any multilevelled system or hierarchy, whether atomic, human, planetary, solar, galactic, etc. It can also be called 'the absolute', meaning that which is relatively perfected with respect to the hierarchy in question. Strictly speaking, the absolute is therefore not the same as infinity; infinitude contains an infinite number of absolutes, all of which are relative.

*You clearly would not agree with the idealist philosophers who argue that the world we live in is a pure illusion.*

No. Some subjective idealists do claim that the material world is the product of our imaginations and exists only in our minds. But objective idealism, or materio-idealism, says that the physical world is relatively real for the beings temporarily inhabiting it, and is an illusion only in the sense that we do not see it for what it really is -- the projection or outer manifestation of inner, more ethereal realms.

All finite beings and things are illusory in the sense that they are temporary, ever-changing forms generated and sustained by inner forces and impulses, and are destined to 'die' and disintegrate when those forces are withdrawn.

*But some quantum physicists argue that subatomic particles, and possibly macroscopic objects as well, exist only when we measure or observe them. This surely undermines the idea of an outside world existing independently of us.*

Only if we take the theory seriously -- which there is no reason to do. Each time we measure the position of a particle, we find it in a particular place, and in between measurements we obviously don't know exactly where the particle is.

But in quantum physics there's a wave equation that can be used to calculate the probability of finding the particle in any particular place. In theory, the particle could be virtually anywhere, though some locations are obviously far more probable than others.

Some physicists 'deduce' from this that in between measurements particles actually

are in all these different places simultaneously -- they supposedly turn into 'superposed probability waves', which somehow 'collapse' into localized particles again when the next interaction with a measuring device takes place.

A few physicists go even further and say that wave functions 'collapse' only when we humans become aware of the result of the measurement, and it is therefore our conscious minds that give reality to the material world.

An alternative and rather more sensible view is that the wave equation simply tells us the probability of finding a particle at a particular place -- not the probability of a particle coming into being at a particular place.

*Presumably you would also reject the idea that there are elementary particles that cannot be divided into anything smaller.*

Yes. Scientists tend to assume that as we move from our macroscopic world down to the microscopic level, things get simpler and simpler, until finally we reach a fundamental, elementary level of utterly homogeneous, structureless particles, with all the members of a particular species of particle being absolutely indistinguishable.

However, a literally homogeneous particle is an abstraction, and the structures we see around us are certainly not composed of structureless abstractions! The standard model of particle physics claims that such particles are infinitely small -- another impossible abstraction.

According to superstring theory, they are one-dimensional 'strings', which vibrate and wriggle around in 10-dimensional 'spacetime'. Theorists claim that strings have zero thickness but that they're a billion-trillion-trillionth of a centimetre long -- which is supposedly the smallest distance possible in nature.

Most scientists seem to prefer such mathematical fictions to the theosophical idea that matter is infinitely divisible and infinitely aggregative and can exist in countless different states, and in an infinite range of sizes.

A solar system is a cosmic atom, an atom is a miniature solar system, and electrons are like planets, built up of molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles on an even smaller scale.

Time, too, is relative: an earth year is equal to one revolution around the sun, and an electron 'year' is equal to one revolution around its atomic nucleus -- which means that what we call a second is equivalent to some four million billion years for an electron!

## **Karma and rebirth**

*What does theosophy have to say about causality and chance?*

There's no such thing as chance; nothing happens by chance, because nothing happens in isolation -- everything is part of an intricate web of causal interconnections and interactions.

Two types of action are sometimes distinguished: causal action and distant action. Causal action means that one thing acts on another through the transference of some kind of energy or force, whether physical or nonphysical, and whether faster or slower than the speed of light.

Distant action, or action at a distance, means that one thing acts on another, either instantaneously or after a delay, without the transfer of any kind of energy or force. This idea -- whether it's called 'acausal synchronicity' or 'quantum nonlocality' or whatever -- is an irrational abstraction that explains nothing. It assumes that no concrete, causal explanation is possible even in principle, and so it's little more than a pompous way of saying that things just happen for no reason at all.

Two events may seem to occur absolutely simultaneously to us, but one may actually follow the other and be caused by the other through faster-than-light interactions.

If two events do occur simultaneously then obviously one cannot be said to 'act' on the other, or to be the direct cause of the other. But simultaneous events, or near-simultaneous events where the first does not exercise a significant causal influence on the other, can still be meaningfully correlated because the causal factors behind both of them are interlinked.

In fact, since all events occurring throughout the universe at any particular instant are interconnected in some way, they are all meaningfully related, but it's only

events that are conspicuously meaningful for us that we call 'synchronicities' -- and some people then invent an 'acausal connecting principle' to 'explain' them! A few people have even gone so far as to propose 'backward causation', i.e. that present events can be influenced by future events -- which basically means that effects can generate their causes. This is utter twaddle!

*Many scientists claim that if anything were to travel faster than light it would travel backwards in time.*

If an object were to travel from point A to point B faster than the speed of light, it's certainly true that observers at B would see it arrive at B before they see it leave A; in fact, it would appear to travel backwards from B to A.

This is because their observations are dependent on light, which can't keep pace with the object in question. But if they could make observations by means of superluminal signals travelling even faster than the object concerned, everything would appear normal again and they would see the object move from A to B.

It's absurd to think that time can literally go into reverse. Strictly speaking, time is not something that 'flows', or that you can go backwards 'in' or even forwards 'in'.

Time is a concept we use to quantify the rate at which events occur, and can be applied wherever there is change and motion, which basically means a succession of cause and effect.

To reverse the direction of time, effects would have to precede their causes! On paper, it's actually very easy to reverse the direction of time: all you do is replace the variable 't' in certain scientific equations by '-t'. Any theorists who think that this shows that time can be reversed in reality need their heads examined!

*If there's no such thing as chance, how come the laws of chance or probability prove very useful in certain situations?*

There's no such thing as absolute randomness or chance. However, the concept of relative randomness or chance does have a certain validity. If we toss a coin, for example, the outcome of each individual throw is unpredictable and 'random', yet we can predict that in a large series of throws each number will come up approximately the same number of times.

This is because the outcome of each throw is the result of a large number of fluctuating factors, and there is no influence - - barring cheating or the exercise of psychokinetic power -- that favours one outcome rather than another. In such cases the laws of probability apply.

A similar situation occurs in quantum physics, where individual experimental results cannot be predicted, but only the probability of different results. From a theosophical viewpoint, both tossing a coin and quantum events are entirely causal processes; if absolute chance or indeterminism were really at work, we would expect utterly crazy results, not statistical regularities!

*Even if we grant that every event has a cause (or many causes), we could still say that evolution, for example, is essentially a chance process in the sense that it is not subject to any overall guidance. And as far as our own lives are concerned, the things that happen to us might still be accidental in the sense that there is no particular reason why they happen to us.*

The teaching of karma denies this. Karma does not just mean that every event has a cause and that every action is followed by a reaction.

It also means that everything that happens to any entity is the result of causes in which that entity was in some way involved, often in some previous existence, and that the impact of an event on any entity is proportional to the contributing causes it originally set in motion, and of the same harmonious or disharmonious quality. In other words, we reap what we sow, both individually and collectively.

This enables us to slowly ascend the ladder of life by learning from our mistakes - - assuming that there is some higher part of us that is able to link our present good fortune or misfortune to things we have done in the past.

*Can you explain how karma works?*

All we can say is that every action, or expenditure of energy, generates a chain of effects, which sooner or later will return, by magnetic affinity, to the point of origin, in the form of appropriate consequences. In other words, like begets like. Karma is an

automatic, unerring process; it is simply the way nature operates, an expression of the inherent tendency towards equilibrium and harmony.

As for evolution in general, absolute chance plays no role here either. Evolution on our planet largely follows the patterns laid down in former cycles of activity, which, in turn, largely followed the grooves laid down in even earlier cycles of activity, and so on, into the eternity of the past, for there was never an absolute beginning to evolution.

Absolutely random genetic mutations - - even with 'natural selection' to weed out non-adaptive ones -- could hardly bring about the incredible diversity and complexity of life we see around us.

*Some scientists might invoke special 'laws of nature' or 'organizing principles'.*

Laws of nature are merely general rules that scientists have formulated to simplify their description of natural phenomena. 'Laws' and 'principles' in no way help to explain the regularity and purposiveness we see in nature. Theosophically, they are catchwords for the habits, the instinctual activities, of a whole spectrum of nonphysical energies and entities, ranging from elemental nature-forces to spiritual intelligences.

Every entity, from atom to human to star, is formed and organized and guided mainly from within outwards, from inner levels of its constitution. This inner guidance may be active and selfconscious, as in our acts of free will, or it may be automatic and

passive, as seen in our habits and instincts, our automatic bodily functions (breathing, the beating of the heart, growth, etc.), and in the orderly, lawlike behaviour of nature in general.

*Is karma the decree of God?*

No, karma is not ordained by any sort of 'god', whether finite or infinite, intra-cosmic or extra-cosmic. The idea of an infinite 'god' outside the boundless universe is absurd; there's no room for two infinities!

The 'God' of traditional theology is supposed to be all-powerful and all-wise, and to have miraculously created everything -- including himself perhaps -- out of nothing.

But for some reason he made us so feeble and imperfect that most of us succumb to all sorts of temptations, for which we are punished by being consigned to eternal damnation in hell -- another of his creations.

Such a being must be either a monstrous fiend or a blundering idiot! Either way, he would have to be extremely limited and imperfect or cruel and unjust, and would hardly be worthy of our adoration.

It makes much more sense to take the pantheistic view that divinity is infinite nature itself, which -- in its illimitable totality -- is an abstraction, not an entity which thinks and acts, or designs and creates.

In addition, in any particular world-system, those beings that have advanced beyond the human stage are relatively

speaking 'spirits' or 'gods'. But there is no god so high that there is none higher. All beings are woven from the one divine essence, and it is their evolutionary duty and destiny to unfold their divine potential.

But even when we have reached the pinnacle of evolutionary development in any particular hierarchy, there are always higher worlds beyond in which to become selfconscious masters of life.

*Karma clearly implies reincarnation, but can reincarnation be proved?*

Although most people don't possess the clairvoyant powers necessary to prove the truth of reincarnation for themselves, there is nevertheless an impressive body of evidence for it -- especially where people (usually children) have memories of a past life that are verifiable, and that shed light on their physical and psychological characteristics in their present life.

Only the twin doctrines of reincarnation and karma can make sense of the apparent injustices of life. The misfortunes that befall us are either the karmic consequences of past actions, or they are pure chance, or they are the 'will of God' -- in which case God must be pretty screwed up. And reincarnation of course implies the existence of a reincarnating, relatively immortal entity or soul, composed of finer grades of spirit-substance than our physical body.

*The prevailing scientific view is that our basic character is determined by heredity.*

Yes, materialists would say that our basic characters are determined by the genes or DNA we inherit from our parents, and by which of these genes are activated in our bodies. If asked why we have the parents we do have, and what determines which genes are active and which are recessive, they would no doubt answer: chance -- which basically means they haven't got a clue!

DNA is vastly overrated by materialistic scientists. The DNA code certainly regulates the production of proteins, the basic building blocks of our bodies, but it does not explain how these proteins then manage to arrange themselves into tissues and organs and complex living beings, and there is certainly no evidence that physical DNA determines our basic patterns of thought and behaviour. Efforts to reduce the wonders of life and mind to random physical and chemical interactions are grossly inadequate and unconvincing.

According to the teaching of reincarnation, our basic habits and tendencies are a sort of memory of our choices and experiences, our achievements and failures, in past lives. A reincarnating soul is attracted automatically to the parents who can provide it with the body and family environment best suited to its karmic needs.

So rather than inheriting our characteristics from our parents, we actually inherit them through our parents from ourselves -- from our own past. In other words, heredity is karma, and it operates not just at the physical level, but also at the astral, mental, and spiritual levels.

*Some people claim that karma is a doctrine of fatalism.*

Karma does not mean that everything is predetermined and that we should therefore just sit back and accept everything and make no effort to improve our lives or those of others.

If we find ourselves in a situation where we can help others and reduce some of the suffering and injustice in the world, that too is karma, and an opportunity to be taken advantage of.

Some people don't like the idea of karma because it means that we can no longer regard ourselves as innocent victims and blame others for our misfortunes. But it's actually a very liberating and comforting idea, because it means that we mould our own future and that ultimately justice does prevail.

*If reincarnation and karma are facts, that would obviously have implications for the way we ought to live our lives.*

That's why all the great spiritual teachers throughout the ages have advised us to rise above our feelings of separateness and to love one another and help one another. The more we can control our restless brain-minds and still our fitful thoughts and desires, the more receptive we shall become to the inspiration and guidance of our higher, intuitive self.

*Is the human kingdom unique, or do you think that all entities reembody -- including subatomic particles, animals, gods, suns, and galaxies?*

The ageless wisdom teaches that mankind is a microcosm of the macrocosm and does not occupy any special place in the universe, and that every divine monad or consciousness-centre has to gain direct experience in all the kingdoms of nature, from submineral to superhuman, through repeated embodiments in many different forms.

*You're saying that death is only relative -- there's always something that survives.*

Yes. Our physical body dies when the inner forces that hold it together as an organic unit are exhausted or withdrawn. It then disintegrates into its component elements, as do our astral model-body and lower animal-human mind or soul. Our human-spiritual soul or reincarnating soul, on the other hand, is said to enter a dreamlike state of consciousness in which it rests and digests the lessons of the previous life.

When the time comes for it to reincarnate, its lower astral and physical vehicles are reformed from many of the same atoms used in the previous life, so that we get the body and personality we deserve.

Every organic system, whatever its relative size, is an evolving entity, animated by inner energy-fields or souls, and subject to the same basic process of birth, growth, death, and rebirth. Nothing comes from nothing, and nothing can be annihilated into nothing; energy-substance can only be transformed. Every entity, every relatively self-contained individuality or monad, has existed before -- in some form and on some

plane. And it will always continue to exist in some form, for every entity is the centre of an unbreakable chain of causation stretching from eternity to eternity.

## Some objections

*It might be objected that the philosophy you are proposing is still 'materialistic' since even souls and monads are regarded as substantial entities.*

If souls and monads truly exist in any concrete sense, then they must indeed be something -- i.e. some kind of energy-substance -- as opposed to nothing. And if they are nothing, we might as well forget about them!

Materio-idealism could be called 'transcendental realism' or 'transcendental materialism' -- but this is not 'materialism' in the usual sense of the word. Unlike materialism, materio-idealism does not say that consciousness magically arises when the organization of matter reaches a particular level of complexity.

*That would make of consciousness a mere epiphenomenon, an abstract quality or property, having no reality in itself. And how can a mere property of matter move and guide matter, as it must do if we have any real free will?*

Subjectively, consciousness means awareness, awareness of sensation, and it is utterly mysterious. It cannot be reduced to anything else, or explained in terms of anything else -- it is the ultimate reality. As such, it is far more than awareness; it is the very essence, the very substance of existence.

Consciousness, life, and substance are an inseparable trinity, coextensive and coeval with infinite nature or boundless space; all these terms are ultimately identical -- a single irreducible mystery.

So rather than reducing life and consciousness to the blind, mechanical movements of blobs of matter, materio-idealism elevates matter to the same mysterious status as life and consciousness.

This means not only that every natural system is a substantial entity, vibrant with life, and possessing a consciousness of its own type; everything is consciousness-life-substance of a particular range of vibration and form. And every phase of energy-substance is born from and gives birth to still other levels of reality, within and without. Such a philosophy is certainly not what most people understand by 'materialism'!

Some people might say that the emphasis on causality is too mechanistic and does not do justice to the mystery of existence. A little thought shows that causality is actually very mysterious. Causal action is sometimes called contact action, because it seems to involve collision, followed by elastic deformation and rebound.

But if I push an object, my hand does not really touch it; the outer electrons of the outermost atoms of my hand and the object repel one another. Matter particles interact through some kind of force field, which most likely involves finer particles, surrounded by even subtler force fields, etc. etc. So no matter how far we extend our analysis, we will never

find anything actually touching. Yet two things cannot collide and rebound unless some sort of contact is taking place.

So we have a paradox: contact must occur, yet contact must be transmitted through an infinite number of levels of structure, and infinity is an abstraction. But if we think about it, we are actually encountering, and resolving, similar paradoxes every instant of our lives.

According to Zeno's paradox, motion is impossible because in every slightest movement, the distance to be moved can be divided into an infinite sum of smaller distances: half the distance, plus a quarter, plus an eighth, etc. etc.

But the fact remains that the sum of these infinite divisions is finite; in other words, every finite distance is infinitely divisible -- yet this certainly seems to present no insurmountable problems to our moving about!

An infinite universe cannot contain gaps of nothingness; it is a seamless plenitude in which all entities and things are linked by a continuum of energy-substance of infinitely varied grades. The fact that our finite minds can never hope to apprehend this limitless spectrum of energies in all its richness and fullness is beside the point.

The mechanistic, 'newtonian' model of the everyday physical world is clearly a huge simplification, though one of immense practical value. In reality, what we call solid objects and mechanical collisions are of

immeasurable complexity.

*But if everything in the universe is causally determined, surely there would be no room for creativity and free will?*

At the physical level there's certainly no absolute determinism -- if there was, this would exclude free will.

The relative indeterminism at the subatomic level means that physical events can be influenced and guided by paraphysical factors and impulses originating on inner planes, including planes of mind and spirit.

*You mean that free will is a form of causality in that once the mind has freely chosen a particular course of action, it influences the physical brain in such a way as to bring the desired action about. But how does the decision or choice originate in the first place? If it, too, is causally determined, how can it be free?*

A free choice or decision is one resulting from selfconscious deliberation as opposed to a purely habitual or instinctual impulse or idea. But obviously even 'free' choices are heavily influenced by the habitual patterns of thought, feeling, and behaviour arising from our long past.

Nevertheless, most of us feel that we do possess a measure of genuine freedom. To ascribe free will to chance is absurd: decisions and choices that just popped into our heads for no reason at all would hardly be an expression of our free will!

Free will must therefore be a causal phenomenon; it involves selfconscious self-determinism -- but who can fathom the mystery of self-consciousness or say where the boundaries of our self (or selves) lie?

*Can anything new ever happen in a universe governed by causality?*

We could say that nothing ever happens that is not new and unique in this universe of infinite possibilities. But at the same time, nothing is absolutely new and unique because nothing is absolutely unrelated to the past.

*But in a causal universe wouldn't everything be totally predictable if we had sufficient information about the past?*

In an infinite causal universe 'sufficient information' would have to mean an infinite amount of information, and it's impossible to possess an infinite amount of information. So everything is not absolutely predictable -- not even in theory.

*But can the future ever be foreseen?*

There's plenty of evidence that people can occasionally catch glimpses of the future, with different degrees of accuracy; sometimes they are able to avoid what they've foreseen (or been warned about), and sometimes they try but fail.

In addition, highly evolved adepts can obtain very reliable information about important future events -- not by performing calculations but by using their spiritual vision to

observe the direction in which events are moving on the inner planes, for the future unfolds out of the patterns of the present and is therefore foreshadowed in the present.

*In your view, then, causal order and regularity are quite compatible with creativity and free will. You would say that the theosophic worldview can satisfy the yearnings of the heart as well as the intellect.*

Yes. An infinite universe should offer more than enough mystery and wonder for everybody. Terms such as consciousness and substance and causality leave the ultimate mystery of reality undiminished. But such concepts are absolutely indispensable if we are to achieve a practical, approximate understanding of the processes taking place in any concrete world-system.

Our understanding of the world around us is not advanced one iota by invoking all kinds of empty abstractions and endowing them with magical reality. Modern scientific theories are littered with abstract and illogical concepts, but they are poor substitutes for inner worlds of consciousness-substance. Examples include: empty space, curved space, additional spatial dimensions, absolute chance, particles and even universes popping into existence out of nothing, regulation of physical processes by 'laws of nature', infinitesimal particles, one-dimensional strings, probability waves that can 'collapse' into material particles, instantaneous nonlocal connections, time reversal, etc. etc.

Contrary to what some scientists seem to think, abstract concepts cannot influence the behaviour of matter and therefore explain

nothing, however useful they might be in certain contexts.

*Some scientists do speak of a 'transcendent' realm.*

Yes, but they tend to insist that it is completely different from our own world, so that their theory amounts to an extreme form of dualism: on the one hand we have our own tangible, physical world, a world of matter and energy, space and time, in which things move at finite speeds (though supposedly no faster than light); and on the other, there is some sort of 'transcendent' realm which is supposedly beyond all possible conceptions of space and time, devoid of any kind of matter and energy, devoid of motion, populated only by mathematical abstractions, and which somehow links everything together by absolutely instantaneous connections.

Such a realm is clearly no more than a blank abstraction, which in no way helps us to understand our own world.

The alternative is to follow the law of analogy, and to postulate infinite levels of structure, linked by infinitely complex webs of causal interactions, on an infinite spectrum of planes, in an infinite range of scales, involving an endless array of living, evolving, conscious entities. It beats a motley collection of sterile abstractions hands down!

Beyond and within the physical world, there are real worlds -- not abstract, absolutely intangible realms tucked away in inaccessible, mathematical 'dimensions' -- but real, concrete worlds.

Ordinary psychics and clairvoyants can catch a glimpse of the lowest levels of them, whereas trained adepts or spiritual masters can accurately observe through spiritual clairvoyance, or visit in their subtler bodies, higher planes that to us are realms of mind and spirit.

And all these worlds are said to be populated by living entities, and to be just as material to their respective inhabitants as our own world is to us. Everything is relative, and what is dense matter to one entity, may be force or energy or mind/spirit/consciousness to other entities, and vice versa.

There's no reason to suppose that there are any limits to the number of interlocking, interliving worlds within worlds: everything is nested within a hierarchy of larger systems and contains within itself an infinitude of smaller systems. The hypothesis of interpenetrating realms of consciousness-substance is testable and verifiable -- as far as our presently evolved outer and inner senses can carry us.

*Would you like to sum up?*

There is one divine essence -- boundless consciousness-life-substance -- which is unborn and undying, unfathomable and ineffable, and worthy of the name divinity.

Within the shoreless expanses of abstract space there are numberless concrete world-systems repeatedly coming into being and passing away, in never-ending cycles of activity and rest, and these worlds are composed of, and provide the playground for the evolution of, countless hierarchies of

beings, at every conceivable stage of evolutionary awakening, which are gradually learning and growing and unfolding their inner potential, periodically descending into matter, gaining knowledge and experience, and reascending to spirit, through world after world, plane upon plane, constantly expanding in consciousness and understanding, endlessly and limitlessly, for ever and ever ...

David Pratt. December 1998

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## **ELEMENTALS-KARMA**

Student-Permit me to ask you again, are elementals beings ?

Sage.-It is not easy to convey to you an idea of the constitution of elementals; strictly speaking, they are not, because the word elementals has been used in reference to a class of them that have no being such as mortals have. It would be better to adopt the terms used in Indian books, such as Ghandarvas, Bhuts, Pisachas, Devas, and so on. Many things well known about them cannot be put into ordinary language.

*Student.*-Do you refer to their being able to act in the fourth dimension of space?

Sage.-Yes, in a measure. Take the tying in an endless cord of many knots,-a thing often done at spiritist seances. That is possible to him who knows more dimensions of space than three. No three-dimensional being can do this; and as you understand "matter," it is impossible for you to conceive how such a knot

can be tied or how a solid ring can be passed through the matter of another solid one. These things can be done by elementals.

*Student.*-Are they not all of one class?

Sage.-No. There are different classes for each plane, and division of plane, of nature. Many can never be recognized by men. And those pertaining to our plane do not act in another. You must remember, too, that these “planes” of which we are speaking interpenetrate each other.

*Student.*-Am I to understand that a clairvoyant or clairaudient has to do with or is affected by a certain special class or classes of elementals ?

Sage.-Yes. A clairvoyant can only see the sights properly belonging to the planes his development reaches to or has opened. And the elementals in those planes show to the clairvoyant only such pictures as belong to their plane. Other parts of the idea or thing pictured may be retained in planes not yet open to the seer. For this reason few clairvoyants know the whole truth.

*Student.*-Is there not some connection between the Karma of man and elementals ?

Sage.-A very important one. The elemental world has become a strong factor in the Karma of the human race. Being unconscious, automatic, and photographic, it assumes the complexion of the human family itself. In the earlier ages, when we may postulate that man had not yet begun to make bad Karma, the elemental world was more friendly to man

## SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A.  
BARBORKA

*Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this feature by sending their questions c/o The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.*

*Question.* What actually reincarnates?

*Answer.* In view of the series of questions which follow this initial query, the simple answer that is usually appropriate is not sufficient in this case. The reason for this is that the process of “reincarnation” (that is, taking on again a body of flesh in the Earth sphere) is not a simple one.

Usually one who first contacts Theosophy regards “reincarnation” solely from the “form side” of the cosmos, which deals with a body. Such a querent has no knowledge of the “intelligence side” or the monadic aspect of either the macrocosm or the microcosm. On the other hand, a student of *The Secret Doctrine* regards both aspects mentioned, and therefore considers a question phrased in the above manner from two aspects.

(1) The aspect of the “form side.” That which reincarnates is the resultant of the former personality’s skandhas, which were implanted in the immortal portion of man’s constitution, namely the Hiranyagarbha (usually rendered the Auric Egg). These skandhas pertain to each one of the seven principles of man’s constitution. However, since humans

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Continued on page 27

focus most of their attention on the personality, the skandhas pertaining to the four lower principles (which comprise the personality, plus lower Manas) are predominant and spring into activity when a human being is born.

The monadic aspect. That which reincarnates, described technically, is the upadhi of the monad, namely "Higher Manas" usually referred to as the Reincarnating Ego. While *upadhi* is usually rendered "a vehicle," its literal meaning allows this rendering: "veil of spirit." The radiance of Atman thus illumines or shines through the upadhi.

At this point it would be well to refer to the Mahatma's answer to a question placed by Mr. Sinnett:

"The spiritual Ego . . . is continually evolving personalities?"

"The Spiritual Ego goes on evolving personalities, in which 'the sense of identity' is *very complete* while living. After their separation from the *physical* Ego, that sense returns very dim, and belongs wholly to the recollections of the physical man." (*The Mahatma Letters*, p. 174).

"Now these personalities I understand to be absolutely new evolutions in each case. A. P. Sinnett is, for what it is worth - absolutely a new invention?" (*ibid* 147)

"An error. A. P. Sinnett is *not* 'an absolutely *new* invention.' He is the child and creation of his antecedent personal self; the Karmic progeny . . ." (*ibid* p. 175)

*Question.* What becomes an Initiate? It was said earlier in answer to this question that it was the Personality. (C.T. July-Aug., 1967)

Answer. The reason that 'the personality' was given as the answer to the question: "What becomes an Initiate?" was because of the reply given by the Mahatma to A. P. Sinnett. Mahatma K. H. wrote:

"Immortal then is he, in the *panaeonic* immortality whose distinct consciousness and perception of *Self under whatever form - undergoes no disjunction at any time not for one second*, during the period of his Egoship." (*ibid*, p. 129)

"Egoship" here signifies the personality, for it is the personality that does have "the perception of Self," and the Mahatma underlined "*under whatever form.*" Moreover, he refers to the personality as the Ego in this sentence:

"Suffice for you, for the present to know, that a man, an *Ego* like yours or mine, may be immortal from one to the other Round. Let us say I begin my immortality at the present fourth Round, i.e., having become a *full adept* (which unhappily I am not) I arrest the hand of Death at will, and when finally obliged to submit to it, my knowledge of the secrets of nature puts me in a position to retain my consciousness and distinct perception of Self as an object to my own reflective consciousness and cognition; and thus avoiding all such dismemberments of principles, that as a *rule* take place after the physical death of average humanity, I remain as Koothoomi in my *Ego* throughout the whole series of births and lives

across the seven worlds . . . Unless I make the same efforts as I do now, to secure for myself another such furlough from Nature's Law, Koothoomi will vanish and may become a Mr. Smith or an innocent Babu, when his leave expires." (*ibid* pp 129-30)

In the quoted passage, the *Initiate* Koothoomi is referring to himself as an Ego his personality. This is clearly indicated.

*Question.* (Continuing the previous question): It was said earlier that in answer to the query "What becomes an Initiate?" that it was the Personality, but *it is* a duality, a house divided against itself.

*Answer.* The suggestion is offered that it is a misapprehension to regard the personality as a duality. It is alone the Manas principle that becomes dual in manifestation; "for Manas alone there is no immortality possible" (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 164). The confusion arises from considering the personality "from below" that is, from the standpoint of the "body, looking upwards.

Considered "from above," the confusion is eliminated, because as already explained, the upadhi for the monad (Atma Buddhi) is Higher Manas Buddhi Manas). In turn, the upadhi for the Reincarnating Ego is the Kama principle; Manas links with Kama, as well as Manas links with Buddhi - hence the duality of the Manas principle. In turn Lower Manas with its upadhis (the three lowest principles) forms the personality during a life. time on earth and is given a name (Kama. rupa).

The questioner uses the simile of "a

house divided against itself." This is indeed applicable when the lower aspects of the desire principle, Kama, take over and rule a person's life. But when the personality follows the behest of the Reincarnating Ego - that is, when the voice of conscience is listened to - it is no longer a case of the house being divided against itself.

*Question.* What is it that has the "Sovereign Will" which can open the door and let the immortal essence come out of its prison and make the man temporarily omniscient?

*Answer.* Again the Personality. The "Sovereign Will" can indeed open the door and let the immortal essence illumine the personality. Here is a strange paradox on the one hand the personality can close the door, or on the other hand open the door by means of Kama - the higher aspect of the desire principle. This higher aspect was referred to in *The Secret Doctrine*, where Kama was linked with the activities of Fohat.

"Kama is the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE." (*The Theosophical Glossary*, pp. 170-1)

*Question.* What are the Skandhas?

*Answer.* Skandha is a term used in Buddhism, representing the elements of existence which form a being; specifically, the

elements which compose the personality of a human being.

“It is the group of Skandhas, that form and constitute the physical and mental individuality we call man (or any being).” (M.L., p. 111)

‘The `old being’ is the sole parent -father and mother at once - of the `new being.’ It is the former who is the creator and fashioner, of the latter, in reality; and far more so in plain truth, than any father in flesh.” (M.L., p. 111)

As to the meaning of the word Skandha. It is a Sanskrit word (Khandha in Pali) derived from the verbal root *skand*, meaning to rise, conveying the idea that when a human being is born the skandhas arise to form a new personality. However, the word is usually rendered “groups of attributes.”

Another term often used is “thought-deposits,” expressing the manner in which the skandhas are formed - by means of one’s thoughts as well as deeds. In Buddhism, in the exoteric teaching, five Skandhas are enumerated, representing groups of attributes in each category: (1) Rupa: form, shape, figure; the form attributes -that which has to do with the material attributes composing the form. (2) Vedana: sensations. (3) Sanjna (Sanna in Pali): abstract ideas. (4) Samskara (Sankhara in Pali): tendencies, both physical and mental. (5) Vijnana (Vinnana in Pali): mental powers, meaning the mental, physical and moral predispositions.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Skandhas are defined as “the germs of life on all the seven

planes of Being, and make up the totality of the subjective and objective man. Every vibration we have made is a Skandha . . . . The exoteric Skandhas have to do with the physical atoms and vibrations, or objective man; the Esoteric with the internal and subjective man.” (Vol. V, p. 560)

*Question.* Please explain the difference between one’s Life or Manvantaric Star and one’s astrological star.

*Answer.* This has reference to a passage in *The Secret Doctrine* where H.P.B. explains that every human being “is born under a star” which will be equivalent to its parent for the Manvantara. This has reference to the divine aspect in the human constitution, whereas the astrological star has reference to the personality. Here is the passage:

“The star under which a human Entity is born, says the Occult teaching, will remain for ever its star, throughout the whole cycle of its incarnations in one Manvantara. But *this is not his astrological .star*. The latter is concerned and connected with the *personality*, the former with the *individuality*. The `Angel’ of that Star, or the Dhyani-Buddha will be either the guiding or simply the presiding `Angel,’ so to say, in every new rebirth of the monad, *which is part of his own essence*, though his vehicle, man, may remain for ever ignorant of this fact.” (S.D. I, 572-3; II, 296 6 vol. ed.; I, 626 3rd ed.)

From *The Canadian Theosophist* vol. 49, No. 4, Sept. 1968

**An Exposition of “Blavatsky’s Secret Books” continuation**  
**by**  
**Yogi Pilupakaranda**

The Reigles in their extant work, quote H.P.B.’s notes on Subba Row’s article which speaks on the Sunyata of space:

“Hence, the Arhat secret doctrine on cosmology admits one absolute, indestructible, eternal and uncreated Unconsciousness, of an element absolutely independent of everything else in the Universe; a something ever present, a presence which ever was, is, and will be, whether there be a God or none; whether there is a Universe or none; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas and Manvantras: and this is space the field for the operation of eternal Forces and Natural Law, upon which take place the intercorrelations of Akasa-Prakriti, guided by the pulsations of Shakti - the eternal energy of an eternal unconscious Law. ...”

Blavatsky’s Secret Books page 119

I, Pilupakaranda, experienced this space sunyata in meditation not as an empty and static place but one of complete fullness, with everything that is in manas stimulating form.

It is akin to an artists’s brush; each

thought a stroke of the brush instantaneously becoming that manifested thought. Indeed, your true form is this infinite field of sunyata. If you commit to the discipline of meditation, you will experience the wisdom or knowledge of Svabhavat.

Svabhavat: The space filled with whatsoever substance or no substance at all ... That which we call rupa (form) is no different from space (Sunyata) and space is not different from form.”

Blavatsky’s Secret Books page 119

There are two schools of thought in Buddhism. Dolpopa states that “Sunyata” (space) is empty of everything other than itself, and the Prasangika Madhyamaka school states that sunyata is empty of everything including itself. There is a svabhava-sunyata or an emptiness of any ultimate svabhava in anything. Page 124 of Blavatsky’s Secret Books.

The statement svabhava in anything is a double negative. Svabhava-sunyata should translate to the essential nature of emptiness or an emptiness which is full.

This is important as a sunyata which is full means an unmanifest fullness, with the absolute potential of becoming literally anything. It is the magical elixir that takes on the rupa form and coloring of Svabhava of that which it touches. Maha-sunyata has no limitations. It means su “To swell” and will become literally anything.

Svabhava: “Essential nature; sva= “Self” “Bhava” = To become or exist.

John Grimes. Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy. page 87 and 307

Could the Svabhavata mean something like self-be-ness and self-being with the essential nature of Svabhavat as both a latent potentiality to become, plus its actual self existent manifested form?

Svabhavat and Svabhava essentially is something that is both “self-existent,” and “self-becoming.” What then is this something?

The Reigles, on pages 88-95 of their book, refer to it as the One Element (Dhatu).

They quote from Maitreya’s Ratna Gotra Vibhaga:

“It is not born, does not die, is not afflicted and does not grow old because it is Permanent.”

They go on to state in the Uttara Tantra by Maitreya in verse 80:

“This one thing, Dhatu, may be called the Buddha nature when obscured, and is the sheath of the Law.

There are three bodies of Trikaya (glorious vestures) that the hierarchies of spiritual beings cloth themselves in. The highest is the Dharma-kaya in which the Nirvanins live.

The Sambhoga-kaya (etheral) is the embodiment of delight and enjoyment. The last of the trikayas is the sheath of the Nirmana-kaya (astral) and is the sheath of transformation.

These kayas are the storehouses of wisdom, cognition, intellect, and consciousness. This storehouse of consciousness is the carrier of all latent potencies and the receptacle for all accumulating tendencies; it is also the transcendent and eternal reality that is Absolute Consciousness.; it’s a continuum that is at once changing and dynamic, yet it remains as a homogenous one. So, the one element (Absolute Consciousness) is dynamic and changing or becoming.

(To be continued)

## ***Book Review by G.A. Farthing***

### **O LANOO !**

by Harvey Tordoff, published by the Findhorn Press (Scotland) 126 pp Including an Introduction and Preface

January 2000

This is a difficult book to review because for many readers the subject matter will be quite new.

In outline the work gives a description of the coming into being of the Universe and in particular our world on the one hand and on the other the advent of humankind onto the scene.

However, the story is against a background of what is claimed to be an occult knowledge of the processes involved.

This means having regard to what goes on behind the scenes, as it were, of the appearances of objective existence, i.e. the world and its place in the solar system as perceivable by our senses.

The Introduction and the Preface are really integral parts of the book. They are informative and explanatory.

In the Introduction the author tells us about the Stanzas of Dzyan and says that he

has retold their story, ignoring all the numerous side issues that there are in The Secret Doctrine which is essentially based on them.

He describes his work as a 10,000 word “epic poem which tells the story of the creation of the Universe and the evolution of Man”.

The author explains that Dzyan is written by a teacher for a student. The old Sanskrit word for student is ‘lanoo’ and Dzyan addresses the student within the teachings.

Whereas some of the Ideas expressed in the book concerning the evolution of matter and life forms agree with the current scientific views, there is much in the work which goes beyond what science admits to. These are the aspects of existence normally invisible and not taken into account by objective physical science.

The great postulate of the stanzas is that the Universe, or the cosmic scene as we can know it, manifests but One Life in innumerable forms.

The stanzas explain that there is a cosmic process proceeding by cycles from its very origins to its end.

This of course is an immense period of time. During this period, again on a cyclical basis, the kingdoms of Nature

come into being and constitute the elements of an evolutionary process of which man is part.

The book divides into two parts: the first is headed “The Seven Creations” and constitutes seven stanzas of the Book of Dzyan with the following headings: Before Creation; The Essence of the Creation to Come; The Re-awakening of the Universe; The Creation of the Gods; The Creation of the Galaxies; The Creation of Earth; The Creation of Man.

Part Two is headed “The Journey of the Pilgrim Soul” and this is divided into twelve stanzas: Earth, Home of Man; Natural Evolution; The Creation of Man; The Creation of the First Races; The Evolution of the Second Race; The Second Race Gives Way to the Third; The First Human Races; The Animal Kingdom and the First Fall; The Final Evolution of (Physical) Man; The History of the Fourth Race; The Destruction of the Fourth Race; The Fifth Race.

These chapter headings give us the content of what the numbered stanzas contain. The stanzas themselves, however, are in the most magnificent and, to use an expression, sonorous language which cannot fail to evoke a response from all but the most insensitive of readers.

The author has attempted in his exposition to retain something of the

feeling of this language in that the whole of his book is written in a lyrical free verse. His rendering is as a result of much intuitive examination of the main text, and is perhaps easier to read and- more-immediately comprehensible than the original.

In the Introduction he says, “I have tried to be faithful to the rich, poetical language of Dzyan, but have avoided words that would be unfamiliar to the average reader”. In this attempt he certainly succeeds in creating a readable and illuminating text.

The reader of this review must not get the Impression that he has in any way limited or reduced the original subject matter and must be prepared to spend time in trying to assimilate what must be new, and in some cases strange, ideas as against those of present day conventional thinking and presentation.

The book is an invaluable one for anyone seeking answers to many of the deep questions which all of us at some time or another in our lives necessarily ask. In the ordinary way we simply do not have the information to answer them satisfactorily.

The author of this work has given us an immense amount of material to illuminate those normally dark places of our lives. /.

## Continued from page 19

because it had not received unfriendly impressions. But so soon as man began to become ignorant, unfriendly to himself and the rest of creation, the elemental world began to take on exactly the same complexion and return to humanity the exact pay, so to speak, due for the actions of humanity. Or, like a donkey, which, when he is pushed against, will push against you. Or, as a human being, when anger or insult is offered, feels inclined to return the same. So the elemental world, being unconscious force, returns or reacts upon humanity exactly as humanity acted towards it, whether the actions of men were done with the knowledge of these laws or not. So in these times it has come to be that the elemental world has the complexion and action which is the exact result of all the actions and thoughts and desires of men from the earliest times. And, being unconscious and only acting according to the natural laws of its being, the elemental world is a powerful factor in the workings of Karma.

And so long as mankind does not cultivate brotherly feeling and charity towards the whole of creation, just so long will the elementals be without the impulse to act for our benefit. But so soon and wherever man or men begin to cultivate brotherly feeling and love for the whole of creation, there and then the elementals begin to take on the new condition.

*Student.*-How then about the doing of phenomena by adepts?

*Sage.*-The production of phenomena is not possible without either the aid or disturbance of elementals. Each phenomenon entails the expenditure of great force, and also

brings on a correspondingly great disturbance in the elemental world, which disturbance is beyond the limit natural to ordinary human life. It then follows that, as soon as the phenomenon is completed, the disturbance occasioned begins to be compensated for. The elementals are in greatly excited motion, and precipitate themselves in various directions. They are not able to affect those who are protected. But they are able, or rather it is possible for them, to enter into the sphere of unprotected persons, and especially those persons who are engaged in the study of occultism. And then they become agents in concentrating the karma of those persons, producing troubles and disasters often, or other difficulties which otherwise might have been so spread over a period of time as to be not counted more than the ordinary vicissitudes of life. This will go to explain the meaning of the statement that an Adept will not do a phenomenon unless he sees the desire in the mind of another lower or higher Adept or student; for then there is a sympathetic relation established, and also a tacit acceptance of the consequences which may ensue. It will also help to understand the peculiar reluctance often of some persons, who can perform phenomena, to produce them in cases where we may think their production would be beneficial; and also why they are never done in order to compass worldly ends, as is natural for worldly people to suppose might be done,-such as procuring money, transferring objects, influencing minds, and so on.

*Student.*-Accept my thanks for your instruction.

*Sage.*-May you reach the terrace of enlightenment!

From *B.C.W.* Vol IX, pp. 109-12.

## Submission Guidelines

### By floppy disk

3.5 or 5.25 inch (DOS format),  
WordPerfect or MS Word  
in ASCII format preferable.

### By hard copy

Laser printer preferable,  
NLQ Dot matrix OK  
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## EDITORIAL

## OBJECTIVES

THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST is an *independent* Journal and has the following editorial objectives:

(1) To serve the greater Theosophical Movement as a forum for the free interchange of ideas and commentary in the pursuit of Truth and to facilitate various projects in furtherance of Theosophical principles.

(2) To present articles and essays consistent with source theosophy, otherwise known as the Ancient Wisdom as given by The Masters and H.P. Blavatsky, and other theosophical writers consistent with this tradition.

(3) To examine contemporary ethical, religious, metaphysical, scientific and philosophical issues from the viewpoint of the source theosophical teachings.

(4) To impartially examine significant events and issues in the history of the theosophical movement which have affected and shaped its present-day realities.

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