

W.Q. JUDGE The Synthesis of Occult Science

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The impassable gulf between mind and matter discovered by modern science is a logical result of the present methods of so-called scientific investigation. These methods are analytical and hypothetical, and the results arrived at are necessarily tentative and incomplete. Even the so-called "Synthetic Philosophy" of Spencer is, at best, an effort to grasp the entire method and modulus of nature within one of its processes only. The aim is at synthesis, but it can hardly deserve the name of philosophy, for it is purely speculative and hypothetical. It is as though the physiologist undertook to study the function of respiration in man through the single process of expiration, ignoring the fact that every expiratory act must be supplemented by inspiration, or respiration ceases altogether.

Taking, therefore, the facts of experience derived from the phenomena of nature and viewing both cosmic and organic processes purely from their objective side, the "missing links," "impassable gulfs," and "unthinkable gaps" occur constantly. Not so in Occult Science. So far as the science of occultism is concerned, it is both experimental and analytical, but it acknowledges no "missing links," "impassable gulfs," or "unthinkable gaps," because it finds none. Back of occult science there lies a complete and all-embracing Philosophy. This philosophy is not simply synthetical in its methods, for the simplest as the wildest hypothesis can claim that much; but it is *synthesis itself*. It regards Nature as one complete whole, and so the student of occultism may stand at either point of observation. He may from the standpoint of Nature's wholeness and completeness follow the process of segregation and differentiation to the minutest atom conditioned in space and time; or, from the phenomenal display of the atom, he may reach forward and upward till the atom becomes an integral part of cosmos, involved in the universal harmony of creation. The modern scientist may do this incidentally or empirically, but the occultist does it systematically and habitually, and hence philosophically. The modern scientist is confessedly and boastfully *agnostic*. The occultist is reverently and progressively *gnostic*.

Modern science recognizes matter as "living" and "dead," "organic" and "inorganic," and "Life" as merely a phenomenon of matter. Occult science recognizes (S.D., Vol. I, p. 626), foremost of all, the postulate that there is no such thing in Nature as *inorganic* substances or bodies. Stones, minerals, rocks, and even chemical "*atoms*" are simply organic units in profound lethargy. Their coma has an end, and their inertia becomes activity.

Occultism recognizes one UNIVERSAL, ALL-PERVADING LIFE. Modern science recognizes life as a special phenomenon of matter, a mere transient manifestation due to temporary conditions. Even logic and analogy ought to have taught us better, for the simple reason that so-called "inorganic" or "dead" matter constantly becomes organic and living, while matter from the organic plane is continually being reduced to the inorganic. How rational and justifiable, then, to suppose that the capacity or "potency" of life is latent in all matter!

The "elements," "atoms," and "molecules" of modern science, partly physical and partly metaphysical, though altogether hypothetical, are, nevertheless, seldom philosophical, for the simple reason that they are regarded solely as phenomenal. The Law of Avogadro involved a generalization as to physical structure and number, and the later experiments of Prof. Neumann deduced the same law mathematically from the first principles of the mechanical theory of gases, but it remained for Prof. Crookes to perceive the philosophical necessity of a primordial substratum, *protyle*, and so, as pointed out in the S.D., to lay the foundations of "*Metachemistry*" ; in other words, a complete philosophy of physics and

chemistry that shall take the place of mere hypothesis and empiricism. If one or two generalizations deduced as logical or mathematical necessities from the phenomena of physics and chemistry have been able to work such revolutions in the old chemistry, what may we not expect from a complete synthesis that shall grasp universals by a law that encompasses the whole domain of matter? And yet this complete synthesis has been in the possession of the true occultist for ages. Glimpses of this philosophy have been sufficient to give to minds like Kepler, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer, and, lastly, to Prof. Crookes, ideas that claimed and held the interested attention of the scientific world. While, at certain points, such writers supplement and corroborate each other, neither anywhere nor altogether do they reveal the complete synthesis, for none of them possessed it, and yet it has all along existed.

Let the reader remember these “Monads” of Leibniz, every one of which is a living mirror of the universe, every monad reflecting every other, and compare this view and definition with certain Sanskrit Ślokas translated by Sir William Jones, in which it is said that the creative source of the Divine Mind, “hidden in a veil of thick darkness, formed *mirrors of the atoms of the world, and cast reflection from its own face on every atom*” (S.D., Vol. I, p. 623)

It may be humiliating to “Modern Exact Science” and repugnant to the whole of Christendom, to have to admit that the Pagans whom they have despised, and the “Heathen Scriptures” they long ridiculed or ignored, nevertheless possess a fund of wisdom never dreamed of under Western skies. They have the lesson, however, to learn that Science by no means originated in, nor is it confined to, the West, nor are superstition and ignorance confined to the East.

It can easily be shown that every real discovery and every important advancement in modern science have already been anticipated centuries ago by ancient science and philosophy. It is true that these ancient doctrines have been embodied in unknown languages and symbols, and recorded in books inaccessible to western minds till a very recent date. Far beyond all this inaccessibility, however, as a cause preventing these old truths from reaching modern times, has been the prejudice, the scorn and contempt of ancient learning manifested by the leaders of modern thought.

Nor is the lesson yet learned that bigotry and scorn are never the mark of wisdom or the harbingers of learning; for still, with comparatively few exceptions, any claim or discussion of these ancient doctrines is met with contempt and scorn. The record has, however, been at least outlined and presented to the world. As the authors of *The Secret Doctrine* have remarked, these doctrines may not be largely accepted by the present generation, but during the twentieth century they will become known and appreciated.

The scope and bearing of philosophy itself are hardly yet appreciated by modern thought, because of its materialistic tendency. A complete science of metaphysics and a complete philosophy of science are not yet even conceived of as possible; hence the ancient wisdom by its very vastness has escaped recognition in modern times. That the authors of ancient wisdom have spoken from at least two whole planes of conscious experience beyond that of our every-day “sense-perception” is to us inconceivable, and yet such is the fact; and why should the modern advocate of evolution be shocked and staggered by such a disclosure? It but justifies his hypothesis and extends its theatre. Is it because the present custodians of this ancient learning do not scramble for recognition on the stock exchange, and enter into competition in the marts of the world? If the practical outcome of such competition needed illustration, Mr. Keely might serve as an example. The discoveries of the age are already whole centuries in advance of its ethical culture, and the knowledge that should place still further power in the hands of a few individuals whose ethical code is below, rather than above, that of the ignorant, toiling, suffering masses, could only minister to anarchy and increase oppression. On these higher planes of consciousness the law of progress is absolute;

knowledge and power go hand in hand with beneficence to man, not alone to the individual possessors of wisdom, but to the whole human race. The custodians of the higher knowledge are equally by both motive and development almoners of the divine. These are the very conditions of the higher consciousness referred to. The synthesis of occult science becomes, therefore, the higher synthesis of the faculties of man. What matter, therefore, if the ignorant shall scout its very existence, or treat it with ridicule and contempt? Those who know of its existence and who have learned something of its scope and nature can, in their turn, afford to smile, but with pity and sorrow, at the willing bondage to ignorance and misery that scorns enlightenment and closes its eyes to the plainest truths of experience.

Leaving, for the present, the field of physics and cosmogenesis, it may be profitable to consider some of the applications of these doctrines to the functions and life of man.

The intellect derived from philosophy
is similar to a charioteer; for it
is present with our desires, and
always conducts them to the beautiful.

— DEMOPHILUS.

“In reality, as Occult Philosophy teaches us, everything which changes is organic; it has the life principle in it, and it has all the potentiality of the higher lives. If, as we say, all in nature is an aspect of the one element, and life is universal, how can there be such a thing as an inorganic atom!” * Man is a perfected animal, but before he could have reached perfection even on the animal plane, there must have dawned upon him the light of a higher plane. Only the perfected animal can cross the threshold of the next higher, or the human plane, and as he does so there shines upon him the ray from the supra-human plane. Therefore, as the dawn of humanity illumines the animal plane, and as a guiding star lures the Monad to higher consciousness, so the dawn of divinity illumines the human plane, luring the monad to the supra-human plane of consciousness. This is neither more nor less than the philosophical and metaphysical aspect of the law of evolution. Man has not one principle more than the tiniest insect; he is, however, “the vehicle of a fully developed *Monad*, self-conscious and deliberately following its own line of progress, whereas in the insect, and even the higher animal, the higher triad of principles is absolutely dormant.”† The original *Monad* has, therefore, locked within it the potentiality of divinity. It is plainly, therefore, a misnomer to call that process of thought a “Synthetic Philosophy” that deals only with phenomena and ends with matter on the physical plane. These two generalizations of Occult Philosophy, endowing every atom with the potentiality of life, and regarding every insect or animal as already possessing the potentialities of the higher planes though these powers are yet dormant, add to the ordinary Spencerian theory of evolution precisely that element that it lacks, *viz.* the metaphysical and philosophical; and, thus endowed, the theory becomes synthetical.

* [*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1891, Pt. II, p. 29; reprinted as *Secret Doctrine Commentary: Stanzas I-IV*, Theosophical University Press, 1994; Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, Vol. X, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1988, p. 383.]

† [*Ibid.*, Pt. I (1890), p. 13; *Collected Writings*, Vol. X, p. 313.]

The *Monad*, then, is essentially and potentially the same in the lowest vegetable organism, up through all forms and gradations of animal life to man, *and beyond*. There is a gradual unfolding of its potentialities from “Monera” to man, and there are two whole planes

of consciousness, the sixth and seventh “senses,” not yet unfolded to the average humanity. Every monad that is enclosed in a form, and hence limited by matter, becomes conscious on its own plane and in its own degree. Consciousness, therefore, no less than sensitiveness, belongs to plants as well as to animals. Self-consciousness belongs to man, because, while embodied in a *form*, the higher triad of principles, Âtma-Buddhi-Manas, is no longer dormant, but active. This activity is, however, far from being fully developed. When this activity has become fully developed, man will already have become conscious on a still higher plane, endowed with the sixth and the opening of the seventh sense, and will have become a “god” in the sense given to that term by Plato and his followers.

In thus giving this larger and completer meaning to the law of evolution, the Occult Philosophy entirely eliminates the “missing links” of modern science, and, by giving to man a glimpse of his nature and destiny, not only points out the line of the higher evolution, but puts him in possession of the means of achieving it.

The “atoms” and “monads” of the Secret Doctrine are very different from the atoms and molecules of modern science. To the latter these are mere particles of matter endowed with blind force; to the former they are the “dark nucleoles,” and potentially, “Gods,” conscious and intelligent from their primeval embodiment at the beginning of differentiation in the dawn of the Manvantara. There are no longer any hard and fast lines between the “organic” and the “inorganic”; between the “living” and “dead” matter. Every atom is endowed with and moved by intelligence, and is conscious in its own degree, on its own plane of development. This is a glimpse of the *One Life* that —

Runs through all time, extends through all extent,
Lives undivided, operates unspent.*

*[Based on lines in *Essay on Man*, Bk. 1, by Alexander Pope.]

It may be conceived that the “Ego” in man is a monad that has gathered to itself innumerable experiences through aeons of time, slowly unfolding its latent potencies through plane after plane of matter. It is hence called the “*eternal pilgrim*.”

The *Mānasic*, or mind principle, is cosmic and universal. It is the creator of all forms, and the basis of all law in nature. Not so with consciousness. Consciousness is a condition of the monad as the result of embodiment in matter and the dwelling in a physical form. Selfconsciousness, which from the animal plane looking upward is the beginning of perfection, from the divine plane looking downward is the perfection of selfishness and the curse of separateness. It is the “world of illusion” that man has created for himself. “Māyā is the perceptive faculty of every Ego which considers itself a Unit, separate from, and independent of, the One Infinite and Eternal Sat or ‘Be-ness’.”* The “eternal pilgrim” must therefore mount higher, and flee from the plane of self-consciousness it has struggled so hard to reach.

*[Blavatsky, *Transactions*, Pt. I, p. 26; *Collected Writings*, Vol. X, p. 327.]

The complex structure that we call “Man” is made up of a congeries of almost innumerable “Lives.” Not only every microscopic cell of which the tissues are composed, but the molecules and atoms of which these cells are composed, are permeated with the essence of the “One Life.” Every so-called organic cell is known to have its nucleus, a center of finer or more sensitive matter. The nutritive, all the formative and functional processes, consist of flux and re-flux, of inspiration and expiration, to and from the nucleus.

The nucleus is therefore in its own degree and after its kind a “monad” imprisoned in a “form.” Every microscopic cell, therefore, has a consciousness and an intelligence of its own,

and man thus consists of innumerable “lives.” This is but physiological synthesis, logically deduced no less from the known facts in physiology and histology than the logical sequence of the philosophy of occultism. Health of the body as a whole depends on the integrity of all its parts, and more especially upon their harmonious association and co-operation. A diseased tissue is one in which a group of individual cells refuse to cooperate, and wherein is set up discordant action, using less or claiming more than their due share of food or energy. Disease of the very tissue of man’s body is neither more nor less than the “sin of separateness.” Moreover, the grouping of cells is upon the principle of hierarchies. Smaller groups are subordinate to larger congeries, and these again are subordinate to larger, or to the whole. Every microscopic cell therefore typifies and epitomizes man, as man is an epitome of the Universe. As already remarked, the “Eternal Pilgrim,” the Alter-Ego in man, is a monad progressing through the ages. By right and by endowment the ego is king in the domain of man’s bodily life. It descended into matter in the cosmic process till it reached the mineral plane, and then journeyed upward through the “three kingdoms” till it reached the human plane. The elements of its being, like the cells and molecules of man’s body, are groupings of structures accessory or subordinate to it. The human monad or Ego is therefore akin to all below it and heir to all above it, linked by indissoluble bonds to spirit and matter, “God” and “Nature.” The attributes that it gathers, and the faculties that it unfolds, are but the latent and dormant potentialities awaking to conscious life. The tissue cells constitute man’s bodily structure, but the order in which they are arranged, the principle upon which they are grouped, constituting the human *form*, is not simply an evolved shape from the lower animal plane, but an *involved* principle from a higher plane, an older world, viz. the “Lunar Pitris.” “Hanuman the Monkey” antedates Darwin’s “missing link” by thousands of millenniums. So also the Mānasic, or mind element, with its cosmic and infinite potentialities, is not merely the developed “instinct” of the animal. Mind is the latent or active potentiality of *Cosmic Ideation*, the essence of every form, the basis of every law, the potency of every principle in the universe. Human thought is the reflection or reproduction in the realm of man’s consciousness of these forms, laws, and principles. Hence man senses and apprehends nature just as nature unfolds in him. When, therefore, the Monad has passed through the form of the animal ego, involved and unfolded the human form, the higher triad of principles awakens from the sleep of ages, overshadowed by the “Mānasaputra,” *built into* its essence and substance. How could man epitomize Cosmos if he did not touch it at every point and involve it in every principle? If man’s being is woven in the web of destiny, his potencies and possibilities take hold of divinity as the woof and pattern of his boundless life. Why, then, should he grow weary or disheartened? Alas! why should he be degraded, this heir of all things!

The peculiarity also of this theology, and in which its transcendence consists, is this, that it does not consider the highest God to be the principle of beings, but the *principle of principles*, *i.e.*, of deiform processions from itself, all which are eternally rooted in the unfathomable depths of the immensely great source of their existence, and of which they may be called supersensuous ramifications and superluminous blossoms.*

 *Thomas Taylor, Introduction to *The Mystical Initiations; or, Hymns of Orpheus*, London, 1787. [See Appendix, *Hymns and Initiations*, Prometheus Trust, 2003.]

It has often been thought a strange thing that there are no dogmas and no creeds in Theosophy or Occultism. Is Theosophy a religion? is often asked. No, it is religion. Is it a philosophy? No, it is philosophy. Is it a science? No, it is *science*. If a consensus of religion,

philosophy, and science is possible, and if it has ever been reached in human thought, that thought must long since have passed the boundaries of all creeds and ceased to dogmatize. Hence comes the difficulty in answering questions. No proposition stands apart or can be taken separately without limiting and often distorting its meaning. Every proposition has to be considered and held as subservient to the synthetic whole. Really intelligent people, capable of correct reasoning, often lack sufficient interest to endeavor to apprehend the universality of these principles. They expect, where they have any interest at all in the subject, to be told “all about it” in an hour’s conversation, or to learn it from a column in some newspaper; all about man, all about Nature, all about Deity; and then either to reject it or to make it a part of their previous creed. These are really no wiser than the penny-a-liner who catches some point and turns it into ridicule, or makes it a butt for coarse jest or silly sarcasm, and then complacently imagines that he has demolished the whole structure! If such persons were for one moment placed face to face with their own folly, they would be amazed. The most profound thinker and the most correct reasoner might well afford to devote a lifetime to the apprehension of the philosophy of occultism, and other lifetimes to mastering the scientific details, while at the same time his ethics and his religious life are made consistent with the principle of altruism and the Brotherhood of man. If this be regarded as too hard a task, it is, nevertheless, the line of the higher evolution of man, and, soon or late, every soul must follow it, retrograde, or cease to be.

Man is but a link in an endless chain of being; a sequence of a past eternity of causes and processes; a potentiality born into time, but spanning two eternities, his past and his future, and in his consciousness these are all one, *Duration*, the *ever-present*. In a former article man was shown to be a series of almost innumerable “Lives,” and these lives, these living entities called “cells,” were shown to be associated together on the principle of hierarchies, grouped according to rank and order, service and development, and this was shown to be the “physical synthesis” of man, and the organic synthesis as well. Disease was also shown to be the organic nutritive, or physiological “sin of separateness.” Every department of man’s being, every organ and cell of his body, was also shown to possess a consciousness and an intelligence of its own, held, however, subordinate to the whole. In health every action is synchronous and rhythmical, however varied and expanded, however intense and comprehensive. Enough is already known in modern physics to justify all these statements, at least by analogy. The principle of electrical induction and vibration, the quantitative and qualitative transmission of vibration and its exact registration, and their application to telegraphy, the telephone, and the phonograph, have upset all previous theories of physics and physiology. “A metallic plate, for instance, can that talk like a human being? Yea or nay? Mr. Bouillard — and he was no common man — said No; to accept such a fact were to upset all our notions of physiology. So said Mr. Bouillard, right in the face of Edison’s phonograph in full Academy, and he throttled the luckless interpreter of the famous American inventor, accusing it of ventriloquism.”*

*Ochorowicz, *Mental Suggestion*, p. 291. [*De la Suggestion mentale et le calcul des probabilités*, Paris, 1887; preface by C. Richet.]

Occultism teaches that the Ego both precedes and survives the physical body. The phenomena of man’s life and the process of his thought can be apprehended and explained on no other theory. Modern physiology teaches in detail certain facts regarding the life of man. It, moreover, groups these facts and deduces certain so-called principles and laws, but such a thing as a synthesis of the *whole man* is seldom even attempted. “Psychology” is mere empiricism, represented by disjointed facts, and these, of course, but little understood, and more often misinterpreted.

Ask the modern physiologist if man can *think* when unconscious, and he will answer No; and if asked if man can be conscious and not think, he will as readily answer No. Both answers will be based on what is known, or supposed to be known, of memory. The idea that the real man, the Ego, is always conscious on some plane, and that it “thinks,” as we ordinarily use the term, only on the lower plane through the physical brain, in terms of extension and duration, or space and time, is seldom in the least apprehended by the modern physiologist. If, however, one grasps the idea of the Ego as the real man dwelling in the physical body and using it as its instrument through which it is related to space and time, perception, sensation, thought, and feeling, the gaps in physiology and psychology begin to disappear. Here again it should be particularly borne in mind that this doctrine of the Ego must be considered in the light of the complete synthesis of occultism, and just to the extent that this is intelligently done will the significance of the Ego appear.

The brief and concise outline of the philosophy of occultism given in the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine* is therefore very significant, and the student who desires to apprehend that which follows in these two large volumes ought to study this outline very carefully. No subsequent proposition, no principle in the life of man, can be correctly understood apart from it. The subject-matter following is necessarily fragmentary, but the outline is both inclusive and philosophical, and if one reasons logically and follows the plainest analogies he can never go far astray. The relation of mind to brain, of thought to consciousness, of life to matter, and of man to Nature and to Deity, is there clearly defined; not, indeed, in all its details, but in a philosophical modulus, to be worked out in reason and in life. The all-pervading Life, the cyclic or periodical movements, the periods of action and of repose, and the intimate relations and inter-dependences of all things apply to Cosmos, and equally to every atom in its vast embrace.

Students sometimes complain that they cannot understand, that the subject is so vast, and so deep and intricate, and not made clear. It is because they do not realize what they have undertaken. Occultism can neither be taught nor learned in “a few easy lessons.” The “object lessons” sometimes given by H.P.B., almost always misunderstood and misapplied, though often explained at the time, served as often to excite vulgar curiosity and personal abuse as to arrest attention and study. If, before the advent of the T.S. in the face of the creeds of Christendom, the materialism of science, the indifference and supercilious scorn of Agnosticism, and the Babel of spiritualism, it had been proposed to begin at the foundations and reconstruct our entire knowledge of Nature and of man; to show the unity and the foundations of the world’s religions; to eliminate from science all its “missing links”; to make Agnosticism gnostic; and to place the science of psychology and the nature and laws of mind and soul over against “Mediumship”; it would have been held as an herculean task, and declared impossible of accomplishment. Now that the thing has virtually been accomplished and this body of knowledge presented to the world, people think it strange that they cannot compass it all, as the poet Burns is said to have written some of his shorter poems, “while standing on one leg”!

Again, people complain at the unfamiliar terms and the strange words imported from foreign languages. Yet if one were to undertake the study of physics, chemistry, music, or medicine, quite as great obstacles have to be overcome. Is it a strange thing, then, that the science that includes all these, and undertakes to give a synthesis of the whole realm of Nature and of life, should have its own nomenclature?

Beyond all these necessary and natural obstacles, there is another, *viz.*, that contentious spirit that disputes and opposes every point before it is fairly stated or understood. Suppose one ignorant of mathematics were to proceed in the same manner and say, “I don’t like that proposition,” “I don’t see *why* they turn a six upside down to make a nine,” “Why don’t two and two make five?” and so on, how long would it take such a one to learn

mathematics? In the study of the Secret Doctrine it is not a matter of likes or dislikes, of belief or unbelief, but solely a matter of intelligence and understanding. He who acknowledges his ignorance and yet is unwilling to lay aside his likes and dislikes, and even his creeds and dogmas, for the time, in order to see what is presented in its own light and purely on its merits, has neither need nor use for the Secret Doctrine. Even where a greater number of propositions are accepted or “believed” and a few are rejected, the synthetic whole is entirely lost sight of. But, says someone, this is a plea for blind credulity, and an attempt to bind the mind and the conscience of man to a blind acceptance of these doctrines. No one but the ignorant or the dishonest can make such an assertion in the face of the facts. Listen to the following from p. xix, Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine*: “It is above everything important to keep in mind that no theosophical book acquires the least additional value from pretended authority.” If that be advocating blind credulity, let the enemies of the T.S. make the most of it. If any authority pertains to *The Secret Doctrine*, it must be sought inside, not outside. It must rest on its comprehensiveness, its completeness, its continuity and reasonableness; in other words, on its *philosophical synthesis*, a thing missed alike by the superficial and the contentious, by the indolent, the superstitious, and the dogmatic.

O wise man: you have asked rightly. Now listen carefully. The illusive fancies arising from error are not conclusive. [verse 196]

The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring, and after having themselves crossed the ocean of embodied existence, help those who try to do the same thing, without personal motives. [verse 39]

— *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi (Crest Jewel of Wisdom)*, by Śaṅkarāchārya
[tr. Mohini M. Chatterji]