

GOTTFRIED DE PURUCKER on NATURE

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY, p.169-173

Now, you remember that we spoke in other studies of the so-called “laws of Nature”, and it was pointed out that in our esoteric teachings there are no “laws of Nature”, and this for two reasons: first, because **there is no such thing as “Nature”**. Nature is not an entity; it is an abstraction. Nature is not a goddess or a god; it is not a being or a planet ; it is not a sphere or a universe. Nature is the abstract aggregate, so to speak, the immense aggregate, of all beings and things, interblending and acting and interacting upon each other: spiritual, intermediate, and lower; and their interblending and interconnexion produce what we call “Nature”. The beings here referred to, of course, are of all grades, from the most material, the most degraded, up to the highest, of any Hierarchy. And the second reason is that these *aggregated beings* that we call very conveniently by the term of Nature, are not “ruled” by “law”.

Who or what makes any laws that Nature shall or must follow or does follow? No one, neither devil nor god. But the query may and ought to arise: Does not Nature follow certain courses, and when the circumstances and conditions are identical, are not those courses always the same, which are what we call *laws*? Of course, yes; nobody denies a fact. We deny the explanation. Explanations are important. If a man comes to you and says something to you and you find that he is merely talking, giving you words when you want the bread of life, are you going to take what he says for truth ? Are you going to take the words only, and be satisfied with husks? Or are you going to think, and say: “My dear Sir, I have looked into what you tell me; what you say is merely words; nobody denies the facts that are; but I want an explanation of those words and of those facts. I want something that will feed my soul”. Do you get any food for your soul when you hear mere talk about mechanical, incomprehensible “laws of Nature”? Do you realize that no great thinker in antiquity at any time ever used such empty language as “laws of Nature” with the concomitant ideas — or lack of ideas? Never.

The expression containing the notion “laws of Nature” is a modern product derived from two sources: first from the Christian religion; and second from modern scientific materialism. Men, during all the ages, have been fully aware that “Nature” pursued certain very regular courses, modernly called “laws”, and always followed the same courses; but our forebears had other and wiser explanations of these regular courses in natural phenomena, for they knew more of the inner mysteries of being, because they had true Religion behind and within themselves; they had a universal philosophy; and last but not least they had what were called Initiates, who personally could go behind and into Nature, enter into her and know her at first hand.

Now what causes Nature to act as she does? The modern scientist will tell you that he means by the “laws of Nature” those sequences of events which always happen in the same way when the circumstances and conditions are the same; the regular order of phenomena and forces. The Christian theologian tells you what he means by the “laws of Nature” probably somewhat as follows: “Well, brother, it is probably the Will of God Almighty, who, it is true, has not vouchsafed to us a full explanation of these difficult problems; but it is fundamentally the Divine Will which has once and for all time created the machine of Nature and has set it in running”.

About two or three or four or five or six hundred years ago these gentlemen had another explanation, somewhat different from the above, because modern science had not yet begun to be aggressively vocal with views or a view of its own; and this other theological explanation was that it was God Almighty Himself who personally and actively guided and ordered these things which

“Nature” produces. “He sent his rain upon the just and the unjust; he caused the sun to shine, and the rain to fall”, and much more to the same tune.

But then came along certain sceptical thinkers and they said, “Ha, ha, God the Creator! Then He created diseases; He creates the evils in men's hearts. It must be so, not otherwise, because He created man and all things else, and, being all-wise, He must have known what He was doing. Therefore, why punish a man for doing what he cannot avoid doing, because God created man and his mind and his heart and his will?”

So the theologians' later idea, apparently, was that God manufactured the world with His own Almighty Hand, and set it to spinning, and set the various elements thereof each to running in its own way, and let it go forth with a primal impress of the Divine Intelligence upon it. I think that I am quoting correctly the early modern theological idea.

Now the Initiates, knowing Nature's arcana, had words fitted to express exactly what they desired to say; words which are impressive and which are not mere abstractions; although when convenient they too used abstractions; they used such words as “Principles” and “Elements” of Nature. It is quite true that such words are catchwords, technical words; but they knew precisely what they meant by them. They also spoke mystically and theologically of the “gods”. It is one of the most lamentable things for scholars to-day, that owing to the deliberate and wilful suppression by the Christian Church of so many of the truths of antiquity, the average scholar or student has no more idea of what the ancients meant by the “gods” and their actions, than he has of what is taking place at this moment on the star Sirius. Yet, when understood and properly explained, Polytheism is seen to be a wonderful and a sublime teaching. It does not mean, for instance, that *each god* is as great and as single as, or omnipotent and omniscient like, the Christian theological notion of their God. Not at all. The gods, *i.e.*, spiritual entities, are the higher inhabitants of Nature. They are an intrinsic part of Nature itself, for they are its informing Principles; they are as much subject to the *wills* of still higher Beings – call these wills the “laws” of higher beings, if you will – as we are, and as are the animals below us.

We are gods to the beings composing our bodies. The atoms in our body are, in their way, conscious, and we are like gods to them. And what they might call the “laws of Nature” are what we think and what we will. Nature is conscious from beginning to end, in varying degrees; although in reality there is no “beginning” and no “end”, which are vain dreams.

Furthermore, **Nature has two aspects, a positive aspect and a negative aspect.** Please understand that I am using the word “Nature”, with the meaning pointed out before, because the ordinary expression is convenient, the term is understood; if a speaker has to spend some three minutes or more in order to explain each time anew an already explained use of a word, he will never arrive at the end of what he wishes to say; so, once having made an explanation of what we mean by “Nature” and “laws”, we may use these or other common words because they are convenient.

Our Teachers also have used these words constantly; and H.P. Blavatsky constantly speaks of the “laws of Nature”, and the “fundamental law of Karma”; so again does our present Teacher, Katherine Tingley, constantly speak of the “Higher Law”. Who has not heard highly educated people say that the sun “rises in the east”? Of course they and we know that the sun does not “rise in the east”. Men very frequently find it useful and convenient to use ordinary language in order intelligently to voice a thought. But this does not mean that they should be held to rigid literal account for what every sane man should know perfectly well is merely a convenient mode of expression.

The so-called “laws of Nature”, therefore, are the *action and interaction and interplay of consciousnesses and wills* – in the Kosmos – not so much considered as personalized consciousnesses and wills, but by us those words are used more as abstractions, meaning the combined and aggregate

action-results of all consciousnesses and wills in the Kosmos. Yet actually, when *traced to causes, to their sources*, these “laws” are the consciousnesses and wills in action of the multimyriad hosts of beings that *compose and are “Nature” itself*, working through, in, and by, “matter”, their vehicles abstractly called “Nature”.

“Nature” has these two poles or sides: the positive pole or side and the negative pole or side. Examine yourself closely, and you will find that even your mind is dual, like everything else, for it mirrors Nature. It has its passive side, its “unconscious reflexes”, just as the body has, just as Nature has. It has also its positive or active side. There is a great difference between the conscious will and the unconscious will. Take the body as an instance of what I am trying to say; *e.g.*, the beating of the heart, the automatic winking of the eyes, the processes of digestion. These are unconsciously performed acts, under the control of unconscious or semi-conscious elemental entities; when normally functioning, man’s will has nothing self-consciously to do with them. They represent the passive side of his will as expressed through those elemental minds. But he also has an active or positive side in which he wills and thinks, and acts accordingly, and for these latter things he is held responsible, he incurs karmic responsibility.

So is it exactly the same, in Nature; as is illustrated by this example of the passive and active wills in man’s own mind and body. The “laws of physical nature” are the action-results of the passive side of the beings and consciousnesses who and which compose what is called “Nature”; and *the higher those beings are, the less is their active or Positive side manifest* on the lower planes.

Work therefore with Nature, and not against her; violate none of her laws, if you desire health and happiness. Remember what H.P. Blavatsky says in *The Voice of the Silence*: Let us paraphrase it: Work with nature and follow her; become one with her, and she will make obeisance unto you as an active, *self-conscious* Co-worker — a Master. Happiness can be found only in obedience to this fundamental truth of inseparable unity. There is no happiness in unbrotherhood, in acting solely for yourself, in trying to impose your personal will on others. *It is by giving*, that life is found in all its beauty, by giving the self to the ALL. There is no happiness like it; there is no way for inner development to come so quickly and so surely and so safely to the student as that which lies in giving up the personal self to nobly impersonal aims. It is the Way to Peace and Power.

OCCULT GLOSSARY

Nature. The consciousness-side of Nature is composed of vast hierarchies of gods, developed cosmical spirits, spiritual entities, cosmic graduates in the University of Life. The material side of Nature is the heterogeneous matter, the material world in its many various planes, in all stages of imperfection — but all these stages filled with armies of entities evolving and growing. In the Theosophical philosophy, *i.e.*, the Esoteric Philosophy, the proper term for Nature in modern Theosophical usage is Prakriti or still more accurately Mûlaprakriti — the ever-living kosmic Producer, the eternally Fecund Mother, of the Universe.

When a Theosophist speaks of Nature, unless he limits the term to the physical world, he never means the physical world alone, but the vast reaches of Universal Kosmos and more particularly the inner realms, the causal factors of the boundless ALL. Hence, a growing understanding of Nature in this sense – which is another way of saying an understanding of Reality – obviously provides the only basis of a religion founded on the changeless realities.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY, p.21 on dualistic character of nature

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky says on page 631 of the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*:

Esoteric philosophy, teaching an *objective* Idealism – though it regards the objective Universe and all in it as *Mâyâ*, temporary illusion – draws a practical distinction between collective illusion, *Mahâmâyâ*, from the purely metaphysical standpoint, and the objective relations in it between various conscious *Egos* so long as this illusion lasts.

The teaching, as all older students of the Esoteric School know – and I believe that many of them are here present this evening – is that *Mâyâ* is thus called from the action of *Mûlaprakriti*, or *root-nature*, the co-ordinate principle of that other line of co-active consciousness which we call *Parabrahman*. We remember that we discussed these questions at our former meeting, and we say that from the moment when manifestation begins, it acts dualistically, that is to say, that everything in Nature from that point onwards is crossed by pairs of opposites, such as long and short, high and low, night and day, good and evil, consciousness and non-consciousness, etc., — and that all these things are essentially *mâyic* or illusory — real while they last, but the lasting is not eternal. It is through and by these pairs of opposites that the self-conscious soul learns Truth.

What is the basis of morals? This is the most important question that can be asked of any system of thought. Is morality based on the dicta of man? Is morality based on the conviction in most men's hearts that for human safety it is necessary to have certain abstract rules which it is merely *convenient* to follow? Are we mere opportunists? or is morality, ethics, based on Truth, which it is not merely expedient for man to follow, but needful, necessary? Surely upon the latter!

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY, p.32 on Man and Nature

The appearance and evolution of man as a human being on this planet Terra, follow the same line of Nature's wonderful analogical working that a planet does in space, or a sun does with its brothers of a solar system, the planets. Man, thus being in very truth a child of Infinity, the offspring of the Ineffable, has latent within himself the capacity of the Universe.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY, p.41-2 on Nature is not perfect

“Nature” is imperfect, hence of necessity makes “mistakes”, because its action derives from hosts of Entities at work. What we see around us all the time is proof of it. “Nature” is not perfect. If it had sprung from the “hands of the Immutable Deity”, hence perfect and immutable like its Parent, knowing no change, it would be a Perfect Work. It is much to the contrary, as we know, and its imperfections or “mistakes” arise from the fact that the beings existing in and working in and controlling and *making* nature extend in endless hierarchies from the Inmost of the Inmost, from the Highest of the Highest, downwards forever, upwards forever, in all degrees of imperfection and of perfection, which is precisely what we see in the scenes of manifestation surrounding us. Our intuition tells us the truth concerning this, and we should trust it.

This was well known to the ancients. The Stoics expressed it and taught it in their magnificent philosophy. The Stoics of Rome and of Greece originally expressed it by what they called Theocracy. Theocracy has a compound meaning – *Theos*, a god, divine being, and *krasis*, meaning an intermingling – an intermingling of everything in the universe, intermingling with everything else, nothing possibly separable from the rest, the Whole.

It is the cardinal heresy of the Oriental religions to-day, notably in that of the Buddhists, if a man thinks that he is separate or separable from the universe. This is their cardinal heresy, the most fundamental error that man can make. The early Christians called it the “sin against the Holy Ghost”. If we look around us and if we look within, we realize that we are one entity, as it were, one great human host, one living tree of human life, woven inseparably *into* and *from* Nature, the ALL.