

Boris MOURAVIEFF

GNÔSIS

STUDY AND COMMENTARIES
ON THE
ESOTERIC TRADITION OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOXY

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FIRST VOLUME
(Exoteric CYCLE)

Diagrams prepared by Michel Droin

The present work, in three volumes, has formed the subject
of lectures given by the author at the University of Geneva

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC HISTORY :

L'histoire de Russie mal connue (out of print).

Le Testament de Pierre le Grand, légende et réalité. Neuchâtel,
La Baconnière.

Le Problème de l'Autorité super-étatique. Neuchâtel, La
Baconnière.

L'Histoire a-t-elle un sens? In "La Revue suisse d'Histoire"
t. IV, fasc. 4.

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Neuchâtel, La Baconnière (Diploma of the "Hautes Études
Internationales).

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La Monarchie russe: Paris, Payot.

In preparation:

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De l'Origine du peuple russe, les Russes sont-ils des Scythes?

L'Esprit russe à travers l'Histoire.

ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY :

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Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. Bruxelles, in "Synthèses", no. 129.

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Bruxelles, in "Synthèses", no. 138. (Out of print, reprinted by C.E.C.E., 1964).

Le Substantiel et l'Essentiel. Bruxelles, in "Synthèses" no.144.

Les Croyances slaves pré-chrétiennes. Bruxelles, in "Synthèses",
no. 161.

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l'Orthodoxie orientale.

T. I (cycle exotérique). Paris, La Colombe,

(Prize Victor-Emile Michelet of esoteric literature, 1962).

Gnôsis. T.II (mesoteric cycle). Paris, La Colombe, 1963.

Gnôsis. T.III (esoteric cycle). Paris, La Colombe, 1965.

In preparation :

Les Stromates. Notes sur l'enseignement ésotérique.

(Notes on esoteric teaching).

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author wishes to draw the reader's attention to the term observation which is the translation of the French word, constatation. There is no word in the English language that corresponds exactly to the latter term.

When used in connection with the Doctrine, constatation is the student's recognition of the object of his observation within the limits of the split of his individual Present, whose duration, we know, is equal to that of the respiration¹.

Only constatations practised in this way, especially during the exercises of introspection, are of some worth. In other words, only they contribute to the esoteric evolution of the Personality.

This is why constatation or observation is of major importance in the psychological method of the teaching of the Doctrine, which is the object of this book.

¹ Supra, pp. 229-231 and t. II, p. 238.

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world², that come to nought :

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew".

(I. Corinthians, II, 6-8)

² In the original: Nor of the Archontes of this Eon. Novum Testamentum graece et latine. Textum graecum recensuit, latinum ex Vulgate. Tertia editio critica recognita. By Frederic Brandscheid, Fribourg, 1907; P. 2 p. 258.

ADDRESS TO THE READER

Persons interested in esoteric problems have perhaps read Pierre Ouspensky's work, published after his death, by his rightful heirs, under the title "Fragments d'un enseignement inconnu"¹. The ideas contained therein have been gathered by the author from "G."². And, according to "G.", the basis of his teaching would have been: "For those who already know, I will say that this is esoteric Christianity"³.

It is strange therefore that the title refers to an unknown teaching. Esoteric Christian Tradition has always remained alive in certain convents of Greece, Russia and elsewhere. Though it is true that this knowledge was in essence hermetic, its existence was nevertheless known and access to it never forbidden to those who showed a keen interest in these problems.

If some passages may incline the reader to think that the book is in some respects a kind of syncretism of several traditional teachings⁴, we, on our part, have no doubt that the "Fragments" of the system divulged in Ouspensky's work are derived for the most part from the Revelation, born of the Great Esoteric Brotherhood to which there is an allusion in the Epistle to the Romans⁵ of the Apostle Saint Paul.

¹ Paris, Stock, 1950. In English : In Search of the miraculous, London, Routledge, 1950.

² Fragments, p. 22.

³ Ibid. p 102 In italic letters in the text.

⁴ In particular p 15.

⁵ Romans, VIII, 28-30.

These fragments therefore stem from the true source. However, as correctly indicated in the title, Ouspensky's work does contain the fragments of a Tradition, until recently only orally transmitted and of which a comprehensive study can open the way to Revelation.

Our relations, with Pierre Ouspensky, whom we knew well, have been described in an article published in "Synthèses"⁶. Here we must reaffirm that despite a keen desire to publish his work during his lifetime, Ouspensky always hesitated to do so. We strongly insisted at the time on the danger of publishing only fragments and drew his attention to ambiguities in his exposition of certain essential points. The fact that "Fragments" was issued only after the author's death, namely more than twenty years after the book had been written, vindicates our point of view.

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The following study is directly based on the sources of the Christian Oriental Tradition: the sacred texts, the commentaries of them, in particular the collection of the Philokalia, and lastly the teaching and discipline as transmitted by those who were regularly invested. Similarities will therefore appear between our study and Ouspensky's work since the sources are in part the same. But a careful examination will illustrate more especially the incomplete character of Ouspensky's work, as well as his mistakes and deviations from the true doctrine. The importance ascribed to diagrams in Esoteric Tradition is well known. Their purpose is to allow

⁶ Woluwe-Saint Lambert, Brussels, Ed. Synthèses, N° 138 of November 1957.

the transmission of knowledge throughout the centuries, even though civilizations may perish. The serious errors in the explanation of a particularly important diagram⁷ have been indicated in the article in "Synthèses" referred to above. Even more open to criticism is the place, allotted to man in the diagram entitled "Diagram of all living things"⁸. After numerous arguments to demonstrate the "nothingness" of esoterically undeveloped man and the insignificance of his position within the Universe, man has been placed in this artificially complicated diagram on a level with the Angels and Archangels. That is to say, within the Kingdom of God, represented by the uppersquare, although Christ categorically affirmed that the entrance to this Kingdom was forbidden to those who had not been "born again" - an allusion to the second Birth⁹, which is the subject and aim of all esoteric work. In this diagram, the place of the man "without" - according to the Gospel¹⁰ - in other words of man within whom this work has not yet borne fruit but whose latent faculties have to be developed, is in fact between the two squares where he forms a link between the visible and the invisible world. Such examples could be multiplied.

A still more serious error is the concept of the machine-man, resulting in his irresponsibility¹¹. This is at formal variance with the doctrine of sin, repentance and access to Salvation, the basis of the teaching of Christ.

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Complete sincerity, human intelligence and goodwill are not enough to prevent mistakes and deviations in all matters pertaining to the domain of Revelation and not entirely prompted by it. Mistakes and deviations to be found in "Fragments" show

⁷ Fragments, p. 289.

⁸ Ibid., p. 323.

⁹ John, III, 3 and fol.

¹⁰ Mark, IV, 11.

¹¹ Fragments, p. 41.

that this work was written neither upon the order nor under the control of the Great Esoteric Brotherhood. This is because the information on which the book is based is of a fragmentary nature. And in the esoteric field, fragmentary knowledge is fraught with dangers. Works of ancient authors, such as Saint Irene, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius from Cesarea, dealing with heresies which occurred during the first centuries of our Era, attest the truth of this. From them, we learn for instance that some gnostic schools accepted the imperfection of the created world without querying the reasons for this imperfection. This induced them, through an abridgement of thought, to adopt heretical views, such as a belief in the Creator's weakness, his incompetence or even his wickedness. The incomplete is thus the very source of heresies. Only what Tradition calls the Pleroma, that is to say the Plenitude, embracing Gnôsis¹² as a whole, can be a guarantee against a deviation.

¹² Saint Paul, Ephesians, III, 18-19; The Didachè, passim; Clement of Alexandria: The Stromates, passim. etc.

PREAMBLE

Esoteric studies help the reader to understand the meaning of man's and mankind's present evolution. That is why they arouse a growing interest in cultured circles. However - and this is a paradoxical phenomenon - among the Europeans who feel attracted towards such research, there are many who turn towards non-Christian traditions: Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or others. It is indeed highly interesting to compare the esoteric thought of these different systems. For Tradition is One. Whoever makes a thorough study of this subject will not fail to recognize this essential unity. But for those who wish to go beyond sheer speculation, this problem takes on another aspect. This unique Tradition has been, and is still divulged, in many shapes and forms, each of them scrupulously adapted to the mentality and mind of the human group to whom its Word is addressed as well as to the mission with which it is invested. Thus for the Christian world, the easiest way, or rather the least difficult to attain the goal, is to follow the esoteric Doctrine which forms the basis of Christian Tradition. For the thought of a man, born and educated within our civilization, to be he Christian or not, believer or atheist, is impregnated with twenty centuries of Christian culture. It is far easier for him to undertake studies based on elements inherent in his own environment, than to start anew by adapting himself to the mind of an alien society. Such a transplantation is also not exempt from perils, and generally yields only hybrid products. Furthermore: if all the great religions, born of a unique Tradition, are messengers of Truth - otkrovenié istiny - each of them addresses itself to a fraction of mankind only. Christianity alone affirmed from the beginning its oecumenical character.

Jesus said: This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations¹. The prophetic might of the Word, disclosed in this sentence, emerges with explosive force after twenty centuries: the Gospel, taught at first to a restricted group of disciples has now been disseminated all over the globe. This astounding expansion results from the fact that the Christian doctrine, in its perfect expression, aims at a general resurrection, whereas the other doctrines, though belonging to Truth, tend essentially to individual salvation and are but partial revelations of Tradition.

The present teaching is therefore fundamentally Christian.

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Esoteric Christian Tradition is based on Canon, Rites, Menology, lastly on Doctrine. The latter consists in a body of rules, treatises and commentaries made by the doctors of the oecumenical Church. For the most part, these texts were assembled into a collection, the Philokalia². To these sources should be added isolated writings from ancient and modern, or religious and laic authors.

The writings of the Philokalia were mostly intended for persons who already had a certain esoteric culture. This is also true of certain aspects of the texts of the Canon, including the Gospels. It should be noted that, though written for all, these texts could not take account of personal bents. Bishop Theophan the Recluse stresses therefore in the preface to the Philokalia that nobody³ can succeed, without assistance,

¹ Matthew, XXIV, 14.

² Version in Russian language. Five volumes in quarto published under the direction of Bishop Theophan the Recluse, by the monastery of Saint-Panteleimon of Mont-Athos.

³ Underlined in the original.

in acquiring a deep insight into the Doctrine. Esoteric science has therefore preserved and developed, in addition to written sources, an oral Tradition vivifying the Scripture. Oriental Orthodoxy has always kept this Tradition unimpaired mainly by means of a strict hermetism. From generation to generation, since the time of the Apostles, it has led its disciples even into the realm of mystical experience.

If hermetism has constituted a safeguard for almost twenty centuries, circumstances have now changed. At the present turn of History, as also at the time of the coming of Christ, the veil is partly raised. Thus, for those wishing for something more than academic knowledge, which never passes the stage of information, for those vehemently seeking to understand the true meaning of life and of the mission assigned to Christians in the New Era, there is a possibility of being initiated into this divine, mysterious and hidden Wisdom⁴.

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When the meaning conveyed by other versions seemed to be somewhat obscure, we resorted to the Slavonic text of the Scriptures, and this for two reasons: firstly, because the translation into this language was carried out at a time when there was still an abundance of sacred exegeses and when the spirit animating the texts was still close to the original meaning. Secondly, because of the stability of the language : modern Slav languages, Russian in particular, are still very close to old Slavonic, a tongue which is still in use in the religious orthodox services of Slav countries.

⁴ I Corinthians, II, 6-8.

We may say with regard to the antiquity of the Slavonic text, that it is generally attributed to Constantine the Philosopher - better known as Saint Cyrilus - and to his brother Saint Methodus, both Greek scientists from Salonika. They were perfectly conversant with Slavonic. When Saint Cyrilus arrived in the Tauric Chersonese in the ninth century, he found that the Gospel already existed in this language. It is very probable therefore that the Gospel was written at the time when the forms introduced by the preaching of the Apostle Saint Andrew, who taught Christianity in Russia in the first century of our Era⁵ were still extant.

The stability of a language is also an important factor if one wishes to discover the original meaning of a text : it was the stability of the Coptic language that enabled Champollion, with the help of liturgical formulae, to discover an equivalence between Coptic writings and Egyptian hieroglyphs. Old Slavonic has remained alive and almost unchanged, as is shown by ritual formulae, in particular. The old Slavonic text of the New Testament, as well as the writings of the Fathers translated into this language are therefore of a particular value for the contemporary seeker.

⁵ The Slavonic text is also frequently quoted in the following works : Unseen Warfare. Translated into English by E. Kadoubovsky and G.E. Palmer, London. Faber and Faber Ltd. Early Fathers from the Philokalia and Writings from the Philokalia. Same translators and same Publisher.

INTRODUCTION

Homo sapiens lives deeply immersed in circumstances to such an extent that he forgets himself and is oblivious of where he is going. And yet he knows subconsciously that death puts an end to everything.

How can we explain the fact that the intellectual who made marvellous discoveries and also the technician, who exploited them, have neglected the problem of our end? How is it that Science which is so daring and also claims to be omnipotent has remained indifferent to the puzzling problem of death? How can we explain the fact that Science, instead of opposing its elder sister, Religion, has not instead joined forces with her, to solve the problem of Being, which is, in fact, that of death?

Human condition undergoes no modification, whether a man dies in his bed or on board of an interplanetary ship.

Happiness? But we are taught that it lasts no longer than Illusion does. And what is Illusion? No one knows. Yet we are submerged by it. If we knew what Illusion is, we would be aware of what Truth is. And Truth should make us free¹.

Has Illusion, as a psychological phenomenon, ever been submitted to a critical analysis on the basis of the most recent scientific data? Seemingly not. And yet no one can say that man is lazy or incurious. He is a passionate seeker. But in seeking he misses the essential.

The first thing that strikes us is that contemporary man confuses moral with technical progress while Science develops in dangerous isolation.

The astounding progress in technology has not changed nor will it ever change any of the essential features of the human condition, for it operates on a material plane

¹ John, VIII, 32.

and affects only superficially man's inner life. From the remotest times, it has been known that the essential is not to be found outside man but within man.

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It is generally assumed that mankind has reached an important stage in its history. The Cartesian spirit which put an end to scholasticism has been outstripped in its turn. There is a danger that the divorce between traditional Knowledge whose depository is Religion, and acquired Knowledge the fruit of Science, may prove fatal to our Christian civilisation, originally so full of promise.

It would be erroneous to believe that, by nature, Science is opposed to Tradition. Equally, it should be emphasized that Tradition in no way implies any opposition to Science. On the contrary, the Apostles foresaw the latter's extraordinary development.

Thus the celebrated formula of Saint Paul: Faith, Hope, Love² summarizes a vast Programme in the evolution of human knowledge. If this formula is examined in relation to its context³, the first two terms appear to be of a temporary nature, whilst the third is a permanent one. According to the Apostle, this formula was appropriate to the period when it was first expounded⁴. Its meaning had to evolve with Time, and that indeed is what happened along the very lines that Saint Paul had foreseen. Science⁵ and generally Knowledge⁶ called upon to supersede Faith and Hope, which, according to the

² I Corinthians, XIII, 13. Love is correctly employed for the third term, instead of Charity. The nuance is important. Love is a noumenal force whereas Charity is merely an attitude, one of the many manifestations of Love.

³ Ibid. 1-12.

⁴ I Corinthians, XIII, 13 "now" says Saint Paul.

⁵ Ibid. Verse 9 and foll.

⁶ Ibid.

Apostle, were the only categories accessible to the mentality prevailing at the time of his teaching, have since then undergone an extraordinary development. And he says further : but when I became a man I put away childish things⁷. This indicates the transition from Faith to Knowledge. And Saint Paul states explicitly that Knowledge, though necessary to evolution, is not definitive for it can only have a partial⁸ character. And he goes on to say; when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away⁹. Perfection is Love. It embraces the accomplishment of all virtues, all prophecies, all mysteries and all Knowledge¹⁰. Saint Paul lays a stress on the last word and concludes by this adjuration: follow after Love¹¹.

It is by joining the efforts of traditional Science based on Revelation, i.e. on Faith and Hope, to those of acquired Science, the domain of positive knowledge, that there will be some hope of fulfilling the programme laid down by Saint Paul and thus finally attaining perfect Love.

One of the purposes of the present work in expounding the postulates of traditional Science, is to make the links uniting it to positive Science become clear.

It is the author's conviction that only a synthesis of these two branches of Knowledge is capable of solving man's problem, this solution conditioning all other problems, which arise nowadays.

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⁷ I Corinthians, XIII, 11.

⁸ Ibid. Verse 9.

⁹ Ibid. Verse 10.

¹⁰ Ibid. passim.

¹¹ I Corinthians, XIV, 1.

According to Tradition, human evolution, after a long prehistorical period, develops within a succession of three cycles; the Cycle of the Father known but incompletely to history; the Cycle of the Son, which is nearing its end; and lastly the Cycle of the Holy Spirit, which we have now reached.

According to the Anthropologists, homo sapiens fossilis appeared forty thousand years ago. Life was then characterized by matriarchy, the outcome of a collective matrimonial system. Fourteen thousand years before our epoch approximately, with the birth of homo sapiens recens, the regime of matriarchy gradually gave way to patriarchy, whose characteristic is polygamy. Thus, an indubitable progress was achieved, although this system was still tainted with bestiality, the woman being reduced to the condition of live merchandise. However, ancient trends still prevailed for a long time. There is evidence of this in the description given by Aristotle of the attitude towards women of the well-off class of his time. He says that legitimate wives were supported to produce citizens according to law; hetaerae for pleasure; and concubines for daily use. Such a conception leaves only a small place for Love.

Jesus introduced into human relationships what was practically unknown before His coming. To the law of the jungle: eye for eye, tooth for tooth¹² he substituted this new commandment that ye love one another¹³.

This led, to a reversal of the relationships between man and woman. In consequence, Love entered social life. The former "merchandise" obtained recognition. Not it is true immediately, or integrally; the principle however was established of a reciprocal choice in Love. This was the revelation of romance.

¹² Exodus, XXI, 24; Deuteronomy, XIX, 21; Levitic, XXIV, 20.

¹³ John, XIII, 34; ibid. XV, 12; I. John. III, 11.

This element of romance, which allowed Christian society to put into practice the principle of reciprocal choice, reached its acmé during the Middle Ages. In spite of the decline which it has experienced since then, and in spite of the present trend towards former regressive forms of the relationship between the sexes, it nevertheless remains the avowed ideal of our society. Hence it is improper to speak of the death of romance. For a silent revolution is now at work to replace free romance of the Christian Era by the unique romance, the attribute of the Era of the Holy Spirit. The aim of this new form of romance, freed from the bondage of procreation, will be to cement the indissoluble union of two strictly polar beings, with a view to ensuring their integration within the Absolute. For, says the Apostle Saint Paul: neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord¹⁴.

For aeons, the best master-minds have been haunted by the vision of such a romance. One finds it in Platonic love, the basic concept of the "unique" romance, and also in the myths of the Androgynous, Orpheus and Eurydice, Pygmalion and Galatea. It reveals the yearning of the human heart secretly lamenting its profound loneliness. This romance constitutes the essential goal of esoteric work. The love in question will unite man to the being, unique for him, of a Sister-Wife¹⁵, the glory of man, as himself will be the glory of God¹⁶. Having found access to the light of Tabor both of them merged into one, will then see true Love, the Transfigurator, the Vanquisher of Death, blaze forth.

Love is Alpha and Omega of life. The remainder is of less significance. Man is born with Alpha. It is the purpose of this work to point out the way leading to Omega.

¹⁴ I Corinthians, XI, 11.

¹⁵ Ibid. IX, 5.

¹⁶ Ibid. XI, 7.

PART ONE

MAN

CHAPTER ONE

Positive philosophy is the study of man in general, in other words man in the abstract; esoteric philosophy is concerned with the concrete: the student himself is the object of his studies. Starting from the fact that man is the unknown, to reveal man to himself - as he is and as he might become - such is the aim of esoteric science.

In principle, the final aim of positive science is the same. But its mode of approach is diametrically opposite. Starting from the centre, positive science spreads in all directions and progresses with specialization towards the periphery, each point of which tends in the end to constitute a separate discipline. Starting with the multiplicity and the variety observed on the circumference accessible to our intelligence, esoteric science works towards the centre. Thus, it tends towards a progressively more general synthesis.

The technique of esoteric science is identical with that of positive science: observation, critical analysis of observed data and strict deduction from the facts thus established. However, this similitary of approach involves a certain difference in the manner of application, a difference due to the intimate nature of a great part of esoteric studies; because of this introspective character it is not possible to submit the acquired inner experience to a discussion leading to a public demonstration of its validity. Therefore, this same method of critical analysis must be applied here with the same strict objectivity, but in the opposite sense. In positive science a postulate is accepted if it cannot be disproved; in esoteric science if neither facts nor phenomena can be found to corroborate it, the postulate is rejected.

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In Western civilization, man's inner life - with all its wealth - is relegated to the background of existence. Man is so caught up in the mesh of mechanized life that he no longer has the power of concentration nor the time required to stop and look into himself. Man spends his days completely absorbed by circumstances. The huge, ceaselessly revolving machine prevents him from stopping for fear of being crushed. Day in, day out, he exhausts himself in this frantic rush, hurled on a course, which when all is said and done, gets him nowhere. Life passes by almost unnoticed, as swift as a beam of light, and then, still a stranger to himself, man sinks down, engulfed in the great abyss.

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When someone who lives under this constant pressure of modern life is asked to turn his inner eye towards himself, he answers usually that he has no time for such exercises. And if pressed, in most cases he will say that he does not see anything. Fog. Darkness. In some rare cases the student states that he catches a glimpse of something he cannot describe, for it changes all the time.

This last observation is correct. Indeed, everything in us changes continually. The least external shock, be it pleasant or unpleasant, happy or unhappy, is sufficient to give our inner content a new aspect.

If we continue - without prejudice - with this introspection, we soon realize much to our surprise, that our I of which we are usually so proud is not constant; that it changes. Then the impression comes more into focus; we begin to realize that in fact there lives in us not one man but several, each having his own tastes, his own longings and pursuing his own ends. Suddenly, we discover in ourselves a world full of life and colour, a world of which only yesterday we were unaware. Continuing the experiment, we soon perceive

in this perpetually moving life three autonomous currents: the vegetative life of the instincts, so to speak; the animal life of the feelings; and finally the human life in the proper sense of the term, the life of thought and word. It is as if there were three men within us, all incredibly bound up together.

By now, we appreciate the value of introspection as a practical method of work, enabling the student to know himself and to examine himself. As we go forward, we understand more and more the real state in which we find ourselves. When all is said and done, man's inner content is similar to a vase filled with iron filings mixed by mechanical action. So that with every shock felt by this vase the particles are displaced. Thus man is unaware of the real life, as a result of the constant change occurring in his inner life.

Fig. 1

However, as we shall see later on, this senseless and dangerous situation can be changed for the better. But this requires work, and conscious and sustained efforts. Introspection carried on unflaggingly results in an inner sensitivity in the student. In turn, this sensitivity intensifies the amplitude and the frequency of movements when the particles are displaced. Thus, shocks which previously have gone unnoticed will henceforth arouse sharp reactions. Through their increasing frequency these movements will produce among the filings such intensive friction that one day the student begins to feel an inner fire kindling within him.

Fig. 2

But it should not be merely a brief flare-up. Nor is it sufficient for it to smoulder beneath ashes. A brisk, ardent fire, once alight, must be carefully kept burning by the student through his will to sharpen and to improve his sensitivity.

If this is so, our condition may change; the inner fire can bring about a fusion¹.

¹ 1 Marc, IX, 49; I Corinthians III, 11-13; 1 Peter, 1,7; IV, 12.



Fig. 1

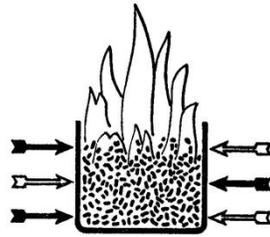


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Henceforth, man's inner content will no longer be a conglomerate of filings; it will become a whole. The shocks undergone will no longer cause as before an inner transformation. Having reached this point he will have acquired enough strength to remain himself through the many storms which life may have in store for him.

Such is the prospect offered to the student by esoteric science. But, in order to reach the state just described, he must from the first get rid of any illusions he has about himself, however dear to him they may be; for a single illusion about himself, if once permitted will continue to grow and before it can be got rid of, greater efforts and more suffering will be necessary.

As long as man has not reached the fusion stage, he is living in fact an artificial life, for he himself changes continually; and as these changes are caused by external shocks which he can hardly ever foresee, neither can he estimate beforehand his own inner changes. Thus he lives at the mercy of events, preoccupied by continual "patchings-up". In fact, he moves towards the unknown, guided by chance. This state of things, called by Tradition the Law of Chance or Law of Accident, is the principal law under whose rule man, such as he is, leads his illusory existence.

Esoteric science points out to the student the ways and means to escape this. It helps him to start a new and rational life; to reason with himself and finally to master himself.

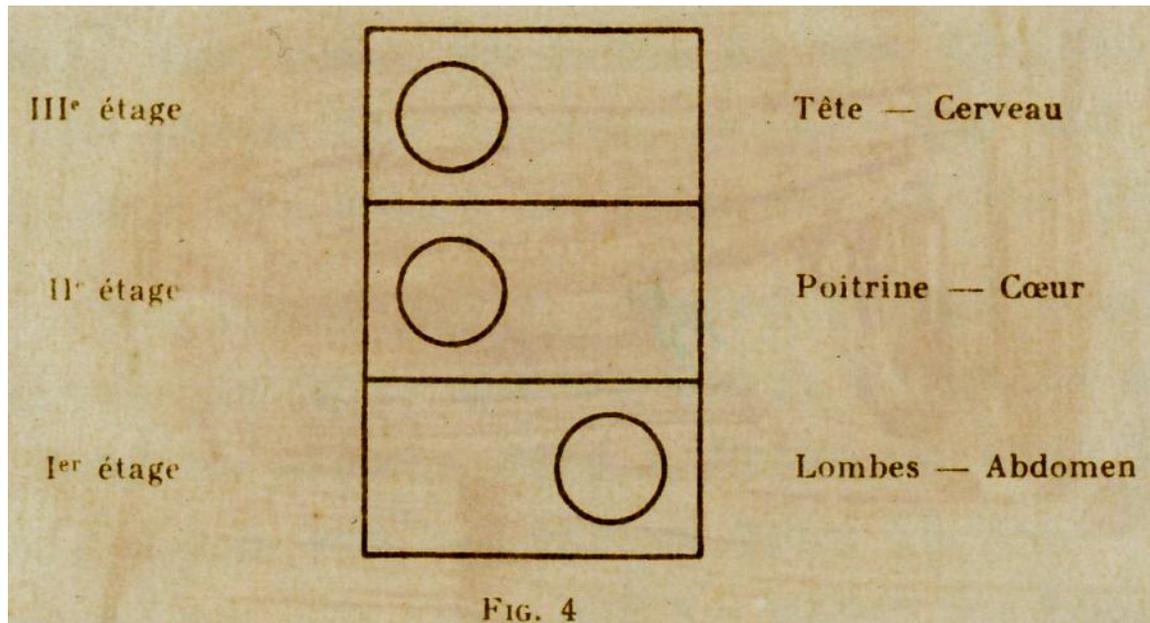
But in order to start on this road successfully, the student is asked above all to look at himself clearly as he is now. A metaphor, which is to be found in the oldest sources, enables him to picture himself thus and to remember his present state. It is the metaphor of the horse-drawn coach.

This represents man's structure. The coach is the physical body; the horses the five senses, the feelings and the passions; the coachman represents intellectual power including

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Fig. 3



The English translation of the figure:

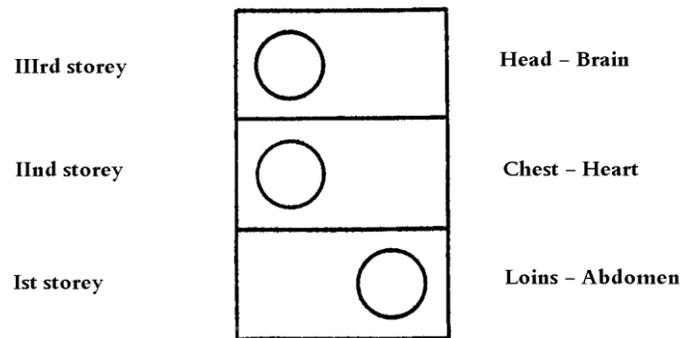


FIG. 4

Fig. 4

the reasoning faculty. The person seated in the coach is the master.

In its normal state, the whole system is in perfect working condition: the coachman holds the reins firmly in his hands and drives the team down the road indicated by the master. But in the great majority of cases things do not happen that way. To begin with, the master is absent. The equipage must go and fetch him and put itself at his disposal. However, everything is in bad condition: the axles are not greased and creak; the wheels, badly fixed, are likely to come off; the shaft is dangerously slack; the horses, although pure-bred, are unkempt and poorly fed; the coach is worn, so are the reins. The coachman is asleep. His hands lie loosely on his lap and the reins which he holds slackly are about to slip out of his grasp.

The coach moves forward in spite of everything, but it does so in a peculiar manner which bodes no good. Indeed, running off the road it starts down a slope so that now the coach pushes the horses which are unable to hold it back. The coachman deep in sleep, sways on his seat and is about to fall. A sad fate is evidently the lot of this equipage.

This picture offers a searching analogy with the condition in which most men find themselves, and should be a subject for serious meditation.

Yet salvation can come through chance. For example, another driver - this one wide awake - passing-by on the same road and catching sight of the coach in its unfortunate situation, and not too pressed for time, may stop his horses in order to come to the help of the team in distress. First of all, he gives a hand with the horses thus preventing the coach from sliding further down the slope. Then he wakes up the driver with whose help he endeavours to lead the team back on to the road. To the coachman he lends fodder and money, adding perhaps advice on how to deal with the horses and recommending a comfortable hostelry as well as a repair shop, and even reminding him of the road he must take.

It will now be up to the coachman to turn to his own advantage both the help and the information given. Henceforth, it is up to him to put everything in order and with open eyes to continue on the road, which he has abandoned.

In particular he will have to struggle against sleep. For it is extremely improbable that, if he falls asleep again and goes off the road a second time and finds himself anew with his coach in the same dangerous position, chance will smile upon him anew, and another driver pass at the critical moment and again come to his assistance.

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We have seen that the practice of introspection very soon leads to the conclusion that everything is changing within us at nearly every moment. Yet man claims to have some continuity in his ideas and in his deeds. Furthermore, life requires this of him and he can only avoid it with difficulty. He gives his word, makes promises and takes vows that bind him in spite of these perpetual changes that he has just discovered in himself, and which explain to him the root cause of this tangle of problems, of these inner and external conflicts and of these lapses which make up the greater part of his life.

Man defends himself as far as he is able against this constant pressure of problems and of obligations which weighs upon him. He generally takes account of changes within himself without noticing them, and instinctively adopts a clear-cut attitude. He wishes at all costs to be, or at any rate to appear to be, logical with himself, even to be master of his acts. Thus at a stroke of fortune, at an unexpected success, he seeks to persuade his intimates and, indirectly to convince himself, that he is not in the least surprised, that he had foreseen it long ago and that it had all been calculated in advance. When he is unsuccessful he attributes the cause to others, to external events and, in general, to circumstances.

This is because the friction of the filings produces a disagreeable sensation within man of which he seeks to rid himself. The movement of the filings ceases when a solution is found to counteract the shock that has been received. To find what is to blame is to find the required solution. Thus man appears to us as being continually preoccupied with this inner "patching-up" which in time takes place within him almost automatically.

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This being so how then can these inner changes be defined? What is changing?

Man, speaking of himself, says I. It is perhaps the most elusive and the least finite term in the human language. In fact, speaking of his body, man refers to it in the third person which, of course, is quite correct. But when speaking of his Soul he also treats it in the third person. He affirms by this that he is neither body nor Soul and, although at first sight this may seem paradoxical, it is correct. But what is man if he is neither body nor Soul? What is his I which he feels in himself and to which he strives to communicate a logical sequence even if it is only a semblance?

It is precisely the particles of filings whose relative position constantly changes which, taken together, represent the I in us. This I is not stable, it has many different aspects but is nevertheless the I with which man, born as he is on Earth, develops in life.

Not only is this I neither stable nor permanent but, furthermore, it is multiple since each of the three men - of whom we spoke above, coexisting within man is also a compound subject. In this way our I is in fact the whole of a multitude of small I's relatively independent and tending to act each in his own way. Such is the nature of our I of which it is said in the Gospel that this name is Legion¹

¹ Mark, V, 9; Luke, VIII, 30.

Coming back to the question raised above; what is man? A precise answer can now be given: Personality. In other words it is Mr. X., identifying himself with this psychic entity which lives within him and which is unstable or practically unstable and which changes in accordance with the impressions it receives, agreeable or disagreeable, and even as a result of physical shocks.

Jesus said: To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other². Yet who is capable of doing that? Only someone who has been able to control within himself the mechanical displacement of these particles of filings by mastering his instinctive and bestial reactions. For what is prevailing within man is the law : eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth³ whose aim is to preserve the filings from anarchic reactions. To remain oneself after having received a blow and, in a state of unshakable, interior calm, to turn the other cheek - this is only possible to a being truly master of himself. The Gospel gives many examples and parables, which illustrate the vital necessity for man to master himself.

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It is necessary, in order to attain this state, to study the structure of the Personality. For here, as everywhere, Knowledge leads to power.

Let us return once more to the image of the three men co-existing within man. In fact, it concerns the three streams of our psychic life: intellectual, emotive and instinctive-motory, which correspond approximately, without however any clear-cut line of division - it will be explained later why - to our thoughts, to our feelings and to our senses and sensations.

The centre of gravity of each of these three aspects of our psychic life is situated, respectively, in the brain, the heart and the loins: these terms should not, however, be taken too literally. For at the moment when an impulse is received from,

² Matthew, V, 39; Luke, VI,29.

³ Exodus, XXI, 24; Deuteronomy, XIX,21.

or sent out from, one of these three centres, the two others, although participating in it, adopt a passive attitude. In this manner, the one which is momentarily in command speaks for the personality as a whole and so represents the whole man.

This state of affairs will be considered in detail at a later stage. For the time being let us try to represent these ideas in the form of a diagram, which will be completed as we progress in our studies and will serve as a working instrument.

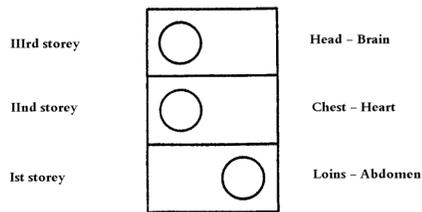


Fig. 4

Fig. 4

These three centres, which personify the three streams of which our psychic life is composed, each have a dual function: to be receptive and to manifest themselves. From this point of view the system is admirably conceived since each centre in its respective field is perfectly suited to the needs of man's inner and outward life.

Let us recall again that the theory of the functions and of the location of the psychic centres is conventional in the sense that they are the centres of gravity. We think mainly, but not exclusively, by means of the head. It is the same with regard to the heart where the emotive centre is located. The motory center directs instinctive life as well as mechanical forces and psychological movements; its activity is thus spread throughout the body. Nevertheless, it is placed on the first level - which includes the loins and the abdomen - for reasons which will become clear later on.

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The human Personality - that is to say the moving mass of particles of filings - is, however, by no means inactive - On the contrary it is a well-ordered psychic organism conceived to play a specific role, although generally not used for this purpose. The reason is that one uses it without knowing it,

without having studied and understood it.

Esoteric studies begin for the student by the study of the content, structure and working of the Personality.

In precise terms the psychological functions of the three centres are:

- the intellectual centre registers, thinks, calculates, contrives, seeks out, etc.;
- the emotive centre has for its province the feelings, as well as the sensations and delicate passions;
- the motory centre directs the five senses, accumulates energy within the organism through its instinctive functions and presides through its motive functions, over the consumption of this energy.

The motory centre is the best organized of the three. It already begins to function within the spermatozoon while the other two only develop and organize themselves in line with the growth and development of the child. It is thus the oldest of the three and the most-co-ordinated. It is thus, so to speak, the wisest, although it is capable of committing errors.

On the other hand, the first two centres confront us with serious difficulties. They are anarchic and frequently encroach on each other's province, as well as on that of the motory centre whose mechanism is put out of order.

In fact, we have neither pure thoughts nor pure feelings; nor are our actions pure. Everything is mixed within us, even entangled, most frequently by all sorts of considerations derived sometimes from the intellectual centre, which stains with its calculations the purity of the feelings, and sometimes from the emotive centre, which mixes up the calculations made by the intellectual centre.

Thus it is impossible to bring order into our psychic life, to make it emerge from its state of perpetual anarchy and of its meaninglessness without having studied the structure of our Personality in detail. This study enables the student to

undertake the regulating and the putting into shape of this organism. The only way of achieving this result is to work on oneself by introspection.

CHAPTER II

Simple ideas are in fact the most difficult to follow. They elude us because of the extreme complexity of our mentality, which leads us to complicate everything. Yet it is precisely the simple ideas and formulae which are dominant in life.

This being said let us start on the question of the relationship between the notions of knowing and of understanding.

We can have knowing without understanding but we cannot have understanding without knowing. It follows from this that understanding is knowing with something imponderable added to it. We are touching upon a problem which is at the same time simple and also very difficult.

We move from knowing to understanding in proportion to our assimilation of knowing. The capacity of absorption is limited; it is a function of the capacity of the individual, which necessarily varies in each.

This relates to what is called the being of the given person. It is one of the fundamental notions of esoteric science. It has several aspects. With regard to the one which concerns us here, the being of the individual is, so to speak, his capacity of absorption.

Knowing is widely distributed. But it is outside us. Understanding, on the other hand, is to be found within us.

If we start to pour the contents of a pitcher into a glass, it can clearly only contain a volume of liquid that is equivalent to its capacity. The overflow will be spilled out. This is exactly what happens to us. We are only capable of understanding what corresponds to the capacity of our being.

Jesus said to his disciples: I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now¹.

¹ John, XVI, 12, quoted from the Slavonic text.

We must, in order to develop in the esoteric sense of the word, concern ourselves above all with enlarging our being, with raising its level.

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The Gospel has no terminology of its own. This is one of the reasons for its popularity: it is accessible to all. Christian esoteric Tradition follows its example and avoids the creation of a special vocabulary, for this would constitute a further obstacle on a road, which in itself, is not the easiest. The point of departure is the principle that if one takes the trouble to reflect thoroughly, everything can be expressed without recourse to neologisms. It is, however, necessary to establish the exact meaning of the words used.

In the first place, the meaning given in the Tradition to the term Consciousness, as well as to its derivatives and its functions must be defined. In the language in everyday use as well as in philosophic literature, different meanings are given to this word and it is sometimes qualified. One finds, for instance, terms such as "super-consciousness", "cosmic consciousness", etc.

In esoteric science, the maximum significance - which attains the divine level - is attached to the term Consciousness. Bishop Theophan, the Recluse, one of the most authoritative commentators, said: the way towards perfection is the way towards Consciousness. He thus did not attribute the everyday meaning to the term Consciousness.

We do not possess Consciousness. And in fact what we call consciousness is only one of its derivatives or functions-- the only one accessible to man born of woman².

There are in all four characteristic levels of consciousness: Consciousness - properly speaking - and its three derivatives:

- ● Absolute consciousness
- ● Consciousness of the real 'I'
- ● Waking consciousness
- ● Sub-consciousness

Fig. 5

Fig. 5

² Matthew, XI, 11.

- Conscience absolue.
- Conscience du *Moi* réel.
- Conscience de veille.
- Subconscience.

The English translation of the figure:

- Absolute consciousness
- Consciousness of the real 'I'
- Waking consciousness
- Sub-consciousness

FIG. 5

Fig. 5

Going from the lowest to the highest, there is firstly, the subconsciousness. This is the twilight consciousness, which we have, for instance, during sleep when the organism is continuously directed. This sub-conscious direction of certain functions of the body continues also, when we are awake.

The field of the sub-consciousness is exceedingly vast and little studied. In general, everything that does not come within the field of the waking-consciousness is placed within the sub-consciousness. Thus, not only are the reflexes and, in general, the functions of instinctive life, quite rightly attributed to it, but also, in addition, and incorrectly, flashes coming from higher levels which are given vague and imprecise terms such as intuition, sixth sense, etc. We do this, because we consider waking-consciousness - sometimes - called light-consciousness to be the highest consciousness.

Two higher levels beyond that of the waking-consciousness are, in fact, distinguished by esoteric science. We do not have them by right of birth and we do not acquire them by conventional education or instruction. But they can be attained by suitably directed efforts of a special nature.

The first higher level is that of the consciousness of the Self, in other words, the consciousness of the real I. This followed at the top by the level of Consciousness properly speaking.

Going from the bottom to the top we can define these four levels as follows:

- 1) Sub-consciousness is the twilight consciousness of the body. Its strength is independent of the cultural level of the individual. Primitive or elementary beings often have a stronger and more ample consciousness of the body than have intellectuals;
- 2) Waking-consciousness is the diurnal consciousness of the Personality. Pathological cases apart, its amplitude and its strength increase with the cultural development of the individual. It is the subjective consciousness of the I;
- 3) Consciousness of the real I is the consciousness of the Individuality, in other words of the objective consciousness of the individual I;
- 4) Consciousness is the absolute Conscience to absolute Consciousness.

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We shall come back later to the question of Consciousness when we are better equipped to feel and to understand the real meaning of this term. However, we can have a certain idea of the consciousness of the real I, even in its passive form. We know it to be the only permanent element within us, hidden behind our Personality, which is continually changing and carried along by the endless stream of thoughts, feelings, passions or sensations, which pass through it and frequently involve the whole man in rash actions which, later, he himself often judges severely. This permanent element is the impartial Arbitrator who judges within us our own acts; an Arbitrator whose voice, however, is not strong and is often drowned by an inner tumult or by external events. But, although feeble and passive, this evanescent form of the consciousness of the real I is always fair and objective.

The doctrine of sin and responsibility for our actions would be nonsensical if, when faced with temptation, the consciousness of our real I did not warn us of a danger³. On the other hand, it is its presence within us which makes esoteric evolution⁴ possible, whose inner meaning, as we have already seen, is evolution towards Consciousness. In man, such as he is born, however, the real I only shows itself in a passive form; this inner Judge only pronounces its verdict in cases where the Personality itself submits its acts to its judgment.

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In everyday life, the contact with our real I occurs exceptionally. Yet man claims to act on the level corresponding to his real I and attributes to himself its qualities, such as the power of gauging the consequences of his acts, a stability of will-power, the ability to take action, and the behaviour of a being logical with himself.

³ Hence, we cannot say that man, even when esoterically undeveloped, the man without, is wholly irresponsible (Cf. P.D. Ouspensky, Fragments, p. 41).

⁴ Nothing can originate from nothing. A grain is needed to give birth to the plant: Matthew, XIII, 31; Luke, XIII, 1.

However, an objective examination of the fact proves sufficient to contradict this claim. Let us take for instance the case of promises we have made; it is clear that we keep to them with difficulty and, if respected, it is rather at the cost of a struggle with ourselves.

This is because we are not acting on the level of our real I but on the level of the waking-consciousness, pertaining to the I of the Personality. We identify ourselves with it, whatever the face it presents. Our attitudes are therefore moulded after its instability. It is thus that one of our small I's or a group of these small I's, takes a decision at a given moment and acts accordingly. Then it gives way to another small I, or to another group, which disapproves both the decision and the results. These changes are sometimes so radical - especially when we are carried away by passion, by a violent feeling or seduced by a false calculation - that it is as if a stranger had acted on our behalf. We do not recognize ourselves in most of the decisions taken, and we bitterly regret them.

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Thus there is a considerable discrepancy between what man attributes to himself - namely the qualities belonging to his real I - and what he in fact possesses. But for a man to attain the level of consciousness which is that of the real I is not only a possibility, but a hope, according to the Apostle Saint-Paul. A considerable amount of work must be accomplished by the student, and strenuous conscious efforts must be made by him before what he claims to possess becomes justified in fact.

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So long as man, against all the evidence to the contrary, continues to be sure of himself - and still more if he is satisfied with himself, he is living in a world of absurdity and in consequence, mistaking his desires and his illusions for reality.

He must first go through spiritual bankruptcy, and suffer a moral breakdown; he must have experienced them and accepted them without attempting a "patching-up". It is only then, that he can begin to look for and to obtain the answer and the necessary force for working on himself. This is true with one exception: that of the just man for whom this work is a source of joy; for since he is just, there is no question of his going bankrupt. But who is just amongst us? Who is even of good faith? In one way or another, we are all corrupt. However, although daily experience proves the contrary, man believes himself to be someone of considerable importance. This opinion arises from a lack of judgment. In fact, we are all in the same boat; the algebraic sum of our qualities and of our faults is more or less the same for each of us, in spite of differences. We should not have any illusions about ourselves; the value of this sum is not very great. It is an infinitesimal, which, as such, tends to zero, which is Death.

To create from this zero a unity on the basis of the latent faculties which we claim to possess effectively is the work which esoteric science proposes to its students. It considers them, at the start, like sick people to whom applies the principle proclaimed by Jesus: they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick⁵.

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Let us state the problem: in order to create out of ourselves, that is practically from zero, a unity, we must return to the question of the being although under a slightly different aspect. It relates to a transmutation, to use the language of the alchemists. The problem consists of transforming our false existence, whose entire value lies in our possibilities, into one real existence by the realization of these same possibilities.

⁵ Matthew, IX, 12; Mark, II, 17 ; Luke, V, 31.

It is therefore a question of progressively raising the level of our being. The work develops according to a vast programme, which is achieved step by step.

Four levels of being can be distinguished, parallel to these four levels of consciousness: that is to say one higher level of being and three subordinate levels:

Fig. 6

As in the case of Consciousness, the superior level of being contains the inferior levels. The lowest level belongs to every living body, comprising naturally a whole scale of values. Some animals, especially among the higher mammals, reach the next level, that of man. Thus, for instance, most of the mammals are able to see - and in fact do see - appearances of objects and phenomena, a function which belongs to the lower level of the waking-consciousness of human beings. But they are unable to go beyond this limit, and they do not have for instance, the faculty of generalizing which enables man to form concepts.

The third level of being which corresponds to that of the real I belongs to men esoterically developed, and who properly speaking are alive: those who have acquired the real I, permanent, unshakable. Finally, the fourth level belongs to the perfect man, who, via his progressive esoteric development, attains the ultimate state of evolution that is possible within the conditions of our planet.

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The question of being is closely linked to the problem of power. We have already indicated that since man has only an unstable I within him, changeable and false, he has not, and cannot have any sequence in his ideas and his acts. That is why he is scarcely able to do anything.

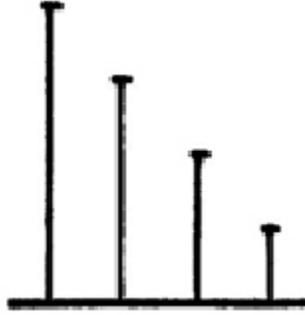


Fig. 6

We have established the relationship that exists between the concepts of knowing and understanding. We must now establish the relationship between knowing and know-how. It is easily understood, in view of what has been said previously, that there is no possibility of going directly from knowing to know-how. Failure to do so is generally attributed to a lack of will-power. This is not true. It is not the will-power, or more precisely the intensity of the desire which is lacking in these cases, but the being which would first allow one to understand the knowing acquired in order to obtain the power which gives access to the know-how. The sequence is as follows:

(passive form)

(active form)

to know - to be - to understand

to be - to understand - to know-how

The acquisition of knowing, as we said, is relatively easy. But the acquisition of the being is much more difficult. But it is precisely the being which leads us towards understanding and, through that, towards the know-how. The formula remains the same in all fields.

CHAPTER III

We placed the Personality between the body and the Soul; though it is bound to both, the Personality in general is closer to the first. Furthermore, we proved that the I which we use everyday corresponds to our Personality designated by the name.

The next question is to know what in itself is the Personality. To be sure, we feel it inside ourselves. We are aware of its attitudes, its desires, its actions; but we are unable to describe it.

Indeed, when we think of ourselves we conjure up a certain picture - a picture of the body, clothed, the face wearing a dignified or a charming expression. Now, this is but one aspect of the Personality. Only through the exercise of introspection, can we shed a light on the real aspect of our Personality and reveal its content to ourselves. Introspection makes us realize there exists in us a sort of small vaporous "sphere"¹-imponderable or almost so - able to feel, to think, to experience emotions, to act. Close and sustained attention, moreover, leads us to the discovery that this "sphere" is mobile: sometimes it is found in the brain, sometimes it descends to the heart, the solar plexus, etc. Following any violent shock, a great fright for instance, it moves down to the knees or even drops down as far as the feet. Everything then happens as if it has surrendered the general conduct of the body which it controls as long as it stays in the brain, in order to act on the local plane, solely by the most elementary reflexes. Once the emotion is over, the "sphere" climbs up again and settles high inside the head, where it stays most of the time. We say then of the person that: he is himself again.

However, modern man no longer feels the pulse of inner life throbbing in him since he is far more preoccupied by the problem of appearance than by that of being, absorbed as he is by events, always far away from himself - or dropping into drowsy self-complacency during his spare time.

¹ Kloube in the Russian texts of the Tradition.

It requires effort on his part, sustained exercises in introspection, in order to reach these first discoveries.

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The Personality is far more dependent on our physical body than we think. Thus, a sharp pang of physical pain in some part of our body is sufficient to relegate all our noble ideas, all our refined feelings, to the background of our consciousness. Conversely, when a person capable of mastering his pain continues to carry on his task with self-composure, he is hailed as a hero, so much does his action assume the nature of an exception.

This intimate dependence of the Personality with respect to the physical body in which it lives and functions leads logically to the conclusion that we must act through the latter to reach it, to study it, and lastly to exert the desired effect on it. That is the reason why all psychic exercises require physical training. The principle is general; its application, however, is different and depends on the method of esoteric teaching used. In the present method, which is essentially psychic, physical training is reduced to a strict minimum, but it cannot be entirely left out of account. Let us confine ourselves for the moment to those directions, which are necessary and sufficient to enable the student, while following them, to solve the first physical training problem: that is to find the body posture most appropriate to the psychic exercises. Experience over countless years shows that there is only one such posture. More precisely and except for some alteration of mere detail, it must comply with the following condition, namely: head, neck and spine should be in a straight line and this must be vertical. Whether standing or sitting, except in special cases which require precise instructions, this rule must be strictly followed. Before tackling the psychic exercises, the student must find the posture described and be familiar with it. For European students exercising at home,

the most practical way is to sit on a hard chair some 25cm or 35cm high, legs crossed, preferably the right leg over the left, hands flat on the knees. This posture is a variation of the one traditionally called: the Sage's pose.

Here are some complementary indications: the muscles must be absolutely relaxed, the head raised high, the shoulders thrown back in a natural way, the chest thrust forward in such a way that seen in profile the spine appears slightly convex. The eyes can be kept open or shut; at the beginning it is advisable to keep them shut, for if they are left open without special training they tire easily and hinder the exercise. This position must be assumed daily and regularly. Regularity in this exercise and the choice of an appointed hour are absolute necessities. An esoteric rule says: tendencies become more pronounced; and again: rhythm increases the result tenfold. However, one must not go too fast. Thus, another traditional maxim states; make haste slowly.

Once these conditions are fulfilled, the student should practice the posture exercises every morning before eating for two or three minutes at the most to begin with. He should extend their duration progressively little by little, but always expressly making sure that he is able to maintain throughout the exercise a complete immobility of body and limbs including the eyes.

At this point, the question arises: how can the student get to know at what moment he has found the Sage's pose? The answer is quite simple: he will know by the sense of repose which he feels. A quarter of an hour of the pose correctly maintained gives a feeling of repose which eight consecutive hours of sleep cannot give.

Once the pose is found - though not before - since this varies with each case, it may require weeks maybe months - exercises in order to reach the "sphere" can be started.

It must be stated beforehand that the measure, in other words, the organic unit of time is individual - and it changes especially as one grows older. This basic unit for

everyone is the interval between two heartbeats with the body in repose. The inner recollection of this unit, of this pulsation must be acquired, for the rhythm of esoteric exercises is always set by it.

The first exercises are carried out in the following manner: breathe in during four heartbeats, hold the breath in during another four, then breathe out during a further four heartbeats. This movement must be carried out harmoniously and without jerking, A shiver may develop: continuance of the exercises on the following days will eliminate it. The same applies, should distress develop. On the other hand if the student is ill - even if it is only a simple cold or a little fever - the exercises should be suspended.

As for results, their appearance depends on the individual; in some cases they are obtained almost immediately; in others, only after a long period of training. But a person who obtains easy results can lose them just as easily; another who has only won them after sustained efforts will keep a firm grip on them.

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The first sensation of the "sphere" appears generally during the third stage of the exercises, that is while one is breathing out. It is felt passing through the larynx and along the thyroid gland. It is a pleasant feeling. When later on the "sphere" is felt from the top of the head down to the heart - and beyond - the student then knows he has made a great step forward.

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To feel the "sphere" inside ourselves is already an achievement - at last to begin with. But it is only a first step. It was pointed out above, though with reservations, that the personality made itself felt in us through the "sphere".

On the psychological plane the "sphere" thinks, feels, acts, changes constantly, whilst on the plane of direct feeling it gives the muzzy impression of a cloudy mass of an amorphous character. This however, is a false impression.

The Personality is an organism. As such, it has a structure. But this structure evades us because we neither know nor study it, our attention being constantly occupied by external facts and events and the mechanical reactions they provoke in us.

Our first attempts at introspection have already led us to distinguish three currents in the psychic life represented by the three centres (Fig. 4). It must be fully understood that these centres are not physical points or organs placed at fixed points in our body. They are rather centres of gravity of each of the three currents of our psychic life. And even this definition is not completely correct. Thus for example, the motory centre plays an active part in every physical and psychic movement. And since thought is material and shows movement in itself, the motory centre is present in it and controls the moving part of the phenomenon. The same is true of feelings, passions, sensations, etc. Thus a discovery made by the intellectual centre with the assistance of the motory centre is immediately communicated to the latter as well as to the emotive centre and provokes corresponding reactions. It was thus that Archimedes, transported with joy by his discovery of the principle which bears his name, ran about the town of Syracuse crying "Eurêka": thought, emotion, movement. This indicates that the three psychic centres which englobe, control and express the life of our Personality and constitute its make-up are not autonomous.

Extended introspection enables the assertion to be made that each one of them is divided into two parts: positive and negative. Normally the two parts act jointly: they are polarized like the dual organs of the body whose joint function assures the accomplishment of same functions. For Instance, our arms may participate at the same time in the performance

of the same work. As a reflection of the universal polarization, this division of the centres enables them to make comparisons, to weigh the two sides of the problems facing them.

The positive part considers, so to say, the right side of the problems, and the negative part the reverse, whilst the whole centre makes a synthesis and draws its conclusions after each part has established the facts. This is the procedure of critical analysis. Therefore it would quite be incorrect to believe that the use of these terms - negative and positive - implies a beneficial or malevolent role on their part, according to whether they are positive or negative. Nor does this designation imply a judgment of value any more than the simple observation that the charges of elementary particles can be positive or negative.

We can see that the two parts, both in make-up and action, are inseparable the one from the other, when we consider the functioning of the motory centre. We can say, with reservations, that the positive part of the centre corresponds to the sum of the instinctive functions of man's psycho-physical organism, while the negative part relates to the motory functions. In other words, the motory centre, in the widest sense of the word, is thus the controller of our body: its task is to balance the amount of energy accumulated by the positive part with that consumed by the negative part.

We can find in the two other centres the same symmetry and polarity.

Constructive, creative ideas originate from the positive part of the Intellectual centre. Yet it is the negative part, which gauges the idea, taking so to say, the measure of it. And it is on the basis of this functional polarity that the centre, as a whole, renders judgment.

In a similar way, the negative part of the emotive centre counterbalances the action of the positive part, whilst at the same time it completes its action, thus allowing the

emotive centre to discern, for instance, the agreeable from the disagreeable.

We can however misuse the faculties of the negative parts; such misuse may involve a real danger, notably in the case of the motor centre. But in this case physical exhaustion exercises a control and stops the excess of energy consumption. As far as the other centres are concerned, the misuse of the negative parts may take far more insidious forms which provoke in our psychism, as well as in our body, far more formidable consequences. Thus the intellectual centre's negative part gives birth to jealousy, mental reservations, hypocrisy, suspicion, treachery, and so on. To the negative part of the emotive centre belongs every disagreeable impression; it also carries negative emotions whose scale ranges from melancholy to hatred. We shall have an opportunity later to go deeper into this problem of negative emotions, whose destructive role is generally disregarded, though constituting in fact one of the strongest obstacle to esoteric evolution.

Fig. 7

The structure of the centres is not limited to this division into two parts: positive and negative. In fact each half is divided up again, into three sectors. The result is that the earlier diagram, thus completed, gives the following:

Fig. 8

In each centre there is then both on the positive and on the negative side, a section which contains in their pure form the characteristics of the centre: sectors which are positively and negatively wholly intellectual, in the intellectual centre; sectors wholly emotive, positive and negative, in the emotive centre; sectors wholly motory, positive and negative, in the motory centre. Alongside these uniform sectors, there are composite ones which are so to speak, the representatives of the two other centres. Taken as a whole, the sectors are as follows:

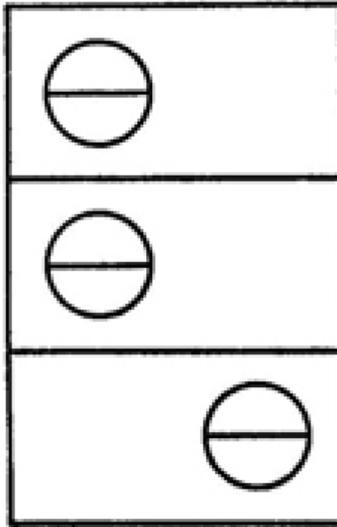


FIG. 7

Fig. 7

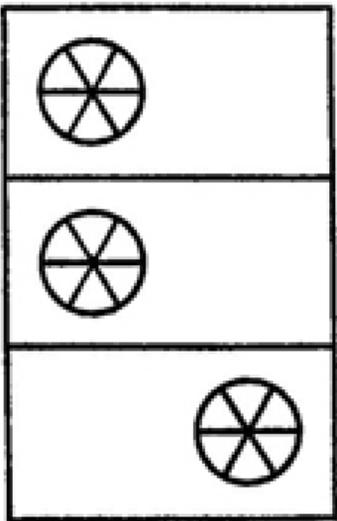


FIG. 8

Fig. 8

For the intellectual centre:

- 1. wholly intellectual
- 2. intellectual-emotive
- 3. intellectual-motory

} positive and negative

For the emotive centre:

- 1. wholly emotive
- 2. emotive-intellectual
- 3. emotive-motory

} positive and negative

For the motor centre:

- a) positive part
 - 1. wholly instinctive
 - 2. instinctive-intellectual
 - 3. instinctive-emotive
- b) negative part
 - 1. wholly motory
 - 2. motory-intellectual
 - 3. motory-emotive

There are then in all eighteen sectors which together represent the organic structure of the Personality.

Thanks to this system no one of the three centres - leaving aside pathological cases - can act in a wholly autonomous manner. For, through the sectors representing the other two centres, any one centre sets in motion the whole system. It goes without saying, however, that the participation of the two centres in the work of the first, is always affected by the character of the latter.

As can be seen, the system of the centres is fairly complex; but it answers perfectly the needs of the situation since it enables one to perceive all the psycho-physical elements of the Universe; to react to all the impressions thus received; to have concepts and to carry out complicated operations.

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The study of the structure of the Personality enables us to tackle a problem which plays a great part in esoteric science, that of human types. If it is true that every man represents in some measure a universe apart, it is equally true that human types repeat themselves. They repeat themselves often, more often than one thinks; because, in fact, they are not numerous. Only three fundamental types exist. These types

can be distinguished by the preponderance in the Personality of the individual of one or other of the three psychic centres: the man pre-eminently intellectual - who thinks, meditates, seeks; the man pre-eminently emotive - sentimental, artistic, romantic; finally, the man pre-eminently a man of action. In the doctrine they are indicated thus:

- man 1 - he whose psychic centre of gravity is in the motory centre;
- man 2 - he, whose centre of gravity is in the emotive centre;
- man 3 - he, whose centre of gravity is in the intellectual centre.

Man, born of woman, always and of necessity belongs to one of the three fundamental types into which all humanity is divided, without distinction of race, caste or class. This is a fact of nature, and it is not given to human beings to change the types into which they are born.

Later we shall see that there exist other types - superior types; however, except in very exceptional cases, one does not become one of these types by right of birth. They are the results of a long process of gestation, referred to by Jesus when, speaking to Nicodemus, He said that man must go through regeneration. To raise himself to these levels, man must make conscious efforts, carried out according to the rules laid down thousands of years ago by esoteric science.

CHAPTER IV

In the man without¹ there are three I's: the I of the body (physical); the I of the Personality (psychic) and the real I (spiritual) in potentiality. In theory it is the real I which should assume the responsibility of commanding the whole system. However, since Adam's fall, the real I has withdrawn itself - in the form of an inner core - to the back-ground of the waking-consciousness and is dominated by the psychic I. Now, the latter -which commands so to speak by interim - lacks unity. Changing, wavering, many-sided, it acts therefore in an irregular way. So much so that the I of the body, which normally should obey the psychic I, frequently takes the lead and imposes its own motives on it. Adultery, arising from sexual attraction in the absence of any spiritual link, is a commonplace example of such domination².

When passing into review various examples, taken from his own life, of the relationships which exist in practice between the three I's, the student will benefit from pondering on the symbolism of the horse-drawn coach which offers numerous and thoroughly instructive analogies in this matter.

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We use the I of our Personality when awake; during sleep we lose sight of this I; the one of the body takes place³. It must be well understood that all the purely bodily functions continue during the day as well as during the night. It is only when man is asleep, that is to say when the psychic I has vanished and no longer mixes into the activity of the I of the body, that this one acts in its own sphere, as necessity arises, and without hindrance.

The motory centre functions as the organ⁴ of manifestation of the I of the body⁴, while the psychic I (the one

¹ Mark, IV, 11.

² This should not be confused with the exploitation of sexual attraction for pre-determined purposes by calculations emanating from the intellectual centre of the Personality.

³ It should be noted that the I of the body does not undergo a total effacement in states such as lethargy, anaesthesia or even coma.

⁴ It will be seen later that this is not the only centre to have this function.

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of our Personality) expresses itself through the emotive and intellectual centres. However, in most instances, it uses these centres incorrectly and, moreover, it frequently interferes with the functioning of the motory centre. The immediate result of this state of affairs is to make the psychic life of man illogical; the I of the body competes with the I of the Personality and, since the latter is multiple, does not have - and cannot have - logical sequence in its ideas or in its actions. This illogicality of life is well-known and is constantly used as the basis of a plot by dramatists and novelists. In Tradition, the picture of the co-existence of three men within man is frequently illustrated by the following: the one who thinks, the one who has feelings and the one who acts. Their interference in realms, which are not their own are described - interferences which may be, according to the case, natural or unnatural, safe or harmful. Unnatural interferences are always noxious and are the cause of a good part of our inner and external conflicts. This sort of interference, sometimes gentle, more often violent, is amplified by the fact, that none of the centres, owing to their division into sectors, is able to act independently although each one claims to impose itself on the others. The stronger the action undertaken by a particular centre, the more powerfully, pathological cases apart, are the two others dragged on in mechanical fashion.

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How can the continuity, even if only apparent, of our psychic life be reconciled with the chaotic state of affairs which arises from the fact that the I of the Personality is composed of a large number of small I's forming various groups which, in turn, rule our attitudes and our actions? Three elements are at the basis of this appearance of continuity:

- the name;
- experiences fixed by memory;
- the faculty of lying to oneself and to others.

The name we bear corresponds to the I of the Personality, that is to say to the whole of the particles of filings irrespective of the relative position in which they are. From adolescence onwards, the name also corresponds to the picture which man has of himself in the state of waking-consciousness. Sometimes, he also attaches to it an ideal picture of himself, the image of what he aspires to be or to become.

He clings to his name as to a life-belt. Everything that exists has a name; it is impossible to imagine any psychic or physical existence, real or false, as being nameless.

In the case of man, his surname and his first name cover the whole of what can be defined as his own universe - in its concrete elements as well as in its imaginary - the latter being generally considered by him to be real.

Memory is a direct function of the being of the individual. The higher the level of the being, the stronger the memory and the greater its capacity of retention. Loss of memory, which leads to a loss of the notion of name - and of the whole which is attached to it - makes normal man into a lunatic. In these circumstances, the question of continuity no longer arises.

The third constructive element of our artificial life is the faculty of lying, which contributes to its appearance of continuity. We can easily understand the role which the faculty of lying plays, if we think of our life such as it would be if this possibility were removed from us. Life would become impossible because of the shocks and conflicts with which we would be faced. In this respect, lies serve as buffers, like the buffers on railway wagons, which absorb the shocks. Thus, the faculty of lying makes our life smoother, and contributes in an efficient manner to the impression of continuity which it gives us. We are confronted once again with the fact that in our claim to be genuine we attribute to ourselves faculties which we only possess as potentially; to speak the truth, and to live the truth, is a possibility which can only become real much later on as a result of

assiduous work on ourselves. Meanwhile, we are condemned to lie; a refusal to believe this is proof of the difficulty we have in looking truth in the face.

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We must deal in some detail with the question of lying, which is of great importance and to which we shall return more than once. The faculty of lying is a function of our capacity of imagination, the latter being a creative faculty. Before we can create anything, we must imagine what we intend to create. This gift only belongs to human beings, since animals do not possess it. It is through this gift of imagination - a divine one - that we possess the faculty of lying. We lie for various motives, mainly because we are moved by a desire to improve situations which seem to us to be untenable or difficult to accept. Thus lying opens the way to the mechanisms of rationalization or of justification, which are the agents of the "patchings-up". It will be seen later on how the lines of behaviour of those around us are entwined and provoke shocks in human relations, thus creating difficult and sometimes insoluble situations - veritable gordian knots. In such instances, it is in good faith that we have recourse to lying.

This being the case, the attitude of the esoteric Doctrine towards lying is straightforward and realistic. The student is not asked to give up lying immediately, for we know that he would not be able to keep his promise in this respect. However, if he cannot cease from lying to others, he is not in the same situation vis-à-vis himself. Therefore, he is asked - and expressly - to cease from lying to himself. This is a formal requirement, and the reason for it will be easily understood. The aim of esoteric work as we have seen, is to open the way towards Consciousness, that is to say, towards Truth. It would be a contradictio in objecto to desire to attain truth, while still lying to oneself or believing in ones' own lies. The student will therefore have to break every attempt to lie to himself and, in this matter, no compromise can be tolerated, no excuse can be accepted. But on the other hand, since in our present state, we cannot live without lying to

others, we should at least be conscious of our lies.

There is, furthermore, another recommendation to the student on this matter. He must try to distinguish among all the lies uttered to others and which are esoterically tolerated, between those which are indispensable, unavoidable or simply useful, and those which are not. The Doctrine requires from him to strive energetically against useless lying.

It is only by a training of this kind that the student will progressively learn to master the tendency to lie which is rooted in himself. Every attempt to hurry things, with regard to lying to others, in spite of its noble intention, is condemned to failure in advance; for we live in a world plunged in lies and animated by lies. It should be noted that the Decalogue, which imposes realistic commands on man, forbids him to lie only in a small sector of human relationships, that of bearing false witness and only when this false witness is borne against his neighbour⁵.

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It is also necessary to guard oneself against a variant of the habit generally formed since one's childhood to lie to oneself, against which we must strive by all means. This habit is all the more common in that it appears at first sight as a positive attitude. This attitude adapts itself readily to no matter what circumstance, in speech as well as in writing, in the course of a mundane conversation or in a doctoral thesis. It is expressed by the phrase: "Yes, but..." which, in itself is perfectly harmless. On the contrary, it is useful, and even indispensable, in the course of discussion, for example, or during controversies, or when pleading at the bar, to have full recourse to it. Applied to oneself and vis-à-vis oneself, with the object of softening a shock, of finding once more an inner peace after sinning or in order to excuse one's actions or faults, this manner of speaking becomes crystallized and, in time, takes the form of a real self-tranquilizing apparatus. It should be

⁵ Deuteronomy, V, 20.

noted that these effects have nothing in common with those of sang-froid, or of presence of mind or of other flashes of the consciousness. On the contrary, this corresponds to a veritable mental anaesthetizing mechanism, which, founded on a refined and dissimulated lie, sows hypocrisy in man vis-à-vis himself.

It is necessary to destroy this self-tranquilizer, along with the other moral buffers.

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Let us return now to the study of the I of our Personality. It has been established that this I, such as it is, is a moving sand. This picture of the sand, like that of the legion used in the Gospel⁶ is very close to reality. For that which we assume to be our I, which appears to be a single unity is in fact the conglomeration of a large number of small I's. In the Personality, each small I, or group of I's goes on the stage according to circumstances. Although the combinations between those I's are multiple, their number is limited and can be calculated.

We have seen that according to Tradition man possesses three psychic centres of which each is divided into six sectors; it follows from this that there are eighteen organs of the consciousness of the Personality. Each small I is only a fractionary consciousness of the Personality, that is to say of the complete psychic I, which nevertheless it momentarily claims to be. By applying algebraic rules to the possible combinations by three, two and one, (because there are three centres and eighteen sectors), the number of the combinations amounts to nine hundred and eighty-seven. The fractionary consciousness results from the deficient state in which the Personality normally finds itself. For the moment, let us say that this fractionary consciousness arises in man as the corollary of

⁶ Mark, V, 9; Luke, VIII, 30.

the various possible combinations of the sectors which at every moment take part in the reception of impressions and in the expression of desires, feelings, opinions. These groups generally occur in threes or in twos; it is only very rarely that a single sector participates in a psychic condition. So long as a fusion of the filings has not taken place, these nine hundred and eighty-seven possible combinations of the centres and of their sectors give birth to an equal number of fractional states of consciousness of the Personality, which affirm themselves as being - and at the moment believe that they express - the whole I. They are in fact precisely the small I's which we have discussed on several occasions⁷.

The combinations which are ceaselessly being formed and broken up within us, based on these small I's, are the fabric of our life and have harmful consequences. This life, like the filings in the vase (Fig. 1), is continuously displacing itself in an anarchic manner, according to circumstances without the intervention of a pre-established plan to attain a desired aim. This recalls the phenomenon of the overlapping of the waves, one upon another - or the movement of the spray on the crest of a wave - (choppy sea)- that can be graphically illustrated by the interlacing of several sinusoids.

Fig. 9

This phenomenon results in a total exhaustion which leads man to death. Later on we shall see this problem under another aspect which will explain even better the causes of growing old and of death. From the esoteric point of view, death is a failure. The friction of the filings which occurs in ordinary life is not sufficiently intense to cause a flaring-up of an inner fire susceptible of altering the whole being;

⁷ Modern psychology also has reached conclusions which come close to this calculation. For instance, Sheldon and his collaborators have distinguished by empirical method, 650 traits of character which are commonly admitted (cf. Guy Palmade, la Caractérologie, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1953, p. 91.)

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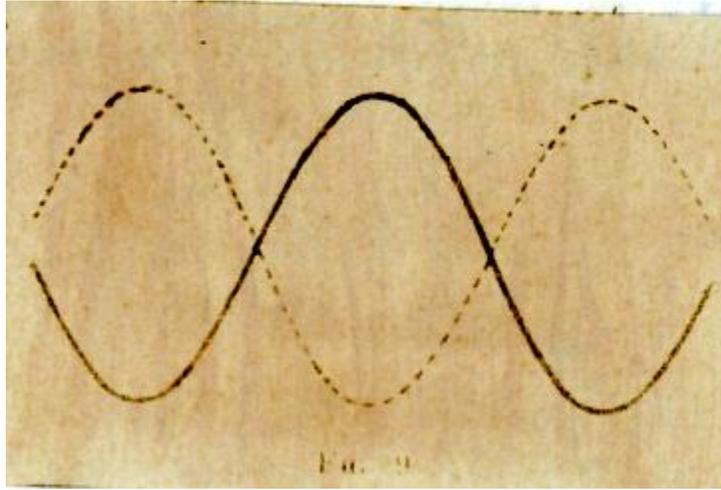


Fig. 9

but it is more than sufficient to completely exhaust reserves of vital forces and to bring on death. This is the case, among others, where the following words of the Book of Revelation apply:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich, and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see⁸.

⁸ Revelation, III, 15-18.

CHAPTER V

The formation and the development of the three psychic centres of the Personality are not synchronized.

The motory centre is already highly developed in the new-born. Its positive-instinctive part forms and grows within the mother from conception and during the entire period of gestation so that at birth it functions at a normal rhythm. From then onwards, there are scarcely any qualitative changes in it. On the other hand, the negative-motory part of this centre develops proportionately to a much smaller extent. Thus in the new-born, while the instinctive part functions at about 75 per cent of its normal activity, this percentage scarcely attains 25 in the case of the motory part, which is almost entirely concerned with the inner movements of the body. During the whole period of growth - both before and after puberty - this part of the motory centre develops both qualitatively and quantitatively. Moreover, the know-how of the physical I, from the moment a baby first learns how to suck down to the most complex movements, necessitates in each case a certain complementary and qualitative development. And this lasts a lifetime.

The emotive centre in the new-born is characterized by its purity. And so long as the child has not yet learned to lie, he retains the marvellous faculty - particular to this centre - of being able to distinguish spontaneously - and over a wide range - the true from the false. With the passage of time, education and all that is inculcated into the child, this centre becomes deranged and this faculty is lost and is only found again much later on through esoteric work, as a result of special exercises and sustained efforts. It must also be noted that in the new-born the emotive centre is normally much less developed than the motory centre, and in general, during the life of man 1, 2, 3 or the man without, it does not undergo a development comparable to that of the two other centres.

While instruction is the main preoccupation of the family and of the public authorities, the development of the

emotive centre of the child is almost entirely left to chance. In contemporary civilization this leads to an extraordinary impoverishment of our affective life. As far back as in the eighteenth century Abbott Prevost remarked:

Few people are aware of the strength of the special movements of the heart. The majority of mankind are only sensitive to five or six different sensations in the circle around which life evolves and to which all their imaginative powers are subordinated. Remove love and hatred, pleasure and suffering, hope and fear and they will feel nothing else.

And he added:

But people of nobler character are often capable of being moved in a thousand different ways. It would seem that they are able to receive ideas and sensations beyond the ordinary limits of nature¹.

The development of the emotive centre is the principal object of esoteric culture. For, as will be seen later it is only through this centre that man can find the key which will open for him the gates to the higher life.

In the new-born, the intellectual centre is in an embryonic stage. It undergoes an intensive development, which continues throughout life, often taking, in our civilization, hypertrophic forms.

What is normally called a man's formation almost entirely consists of the formation of his intellectual centre through instruction, personal experience and analytical, constructive, original or research work.

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In the child the intellectual centre is a clean slate. It can be compared to a system made up of blank gramophone records. This system is vast, orderly and is equipped with a device -the one of associations - which ensures that once a record has reached its conclusion, it automatically releases

¹ Abbott Prévost, Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, Payot, Paris, 1926, p, 96-97.

another whose contents associate themselves with to first. Similarly, a record, which is turning within the person one is talking to can provoke - always by association - the release of a corresponding record in ourselves. It is in this way that dialogue and conversations in general arise.

This process is mechanical, and is easily observed, especially in the course of a conversation between a number of people who do not know each other particularly well. Such a conversation of necessity comes down to the elementary level of common interests: the weather or political or city news. One hears the records being released and turning continuously, moving from one person to another, while their expressions are fixed in a grimace which is commonly accepted as being the sign of amiability.

The recordings go on almost to infinity, since the record library is vast and the recording apparatus very sensitive. When a person is speaking, it is generally possible to discern easily enough whether it is the records which are turning or whether it is his real self talking. If the latter, his language will be picturesque, rustic or even clumsy; if the former it will be a kind of sing-song. It is important to make such observations on oneself in order to ascertain these variations in language. At a given moment, the I is speaking; then, imperceptibly, it is no longer I, but a record, on which a recording has already been made, which begins to rotate. It is curious that once a record begins to turn, it is almost impossible to stop it before it has reached its conclusion.

Some records should be preserved carefully, while others need to be recorded afresh. A particular series of records sometimes represents a knowledge of one's craft. Each person, in his own sphere of activities, is unconsciously creating one or several records which he uses for professional purposes.

But apart from that, a number of records exist within us whose contents are nonsensical and which correspond neither to needs nor even to facts. To this category belong for instance, the anecdotal style, funny "stories" or stories which seem to be so to those who recount them. Introspection, directed towards this phenomenon, enables the student to find in himself a complete repertory of this kind of record. This discovery gives him an opportunity of working on himself with the object of controlling the release of this category of records, and then of completely eliminating them from his collection. In order to do this, the student must first learn to distinguish them from the useful and sensible records by analysing their contents as well as by observing how they "taste" to his inner self when they are released, and noticing the characteristic intonations of his own voice when uttering them. Then he must try and spot the moment when they are released, for it is at this precise moment - we will see later why - that it is possible for him to become master of these records and to eliminate the useless ones.

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Observation clearly shows that, in the child, the Personality still strongly under-developed identifies itself with the I of the body.

Evidence of this is to be found in the fact that when speaking of himself and conjuring up his name, the attribute of the Personality, the child refers to it in the third person, as the adult who identifies himself with his Personality deals with his Soul in the third person. However, if the Soul is as alien to the man without as the Personality is to the young child, this is not true of the body, though it is also referred to in the third person (see French text, chap. XV, p. 57). Whilst less evident, the subservience of the Personality to the I of the body is often to be seen in the adult.

Once conscious of this subservience, the student often tries to dominate it; but it often happens that in so doing he has recourse to dangerous methods. It is thus that in certain techniques of Orthodox, Moslem or Hindu esoterism, the mistake is made of having recourse to mortifications involving excessive suffering. It is often forgotten that the body is the horse which we have to ride all our life, and an instrument for which there is no substitute. The horse must certainly be trained and disciplined and must be kept in his place which is that of obedience. But it is also true that he must be properly cared for and looked after. The object to be attained in this respect is that of a state of discipline which compromises neither health nor vigour.

When an instrument is out of tune, it must be remedied by tuning rather than by cutting the strings.

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The formation of character runs parallel to the growth and development of the psychic centres of man. We have seen that the Personality consists of small I's, each of which affirms itself in its turn, by one of a possible combination of centres and of their sectors. These small I's form the filing which under certain conditions - friction and fire - can undergo a radical transformation through what we have called fusion. It is then that man's character can be considered to be effectively formed. And it is only then that the ideal qualities of firmness in man and of gentleness in woman are acquired. This no longer occurs momentarily - until the next storm - but in a permanent way which always depends on the nature of the given person. As long as a regular and total fusion has not taken place, the so-called character of man can be compared to a tent set up on the fine sand of a beach exposed to the winds and to storms. In reality, this character represents, among all the other small I's, the grouping of a certain number

of them, a grouping which is formed as a function of factors such as innate predispositions, education, teaching, personal desires on all levels of consciousness, especially that of the sub-consciousness, and chance associations. Such groupings can be formed on very different levels. The degree of firmness of the links uniting the small I's can either make a fragile compound of them, or on the other hand, form a partial fusion amongst them. This can happen in different ways: in the form of a bark, which is either circular or lateral, or in lumps.

Fig. 10

In the first case, the character shows a certain constancy in form and in appearance, which however is rather superficial. This case is not uncommon amongst Anglo-Saxons and, generally speaking, amongst Germanic peoples. This type of man has his principles, but is essentially pragmatic. In the second case, the orientation of the character is more rigid. This case is more frequent amongst people of Latin origin. Throughout the ages, it has turned towards the cult of formal logic and the formation of what is known as a Cartesian attitude of mind.

Fig. 11

In the third case, the small I's no longer give rise to a single group of particles, but rather to two groups appearing as lumps in the middle of a fluid mass.

Fig. 12

Such cases are often met with amongst Slavs and in the Near and Middle East. The presence of two groups instead of a single one makes the whole of the Personality more fragile, especially as regards the individual's defence of his personal interests. On the other hand, this structure makes him "two-sided", thus more objective and, consequently, more comprehensive. In the case of two lumps, one of them consists of small I's of an emotional character, and the other, of small I's of an intellectual character. When an inner or external shock

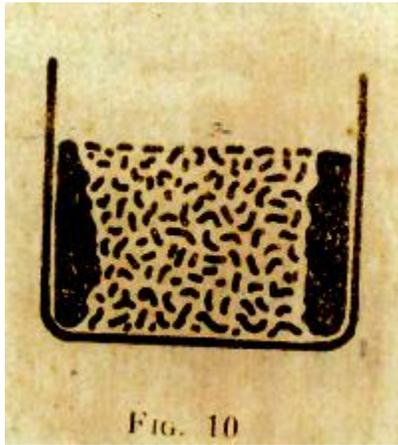


Fig. 10

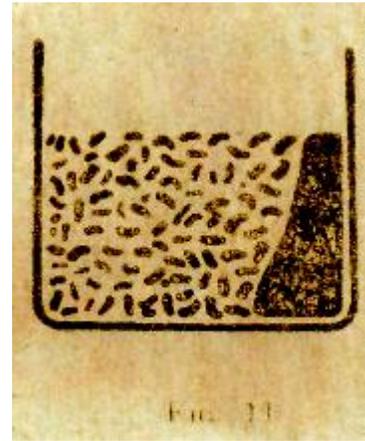


Fig. 11

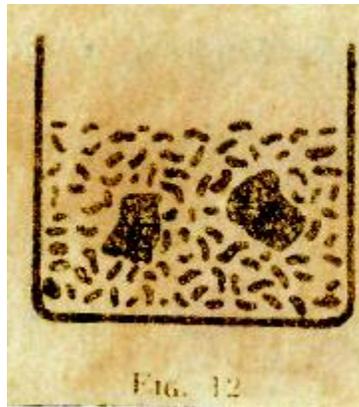


Fig. 12

takes place or something happens, this leads to a close collaboration between these two groupings which, for some time, form a single block. Over this period, the character thus becomes particularly firm, capable of taking decisions or of upholding a heroic fight. In normal conditions, the character of these human groups - for which personal interest, adventure or money do not provide a sufficient incentive to destroy the equilibrium between the two lumps and to lead to a general fusion - should always be magnetized by a disinterested motive : an idea, a belief, a doctrine, worship, confidence, etc. The formation of the two lumps can sometimes give rise to definitely negative effects : man wavers and becomes incapable of taking a decision since in each case he finds arguments fifty per cent in favour of action and fifty per cent against. Russian classical literature offers more than one example of human beings of this type, particularly in Dostoïevsky's novels. The simultaneous crystallization of two centres in the mass of the small I's can lead to a dual Personality. There are even cases where three lumps have been formed. But this comes within the category of pathological cases which do not come within the scope of the present study. It should only be noted that the formation of three or more lumps generally leads to a complete breakdown of the Personality.

A characteristic example of dual Personality is given in the character of Alexander I².

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² Third emperor of Russia, of the dynasty of Holstein-Gottorp. Son of a semi-maniac (Paul I, assassinated), grand-son of a degenerate (Peter III, assassinated) and great Grand-son of an alcoholic (Charles-Frederick, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp). Contemporary accounts of Alexander are most curious. For instance, Lagerbjörk the Swedish Minister, said of him: "Alexander is as pointed as a pin, as sharp as a razor and as false as the foam on the sea". The phrase attributed to Napoleon might also be recalled: "It would be scarcely possible to be more intelligent than Alexander, but I find something lacking in him and it is impossible to discover what it is." N.K. Schilder, the Emperor's foremost biographer said of him that: "It was natural for him to have, with regard to everything, two ways of thinking". Alexander hated people who could guess the state of his Personality of which he himself was no doubt aware. He used to conceal this duality, but always finished by completely repudiating what he professed to be his most sacred ideals.

Let us now examine the place occupied by the Personality of adult man in relation to the real I, our inner core, a supreme Judge, just and impartial but passive. This position is illustrated in the following diagram.

Fig. 13

The left-hand circle illustrates the I of the Personality - consisting of the whole collection of the small I's - which at root is a Non-I. The right-hand circle is the real I. In men 1, 2 and 3, the Personality is dominant. It acts, while the real I, which since Adam's fall, occupies a primarily passive position in man, undergoes the consequences of its acts. The Personality follows its own aims and acts according to its manner, often trespassing on the principles and maxims of the real I. Reflection enables us to grasp the profound meaning of these strange words of the Apostle Saint Paul: for that which I do, I know not; for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate that I do³.

Such is the situation of man who spends his life in the ignorance of his latent faculties, that is to say of real Life. His artificial existence is only a loan: it is, as a result of this, temporary and according to the divine words, finishes with death, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return⁴.

What is the meaning and the aim of such an existence? No explicit answer can be found to this question unless it is examined in the wider context of the life of the Cosmos. We can then understand the meaning of human life, as well as its objective significance, in relation to the economy of the Universe. On the other hand, such a life, considered from an individual subjective point of view, seems in itself, to be absurd. Great minds have always seen and said this clearly. Thus Pushkin

³ Romans, VII, 15.

⁴ Genesis, III, 19.

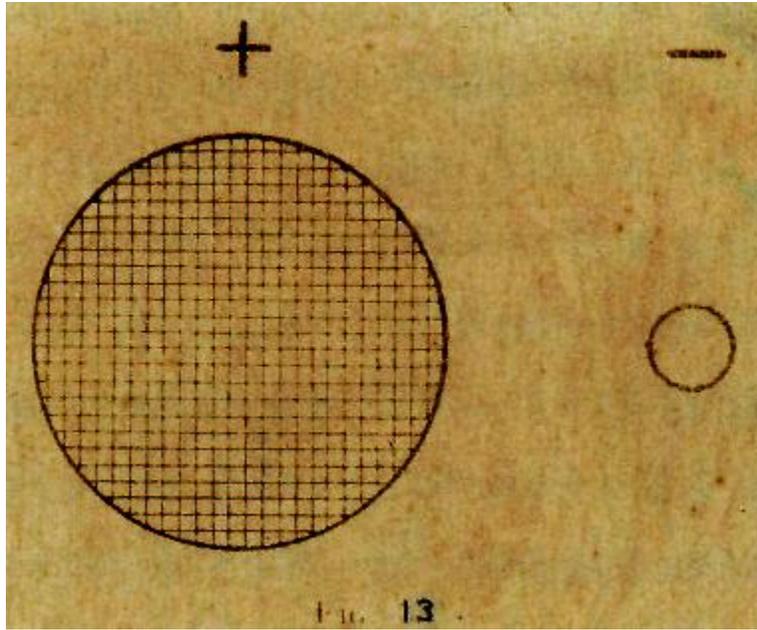


Fig. 13

exclaimed: marvellous gift, useless gift, life, with what object have you been given us?

Here we are touching upon the big problem of Death. The more man identifies himself with his Personality, the less he thinks of death. Against all the evidence, seeing that everything around him dies, man has no instinctive consciousness of his mortality. Even when endowed with a lively imagination, he can only picture it with difficulty. He must make an effort to envisage the idea of his own death and to make a picture of it. At most will he be able to conjure up a vision of his own corpse, but he can never eliminate from this image the observer who is contemplating it. This fact is well known, and some authors have seen in it the proof of our immortality. There is a grain of truth in this; for the mental effort which conjures up a picture of himself as being dead detaches man a little without his noticing it from identification with not only his own body, but also his Personality, and this leads him to identify himself - even if only partially and for a few moments - with his real I. Otherwise the latter remains neglected, generally forgotten somewhere in the background of our waking-consciousness, which is the consciousness of the I of the Personality, together with the consciousness of the I of the body.

This exercise is useful and even necessary. In esoteric orthodoxy, it is imposed upon the student, next to Jesus' prayer under the title of remembrance of death. For death is the only, unique, real event which must necessarily happen to us. In other words, to bear constantly present in mind the idea of death, which every day is nearer is the only concrete way of confronting the implacable reality which overshadows all the joys and the cares of the Personality. It is thus that one learns that in fact all is vanity and a striving after wind⁵.

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⁵ Ecclesiastes, I, 14; II, 17. Quoted from the Slavonic text.

There is no way out of the situation so long as man, affirming himself as a Personality, identifies himself with his relative consciousness and makes its aims and its interests his own. Such is the broad way that leadeth to destruction⁶.

But where then are the narrow gate and the straitened way that leadeth unto life?⁷ The brief study of the relationship between the Personality and the real I which we have made, shows where the reply can be found. It is precisely on this point that the student, who wishes to find a way out of this false existence of whose vanity he is well aware should concentrate his efforts. All hope is centred there.

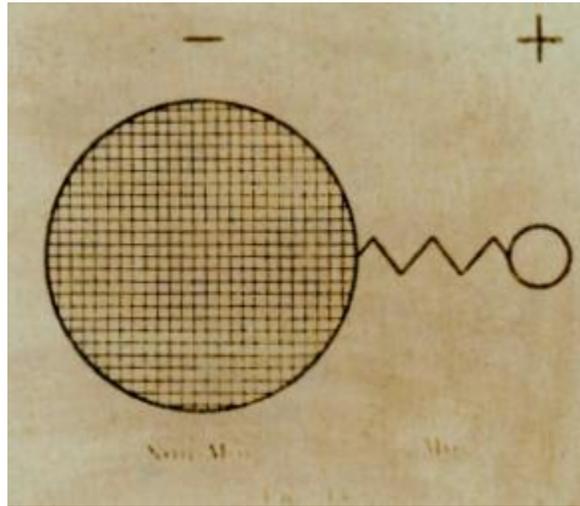
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From these findings, esoteric science sees man no longer as a fact but rather as a possibility. It finds that the growth and the biological, psychic and moral development of the man without spontaneously stops at a certain level. It is true that man continues to act, and even to act in a constructive manner on the higher levels of his waking-consciousness, in all fields and in particular with regard to his professional activities. He is able to make discoveries, to render substantial services to society, but he can no longer, such as he is, raise the level of his being. From this fact, the process of degeneration immediately comes into action. It begins through the physical body and leads him to old age and death.

The straitened way that leadeth unto life consists in the possibility - which is real - of reversing the situation illustrated on the preceding diagram (Fig. 13). This is done by introducing between the Personality and the passive real I a permanent link, continuous, which makes its presence in the Personality's field of action constant. Then, in time, and in relation to sustained efforts, the situation can change entirely:

⁶ Matthew, VII, 13.

⁷ Ibid. verse 14.



Non -!

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Fig. 14

And we know that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven⁹.

It is in the discovery of this road that is to be found the real sense of life, this marvellous and otherwise useless gift, according to Pushkin. This gift is a possibility to the realization of which the voice of our inmost self is calling. But to this end, one must work ceaselessly, for fear of being unable to finish in time. One must work, says Jesus while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work¹⁰.

The student must always bear in mind the image of death. Thus with bitter regrets, he will appreciate the value of each lost day.

⁹ Matthew, XIX, 24; Mark, X, 25; Luke, XVIII, 25.

¹⁰ John, IX, 4.

CHAPTER VI

We have reached now the subject of esoterism properly speaking. The Apostle Saint Paul says: take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power¹.

This text is important. For by it the Apostle establishes a clear distinction between, on the one hand, positive philosophy based on speculations concerning what he calls the fleshly mind², as well as on the purely human tradition and, on the other hand, the superior knowledge whose only source, he says, is Christ. For Saint Paul "the fleshly mind" is none other than the Personality, which in cultivated people is dominated by an eminently intellectual formation. This intelligence however cannot go beyond the limits of agnostic rationalism in spite of all the subtleties of the art of reasoning. Enclosed within this circle, the human mind does not know and cannot know anything that lies beyond its limits: Ignorabimus, as R. Virchow says.

This distinction between the human knowledge, which is accessible to the Personality, and the higher knowledge, which comes from the divine level, is brought out in a much more striking manner by comparing the following texts according to Saint John. The affirmation: no man hath seen God³ seems to be in flagrant contradiction with the words of Jesus quoted elsewhere by the same author: if a man love me he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him⁴ And again Saint John in the Revelation: behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me⁵.

¹ Colossians, II, 8-10. According to the Slavonic text.

² Ibid. 18.

³ John, I, 18.

⁴ Ibid. XIV, 23. Cf. also I, Corinthians, III, 16: know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

⁵ Revelation, III, 20.

One could multiply quotations from the Holy Scriptures in support of these passages. Let us simply give the definition according to Saint Paul of these two kinds of knowledge which are apparently unrelated to one another. He says: now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man⁶.

These passages enable us to deduce with certainty that the Apostles made a clear distinction between two kinds of knowledge: the one relative, limited, and unaware of the other - and the other, absolute, unlimited, embracing the first. Saint Paul attributes the first to the animal man, the second to the spiritual man.

What is to be understood by these two types of human beings and are there no means by which animal man can become spiritual man?

This places us before the problem of the essential qualitative difference between human wisdom and divine wisdom. It remains to be seen whether it is possible, and if so how, to become initiated to the latter or to approach it.

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We have seen that the real I rarely makes itself felt in man, and, when it does, it is generally only when the Personality appeals to it. It can be compared to a Judge who stays in his palace without seeking to pass judgments and whose passive attitude is in opposition to the active one of the Personality. It has also been seen that if the link of esoteric knowledge is introduced between the Personality and the real I, their position, relative to one another can gradually be reversed. The real I then becomes active and the Personality, as well as the I of the body, submits itself completely to the real I which becomes the absolute and incontestable Master.

⁶ I Corinthians, II, 14-15.

This reversal of the situation will be characterized in particular by a changed attitude on the part of man towards his own desires. While formerly he wanted what he fancied, henceforth he will fancy what he wants.

The student will become conscious within himself of this change in proportion to his progress in esoteric knowledge. And the more he progresses, the more this change deepens and widens. At the same time, when he observes this phenomenon in himself, he knows that he is progressing and is able to measure the progress that he has made.

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Now let us see through which organs the real I makes itself felt in man and how it is possible to widen and intensify its activity.

Apart from the three psychic centres of the Personality - which will henceforth be called lower centres - we have within ourselves two others, higher centres, which are independent of the physical body and of the Personality. Together, they truly represent the Soul that we commonly refer to in the third person. Their presence in our inner core, and the rare impartial and objective messages which we pick up through these centres give us that impression of the real I which we have already compared to a Judge residing in his Palace. But as will be seen in a moment, this aspect of the real I is not the only one. Far from it; the doctrine of the higher centres not only enables us to clear up the apparent contradiction between the texts quoted above, but will also help us to understand the meaning of a number of obscure passages in the Holy Scriptures and the significance of the Tradition and of life and more important still, give us a better understanding of ourselves.

While the lower centres in the man without are incompletely developed, his higher centres are perfect. And they work at full capacity. However, such as we are, we are only able to pick up a tiny part of their messages. This is because of the

self-affirmation of man as Personality. The immediate effects of this illusion are pride, egotism and selfishness which form a kind of screen. This only lets in elementary messages emanating from the higher centres; their emissions, however, continue endlessly: they knock at the door. But it is for us to hear their voice and open the door.

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Passing from Saint John's language of imagery to a scientific definition, it can be said that it is the deficiency of our lower centres which prevents us from picking up the emissions emanating from the higher centres. We have seen that of the three lower centres, the motory centre is the only one which functions more or less normally. This is important to know, for this centre plays a part in all our psychic experiences; and consequently, since we must use it for esoteric purposes, we must also educate it, for in this province its development is far from being complete. Similarly, the intellectual centre must be continuously wakened by all sorts of shocks and impulses for, being the slowest of the three, it has a natural tendency to drowsiness and inaction. Goethe said: man is feeble, he sleeps all the time... The superior education of the intellectual centre, like that of the motory centre, is carried out by appropriate esoteric exercises as a necessary complement to academic formation.

The emotive centre occupies the least advantageous position of the three lower centres. In our civilization - as we have already remarked - it generally receives neither rational education nor systematic instruction. Its formation and its development are left to chance; religious education in these days being largely intellectualized and rationalized. All sorts of considerations dictated by worldly wisdom and vanity, the

common practice of lying - especially to oneself - the hypocrisy from which no one is entirely exempt, inflict a dangerous deformity on the emotive centre. This centre becomes unrecognizable since, being frequently infected with a sense of inferiority and with the need for compensation which this brings in its train, it becomes accustomed to criticising and to judging all and sundry, and surrenders to the strange voluptuousness of negative emotions. It degenerates to a point where it becomes the instrument of destruction of our being, and thrusts it towards decay and death.

The two higher centres work at a much more rapid tempo than do the three lower centres. Of the latter, the slowest - as has already been said - is the intellectual centre. The motory centre is much more rapid. But the most rapid ought to be the emotive centre if it did not suffer from the deformity described above. And it generally works slowly, at the same rhythm as the motory centre.



The diagram of man, completed by the inclusion of the higher centres, is shown below:

Fig. 15

These are: at the level of the heart, the higher emotive centre; and at the level of the head, the higher intellectual centre. Their functions differ. In the Tradition, they are sometimes called the eyes of the soul. And as says Saint Isaac the Syrian: while the two eyes of the body see things in the same way, the eyes of the soul see them differently: one of them contemplates truth in pictures and in symbols, while the other, face to face⁷. In other words, the message picked up by the higher emotive centre can be translated into words or in forms, but only in the shape of pictures or of symbols. Such is, for example, the case of the Book of the Revelation. On the whole,

⁷ Philokalia, 82nd/72nd sermon of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

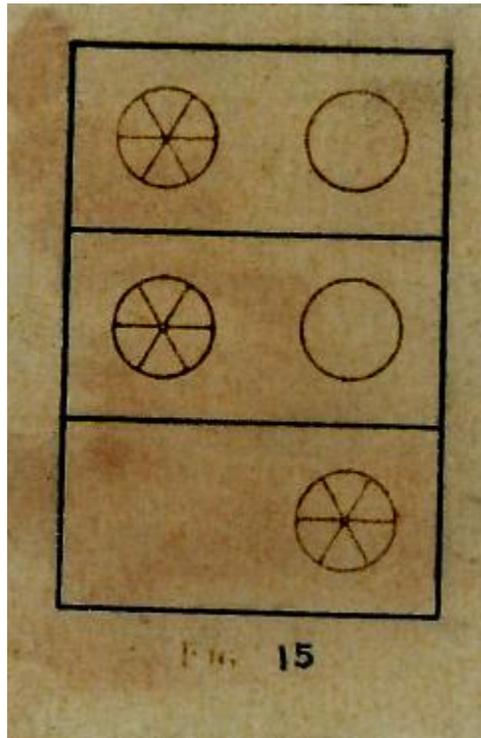


Fig. 15

it is unintelligible if one tackles it only through the lower centres. To understand its true meaning, it must be read with the help of the higher emotive centres. It is in this form that it was revealed to Saint John on the Island of Patmos, and it is only in this way that one can understand this message of major importance. Certainly, the I of the Personality can read it; but it can only understand a small part of it; the true meaning of these grandiose visions remains hidden from it. The messages picked up by the higher intellectual centre, on the other hand, are of a transcendent nature and, as such, can in no way be translated into human language.

The reason why we do not pick up the messages from the higher centres which are working within us ceaselessly and at full speed, is not only because our lower centres are underdeveloped, but also because they are not in equilibrium. The student must strive to stimulate the growth of his Personality, to bring it into equilibrium and to regulate the work of his three centres. While practising introspection assiduously, he should force himself to distinguish within himself, firstly the work of each of the three centres, then of their two parts and finally of their sectors. In this way, he will return within himself.

If, through appropriate exercises, the student achieves a complete development and a perfect balance of his lower centres, he will be in a position to establish a permanent link with his higher centres. This link is gradually formed starting from the lower emotive centre. In proportion to its purification and development, the acquisition of its normal rhythm enables contacts with the higher emotive centre to be established. Later on, and through the latter, he will enter into contact with the higher intellectual centre.

Since there is no direct link between the lower and the higher intellectual centres, intellectual culture - which

is the almost exclusive object of our education - cannot lead us towards the higher levels of consciousness. Despite the refinement of his intelligence, and whatever the scope and the depth of the knowledge he has acquired, the man without lives enclosed within the small circle bounded by reason. The only outlet is through the heart; that is why the cultivation of emotive life is made the centre of attention and of the preoccupations and efforts required by esoteric teaching. However, although purely intellectual, rational and positive culture cannot lead us directly towards the higher levels of Life, this does not mean that it is useless. From the esoteric point of view, it is still of value and will be of great use to the student when forming his Individuality. But one must begin at the beginning, that is to say by the training of the heart and by the refinement of emotive life. On this point, an authority on the matter, such as Bishop Theophan the Recluse, is categoric. He says: there, neither dignity nor erudition are of any use.

Fig. 16

On reaching the higher emotive centre, the student acquires the real, individual I. With the access to the higher intellectual centre, he reaches the level of Consciousness and, by this inner communion, he participates in the universal I. It is the end of all possible evolution for man under worldly conditions. This perspective however is grandiose. On this subject, the Apostle Saint Paul says: and we know that ... all things work together for good even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren⁸.

In sum, our higher centres are two divine sparks: one issuing from the other. The higher emotive centre – the spark of the Son - and the higher intellectual centre - the spark of the Father, under the consubstantial aspect of the

⁸ Romans, VIII, 28-29.

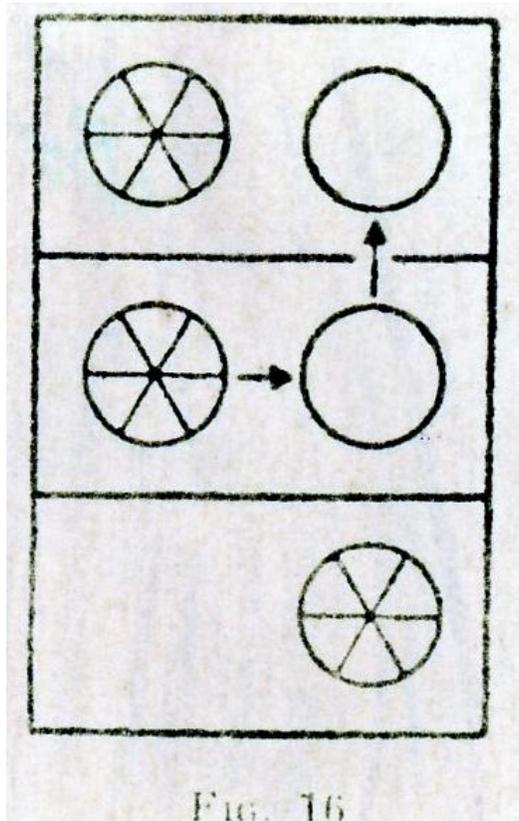
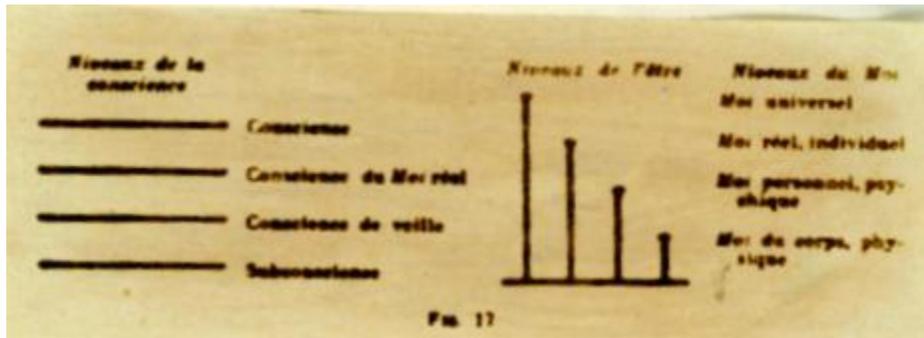


Fig. 16



The English translation of the figure:

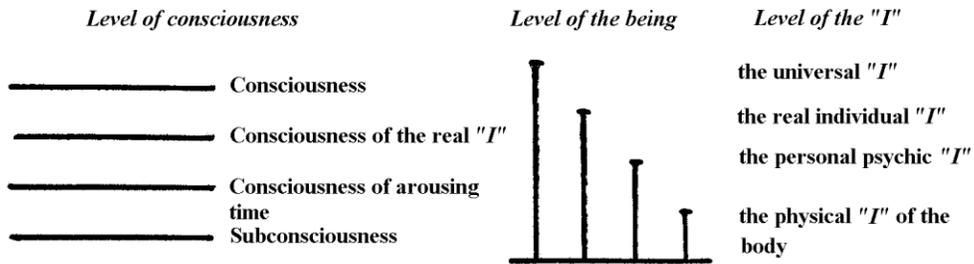


FIG. 17

Fig. 17

Holy Spirit. The meaning of the text quoted at the beginning of this Chapter will now be understood, as well as the essential difference, to which attention was drawn by Saint Paul, between human philosophy and tradition on the one hand, and esoteric Tradition on the other hand.

If we now try to take in at a glance the whole of the road to be followed, from birth to the summit of esoterism one can see it as the evolution of the I, always taking new forms without however destroying the old ones.

Four characteristic levels of I corresponding to the four levels of being and of consciousness are:

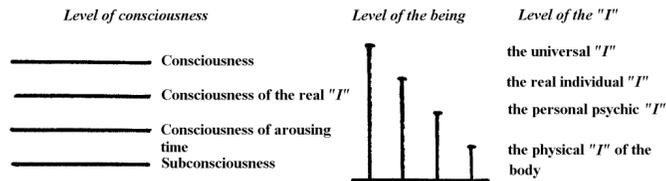


FIG. 17

Fig. 17

Gabriel Derjavine described this evolution in his celebrated phrase: I am a worm, I am a slave, I am a king, I am God.

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In the light of what has already been said, we may ask what are basically the significance and the mission of the Personality, this fine and complex organism which nevertheless is a Non-I, with which we identify ourselves and from which we must henceforth detach ourselves at the cost of painful efforts.

It should be recalled that man, since Adam's fall, lost contact with his higher centres, that is to say with the Tree of Life when from spiritual man he turned to animal man, thus giving predominance to his lower centres, that is to say to the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, through the Personality and its three centres, we possess within us - in an embryonic or developing state - all the elements of which

the Universe is composed. These elements are represented by the corresponding particles of our Personality. This is what the orthodox Tradition calls the "World".

As he gradually acquires the mastery and control of his Personality, man, with the help of this complex instrument, begins to understand the Universe in all its parts and to establish with it conscious and organic links. This is in accordance with the principle of Plato, according to whom like can only be grasped or understood by like.

Such are the objective sense and place of the Personality in the evolution of the I. By means of a kind of conscious identification, the fruit of appropriate exercises of concentration the student will arrive at an understanding of the external Non-I through the inner Non-I, that is to say through his Personality. And this process, to which we will come back later, gives him access to the Powers. Try to penetrate into the inner shell and you will see the external shell (the Universe) for one and the other are but one⁹.

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We are now better able to understand - and to define - the concept of esoterism. By it, in the narrow sense of the term we understand the facts and acts accessible to the higher centres, that is to say the zone of the consciousness of the Self and of Consciousness. In its wide sense, esoterism embraces the two steps of access to this zone and includes: first exoterism which is characterized by an abandonment of the belief that the Personality constitutes a permanent value; secondly mesoterism a zone of approach towards the real I. In the following, diagram the three degrees of esoterism are represented by three concentric circles, outside which the wilderness is to be found, in which zone the man without lives according to his Personality.

⁹ Philokalia, 2nd/30th sermon of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

Fig. 18

Seen in perspective, the former diagram appears as follows:

Fig. 19

Let us now examine how, from the practical point of view, man can attain esoterism, and by what means he can work in order to establish the permanent links which will enable him to develop. This problem is tackled in the Tradition with the help of the following diagram. In the esoteric system of teaching, this diagram is, in some way, the most important. It embodies a profusion of ideas which cannot be fully explained in the comments given below. That is why the student is asked to come back to it often and to meditate upon it.

Fig. 20

The black arrows represent the influence created in life by life itself. They are the first kind of influences, in the midst of which man is placed, and are called "A" influences. It will be noticed that they cover in an almost equal manner the entire area of the circle of life. As in the case of all the forces radiating from nature, their effect is inversely proportional to the square of the distance; thus man is most strongly influenced by the arrows immediately surrounding him and is driven hither and thither at every moment according to their temporary position. The influence of arrows "A" on the man without is imperative; driven by them, he wanders within the circle of his life, from birth to death, following a broken line which sometimes undergoes dangerous changes in direction.

The whole of the "A" influences form the Law of Chance or the Law of Accident under whose domain is placed the destiny of man. Now, by examining the diagram more closely, one sees that each black arrow is counterbalanced, neutralized in some way, by another arrow equal in force and diametrically opposed to it, so much so that if they had been left to neutralize

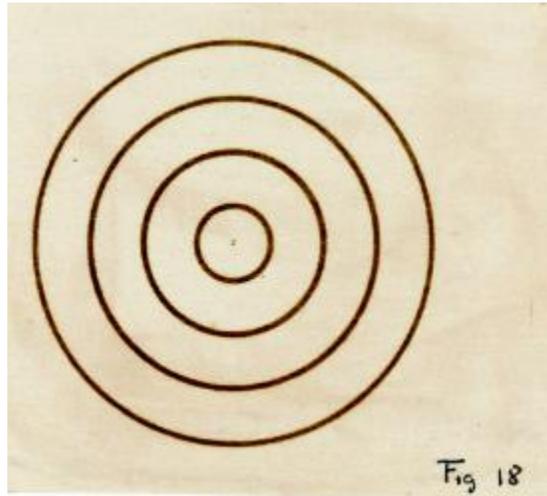


Fig. 18

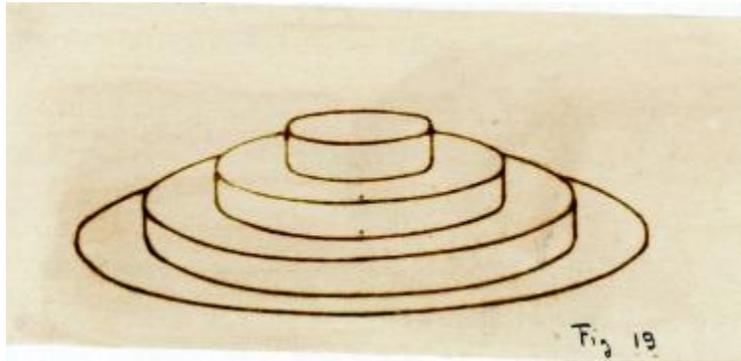


Fig. 19

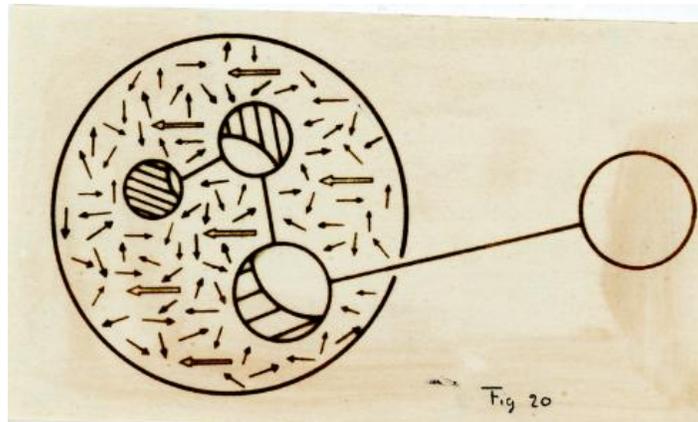


Fig. 20

themselves respectively, their general resultant would have been equal to zero. That means that, on the whole, the "A" influences are of an illusory nature although their effect is real: for this latter reason the man without mistakes them for reality.

The white circle represents the esoteric Centre placed outside the general laws of life.

The white arrows represent the so-called "B" influences. Those are the influences, which are thrown from the esoteric Centre into the turmoil of life. Created outside life, these arrows are all pointed in the same direction. Taken together, they form a kind of magnetic field.

Since the "A" influences neutralize themselves, the "B" influences constitute in fact the only reality.

The small shaded circle represents in this diagram man, in isolation. The shading shows that the nature of the man without is not homogenous; it is mixed.

If man spends his life without being able to distinguish "A" from "B" influences, he will finish it in the same way as he has begun it, that is to say mechanically, moved by the Law of Chance. However, according to the nature and strength of the temporary forces to which he will be subjected, it is possible for him to make a brilliant career, in the worldly sense of the word. But he will reach the end of his days without having learnt or understood anything Real. And thus earth comes back to earth.

In life, everybody is in fact submitted to a kind of competitive test. If man discerns the existence of "B" influences, if he feels a desire to gather and to absorb them, if he aspires to assimilate them more and more, then his inner nature, mixed up as it is, gradually undergoes a certain development. And if his efforts to absorb the "B" influences are constant and sufficiently strong, a magnetic-centre can be

formed within him. This centre is represented in the diagram by the small white space.

Once born within him, if it is carefully developed, this centre takes shape, and exerts in its turn an influence on the resultants of the continuously active "A" arrows, in such a way that a change in direction can take place. This change in direction can be violent. Generally, it constitutes a transgression against the law of outward life and provokes conflicts within and around man. If he loses the battle, he emerges with the conviction that the "B" influences are only an illusion and that the only reality is represented by the "A" influences. Little by little, the magnetic centre which has formed within him is absorbed and disappears. Then from the esoteric point of view, his new situation is worse than his former one when he was scarcely able to distinguish the "B" influences¹⁰.

But if he wins this first struggle, his magnetic centre, consolidated and reinforced, will attract him towards a man of "C" influences, stronger than himself and possessing a more powerful magnetic centre. Thus, by the way of succession, this man being in relation with a man of "D" influences, he will be linked to the "E" esoteric Centre.

Henceforth man will no longer be isolated in life. It is true that he will continue to live as before under the "A" influences which will continue for a long time to exercise their hold on him; however, little by little, thanks to the effect of the chain influence "B" - "C" - "D" - "E", his magnetic centre will develop more and more and, as it goes stronger, man will escape from the hold of the Law of Chance to enter into the province of Consciousness.

If he is able to achieve this result before his death, he can say that his life has not been lived in vain.

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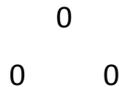
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¹⁰ It is precisely this case which is referred to in the Parable of the unclean spirit and of the empty house. Matthew, XII, 43-45. Cf. also Hebrews, VI 4-8; II Peter, III, 17.

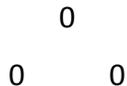
Let us now examine the same diagram, but under a different aspect:

Fig. 21

This second diagram, with the black magnetic centres, represents the case where man makes a mistake and where, believing that he is absorbing the "B" influences, he absorbs while making his choice, those of the "A" influences - the black arrows - which are to some extent parallel to the white arrows of the "B" influences. This will bring him into contact with people possessing magnetic centres of the same kind who, themselves either make a mistake or induce others into error since they have neither direct nor indirect link with the esoteric Centre.



One last remark. What guarantee is there for a man that he will not make a mistake and fall into the second case? The reply is simple: the purity of the magnetic centre must be scrupulously maintained from the beginning and all through the process of evolution.



It must be repeated again that the commentary suggested for this diagram is not exhaustive. Other explanations are also possible - and those who study the doctrine assiduously are asked to meditate upon it so as to be able to penetrate more deeply into its meaning.

Then they will see that this diagram embodies a whole series of laws of human life, set out in the Gospels in the form of parables, images and allusions.

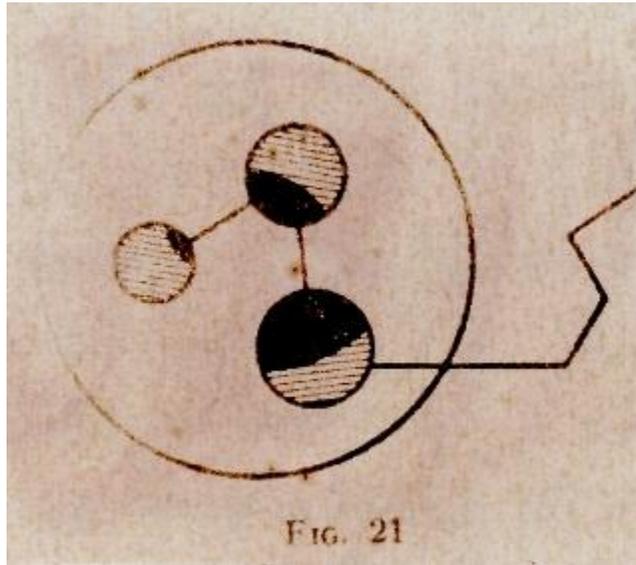


Fig. 21

CHAPTER VII

We are now going to examine the changes which take place in the psychic organism - that is to say in the Personality of the student - as a consequence of the appearance and of the growth of the magnetic centre within us. In a general way, it can be said that the radiations from this centre will help us in an efficacious manner to perfect the development of the lower centres. Moreover under its aegis, the relationships between the three centres will be radically changed and our life will be influenced in consequence. This, in turn, leads to a number of repercussions on the relationships, which we have with the people around us.

We have seen that, through the system of sectors, the three centres are in a state of permanent interdependence such that any movement in one of them is automatically followed by a riposte from the other two; thus as long as the psychic life of the individual only consists of these various combinations and movements of the lower centres, man is unable to have a pure thought, a pure feeling or to take a clearcut decision. Everything is mixed up within him as a result of the operation of these mechanical links. Certainly, the ripostes of the other centres do not have the same power as the movement of the centre through which the action takes place. Nevertheless under normal conditions man is unable to rid himself of them. This phenomenon, which is accompanied by an underdevelopment and a derangement of the centres and of their sectors in one form or another is the cause of the doubts and of the inner conflicts by which man is so often assailed. Furthermore, these mechanical links have a special significance and play a positive role in the psychic life of the individual. Taken together, they constitute the organ - or rather the instrument - of ethics. Since the voice of the real I is weak and rarely heard in external life man, nearly always identified as he is with the I of his Personality, is able to act - and often, does act - without taking this intimate voice into account even if he repents of it afterwards. In these circumstances, the mechanical links between the three centres constitute in practice the only

restraining influence on these anarchic desires.

This instrument of ethics lends itself to the traditions of class and family, and is formed from childhood by education. It is clear that without this instrument, the organization of social life in all its forms would be unthinkable. However, by its very nature, it cannot serve as a guarantee of good and fair conduct in human beings; in order to ensure its peaceful existence, human society at all times has been obliged to have recourse to constraint and to the application of penalties. These are necessary remedies, for the moral sense has never had sufficient strength to restrain the extreme tendencies - anarchic and centrifugal - of the Personality. For the latter lacks the sort of consciousness which religious practices seek under the form of the fear of God¹.

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It will be easily understood - from what has been said above - that ethics are not at all identifiable with Consciousness. They are a sort of ersatz-consciousness, not based, like the authentic Consciousness, on a direct judgment, spontaneous and simple, but on a whole system of considerations amongst which race, civilization, period, caste, class, personal interest or interests, etc. play their role. So much so that the notion of moral sense changes as a function of the variations of its components. Thus the moral sense of a cultivated man is distinguishable from that of a savage, the moral sense of Roman society from that of the Middle Ages, and the latter from that of our own day. However, it must not be thought that ethics follow, in

¹ Job, XXVIII, 28; Psalm, CX, 10; Proverbs, 1, 7 and IX, 10; Ecclesiastes, XII, 13. It should be noted that throughout this text, the numeration attributed to the Psalms is quoted according to the Slavonic text of the Bible, or the Book of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, pub. in 1762; see the Bibliography.

time, an ascending curve of progress. Besides, from the esoteric point of view, the notion of progress as commonly envisaged does not have any absolute value. Progress in itself offers no guarantee of solidity since it is the fruit of the efforts of Personalities who are themselves unstable. The experience of recent wars and revolutions gives irrefutable proof of the extreme fragility of everything that has been seriously considered as recently as the nineteenth century to be the unshakable foundations of human ethics, at least amongst civilized peoples.

The mechanical links between the centres can be illustrated as follows:

Fig. 22

Normally, in the man without these links are sufficiently solid to be able to function during his lifetime. However, in the conditions of modern life, feverish and rather unbalanced, these links, especially those between the intellectual and the emotive centres, are somewhat loose. Sometimes, they are even seen to break. For the individual this break brings with it the loss of the notion and the meaning of the moral sense. Any change in these links ranging from progressive relaxation to complete elimination produces a whole series of psychic phenomena, characterized by an increasingly pronounced hypocrisy resulting in the final rupture of the links which turns man into an amoral person.



The appearance within us of the magnetic centre is able to provoke - as we have said - a profound modification in our psychic organism. When it has reached a certain degree of growth, this centre establishes direct links, which are no longer mechanical but conscious, with each of the three centres as is illustrated on the following diagram:

Fig. 23

When these new links are sufficiently strengthened,

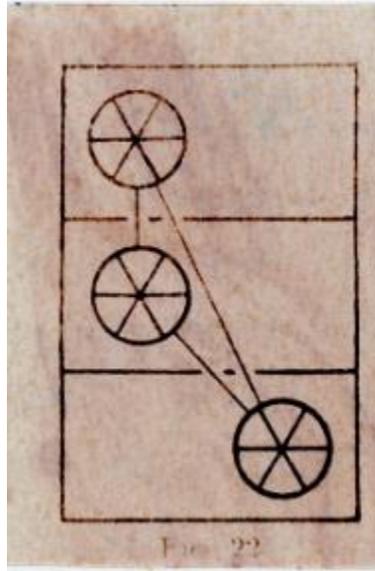


Fig. 22

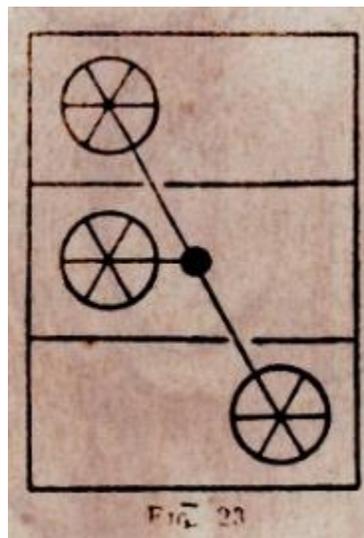


Fig. 23

they take the place of the old ones which immediately fall away. At this moment, man recovers the faculty of being able to have thoughts and feelings which are pure, that is to say, no longer conditioned by the mixture which comes from the automatic interdependence of the centres. Henceforth, each centre can work independently but under the strict control of the magnetic centre which assumes the role of co-ordination.

Thus, so far as our moral nature is concerned, the appearance and growth of the magnetic centre result in the progressive replacement of elements of this moral nature by corresponding elements of the Consciousness. We cease to be the victim of impulsive movements, and our reaction to impressions and to external shocks becomes more and more deliberate and conscious. However, it should not be thought that so radical a transformation of the inner and outward life can occur suddenly. With certain rare exceptions - which concern those who are just by nature - this evolution is a long process, an uninterrupted fight, woven with successes and with failures. More than once the student will succumb to crises of discouragement, more than once it will seem to him that he has been thrown out of his own life. He will sometimes feel crushed by the weight of the trials and difficulties he has to contend with in the course of his researches. This is understandable because in its teaching, esoteric science goes beyond the imparting of simple information: it aims at the transformation of the very being of those who study it. As it generally has to do with those who are unjust, but who are aspiring to the light, it calls to them, according to the word of Saint Paul, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him². In any case, if esoteric science offers everything to the student, it asks everything of him in return. Everything must be paid for. It is impossible to arrive at the True through lies or by acting hypocritically;

² Colossians, III 9-10; Ephesians, IV, 22-24.

for here, one is seeking to be and no longer to appear. It is within this train of ideas that one must look for the meaning of that strange and redoubtable story of Ananias and Sapphira which Saint Luke recounts in the Acts of the Apostles³.

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Things appear in this way as seen from below, from the point of view of the Personality which is founded on the maxim: this is mine, and that also. A sage has said that God smiles when he hears man reasoning in this manner. For, seen from above, things appear under an entirely different aspect. The Personality of the men without is mortal. Consequently, all the values to which it aspires, in fact only belong to it temporarily: on loan as it were. They are also perishable, therefore illusory.

Esoteric science points the way towards permanency. But for that it requires man to detach his heart from the perishable which leads him towards the great gulf. According to the word of Jesus, it sells him pure gold - which he is unable to recognize - in exchange for false coins - which he believes to be pure. And man fears to be a dupe, wavers, suffers,... This is the origin of that great misunderstanding: human life considered from a personal angle. The whole of the Gospel is there. It calls out to those who aspire to Life.

But: if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant, says Saint Paul⁴. He will be excluded from the narrow way to fall back on to the spacious way which will lead him, as we know, to death.

Humility: the meaning, as well as the absolute necessity of this requirement, which is common to all religions and to all esoteric traditions, will now be better understood.

³ Acts, V, 1-11.

⁴ I Corinthians, XIV, 38.

The notion of pride which is its opposite must first be defined. In its esoteric meaning, pride is the affirmation by the Personality of its primacy in relation to the real I. In the man without such an attitude is natural and if he succeeds, this will further aggravate this attitude. Esoteric law is formal on this matter. God says: behold I stand at the door and knock⁵. This means that every man finds himself under a permanent pressure emanating from the esoteric Centre under the form of the "B" influences⁶. Nevertheless, it is man himself who by his own efforts can "open the door", in other words can discern and assimilate these influences. Then the Personality, transcending its prideful nature must give way and accept the superiority of the real I. And it must do it in advance through an act of faith and of hope not knowing whither he went⁷. The student is thus asked to give credit to God. Such is the role of humility as a condition sine qua non of any constructive esoteric work. One can understand the meaning of the old maxim that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble⁸. Care must be taken to understand this in a metaphoric sense; the Personality which normally commands in man must, with the I of the body, bow down to the real I and pay homage to it. To achieve this result, the major difficulty to be overcome, is the following: Illusion believing itself to be reality mistakes Reality for Illusion. As will be seen further on, the power of Illusion acts in man especially through his sexual centre or, more precisely, at its expense. If no account is taken of the links, the complete diagram of man is as follows:

Fig. 24

The sexual centre is analogous to the higher centres: it is indivisible, does not include a negative part and is not subdivided into sectors. But the lower intellectual centre,

⁵ Revelation, III, 20.

⁶ Cf. fig. 20, Chapter VI.

⁷ Hebrews, XI, 8.

⁸ James, IV, 6; also Proverbs, XXIX, 23; I Peter, V, 5.

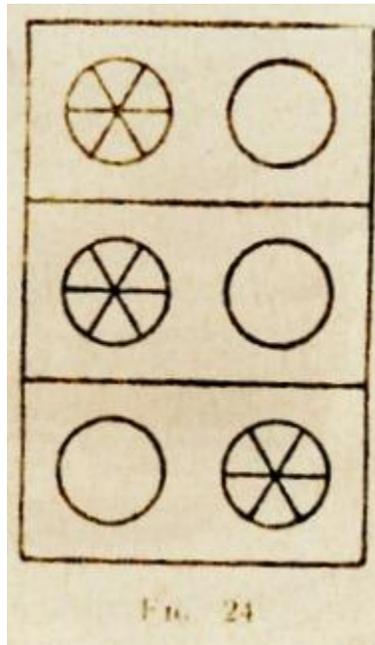


Fig. 24

the lower emotive centre, or both at the same time, can steal some of its energy. This leads to negative phenomena, amongst which are this confusion between vanity and Reality and all kinds of manifestations of intransigence.

If we can pass this test, the I of our Personality displaces itself more and more frequently so as to reside in the magnetic centre. Inversely, the longer the I remains in this centre and identifies himself with it, the more the latter develops.

When, in asserting itself, the magnetic centre establishes an incontestable authority over the three centres of the personality, the student, formerly man 1, 2 or 3 becomes man 4. Throughout this stage of his evolution, he will have the task of recognizing the way in which the three psychic centres function, of assigning to each of them the role which is its own and of equilibrating them. Thus the growth of the magnetic centre will be completed and its development will begin. The latter depends on the conscious efforts of the student to develop his lower centres to their fullest extent. In proportion to this development, the magnetic centre progressively absorbs the lower emotive centre, while at the same time it identifies itself more and more with the higher emotive centre. The magnetic centre definitely identifies itself with the higher emotive centre, once the three lower centres are fully developed and balanced, while at the same time carrying with it the lower emotive centre, which it absorbs. Henceforth, the lower emotive centre and the magnetic centre will become an integral part of the higher emotive centre.

Fig. 25

This fusion having been realized, the student becomes man 5.

In opposition to men 1, 2 or 3 referred to as the men without, men 5, 6 or 7 are called the inward men⁹.

⁹ Romans, VII, 29.

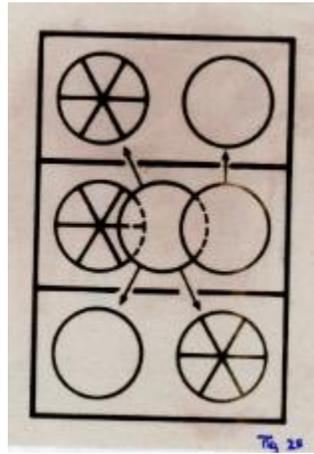


Fig. 25

With the establishment of a link between the higher emotive centre and the higher intellectual centre, the student will become man 6. After this, it remains to him to consolidate the results thus obtained. This consolidation constitutes the last stage of esoteric development.

The tasks, by stage of development, can thus be defined:

- man 4 - to recognize, then to develop fully the three lower centres and to regulate their functioning;
- man 5 - to acquire new faculties: powers¹⁰;
- man 6 - to develop the faculties thus acquired to their fullest capacity;
- man 7 - to consolidate the results obtained.

This consolidation takes place through the sublimation of the sexual centre.

When considering the complete diagram of man (fig. 24), we should bear in mind another slightly different aspect of it, as follows:

Fig. 26

This is the diagram of man who has become complete and immortal in the sense of the words of the Apostle Saint Paul: we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed¹¹. The higher emotive centre, now placed in the middle of the diagram, has absorbed the lower emotive centre; the meaning of the dotted lines will be explained later, as well as the link with the sexual centre.

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While men 1, 2 or 3, animated by the energy from the sexual centre distributed through the three centres use the provisional I of the Personality, an unstable I, changing,

¹⁰ These are the gifts from the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians, XII, XIV, passim.

¹¹ I Corinthians, XV, 51.

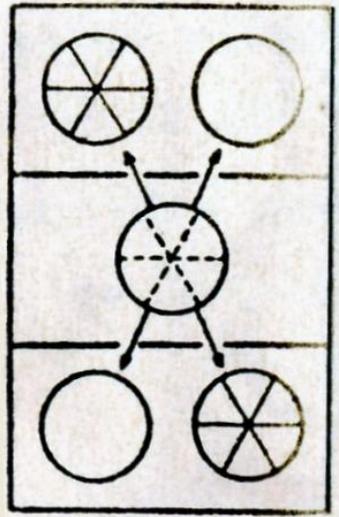


FIG. 26

Fig. 26

illogical with itself, and which leads them to a false existence, the situation changes entirely when, passing through the stage of man 4, the assiduous student becomes man 5, the inward man then 6, finally 7.

- Having become man 5, the student accedes in a permanent manner to the consciousness of his Real I
- Having become man 6, he accedes permanently to Consciousness
- Having become man 7, he accedes to freedom, when obtaining a true Will

Real I - Consciousness - Will constitute the triple objective of esoteric science and are the reward of conscious and unflinching sustained efforts. This is the end of the esoteric evolution possible for mankind on earth.

It is through this evolution that animal man rises again from Adam's fall to become spiritual man, thus becoming initiated to the divine wisdom.

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An important remark. In spite of the formal necessity of humility, we must not, despite this, fall into an extreme, and go so far as to neglect our psychic I, or scorn it or illtreat it. Similarly, we must not neglect, scorn or illtreat our body by submitting it to excessive mortifications. We must only give them the value which is their own and must cease to attribute to them the supreme authority or qualities of the real I. In addition, we must fight by all possible means the feeling of sufficiency, knowing that the I of the Personality is only a provisional I, perishable in itself. For if we obstinately identify ourselves with it, we reaffirm that we are subject to the Law of Chance and, effectively, move towards Death.

Without falling into such an extremity, we must treat the Personality - our provisional I - and our body in which it lives in the way a good rider treats his horse. It is by taking care of this I - at the same time that we control him -

- 84 -

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that we will be able to proceed along the road which will lead us to the desired goal. Before making each effort, we must measure our strength. For the horse does not know where the rider is going; the rider is the only one who is responsible for them both.

PART TWO
THE UNIVERSE

CHAPTER VIII

As we have seen, parallel with the study of man, esoteric science is concerned with the study of the Universe. For in esoteric science care is taken not to separate man from his organic context. It looks at man in the context of the whole of life on Earth, as an element of the planetary world gravitating around the Sun, which itself is one of the stars of the Milky Way, our World, born in the midst of the Manifested Absolute which ensures its existence and its subsistence.

The fact that man isolates himself from the earth in his movements, that he walks on soles, moves around in a car, in a train or in an aeroplane, creates in his subconsciousness the idea of detachment from Nature. But despite all the machines that have been created, he never ceases to be an integral part of Mother-Earth: in the Universe everything is living and everything is part of the whole. This is the reason why alongside the study of man, a study of the Universe is necessary.

The orthodox Tradition considers the Universe as a living being. Origen, in his Principles compares it to an immense organism whose Soul is God. This conception has remained almost intact in the esoteric Tradition; it is expressed in a somewhat abbreviated form, in the liturgical prayer with responses, called Great Hektenia.

Formerly, this conception was expressed in a diagram taking as the point of departure God as Soul of our Soul and gradually leading to God embracing within himself everything that exists. This diagram consists of twelve concentric circles which, moving from the centre, represent the elements shown in Fig. 27.

It should be noted that this double conception of one God - as Soul of our Soul and as God embracing the Universe created by him - is characteristic of the esoteric Orthodoxy. It is also found in the Gospels and in the Apostles, but is generally unnoticed. This has already been mentioned when

quoting the words of Saint Isaac the Syrian speaking of the identity of the "shells", inner and external¹. In this connexion, the speech made by Saint Paul at Athens may be quoted: Saint Luke relates it as follows:

"Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said:

"Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription To the unknown God.

"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship I declare I unto you.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

"Neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though he be not far from every one of us;

"For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring"².

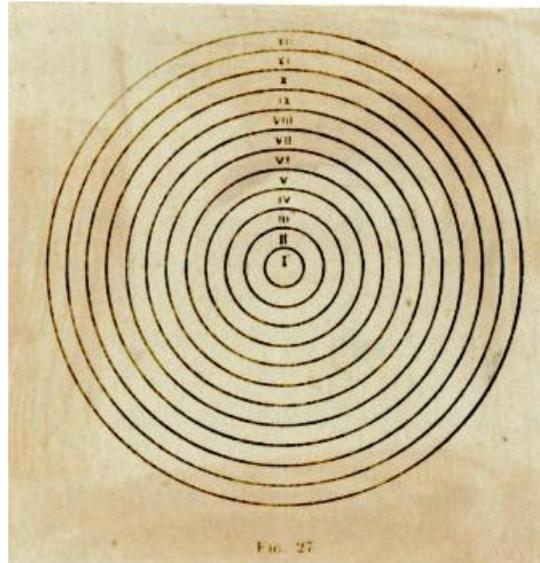
Fig. 27

I.	God, Soul of our Soul	VII.	State
II.	Soul	VIII.	Our planet
III.	Man	IX.	Solar system
IV.	Room	X.	Milky Way, our World
V.	House	XI.	All the worlds, similar and dissimilar
VI.	Town	XII.	God who embraces all

The astronomical world that we can observe from our planet appears to us as such because we see the body of the Universe from the inside. And we do not understand it as a whole because our observations are made and interpreted according to our own scale which, in relation to the whole, is infinitesimal.

¹ Philokalia, 2nd/30th sermon of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

² Acts, XVII, 21-28. Translation in French text from the Slavonic text. Underlinings have been made by the author.



The English translation of the figure:

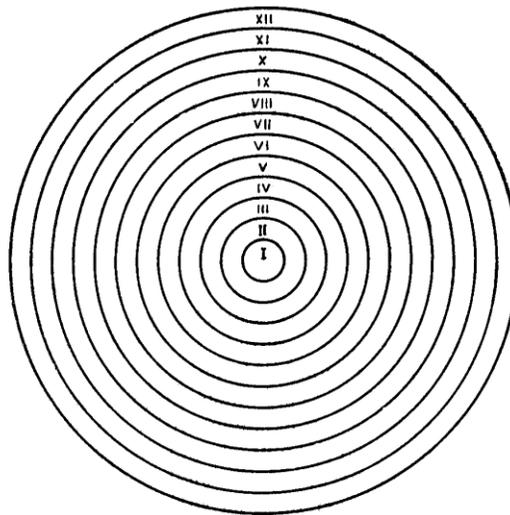


FIG. 27

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|--------------------------|---|
| I. God, Soul of our Soul | VIII. Our Planet |
| II. Soul Real "I" | IX. Our solar system |
| III. Man "Personality" | X. Milky way (Megalo
Cosmos) |
| IV. Room | XI. All the worlds Aghio
Cosmos |
| V. House | XII. Proto Cosmos "God who
Embrasses (surrounds)All" |
| VI. Town | |
| VII. Country | |

Fig. 27

What puts us on the wrong track are the distances between the stars: nuclei of living matter, pieces of the universal organism - seen under an inner perspective, they appear to us to be immense. Nevertheless, the density of the Universe as a whole is analogous to that of our body.

Man, in the Universe, is similar to a micro-organism in the human body. If we were to become microbes, we should see our body from the interior, as the starry sky covered with galaxies which are our organs. If, on the other hand, we were to become immense and to see the Universe from its own scale, we should see it as a living body. Such is the effect of the principle of Relativity.

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What then, is the meaning of human life in this Cosmos such as we know it?'

Man's existence has a double purpose:

- as an element of the universal organism, he serves the aims of the latter;
- as an isolated individual, he is able to pursue his own aims

An example will help in understanding why and how these two objectives are linked.

Man's position in the Universe is analogous to that of a cell in the human body: each cell is part of an organ which, in its turn, takes part in the activity of a group of organs, which ensures the smooth running of such, or such function of the organism.

Let us look, in this case, at the fate of a cell of the body: this cell is influenced by two categories of laws, or to simplify it can be said that it finds itself placed under the grip of two laws.

The first keeps the cell in its place. That is why in esoteric science it is called the General-Law. The second

allows the cell a certain liberty of action and is called the Law of Exception.

The first law, conservative, sees that the organ of which the cell is part functions without hindrance. To this end, the first condition is that the cells of which it is composed should fulfil, in the course of their lifetime, the role assigned to them. Thus this law obliges the cells to remain in their respective places, to accomplish their work and to dedicate their own lives to it.

It is obvious that if this law did not keep the cells of the body within the boundaries of each organ and if it did not oblige them to contribute to its working, the organs could not exist. Thus this law is beneficial; by ensuring the existence of the organ, it enables the body as a whole to last.

It is known, however, that the removal of certain organs of the body is compatible with survival. In the present state of science, such removals do not involve any major inconvenience from a functional point of view. It follows, then, that the organism can tolerate partial amputations which are still less likely to upset either the organs or the role the latter play within the general body's economy. Therefore, the disappearance of several cells from an organ, of which they represent but an infinitesimal part, remains unnoticed; its function indeed is unaffected. And as the essential role of the General Law is to ensure functional continuity, the disappearance escapes its notice and nothing is done to prevent it. Symbolically, it could be said that the cells, which have evaded the provisions of this law, have now entered the domain of the Law of Exception.

This evasion of cells from the body is, moreover, a constant phenomenon. At different and variable rhythms, our cells whether epidermic or nervous are continuously renewing themselves. Simultaneously with their renewal from within, there also occur disappearances which may or may not be compensated by new units.

The analogy is complete in so far as the human destiny in relation to the General Law and the Law of Exception is concerned. But in the present state of our knowledge, it stops there. For there is no reason to think that in this life-movement involving the migration and death of our cells the passage from the General Law to the Law of Exception is the result of any conscious act. In the case of man it is different.

Man, as a cell of humankind, is part of organic life on Earth. This life in all its aspects represents a very sensitive organ of our planet and plays an important role in the economy of the solar system. As one of the cells of this organ, man comes under the domain of the General Law, which keeps him in his place. It is true that this law allows him a certain latitude, a sort of tolerance which permits some free movements within fixed limits. Within these limits, objectively very restricted, but which subjectively seem to be vast, man can give free rein to his fantasies and to his ambitions. Without going too deeply into a definition of the limits, or attempting a detailed description of the components of this General Law, it can be said, for example, that one factor is hunger and the necessity of working to ensure our subsistence. The sequence: sexual instinct, reproduction, solicitude of parents for their children, is another. The esoteric maxim applied to this level of life is conceived as follows: carnal love is necessary for the general good. Fear and its corollaries constitute the third group of these factors. In short, the margin allowed for free movements, tolerated by the General Law, has as a limit what can be described in a phrase, which although hardly scientific creates an image: bourgeois happiness. In other words: a career in any branch of human activity, fortune, family, loves, honours, etc. But all this on the condition sine qua non of an acceptance, even if only subconscious, but without any reservation, of the inevitable character of Death.

As long as man accepts without a fight the principle of the final annihilation of his personality, he is able to act

in life without drawing upon himself the increased pressure of the General Law.

It is quite otherwise if he sets out to defy those limitations. Then he comes up against an action emanating from the General Law and from its derivatives. This law acts simultaneously on several levels: physical, psychic, and moral. Its action on the moral plane is conceived by man, from time immemorial, under the personified form of the Devil.

In the Orthodox Tradition, demonology occupies an important place. Practical findings and acute and profound observations are to be found in it; concerning the subtle and insidious forms which the Devil's action may take under the most different circumstances, since this action goes as far as to use the goodwill of human beings to further its own end.

Very useful advice, based on experience accumulated through thousands of years can be found in it and this is particularly useful to students of esoteric science. Once first positive results are attained, students will inevitably come up against the active opposition of this Law and of the Devil's game.

The student must realize that in placing himself under the control of the Law of Exception, he is running counter to the General Law, which he is even called upon to overturn - on his individual scale, naturally. He must not forget at the risk of a "surprise attack" - that his salvation depends on his victory over the Devil - a personified form, as we have seen, of the moral aspect of the General Law. And this is true, although this law, as a cosmic law, is naturally a divine law³. The student must not be afraid, for the Law of Exception is also a divine law. In choosing this way, man also serves the interest of the whole, although differently, but in an incomparably more efficient manner. In his fight against

³ It should not be forgotten that Jacob fought a whole night against the angel, conquering him and receiving from him the surname of Israel, which means the one who has fought against God or strong against God.

the first law, the student is submitted to trials which often take the form of temptations. The orthodox Doctrine deals very thoroughly with this subject, and gives, as has been said above, useful practical advice, the details of which cannot be gone into here. The student's attention should however be drawn to an indirect form of devilish activity. If, marching straight towards his goal, which is freedom and Salvation, the student successively overcomes the obstacles in his way and, by so doing, gives proof of a strength which enables him to defy the authority of the General Law, this law begins to act indirectly upon him, generally through the intermediary of his intimates, when they are not following the same road. This action undertaken on the moral level, often takes an emotional form, appealing to the noble, generous and disinterested feelings of the student; to his charity; to his obligations; to his pity. This is in order to switch him onto an impasse leading nowhere by insinuating that in this way he is returning to his duty and will continue to follow the straight and narrow way, etc. This throws light on the meaning of the word of Jesus saying that a man's foes shall be they of his own household⁴.

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Let us repeat it, for it is important: esoteric work is by its nature a revolutionary undertaking. The student aspires to change his status, to conquer Death and to attain Salvation. Such is the aim given to this work by the Gospel and the Apostles. As Saint Paul says: if ye live after the flesh ye must die⁶³. But on the other hand it should not be forgotten that he said: we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed⁶⁴.

The man who lives passively - even as an excellent citizen - under the control of the first law embarks, without even noticing it, on to the spacious way which leads to perdition; the one who has chosen the Law of Exception, takes the straitened way which leads to Life⁶⁵.

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⁴ Matthew, X, 36.

⁶³ Romans, VIII, 13.

⁶⁴ I Corinthians, XV, 51. Text already quoted.

⁶⁵ Matthew, VII, 13.

The Universe consists of a vast scale of elements starting from the Absolute as the source of Life, and via multiple ramifications extending as far as the exterior bark, the epidermus, represented by all the planets' satellites.

But before starting on a study of the structure of the Universe, something must be said about the conditions of its Creation. The orthodox Tradition teaches that the Universe was created by a sacrifice of God. The meaning of this postulate will be better understood if the distinction between the state of manifested Divinity and that of the non-manifested Divinity - unlimited and free of any conditions - is taken into consideration.

The sacrifice of God consists in a Self-limitation through manifestation. What are the conditions of this limitation? There are three: in the first place the Universe is created in Space, secondly in Time, thirdly in Equilibrium.

These three fundamental conditions of the Creation show themselves in the Universe in the form of three basic principles of life: the static principle, the dynamic principle and the neutralizing principle.

Any kind of creation can be analyzed and studied in the light of these three principles, which express themselves in a manner analogous to that which has been described when reviewing the conditions of the creation of the World, conditions which are uniform at all levels of the Cosmos.

If we take as an example the creation of an enterprise, we can say that in the first place the idea must be conceived as being within the realms of possibility; the project studied and the plans established. This is because of the static principle. Then comes the stage of the realization according to the dynamic principle. Each of the two principles acts according to an appropriate law in the manifested world, and these principles will be studied later on.

In practice, the enterprise thus created will in all likelihood be unworkable if the directors do not take the third principle, which is that of Equilibrium, into consideration, and do not apply it judiciously to their creation. The principle of Equilibrium must be followed from the first study of the project, until its realization, and it must be strictly observed during the entire running of the enterprise. In a very general manner, it can be said that the promoters of an enterprise, in no matter what branch of human activity, must above all observe the equilibrium between the efforts needed for the creation of the projected enterprise and the means which are available to achieve its realization. If it relates to scientific studies, - it also applies to esoteric studies - equilibrium must also be observed but in a different way: in this case, the plan of the studies must correspond to the structure of the object under study.

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When speaking of the creation of the Universe, it is also necessary to touch upon the notion of Eternity, of which one generally has an erroneous idea. Eternity is generally represented as being a prolongation of Time to infinity. Now Eternity is not time: it is even, so to say, perpendicular to Time. Furthermore, it is not infinite, but limited: the Tradition places together the end of Eternity and the end of the World. Thus, God is praised in His pre-eternal state. In the Christmas carol, one sings:

On this day the Virgin has begotten the Pre-existing;
And the Cavern-Earth brings to the Inaccessible
The Angels and the Shepherds sing praises
The Magi march with the Star
It is for us that the little Youth was born,
the Pre-Eternal God⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ Translated from Old Slavonic.

With regard to the end of the World, it is represented under the form of Fulfilment which is, according to the word of Jesus, the Declaration of accomplished works and facts.

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Two of the three fundamental principles of the Creation, Space and Equilibrium do not contain in themselves any danger for the created Universe. This, however, is not so as regards Time, for though Time is the dynamic principle which makes every action, including creation, and every realisation possible, it includes as a counterpart, the certainty of the final annihilation of everything that has been created. In this connexion the Greek myth of Chronos devouring his children can be recalled.

In order to counteract this menace, the divine Wisdom has introduced into the action of Time an arrangement to prevent the immediate destruction of the created world. It consists of one of the two basic laws whose principles, functioning and effect will be studied in the following Chapters. For the moment, it is sufficient to say that, thanks to this artificial law, the march of Time is enclosed within cycles and, in this way, its destructive effects are counteracted within certain limits. Time does not work along straight lines, but follows curves; it "turns".

The cycles close themselves and repeat themselves. Thanks to this cyclical action, the Universe itself, and everything which exists in it, can continue in being, each element according to its own cycle. The Ancients knew this law well; their philosophy did not admit straight lines; it was based on the cyclical principle.

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Let us try now to give a general picture of the structure of the Universe. The following are the elements which

are called in esoteric science the Ray of Creation and, less frequently, the Cone of the Creation of the World.

The diagram has been established in the following way. The Earth has the Moon as its satellite. This is the limit, the last step of creation beyond which there is nothing. The Moon in fact - and it is also true of the satellites of the other planets - has no satellite of its own.

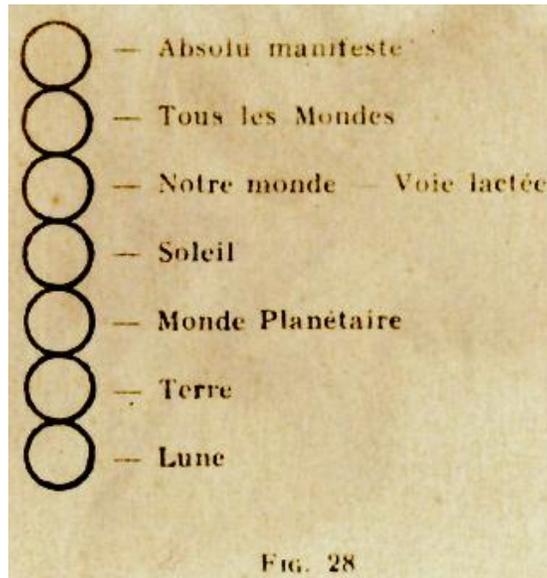
When looking towards the centre, the Earth is found to be part of the Planetary World which gravitates around the Sun, master of our system. The Sun is one of the stars of the system known under the name of the Milky Way, a system to which belongs the whole of the solar system. It is known that the Milky Way is not unique of its kind. Other galaxies can be observed in the sky similar to our own and it can be assumed that there are other worlds which would not resemble it. These large units, as a whole, constitute All the Worlds, in other words, all the contents of the Universe which gravitates around what is called in the Tradition the Central Sun, that is the Absolute, or God made manifest.

The diagram is as follows :

Absolute
All the Worlds
Our world - Milky Way
Sun
Planetary world
Earth
Moon

Fig. 28

It will be currently used in our studies as a useful diagram to follow and on which to reason. But we should not forget that it only represents a ray of creation, and not the Universe as a whole; that the whole Universe is analogous in its structure to a tree where, taking the root as the point of departure - the Absolute in our diagram - a whole system of ramifications finally lead to the foliage of which one leaf



The English translation of the figure:



FIG. 28

Fig. 28

would be analogous to the Moon in our Ray.

And if it were desired to establish a diagram which is even closer to reality, all the steps of Fig. 23 could be placed within each other in order to show the whole in a large circle representing the Absolute embracing all and in which exists and lives everything that exists and has life.

Fig. 29

Nota: For technical reasons, the diagram stops at the fifth step.

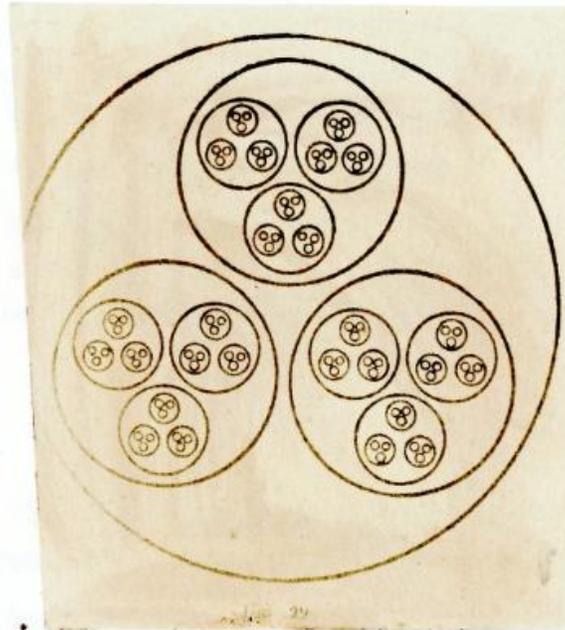


Fig. 29

The original Schema is not complete because cut with scissor.

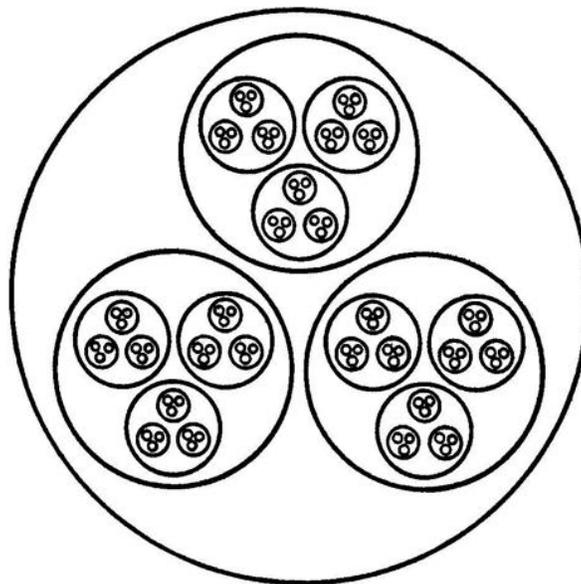


FIG. 29

CHAPTER IX

The three basic conditions under which the Universe was created were set out in the preceding Chapter. The two fundamental laws which control everything that exists and lives at all levels of the created Universe will now be studied.

The first of these laws governs the existence of everything within the Cosmos, whether beings, objects or events.

The second fundamental law presides over and regulates every action, every movement - in particular the process of life under all its forms - up to the subtlest and most intimate movements of thought and of feeling.

Thus these two fundamental laws are omnipresent and penetrate everywhere in such a way that nobody and nothing in the Universe can escape from them.

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The first law is called by esoteric science the Law of Three. This name is explained by its definition.

Definition: everything in existence exists as a result of the action of three forces converging at the same point and at the same moment: a passive force, an active force, and a neutralizing force.

It will be noted that the above forces reflect the three basic conditions of the creation of the Universe discussed above. As such, they represent in the created Universe the manifestation of the three conditions of the creation as conceived in the state of pre-existence of the World by the non-manifested Divinity. Thus, the passive force is the derivative of the static condition: Space; the active force is the derivative of the dynamic condition: Time. Finally, the neutralizing force ensures the maintenance in the Universe of Equilibrium on all levels and at all stages.

It goes without saying that since they are forces, all

these three are active. They have been named according to the role that each of them plays in the co-operation which gives birth to the phenomenon of the creation of the Universe.

Seen from this angle, life in the Universe can be considered as being a perpetual process of creation in every field, on all planes and at all stages. For each event, big or small, considerable or insignificant, an act similar to the First Creation, that of the whole Universe - proportionately speaking - is repeated - an act in which the three forces appear as a response to the three conditions conceived in the pre-existence of the created Universe.

The classic example given in the esoteric schools of the role played by the three forces is that of bread. To make bread, it is necessary to have flour, fire and water. The flour in this example, is the conductor of the passive force; the fire of the active force and the water of the neutralizing force.

It must also be said that the same substance which serves in one case as the conductor of the passive force may in another case, appear as the conductor of the active force; in a third case, it may conduct the neutralizing force. This can also be seen in another classic example, that of the conception of a child. From this point of view, in the couple the woman appears as the passive force, the husband as the active force, carnal love as the neutralizing force. These three conditions being present, conception becomes possible. The situation is seen in reverse if one passes from the carnal plane to the moral one. Here it is the woman who acts - or at least should act - as the inspirer, representing the active force, since man, in the co-operation, which is fruitful on this plane, is the passive force. Just as it is the woman, on the physical plane, who bears the fruit of carnal love during pregnancy, gives birth to it, suckles it, feeds it and educates it - so, likewise on the moral plane, it is the man who conceives the idea which has been inspired or brought to fruition by the woman; who bears

it in a way similar to that in pregnancy; and finally gives birth to it in the form of an opus or, more generally, of a creation.

The primordial character of the passive force can be illustrated by numerous examples. Let us take the case of a purchase: the article which has been offered is the passive force; the buyer's need or wish appears then as the active force, and the price paid for the article as the neutralizing force. In general, the offer constitutes the passive force, the requirement the active force and the payment the neutralizing force.

The fact that the passive force is a force and as such, has an active character, is very clearly demonstrable on the psychic level: for example, no matter how active feminine coquetry really is, it appears in fiction as the passive force.

The third force, the neutralizing one, often escapes attention, either because of the bi-polar character of our psychism, or because of its very nature which often causes it to escape notice. This is because it sometimes plays the role of a catalyst, a much less obvious role than that of a bond or link which, fundamentally, it is.

Tradition makes the following distinctions according to the role of the three forces acting through matter:

When a substance serves as a conductor of the passive force, it is called Oxygen (O); as a conductor of the active force Carbon (C); as a conductor of the neutralizing force, Nitrogen (N). The substance, when considered independently from the forces it conducts, is called Hydrogen (H).

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If the concurring action of the forces remains sterile and this means, from the esoteric point of view, that their cooperation was incomplete, the defect may arise from one of the

three forces, from two of them or even from all three. The analysis of the case in the light of the present law can greatly facilitate the determination of the cause or causes of failure. For example: with the same good flour, the bread will be bad or even inedible if too much water is used - or too little - or if the fire is too weak or too strong.

This last remark enables one to grasp the meaning and the effect of a subsidiary law of the Law of Three. With the same flour - the passive force in this example - it is possible to fail as a consequence of a faltering of the active force (fire) of the neutralizing force (water) or of these two forces at the same time. This logically leads to the conclusion that the action of the active and neutralizing forces must be regulated according to the content of the passive force which intervenes as the stable element, as a constant. The passive force contains in itself all the possibilities of the creation of the phenomenon, while the active force intervenes as the realizer and the neutralizing force as the regulator of the relationships existing between the two other forces by weighing them in the optimum manner. This explains and justifies why primacy in the world of phenomena is attributed to the passive force.

It will be noted that this primacy is also seen as a consequence of the conditions of the first Creation. In fact in order to pass from the non-manifested state; e.g. monopolar, in which before the creation of the World, the Divinity is concentrated on the unique consciousness of the Self, to the manifested state, the first idea which brings it out of the non-manifestation, is necessarily the idea of Thee. This idea conceived by the divine sacrifice of self-limitation is Love - the third force, the neutralizing one. In the language accessible to human beings, Saint John expressed it, saying: for God so loveth the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life¹.

This shows that the attitude of the manifested Absolute itself is controlled by the passive force- the World -

¹ John, III, 16.

Universal Thee, seen as the object of its solicitude.

Thus since the Creation, the divine existence became bi-polar - Love being the neutralizing force which ensures the relationships between the Universal I and the Universal Thee.

It is important for the student to seek and to find examples of the action of the Law of Three, not only in order to convince himself of its efficiency, but also in order to accelerate the esoteric re-education of his intelligence.

It is known that the structure of the lower intellectual centre is bi-polar. This is logical because this structure is perfectly adapted to what the orthodox Tradition calls "the World". This "World" consists of the whole of the "A" influences discussed above (Chapter VI. p. 71-73, English text, pp. 72-74 French text). It is the world in which we live and which appears to the human Personality as the only real one, but is in fact relative, even illusory. The diagram of the "A" and "B" influences (Fig. 20) has been seen above, and attention has been drawn to the fact that all the arrows representing the "A" influences have their counterpart which has a neutralizing action. It symbolizes the creation of the world from Zero by its division into two groups of forces which are equal in power and diametrically opposed in direction.

Since the bi-polar structure of the intelligence corresponds exactly to the structure of the "World", it enables man to study and to discern all the "A" influences, to orientate himself within both the near and the distant field of their action, to apply his aptitude for research, to calculate, to combine, to intervene, to act and even to create within the limits of action allowed by these "A" influences.

It is known however that this "World" is illusory: that the only imperishable reality in life is represented by the "B" influences. Jesus said: lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for

yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal².

The student will understand that this implies the existence of two interpenetrating worlds: the first constituted by the whole of the "A" influences, the "earth"; and the second, esoteric, the "sky", formed by the "B" influences.

By carefully studying the play of the three forces, the student will train himself to recognize the role played by the "A" and "B" influences and to discern their action. This discrimination constitutes one of the essential factors of the re-education mentioned above.

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Let us, however, avoid going to extremes when distinguishing between the "A" and "B" influences. The "A" influences act according to the General Law, in accordance therefore with the divine will: one of the reasons for their existence has already been seen: to serve the Whole. It should not be forgotten that everything is relative. Thus the student of esoteric science should never fight the "A" influences, as a whole, which would only lead him to catastrophe. This in fact was Don Quixote's instructive experience which he failed to understand. The "A" influences play a positive role in the economy of the Universe. And as a whole, they confront anybody willing to fight them with a shattering force. The student's task is different. While pursuing his esoteric culture, he must not attempt to overturn the "A" influences, and through his exploits to make his way among them, but to escape from their control.

It should also be understood that we are unable to escape from them by our own strength. It is by absorbing the "B" influences - divine influences which emanate from a superior and consequently more powerful level - and by trusting them,

² Matthew, VI, 19-20.

and, at the same time, giving proof of capability and of devotion that we shall be freed from the domination of the "A" influences controlled by the General Law with the aid of the Law of Accident.

If the student's efforts are crowned with success, and if he attains superior levels of being, he will immediately be employed to take part in the management of a particular stage of the inferior forces of the Cosmos.

Generally speaking, the task which one must accomplish belongs to the province of the "A" influence. This work necessitates before anything else a study of the bi-polar world. Intelligence is the only tool which we have for this purpose. Such is, in fact, the real reason of its existence as well as of its structure which exactly reflects the world of the "A" influences. This instrument therefore enables man, according to Plato's principle, to grasp and to know the like through the like.

Knowing this, the student of esoteric science must avoid going to the extremes into which some teachings fall. He must neither despise nor neglect his intellectual faculties. Intelligence must be developed and sharpened to the utmost extent; the student's thought must become as sharp as the point of a needle. However, he must not forget that intelligence, in spite of its very complex structure and its multiple aptitudes, is but an instrument whose functioning remains purely mechanical. This is why in esoterism, intelligence does not know and will never know anything with certainty. By nature agnostic and phenomenal, it is limited by the fact that it is trained to function on a three dimensional plane from which it is unable to escape. And it sincerely considers the world of the "A" influences as being the only real one.

Knowledge of the Law of Three allows one to realize the complexity of the structure of the Ray of Creation (Fig. 29).

In the beginning, the Absolute takes the form in which it was first manifested. It is One, and the three forces lie

united within It. It is the traditional doctrine of the Holy consubstantial and invisible Trinity. Seen from the bottom to the top, the Trinity is allegorically called the Summit-limit which crowns the Universe conceived as a Pyramid.

The three forces of the Absolute - the three Hypostases of the Trinity, endowed, with an autonomous will, yet interdependent - create the phenomenal Universe and everything which it contains. At the first step, they create the Worlds. These Worlds whose existence is no longer consubstantial, since they are separate, depend directly and entirely on the will of the Absolute whose three disunited forces they preserve.

Thus created by the three disunited forces, these Worlds continue to be penetrated by the three forces in consubstantial state, which pertain to the Absolute when manifested.

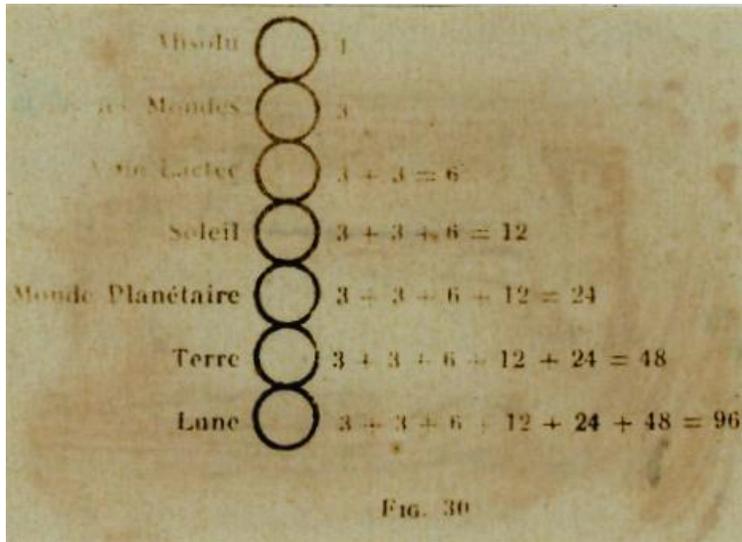
In following the development of the Ray of Creation from the highest to the lowest level, the Creation always conforms to the same process. Each subsequent world is created by its own three forces and finds itself under the control of the forces which regulate the preceding levels from which it has emerged.

These creative forces each represent a group of laws of the same order which regulate and cause to function the world belonging to their step. This enables diagram 28 to be completed by a scale representing the number of groups of regulating-laws alongside the Ray of Creation:

Absolute
All the worlds
Milky Way
Sun
Planetary World
Earth
Moon

Fig. 30.

This hierarchy of laws is only a hierarchy of compe-



The English translation of the figure:

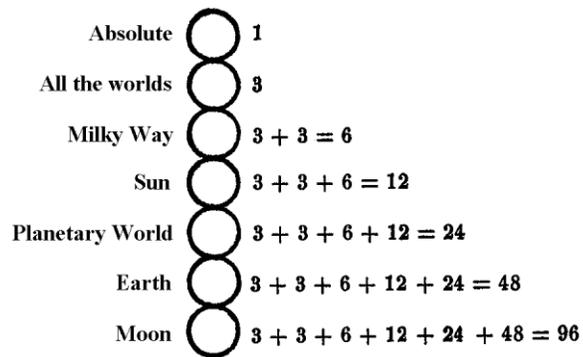


FIG. 30

Fig. 30.

tense and of power.

From step to step, and up to the bark of the Creation the Absolute's will penetrates everything and everybody in the Universe down to the most primitive organism, and beyond, including the most inert form of matter, designated in the Tradition by the term stone.

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What is the meaning of the figures shown on the preceding diagram? They represent the conditions or the forces of the Creation; in other words the laws, or more precisely the categories of laws under which is placed each of the steps of the Ray of Creation. The unity belongs to the Absolute only and this number 1, indivisible, although it contains a consubstantial triad, represents the freedom of God. Everything which emanates from Him progressively loses its freedom; in other words it is submitted to an increasingly greater number of laws or categories of laws. A being moving along the Ray of Creation, from the Absolute towards the Moon, is more and more tied; we who are on Earth, are bound by 48 groups of laws, a figure huge in itself. To these 48 groups of laws, under which the Earth lives, must be added, for the man without, laws relating to the organic life on Earth, and laws resulting from the existence of human society and of the organs and cells of this society: races, castes, families, etc. We live in a "jungle" of laws, and this is why, in spite of certain outbursts, our life comes up against all kinds of obstacles. Salvation consists precisely in the progressive liberation of our submission to this considerable number of laws. In each case, even if we do not overcome these obstacles, we must at least circumvent them. Esoteric science says: we cannot fight the laws which bind us by attacking each of them in turn; in this way we shall never accomplish anything. We would need to have a thousand consecutive lives to attain the desired aim in this manner. We must therefore have nothing to do with all this; then we might have a chance. What is it? We shall see it in the following Chapters.

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The hierarchy of laws being none other than a hierarchy of power, the more we are bound, the less power we have. We must also however alter our conception of power. In esoteric science, power means freedom.

Each time that one enters into an undertaking in life, one voluntarily submits oneself to a new group of laws which controls the elements in the field relating to this undertaking. One does not think of this especially when one is young and it may well be said that man passes the first half of his life "accepting drafts" and the second half wondering how to meet them.

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The initial creative force, the neutralizing force which unites the Universal Thee to the absolute I is Love. This force of Love which at each step takes on a new aspect, but remains identical in essence, penetrates the whole Universe from the highest to the lowest and vice-versa.

Saint John clearly said: God is Love³. Inversely we can say: Love is God. The Apostle's conclusion is: he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Loves⁴. Love, as a divine Hypostase, manifests itself in the Universe as the force of renascence and of perpetual renewal.

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The Life of the Universe is organized according to a rigorous and perfect order. Everything which appears to us to be disorderly or anarchic appears so because of our lack of perception and of judgment. This is so because the major part of the "B" influences escape us. But in the economy of the Great Universe, every being or phenomenon knowingly or unconsciously has its place for a particular purpose.

Such are the essential aspects of this first divine law which is the Law of Three.

³ I John, IV, 8.

⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER X

It has been established that the Law of Three reflects in the World created through the play of forces the three fundamental conditions of the Creation: the static, the dynamic and Equilibrium. The importance of this law cannot be overestimated, since everything that exists within the Universe, in reality or as a possibility, exists as a consequence of the combined action of these three forces.

We are now going to study the second fundamental law: the law of Seven. This law does not apply to the creation or to the existence of things and phenomena in space, but rather to their evolution in Time. It concerns the action of every type of movement, on all planes and at all steps of the Creation.

It is necessary to embark on a slight digression in order to understand better the Law of Seven and to grasp its importance. It has been seen that the only chance for the individual who lives in a jungle of laws is to place himself under the authority of the Law of Exception, esoteric law which enables him to escape from the whole of the "A" influences whose impact on our inner world is the result of their action in the external world. As an action, this evasion also comes under the domain of the Law of Seven.

According to this law, as will be seen in a moment, every action, is subject to one or more deviations and, as a result is destined to failure. Nevertheless, by analysing the action of the Law of Seven, the characteristics of these deviations, as well as their role, will be better understood from an objective point of view and we shall learn how to guard against those deviations and to pursue the desired goal without altering our course.

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The nature of the Law of Seven and its objective necessity are due to the destructive principle of Time, the second condition of the Creation. By virtue of this principle,

everything which is born or which is created - including man - is destined to annihilation. The Universe also, since its creation was menaced by annihilation through the action of Time.

Thenceforward it was necessary to guard against this danger. The Law of Seven represents the means by which the destructive action of Time is to a certain extent neutralized.

Movement cannot be dissociated from duration. For every action is necessarily an external or an inner movement. Therefore it is situated within Time. The Law of Seven consists in this: that each movement thus undertaken undergoes at a given moment a deviation; then, after travelling in the new direction, a further deviation and so on. If the initial impulse is sufficiently strong, the movement after having described a hexagon, returns by the last deviation to its point of departure. Thus, under the influence of the Law of Seven, every action undertaken in the Universe takes place according to cycles (Fig. 31).

While the Law of Three is a natural law, the Law of Seven is an artificial one. If it does not completely neutralize the destructive action of Time, it at least moderates it by imposing on each action or movement successive curves which enclose it within cycles. In the first place, Time itself is curved, deviated from the straight line and enclosed within a large Cycle, englobing within it all the subordinate cycles. Because of the Law of Seven, annihilation only occurs in the course of the first cycle or the following cycles when the initial impulsive force is exhausted. However, the Law admits the possibility of reviving a movement which is in the course of losing energy - and thus speed - by giving it complementary impulses at opportune moments and places. (Fig. 32)

GOAL

ANTIPODE

Fig. 31

GOAL

1. First impulsion
2. First deviation (trend)
3. Complementary shock
4. Continuity in the direction of the first impulsion resulting from 2 + 3

Fig.

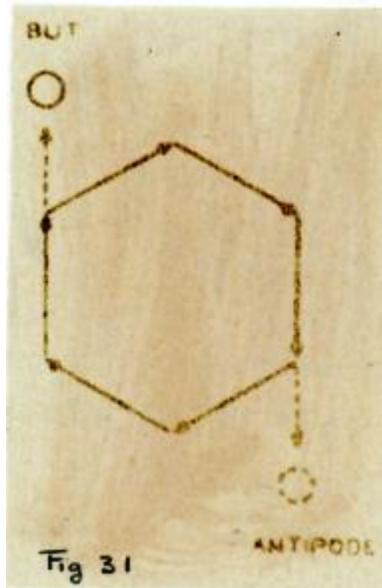


Fig. 31

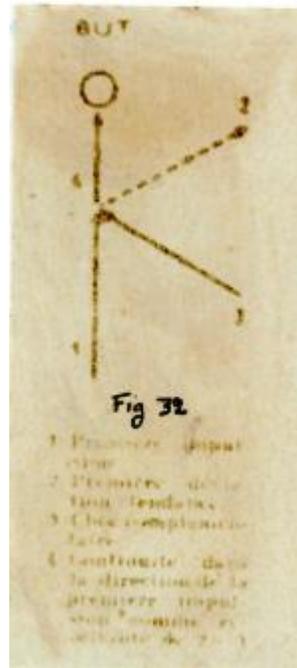


Fig. 32

The English translation of the figure:

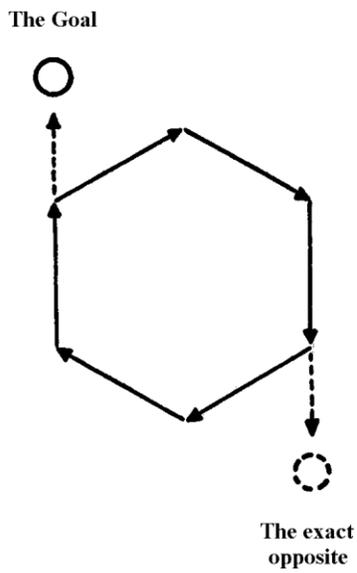


FIG. 31

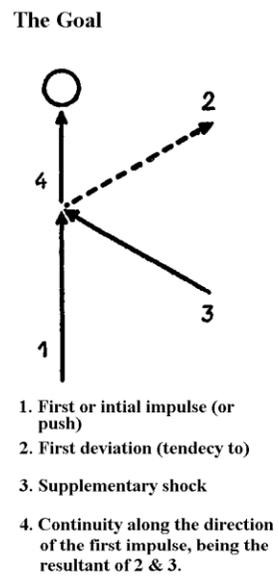


FIG. 32

The Great Cycle, comprising Time, from the moment of the first impulsion of the divine manifestation as far as the Fulfilment, that is to say until the end of the World, is expressed in the Tradition as Eternity. Eternity - as has already been pointed out - is therefore not infinite. Like everything else which is created, it is limited. It embraces the whole of the Manifestation and includes within it the accomplishment of every possibility and of every promise.

This curvature of Time, which results from the Law of Seven, thus makes it also return to its point of departure, after it has circumscribed the polygon of Eternity. Considered in this way, Eternity has a certain duration which can be calculated. It is equal to 2×10^{15} terrestrial years, as will be seen later on. These considerations on the curvature of Time and of every movement, including every physical, psychic and moral action of whatever nature, enable a general definition of the Law of Seven to be given.

Definition: Every movement in a given direction undergoes a deviation at a certain moment.

Inversely: In order that a movement towards a given goal may be continued in the same direction without deviation, it is necessary to give it adequate complementary impulsions at given moments and points.

Corollary: A movement in a given direction, if left to itself, follows with the third deviation a diametrically opposite direction.

These are the essential characteristics of the Law of Seven.

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The above corollary finds an application within human activity on the moral plane at all times. How much blood has not been shed in the name of the Son of God who preached Love?

How much cruelty, violence and constraint has not been exerted in revolutions made in the name of Liberty and of Fraternity? These examples could be endlessly multiplied.

We are generally incapable of realizing these deviations and persist in believing that we are following the straight road, although imperceptibly we have been led to take the opposite direction. Thus human action undertaken on the moral plane automatically receives in this new direction a share of the energy which emanates from the reaction of the surroundings to the original impulse. The more vigorous this is - "avant-gardiste" or "revolutionary" - the stronger is the reaction, according to the Principle of Equilibrium. In this way the movement in the opposite direction which is commonly called the reaction, takes on an unexpected amplitude and often causes the promoters of the original action to retreat to a position behind their point of departure. This is nearly always true of political doctrines.

By consolidating the first success, the second impulsion must allow its exploitation. History has shown many examples of the necessity of a second impulsion: where it fails, after battles have been won, wars have often been lost.

Attention must also be drawn to another effect of this law. It has been seen that it is necessary to go through two consecutive deviations in order to reach the opposite direction from the original movement. That is to say two consecutive complementary impulsions must be foreseen to maintain the original direction of the movement and in this way to ensure the success of the undertaking.

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In order to take a step forward in the study of the Law of Seven and to understand why this name has been given to it, it is necessary to glance at the relationships which exist between matter and energy, as well as at the nature of the cyclical movements animating them.

Positive contemporary science has established the close relationships existing between matter and energy, a fact known to esoteric science from time immemorial. Today one would no longer hesitate to say that matter is in some way only a static form of energy whose nature is "par excellence" dynamic. Some phenomena known throughout all time previously enabled this notion to be perceived: the spherical lightning or thunderbolt (a ball of thunder), for example, possesses certain characteristics of matter such as volume and colour. But knowledge gained during the last century did not enable a study of this phenomenon to be tackled usefully and, in any case, because of its rarity, it was seldom noticed. The recent progress achieved in positive science has led to a rediscovery of the old traditional knowledge - if not in its entirety, at any rate on more than one point - and particularly concerning the relationships between matter and energy. Traditional esoteric science envisages the manifestation of energy in the form of a cyclical and vibratory movement. It teaches that matter as such, consists of a relatively small number of nuclei of various qualities which are analogous in nature to that of the spherical lightning. These nuclei are animated by cyclical vibratory movements of different frequencies and amplitude. The notion of density is introduced at this point in the Tradition and this notion applies to energy as well as to matter; finally, the law is established according to which the density of matter and that of the vibrations are inversely proportional.

Always according to the traditional teaching, the quantity of nuclei in matter - nuclei which are, properly speaking, matter - is trifling. The volume occupied by any object whatsoever is filled by what can be called the tracks of extremely fast movements of a small number of nuclei. Everything depends on the density and the speed of these movements. The heavier and the slower the vibrations, the more nuclei are required to form a body; on the other hand, the faster and

lighter the vibrations, the fewer nuclei are required to form it. It is known that the speed of the movement is capable of modifying the physical properties of matter. For example, when a rotative movement of five or six thousand revolutions per minute is given to a light sheet of paper tightly gripped in a vice, it becomes capable of sawing through a piece of wood. At this speed the piece of paper has the appearance of a disc although it is in fact rectangular. If the speed of rotation is very much accelerated, the disc while it is rotating acquires, for our senses, the characteristics of a solid object at rest. At this speed one could touch the sheet of paper without running the risk of having one's hand sawn.

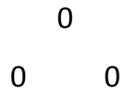
The structure of matter presents itself therefore, in the light of this theory, as being analogous to that of the Universe with its system of rotating stars observed from "the interior". This has already been mentioned (Chapter VIII, p. 86 English text, p. 89 French) and, as has been said, if we were able - by reducing ourselves to the proportions of an infinitesimal being - to observe our body from the interior in the same way as we observe the body of the Universe, we would see it in this way. This is because - subject to the application of the Principle of Relativity - the structure of the Universe is strictly uniform at all levels.

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In the Tradition each movement is considered as being an increase or a reduction in vibrations of the same order of magnitude. The idea of stability is rejected, since everything which exists, exists because of movement and is in a perpetual state of movement. The same body is able to accomplish - and generally accomplishes - several movements at the same time. Thus our planet, the Earth, is animated by a large number of movements of which 12 are considered to be the principal. One hundred can be counted for our satellite, the Moon. On the psychological plane, and even on the physiological, opposite components for the same group of movements are often observed;

a part of these is found to be in progression whilst the other part is in regression. Nothing is strictly speaking stable. Stability, from the esoteric point of view, is unthinkable. It is a fiction. The only stability which is admissible is stability within movement: it is this phenomenon - which is of primary importance - which has allowed the creation of matter in its three forms, such as we know it, to take place.



Let us now observe the action of the Law of Seven in the case of a movement in which the vibrations are progressively increasing. The consecutive deviations which were spoken of at the beginning of this Chapter create, in this case, a discontinuity. This discontinuity occurs in the propagation of any movement, although it may seem to us - and in fact it does seem to us - progressive and uninterrupted. In this connexion let us now examine the musical octave, whose structure is a perfect reflection of the Law of Seven.

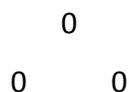
By octave is understood the doubling of the vibrations. The musical scale, placed between the limits of an octave, comprises seven tones and five semi-tones. The missing semi-tones are placed, as indicated by the small arrows:

Fig. 33

The first is to be found between the notes FA and MI and the other between SI and DO²; let us now observe the nature of the progression of the vibrations which, as we pointed out is discontinuous. The following diagrams show on the one hand these discontinuous vibrations expressed in fractions and white numbers and on the other hand, the curve of discontinuity within a musical octave.

Fig. 34

Fig. 35



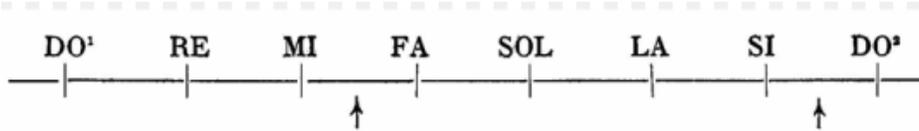
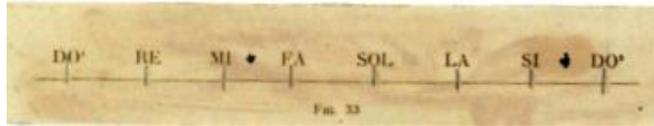


FIG. 33

Fig. 33

All fig. are too blurred.

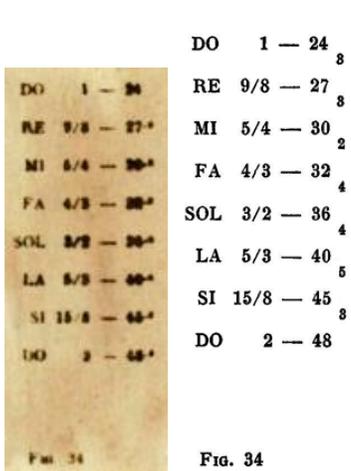


FIG. 34

Fig. 34



FIG. 35

Fig. 35

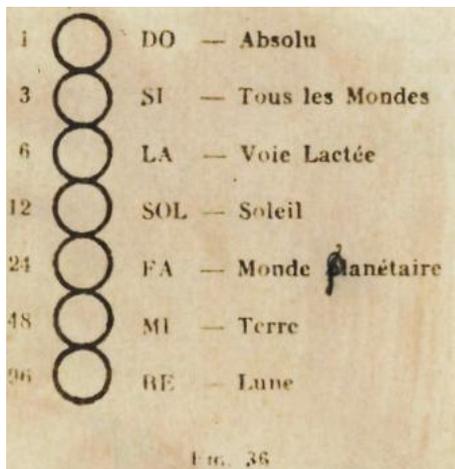


FIG. 36

Fig. 36

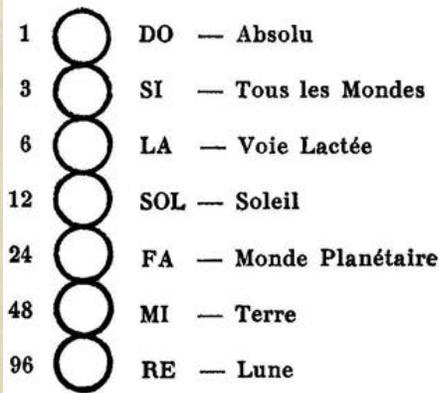


FIG. 36

It has already been said that every existing phenomenon exists within Time and consequently is movement. And every movement, a function of Time is placed like this one under the domain of the Law of Seven, in other words, the Law of the Octave. The action of the Absolute which created the Universe, whose existence at all levels is assured by the Law of Three, is also developing in Time and thus follows the Law of Seven.

The Ray of Creation, which moves from the Absolute as far as the planets' satellites - the Moon in our case - necessarily follows the tempo of the Octave. In the Tradition it is called the Great Octave or the Cosmic Octave. It is a descending octave:

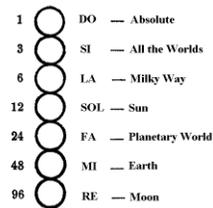


FIG. 36

Fig. 36

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Esoteric teaching, formerly restricted to the initiated, was known not only in the East but also in the West. It is clearly seen when analysing the denomination of the notes of the musical scale, drawn up, as is known, by Guido d'Arezzo, an Italian Benedictine (circa 995 - 1050 A.D.). In order to do this, he used the hymn of Saint John the Baptist, which had been composed two centuries previously by Paul Diacre of Warnefrid, a Lombard historian (740-801 A.D.). The latter, who had been secretary to King Didier of Lombardy, lived afterwards in Charlemagne's court and then in Benevent's court and finally retired to the convent of Monte-Cassino where he died.

Saint John the Baptist's hymn runs thus:

UT queant laxis

REsonare fibris

MIra gestorum

FAmuli tuorum

SOLve polluti

LAbii reatum

Sancte Johannes¹

This hymn was composed by Paul Diacre in a hermetic form. This process has always been followed in esoteric teaching. A comparative study of the diagram of the Great Octave and of Paul Diacre's hymn leaves no doubt that he knew this diagram well. In the same way Guido d'Arezzo, two centuries after Paul, chose precisely this hymn to insert in the musical scale.

It can even be explained why Paul Diacre used, in order to designate the first note, the syllable UT and not DO. It will be noted in this connexion that he conceived his hymn on the ascending scale, while the Great Octave naturally represents a descending scale. In its content, this song leads from the lowest towards the highest, from the rough towards the refined, in other words, from the human plane towards the divine plane. Now it stops on the note SI, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. It can be said in passing that the Precursor enjoys in the esoteric Tradition a special veneration, being placed before the Apostles. He is represented on some Byzantine icons as having wings and two heads, the one placed on the shoulders and the other, a similar one, but cut and bleeding, which he carries on a tray in his hands.

If Paul Diacre had wished to prolong his hymn for another line, he would have been obliged to consecrate it to Jesus, and as a result, to begin with the syllable DO. But he did not do it. His eminently human scale having, as its point of departure, man such as he is born of woman² in all his imperfection, could evidently not begin by DO, whose real meaning is Dominus. He chose the syllable UT, from the word Uterus, organ of gestation, precisely to underline the imperfect condition, common to all the faithful, as well as to all men, and to direct them on to the way of Saint John on the subject of whom Jesus has said: verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist³.

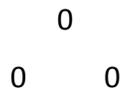
¹ The translation of this hymn is as follows: In order that your faithful might with all the fibres (of their soul) sing the marvels of your life - purify their lips soiled (by sin) O Saint John!

² Matthew, XI, 11.

³ Ibid.

Thus UT - Uterus – symbolises the door of birth according to the flesh and SI, the door of the second Birth, the one according to the Spirit, the condition without which man cannot see the Kingdom of God!⁴ The ascending scale of Paul Diacre thus includes an octave of regeneration, going from birth on earth to that in the heavens.

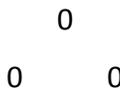
Such is the explanation of this hymn, which conforms to the familiar meaning of the mystical traditions of former times.



An exhaustive explanation of the names of the notes which form the musical octave shows a direct correspondence with those of the Great Cosmic Octave, as the following diagram indicates:

God. Absolute manifested. Central Sun	<u>D</u> ominus
Starry sky. The whole of the Worlds	<u>S</u> idereus orbis
Our Great World; Milky Way	<u>L</u> acteus orbis
Sun	<u>S</u> OL
Planetary World, to which was attributed in antiquity a direct influence on destiny	<u>F</u> atum
The Earth, our imperfect world, placed under the domain of a blend of Good and Evil	<u>M</u> ixtus orbis
The Moon, according to the Ancients, the direct controller of the human destiny	<u>R</u> Egina astris

Fig. 37



Let us return to the problem of matter-energy in order to throw light on the question of atomic structure such as envisaged by esoteric science. It has been seen that the first manifestation of energy appears in the form of an intra-atomic vibratory and cyclical movement. This movement, which animates a certain number of nuclei, forms matter. If traditionally, it is said that these nuclei form matter, it should not be forgotten that they themselves are constituted by energy in a static form.

⁴ John, III, 3.

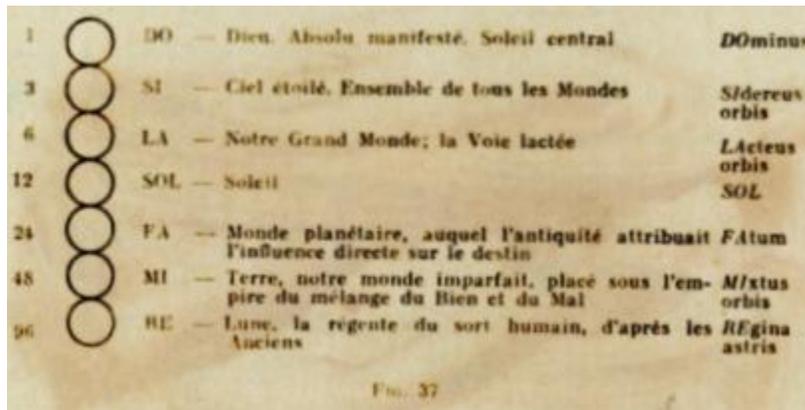


Fig. 37

The English translation of the figure:

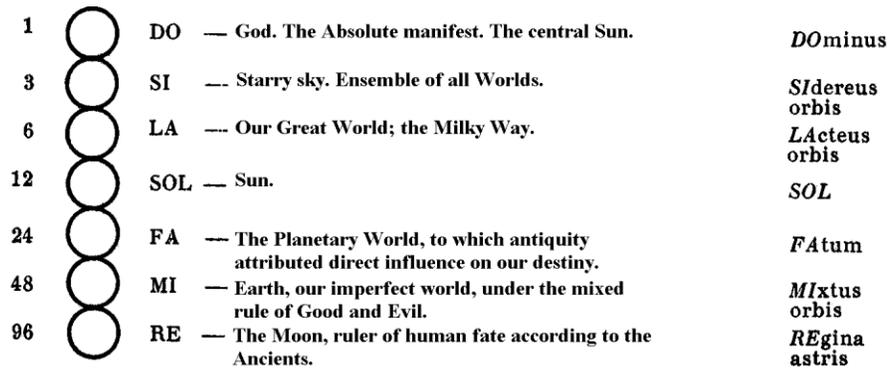


FIG. 37

The disintegration of the atom provides an example of such a transformation. On the other hand, spherical lightning has been quoted as an example of the concentration of dynamic energy in nuclei. This process is the inverse of the first and may be compared to the phenomenon of the atomic fusion.

It has also been indicated that the structure of matter, subordinated to the principle of Equilibrium, has a density which is inversely proportionate to that of the internal vibrations which animate it. It is now necessary to introduce into our studies the notion of the atom as considered in the Tradition. According to the classic distinction, the atom is that particle of a base element which cannot be split further if it is to maintain the whole of its chemical properties with which it is capable of entering into combination with other bodies. Esoteric science has adopted quite a different notion. It is as follows:

Definition: The atom is the smallest particle, the last division of a given substance which maintains entirely all its properties: physical, chemical, psychic and cosmic.

It is clear that this definition is closer to that of the molecule, although it goes beyond it.

Thus atoms of composite elements, e.g. an atom of water, an atom of air, etc. are distinguished in addition to atoms of elements considered, chemically, as being base. In correlation with the cosmic properties of the atom defined in this manner, esoteric science recognises several Orders of Matter according to the density of the standard atoms corresponding to each step of the Great Octave. According to this conception, there can be no basic opposition between Matter and Spirit? If the one is opposed to the other, this is traditionally done for convenience - just as in astronomy for practical purposes, Ptolemy's system continues to be used, although it is perfectly well known that Copernicus's system is nearer the truth. From the point of view of the, theoretically, monist conception of esoteric science, everything is matter in the manifested world, since matter yields energy which is only a certain form of Spirit. The attributes given to the Holy Spirit in a hymn which

has been preserved in the Orthodoxy clearly show this form of thinking:

King of Heavens, our Consoler
Spirit of Truth, Omnipresent,
Filling each and everything
Treasure of the Saints,
Life-giving
Come and make thy abode within us,
Purify us of all blemish
And save our Souls, O Thou Blessed!⁶⁵

This being said, it will be understood that only the atom of the Absolute is in fact simple and, because of this, indivisible. It consists of Energy-Spirit at the maximum intensity of vibration of a single nucleus. It is the lightest atom; its density of matter is taken as being equal to unity, in esoteric science. Going down the Ray of Creation, step by step, the vibrations progressively lose their speed. It follows that the constitution of the atoms at each subsequent note of the Cosmic Octave necessitates more matter, the atoms becoming more and more heavy and inert. As will be seen below, the standard atoms of each step correspond to the order of Creation according to the Law of Three (Chapter IX, Fig. 30, p. 104-105 English Text, p. 104, French text; Chapter , Fig. 36, p. 114, English text, p. 113, French text). As a result the density of these standard atoms follows the notes of the Great Octave and can be shown by the diagram of Fig. 38.

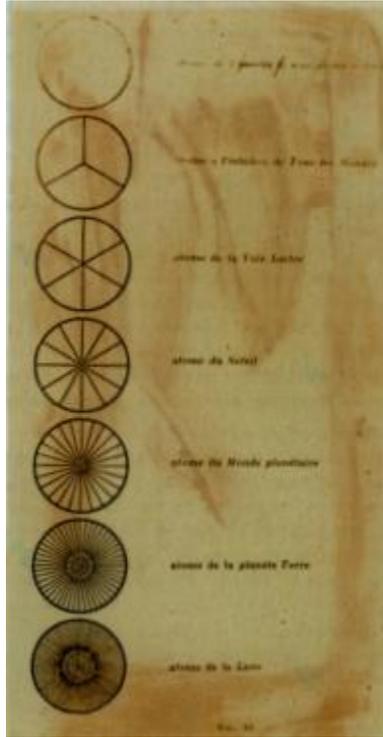
Positive science is only concerned with four of the seven steps of cosmic matter: wholly, with the step of the Earth; to a large extent with the step of the Moon; and in a much lesser degree with the steps of the Planetary World and of the Sun. It does not as yet have any means of perceiving or of knowing the three higher steps. Even the atoms of the Planetary World, such as have been defined above, generally appear to it as being more or less hypothetical. As to the Sun, very little is known about this star. But progress in positive Science brings us today to the brink of sensational discoveries in this field, as well as in that of knowledge of our own satellite. It is surprising to learn that objectively the Sun has quite a different aspect from

⁶⁵ Translated from old Slavonic. Underlinings have been made by the author. It should be noted that this conception of the Holy Spirit, which elsewhere is represented in the form of fire (Acts, II,) is analogous to that of Agni in Hinduism. It will be noted that in Greek the terms spirit and air are homonymous (pneuma) as are spirit and wind (doukh) in the old Slavonic.

that which we see and, that the Earth, when seen from the Moon, seems to be quite different from our own image of it.

Atom of the Absolute, sole indivisible atom
Atom at the step of All the Worlds
Atom of the Milky Way
Atom of the Sun
Atom of the Planetary World
Atom of the planet Earth
Atom of the Moon

Fig. 38



The English translation of the figure:

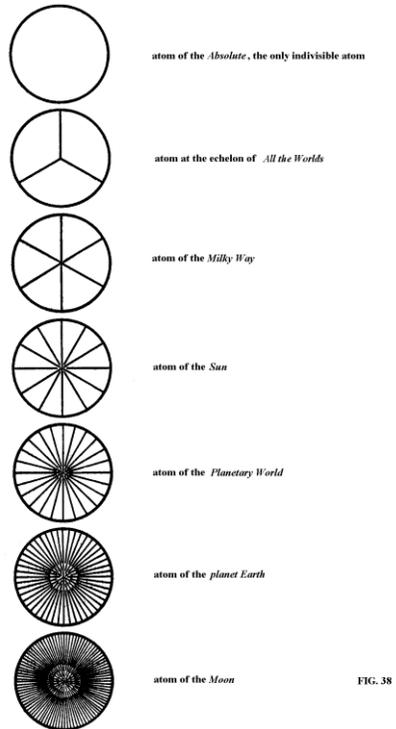


FIG. 38

Fig. 38

CHAPTER XI

The Law of Seven is a general law which regulates all the varieties of movement - conscious or mechanical - which occur in the created Universe. In other words every movement or creative act develops according to a scale. But in every scale the natural progression undergoes a deviation, is slowed down and sometimes even stopped at intervals between DO and SI and again between FA and MI. This is the meaning of the notion of the Fate such as was envisaged by the Ancients. Zeus, himself, according to them, did not escape from its grip. In fact, the action of the Absolute following in its creative work the Ray of Creation, is also subject to this law. As with any other creative work this action follows a descending scale. In order that the Absolute's will may reach the stage of manifestation and subsequently arrive, after going through all the steps of the Ray of Creation, at the final point which is the note RE, the Moon, it was - and remains - necessary to fill the interval between DO and SI and then to neutralize the tendency for a deviation to occur as a result of the sudden slowing down of its progression between FA and MI.

The first interval is filled by the Absolute's will, in particular by its creative will which appears at this point as a conscious effort giving the first impulse to the premeditated creation. This creative force as we have already said, is Love. The interval between FA and MI of the Great Octave is also filled by the Absolute's will but not, as in the first case, directly. This will acts here in the second degree, but always as a creative force of Love. It appears on the lower level corresponding to the interval in question. The presence of these complementary forces at the place and at the cosmic moment desired enables the first creative action of the Absolute to pursue its development without hindrance.

The two diagrams below reflect, respectively, the plan of the Creation (Fig. 39) and its application (Fig. 40):

Absolute First interval (Absolute's Will)

First interval

Second interval DO of the lateral octave

Absolute Second interval (organic life upon Earth)

Fig. 39

Fig. 40

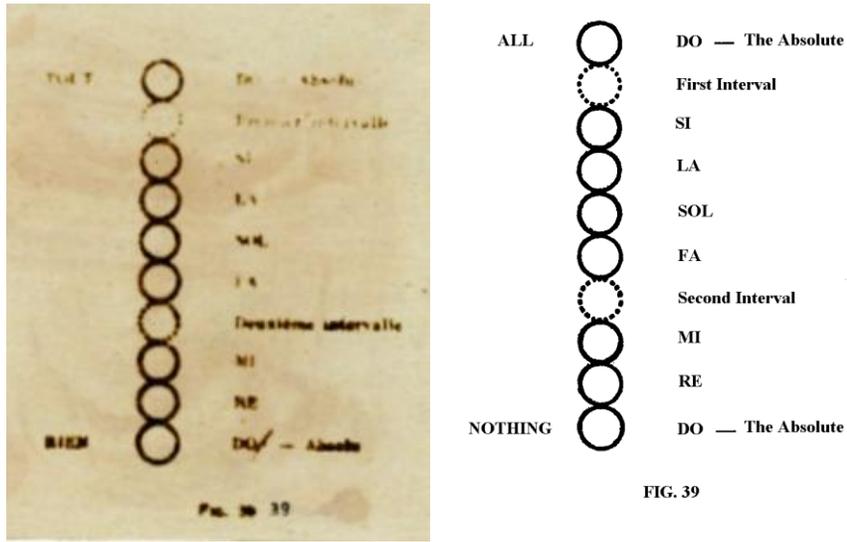
Technically, the transmission of creative energy across the second interval is realized by the introduction in the execution of the cosmic plan, of an auxiliary lateral octave moving outwards from the Sun, that is to say from the solar system, which is the SOL of the Great Octave. With the creation of the Planetary World, the SOL of the Great Octave begins to resound like the DO of this lateral octave.

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Before going further, it would be useful to comment upon the meaning and the mission of the lateral octave as a whole and to establish the significance of each of the notes of which it is composed.

It will be observed, when glancing at the diagram representing the cosmic Octave, that there is no intermediary body of a different nature between the Absolute and the Sun. In fact the notes SI - All the Worlds - and LA - the Milky Way - our World, are composed of bodies at different stages of their existence (formation, maturity, decadence, or death) but all seem to be more or less analogous to our sun. As will be seen later on the Sun, as well as all the stars of the astronomical World - of which each star is the sun of its own system - represents a whole. There is no intermediary body between the Absolute and this whole, which in the Tradition, is considered as the body of the cosmic Christ. In fact various groups of bodies of the same solar nature are to be found there. This is the reason



The English translation of the figure

Fig. 39

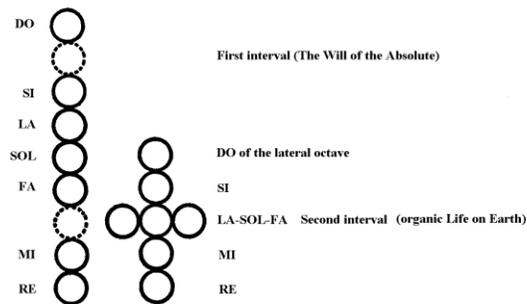
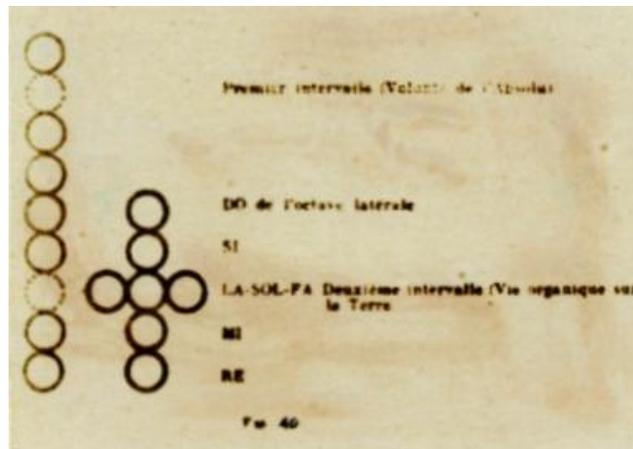


FIG. 40

Fig. 40

The English translation of the figure

why in the Christian dogma, the Spirit of this integral solar body is considered as being consubstantial with the Absolute, engendered and not created, the Son of God¹, or as we say, the cosmic Christ. Its manifestation in our Ray of Creation appears because the SOL of the Great Octave resounds like the DO of the lateral octave indissolubly bound to this same Ray of Creation. In the Universe the lateral octave is the conductor of life in all its different forms. Spirit of the Sun, Christ lives²; He has in Himself the fullness of the solar, planetary and satellite life in all their forms, actual, past or to come.

Such is the general meaning of the lateral octave. Let us now see how this source of life, derived from the Sun, shows itself or manifests itself through the notes FA, MI and RE of the Great Octave, as well as through the notes SI, LA, SOL, FA, MI and RE of its own octave.

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We must beware of depicting the Universe in too astronomical or astro-physical terms. Our vision of the cosmic phenomena is a partial one and is in relation to our limited capacity of perception. Such as we are, the men without, the psychic element in the life of the Universe escapes us. In more precise terms, we do not have any objective notion of it. Through our lack of knowing, we are reduced in this field to beliefs: positive, that is to say emotive, religious; or negative, rationalist, atheist.

In fact we know very little about our Sun and the multiplicity of its functions and the influences by which it rules the three remaining notes of the Great Octave, especially the MI which is the note of our planet.

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In order to have a better understanding of the action of the scale in general, let us take an example from everyday life.

¹ Cf. the Credo.

² John, XIV, 19.

It will be seen, that instinctively, man is always seeking to cross the intervals both at the moment of creation as well as during the realization of his undertakings.

It is generally recognized that in order to do something well, it is necessary to work according to a plan, drawn up in advance. What is the esoteric meaning of this general principle? It is twofold: the first is known to all. It fulfils the requirements of the Law of Three which presides over each and every creation. The second relates to the materialization of the projected undertaking and its putting into operation, which is necessarily made according to the Law of Seven.

Let us take a well-known example, that of Administration. A decree is generally accompanied by one or several sets of instructions which are closely linked to it. They play the role of a neutralizing force between the DO of the decree, an active force, and the SI, a passive force, in which begins the execution of the measures derived from the decree.

As a general rule, the execution of the plan does not depend on the high authority which has issued the decree but on a subordinate authority, such as the Son in the Great Octave. It is this authority of the second grade which is entrusted with carrying out the undertaking from beginning to end. Its point of departure is the SOL which has behind it the notes SI and LA, representing the accumulation of the psychic and biological means and, in front of it, the note FA, that is to say the material means of all kinds which are at its disposal.

In the case of a normal development of the administrative undertaking, the note MI will represent the first results. Final victory is achieved in the note RE which allows access to the fruits of ultimate success. These fruits appear as the DO of the following octave which is then engendered and which will enjoy an independent life and development.

Such is, in theory, the evolution of the creation following the principal Octave. Nevertheless, the well-conceived

decree, the happy choice of a subordinate and the opportune accumulation of the necessary psychic, biological and material elements taken together are unable to push the undertaking beyond the note FA. It is only by means of the lateral octave that the undertaking can be brought in practice to the objective result which, as we have seen, can only be attained in the note DO of the octave which follows the secondary octave.

The lateral octave begins by the note DO derived from the SOL of the principal octave. It means that the subordinate chief, who is the SOL of the principal octave takes the initiative of executing the decree-plan in the framework of the set of instructions. He has no freedom of action; he is bound by the decree-plan and directed by the instructions. Nevertheless, in the framework of those limits he is expected to show initiative. If from the higher level, the error is not made of interfering in his actions, this subordinate appears in this framework as the absolute master; the DO of the lateral octave, in its field, is analogous to the DO of the principal octave.

The quality of the supreme chief shows itself in a judicious choice of collaborators after he has drawn up a precise plan and has accumulated the necessary means to put it into operation. In turn, the collaborator must in every field - and particularly in the esoteric domain - make fructify his talents.

It will be now understood that Jesus referred to this aspect of the Law of Seven when He uttered the words which are at first sight so strange: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath³, or rather which he seemeth to have⁴.

Man acts in life under the authority of the Law of Seven without in fact knowing it. It is when coming up against difficulties which appear on his path without any visible cause and

³ Matthew, XIII, 12; Mark IV, 25.

⁴ Luke, VIII, 18.

by accumulating experiences of successive failures that man seeks empirically the means of circumventing these difficulties.

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From what has been said above, the student of esoteric science is able and even obliged to understand better the comedy of life where the pretentious blind lead the more modest blind towards a gulf which swallows them both⁵. Knowing this, he will have the possibility, to the extent of what independence he may still retain after the previous undertakings which he had accepted - and which continue to bind him - of overcoming the unlucky effects of the "A" influences. It is in the "B" influences that he will find the necessary impulses to fill in the two intervals of each scale which he undertakes - or of which he is a victim - within the network of "A" influences of which all our life is woven. An object of their game, he must become the subject in order to subsequently become the master.

It frequently escapes the attention of students that after having started on esoteric studies, they continue as before to live and to work in the middle of this same comedy of life, born of the "A" influences. It often seems to them that because of this very fact, they are already freed. This is a mistake. They often fall into the opposite extreme. They must prevent themselves from following the example of Don Quixote who was keen to fight the "A" influences in all their forms and particularly those of the windmills. The student must learn to govern these influences, especially those which enter as components in the film of his personal life, by extracting for this purpose a complement of energy from the source of the "B" influences and by using them in his "life" in strict conformity with the requirements of the Law of Seven. For this purpose the student must try to recognise all the scales, at least all the principal scales in which he takes an active or passive part and which

⁵ Matthew, XV, 14; Luke, VI, 39.

he is continually crossing. Such is the first part of his work which corresponds to the principle of knowing. The second part, which is no less important, corresponds to the principle of know-how. Having objectively recognized his position at the crossing of the scales at a given moment, he will then proceed to a comparison of these facts with the practical means at his disposal in relation to the aim chosen or envisaged on the esoteric plane. Then the know-how comes into operation. It consists in a double action: of extracting the necessary energy at the source of the "B" influences, then of applying them to the scales of which he is a part and which is composed of "A" influences. This must be done in a strictly realistic manner, free from any hypocritical tendencies and of excuses towards oneself, and above all exempt from lies to oneself, a condition indispensable of success. The period of application will have the effect of bringing conscious efforts into operation by the introduction of lateral octaves in all the cases submitted to the Law of Seven in a manner to that in which the lateral octave is introduced into the cosmic Octave.

It must be said here and now that in spite of the realization of these conditions one can only rarely attain the desired result without committing numerous faults, both as regards appreciation and application. It is necessary to be a just man by nature in order not to make a mistake here or not to persevere in error. The unjust, the prideful, almost invariably fall back into their old errors. For they believe themselves to be the only just ones and consequently to be right while the others - as well as the circumstances - are wrong. In their pretentious blindness they often go so far as even deliberately to distort the facts. Hence the well-known saying: "Never mind the facts".

The student of esoteric science should be careful not to rejoin the crowd or follow the "others" along the broad way which leads to the abyss.

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Let us return for a moment to the study of the first lateral octave the one which is attached to the Great Cosmic Octave.

First it should be said that DO, issued from SOL of the Great Octave appears as the Absolute. This is the Christus, the Anointed by the Absolute I - the Second Logos - the Spirit of the Sun, shining in its own light⁶ engendered and non created, consubstantial to the Father.

First interval (Absolute's will)
DO of the lateral octave

Second interval (organic life upon Earth)

Fig. 41

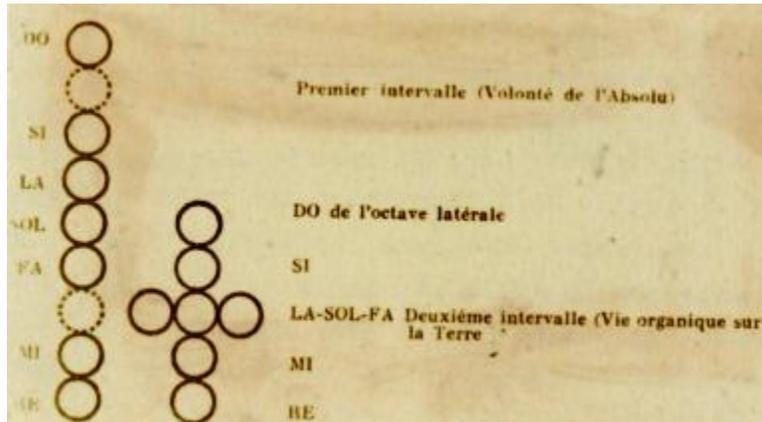
The DO of the lateral octave is the Absolute of organic life upon Earth, the life-giving principle of the Sun. In other words all the elements of organic life on Earth in their manifested or latent state - up to the limit of their possible development and without any exception - depend on the Sun.

The interval between DO and SI of the lateral octave is filled by the creative will of the Absolute II, analogous to that of the Absolute I of the Great Octave, which is Love.

This creative and conscious force which has come out of the Absolute II intervenes as a neutralizing force between the active force of DO and the passive force of SI belonging to the whole of the Planetary World. The outcome of the converging action of these three forces brings into being the necessary condition for the existence and development of organic life on the surface of the planets, in the case of the Earth: the atmosphere.

The three notes LA, SOL and FA represent the three forms of organic life: Man, Fauna and Flora.

⁶ Matthew, XVII, 2.



The English translation of the figure

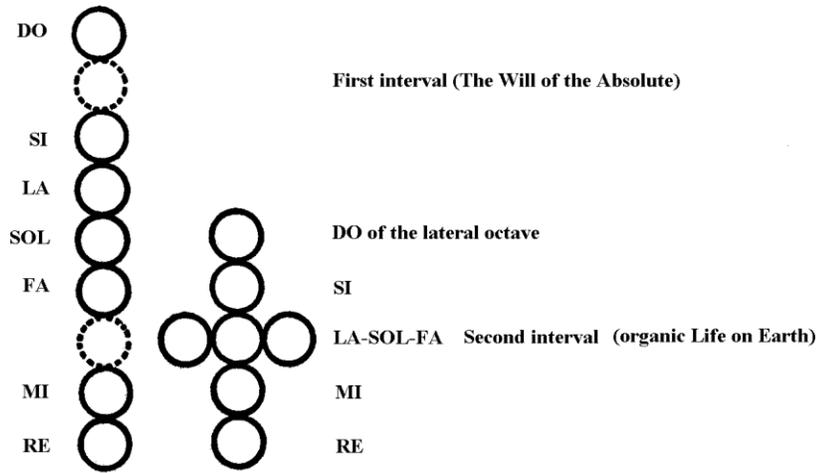


FIG. 41

Fig. 41

The notes MI and RE of the lateral octave represent the life-giving influence of the Absolute II across the transmitting station LA-SOL-FA, which goes through the planet Earth and its satellite the Moon.

We already said that the notes of the Great Octave SI, LA and FA represent, respectively, the psychic, biological and material elements put at the disposal of the Son in order to accomplish the Creation undertaken by the Father. It is why Jesus has said: all things whatsoever the Father hath are mine⁷ and elsewhere I and the Father are one⁶⁶.

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SI of the lateral octave, as has already been indicated corresponds to the creation, organization and maintenance of the atmosphere of the planets, in this case that of the Earth. With time, the atmosphere changes its structure and its composition in conformity with the evolution of the planet. The atmosphere is the condition sine qua non of organic life characterized by respiration. Simultaneously, it is the conductor of all kinds of terrestrial and extraterrestrial influences, including planetary, solar and cosmic influences whose rays penetrate into the atmosphere and are absorbed by respiration. Man knows very little about the influences absorbed in this way by respiration, and which, immediately penetrating into the blood, pass through all his organs and consequently through all his psychic centres.

The three following notes of the lateral cosmic octave, LA, SOL and FA as a whole form the organic life on Earth. FA corresponds to the vegetable life, SOL to the animal life and LA to the human life. These three notes jointly constitute an Organ of the planet, a kind of very sensitive membrane which serves as a transmitting station for creative energy coming out of the Absolute I, which is Love, and afterwards going through the Absolute II. It is through carnal love - note SOL of the lateral octave - and by a perpetual renascence that this organ maintains itself, evolves and ensures the transmission of the creative

⁷ John, XVI, 15.

⁶⁶ John, X, 30.

energy which has come out of the Absolute I across the interval between FA and MI of the Great Octave.

The notes MI and RE of the lateral octave join with these of the Great Octave respectively represented by the body of the Earth and by that of the Moon. The action of the notes MI and RE of the lateral octave manifest themselves through the development of these two bodies.

Such are, in general terms, the meaning and the mission of the lateral cosmic octave.

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It will be noted that while filling in the interval between FA and MI of the Great Octave, the lateral octave itself must undergo a slowing down or a deviation at the interval between its own notes FA and MI. How then can it be filled? We will come back later to this important question after having acquired intermediary notions which will permit us usefully to tackle this problem.

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The brief analysis of the working of the lateral octave also enables certain major problems to be contemplated under a different light, such as for instance the overpopulation of the globe, the world food problem, the general organization of human society, the cosmic meaning of the wars which have taken place in the past and their role in future and even problems such as inter-planetary and inter-stellar navigation.

CHAPTER XII

We have examined the structure of the Universe as the Ray of Creation; its constitution under the Law of Three and its functioning under the Law of Seven. This preliminary study of the Cosmos already enables us to grasp the full meaning of this word, to which the Ancients rightly attributed the sense of Order and Beauty. In the former Chapters we gave a description of the Universe based on the order which lies at the base of its foundation and of its functioning. We saw that this order is strictly and uniformly applied throughout the Universe. As bearer of the Absolute's will, this ordonnance rules the Universe in its whole as well as in its most infinitesimal parts. The old esoteric maxim is thus justified: what is below is like what is above. We shall now study the Universe from the point of view of the life by which it is animated, since its structure, as envisaged here, constitutes in some way its changeable make-up. We shall thus be able to understand better the ineffable beauty of the Cosmos.

Let us not forget that our capacity to construct mental images is poor. Among the images we try to conceive, the richest are flat and colourless. Without realizing it, and unless we have been specially trained, we perceive, within the environment in which we live, only very incompletely the ceaselessly changing volumes; for our perceptions tend to take snapshots of the objects surrounding us. We are thus usually living in a static and two-dimensional world, although we belong to a three-dimensional world which evolves with Time. The latter yet comprises, hidden from us, further dimensions of which we have no direct perception. The concept which we can form of the Universe and of its life - pervaded by the perpetual vibration of Love from the infinitely great to the infinitely small - remains always flat and reflects only distantly and in a purely conventional way its unspeakable beauty.

It is only through a progressive evolution, after having reached man's 4 level of being, and crossed the second Threshold, that the student, having become man 5 will enjoy the direct contemplation of the Cosmos, under its dual aspect of Order and Beauty.

The endeavours made by the man without to grasp that order and Beauty are nonetheless not in vain; they are even indispensable. One must first learn in order to understand; this is also true of studies based on positive science.

This should be borne in mind when reading the present Chapter.

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Subject to these reservations how then could we figure the Universe? The Tree is one symbol to which Jesus had recourse when speaking of Himself as the vine and of His disciples as the branches¹. We can imagine the whole of the Rays of Creation as the ramifications of a tree springing from a triple root which gives birth to a trunk and branches. This frame puts forth buds which also yield leaves, flowers and then fruit. The tree lives, and bears in all its ramifications the various manifestations of its life. Interdependent, useful, even essential the one to the other, these manifestations ensure the being, the growth and the development of the whole. Though far from perfect, this symbol is convenient and we shall refer to it more than once. Its imperfection lies in the fact that the different parts of the Tree - at the various stages of its existence - are not alike. If branches resemble the trunk, and boughs the branches, the flowers, the leaves and the stems on the other hand offer an entirely different aspect from that of the frame. The life of the Cosmos comprises several planes also, of which there are seven principal ones. But these seven planes of manifestation have been conceived in the image of the first², in whose breast dwell the six others. In short, there are seven cosmos, or rather seven kinds of cosmos, whose triple root is one, and which exist and live within one another, following the ramifications of the Rays of Creation.

With the passage of Time, the old teaching which linked each Ray of Creation with a scale of seven Cosmos was

¹ John, XV, 5.

² Genesis, I, 26-27.

either partly forgotten or intentionally distorted. The occultisation of esoteric science has always been practiced. The Pentateuch and the Gospel give proof of this process. Although concealing the exact meaning of the Doctrine, the Elders nevertheless took care to impart to non-initiates - in one form or another - a portion of the truth which could be represented as a complete system. They gave thus to seekers, throughout the centuries and even millenaries, through the medium of civilizations now extinct sufficient indications to urge them to deeper research.

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A summary of this old teaching relating to the Seven Cosmos was disclosed in the Cabbala by Rabbi-ben-Akiba, who described two Cosmos; the little Cosmos symbolizing man and the great Cosmos symbolizing the Universe. According to the Greek terminology, the complete analogy between the Microcosmos and the Macrocosmos reflected the above-mentioned postulate of the Book of Genesis, i.e. that of man created in the image of God and made after His likeness³. This thesis obviously involved the principle of the World's unity. The teaching referred to, however, took account of two Cosmos only, though the full doctrine - as we just said - deals with Seven Cosmos and not two Cosmos, covering altogether a complete cycle of life in perpetual renaissance.

It should be noted that the system of Seven Cosmos includes in itself everything which exists, that is to say the integral Being of which, as in equating it with the Great Universe, we take a far too astronomical view. This cosmic system also embraces everything connected with the life of this Being; its organization and manifestations. It is important to remember this, for Knowledge, in its full esoteric meaning, starts of necessity with a study of this system, on one indispensable condition nevertheless, namely that its constituents

³ Genesis, I, 26-27; V, 1-2; IX, 6.

must always be studied in relation to the whole.

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The following diagram shows the system of the Seven Cosmos, the ensemble appearing as the Macrocosmos;

Fig. 42

The following can be said concerning this doctrine.

Each Cosmos is a living being. Each of them is three-dimensional, like the Microcosmos, that is to say man, and similarly lives within Time. Each of the Cosmos is determined by two adjacent Cosmos. A triad of successive Cosmos forms thus a full unit. This, however, does not set up impermeable partitions between triads, since - and this is very important to recall - the central Cosmos of a given triad is part of the superior triad as an inferior element and, of the inferior triad, as a superior element.

As already said with regard to the Ray of Creation - and this applies to the Macrocosmos as a whole: the different Cosmos are ruled by identical laws. Though analogous they differ in their application to each of them. It should be noted by the way that an action may be prompted in a given Cosmos in accordance with the laws governing another Cosmos. A classic example of such action is exemplified on the one hand, by illnesses of bacterial or viral origin; on the other hand, by the methods used to combat such diseases by means of vaccination, serotherapy, etc. In this example one can see the intermingling of two Cosmos, that of man and that of micro-organisms, in their own respective provinces. Laws, emanating from man's superior Cosmos intervene less often in human life, or at least so it seems to us. Everyday language calls these interventions miracles.

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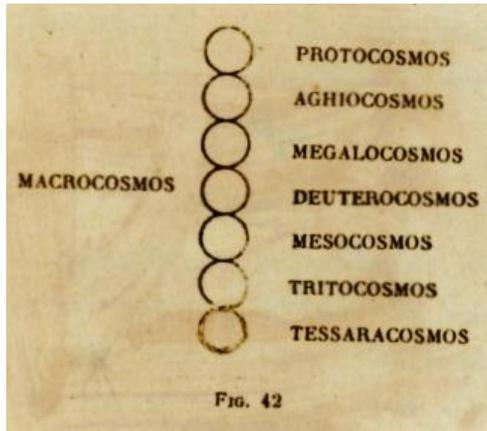


Fig. 42

We shall now make a comparative examination of the conceptions relating to the Cosmos and the Ray of Creation.

If, in picturesque terms, the Rays of Creation are the branches of the Great Tree - the Universe - whose triple root symbolizes the Absolute made manifest, the System of the Cosmos appears as life on these branches.

This kind of life springs from the same triple root, the Absolute I, on which it wholly depends.

It is at this point that the Rays of Creation and the System of the Cosmos converge, thus enabling us to identify the Absolute I with the Protocosmos, namely the First Cosmos.

It can be seen therefrom that our Ray of Creation represents only one branch of the Tree along which the life of the different elements of the System of the Cosmos expresses itself.

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We shall pause here for a while to prevent the reader from forming an erroneous conception of the image of the Tree. If, by analogy, we can better comprehend our object thanks to certain aspects of this symbol, it does not however cover the whole of the relationship existing at all levels between the Ray of Creation and the System of the Cosmos. Mental laziness and a permanent tendency to drowsiness - inertia of matter, the great obstacle to new conceptions - cause us to jump to hasty conclusions and unjustified generalizations. We should not forget that analogy does not mean similarity, even less identity. One should use every symbol with caution and avoid exceeding the limits of the concordance of the symbol with the object under study.

We thought opportune to give this warning for, in studying the System of the Cosmos, we penetrate deeper and deeper into the domain of new notions. Man has to make conscious efforts to learn or to conceive. From a certain angle, this constitutes a creative attempt to which our relatively heavy brain matter

is always opposed. Metaphorically it may be said that each new conception makes a furrow on the surface of the brain. The newer and more striking the formulation of a conception, the deeper is the track imprinted in the brain. Thought should be sharpened to become like the point of a needle. If deep enough, incisions therefore cannot be filled up immediately. And it thus enables cerebral matter to fix thought.

There are however two obstacles to this process:

The first is a mental strain which occurs when the reserves of strength - necessary to reach the desired degree of concentration -, have been exhausted. We shall see later on that in the man without this reserve is very small. Man generally lives at the limit of his nervous resistance, each absorption of energy being almost instantly balanced by an equivalent consumption. This quasi permanent exhaustion of reserves urges man to abandon the path leading towards novelty, in other words towards the unknown, and to allow his mind to slide along the beaten track, which demands neither conscious effort nor concentration. The second obstacle is due to the cerebral matter itself, which resists sharp thinking because it hurts the brain as the point of a needle would do.

Hasty conclusions gratuitous generalizations and slogans are the usual technical means by which the dark and inert part of human nature attempts in all circumstances to bring the mind to abandon researches in the field of novelty, of the unknown, a work which necessitates, as aforesaid, conscious and creative endeavours from the student.

A method, whose purpose is also twofold, is recommended to overcome this double obstacle, presenting difficulties varying according to each person, which, nevertheless, have to be confronted by us all. We should do exercises, firstly to accumulate energy in view of constituting reserves; secondly, to bring about a refinement of the work performed by our brain cells. These cells, endowed with the greatest permanence possible

within the limits of the life of the human body, are capable of being educated. Their sensitivity may become incredibly acute. Noble natures are differentiated by the degree of their cells' refinement. In principle evolution is possible to all of us: the door is wide open. But to enter it calls for permanent, conscious and creative endeavours, without which the refinement of the cells comes to an end. This occurs generally when the education of the person is completed. Then ordinary life begins, which consists in implementing educational means and this too often leads to a sort of moral sclerosis, to a "hardening" of the brain and to an increasing loss, in man, of his capacity of adaptation: and still more of his ability to penetrate into the domain of the unknown.

Apart from other causes, to which we have already alluded and to which we shall return later on, the ideas and facts expressed here explain why esoteric studies remain the patrimony of a minority, preoccupied by spiritual matters and capable of conquering Knowing, as the Knights of the Grail⁴ have done.

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We have already established that, at the point of departure, Ray of Creation and System of the Cosmos are one. Yet, immediately afterwards, begins a distinction. The relationship existing between the steps of the respective systems differs. In the Ray of Creation those ratios are discontinued as they run parallel to the variations of the scale. They are constant in the System of the Cosmos.

⁴ More precisely the Knights of the Holy Grail. The etymology of the word is derived from real blood = royal blood.

According to legend, the mystical vase into which was poured the wine that Jesus drank at the last supper, was called Holy Grail; raising the cup to His lips He said "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew, XXVI, 28; Mark, XIV, 24). And it is also reported that the cup was kept by Joseph of Arimathaeus who brought it later on to Brittany.

The relationships between adjacent Cosmos are those which bind an infinitesimal to an infinitely large quantity. However, thanks to the action of the Law of Seven, the ratio never reaches the limit, i.e. Zero to Infinity; otherwise this would necessarily bring about a breaking of the chain, and a collapse of the System⁵.

Now let us try to understand the meaning of the names attributed to the different steps of the System of the Cosmos.

We have already dealt with the Protocosmos and the Absolute. The two consecutive levels, the Aghiocosmos and the Megalocosmos, refer to the notes SI and LA of the Great Octave. In other words to All the Worlds and to the Milky Way of the Ray of Creation. These two levels represent the psychic and physiological form of life of the Macrocosmos, the Great Universe, considered as a Living Being. We certainly cannot, such as we are, comprehend this notion nor have a clearcut representation of what we just said. This kind, of knowledge and understanding comes solely after esoteric evolution and, for the time being, is for us of theoretical value only. At our level of being, the practical meaning of the System starts at the level of the Deuterocosmos.

Why Deuterocosmos, or second Cosmos, as in fact it corresponds to the fourth degree of the System? The answer to this question may be given by the reader himself. The reason has already been furnished: (see Chapter XI, page 121-122). Between the Absolute I and the Absolute II, the Sun, there is no intermediary of a substantially different nature. At the SI level of the Great Octave, corresponding to the Aghiocosmos, appear nebulae. They yield enormous amounts of energy, giving birth, through a process of growing heaviness of atoms, to galaxies composed of suns-stars. Since the Absolute I, DO of the Great Octave, corresponds to the Protocosmos, the Absolute II, DO of the lateral octave, is thus the second cosmos and analogous to the first Cosmos. Let us leave aside for the moment the Mesocosmos, to which we shall come back later on. We shall mention at this stage

⁵ C.f. Ouspensky: Fragments, p. 292, where this error is to be found.

that the form of life relating to this level is sometimes illustrated in Tradition as the inferior Heavens, ruled by the Princes of the Air or Pneumatic Archontes. We say this in order to locate the Mesocosmos in relation to the FA of the Great Octave and to the SI of the lateral Octave.

Let us now examine the problem of the Tritocosmos and of the Tessaracosmos. We shall start with the latter. Tradition gives few indications with regard to the Tessaracosmos, the Doctrine even less. A few allusions only can be found in texts concerning this problem which has been brought up-to-date by the progress in positive science and technology.

If the Tritocosmos represents life upon Earth and the life of Earth, as a living Being, by analogy the conception of Tessaracosmos refers to our satellite. Now, the Moon, from the point of view of the System of the Cosmos is still at a foetal stage and is nearing completion of its period of pregnancy: the Tessaracosmos is not yet born. Therefore it should absorb the energies and elements which are essential to its incomplete growth. A massive share of these necessary elements has been made available to it as a function of the progress achieved in techniques, the increasing multiplication, as well as the new organisation of mankind; the extension of livestock and the rationalization of agriculture. All this sounds promising for a rapid acceleration of that process of growth in the forthcoming century. As the child in his mother's womb, the Tessaracosmos exerts a very great influence upon the Tritocosmos and, through it, upon man who, being an integral part of Organic life upon Earth, pays his contribution to the Moon's growth, this cosmic foetus.

That is all that can be said now in relation to the Tessaracosmos.

Let us return to the Tritocosmos. It means the third cosmos, although the Mesocosmos comes between it and the Deuterocosmos, the second Cosmos; yet the same reasons which have induced us to consider the Deutorocosmos as the second Cosmos, though two further Cosmos also exist between it and the Protocosmos, apply in this case.

The Tritocosmos represents the Earth, considered as a living being. Within our limited possibilities of conception, the Tritocosmos is the Organic Life upon Earth. Let us attempt to define its position in relation to the two adjacent Cosmos. If we consider the Deuterocosmos - The Sun - together with its whole system as a unit, it is easy to establish, be it only under the astrophysical aspect, that the relationship between these two Cosmos is comparable to that existing between an infinitely great quantity and an infinitesimal one. The Deuterocosmos therefore, is the adjacent higher Cosmos in relation to the Tritocosmos.

What is, on the other hand, the adjacent lower Cosmos to the Tritocosmos? It cannot but be the organism which though of infinitesimal dimensions in relation to the ensemble, is the most characteristic of Organic life upon Earth. Since the latter is assimilated to the Tritocosmos, man is doubtless the most specific organism of that Cosmos.

Man is therefore the Microcosmos, conceived also as each Cosmos, in the image and after the likeness of God.

A curious thing is to be remarked upon: it is easy to figure the Deuterocosmos as Christ, under His cosmic aspect, or in an individualized and solar shape, according to the traditional, anthropomorphic description, which probably responds to objective truth. But we experience some difficulty in conjuring up the Tritocosmos - and this is also true of the Mesocosmos - under the same anthropomorphic shape. Yet, with regard to the latter, Tradition speaking of the celestial hierarchy, as well as of the Princes of the Air, always has recourse to imageries of this kind, and uses also sometimes zoomorphic symbols.

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What is the position of the Microcosmos in the scale of the System of the Cosmos? It is indicated below:

Macrocosmos Fig. 43 Microcosmos

We should not believe, however, that the Microcosmos is the last stage of Organic Life upon Earth. We know that, at least, physiologically, man's life rests on the existence of the micro-organic world, starting with those that transmit life, the bearers of the species principle, i.e. spermatozoa and ovulae. An ensemble of big and small cells, protozoa, bacteria, viruses, form this world, invisible to us, without the aid of instruments. Returning to the principle of grouping Cosmos by triads, we can draw from the former exposé the conclusion that man's life, as a Microcosmos is delimited on the one hand by organic life on Earth - the Tritocosmos - of which it represents but an infinitesimal portion and, on the other hand, by the existence of the micro-organic world which moves in man, and each unit of which is also infinitesimal in relation to him. The following diagram shows these various relationships:

Fig. 44

With the help of this diagram, we can now understand the diagram of the cosmic lateral Octave which, examined from a dynamic point of view, is the octave of the Deuterocosmos:

Fig. 45

We are thus led to establish that if, on the one hand the development of the Universe is no far not yet achieved along our Ray of Creation - The Tessaracosmos still being a foetus - on the other hand, the evolution of man, as an individual, at the other extremity of the scale, stays put at the level of his three lower centres which act like three disunited forces in the man without. His task consists therefore in realizing their unity, which is the practical aim of esoteric studies and work. The tasks to be accomplished in view of the development of the Macrocosmos and the Microcosmos are delineated belows:

Macrocosmos (Universe)	Microcosmos (Man)
Descending octave of creation, by degree of action prompted by the Absolute's will which is Love	Ascending octave of evolution by degree of results achieved by man's will which is Love

Fig. 46

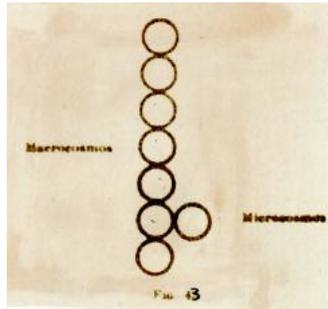


Fig. 43

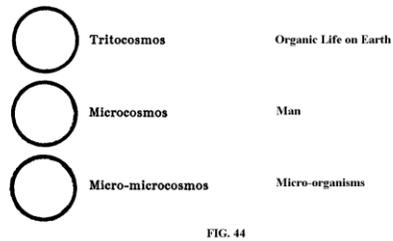
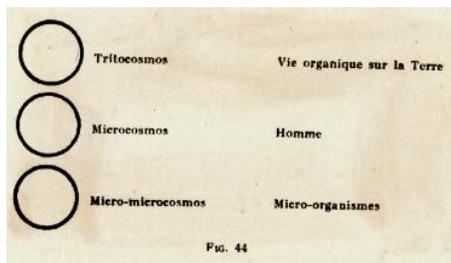


Fig. 44 The English translation of the figure

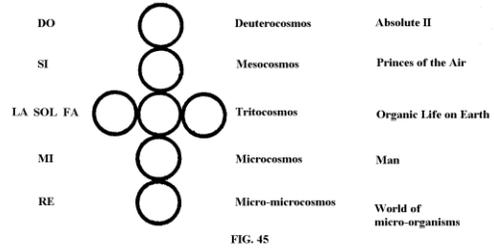
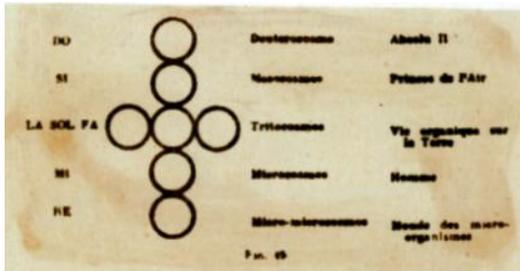


Fig. 45 The English translation of the figure

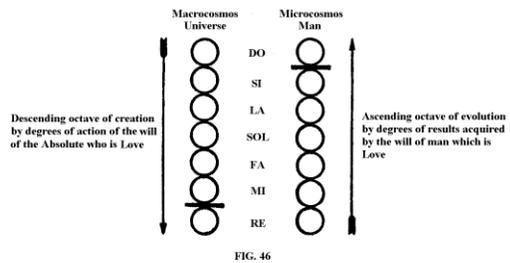
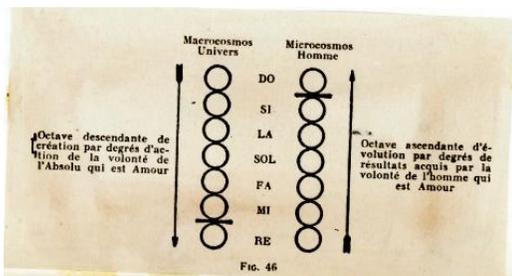


Fig. 46 The English translation of the figure

The ideas and facts which have been set forth in the present Chapter allow the reader to understand the role which has been attributed to man in the System of the Cosmos, and the responsibility incumbent on him.

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With the progress achieved in science and technique, man assumes more and more the material control of life and also, to a certain extent, that, of Organic Life upon Earth on the biological plane. Organic Life, as we have seen, serves as a transmitting station for the vivifying energy directed towards the Earth and the Moon, across the interval of FA-MI of the Great Octave. This task is overwhelming. In peaceful conditions, the quantity of energy thus transmitted to the Moon thanks to the labours of mankind, together with the contribution of the fauna and of the flora, is insufficient. It leads to interventions on the part of the Deuterocosmos which result in convulsions of the Tritocosmos. This ensures, through a growing expense of energy at this level, the food and growth of the cosmic foetus, the Tessaracosmos. Such is, for instance, the cosmic origin of wars, revolutions, epidemics and other plagues affecting mankind. It has been noticed for a very long time that a massive appearance of solar spots produces magnetic storms on Earth. It also gives rise to a psychic state which leads to conflicts on the social, international and racial plane.

The more mankind multiplies, the better is man able to improve and increase livestock and extend the areas of arable land, etc; and the purer and the stronger the notes LA, SOL and FA of the lateral Octave resound in strict accordance with cosmic laws, the more reduced will be the proportion of energy to be produced per inhabitant, and the happier and the easier will life become upon Earth.

In proportion with this alleviation of human bondage, further problems will however arise and confront him. However,

they take place on a higher plane. But first of all, mankind must pass successfully its maturity examination. Technical progress moves at an accelerated rate and, in this matter, our century is promising. It is not the same with moral progress. Great and conscious efforts on the esoteric plane must be made by the man without to re-establish the equilibrium between Science and Consciousness, thus enabling him, through his own evolution, to play an efficient role, as is his duty, in the harmonious evolution of the System of the Cosmos.

CHAPTER XIII

It will be recalled that Time is the second great principle of the Manifestation and of the Creation of the Universe, and with everything within it, the Universe exists within Time and Space. It is governed by two fundamental laws: the Law of Three and the Law of Seven, the purpose of the latter being to confine within cycles, large or small, the destructive action of Time, thus allowing every creation to last.

Our notion of Time is inseparable from that of movement. For us Time is conceivable through movement, which, in turn, complies with the Law of Seven. Let us try now to penetrate the very nature of Time in so far as this is possible for us. The fact that we are immersed in Time, as well as all our conceptions, makes this investigation difficult and obviously limits its scope.

Study of Time confronts us in the first instance with the Principle of Relativity which embraces the multiplicity of the manifestations of the phenomenon of Time; it makes them appear as fleeting, perpetually moving shapes, as in a Magic Lantern. Everything which exists exists in Time, right up to the day when the seventh Trumpet will sound announcing that the Great work undertaken by the Absolute has been achieved. Then the Kingdoms of this World will become that of God and of His Christ; the Alpha and Omega of the Manifestation. In Saint John's vision, in the Island of Patmos, the Angel swore that there should be time no longer¹.

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In studying Time we must not lose sight of the subjectivity of our senses; for only through the subjective can we reach the objective. There lies the deep meaning of esoteric studies: they enable the man without to impart to his subjective psychism an objective value. This objective state can be attained by having recourse to a technique which is analogous to that employed for instruments of precision, i.e.; before

¹ Revelation, X, 6; XI, 15.

making use of them, one tries to locate for each appliance the error of index. Thus, in taking into account the "subjectivity" of the instrument, it is possible to produce correct results in spite of its defects. To observe with accuracy the phenomena which occur in our inner world and those of the external world, we must beforehand ascertain and determine the error of index in our psychic instrument of observation, which is one of the principal aids of our Personality. The whole esoteric teaching is directed towards this aim. The last goal being attained - through the second birth - man enters a new, entirely different, objective, form of consciousness and existence, of which the man without can form only a vague and obscure idea.

As long as our nature remains in a subjective, therefore relative state, it is only indirectly that we can, with the help of the Principle of Relativity, embark at all effectively upon the study of Time.

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Our perception of Time varies in two ways: first it differs from one person to another and, for each, according to the physical or psychic conditions in which he finds himself; the influence exerted by age, health or emotional state is well known. But apart from this, there are particular cases in which the perception of time completely disappears: as, for instance, when we sleep without dreaming; also during a momentary loss of consciousness, or a total anesthesia. The loss of sense of Time is then due to physiological causes. Yet the sense of Time can also be obliterated as a result of conscious, voluntary efforts, namely concentration. If one constantly practises this method, one becomes aware of this phenomenon from the very first exercise. And the deeper our state of concentration, the less are we conscious of Time. If through methodical and sustained efforts, one succeeds in wiping everything out of one's field of observation, with the exception of the moral or physical object upon

which one is concentrating, and if one also succeeds in keeping one's attention focussed on a single point - a process which leads to contemplation - all sense of Time then vanishes entirely. Inversely, the more man's attention is dispersed, the slower is the passage of Time.

This phenomenon is objective in itself. It is a law. Its meaning and functioning will be explained later on when dealing with the Doctrine of the Present.

It is also of interest to point out another phenomenon: our capacity of modifying the speed of Time. This is happening everyday and on many occasions. Yet we do not pay the slightest attention to this phenomenon because it takes place in a mechanical way and on a small scale. But it may occur voluntarily and on a broader scale.

Once a tennis champion reported that, in the course of a match, when on the point of receiving a particularly difficult ball, he saw all of a sudden the ball approaching him at a reduced speed: so slowly in fact that he had all the time to judge the situation, to make the appropriate decision and finally to make a masterly stroke which aroused the admiration of the experts.

Cases in which Time seems dilated are the result of considerable acceleration of the vibrations of the centres, in particular the motory centre which controls the perception of the phenomena of the external and of our inner world.

In general, the more the speed of someone's perception increases, the slower the observed motion appears. Conversely, the slower the speed of perception, the faster the same movement - or the flowing of Time - appears.

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Subjectively, and in relation to the speed of perception, four categories of movements can be distinguished:

- motions whose speed is so slow that the moving object appears motionless. For example: growth phenomena in general; movements of the hour - and minute- hands of a clock;

- motions whose speed is perceptible but does not modify the perception of the shape of the moving object. Such are the majority of the movements in everyday life. For example: walking, dancing, carriages, cars, planes, second hand of a clock, etc.

- motions which are much more rapid, resulting in a distortion of the perception of the object, so that only the trace left by the movement can be apprehended. For example: rapid gestures, especially if repeated; vibratory movements of the points of a diapason, etc.

- motions so rapid that the moving object "vanishes". For example: trajectory of a bullet, etc.

These categories are subjective in the sense that the same speed of movement - especially if close to the limits which exists between the categories - may be perceived in a different way by various persons. Yet for a given person, these categories are objective in relation to his own speed of perception. This is important to remember. For with a modification of our perception of movement, we shall thus be able to assess the results achieved in controlling the motory centre and the motory sectors of the two other centres.

The acquisition by us of the faculty of modifying at will the speed of our perceptions in opposite directions plays an important role in esoteric evolution, for it applies to every kind of motion. And as every psychic action consists essentially in movement, it enables us through an appropriate training applied to thought, firstly to embrace more easily a complex of ideas which normally would escape our notice; secondly to penetrate with acuity into their smallest details. At the same time this faculty increases in a high proportion our capacity for working. This exercise - when applied to the domain of feelings - allows the student to have a direct perception of the

aspirations which are latent within large communities - nations or even groups of nations - and to incarnate them. On the individual plane, it makes possible an emotional life of unsuspected depths.

Mankind's great leaders, whose achievements changed the face of history, such as Alexander, Augustus, Peter the Great, possessed this faculty, to a high extent. It explains the secret of their extraordinary capacity for making use of time, which otherwise remains unexplained.

In this connexion, mention should be made of a traditional aphorism thus formulated: Punctuality is the reserve of Time.

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Let us now try to define some units of Time, account being taken of the Principle of Relativity. As will be seen, these units are natural; their value, however, though absolute in principle, is differently assessed, according to which steps of the Cosmos they apply.

Respiration characterises organic life. Has it not been said that in man formed of the dust of the earth Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul². And did not King David proclaim: Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord?³

If respiration, as we just said, constitutes the essential feature of organic life - the primum mobile by which the whole of its component organs is animated and their work regulated - it therefore sounds logical to choose the rhythm of a human being's respiration as the basic unit of Time.

Organic life upon Earth is subordinated to that of the human species and follows its evolution⁴. With the acceleration of progress, man is more and more taking under his guidance the

² Genesis, II, 7; VII, 22; Acts, XVII, 25.

³ Psalm, CL, 6

⁴ Cf; also Genesis, I, passim.

development of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. He transforms the soil, modifies the course of rivers, explores and exploits the underground resources, disintegrates the atom. It can be foreseen that, in the near future, the intensification and the rationalisation of organic life will reach their limit. Without his being conscious of it, man is thus efficiently contributing to the development of our Ray of Creation, and through it, to the evolution of our planet and of its satellite.

Furthermore, man has within himself all the elements of Nature. It is therefore normal to select man's respiration as the basic time unit for the Tritocosmos, the organic life upon Earth.

It is known that the respiration of an adult man lasts approximately three seconds. It will be the first basic unit of Time.

An entire day constitutes the second unit of organic life. For man and the animals it corresponds to the cycle of sleep - waking; an alternation of activity and repose. Finally the greatest natural unit of Time is for man his lifetime. It is generally considered as being equal to eighty years.

When comparing these three units, one notices that between them they stand in the relationship of 1 to 30.000 approximately. For, each twenty-four hours comprise 28.800 respirations, each lasting three seconds, while eighty years amount to 29.200 days in all. If now one divides three seconds, which correspond to the duration of one respiration, by this same coefficient of 30.000, one obtains a tenth-thousand of a second; this being the duration of lightning or the shortest visual impression.

If man's respiration lasts three seconds, that of nature - the vegetable world - is much slower. Its inspiration - expiration cycle lasts 24 hours, the inspiration taking place during the daytime and the expiration during the night. Man, as a member of organic life upon earth, participates also in the respiration rhythm of Nature, whose cycle, as previously said

is equivalent to 24 hours. Actually man's respiration undergoes modifications, during his sleep, of a rhythmical and chemical nature.

From this, we can draw the conclusion that the 30.000 coefficient remains constant in the scale of the units of Time applying to the Microcosmos, as well as in the relationship between the Microcosmos' respiration and that of the adjacent superior Cosmos, i.e. organic life upon earth. The following table can therefore be drawn up:

	MAN	ORGANIC LIFE UPON EARTH
Impression	0.0001 second	-
Respiration	3 seconds	24 hours
Waking/sleep	24 hours	?
Normal duration of a lifetime	80 years	?

It would be tempting to apply, this same coefficient of 30.000 to the whole of organic life. Yet it would be erroneous. And the reason for this will shortly appear. In this case organic life upon our planet would not exceed the limit of $80 \times 30.000 = 2.400.000$, a number which is manifestly insufficient.

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In resorting to modern means for determining the age of prehistorical men and animals skeletons, anthropology has set up a table of periodicity according to the evolution of the human species, since its separation from the higher animal kingdom. Though the data shown are still approximations they may nevertheless serve as orders of magnitude.

It is instructive for a better understanding of the principal role of man and his evolution within the general evolution of organic life, and through it, of the importance of man's mission in the development of our Ray of Creation, including the Tessaracosmos.

to take a quick look at the results achieved by anthropology using only the same methods as positive science⁵:

		Geological periods	Approximate dates	Stages of development of man's and his ancestors' physical type	Archaeological periods	Stages of evolution of primitive mankind
		Quaternary Period (Anthropogenans)	Pleistocene	Holocene or Contemporary period	14,000 years ago	Man's contemporary physical type: Homo sapiens recens
Post Ice age	40,000 years ago			Man's contemporary physical type: Homo sapiens fossilis	Post-Palaeolithic	Old community : Matriarchal <u>Gens</u>
Middle Ice age	100,000 years ago			Neanderthal man	Pre-Former Palaeolithic	Primitive hordes
Former Ice age	800,000 years ago			Man of Heidelberg Atlantropes Sinanthropes Pithecanthropes		
Tertiary Period			Pliocene Miocene Oligocene Eocene	60,000,000 years ago	Australopitheque Ramapitheque Briopitheque	-

Man's antiquity, as it appears from this table, should not be a surprise. Actually some elements allow us to build up a general idea of the slow development of mankind:

(in cm³)

1. The maximum brain capacity of anthropoid monkeys does not exceed 600 to 800

⁵ Étapes les plus reculées du développement de l'homme primitif (The remotest stages of primitive man's development) Chronological table from P.I. Boriskovsky. Le Passé le plus reculé de l'humanité (The remotest past of mankind). Moscow, Ed. de l'Académie des Sciences 1957, p. 212 (translated from the Russian).

(in cm³)

- 2. The Pithecanthrope's capacity (height 165 to 170 cm) 850 to 950
This type of man already possessed the use of a language at a rudimentary stage, and walked in an upright position

- 3. In the Sinanthrope, which appears to be the first real humanized type, brain capacity
approached in women 1050
in men 1100 to 1200
The use of the right arm, in preference to the left, which is man's distinctive mark, can be clearly observed in the Sinanthrope, while in the Pithecanthrope it is hardly perceptible. This preponderancy of the right arm is accompanied by a slight asymmetry of the brain. The Sinanthropes possessed a language. This appears from the differentiated relief on the postero-inferior part of the inferior frontal circumvolution.

- 4. Brain capacity of contemporary man varies from 1400 to 1500
Primitive man has embarked upon the long road of material progress thanks to an aptitude for working and to the possibility of uttering an extended scale of sounds, which enabled him to elaborate a language (op cit.)

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The foregoing exposé shows that, in the present state of Science, it is impossible, as suggested by some authors⁶, to apply the 30.000 coefficient to the comparable units of Time, relating to the adjacent Cosmos. In return, the data of the preceding tables lead us to the following observation: this same coefficient of 30.000 expresses the relationship between man's respiration and that of organic life. It is therefore logical not to apply it to the scale of cosmos but to the stages of man's evolution. If the table of units of Time, as shown above, is applicable to the man without, it is not true of the inward men 5, 6 or 7, having reached the higher levels of consciousness.

⁶ Cf. P.D. Ouspensky, Fragments, pp. 459 and foll.

In consequence, we shall arrange the units of Time, as shown in the following table, in agreement with the various stages of esoteric evolution of man. The first column is devoted to men 1, 2, 3 and 4, the latter still representing the man without, yet balanced.

Let us recall that the types 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the terrestrial man relate to those whose physical body only is fully developed. With the integral development of the Personality and the second Birth resulting from it, man acquires an astral body. Having become man 5, he not only belongs to the Tritocosmos, but also to the Mesocosmos, which corresponds to the note FA of the Great Octave. It is said of him that he is henceforth endowed with the planetary life. Having become man 6, with a mental body fully developed and born, he will also take part in the life of the Deuterocosmos. Then after having consolidated the results thus achieved, he will become man 7. His evolution, as man living upon earth, will come to an end. At that stage, endowed with a body of grace (or causal body) man will become a member of this Higher Brotherhood, of which the Apostle Saint Paul says that the Son will be the first-born among many brethren⁷.

Below will be found the recapitulative table:

Stages of evolution	Men 1, 2, 3 and 4 Physical body	Men 5 Astral body	Men 6 and 7 Mental body consolidated by the body of grace
Units of Time			
Impression	0.0001 second	3 seconds	24 hours
Respiration	3 seconds	24 hours	30 years
whole day	24 hours	30 years	2,400,000 years
Life	30 years	2,400,000 years	72 thousand million years

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⁷ Romans, VIII, 29.

The Principle of Relativity has been known from time immemorial. The Apostle Saint Peter says that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years⁸.

In the prayer of Moses one reads: For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday... as a watch in the night⁶⁷. In the Gnostic texts, a similar indication can be found, derived, it would seem, from the same source: one day of light is as a thousand years of the world⁶⁸.

It is not known exactly what is to be understood here by "day", "watch in the night" "day of light". As can be seen however, the Principle is well established. Only by means of further investigations into ancient sources⁶⁹, could a concordance with these interpretations be established.

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⁸ II Peter, III, 8.

⁶⁷ Psalm, 90 (89) 4.

⁶⁸ Pistis Sophia.

⁶⁹ Attempts at drawing up such a concordance with Hindu sources, though yielding closer results, have not led to a complete coincidence. Hindu sources have recourse to units of a same order, such as "Breath of Brahma", "Day and night of Brahma". The figure of 3×10^{14} years is cited for the Maha Manvantara - the Great Manifestation. With reference to the former table, the following figure of 2×10^{15} terrestrial years would be obtained for the duration of the manifestation, in other words Eternity (cf. English and French text, Chapter X, p. 109) by adding a further column. Both these figures should be looked at with caution, as the slightest error, when multiplied at the beginning results in enormous differences.

The following indications, necessarily brief, can be drawn from a rapid examination of the table of equivalence of the units of Time.

Having passed through the second Birth, man 5 endowed with an astral body, though remaining on Earth, participates henceforth in the Mesocosmos.

Man is thus capable of contemplating the superior adjacent cosmos i.e. the Deuteroscosmos, the Cosmos of the Son. This explains the following exclamation in a hymn of the Easter cycle, which otherwise might appear strange: I see thy Palace, O Lord.

The planetary life, of a duration of over two million years, is indeed a rich reward for the work which esoteric science demands from its students. Irrespective of the solar life, the attribute of men 6 and 7, the life of man 5 already appears to the limited and relative consciousness of our Personality as the Salvation and the Eternal Life, which form the subject of the prayers of the Christian liturgy. Each cosmos being in itself three-dimensional and analogous to the others, Time perception within the various cosmos is also analogous. It is because Time, in itself, varies in each Cosmos. Consequently, if the life of the physical body is normally limited to 80 terrestrial years, that of the astral body is also restricted to 80 astral years or 80 years of the Mesocosmos. And so forth. Except in exceptional cases, it is by climbing the ladder of the Cosmos, during a lifetime bounded by the 80 years attributed to each rung of the Relativity, that the human Individuality will reach the threshold of the Protocosmos and be welcomed as the prodigal son within the arms of the Absolute I.

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We have ascertained the characteristics of Time for the Microcosmos, domain of the physical body; for the Mesocosmos, domain of the astral body as well as for the Deuteroscosmos, domain of the mental body, consolidated by the body of grace.

What lies beyond the Deuterocosmos remains closed to man in so far as he lives in his physical body. In the last table therefore, the column dealing with the Deuterocosmos sets the upper limits of Time's relativity for the terrestrial man. But to complete the table, a further column should be added to the left of the Microcosmos. It would deal with the Micro-microcosmos, i.e. the world of microscopic organisms which form the basic constituents of the human body. With the application, in the opposite direction, of the same coefficient of 30.000, one obtains 24 hours for the life of an ordinary cell of the human body and 3 seconds for its entire day. A full analysis of the equivalences between the Microcosmos, man, and the Micro-microcosmos, to be correct, would require that man himself be considered as composed of seven cosmos. For the time being, it will be enough to recall that, according to the Principle of Relativity the life of the Micro-microcosmos, though corresponding to 24 hours of the Microcosmos, man, is being felt and experienced by it as 80 years. Its day, equal to 3 seconds of a man's life appears to it, as 24 hours seem to man. This is the explanation of the phenomenon, otherwise inexplicable, in fact so far unexplained, of the speed at which physiological reactions take place within our organism, reactions which nevertheless give rise to a lot of complex operations. The Principle of Relativity enables us to understand that in fact the cells have at their disposal all the necessary time to accomplish these operations. If man, after having drunk a glass of alcohol, almost immediately feels its effects, the reason is that one or two seconds represent for the Micro-microcosmos eight or sixteen hours, a duration which is largely sufficient to allow the achievement of the operations whose effects will make themselves felt in various points of man's organism.

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Before ending our brief study of Time, we must yet touch upon the question of its dimensions.

We speak of a world of three dimensions, or of a three-dimensional world. These expressions, we know, are conventional. For if a three-dimensional object is not allowed a single instant of existence within Time, it immediately disappears. Thus everything which exists within Space lives simultaneously within Time, the latter constituting, so to speak, the fourth perpendicular, a co-ordinate which is to be added to those of Descartes.

Our perception of Time makes it appear as a line. The characteristic concepts of Time: Future and Past, together with the point of the Present, where future events turn themselves mysteriously into past events, are analogous to those characterizing the geometrical line where, in relation to a given point, everything is located before or after.

We will further examine this important problem in the exposé dealing with the Doctrine of the Present. For the time being, it suffices to say that Time possesses not one but three dimensions, and that these dimensions are strictly analogous to those of Space. We have already alluded to these upper dimensions. Let us say for the moment that our waking-consciousness, or the I of our Personality, which is relative, can no more apprehend or observe directly these two upper dimensions of Time, than it can their effects. Personality mixes them up in a general appraise with the fourth dimension, which is the Line of Time.

The fifth dimension represents the geometrical locus of all the possibilities of a given moment among which a single one takes place in Time, whereas all the others remain ineffective. It is a kind of plan that is pierced by the Line of Time at the point where the possibility is to be found which, as a result of this, is realized. The sixth dimension is the Time of the Universe, which includes within its volume no longer the possible, but the accomplishment of all the possibilities of each instant through the complete cycle of all the Lines of Time.

Last of all, there exists a seventh dimension which consists in a point. A point located within both Space and Time.

Line of Time, Eternity and Everything are the words used in everyday language to designate the fourth, the fifth and the sixth dimensions. Zero corresponds to the seventh and last dimension, which ought perhaps to be considered as the pre-first dimension.

The concept of Zero plays a great role in esoteric philosophy. It is by no means a Nothingness. It is both the germ and the end, the Alpha and Omega of everything which exists.

CHAPTER XIV

Besides Space and Time, Equilibrium is the third great principle of the manifestation.

In its whole and even in its most infinitesimal parts, the Universe is balanced. Yet one should not believe that this equilibrium is uniformly stable along the whole scale of the Creation. It is so only at the starting point. Thus, the DO of the cosmic Octave and the Protocosmos are one. Yet the coincidence between the Ray of Creation and the System of the Cosmos stops there. This coincidence - or rather this union - is ensured by the very nature of the Trinity which is one and indivisible. Already at the note SI, corresponding to the Aghiocosmos, the three consubstantial forces, so far united, make themselves felt henceforth as disunited elements; they form thus the first triad, and give birth to the first, properly speaking engendered world. By its simplicity, as well as by the deepness of its conception, this phenomenon is particularly astounding. As soon as they disunite, the three primordial forces converge to the same point of application. The stability of the First Equilibrium which was ensured by the consubstantial nature of the Trinity is, however, broken as a result of the disjunction which preceded this creative and converging action. It is this break which gives rise to the discrepancy between the note SI of the Great Octave and the Aghiocosmos. And this discrepancy continues to increase along the Ray of Creation and the System of the Cosmos up to their further limits.

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The foregoing concepts and the knowledge already acquired with regard to the structure of the Universe, enable us to understand the reason and meaning of the groups of regulating-laws which multiply from 1 to 96 when operating along the Ray of Creation (fig. 30). Their aim is to compensate in an adequate way the progressive loss by Equilibrium of its stability. The further one moves away from DO-Protocosmos, the more is stability compromised; while the necessary efforts to re-establish the

Equilibrium assume an increasingly complex character, though losing in inverse degree, something of their intensity. In other words, the unshakable stability of Equilibrium is a property only of the Universe as a whole. As for the six cosmos, consecutive to the Protocosmos and which live within it, they are in a permanent state of unstable equilibrium. And this instability increases in proportion with the distance from the Protocosmos.

By its very nature the unstable equilibrium, in which the world lives, is being constantly disrupted, only to be immediately restored by the action of the corresponding groups of regulating-laws.

Such is the mechanical aspect of the phenomenon. But the essential lies in its biological meaning. In fact, recourse to an unstable Equilibrium and a mastery of the destructive effect of Time with the help of the Law of Seven, constitute the two primordial conditions of Life itself. The nature of these conditions remains the same all along the universal scale although life, at the level of each cosmos, assumes a particular aspect.

If one builds up a picture of a perfect World based on the principle of a stable equilibrium, it will result in a static picture - that of Death. For Life, properly speaking, is a movement, which resembles a stream. And a stream is always the result of a difference between potentials. Likewise, the different potentials appear in every field as a consequence of a disrupted equilibrium.

A straight line of Time, as well as a perfect and stable equilibrium, would exclude the phenomenon of Life, together with every idea of the possibility of evolution. The equilibrium must be broken to give birth to movement. It is owing to the introduction of the Principle of Imperfection into the Creation that Life emerged at every step of the Macrococosmos.

Man – as Microcosmos - has been created in his image and after his likeness¹. His higher centres, perfect, balanced and stable, form his own Protocosmos. But this equilibrium is broken on reaching the next step which comprises his three psychic centres; this step is analogous to the Aghiocosmos - and so on and so forth.

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In short, it can be said that Life emerges from a vibratory process which takes place at every step of the Universe; this process involves in every case a disturbance of the equilibrium followed by its re-establishment.

This disturbance is made possible because everything which exists within the Universe, though balanced, is to be found in unstable equilibrium.

The principle of Equilibrium finds a practical application when it compensates these disturbances. However, it is only rarely that this compensatory action is able to re-establish the situation which stood ante actum, though generally speaking this in fact would not be desirable. Thanks to the principle of Imperfection, and everything being in motion, the vibratory process - disturbance/compensation - often takes on the form of an open cycle, in other words of a spiral, in particular in organic life. There again, the perfect logic of the system is demonstrated. For it is known that a movement of translation like that of evolution - is always difficult. The spiral certainly slows down the progression, but on the other hand it also makes it easier. In the event of a fall, it retards the retrogradation.

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Time, Space and Equilibrium, the three basic conditions of the Manifestation and of the Creation of the Universe, as has

¹ Genesis, I, 26.

already been said, have given birth in the created Universe to three forces: active, passive and neutralizing. In the third category, the principle of Equilibrium takes on a dynamic aspect; as a reactive force, whose task is to compensate the disturbances it re-establishes the broken balance. Thus it always occurs as a unilateral reaction. Applied to the whole of the Universe, the principle of Equilibrium acts in a mechanical way and is automatically released. Consequently each and every action, undertaken no matter where in any cosmos is, of necessity, counterbalanced.

The foregoing considerations enable us to understand the meaning of some phenomena which positive science has so far left unexplained. In the first place, there is the great problem posed by Death: just as life is born of disturbance, so does death necessarily proceed from the principle of Equilibrium. At all events and without exception, the disturbance must be compensated, the equilibrium restored. It is through death that compensation is achieved.

Birth on all planes is the result of a revolutionary and perturbatory act which is Love. Love itself was born before the Creation, with the appearance, in the Consciousness of the Absolute, of the idea of Thee, which necessarily followed the notion of I. Thus took place the first disturbance of the stable and pre-eternal equilibrium. This is why we correctly, even though instinctively, think of Death as opposed to Love and not to Life. It is also quite right that the human heart should feel against all the evidence, that Love is a superior force and able to overcome Death.

To conquer Death, such is the watchword of esoteric science. But let us well understand its true meaning.

The three forces permeate and are active throughout the whole Universe. They make themselves felt in the System of the Cosmos and Rays of Creation as follows:

Love appears as the perturbatory active force, death as the stabilizing passive force, and life as the neutralizing force which takes the measure of existence within the bounds set by the two other forces. Therefore, death is the indispensable condition of existence - in fact of life - whose fruit in the triad that follows is descent. The question is to know whether the struggle against Death in order to win eternal Life - this great human hope preached by all religions - may truly and reasonably be undertaken with a chance of succeeding. This problem is complex and needs a searching examination to be solved. Religions place this problem at the level of belief and make it a profession of faith. At the present time, on the threshold of the New Era of the Cycle of the Holy Spirit, this position no longer satisfies, at any rate not entirely, enlightened minds. They wish to understand, and apprehend directly something that, up to now, could only be considered as an article of the Credo.

It is certainly easier to demand from the faithful a credit than to try to explain things that can only be explained with great difficulty. Actually, esoteric science provides an answer to this question.

The face of the world is changing. The Cycle of the Son, as formerly that of the Father, is drawing to an end. With Christ, the law received by Moses came to end² and was superseded by the system of Faith, Hope and Love³. Now with contemporary wars and revolutions, with the extraordinary progress achieved by positive science, we have entered into the period of transition whose aim is to give access to the Cycle of the Holy-Spirit. During this period, Faith will progressively give way to Knowledge, and Hope will vanish away within Fulfilment. Thus will take place the final triumph of Love: for love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away⁴.

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² Romans, X, 4.

³ I Corinthians, XIII, 13.

⁴ I Corinthians, XIII, 8. Quoted from Slavonic text.

By victory over Death, Tradition understands the victory of our completely developed Personality over Death; in it is to be found the meaning of Salvation, object of the prayers and goal of religious practice in Christianity. We have already quoted the sentence of Saint Paul: behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed⁵. The profound significance of the word changed lies in the fact that all men without, like those who have attained the levels 5, 6 or 7, will sooner or later be called upon to leave their physical body. With this difference however - namely that the latter will do so as one abandons an old garment for a new one. Whereas for men 1, 2 or 3, the death of their physical body entails the decay of the Personality-foetus. Death is tantamount to an astral miscarriage. Salvation is secured through the second Birth when the Personality, entirely developed and born, joins indissolubly with the real I to form an Individuality. Once born, the Individuality no longer depends on the physical body, any more than a new-born baby does not die, even when his birth costs his mother's life. It is to this meaning that the Apostle alludes when he says that we shall not all sleep.

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⁵ I Corinthians, XV, 51.

We have seen that, in the various cosmos, Time differs and that if one calculates a life's duration in higher cosmos by means of terrestrial units, very high figures are arrived at. Now, everything is relative. We said that if some eighty terrestrial years are taken as a normal lifetime for the terrestrial man, the life of the astral body, belonging to the Mesocosmos, numbers 2.400.000 of our years. This figure does not represent, as one might think, a true Eternity; it represents only the same eighty years, expressed in astral years. So much so that once physical death has been conquered, the problem of conquering astral Death confronts us; then mental Death, having once again at one's disposal a lifetime of some eighty mental years. It is only after the crystallization of the body of grace has been achieved within the Absolute, that Death will be definitely conquered. For there, the being will find himself once again in the state of primordial Being, in the midst of the stable Equilibrium. It will no longer be a provisional Salvation but the definitive Salvation.

According to the foregoing definition, this state of Beatitude cannot however be characterized as life. As a result of a desired imperfection, life naturally ceases when returning to the Absolute, within the Protocosmos, where the principle of Imperfection has no admittance.

A few believe that such a state corresponds to a total Non-Being, or the Nought, the absolute Zero. It is certain that it cannot be a life taking place in Time, as we know it and which extends from birth to death. This existence - if the term still fits here - is situated beyond Space and Time. To be sure, we cannot, such as we are, conceive a true picture of such a state. But in contrast to the frigid descriptions so often given of the Nirvana - or so it seems to us - the orthodox Tradition resorts to the only concept that is known to the human language and which reflects the divine condition: Love. God is Love, says the Apostle Saint John⁶. He who wins a triple victory over physical,

⁶ I John, IV, 8.

astral and mental death, will be welcomed in the arms of absolute Love, which has no beginning, therefore no end. Pleroma, in the orthodox Tradition.

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Absolute Love is accessible to the human soul even on earth. However, neither man nor woman can attain it separately. It is accessible solely to a couple, and subject to a conscious and total reintegration of the two into a single Being, through a synthesis of the real I and Thee, who alone have enough strength to break the bark of their respective Personalities⁷. In practice, this can only happen when the two Personalities are already far advanced, and enriched from the experience they have gathered separately in outward life.

What is the meaning of this long road to regeneration which starts from the fall of Adam and has for final objective a perfection, close to divinisation? Orthodox Tradition gives no precise indication in this matter. It simply affirms that the ways of God are past finding out⁸ and for of Him and to Him are all things⁹. As to the description of the state of Beatitude which was current in the early Churches, it was withdrawn by the Fathers of the First Synod, lest it created a scandal in view of its apparently erotic character. But we do find in the Doctrine an indication, as we have already mentioned that human, terrestrial love, is but a remnant of celestial Love.

If it is certain that the state of Beatitude cannot correctly be expressed in human language, Tradition insists on the fact that, despite huge difficulties, it is still attainable. Esoteric science has elaborated, for that purpose a whole technique of practices.

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We have ascertained that death represents one of the manifestations of the principle of Equilibrium which automatically

⁷ Matthew, XI, 12; Luke, XVI, 16.

⁸ Romans, XI, 33.

⁹ Ibid. verse 36.

reacts to the perturbatory action of carnal love in the created world. Though imperfect, this kind of love gives birth to life. Human love is imperfect because of its instinctive and impulsive nature. As long as man surrenders mechanically to his impulses his love will only serve the cosmic interests of the whole. However, he will draw from it, as an element of equilibrium and as a reward, the pleasure that it procures; but as such, it will not be beneficial to his esoteric evolution. And yet, Love constitutes the surest and mightiest tool at his disposal to complete this evolution, because Love is the only objective element in our lives. This remains true in all the multiplicity of its aspects and in all its various manifestations.

Love may, indeed, be useful to man in his esoteric evolution. To achieve it, however, man must apply to this kind of love conscious efforts and not allow himself to act impulsively. He will thus himself be able to neutralize Love's perturbatory action, and this will prevent - and render useless - an intervention of the principle of Equilibrium, together with its damaging reaction. This means that the strength he acquires through Love will not be immediately spent by man to serve general aims, but will remain in his possession. This added power may then be used to accelerate the growth of his Personality and enable it to advance towards the second birth, which represents the first tangible result achieved by esoteric practice.

Such is the monastic theory which essentially applies to the sexual centre, the object being to master the impulses arising from this centre with the help of exercises. Without attempting to assess the advantages and inconveniences of this method, it must be said that, in the New Era, esoteric work is no longer carried on in crypts and monasteries. From now onwards, it must be pursued within life itself, in the actual field of activity of human society. The task certainly becomes more difficult, for man will no longer be, as in a monastery sheltered and protected from most of the "A" influences. Nevertheless life

offers more efficacious means and leads to less fragile results; esoteric practice in external life enables us, besides mastering the sexual centre, to cultivate to better advantage the manifestations of love through the emotive and intellectual centres. Thus this work allows man's creative spirit to develop and to express itself in various forms. The aim of this culture on a superior level will be to focus man's creative efforts onto the same targets, namely the integral development of the Personality, the second Birth, and the crystallization of the astral body, through its union with the real I, in order to achieve the formation of an Individuality.

If performed by two persons, man and woman, this work can be carried on with extraordinary intensity and bring rapid results. On condition, however, that from the esoteric point view, these two beings suit each other integrally, and that they constitute a perfect couple; in other words that together they reflect - allowing, naturally, for the peculiarities of their human type - the relationship between the absolute I and Thee which preceded the Creation of the Universe. This refers to beings, called in esoteric science, polar beings.

We shall return later to this important problem which, with the coming of the New Era, is one which confronts us today. For, during the Cycle of the Holy-Spirit, free romance - the attribute of the former Cycle - will make way in cultivated circles for the unique romance of polar beings, destined to become the elite of the society of tomorrow.

The principle of Equilibrium - which ensures that every disturbance and all free movements, in organic life and specially in the human sector, get the compensations they need - appears like a severe yet impartial guardian who, along with the Law of Seven, guarantees the duration of each and every existence in accordance with the laws. Human wisdom has been conscious of this from the remotest times. It is the principle of Karma, the Nemesis of the Greeks, and the Archistrategus Uriel of the celestial Christian hierarchy, one of the seven Spirit of God, who alone in the Universe never change, according to Tradition.

This principle's task is to re-establish the broken equilibrium at every step of the cosmic scale, including the Micro-Microcosmos.

Karmic action is released in an automatic fashion. We should ponder upon this automatism and take account of it, at least in our deeply meditated deeds. It is not so easy, for we seldom realize what are the disturbances and the effects caused by our actions. That is why karmic action too often goes beyond the horizon of the predictable. Once more however, we must say that for just men, Karma loses its formidable aspect and brings them nothing but joy. Because their actions do not set up disturbances which infringe general and local cosmic laws. Just men never make mistakes, while the common herd, even if acting in good faith and in the belief that they are behaving correctly, commit errors; to begin with errors of conception which are the very root of sin. In itself, sin does not entail any element of a so-called mystical nature. As an error, sin may be liquidated by adequate compensation. The following indication, which relates to this, may be found in the Tradition: there is no unpardonable sin except sin without repentance¹⁰. The true sense of this saying is easily understandable. Repentance occurs first of all as an act of consciousness which involves a benevolent and effective compensation for the committed error. Such is the theory. It is not so simple in practice: each case calling for an exhaustive study. It is obviously easier not to sin than to compensate for our sinful deeds afterwards. If repentance, in the sense attributed to it here, does not occur in time, compensatory karmic action comes automatically into operation, thus forcing us passively to submit to it.

Since karmic action is automatically released and acts in a mechanical way, it compensates each disturbance on its own plane. Compensation is entered, as in the great ledger, in each individual account, but is not made between the totals of good or evil consequences.

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¹⁰ Philokalia, 2nd/30th sermon of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

Let us now examine the influence exerted by the principle of Equilibrium on the Law of Seven. By virtue of this Law, a cyclical character is transmitted to every prolonged motion and gives rise to a rotation, either slow or fast, which takes place in one direction only in each case. This entails of necessity a perturbatory effect and, therefore, needs compensation. The counteraction also assumes a cyclical form, which is animated by an appropriate giratory movement but proceeding in the opposite direction. Thus a scale of work - a descending scale - immediately gives birth to another ascending one, of a strictly compensatory nature, which is the scale of the results achieved by this very work. If the work is progressing well, the scale of results accordingly brings to the worker positive results and vice-versa.

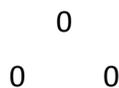
Therefore, one must know that each descending scale - a gamut of action - starting with the Great cosmic Octave - gives rise automatically, on the same level and on parallel lines, to another ascending scale - a gamut of results. The latter is obtained by virtue of the action undertaken in the first scale. This is a general law, resulting from one of the effect of the principle of Equilibrium. In nature, these two kinds of gamuts are conceived in such a way that one is assisted by the other. A study of the application of this law to physical, chemical or biological phenomena offers a startling and grandiose spectacle, behind which one may sense the Spirit that rules them. This study also makes it possible in certain cases to find an answer to problems which otherwise cannot be solved, by reason of our linear way of thinking; such is for instance the problem of nutrition of the Universe as a whole.

Various cyclical schemes ensure the nutrition of vegetable, animal or human creatures. Men and animals absorb oxygen and exhale carbonic acid; plants absorb carbonic acid and exhale oxygen. Men and animals eat plants; conversely, human and animal excrements feed them. In this case, and in a great number of others which can less easily be observed, we are confronted with processes running parallel to a pair of scales - ascending and descending and whose whole is perfectly poised. Nutrition - as is well known - correspond to an absorption of solar energy through complex

processes of metabolism, not all of which are as yet known to Science. At the same time, the food substances, which, when passing through the digestive duct furnish the elements and energies needed by the organism, leave behind them waste products which, in turn, serve as a food to the vegetable kingdom whose produce will later return to the table in the form of meals. In this case, the ascending scale of the products of the metabolism is counterbalanced by the descending gamut corresponding to the transformation of the meal into excrements. A great many examples might be quoted to show this compensated system of scales operating in different fields and on various planes: physical, psychic and moral. Actions which develop according to such poised and compensated schemes naturally do not cause karmic reactions.

If we now pass from the particular to the general, and examine the problem of feeding the whole Universe considered as a living being, it should be admitted that the Universe cannot find food outside itself for, beyond it, nothing exists. Yet Tradition affirms that the great Universe - the Macrocosmos - is verily a living being¹¹; like every cosmos within the System. In fact, since its components are living elements, the whole cannot be anything else than a living being. And as such, it needs food. We have said that the Macrocosmos was unable to find food outside itself; we can infer from this that food has to be found from within. Such is our first finding. We may then add that if the whole of the Universe stays in a perfect state of equilibrium, then the only way to ensure its nourishment, will be through a cyclical arrangement of coupled scales. We have already seen how this mechanism functions in the ebb and flow of energies along the Ray of Creation. This question will be gone in greater detail in the second Volume.

Fig. 47



We must now consider for a moment another manifestation of the principle of Equilibrium, that of the organic relationship between form and content. This problem appears as vast as it is complex; the scope of the present Chapter, however, does not allow an extensive study of this question to be made. But it has been deemed useful to us to give an example which, since the beginning

¹¹ For example, Origen, Principles, passim.

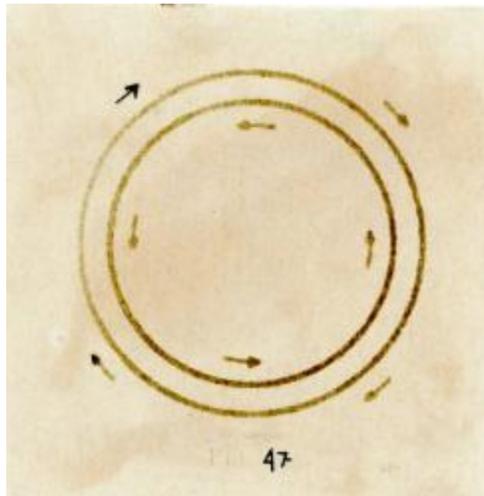


Fig. 47

of the century, has been often cited. It relates to the law which governs the relationships between the form and content of political systems. Reflection enables us to discover this law without difficulty. Unfortunately, political leaders seldom pay attention to it and, if they take it into account, they do so subconsciously rather than as a result of a rigorous reasoning.

The law is formal: with time, elements in course of growth develop and, after having reached the limit of their development, start on a downward path, tend to degenerate and finally reach a complete state of decay.

Every "classical" or "new" political regime is subject to this law. Circumstances, mainly political, change. Changes occur in line with the modifications undergone by mankind in the course of its life, whether in progression or in regression. The principle of Equilibrium shows itself in the inner policy of States; at this level, it maintains a certain correspondence between the form given to the Government and the political content of the existing system. Both factors must be balanced. In fact they almost never are. Generally, and for various reasons, governments lag behind events. Now, in view of the historical evolution, it is impossible beyond certain limits to preserve at the same time both the form of the government and the content of the regime. Once those bounds have been passed, a revolution takes place. Trying to make a fresh start, it introduces new policies which are supposed to be progressive. But Time does not stand still. After a certain period, the revolutionary movement in its turn is superseded. And the more violent the revolution, the shorter this period lasts. Such was the case of the French revolution of 1789, and also that of the Russian revolution of 1917.

England gives an example of a surprising traditional stability. Yet one often loses sight of the fact that it consists of a stability in motion, the only conceivable one within the Universe, whose existence and life are founded on an unstable and perpetually broken equilibrium. The English Government has

preserved its traditional form for centuries, because statesmen of this country knew and still know how to change the content at the right time and with an extraordinary political flexibility.

The government of Nicholas the Second, against all the evidence, obstinately persisted in its wish to maintain intact both the imperial form and the autocratic content of power. The result is well-known.

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The unbalance between form and content may sometimes be on a very much larger scale, than when states alone are involved. It cannot be denied that the crisis in which mankind has been immersed from the beginning of the century is fraught with the worst dangers. Apart from the catastrophe which may result from the chain reaction of an atomic explosion, there exists a danger of an entirely different nature, that of an accumulation of what we called the karmic burden. When this occurs, equilibrium is re-established, either by a catastrophe like the Flood, or, if the Karma's weight is exceedingly heavy, by an intervention from the higher cosmos. Such was the deep reason of Christ's Incarnation, of His mission upon Earth, of His torture and of His sacrifice. Visibly, the danger involved by the accumulation of the karmic burden at the time of His advent, was real and great. The Apostle Saint John says that God sent His Son so that the world through Him might be saved¹. We must believe that the teachings of Christ, then His sacrifice, have counterbalanced the karmic burden which at that time was excessive, and re-established the equilibrium of the planet, thus saving the world, as well as the whole of mankind.

¹ John, III, 17.

PART THREE
THE WAY

CHAPTER XV

The sum of those practices whose implementation, in accordance with the principles of esoteric science, enables man to evolve, constitutes the Way. A prior examination of the fundamental elements relating to man and to the Universe - the subjects of parts one and two of this volume - has enabled us to acquire the necessary minimum of knowledge to start on the study of the Way.

Esoteric science begins beyond the area of exploration within the scope of positive science. Between both branches of knowing, a gap, an area of illusion, has been set up intentionally in the form of an obstacle. This gap, which can be bridged only at the cost of considerable, even assiduous efforts, performs a selection. The character and amount of the efforts required vary for each person and depend on the kind and degree of distortion that affects the mind of the man without, as this deformation is purely personal. To bridge the gap demands theoretical studies, together with practical tasks, complying with a specific programme.

We can now undertake a study of the Way, a study which can be carried on from several angles; but it is easier to set forth the philosophical and esoteric meaning of the Way, starting from the views stated in Chapter VIII, where man is compared to a cell of organic life upon Earth. Since he belongs to this organ, man submits to the General Law; it is only after he has escaped from its rule, that he comes under the Law of Exception.

We do not realize how much we are tied by the General Law's action¹. Exerting its action upon us, as it does on the cells, the Law immobilizes us, or is constantly aiming at bringing us back to our place. Our freedom of movement is bounded both in orientation and scope by the Law's force, which can take various forms. It may be said that if man behaves "like everybody else", if he does not venture outside the beaten track, he has no inkling of the existence of this force; or rather, the force takes no notice of him. But if his undertakings are at all out of the ordinary, in whatever field, and especially in the esoteric domain,

¹ Cf. Chapter VIII.

the force comes into operation and confronts him with all kinds of obstacles in order to bring him back to the point where, in accordance with the General Law, man ought to remain. In fact, though unconscious of this force, we sense intuitively its existence, and are aware of the various aspects it may assume. The Holy Scriptures have more than once referred to this force, in particular when they mention esoteric work. Jesus says that: a man's foes shall be they of his own household², and with even more reason that a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, among his own kin and in his house³.

If unable to "calm down" man through direct action, this conservatory force, the servant of the General Law, tries to reach him indirectly through the members of his household, either by the feelings they arouse in him or by the coldness or scorn they may show towards him.

A classic example of this indirect action is the seduction of Adam by Eve, his alter ego, after she herself had been deceived by the Serpent by means of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The myth is full of meaning. At first, why was the Serpent more subtile than any beast of the field⁴. The Serpent personifies Illusion, or more precisely, the force of Illusion implanted in the human organism, and its power. It should be noted that apart from the dangers that it involves, this force produces undeniably positive effects, particularly when it stimulates the creative imagination.

The force of Illusion may be mastered and even directed integrally along constructive lines; yet, this reversal of its effects is achieved only at the cost of continuous efforts directed towards and along the esoteric Way. Through the series of illusions it gives rise to, this force produces negative results in the man without.

In the Tradition, this force is called "Serpenteau", the little serpent. The reason for this designation is the

² Matthew, X, 36.

³ Matthew, XIII, 57; Mark, VI, 4; Luke, IV, 24; John, IV, 44.

⁴ Genesis, III, 1-7.

following: when awakened and oriented in a constructive direction its action within the organism gives the impression of an undulatory motion. This is why the serpent, as a personage, has been introduced in the myth of Adam's fall. The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - the knowledge accessible to our intellectual power, to our reasoning faculty (ratio) whether pure or practical, which is confined to the area circumscribed by the "A" influences - is in the last resort of an illusory nature. In fact, it amounts to nothing more than a knowledge of the constituents of the phenomenal world, i.e., the "A" elements whose algebraic sum is, in its totality, tantamount to zero. In other words, a magic and revolving Lantern.

The artful Serpent approached Eve and fascinated her through the twinkling play of the lantern. Mistaking the unreal for the Real, Eve dragged down Adam in her fall. Since then, this seductive manoeuvre, enriched by numerous variants, has become customary in human relationships.

It is by engaging himself on the esoteric Way, that man is able to retrace his steps and atone for the original sin, that error of our common ancestor, which we are continually repeating. As long as this force has not been mastered, it holds each one of us, in his place, making us as often as not mistake the false for the true. Plunged in the Unreal, instead of advancing, man merely marks time: one step forwards, two paces backwards, two paces forwards, one step backwards, and so on and so forth. The exhaustion that follows leads him to death.

In this unreal life, controlled by Illusion, yet studded with "B" influences, we are almost everyday obliged to re-assess our values in order not to fall into a new delusion. That the danger of Illusion exists is generally recognized but only in theory; we more often see it weighing upon our neighbour, but not on ourselves. Day in, day out, we continue to live in the same fashion; and the force, called the "Devil", is triumphant. But whatever its name, it is always present. We live in an artificial, illusory world. It is interesting to recall the following

remark of a Buddhist monk. To the question: "How do you conceive the creation of the world?", he replied: "The world is created anew for each new-born baby". This is perfectly true, since the force of Illusion which binds us all exerts at the same time a specific influence on everyone of us. For our minds are deceived, each in its own different way. What outcome can there be to this situation? If we stay quietly in our place, human careers are open to us, in so far as they belong to the area inside the gap. We may spend a happy, or unhappy, life; have a family; have love affairs; make discoveries; travel; write. Then comes the end.

Our reasoning becomes more realistic if our attention is focused upon the end. Everything may happen to us in life, or nothing. Our aspirations may be fulfilled or not, but there is an unquestionable end which is death. We have to start from this fact in our studies.

The following question is posed since mankind exists: is Death absolutely inevitable? Is there no escape? Can we admit that we were born, educated, trained, etc. to undergo purely and simply annihilation? Can our hearts and minds accept this fatality without revolt?

In point of fact, we do not think about this, or hardly ever, to the great satisfaction of that master of Illusion, the Devil, according to the Tradition. Today however, man is more conscious of the futility of world matters, especially since the events of the present century: world wars, revolutions, civil wars, cold war, political and social tensions, disintegration of empires, overwhelming demographic growth. We shall return later to these events, whose significance is of a cosmic nature.

Confronted by such a state of affairs, we are struck by the absurdity of it all. The rapid progress achieved in technology, instead of being reassuring, inspires fear and provokes a feeling of insecurity within us, which undermines the heretofore unshakable force of Illusion. We then begin to develop a growing interest in the problem of death, until yesterday still hidden in the background of our waking-consciousness.

We have already quoted the text of the Apostle saint Paul: behold I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed⁵.

Let us again comment on it, but from a different angle.

What is the meaning of: "we shall all be changed"?

Sooner or later, everyone of us will abandon our physical body; in fact, we shall all be changed.

Then, what is the meaning of: "we shall not all sleep"?

For the man without, the destruction of the physical body which serves as a matrix to his Personality - still at the stage of an astral foetus - entails the compulsory decay of the latter. In the Traditional language, the Personality's decay, together with that of the personal I is called the second Death⁶. We have access to the planetary life, and thus escape from the second Death, when we have gone through the second Birth, which occurs as a function of the birth of the astral body, after its fusion has been completed and when it has been integrated with the real I to form an Individuality. The second Death will however take place, no longer on the fortieth day after the death of the physical body, but only after eighty astral years, i.e. 2,400,000 terrestrial years. When man 4 has crossed the threshold of esoterism's inner circle, the death of the physical body is tantamount to discarding an old-fashioned or worn out garment. If necessary he will put on another one. Therefore, for him, this will no longer be a catastrophe. Such is the meaning of Saint Paul's affirmation.

This text sheds a light on the first aspects of the problem, indicating all the conditions which have to be fulfilled, according to the Apostle, to attain the appointed goal which esoteric science calls the Way. These include: the pursuit of certain studies; the observance of precepts; submission to certain rules and the performance of practical works. All this has to be done in the same spirit of rigorous discipline as that prevailing in positive science. But even more than in the latter domain, is it indispensable to train, develop and sharpen our critical mind.

⁵ I Corinthians, XV, 51.

⁶ Revelation, II, 11.

For clear boundaries are not always traced in our inner world. If, on the intellectual plane, logic tends to formulate clearcut definitions, the mechanism of intelligence nevertheless finds itself under the grip of Illusion, which warps our judgments in many instances. On the emotive plane, the situation is even more complicated, for it is very difficult to take the right direction and to establish a clear distinction between what is born of ourselves and what is non-I. Though it is easy to discriminate between the object and the subject in the physical world, if not quite so easy in the intellectual world, such a discrimination is especially difficult to make in the emotive world. Now the emotive life constitutes the primordial objective of esoteric work, and this is why esoteric teaching attributes such a great importance to the development of the critical mind, directed at ourselves, in other words at the phenomena of our inward life.

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Man, as a cell of organic life upon Earth, takes part in the development of the Ray of Creation. The vivification of the Moon - this cosmic foetus - personifies at present one of the multiple aspects of this development. This process needs an enormous quantity of energy which is provided mainly by the human sector of organic life. Illusion - which plays such an important role in man's waking-consciousness - has been created to make man willing to contribute without protest to this aspect of the cosmic work.

If we are aware of this situation and wish to evade it, we must contrive and set up a sort of screen as a protective device against the Moon's devouring influence. We should, however, beware of falling from one illusion into another, building up a false screen; for, this would lead not to an accretion, but to a serious wastage of man's reserves of energy. Now the quantity of energy needed to withstand the Moon's influence is considerable. Therefore, it is imperative above all to stop wasting energy, to turn off the taps through which energy flows

uselessly: e.g. sterile, namely negative, emotions; whims born of our uncontrolled imagination; incoherent mental gymnastics, gossip, etc. We have to deal with this matter as a wise minister of finance would do and severely economize our strength, without however sterilizing either our activity or our intelligence. On the contrary, we must augment as far as possible our stores of strength. Such is the dual aspect of the first objective to be reached.

The gap, which we referred to in the course of the present Chapter, has been called in the picturesque language of Tradition, ditch or threshold. Later in the text, we shall preferably use the word "threshold"; here, however, we shall employ the first designation in connexion with a symbolic fragment. Esoteric teaching has at all times propounded to its students diagrams and literary fragments in symbolic form for study. These must be learnt by heart; therefrom the student has subsequently to contrive a diagram. The reverse exercise is also practised: starting from a diagram, the student must produce a literary fragment.

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Below is reproduced one of these literary extracts:

Lost in a forest, full of wild animals, confused, yet profoundly moved, a man is desperately searching for an issue. Exhausted after having run a thousand risks he finally reaches the outskirts of the forest.

Before him unfolds a spectacle which makes him gasp with wonder mixed with fright: a castle of wild and impressive beauty stands on the other side of a moat (ditch) filled with clear and sparkling water. Behind the castle, lies a happy valley illuminated by the last rays of the sun. On the left, the dark, reddish horizon announces the approach of a thunderstorm.

Wonderstruck, seized with a passionate desire to reach the castle, the man forgets the dangers and trials to which he is still exposed.

- How to get there? He wonders.

Suddenly, he hears a Voice addressing him from deep down in his heart.

- To cross the moat, it says, you will have to swim. It is the only way. But strong is the current and icy the water.

However, the man feels an inflow of new strength rising

within him. Having made up his mind, he throws himself into the moat, whose cold water takes his breath away. But collecting himself, by an extreme effort of his will-power, he reaches the other bank in a few strokes, and leaps onto the first step of the stairway at which he has landed. Three other huge steps, of granite, rise above him. They lead to a wide terrace, in the shape of hemicycle, flanked by two towers, whose access is guarded by two locked gates.

A howling strikes his ears. The man looks around him and sees a pack of wolves roaming on the place where he stood only a few minutes ago.

Night is falling. In the gloaming he can still discern the red glint in the eyes of the hungry animals.

Again the Voice makes itself heard.

- After all, the risk was not so great since, had you refused to run it, the wolves would have torn you to pieces.

Terrified in retrospect by the peril from which he has escaped, the man gauges the difficulties that the ascent has in store for him.

As soon as he attempts to reach the second step, a diluvian shower of rain falls, rendering the stones slippery and hindering his movements. He eventually succeeds in setting foot on it. The storm ends and the rain diminishes. His face and clothes drip onto the flagstone.

- Never mind, whispers the Voice. You were already soaked after you crossed the moat.

The man recovers his breath and starts his climb anew. Night has now fallen and the pale gold crescent of the new moon appears on the right, where the sun has just set.

- Good omen, he hears within himself.

The man smiles. Now he is clinging to anything he can hold on to in order to reach the third step. He lands there, hands and legs stained with blood. As soon as he stands up, he is nearly blown over by a squall of icy wind. Clutching at the stone, he continues to climb farther until he reaches the bottom of the wall forming the fourth step where he finds shelter.

- It is not all over, yet, says the Voice at that moment. Do not linger in your shelter. For the step may open, and then the earth will swallow you up.

His struggle against the storm, far from having exhausted him, has increased the man's strength tenfold. He now without much difficulty climbs the fourth step, although it is the same height as the others.

As he stands there, he hears like a clap of thunder a trumpet sounding the alarm. All of a sudden he feels a burning breath upon his face. He raises his eyes and sees before him, in the darkness of the night, a radiant form: it is the Watchman. Wearing armour and a glittering helmet, his arm outstretched, he holds in his hand a flaming sword directed at the man.

-Who are you, pilgrim? He asks; for what purpose and in the name of whom have you overcome those obstacles and climbed the stairway leading to Paradise?

Filled with unutterable happiness, the man repeats out loud the words he just heard in his heart. Feeling them to be his own, he answers the Watchman boldly:

- I am a Soul in search of divine bliss, a particle athirst for union with the Creative Principle.
- Your reply is valid, answers the Watchman.

The gate of the tower on the right opens. Having sheathed his sword, the Watchman takes the man by the hand and helps him cross the threshold.

As dawn gilds the Eastern sky, the Morning Star, heralding the Sun, shines above the happy Valley.

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We quote below another fragment, extracted from Tourgueneff⁷.

I see before me an enormous, massive building. In the outer wall a narrow, open door-way; behind it everything shrouded in a melancholy mist. On the raised threshold stood a young girl, a pretty young Russian girl.

Out of the dense, chilly mist, emerging from the inmost depths of the building, came the sound, borne on a gust of icy air, of a deep, slow voice.

- O you standing there in the hope of crossing this threshold do you know what awaits you?

- I know, replied the girl.

- Cold, and hunger, hatred, mockery, scorn, injustice, prison, sickness even death?

- I know.

- Are you prepared to be rejected by all, and to live in complete solitude?

- I am. I know how it is. I will bear every kind of suffering and treatment, however harsh.

- Even if meted out, not by enemies, But by your own relatives and friends?

- Yes, even from them.

- Good. Are you ready to be sacrificed?

- Yes.

- To be sacrificed anonymously? You will perish, and no one and nobody will even know whose memory to honour.

- I have no use for recognition or pity. I have no need of a name.

- Are you prepared to commit a crime?

The young girl hung her head.

- Yes, even a crime.

The questioning voice was silent for a moment. Then it went on:

- Do you know that one day you may no longer believe what you believe now, and may even come to think that you have been duped, and that you have lost your young life for no purpose?

⁷ J.S. Tourgueneff, Poèmes en prose. (Poems in prose). Publisher Le Seuil. First integral translation, published in accordance with the original manuscript, accompanied by notes, by Charles Salomon, Gap, Impr. Louis Jean, 1931. This poem (in Russian) was censored and prohibited at the time.

- That too, I know. All the same, I wish to go in.
As the girl crossed the threshold a heavy curtain fell.
Grinding his teeth, someone behind her cried out:
- Idiot!
To which, another voice from somewhere replied:
- Saint!

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These two fragments, both of esoteric origin, illustrate the meaning of access to the Way. As we progress in our studies, we shall try to decipher more thoroughly the meaning of these two extracts. For everything in them is full of meaning. For the time being, we call the reader's attention to the first indication, of the utmost importance for him: it is a one-way road.

In other words, whoever embarks upon it, must know that there can be no turning back. Not by virtue of any external directive, but because with each step forward the seeker experiences an irrevocable change in his inner self. As a consequence, he becomes more and more detached from his environment, and takes less and less interest in the outward life in which until now he took an active part. In his eyes, things, especially human beings, are transformed. It comes as a surprise to him to see, one day, that some faces, that up to now had always seemed to him very beautiful, now show signs of bestiality. Not all, but a great number.

- What do you see? Exclaimed Nicholas Gogol in a fit of clear-sightedness.

- Fog And snouts of pigs...

The further man progresses on the Way, the more acutely conscious of being a stranger does he become. He soon becomes a bore; then even his presence becomes unbearable; lastly people find him odious. That is why a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house⁸. The indication is clear and leaves no room for doubt.

⁸ Matthew, XIII, 57; Mark, VI, 4.

He who wishes to start on esoteric studies is advised to think deeply before making his decision and to weigh each and every factor before taking the plunge and crossing the "ditch-threshold". For, let us repeat it once more, the student will no longer be able to return to outward life, resume his former place and, as in the past, find pleasure and satisfaction in society. But aside from the difficulties which represent the first results of his evolution, man will gather some comforting impressions, especially in his human relationships. As already mentioned, he will be surprised at seeing faces, yesterday still looking plain, assume today a great beauty. For his eyes, sharpened by esoteric work, have acquired the faculty of penetrating through the bark of the Personalities. It is among these more transparent human beings that he will make new friends; he will be welcomed within their fellowship as one of their kin. He will be understood, and the community of goals and interests will contribute to stimulate and help each and everyone of them.

We reproduce below the diagram of Abbot Dorothee which is given by the orthodox Tradition when the student starts on the problem of the Way. It means that those who march off towards Truth get progressively closer the one to the other.

Fig. 48

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We have spoken of the Way as if it were already open to us and within reach, so that one step would suffice to bring us to it. But nothing of the kind.

First of all, we should be imbued with the idea that outward life represents a real wilderness, under the control of the "A" influences. Yet, we should also know that there exists a Way, traced by the "B" influences. We should also understand that the Way is One, and that there is no route outside the Way. Then we should realize that, such as we are today, we are not,

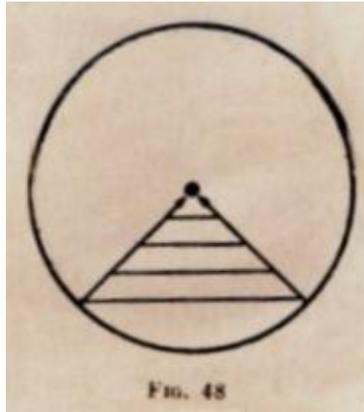
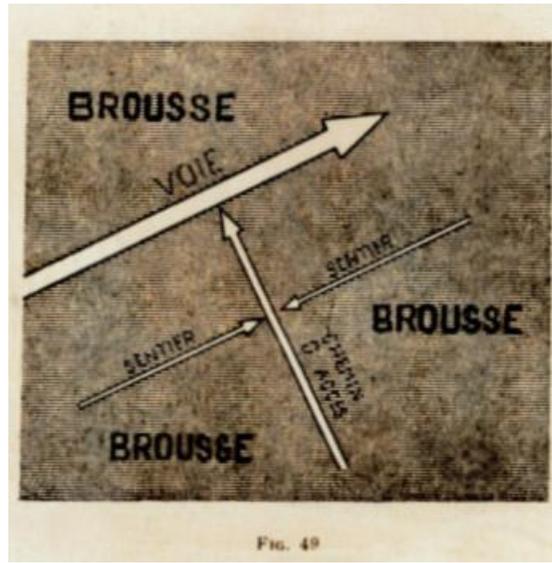


Fig. 48



The English translation of the figure:

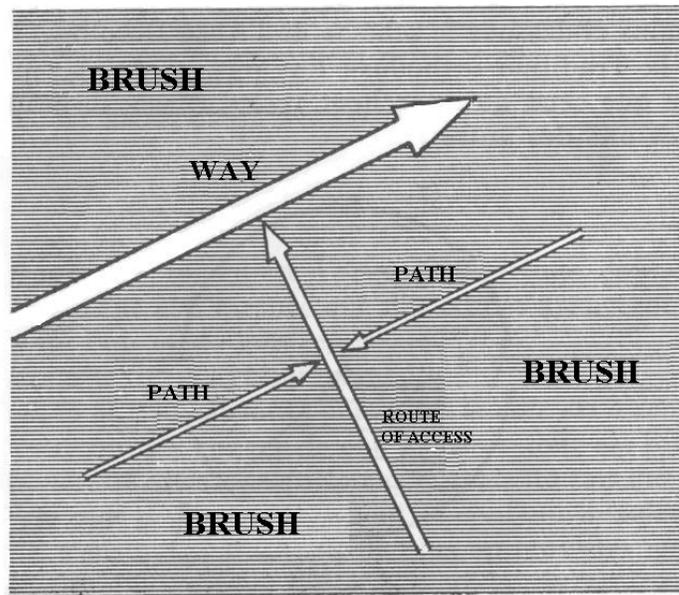


FIG. 49

Fig. 49

CHAPTER XVI

When someone starts to seek the Way, it generally means that something within him has broken down. This breakdown, except in rare cases, is preceded by a re-assessment of his moral values which seem in his eyes to be worth less than he had previously thought. This re-assessment is the sequel to an accumulation of more or less violent shocks which give rise to negative emotions.

One must be a just man, pure by nature and unblemished by life to be attracted to esoteric research by positive emotions and success. For the common herd, success and happiness make them sink into mental sloth instead of waking them up. It is said that success goes to the head. From the esoteric point of view, disagreeable shocks are better incentives to work than fortunate hazards. Humility, demanded by Tradition, is rightly intended to serve as a screen against the damaging influences exerted on man by the slightest inner or outward success. However, here as elsewhere, extremes should be avoided. Everything, says Saint Isaac the Syrian, is adorned by moderation. If excessive, even beauty seems deformed¹.

Inner breakdown entails a certain number of consequences. Man begins to see things in a different light. Two diametrically opposite effects may result therefrom. If sufficiently strong and impartial, man keeps his eyes open in the face of implacable reality. He has courage enough to face facts and to admit their outcome, however disagreeable they may be. In this case, it means that man has firmly embarked upon the path giving access to the Path of Access to the Way. Conversely, if man is weak, the experience will weaken him even more. The law is formal: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given and he shall have more abundance, but, whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath².- If man refuses to recognize his situation, and in particular his inner state — as they appear in the light of flashes of consciousness of his real I — and if, with obstinacy and against all evidence to the contrary,

¹ Philokalia, 1st/1st sermon of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

² Matthew, XIII, 12; XXV, 29; Mark, IV, 25; Luke, VIII, 18; XIX, 26.

he strives to justify his Personality by retrenching himself behind logic, legitimacy or justice, he will then turn his back to the path of Access and will plunge deeper into the wilderness.

Once again: the Path of Access to the Way cannot be reached by man unless he has previously experienced inner bankruptcy, and moral collapse. Except for the just man, but the case is seldom encountered.

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Such is, or ought to be, man's attitude towards himself, when he starts searching for the Way. Let us now examine what should be his behaviour with respect to the people amongst whom he lives and vice-versa. The question is of importance, because an incorrect attitude to start with will raise difficulties and further obstacles which can be avoided. Now, our strength should be used sparingly, for our progress towards and along the Way will tax it to the full. Every wasted effort may in the end result in failure.

This should be borne in mind for in principle, the reaction of society against the one who is in search of the Way, is negative. This is because the action of the General Law - as is known - is directed at keeping man in his place. The General Law, when unable to achieve this result through direct recourse to Illusion, and when losing its grip on the man who "moves", acts indirectly through his entourage. This is a classic mode of approach. After having suffered an inner breakdown, he who is in search of the Way becomes different from the men who continue to live within the bounds allotted by the General Law, and to mistake illusion for reality. Consequently, the student feels more and more lonely. His personal life and interests tend more and more towards esoteric work which finally absorbs him entirely. But it is better for him not to allow this new approach to appear in his outward life. The "World" will automatically feel hostile to him, and he has nothing to gain by provoking such an attitude, still less by encouraging it. A day will come - if he remains in the same environment - when - with a few exceptions - he will be openly or secretly hated. Jesus said:

If the world hateth you, ye know that it hated me before it

hated you. If you were of the world the world would love his own. But because ye are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you³.

And also:

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world⁴.

On reflection we can understand that, psychologically, the hostile attitude of the "World" towards the esoteric student is not only a normal phenomenon, but, so to speak inevitable. For those who have settled in the wilderness and enjoy being there, to approve the attitude of the seeker walking on the path of Access would be tantamount to admitting their own failure. That is why the "World" looks upon the seeker as a failure. And the more he progresses in his work, the more he becomes an object of hatred. For it is said that: no prophet is accepted in his own country⁵. And also: a prophet is not without honour save in his own country and among his own kin and his own house⁶.

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Long before he has reached the Way, the man who has embarked upon the path of Access should know that from this road there is no return. This is generally conveyed - as already said - by: the road is one-way only. This is true, for he who has embarked on this adventure in quest of the Way, will be unable to return to the point where he stood before setting out. The Word of Truth is living, and works within those who have tasted it, even if they do not consciously realize it. Knowing this, the seeker should think seriously before entering on the path leading to the Way. But all trace of indecision must be banished once he has made up his mind. Firmness is then indispensable. To someone who wanted to follow Jesus but first asked for permission to bid farewell to those at his house, Christ said: no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God⁷.

³ John, XV, 18-19.

⁴ John, XVI, 33.

⁵ Luke, IV, 24.

⁶ Mark, VI, 4; Matthew, XIII, 57; John, IV, 44.

⁷ Luke, IX, 62.

Let us repeat it: the road is one-way. Salvation lies in front of him who embarks upon the Way, never behind.

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Yet it should not be thought that for the seeker who has resolutely set out on the path, everything will change and that his life will miraculously start anew. It is true that his studies in esoterism have introduced a new element in his life, but this does not imply that the former elements - of which until now his whole life was made up - have disappeared. They still remain, and very often are a hindrance to him in his esoteric work. For entering on the path, man places himself under the aegis of the Law of Exception: to do so however, he must of course escape from the rule of the General Law. This evasion assumes always the character of a struggle, sometimes of a fight to the death. As already said, this is a struggle against the "World", that is to say against all the combined influences of man's environment which are usually of a negative and hostile nature. To overcome the "World", such is the watchword to be adhered to by him who aspires to the real Life.

This being said, the means by which the problem may be resolved have to be defined. To strive openly against the "A" influences would only lead to a repetition of what happened to Don Quixote charging the windmills. Thousands and thousands of people of good faith have perished uselessly owing to this error in conception inspired by the Devil: to deem the impossible to be possible. For the "World" is far stronger than a single individual, as long as the latter remains a man without.

He who wishes to benefit from the Law of Exception must first win a victory over himself, over his inner world, before being able to overcome the "World" and thus escape from the General Law.

The principle of this method is simple. One should recollect in this connexion Plato's postulate, according to which like can only be grasped or understood by like. More generally, the external influences cannot act on human beings except via similar elements, forming part of their inner world. For the individual's inner world is submitted both

to the "A" and "B" influences. The accumulation of the latter within himself, forms a magnetic centre which constitutes, as it were a new centre of consciousness. In proportion as the centre of gravity of his interests in life gradually shifts towards the magnetic centre, until it permanently settles there, the pressure exerted by the General Law increases accordingly. And the collective spirit of all the "A" influences - which is enforcing from outside the application of the Law - tries to act upon man through the intermediary of its agents, i.e. the "A" influences of man's inner world. It is readily understood that gaining control of these influences means shutting out the "A" external influences and putting an end to their power.

In the language of imagery of the Tradition, it is said that the wild beast must be tamed, the wolf transformed into a faithful watchdog. Henceforth, the General Law has no more hold over the individual who is thus wholly placed within the purview of the Law of Exception.

These words of Jesus will now be better understood: for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me⁸. Such is the state to which the man in search of the Way should aspire. Let us repeat it: by mastering the "A" influences in his inner world, man escapes from the action of the same influences coming from the external world; in other words he evades the rule of the General Law.

Such is the theory. Putting it into practice gives rise to a host of problems. The almost unbounded variety of individual cases raises the following difficulty: problems of this kind do not fall within a general category; nor is it possible to break them down into sections enabling standard methods to be established in order to resolve them. That is why the procedure followed is peculiar to each given person. Some indications however may be given, so that it may be possible, if not to find a solution to one or more problems arising out of a specific case, at least to pose them correctly. This is important, for ill-posed problems entail ipso facto incorrect solutions, tainted by Illusion.

⁸ John, XIV, 30-31. The edition attributed to Saint Jerome gives a slightly attenuated version: "... and he has no power over me". This does not change the narrative sense, but misses the esoteric meaning which is revealed when confronting this text with that mentioned above: "I have overcome the world."

Instead of clarifying the situation, this leads to even greater confusion. From the last observation may be deduced a first indication of general applicability: a correct, that is to say objective, view, concerning any problem helps to simplify, to clarify, if only partially, the situation. Inversely if, as a consequence of the steps taken to solve the problem, the situation gets more entangled, this is an objective indication of an initial error in conception.

A second general indication is that the sum of the "A" influences is far more powerful than the reserves of strength of any given person, as long as he has not undergone esoteric training. Fronted attacks — we have said — are but the repetition of Don Quixote's experience in fighting the windmills. These are in fact the giants which they appeared to him to be, and on this matter the artful hidalgo had guessed correctly. However, their power is imaginary; it becomes effective only in so far as man believes it to be real, especially when his inner life is concerned. In order to master the "A" influences in his inner world, man must modify his attitude towards them. Such as he is, man 1, 2 or 3 has no direct power over the facts, though he often believes it, against all evidence. But if the facts themselves elude his control, his attitude towards these influences depends wholly on himself. This attitude may arise — as is generally the case — in a state of drowsy consciousness, according to the principle: Go with God and trust in the Lord! On the other hand, when reviewing facts, man can make a conscious effort. Here again appears the absolute necessity for the man in search of the Way to proceed to a re-assessment of the moral values of his life, in other words to examine what position he occupies vis-à-vis those around him, to review all his points of contact, and to scrutinize his whole relationship with his environment. This re-assessment of values takes time, for man's penetration has not the requisite objectivity, nor can this quality be acquired all of a sudden. How far he is able to develop insight in view of acquiring objectivity depends on the progress accomplished by man in esoteric work. It follows then that this re-assessment of values is constantly taking place within him. In serious and complicated cases, as well as in simpler ones, man ponders again and again over his

problems, which he will review each time in a new and more objective light, and consequently in a more disinterested way. A day will then come when, man having ceased to adorn facts in order to justify himself, each problem will appear to him in its true light, bare and devoid of embellishment. It is at this moment that, in his mind, an objective and correct solution becomes possible and desirable, even if involving a painful process. For this solution opens the way towards Truth which liberates.

From this short analysis may be derived the rule of never lying to oneself; when applied to the cases under review, this rule demands a recurrent, incessant revision of the moral values of our life, which are generally determined by our arbitrary choice and imbued with all the errors resulting therefrom.

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We said that the "A" influences as a whole — under whose control man finds himself when he decides to make a start towards the Way — are far stronger than his own reserves of strength. Therefore we should try to work out vis-à-vis ourselves and the external world, a sort of psychic policy in order to counterbalance, through appropriate manoeuvres, our lack of strength and of reserves. It should not be forgotten that, however strong he is or appears to be in outward life, man 1, 2 or 3 is weak from the esoteric, that is to say objective, point of view. Everything is limited in him, to begin with his nervous resistance. As a consequence, he must as far as possible, work silently, without attracting to himself increased attention and pressure. Otherwise, he will be lost, for the "World" 's reaction will be severe. Man's task consists therefore in mastering consciously, by dividing them, the "A" influences of his inner world, in order to accumulate strength and store energy. When the "prince of this world" has nothing left in him, he then will merely say good-bye to it.

This can only happen however on condition that man works in silence without attracting to himself the attention of the conservative spirit of the General Law and of the forces of life, systematically

hostile to whomever is in search of Truth.

For this purpose, we are confronted with two possibilities: the first is to protect oneself physically from the noxious influences of the "World". Such is the raison d'être of the monastic and hermit life. For those who carry on esoteric work in the "World", the shelter has to be constructed by the seeker, not outside himself, but inside, within his inner world. The language of imagery of the Tradition says that every man must build for himself a shell⁷⁹. This shell has to be equipped with every means of communication and of control in relation to the centres. It must also be strong enough to resist efficiently every rebellion on the part of small I's, either isolated or acting in conjunction. This construction takes time. It needs constant enlargement, revision, perfecting to enable it to function as a controlling organ.

In this description the reader will recognize without difficulty the magnetic centre, this new centre of consciousness which, in proportion to its growth, takes under its guidance the three lower centres, establishes an absolute authority over them all, and over each one separately, as well as over every possible functional combination they may form amongst themselves and between their various sectors. Obviously, this needs time and hard work, and a lot of patience and perseverance. He who engages in esoteric work, will greatly facilitate his task, if he is capable of thinking about it incessantly, like a lover - says the Tradition - who constantly longs for his beloved. At the same time the seeker must strive to make his abode in his shell permanent. This means, that he must not only make continual endeavours to attain presence, but also presence in the Self, which is not the same thing. The nuance is important: presence corresponds to the perception of I, whereas presence in the Self corresponds to the perception of I AM.

⁷⁹ Kljjet in Russian. This, somewhat archaic term, means room, chamber, and also shell (cage). We have selected the last meaning because it is also used in the Tradition to designate the vastness of space which contains and embraces the whole Universe.

When man merges into circumstances and is oblivious of himself, he is merely borne along by one of the psychic currents which passes through him, though he is not conscious of this; he believes he is acting, whereas he is in fact carried away, plunged into mental sleep. When practising the tresvénié⁸⁰, - the exercise of being inwardly present — and as long as this state lasts, he realizes that he is being carried away. But that is all. He still continues to be carried away. However, the student has now achieved a great step, for it allows him to concentrate upon the idea: I AM.

In this way, he will make his first attempt to attach himself to the permanent by detaching himself from the temporal. With the help of the formula of I AM, man for the first time will resist the psychic currents which bear him along and of which he is the plaything. By this kind of conscious effort he will begin to build his shell, his future control room.

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Having gone so far, man must beware of not letting any "A" influence penetrate into his shell, which must form within him a sacred place to which the "B", "C", "D", "E" influences alone have access. If this condition is not strictly adhered to, all his esoteric endeavours are doomed to failure. However, outside his shell, the "A" influences will still for a long time to come make themselves felt in his inner world. Man will continue to live and to act in the midst of these influences; yet he will have at his disposal a refuge and will do everything possible to consolidate it, to form — as has been said —

⁸⁰ Trezviet or protrezviet, in the Russian language as it is spoken today, conveys the meaning of recovering one's normal state after intoxication. By this, Tradition implies that the waking-consciousness corresponds to a sort of drunkenness, or mental insanity, from which one must return to a truly normal state, i.e. regain a higher level of consciousness, that of the real I.

a real control-room. He will be able to achieve this result on the sole condition that no "A" influence will be allowed to enter his shell and this from the beginning of his esoteric work.

To do this, man must obviously know how to discriminate between these influences. If this proves easy in certain cases, it is a very different matter, when the action of the General Law manifests itself in the form of temptations, of prélest⁸¹. In this respect, the "A" influences offer a wide range of nuances. To begin with seduction in its classic sequence: money — woman — ambition. If the student has so far offered a victorious resistance, the prélest takes on more and more refined aspects, parallel, as it were, to the "B" influences. These forms vary to an infinite degree, according to each personal case. Amongst the finest nuances, considerations imbued with nobleness, charity or compassion⁸² are to be found on the emotive plane; on the intellectual plane, considerations relating to "the well-understood interest" of esoteric work. These influences, parallel to the "B" influences, yet of an "A" nature, must be detected by means of a subtle attention; a firm and unbiassed attitude has to be adopted concerning them.

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Although in search of the Way, we have made it plain that we continue to live in the midst of the "A" influences, which still make up the circumstances of our life. But our attitude towards them begins to change. Formerly, we tried to master in each case a group of these influences by identifying ourselves with another group. Now, in our shell exclusively filled with "B" influences, fortified by our weapon, the formula " I AM," our attitude with respect to the "A" influences takes on another aspect. To be sure, these influences are still our field of

⁸¹ In other words: prelstchénie, which means charm, attractiveness; in the Tradition, the doctrine of temptations is developed in detail. It is divided in two parts: Temptations of God's friends, who are good; and Temptations of God's foes, who are wicked. Both texts contain practical and particularly suggestive indications.

⁸² Cf. Dostoïevsky: The Brothers Karamazoff. Conversation with the Devil.

activity; but we no longer enter the field to rush headlong into the fray; henceforth, we will act as the agents of the "B" influences, working for them and furthering their aims according to the word of King David: not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name give glory⁸³.

The transition from one state to another is not effected without conscious efforts, hard work, and a struggle. For the one who today decides to engage himself on the path leading to the Way should in principle become another man; but he remains in fact such as he was yesterday, weak, drowsy, pitiful. How in this state would he be able to overcome the resistance of the General Law, and enter irretrievably upon the Way? This is impossible. To attain the goal, man must first of all gather energy. This is why the necessity of making a silent progress in esoteric work is emphasized, so as not to provoke increased pressure on the part of the General Law which would soon exhaust man's reserves of new energy built up during his hard struggle against the law. Therefore, it is necessary to gain time and to delay, as far as possible, the reaction of the General Law.

All this is easier in a monastery. There, the action of the "A" influences is almost reduced to zero. The struggle for life is non-existent, and one has the benefit of the permanent assistance of the superior, who is supposed to have reached a high stage of evolution. Esoteric work pursued in the world is deprived of these advantages. The assistance of a guide, without whom this kind of work cannot be performed, does not protect the seeker from outside influences to which he remains entirely exposed. Neither the construction of the shell, nor the discovery of a guide are sufficient protection. For the seeker shall have tribulation in the world⁸⁴. He will have to summon up the necessary reserves of energy to meet these trials, after having made the necessary efforts to accumulate them.

By putting into practice an appropriate esoteric policy, man will succeed in doing this. The essence of this policy or tactical plan,

⁸³ Psalm, CXV, 1 (Louis Segond).

⁸⁴ John, XVI, 33.

as it might be termed, is that man must continue to live in the everyday world as hitherto; but instead of merging in this unreal life and mistaking it for reality, he must, if possible, live in a state of inner and entire non-conflux and non-considering, while multiplying signs of external considering.

Inner considering and conflux are the direct result of man's constant state of drowsiness, which gives rise to this peculiar phenomenon of almost permanent self-oblivion. As a consequence of original sin, this drowsiness turned Adamic man, hitherto subject to divine law, into an object. And so he fell, being subjected, together with the animal and vegetable kingdoms, to the rule of the General Law. This explains why the "A" influences, emanating from the external world, have so deeply penetrated into man's inner world in order to take a firm hold, from which he now wants to free himself.

As to external considering - and this must be stressed - it needs on man's part conscious efforts of discrimination and of insight, as well as assiduous attention. This, however, is beyond the strength of man whose reactions are by nature mechanical. This external considering can only be achieved through trying to attain presence in the self. Assiduous practice to develop the latter procures for the seeker a dual advantage. On the one hand, this striving after presence in the self accelerates his progress towards the Way, through the cycle: presence in the self/ external considering/ presence in the Self, which is a kind of closed circuit. On the other hand, this training helps him to set up the protective screen - mentioned above - against the influence of the General Law, whose role might be compared in this context to that of gravitation.

In order to attain the desired aim, man must practise external considering in the form of a game. When starting his journey towards the Way, man must understand that he can no longer take part in life - this permanent choppy sea - with enthusiasm, and that he will have to move with increased cautiousness and circumspection if he does not want to be crushed by the blind forces of the "A" influences - forces which may be unleashed by some conscious efforts, which, though too weak to master

them, are yet too far removed from ordinary mechanical movements to escape notice. Therefore, man must no longer live his life as before, but play it by conscious efforts of external considering.

Man has a role to play in life. Each human being is born to perform a specific role. But those who play their role correctly are rare, although man's inner core is always ready to prompt him. But man is more inclined to listen to his reason and to his judgment — though distorted by the lies he utters during his life — than to his inner voice. He thus distorts his genuine role, which no longer coincides with the roles of those around him, nor with the circumstances in the midst of which he is called to live and to act. Man not only forgets his part by distorting it, but also forgets that the stage on which he is performing is not real life.

This complex question is dealt with in greater detail in the course of the chapter dedicated to the film of life which examines the authentic contents of the film, its distortions and the way in which it is mixed up with the films of other persons, who enter, in such or such capacity, into our life. For the time being, and without going thus far, we must say that, from his very first steps on the path, man must cling to the following principle: feed the crocodile in order not to be eaten up oneself. The same idea may also be conveyed in a picturesque way by saying that our conduct should conform to the attitude of the player, engaged in a game in which, normal rules being reversed, the winner becomes the loser. It is a game where "he who loses wins". In fact the analogy is very close.

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In the meantime, man has to develop the quality of calmness, though outwardly continuing to react as if he was merging into life around him as before. For a long time — for reasons already given — his objective is to appear like the others; but to appear, not to be. Entrenched within his shell, purified from all traces of the "A" influences, man is soon able to understand — and to gauge — how far removed appearance is

from being, notions which yesterday were still confused in his mind.

Thus playing his role in life, man will at times be so strongly attracted by the part he is playing that he will merge again with it, mistaking as before the stage for real life. These lapses, these returns to fiction, are almost unavoidable and will recur for a long time to come, at more or less distant intervals. These lapses should not frighten the student, still less become obsessional. Having regained his self-composure, man has to ascertain the reasons which led to the lapse; he then must resume his role, the new attitude he has adopted and, as if nothing reprehensible had occurred, carry on unflinchingly the "unseen warfare" which will lead him to the Way.

We should however beware of falling into a snare. The notions of "playing a part" and "forgetting the past" are very convenient since they serve to justify in our eyes our weaknesses and lapses. We do not refer here to lapses that actually occur during this "unseen warfare", but to those resulting from a compromise with ourselves with a view to giving vent to our carnal lusts, whether sexual or not, our ambitions or securing advantages. To say "This is something I can't resist" is no excuse for him who aspires to the Way.

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The attitude of the Tradition concerning the utterance of lies will now be better understood. If desirous to attain the Way, the student must necessarily, as soon as he takes his first steps on the path, stop lying to himself. Otherwise he will be unable to build his shell, or if he succeeds in starting to build it, its walls will fall down as soon as he has intentionally sought to delude himself. Nor should he try to justify himself after a lapse, when he knows very well in his inmost self that the reasons he invokes are not valid. Sincere mistakes are forgivable; "patched-up" errors ruin everything. For it is one of the aspects of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, this hypocrisy towards oneself which shall not be forgiven, neither in this worlds neither in the

world to come⁸⁵. Reference is made here to the celebrated leaven of the Pharisees⁸⁶ which, despite the danger involved, always finds human hearts in which to establish itself.

In addition to the rule of not lying to oneself, is to be found another one, less rigid, whose observance however is greatly beneficial to the student: this is the rule of no longer uttering lies in vain. If to lie to oneself excludes the possibility of esoteric work, useless lies are nonsensical, in addition to being noxious. For every lie involves a loss of the most refined, most precious, energies.

When man lies, either because he cannot do otherwise, or because he is moved by positive emotions or considerations, his attitude is to a certain extent justified; the phrase: "the means are justified by the end" may be invoked in support of these cases. But to lie for the sole purpose of lying gives irrefutable proof that one has fallen to the lowest degree of degeneration.

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We live in an extraordinary epoch. The Traditional language says that we are entering into the era placed under the sign of the Mystery of Fulfilment. This Mystery takes place at variable degrees on all the planes of the lateral octave of our Ray of Creation. It embraces the integrality of organic life on Earth, therefore applies to mankind whose centre of gravity is located in the Christian world.

Mankind as a whole will be saved anew, and the menace of the fervent heat, proclaimed by the Apostle Saint Peter will be overcome if a newly-formed elite, composed of men having reached at least the levels 4 or 5, appears in the near future. Were it not the case, numerous indications give sufficient proof today of the clear sightedness which inspired the following words of the Apostle: the day of the Lord will

⁸⁵ Matthew, XII, 32; Mark, III, 29.

⁸⁶ II Peter, III, 10.

come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up⁸⁷. This means that the experience will have proved unfruitful, and that, starting from zero, the divine Will will make a new experiment after having wiped away the past.

But even in the worst eventuality - and nothing proves that it will inevitably occur - none of the efforts made in search of the Way, leading to the Truth, will be wasted. For the Absolute's will to create a Unity out of Zero remains constant at all the levels, including the individual plane. Inward men are needed for the achievement of this design, for these are they who plough the Lord's field. Thus he that ploweth should plow in hope⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ II Peter, III, 10.

⁸⁸ I Corinthians, IX, 10.

CHAPTER XVII

We live in a world which is ruled by lies. To lie and to steal represent the dominant features of the human character, irrespective of race, caste or confession. Whoever states the contrary simply speaks another lie. Man lies because he cannot do otherwise in a world animated by lies. Moreover, it is also a fact — which at first sight seems paradoxical — that the progress of civilization — the fruit of intellectual culture — has increased the need for lying in a considerable measure.

Jesus said to the Jews: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it¹.

Obviously, the sentence applies not only to the Jews and to biblical times but also to man, to whatever epoch or race he belongs, as long as he identifies himself with his Personality which is in obedience of the General Law. Talleyrand said that a tongue was given to man to conceal his thoughts.

Man, however, has a feeling that he should not lie. A vague recollection of the state of purity of the uncorrupted consciousness which reigned before Adam's fall survives in his inner core. Every normal and sensible human being has more than once felt a nostalgia for an uncorrupted life and bitterly regretted being caught in the mesh of moral and material cheating.

Yet man gets tied up more and more in life; for the faculty of lying gives him the marvellous impression that he is able to arrange difficult situations for the better. But he forgets that a lie once uttered is a binding force. The imaginary fact, thus forged, requires an appropriate context which, in turn, must, if not coincide, at least tally with the circumstances in which we live and act. When insignificant facts are concerned, the lie generally has no serious consequences,

¹ John, VIII, 44.

on the other hand due to the lack of an adequate context, a serious lie leads irretrievably to a disaster proportionate to the importance of the problem. This connexion with a context - whose meaning we fail to understand - explains why the law to which Jesus called attention applies with a frightful precision, when he said: There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known². Addressing his disciples, Jesus added: Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy³. As seen in the previous Chapter, this kind of lie is the most pernicious one.

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The analysis of lying enables us to discern the following forms:

- lying to others
- lying to oneself
- the useful lie
- the useless lie.

Two particular cases have to be added to these ordinary cases of lying:

- hypocrisy, which takes on a virtuous aspect and simulates praiseworthy feelings in order to deceive people of good faith;
- integral lie, which is characteristic of the person who, by dint of lies and cheating at every opportunity, succeeds in believing in his own lies, thus losing all sense of truth.

The last two cases are the most difficult to be cured of: for hypocrisy has to be deeply rooted in order to become a part of the Personality's behaviour. To overcome this tendency within oneself necessitates considerable and painful efforts. No esoteric and fruitful work can be achieved by those who have not beforehand got rid of this vice. It is even risky for a hypocrite to begin to seek the Way, for

² Matthew, X, 26; Mark, IV, 22; Luke, VIII, 17; XII, 2.

³ Luke, XII, 1.

he is condemned to failure in advance. The same is true of those who have become a prey to integral lying. However, if their lies are not tainted with hypocrisy, — i.e. if the intentional mythomaniac element is entirely lacking — their case can more easily be healed than the former.

However, it is rare for persons suffering from these defects to show an interest in esoteric teaching. For oriented as it is towards the truth, this teaching usually excites a strong repulsion in those suffering from these psychic anomalies. Therefore, we can devote our attention to the most frequent cases which belong to the four categories mentioned above.

Generally, it may be said that every man lies in one of these four ways, and he who embarks on esoteric work does not escape the rule. The accent however varies from one person to another. Leaving aside the cases where people lie for the sole purpose of lying, a whole series of motivations can be distinguished which give rise to the habit of lying, ranging from what is basest in our nature to the noblest feelings of which it is capable. For instance one does not tell the truth to persons suffering from an incurable illness. One lies also at times to soften the shock produced by bad news. And there are cases where one tries to improve situations by lying, moved not by hypocrisy but, by what might be described as a predilection for the marvellous, for the miraculous. Heed should be paid to these cases because they are exceptional. Remember the words of the sacerdotal prayer in which Jesus prayed to the Father; Thy word is truth⁴. This creative force of the Verb, of the Logos, which is the very essence of the Son, lies within us, in our inner core.

It should be noted that phenomena and messages coming in fact from higher levels of Consciousness are frequently attributed to the domain of the sub-consciousness. Moved by vague memories, the man of good faith, endowed with a generous heart sometimes feels an urge to

⁴ John, XVII, 17.

bring consolation and strike an optimistic note. But in thus presenting facts in a more favourable light, he distorts them. Though undoubtedly a praiseworthy attempt, it is ineffective, owing to insufficiency of means. For our word is not yet the word of Truth. Had it possessed the force of Jesus's word, the lie invested with miraculous power would have really improved the situation. But this not being the case, the circumstances remain unchanged, as they were before the man of good faith tried to improve them. This kind of lie might be described as an attempt to perform a miracle with insufficient means.

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Lying has a profound effect upon our psychism and distorts the incompletely developed organs of our Personality which will be affected by the efforts needed to attain the second Birth. In the man without who starts on esoteric work, these embryonic organs are softer and more delicate than those of the physical foetus in his mother's womb. Each lie affects and deforms them. Time and conscious efforts are necessary to enable them to recover from these veritable traumatic shocks and to regain their prior state. Lying, moreover, stops the man who aspires to evolve from advancing and bars the way leading to esoteric growth by increasing the disequilibrium between his three lower centres. The latter, however, are the organs which, despite their incomplete character, enable him to pick up the "B" influences and to be attracted by them. The growth of these organs, if following a normal course, and developing in favorable conditions ensures the formation and the development of a magnetic centre within man.

It is certainly difficult, if not impossible, to give up lying at once, when we live in a world ruled by falsehoods. This is why our religion does not categorically forbid lying. Among the commandments of the Decalogue which are laid down in a negative form, i.e. thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, etc. , thou shalt not lie is not to be found. It does not mean that lying is permitted, but it is known that to suppress it entirely is an impossibility

for the man who lives in an atmosphere of illusion, that anaesthetic by means of which the General Law holds man in his place, entangled in the meshes of a net where there is very little room for free movements. Therefore the Decalogue envisages only a very small sector of human relationships where lying is forbidden, that of bearing false witness against one's friends. And although the New Testament praises sincerity, the thirst after righteousness⁵, the pure in heart⁶, it nowhere expressly forbids lying.

We can see from this that the Cycle of the Son, like that of the Father, belongs to the Mixtus Orbis, a not yet transfigured mixed world, where the Light shines in the Darkness, and where the Darkness has not yet given up all hope of conquering it. For to live in the truth, without lying, is the attribute of the Cycle of the Holy Spirit, of the Light without Shade.

Pending the advent of this era, lying is however forbidden to certain Individualities: i.e. the men who have reached or are on the verge of reaching the second Birth, the inward men. The New Testament gives one indication only, but the words of the Apostle Saint Peter leave no room for ambiguity:

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all⁷.

While this injunction against lying concern only a small minority of inward men, with regard to their relationship between themselves, it also fully applies as soon as a certain degree of evolution is reached, which implies an aptitude for the truth. That is why Saint Paul exhorting his Corinthian disciples wrote:

But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way⁸.

⁵ Matthew, V, 6.

⁶ Matthew, V, 8.

⁷ Colossians, III, 9-11.

⁸ I Corinthians, XII, 31.

This way, the way of Love, is defined by the Apostle as follows:

Love suffereth long and is kind; Love envieth not; Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues the shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away⁹.

He who has attained Love will no longer be able to lie. But to overcome lying requires an esoteric culture, which is inaccessible to the ordinary man.

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The analysis which we have just made allows the student, who has started on the path in the hope of reaching the Way, to grasp more clearly the elements of the important problem of lying. To strive against lying is a long-term undertaking. It means especially a struggle against oneself, i.e. against our spontaneous tendencies and against that automatism which constantly causes us to revert to lying.

In the preceding Chapter we have briefly tackled the problem of the lie to oneself.

The useless lie made to others comes within a special category. It is the easiest form to master and to cure, and is far from being so noxious as lying to oneself, which at times takes on extremely refined and subtle forms and requires our full and steady attention, as well as methodical and assiduous efforts of being present in oneself, if it is to be cured. No permanent effort is needed to eliminate the useless lie made to others: one should simply beware of not letting it slip in conversation. When the lie is on our lips, a mere effort of attention is sufficient to stop it. Therefore, it is recommended to start with this category of lies when striving to attain the habit of veracity.

⁹ I Corinthians, XIII, 4-8.

One peculiarity should be noted which is specific to the work relating to these two categories of lies. It is obvious that lying to oneself or striving against this kind of lie is not perceptible to the outer world. As soon as he starts to combat this failing, man's inward attitude vis-à-vis his surrounding, or more generally vis-à-vis his own circle, undergoes of course a certain number of changes. However, these should not be too apparent. Time is needed to allow the necessary adjustments to take place between man's inward evolution and the response it arouses in his entourage.

When we cease to lie for no useful purpose this also remains unnoticed. In practice, it may be said that the struggle against these two forms of lying however effective it may be for the man who is engaged in it, does not affect his relationships with his own circle. We can therefore freely embark on it, on condition however that we do so discreetly so as not to draw the General Law's attention to ourselves and thus be subjected to an increased pressure from it.

In our efforts to overcome the habit of useless lying, the only difficulty arises from the fact that - as in all cases of inward and easy struggle - we do not notice when we are telling lies - and our tongue continues to utter lies mechanically, day in, day out. It is generally after a long chat that we realize that we have overlooked our decision not to lie uselessly. Though by closing the tap, we would have saved a great deal of valuable material.

The efforts one makes to stop lying to oneself entail far more important consequences. For this kind of lying is deeply rooted. Paradoxical situations arise sometimes in this connexion. Some of them are of such a psychic subtlety that it is difficult to bring them to light. Take the case of a marriage for example where one of the partners - having realized that the union is a mistake - persists nevertheless in trying to convince himself of the contrary. And if he is of an affectionate nature, he redoubles the marks of affection towards his partner as if the latter were really his polar being. The absurdity of the situation reaches its climax if the partner reacts by adopting a corresponding attitude without any sincere or spontaneous tenderness. This veritable "play of love" is obviously performed to the greatest benefit of the

General Law. The danger, from the esoteric point of view, is that - by force of habit - such a situation may appear to one of the two partner, or even to both of them, to be a case of true love. This kind of lie to oneself, as far as persons of good faith are concerned, lasts sometimes for ten years or so and finally leads to tragic disillusionment.

The man who begins striving against lying to himself must be told of these difficulties and of the possible collapse of some, if not all, of the values which he used to rate very highly. But it may also happen that such failures occur in beings who have never done any esoteric work, and who try to find in it something more solid and more permanent. Everyone should know that real esoteric work begins only after the student has gone through a general bankruptcy, and seen his gods being trampled underfoot.

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We have already stressed the absolute necessity for anyone who aspires to esoteric development to be cured as quickly as possible of the inveterate habit of lying to himself. Let us now look at the problem from another angle, that of the objective results achieved by the student who has broken himself of the habit of lying to himself.

As he gradually progresses in this task - a task that needs time, and the courage to face disillusionings,- while implying confidence in himself and faith in the given teaching - the seeker experiences a new sensation. He will of course at times feel bitter regrets when seeing his beautiful dreams fade away. But at the same time he will feel more and more free. For his increasing sincerity towards himself will establish an atmosphere of truth in his inward life. The law proclaimed by Jesus: And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free¹⁰, will now apply to him. Let us meditate upon these words for a while. Jesus lived and preached in a world where governments were based on slavery. The term free had therefore been selected by Him in opposition to a state of

¹⁰ John, VIII, 32.

bondage. After each operation of inner purification - however painful it may be - the seeker will have a more and more profound feeling of being freed from the gratuitous, and therefore absurd bondage, which turned him - a subject of the divine law - into an object of the alleged human law.

Man will understand the full meaning and magical power implied in the word freedom when he has reached a certain degree of inner liberty.

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We must insist on the fact that to win inner freedom is an indispensable condition of success in esoteric work. For it alone makes it possible to observe the work of the lower centres in all objectivity. The existence of a magnetic centre, our control-room, - the undivided domain of the "B" influences - enables us to make impartial observations and judgements.

When our inner world has been purified by the "B" influences - these rays of the cosmic Sun - when our inner shell has been built and its control-room organized, and when we have ceased from lying to ourselves, what attitude shall we assume towards the world and those around us? As we have seen, this problem is far from being easy to resolve. Let us try to locate it more clearly. We shall thus get closer to its solution. In order to arrive at a correct solution, we must first of all not hurry things. For if it is written: the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force⁸⁹¹¹, we should not forget to compare this text with the principle according to which the Kingdom of God is within us¹² and not outside. Therefore, we should above all resort to violence only towards ourselves. This method is always useful, sometimes necessary in order to extirpate from within us the roots of Illusion, the mother of the "lie to oneself". So far as the

¹¹ Matthew, XI, 12. According to the Slavonic text; the kingdom of heaven is violented and those who violent themselves take hold of it.

¹² Luke, XVII, 21.

society in which we live is concerned, we ought certainly not to believe that those around us automatically follow step by step our own evolution and, at every moment, find themselves at the level we may have reached as a result of assiduous and conscious efforts to which they themselves have not contributed. Such an idea might sound absurd; but is man not living in absurdity?

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The feeling of freedom - even partial - and the happiness felt after each victory over oneself are beyond the comprehension of the limited and still weak understanding of the man without. And he feels a need to express them, which is, to a certain extent, legitimate. We should however be prudent. In this respect the rule prescribed by Tradition is formal: it urges one to silence. But it would be wrong to believe that this is tantamount to a true vow of silence. To hold one's tongue from the esoteric point of view means to speak within well-defined limits: a man must only say what has to be said when the necessity arises and to the right person. This of course rules out all chatter, all loquacity.

To the role of holding one's tongue is linked another one to which the student must try to adhere, as from his first steps in the esoteric work. When we observe people taking part in social conversation, or in a general discussion, we see that instead of listening for themselves - in other words instead of learning and speaking for the listeners - everyone - and we are no exception to this rule - speaks for himself and listens to the others through mere politeness. Everyone is eager to place his own ideas and waits for an opportunity to do so. We listen to what is being said more or less patiently and attentively while waiting for that opportunity. Conversation of this kind is like a dialogue between deaf people; it is fruitless; and in fact we learn nothing from it. At the time of parting each participant leaves with the same baggage he brought with him, the only difference being however that this sort of talk entails a considerable loss of precious energies.

Lastly, it is highly desirable that we should remain serious

in our contacts with our fellow-men. This rule needs commenting. To be serious in this case by no means implies being sullen, still less taciturn. Esoteric work requires from the student a vigorous mind. What we are required to do is to develop within ourselves an inner positive emotive attitude and to acquire inward serenity. Man must adopt a benevolent attitude towards everybody; he must rejoice with those who are happy, be charitable towards those who suffer and ignore the wicked. But he must not play the role of a clown. Surprising though it may seem, this attitude is far more harmful to those who adopt it than it is commonly believed. For such behaviour tends in fact to reduce everything to the level of dullness and triviality. Clowning proceeds from scepticism and is opposed to that enthusiasm so indispensable during the difficult periods that will not fail to occur in esoteric work.

These rules have therefore to be observed. That of holding one's tongue is imperative. Jesus attached great importance to it. That is why He proposed an unusually harsh formula to His disciples, His purpose being to anchor in their minds the idea of the necessity to preserve the soft and delicate seed of the new life — of the real Life — after its appearance in man as a result of his first conscious endeavours. Jesus said: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine¹³; adding the warning: lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you¹⁴.

Yet those in whom a magnetic centre has appeared and is developing feel obliged to talk about it. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh¹⁵. But they should impart their experiences and happiness only to those who, like themselves, have undertaken esoteric work. And the rule to hold one's tongue is compulsory only at the beginning of esoteric training for, very soon, and in virtue of his conscious endeavours, the student begins to evolve and to perceive the futility of most mundane relationships. To blend the fruits of evolution with this life is always a mistake.

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¹³ Matthew, VII, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Matthew, XII, 34.

Let us now return to the general conditions necessitated by the very nature of the Way. Bishop Theophan insists on this. He states that the divine grace will not operate within us if we do not make an effort to obtain it; he also says that human endeavours alone cannot produce anything stable or permanent in us. According to him, the result is acquired through a combination of human endeavours and grace¹⁶. This is only one of the authorized commentaries on the following verse of the Book of Revelation:

Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me¹⁷.

Under its substantial aspect, the divine grace exerts a constant pressure upon us; but it is up to us to "hear the voice" and to "open the door", otherwise it will not operate within us¹⁸.

Every man can hear the voice. If so, the "B" influences begin to penetrate and to establish themselves in him. But he does not yet know how to cope with opening the door. To do so, he must find a guide, a man of "C" influences. Bishop Theophan insists on the indispensable character of this assistance, without which, nobody can attain the Way. In this respect the Tradition is formal.

¹⁶ Here, we are not dealing with grace, in the sense of absolution, but with divine grace; in Russian, blagodat; it is not an attitude, but a real force which materializes - though in a very subtle way - in the form of a substantial energy; in certain conditions this energy may operate within us. Precise indications are given in the Tradition as to the different ways of receiving it or of provoking its action within ourselves.

¹⁷ Revelation, III, 20.

¹⁸ The Hindu tradition has recourse to the following description : it is said that grace - daya in Sanskrit, the water of mysterious renewal, a conception analogous to that of blagodat - is comparable to the water supplied for the irrigation of the fields; the pipes are filled with water which is retained by sluices. When the farmer opens the sluices, the water flows in compliance with the law of gravitation. (Soutra of Patandjali IV. 3, commented by Swami Vivekananda).

The disciple is free to choose his master. But to reach his proposed goal, he must strictly follow the indications given by this master. Obvious truth, yet often disregarded...

Saint John Climacus says in this connexion: If thou seest in thy master, as a man, defects or certain weaknesses, do not linger on them. Follow his indications or else thou will get nowhere¹⁹.

For esoteric teaching binds the teacher: his initiatives must remain strictly within the framework laid down by the Doctrine and should help him to reach the proposed goal.

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The four conditions to be fulfilled before starting in search of the Way are:

- a keen desire to attain the Way
- discernment
- a discipline of iron
- initiative.

The first condition is absolute. If not fulfilled, it is useless to continue. But if sustained by a keen desire, the student should then strive to develop by all means the faculty of discernment. For - let us repeat it - we live in the Mixtus Orbis where facts, as well as real and imaginary phenomena are interwoven. The difficulty of discriminating between them arises from the fact that the Imaginary looks like the Real, just as the space beyond the mirror reflects what is on the other side. When we find ourselves surrounded by mirrors, we easily lose all sense of reality. In mathematical language, we should express this in the following equation:

$$I = R \sqrt{-1}$$

where I, the Imaginary is equivalent to the Real R multiplied by the imaginary, the square root of minus 1. To recognize $\sqrt{-1}$ wherever it

¹⁹ Philokalia, sermon IV/6 of Saint John Climacus.

occurs means that one has acquired discernment. Although the Imaginary closely resembles the Real, there is always between them a discrepancy which, as in the case of the mirror, results from the fact that the picture is reversed in relation to the object: this applies to all kinds of elements produced by the Unreal and provides the student with a clue as to how to trace them.

The "A" influences in the midst of which we live are of an illusory nature. But they may entail or produce real effects. This is constantly happening in life. That is why for fear of imaginary dangers we take concrete measures of precaution. International policy throughout the ages proves the truth of this.

Two practical methods are recommended by Tradition to develop the faculty of discernment: each of them is adapted to one of the two types of the man without, which are most commonly met with in our civilization:

- the negative method, or method of exclusion, is recommended for the man 3 (or the intellectual type);
- the positive method, or method of integration, applies to the man 2 (or the emotive type).

Both methods are equal in value. The difference consists in that, when following the first, the seeker will see the light only at the limit of his endeavours; when following the second, he will be encouraged by sparks emanating from the consciousness of his real I, which may accompany him along the road.

In principle, the man 3 has a tendency to dis-belief⁹⁰; he is of a rather sceptical nature. He likes to make a thorough and critical

⁹⁰ Here a distinction should be made between: to believe and to have faith. To believe is of little significance: the devils also believe and tremble. (James, II, 19). So everybody believes in God or at least in something: in money for instance. Yet this sort of belief has not the force capable of moving mountains.

analysis of the facts and problems which confront him. The centre of gravity of his psychic life lies in his intellectual activity. The negative method takes account of these aptitudes: the closest and most impartial analysis possible is required from the student in the observation of every movement in his inner life. Following the comings and goings of the small I's or of the groups of small I's and recognizing them as a Non-I, the student tries not to identify himself with them. Little by little he puts aside whatever does not testify to a real, permanent bent in the streams of his psychic life.

When this work of ascertainment has been done, and checked again and again, the observer becomes aware that certain elements of his Personality are permanent and, consequently, cannot be submitted in all objectivity to the principle of exclusion; this means that the student is getting close to his real I. It may be seen therefrom that this method needs neither an ideal, nor faith. There is a danger, however, in that the application of the method demands from the student a total impartiality in his observations and conclusions. If this impartiality is not adhered to from the beginning, the student will plunge deeper and deeper into Illusion and his situation will then be worse than before. For the structure of his Personality has undergone certain modifications as a result of this practice and the links between the centres — mentioned in Chapter VII — get loose and finally fall out. If, at this moment, the magnetic centre has not enough power to establish a direct control over the lower centres, the man will become amoral, dangerous both to himself and others.

It is that case which is referred to in the frightful parable of Jesus dealing with the seven wicked spirits which render the last state of that man worse than the first⁹¹.

The second method is positive and applies only to the man 2, whose psychic life is concentrated in the heart. This man may have an ideal and try to reach it. To do so, he will attempt to gather together

⁹¹ Matthew, XII, 43-45; Luke, XI, 24-26.

the elements of his Personality in which the seeds of his ideal are scattered. This method is the opposite of the former, since it no longer tends to exclude unstable elements but to make a positive synthesis. The qualification of "warm" implies that man gives free rein to his positive emotions, this method being the opposite of the cold method of critical analysis and exclusion. The positive method is not devoid of danger, but the danger is of a different kind. It may arise from an initial mistake in the choice of the ideal, or rather in the attitude adopted when choosing. The fact that the ideal has been approved by the master does not make any difference. Here it is a case of a lack of sincerity vis-à-vis oneself. The gap between the student's avowed and unavowed goal may produce in him an inner conflict which, if it gets worse, may result in a dual Personality.

This brief analysis of these two working methods has stressed the role of impartiality—this form of objectivity of which man is capable — and again of sincerity. Our failure consciously to make use in our life of these two qualities — especially towards ourselves — gives rise to numerous mistakes for which we do not know later how to make up.

There is within us a prominent proclivity, either to impartiality in our judgements, or to sincerity. This aptitude corresponds to our fundamental type and, in principle, determines the selection of the method we decide to follow. However, we should not forget that our nature is composite as a result both of our birth and of our education and upbringing. That is why when practising the method which best tallies with our dominant feature, we should not lose sight of the other, for both should play their part in our endeavours towards evolution, but in variable degrees for each one of us.

Another source of confusion also plays an important role in practice. We often think that it is sufficient for us to acquire a theoretical esoteric knowledge, and that this knowledge will consequently produce its effects within us — like a salutary drug — without necessitating on our part any further effort. This error in conception is widespread. In fact, esoteric work necessitates continuous efforts of

analysis and of synthesis, the purpose of which is to set up and consolidate each particle of success achieved on the march towards and on the Way. For influences of a mixed nature, originating from life — that great Way — exert a constant pressure upon us, and amongst them corruption plays an important part. To make our selection we dispose of a certain baggage, some liberty of movement and a certain force. This force is attention, which represents the only asset we have. Yet we can make either a correct or a bad use of it. Very often and we do not use it at all, and allow it to be dispersed. Attention, however, is indispensable, especially to control the negative emotions which impoverish us and sometimes provoke considerable losses of strength, accumulated at the cost of assiduous efforts. In certain cases, this may even give rise to an actual breakdown of our inner selves. An awakened attention enables us to suppress the negative emotions, as soon as they appear. Then, on this purified ground, we shall be able to give free rein to the positive emotions which enrich our Personality and enable us to gather the necessary energy to continue esoteric work.

CHAPTER XVIII

A study of the Way - how to find it and how to follow it in the midst of life - raises the problem of the relationship between man and woman, considered from the esoteric angle. We have already tackled the problem and shall return to it more than once, for it is of the utmost importance, far more than is commonly believed. Now the most important questions too often escape our notice, especially when esoteric problems are concerned. The reason is that our level of being does not enable us to hold the proposed knowledge. Thus the Gospel and the New Testament in general have been and are still very little understood and assimilated. It would not be foolhardy to express the view that the proportion of the true contents of the Scriptures of which full use is made, even by specialists, does not exceed five to ten per cent. The reason is that their study has been carried out without taking account of the clues contained therein. It comes sometimes as a surprise to see how little attention is paid to some indications, which are nevertheless explicit.

Concerning the relationship between man and woman, seen from the esoteric point of view, Saint Paul is categorical. He said that each of the Apostles - who, after Whitsuntide, ought to be man 7, or at least man 6 - had at his side a Wife-Sister¹. And, generalizing, he added that in the Lord neither is the man without the woman neither the woman without the man². Here again we find the same idea expressed by Plato in the myth of the Androgynous. This should be clearly stated: esoteric evolution is essentially an evolution in which both man and woman are involved. The fall was not only Adam's fall, as is commonly believed, but the fall of Adam and Eve, each of them having fallen in

¹ I Corinthians, IX, 5.

² Ibid. XI, 11. It will be noted how contrary this text seems to certain practices, in particular the monastic rule. The explanation of this apparent contradiction is to be found elsewhere. The Apostle Saint Paul, like Saint John the Baptist, had no Wife-Sister at his side. For both of them belonged, together with other personalities of the Gospel, to this group of beings endowed with a high degree of evolution and who, mandated for this purpose, took a conscious part in the Mystery of Realization under the leadership of Jesus-Messiah.

their own different ways. Similarly, redemption is not a matter for man alone, nor for woman alone, but affects them both, each couple of "polar beings" representing one of the unlimited variants of the primordial couple.

This being said, let us now examine the role played by each sex in the esoteric work concerned with the great Redemption. On the whole, it is comparable to the role it played on the occasion of the Fall. Let us see now how this postulate should be understood.

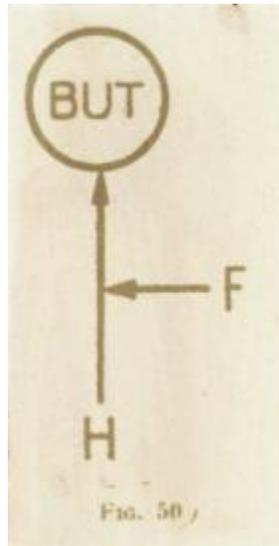
First of all, man alone is able to march directly towards a goal. Woman lacks that faculty. If she wants to attain a given goal, she must find a man who is in pursuit of the same goal and follow him. This man may be her husband, her brother, a relation, a spiritual guide, a father or a priest, or a master in esoterism.

GOAL

Fig. 50

We just said that the woman's role on the curve of Redemption should be comparable to the part she played in leading the couple onto the curve of the Fall. She was the inspirer. Having conceived in her fertile and artistic imagination the concept of Illusion, she proffered its fruit to her husband after she had tasted it. And then, having fallen to earth, they have ever since been engaged on a long course of studies, the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

At this point we come back to the notion of discernment without which nothing concrete can be acquired in esoterism. The difficulty consists in the fact that an absolute conception of Good and Evil has not been imparted to man. Every light that he sees brings its own shade. This is disconcerting even for beings of good faith, endowed with a subtle mind. When we sincerely wish to resolve a problem equitably, we always find in the last resort an almost equal percentage of arguments in favour of or against the proposed solution. So we cannot reach a decision. We stick to immobilism in



The English translation of this figure:

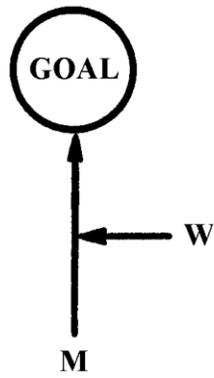


FIG. 50

Fig. 50

expectancy, ad majorem diaboli gloriam ... The man whose psychism is not directed by a dominant idea generally remains motionless, until, moved as often as not by a sudden impulse, he takes decisions liable to change the course of his life for the next ten years or so.

Everything changes for the student who goes in search of the Way. For his search represents a permanent goal. The seeker is then able - without for the moment losing sight of relativity - to formulate a correct conception of what is positive and what is negative: i.e. for him everything is Good which leads him to the proposed goal, or helps him directly or indirectly to attain his objective; everything is Evil which turns him aside, retards or stops his progress, pushes him back and in general creates all sorts of material or psychic obstacles to impede him in his search.

This definition is of general application; but applies specially to the search for the Way.

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In proportion to the progress made on the way of Esoterism, inner impressions get enhanced, assuming sometimes disproportionate dimensions. Whereas the seeker formerly overcame inner shocks without great pain, these may now plunge him into real crises of searching doubt and conflict.

Sometimes the student abandons the work, having no longer the requisite strength of character to face the inner struggle between a positive or negative attitude - a struggle which absorbs his whole being and plunges him into frightful doubts -. In fact this struggle is a prime necessity for him. It provokes an inner tension which increases until it becomes, in most cases, physically unbearable. Yet it is at this moment that the friction between the various particles of the Personality produces enough intensity to set the heart on fire. If in assuming the proportions of an inner brasier this fire leads to a fusion in man, it is this fusion- which we have already mentioned - that if correctly carried out represents for the student the first

important and tangible result of his esoteric work.

If the work is undertaken by a couple - and if the latter consists of "polar beings" - the woman's role appears as important as that of the man. As an inspirer, she will support the man during his fits of discouragement, unavoidable in this sort of work which, if correctly done, always complies with the Law of Seven. The woman will also provide the complementary impulses necessary when the work is interrupted, despite the man's endeavours. It may be said that such a collaboration, if it proves successful from the beginning, represents a serious and positive proof of the polarity of two beings.

We should add that nowadays, at the threshold of the era of the Holy-Spirit, where everything which is false - even inspired by good faith - must fall and be destroyed, the problem of the real polarity of couples assumes a crucial importance. However the two partners - the man and the woman supposed to be polar - will have an absolute confirmation of their polarity a posteriori only, when they reach the level of man 4, at the threshold of man 5's level. Though polar in essence, each of them trails a past covering their real I with a dissimilar bark. This has to be taken into account by the a priori polar beings. In proportion as they rid themselves of their bark, the features of their true essence will progressively shine out, each discovery thus bringing them an influx of ineffable happiness. Their love will ever and ever increase; and they will cherish each other more and more, today more than yesterday and far less than tomorrow. This is the road leading to Triumph.

In this true romance, the Lady's attitude contributes, if not entirely, at least a great deal to the victory of the Knight. With her refined and artistic intuition she seizes the true meaning of love: to love with all the fibres of one's being until an integral union of the two is realized, both being carried away in a glorious upward surge towards the same objective.

Therefore, it is not sufficient for the Lady to wait and see and to merely allow herself to be loved. This last observation is of importance.

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Let us now examine the general indications given by the Tradition of oriental Orthodoxy concerning the Way.

As already said, it teaches that the Way is one. Yet the paths leading to it amount to three, which correspond to the three fundamental types of the man without. The Way is symbolized by a river which as it flows into the Ocean is divided into three branches. The river has its source in a peaceful lake, situated at the top of a mountain and reflecting the beauty of the heavens.

In order to have access to the estuary and its three branches, the student must cross the bar and sail through a great number of islets and reefs.

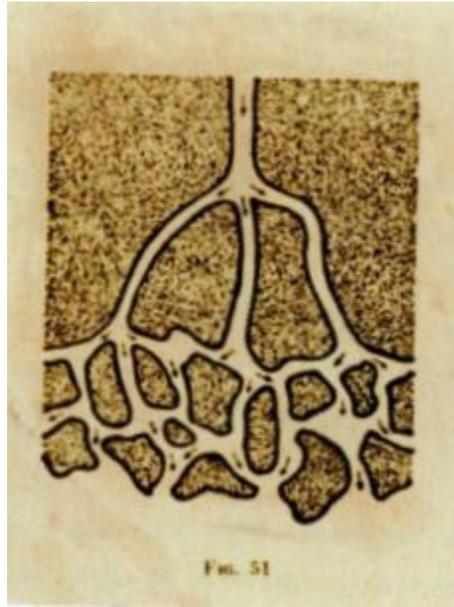
Fig. 51

The Ocean into which the river flows is the Ocean of Ignorance. The three branches personify the first three Gospels, the river the fourth, (the Gospel according to Saint John) while the Lake of Silence represents the Revelation.

The three synoptic Gospels are conceived in such a way that each one is adapted to the corresponding type of the man without: 1, 2 or 3. The Gospel according to Saint John is addressed to man 4; the Revelation to man 5. It is revealed in pictures and symbols, in accordance with the modes of perception of the higher emotive centre. The perception of the higher intellectual centre being of a transcendental order, the messages coming from this plane of Consciousness cannot be expressed in human language. The Revelation is the ultimate message that can be expressed in words.

It is useless to try to understand the Revelation through the intermediary of the centres of the Personality. The seeker will read it with profit when he passes in his evolution from the level of man 4 to that of man 5.

Each one of the three paths of Access to the Way — the three branches of the river — is provided for one of the fundamental



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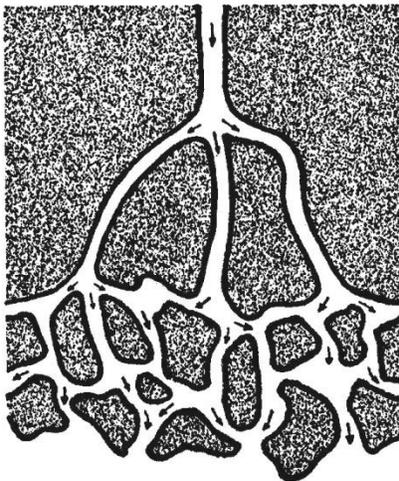


FIG. 51

Fig. 51

human types: the first men 1, the second for men 2, lastly the first for the third for men 3.

According to esoteric Tradition, the three synoptic Gospels have been conceived as guides to help the student to reach and follow the paths of Access to the Way. They have been endowed with distinctive signs which serve the reader as first keys:

- Luke is represented with a Bull at his side; this is for man 1;
- Mark is represented with a winged Lion; this is for man 2;
- Matthew is represented with a Man; this is for man 3;
- John is represented with an Eagle; this is for man 4.

According to the Tradition, the Gospel is a Book with seven seals. This means that it should be studied in seven consecutive steps, the whole text being read anew each time with a new key. The first keys have been given in the form of the above signs. The seeker, if working correctly on the Gospel which corresponds to his own type, will discover at each new reading the key giving access to the following step.

We can see from this that evolution towards Consciousness is a progression from effects to causes. In other words, it is a progression along a scale, going from products to productions. Or again, it is a journey starting from a mechanized existence - which is Death - and leading to an existence directed by the creative Spirit- which is Life³

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The question of goals is related to the problems which have just been raised. What is the object of life? What could it be? From the esoteric point of view, a life devoid of objective is non-sensical. Here a distinction is made between the indirect and direct objectives of human life.

³ John, V; 24.

To the indirect goal corresponds the general case, that of mankind as a whole. Man follows the stream of life and, by the processes of birth, of love and of death, serves unconsciously the interests of Nature and thus contributes to the growth of the Ray of Creation.

The direct goal is made up of individual cases. It means that man goes against the general stream of life, to ascend individually the ladder of the cosmos, after having neutralized in himself the influence exerted by the Moon on organic life to serve general purposes. The direct goal cannot be understood, formulated or pursued by man except at the cost of conscious efforts.

Those two possibilities - to which man has free access - are represented in the following diagram:

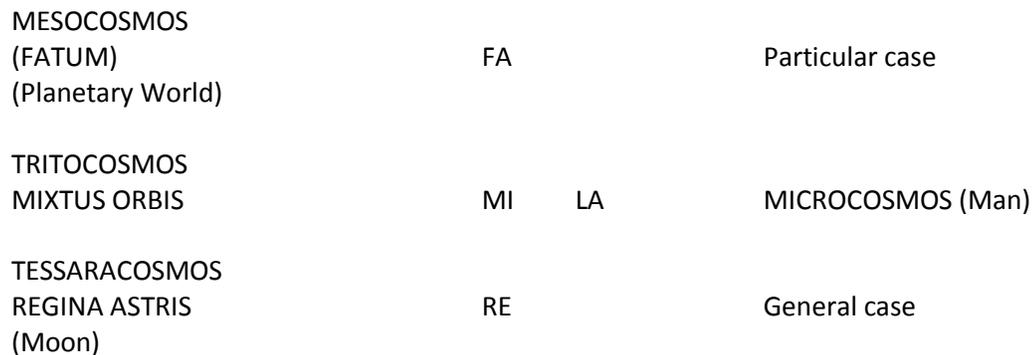
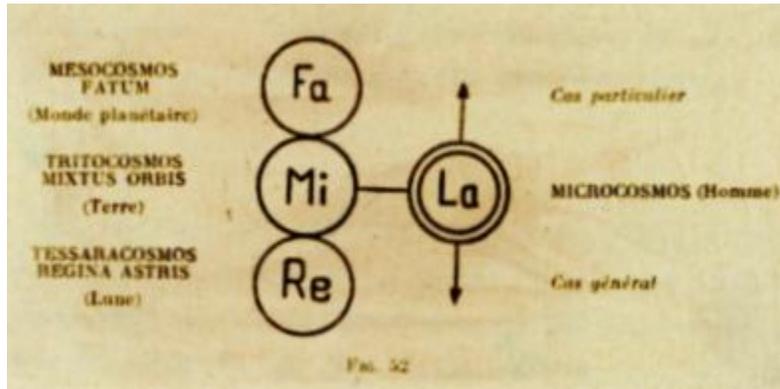


Fig. 52

There is a unique and direct goal which constitutes a long-term objective; it can be reached only through consecutive steps. Along the road, the student in search of the Way has to formulate short - or medium-term goals, which have to be approved by the Master. One objective only must be pursued at the same time and should not outrun the strength of the seeker. A very close analogy can be drawn between this method and that in use for the preparation of an academic thesis.

Below will be found some examples of direct and possible goals:



English translation of the figure:

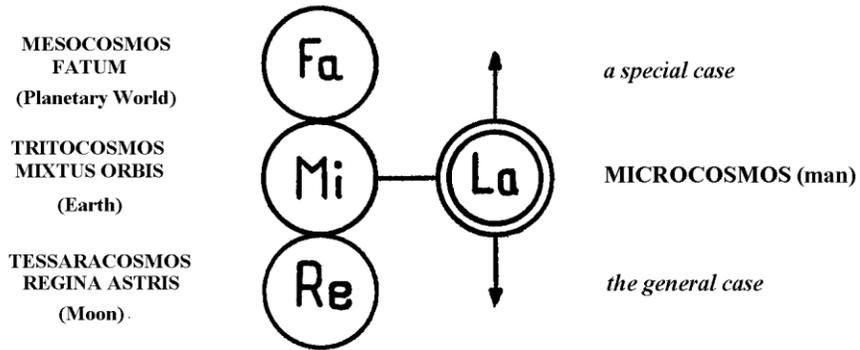


FIG. 52

Fig. 52

- to become master of oneself;
- to acquire the creative spirit of inspiration;
- to raise to the level of waking-consciousness the physiological processes;
- to acquire new faculties (the gifts of Spirit, according to Saint Paul);
- to enter as an active member into an esoteric undertaking;
- to achieve an integral self-regeneration; etc.

In conjunction with esoteric development, the goal formulated from the beginning has to be adapted in its modalities and modified accordingly in its scope. The master must be consulted when the disciple feels his consciousness stir and call for changes.

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While dealing with the individual goals, some indications concerning the general conditions of access to esoteric work should be given. Even when the seeker has found a master who agrees to guide him, he will not progress very far if his efforts are aimed merely at acquiring knowledge and know-how. His case is exactly comparable to that of a student pursuing academic studies: when those come to an end, the student, now provided with a title or degree generally tries to make use in life of his knowledge and acquired proficiencies. The same applies to the esoteric realm: when the master has recognized the disciple as being apt for esoteric work, the latter must try to put into practice the knowledge he has gathered. Although he has to consult his master, he should never lose sight of the following rule, i.e. to show personal initiative. He must not hesitate to take an active part in one of the esoteric works which are being undertaken in the world. At the present time, there are two that can be mentioned. One is analogous to the construction and equipment of Noah's ark, which took place approximately 4,000 years before our Era. As at that remote period, the work consists in collecting in a compact and systematic form the knowledge and experience so far acquired with a view to preserving and transmitting it intact to future generations of mankind.

Another kind of esoteric work which has been pursued in a more immediate and intensified way since the beginning of the century, especially since the first world war, has as its objective the formation of a new human type. The problem of the New Man is being posed before us by the logic of History. Let us try to consider the elements of this problem, on whose happy solution will depend the future destiny of mankind.

This analysis is particularly important, because, although we may be unaware of it, it is necessary that new formulae should rapidly be drawn up to make preparations for the future. The rising generation indeed - which has grown up since the second world war - might and should give birth to the first elements of an elite able to take over responsibilities, as from the beginning of the Cycle of the Holy-Spirit, succeeding the present Cycle. After having examined the problem as a whole, the analysis to which we shall proceed should enable us to place it within its historical context; then passing from the general to the particular, to understand better the significance of the esoteric work which is being carried on in the world for the formation of a new elite; as well as to discover the means by which those in search of the Way might usefully participate in this work and contribute their obol.

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The picture of this world is passing away. Everything changes. Before our very eyes numerous modifications are undermining the foundations of the old order. Developments in technique are taking place at an accelerated rate and nobody can stop or slow down this movement. New and almost unbounded sources of energy, as well as the use of automation in industrial production have introduced changes, or are on the verge of completely modifying the mode of life and the general aspect of human society. It would not be foolhardy to state - taking into account what has already been said - that in a not-too-far distant future the struggle for life - this great controller of human life - will enter the domain of historical souvenirs. By right

of birth, man will be endowed with everything he needs. What is a luxury today will be free for all tomorrow.

Such a perspective may be most pleasant; but it may also be frightening. The necessity to earn one's living which, up to now, kept man busy and automatically restrained his primitive instincts, will be abolished. What will he then do, when freed from the strain of his daily task? It has already been recognized that an increase in criminality coincides with a general reduction in working hours. The holiday period shows an increased number of accidents and a significant slackening in morals. Such indices should urge one to reflexion. Is it possible to give an occupation to the "free" man by means of a new planning of his leisure time? But he will soon get weary of having four or even five Sundays a week, since the prospect is that it will be sufficient to work for four to six hours a day, and two days per week as a consequence of automation.

By what means will it be possible to ensure the equilibrium of social life when the safety-valve — the imperative need to earn one's living — has disappeared? Nobody knows. No basic plan seems to have been devised in this connexion, and no serious proposal has yet been formulated by the responsible leaders of the industrial, social and political spheres to resolve this problem. However, the constraint which is exerted on man by Nature — in other words by the divine Will — cannot be replaced by human constraint, e.g. by a police force. The solution must come from a higher plane.

Let us examine the question more closely. One of the first consequences of a generalized introduction of automation in production will result in a proportionate weakening of the political and social power of money. Why are we still today trying to make money? Because it is an equivalent of human labour and gives one the possibility to buy the fruit of this labour without any effort. Now if the same result is achieved by automation without, or almost without, the intervention of human labour, money will progressively lose its buying power. Progress in technique will warrant an easy life and an almost unbounded satisfaction of his material needs to every new—

born baby, by right of birth.

Under these conditions, it may be said that mankind is no doubt on the eve of the most important turning-point in its history. For if money loses its buying power, it is bound to lose its political and social power at the same time. The real power today is in the hands of a minority which either possesses money - capitalism - or has control of it - communism. With automation, the rivalry between capitalism and communism will become everyday more nonsensical. And the present great controversy, deprived of its raison d'être, will be superseded tomorrow, though without having been solved. The question is: who will form the leading elite in the new era? In other words, by what new force will the agonizing power of money be replaced?

The last great historic turning-point in Christian civilization which may be compared, generally speaking to the contemporary evolution is the passage from the Middle Ages to Modern times. This transition, which lasted from the XIVth to the XVIIth century, entered with the XVIIIth century into contemporary history. It is instructive for our purpose to examine briefly how the former medieval elite was gradually replaced by the modern elite.

In the Middle Ages, the Knights represented the elite. The Knighthood formed the nobility, the ruling class at that time, in which money did not yet hold the reins of private and public life. To be noble meant to be detached. The noble man was characterized in those days by his physical, muscular strength. He had to prove himself capable of wearing armour, of handling heavy spears and sword. Apart from digressions and abuses, the knight, owing to his vigour and the power of his weapons, had become the leader of his society and in turn obeyed Church rules. His mission consisted in being the defender of the weak and the oppressed, as well as the regulating force in public life, based on the work of the farmer as well as on handicrafts.

From the intellectual point of view, the average knight of the early Middle Ages was far from brilliant. Often the noblemen of

those days could neither read nor write. Their mental level did not surpass that of the boxing champions of today. And the tournaments - which remind us of our own matches - served as capacity tests for the ruling class. Those tournaments took place at the courts of the kings in the presence of the ladies. The people took no great interest in them.

With the Renaissance which laicized men's minds, the mediaeval ideal of knighthood faded and finally became an object of mockery to the newly-formed elite. Miguel Cervantès's Don Quixote gave the finishing blow to the old conceptions that had formerly been accepted. The increasing power of the intellectual faculties superseded physical force, thus establishing a new social hierarchical order. Sure of himself, of his superiority in relation to the previous psychic type, the man of the new period opened up for mankind further spheres of activities. The exploration of Nature, calculations of all kinds, the notion of profit and gain, - a conception which had formerly been looked down on - and lastly the new notion of comfort and luxury - surpassing anything of which the Orient could boast - took their place among the categories on which the new scale of values was based. And little by little money - whose handling had been forbidden to the knights by rules laid down by Saint Thomas of Aquina in the name of religious principles - became the primary objective of the elite. The new man strove hard to defend his own interests before defending the common cause - which constituted the sacred duty of knighthood.

Then the old regime collapsed. The physical strength of the knights, and the Church's recognised authority over temporal activities, gave way to the power of the intellect, thus giving birth to rationalism. The reasoning faculty being agnostic by nature, Religion, formerly the highest power, was superseded by Science.

The victory was not so easily won. During a struggle which lasted for centuries, Religion tried to defend the primacy of its position. But - and this proved fatal to it - it resorted to out-of-date methods. In other words, Religion had recourse to physical force;

to the knight's sword, whose efficiency had paled with the advent of fire-arms, Religion added the flames of the Inquisition, thus undermining the very base of its existence. This internal contradiction provoked the rebellion of reason and prompted the Reform. Consequently, rationalism prevailed in every field of activity. Instead of being burnt, as was the fate of Giordano Bruno two centuries before (1600), Voltaire was raised by the new society to the pinnacle of honours. Universities and high schools, formerly created under the aegis of the Church, became the citadels of lay science and of liberal thinking.

It was above all owing to its capacity for computing and appraising material values that the new elite secured the victory of intellectualism over the former ruling class. Its conceptions, laid down in the Encyclopaedia, inevitably urged the new world towards the Revolution: the rich bourgeois and the intellectuals replaced the aristocrats, thus consecrating the long process of formation of the new ruling class.

Having achieved power, computers and explorers directed the main activities of the western world towards the industrial revolution, called upon once more to change the face of this world. Yet science, which has since produced marvels in the sphere of technical means, failed to indicate any practical method of securing control over these means. It holds out a promise of free luxury, but has so far not yet set up nor even outlined the frame of a new social organization in which men would be freed from the bondage of earning their living by the sweat of their brow.

Scientific man — the intellectual — created the machine. Yet the machine is today a force which he is no longer able to control. And the ruling class of yesterday, incapable of assuming its responsibilities in the years to come, has been outrun. Thus the logic of History imposes the creation of a new governing elite. Now the essential characteristics of the New Man have still to be defined, and we cannot yet see the shape of things to come in the new era, whose advent was announced by a thunderbolt, as when the Tables of the Law descended on Mount Sinai. This time, however, the thunderbolt of world wars, the fire and flames of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are in men's hands.

Let us think by analogy. We said that the transformation of the ruling class, which took place between the early Middle Ages and the time of the Encyclopedia, depended on the coming of a new type of man, the Intellectual, the scientific man. Just as the Philosophy of the Ancients was superseded by Religion, so did the latter give way to Science after the Middle Ages.

Only four modalities of perception and of study of the outward world and of man's inward world exist: Philosophy, Religion, Science and Art. And we see that civilizations succeed one another in accordance with the displacement of the central point of interest in the activities of the elite. This process has given rise to a periodicity in the historic development of civilizations.

Fig. 53

In the succession of civilizations we can observe an alternated pre-eminency of men 2 and 3. Thus the platonic period is clearly marked by intellectualism; this may be noticed in works such as "The Banquet" where one might have expected to find traces of pure emotivity. Then comes the period when the flame of Christian sentiment was burning bright, reaching its climax in the Middle Ages where it found its essential expression through men of type 2, whether Knight, troubadour or builder of cathedrals. This emotive intensity has been in evidence since the foundation of Christianity, and makes itself manifest through the Personalities of the Apostles. At the Renaissance, (Renaissance) we again find a leading type 3. This type also flourished in the rationalism and intellectualism of the XIXth century, of which Auguste Comte was doubtless the most characteristic representative. Then we are led back by the forthcoming Cycle of the Holy Spirit to man 2, with an emotive predominance. But this is only partly true: for the new era has a character of synthesis; it tends to escape from the alternation shown by the former periods, and to favour the emergence of man 4, in whom the motory, sensitive and intellectual trends have been balanced. This indication sheds a light on some aspects of

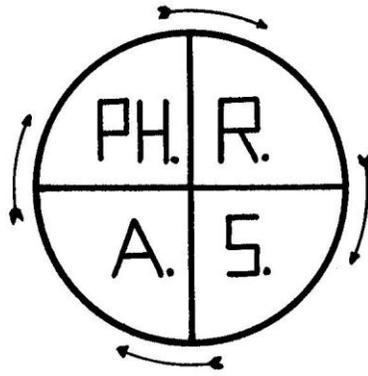
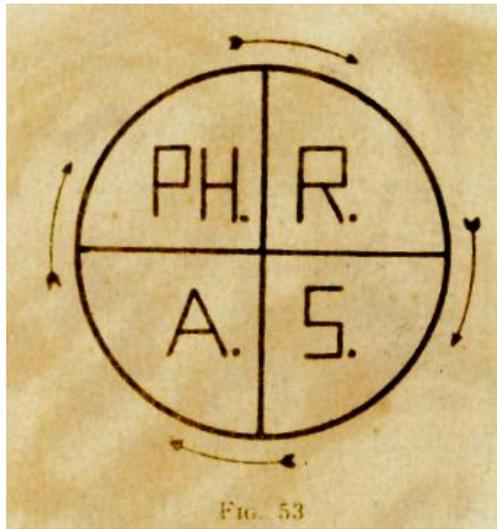


FIG. 53

Fig. 53

the Revelation, in particular those relating to the period of a thousand years without war during which Satan will be bound⁴.

We should also point out that each of these periods expresses a dominant trend, but not an absolute one. Thus the scientist, outside his laboratory, may express philosophical, artistic or even religious tendencies. However, it is difficult to assess to what extent these tendencies are reflected in his scientific works, however objective he may wish these to be. If we consider the sum of the scientific work of a given period, it is practically impossible to discriminate between that which is due to the repercussion of the philosophical dominant conceptions over the scientific theories, and, on the other hand, that which is the result of individual reactions to these conceptions. The same line of reasoning might be applied to the periods where the dominant trend was religious or philosophical, in order to show that none of them can be considered as a pure manifestation of a human tendency, but rather as a blend in variable proportions of tendencies revealing the character of Mixtus Orbis of our Cosmos.

In ancient times where Philosophy prevailed, Religion and Science were so to speak "philosophized", the mind of the man of this epoch being specifically contemplative. He did not think that he was under the obligation of "saving time" or making money. The Middle Ages, marked by Religion, imparted a religious touch to Philosophy and Science. Then, in modern times, it was the turn of Philosophy and of Religion to be taken over by Science. Art is distinguishable from the three former realms in that it embraces them all without deforming their nature. These spheres of human activity are destined to develop under the aegis of Art and to assume their natural form, without undergoing shrinkage or hypertrophy, but complementing each other within a harmonious whole. In the forthcoming era Art — which is now degenerate and over-intellectualized — will assume the predominant role, which is at present played by Science. It will penetrate

⁴ Revelation, XX, 2.

every sector of human consciousness; Aesthetics will even absorb Ethics. And when this new Era arrives women will have an essential part to play. But to perform its task, the elite of tomorrow must consist of supermen. There is no need to be afraid of this word. In the eyes of a knight living at the time of Peter of Amiens, scientists and technicians of today - with all their new methods of transport and powers of construction and destruction, as well as those devised to transmit thought - would doubtless appear as supermen. For they have developed new, intellectual, faculties which in the knight were merely latent. Similarly, the ruling class of our times which is destined to disappear, possesses new faculties, which are no yet awakened and still in an embryonic state. A blossoming of these faculties will give birth to the New Man. The distance between him and a technician, a financier, a diplomat, a general or a professor of our own time will not be greater than that separating an intellectual from a knight in the Middle Ages.

Apart from curiosity, the principal faculty whose development gave rise to the intellectual is a capacity for calculation and combination. The new specific feature of the forthcoming Cycle's ruling class will consist in its aptitude to discern spontaneously, without any supporting testimony or evidence, the true from the false. The new man could also be endowed with the spiritual gifts, enumerated by Saint Paul⁵. It is obvious that those who can add to their cultural knowledge faculties of this nature will automatically rise to be the leaders of human society. Their power will be recognized as was the authority of the intellectual, when he replaced the knight and for the same reason: the evidence of his superiority.

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More and more clearly technical progress confronts the world with a dilemma. If the equilibrium - already precarious between the diverging tendencies of the past century - gets more and more compromised, the life of tomorrow will either be entirely dominated by the devil and be wiped away by the cataclysm foreseen by the Apostle Saint Peter⁶ or be sanctified to allow the apparition, according to the

⁵ I Corinthians, XIV, 1.

⁶ II Peter, III, 13.

words of the Apostle, of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness⁷. The conditions favouring the realization of the first of these alternatives - in other words a general disaster in which the world would be destroyed - are already present, but this is far from being the case as regards the prospect of sanctification. To allow for the establishment of a new earth, man's savage instincts will have to be mastered when the common herd, freed from the necessity of working, will have long hours of leisure at their disposal. Logically, the already foreseeable economic situation must lead to a chaotic period, brought on by the collapse both of the power of money and of the power of the ruling class. The ensuing state of anarchy would be the forerunner of the predicted catastrophe.

The new elite, entrusted with the task of warding off the mortal peril which weighs upon mankind, can only be formed by dint of the conscious efforts which will be needed to acquire the new faculties referred to above. These efforts will have to prove sufficient to counterbalance the principle of Equilibrium, according to which everything has to be paid for at the proper price. In the new era, the average man will continue to live outside of the Truth, as he does today, in so far as he will be capable of concealing his thoughts. These, however, will be comprehensible to anyone who will have reached a cultural degree comparable, proportionally, to the present level of university teaching.

The new culture indeed pre-supposes the assimilation of the age-old experience of mankind, and also the methodical development of new faculties. Due to a lack of development these new faculties have up to now revealed themselves only in a sporadic and partial way, and have found no practical application within the organization of human society, although the man pertaining to the ruling class of tomorrow will be born again, according to the celebrated word of Jesus to Nicodemus⁸.

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⁷ II Peter, III, 13.

⁸ John, III, 3.

Esoteric Tradition teaches that every civilization is only the projection over the outward world of the consciousness of the I of members of the elite. The I of the intellectual is different, as we have seen, from that of the knight. Thus in the coming civilization, placed under the aegis of an Art of a mainly sacred character the consciousness of the I of the elite will be totally different from that of the three former periods. This man, as already said, will have the consciousness of his real, unshakable, permanent I and no longer that of the personal, unstable composite I, accepted and glorified by our time. The civilization of the future will no longer be built on the sand, but on the rock⁹ of the consciousness of the real I, that divine spark.

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The advantages enjoyed by man 2 in the period of Transition in which we find ourselves are now clearly apparent. His upbringing and the present conditions of his entourage in which, at least in the West, the emphasis is on intellect, and only, to a less extent, on sport make it easier for man 2 to balance his psychic organism. In our highly, intellectualized society, man 2 is extremely vulnerable and is rarely found among those who achieve the highest honours. On the other hand, if he succeeds in weakening in himself the effects of the "A" influences — particularly strong nowadays — by "clutching" more and more at the "B" influences, his emotive nature will enable him to balance more quickly and more easily his lower centres. For man 3, living in a "world 3" this is much more difficult to achieve. For his psychic make-up, reinforced by an intellectual education, instruction and atmosphere, turns him in the end into an utterly unilateral being. This is the real cause of the weakness demonstrated by the present ruling class, which has failed to stabilize and balance the way of life in human society — although technical progress offers all the material and necessary means for this purpose.

⁹ Matthew, VII, 24-29; Luke, VI, 48.

Similarly woman, endowed with a refined emotivity, is placed in conditions which enable her to accomplish, in the contemporary world, rapid progress in the esoteric domain. For the stress laid in our civilization on the development of the intellectual faculties fosters the equilibrium of her centres on condition, however, that she does not lose her feminine emotivity and does not become too "calculating". To preserve her womanhood is a stumbling-block, a test upon which selection automatically depends. Above all, she must beware of acquiring a masculine mentality and of identifying herself with it. For this sort of mind in a feminine body excludes the possibility of esoteric development. Such a type of woman is unfortunately widespread nowadays, as well as the type of the womanish man; these are called by the Tradition the neutral sex. Unions between persons having thus deviated from the normal are in opposition to the state of Androgynous - the summit of the divinized human power. They shall not inherit the kingdom of God¹⁰.

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The evolution of the Tritocosmos - the organic life - in principle runs parallel to that of the Microcosmos - in other words of the terrestrial man. The stages of man's possible evolution have already been dealt with. It is now necessary to examine the way in which mankind, considered as a whole, evolves since it constitutes the essential element of organic life and the very fate of our planet depends today on the attitude of mankind with respect to the problems which are facing it. We have seen that mankind's destiny also depends on the formation of a new elite, susceptible of resolving the present problems. Yet from whatever aspect we envisage things, we are always led, in the last resort, to examine the problem of the New Man.

As has been said, man's esoteric evolution starts with the formation in him of a magnetic centre, a new centre of consciousness. It is also sometimes called the fourth centre. The symbolic reference

¹⁰ I Corinthians, VI, 9.

to magnetism arises from the fact that, when it has reached a certain degree of development, the magnetic centre "magnetizes", as it were, the 987 small I's which live generally in a state of dispersion; it makes them gravitate within its orbit and follow the direction to which it conforms itself as a result of its resonance to the "B" influences. The magnetic centre may develop in a normal way: the stages of this development have been described in Chapter VI. Yet it may also, in exceptional cases, be resolved; but even in these cases it tends to form again - as we shall shortly see. The resorption proceeds always from the same cause. It is due to the dual tendencies which prevail in man when the magnetic centre is in the course of formation, and these rouse inner conflicts and sufferings which can be relieved only by the resorption of the centre. When forming again, the latter takes into account the acquired experience. In such cases, the regeneration of the centre is preceded by a new moral failure which recurs, if the necessity arises, until the "B" influences which appear to man to be his only possible refuge ensure by themselves the growth of the centre. After being brought to the edge of the precipice, man turns to the only source of salvation.

Mankind, considered as an entity, is now undergoing a process, analogous to the formation of the magnetic centre. This formation involves struggles, sufferings, anguish and all the symptoms of a general bankruptcy. The idea of an international organization entrusted with the task of governing mankind in accordance with the highest principles was conceived a long time ago. However, the first concrete attempt in this field resulted in the Holy Alliance whose trends were far from being purely idealistic, and it quickly broke up. Almost a century later, in 1898, Russia invited the principal powers to participate in the Hague Conference and, for the first time, enunciated at international level the problem of the limitation of armaments: the terms of her proposal appeared so revolutionary that the invited powers finally rejected it. The outcome of this first Conference was pruned to a convention concerning women's work. However, the date of a second conference was fixed and it took place in 1908

but achieved little practical result. A third conference was scheduled but did not convene as a consequence of the first world war. The atrocities of this war convinced the responsible statesmen of the necessity of setting up a permanent international body, invested with certain powers. Thus was born the League of Nations. This embryo of an international magnetic centre collapsed after several crises which undermined its authority, weak from the beginning, and it perished in 1939. It was only after the second world war — which cost humanity some 50 million lives — that a new conference was held in 1945 in San Francisco, where the Charter of the United Nations was adopted. Properly speaking this does not so far constitute a really complete world organization. Neither does man's magnetic center take immediately under its guidance the three lower centres and their sectors. Every growth needs time. But it is a fact that, despite the harsh criticisms directed against the United Nations Organization, nobody really wishes its liquidation. This by no means implies that people are satisfied with the results so far obtained; nor is it believed — except by a few enthusiasts — that a brilliant future is reserved to this international political body; but everybody realizes that if the United Nations were to disappear, the international situation would worsen still more and the probabilities of a third world war would greatly increase. Most probably, such an event would end with a general conflagration in which our planet, would be destroyed by the fire and flames of atomic explosions.

The United Nations today represents a centre analogous to the embryonic magnetic centre of a man who is pursuing esoteric work. Unless the leaders of one or the other side become insane, this centre can no longer be disregarded nor discarded. Normally, the international Organization should come out strengthened by the crises and perils it goes through. There are already perceptible signs which suggest that, with time, this body may become a real world organization, and be transformed eventually into a superstate authority, which would guarantee an equitable and durable order on the planet. This organ would then ensure the coordination of the constructive efforts furnished

by mankind.

The coming generations will be in a position to carry on with this task of the International Organization only when the new man has grasped the reins of power.

Within the framework of our study it would be vain to pursue the present examination any further; we shall merely call the reader's attention to the striking analogy which may be drawn between the formation of a magnetic centre in man and, in the form of an international organization, in the body of the whole of mankind.

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The foregoing considerations have shown where the heart of esoteric work is located at present: it is in the sum of the efforts being made with a view to forming a new type of man. This process is inseparable from the work that has to be done on oneself; in fact it begins with, and is conditioned by this work which can be compared to the thread of Ariadne.

Personal, conscious endeavours — in particular the efforts contributed by two "polar beings" — as well as the efforts made in common by persons who have already progressed in their search of the Way, mark the road for those who wish to serve and take a useful part in the redemptory mission which is the aim of esoteric work today, throughout the world.

CHAPTER XIX

An essential difference separates esoteric knowledge from purely intellectual knowledge. The latter is independent of the moral qualities pertaining to a student or to a scientist. In this connexion, to be wicked or to be a hypocrite does not prevent anyone from making a scientific discovery. This is why intellectual knowledge remains on the plane of information and, in fact, does not claim to go beyond it. Its assimilation necessitates merely an intellectual effort. Esoteric knowledge is of a different nature. In this case, a proper understanding and correct assimilation of the theory necessitate not only an intellectual effort, but also a participation of the whole being. This is even truer as regards the practical side, which constitutes the main part of the work. Nor should it be forgotten that esoteric traditional knowledge, the fruit of Revelation, is a living Word. Once received, it works within ourselves, even when we are unconscious of it, whether awake or asleep, and imperceptibly impregnates our being.

The nature of intellectual knowledge is objective, in that it does not depend on the Personality of the student or of the scientist: it is outside him. Esoteric knowledge, whose object of study is the student himself, is necessarily of a subjective nature. It will become objective only when the Personality of the student reaches an objective level of being, through its junction with his real I. Tradition calls this sort of knowledge the living water¹ in opposition to the dead water, consisting of purely intellectual knowledge. However, in esoteric work, both kinds of knowledge are indispensable. That is why university training greatly facilitates esoteric work because of the discipline of thought it imposes, and the method it teaches. This is particularly true when esoteric teaching resorts to the psychic method, as is the case in the present book. However, we should not conclude from this that a purely rational, theoretical, and therefore intellectual study, of the esoteric doctrine alone can lead to evolution. For the latter

¹ John, IV, 10.

goes beyond knowledge and understanding, which are the common objective of all sciences. From the point of view of esoteric knowledge, to reach this objective is of value only insofar as it gives access to know-how. Seen from this angle, esoteric science is endowed with a nature similar to that of applied science, with this difference, however, that the scientist, and generally speaking the technician, tries to master the elements of the outward world by external means, whereas the inward man reaches analogous results, even greater maybe, because he is able to master the elements of which his inner world is composed. But in both cases the principle is the same: pure theory must give way to practice. And in both cases, it is only the result that counts.

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When observing himself and observing others through the intermediary of his waking-consciousness, the man without often confuses the conceptions of being and appearance. For, when seen through the prism of the Personality — that underdeveloped and therefore imperfect organism, the Real appears as relative. To discriminate between both notions is a particularly difficult task for the man 1, 2 or 3 who, disposing of no criterion for making this distinction says: everything is relative. An assertion which, in itself, has but a relative value.

We must go back to the earliest sources, to the very origin of the Creation in order to be able to penetrate the deep meaning of the difference between the conception of being and of appearance. When the Manifestation appears in the form of the created Universe, the relation of Infinite to Zero becomes the relation of an infinitely great quantity to an infinitesimal quantity: though showing a very small variation from the quantitative point of view, the last approximation represents on the other hand a considerable difference from the qualitative angle. When the two relations, instead of being distinct are completely merged, the confusion increases from step to step till being and appearance become undistinguishable the one from the other; the two notions representing a distant reflection of both primordial

formulae. The relationship between two adjacent cosmos is not that between zero and infinite — as is often stated — but that between an infinitesimal quantity and an infinitely great one. In these relationships, an infinitesimal quantity represents no negligible amount. For the Microcosmos — man — the spermatozoon — the Micro-microcosmos — is not a zero. Man itself proceeds from it. Similarly, man should no longer be considered as a zero vis-à-vis the Tritocosmos — which is organic life on Earth. The latter is deeply transformed by man who even claims to have mastered it completely. This is possible because the three consecutive cosmos form a whole and, to a certain extent, constitute a closed cycle. Thus a galaxy, like our Milky Way, which is a Megalocosmos, forms with the whole constellation of stars — i.e. the Deuterocosmos of which it is composed — together with the planetary systems of the latter — or Mesocosmos — a closed cycle. In other words, a galaxy is one of the organs of the Macrocosmos, the Great Universe. The laws governing this system of three consecutive cosmos, embraced by a galaxy — Megalocosmos — are, as we have seen, (Chapter IX, p. 104, French text 105) twice as numerous as the laws ruling the relationship between galaxies in the whole of the Aghiocosmos, contained within the Protocosmos. Whilst each galaxy is ruled by six groups of laws, the higher cosmos, the Aghiocosmos, is governed only by three groups of laws. Certain laws of Nature obeyed by the lower cosmos are ineffective in the higher cosmos². We should also note that within these groups of three cosmos the influences from one to another are exerted only from one step to the next one; that is why the Micro-microcosmos has no influence on the Tritocosmos.

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The relation between Infinitesimal and Infinitely Great, considered under its dynamic aspect — i.e. in the form of a cyclical

² This fact might throw light on a recent theory according to which Newton's law would not be universal but would apply only to limited parts of the Universe.

and perpetual movement - leads in the last resort to the basic plan of the Creation and makes its raison d'être comprehensible. The primary condition of the Creation is the implementation of the principle of Imperfection³, and of the principle of Asymmetry, a product of the former. These in turn condition the apparition and the duration of Existence within Space and Time.

The relation between the Infinite and the perfect Zero - the formula of universal statism - expresses the non-manifested state of the Absolute:

$$\frac{\infty}{0} = \infty \quad (I)$$

The meaning of the Creation consists in realizing starting from Zero a Unity similar to the Infinite. The primary concept of the Manifestation therefore is to be found in the following equation; the Unity being designated by α

$$\frac{\alpha}{0} = \infty \quad (II)$$

from which, we can deduce by comparing (I) and (II)

$$\frac{\infty}{0} = \frac{\alpha}{0} \quad (III)$$

or again:

$$\infty = \alpha \quad (IV)$$

These four equations relate in mathematical language to:

- I the non-manifested Absolute;
- II the idea of the Creation;
- III the formula of the pre-Creation (in dogmatic terms: the Engendered and non-Created Being);
- IV the Creation which has reached its Fulfilment. In other words, the accomplished Universe will have covered at that stage the distance between it and the Creative God. Such are the meaning and the goal of the Manifestation.

³ Cf. Chapter XIV, p. 159 English text, 152 French text.

The technique used by the Creation consists in splitting the initial general Zero, voluntarily rendered imperfect, into an infinity of distinct zeros. This corresponds to the fall of Souls. This fall did not take place in a uniform way. As indicated by Tradition, the depth of the fall, which varied for each Soul, has conditioned the infinite variety of the universe, regulated by the System of the Cosmos.

We now understand that each one of us has his origin in one of the differentials of the general Zero, rendered imperfect: this differential represents our Personality. The meaning and the mission of your life are to create, from such a differential of Zero, a differential of Unity. The fourth equation will then read for the whole:

$$a = \int_0^{\infty} d.a$$

(V)

or, for each particular case:

$$d.a = d.0.\infty$$

(VI)

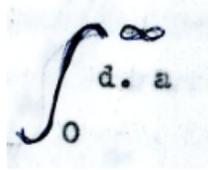
Let us notice that the preceding lines constitute a starting point for the study of an important sphere of esoteric science: the Doctrine of Numbers.

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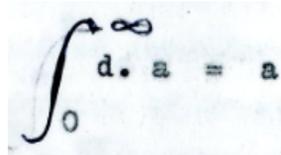
The Personality is thus none other than a differential of Zero rendered imperfect and, as a consequence of this fundamental imperfection, its existence is a loan. This is why appearance assumes for it the value of being.

The point of evolution where the Universe, together with everything it embraces - including each one of us - is at present located, between the third and fourth steps, i.e. between the pre-Creation and the final, fulfilled, Creation. Equation no. IV enables us to understand that the creation starting, from our Personality (d.0),

by means of esoteric work (∞) of a new Individuality (d.a), is part of the general evolution of the Universe. This creation contributes indeed, by means of the inclusion of infinitesimals belonging to the Real (d.a) to perfecting the contents of the formula:


$$\int_0^{\infty} d.a$$

which in the end will be equivalent to:


$$\int_0^{\infty} d.a = a$$

(VII)

The foregoing exposé gives us an idea on the audacity and depth of the Creation. May-be we shall feel now the inestimable and exhilarating value of this divine loan which has been granted to us, namely our body which, as a depository of our Personality, enables us to become a real Unity. Doubtless we shall also be frightened when we think of the frivolous way in which we make use of this loan. We let our life glide by without reflecting upon the problems it poses, upon the end, where the loan of our existence has to be repaid. If we pause for a while to meditate upon these lines we shall grasp afresh the real meaning of the parable of the Talents⁴.

Let us now try, within the framework of our search for the Way, to find out in what concrete fashion this marvellous transformation from the illusory into the real can be achieved, and how five talents can be gained for five, or at least two for two, according to the parable.

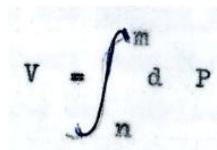
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To be means to be in the Present. We do not yet exist in the Future and we no longer exist in the Past. But what is the meaning of the Present?

⁴ Matthew, XXV, 13-30.

The I of the Personality, being a loan only, is a provisional I, to which man has recourse through lack of consciousness of his real I. With his Personality man lives either in the Future or in the Past. The Personality has no Present; this latter conception appearing as an evanescent line of demarcation where the Future mysteriously turns into the Past. It is for this reason that the existence of the Personality seems illusory and unreal. In common terms, what is called Present is, in fact, the part nearest to the Past, in which we include our forecasts of certain probable elements of the near Future; but a real Present seems to us devoid of existence. This conception, however, is wrong. In fact, the succession of events in Time - i.e. History under all its aspects - covers an uninterrupted sequence of independent and autonomous particles of the real Present. In other words, our representation of the Present, as an imaginary line of demarcation where the Future transforms itself into Past, is erroneous. The same applies to our classical conception of the Future and of the Past. For everything which exists lives within Time. An object, endowed with three space dimensions, consisting of solid matter, is also in need of the element of Time - the fourth perpendicular - to affirm its existence. If this object is not allowed a single instant of Time, it cannot exist. Therefore the Present of necessity must have same duration. For the man without this duration is very limited, and furthermore individual. But if this very small Present is reduced to the zero - which in fact we believe it to be - purely and simply it means the end of existence and this is how death occurs.

In mathematical symbols, our existence, as also that of the whole world in which we live, can be expressed as follows:


$$V = \int_n^m dP$$

where V represents life, n and m (birth and death) are the limits set to the integral and where dP is the differential of the Present.

This formula enables us to understand that man, as we know

him - like every being - is nothing but a series of consecutive portions of an integral being, whose existence is extended in Time, from its birth to its death. We shall see later that man has within Eternity another mode of existence, and a third one which is situated on the plane of principles, in the arms of the Absolute.

According to Traditional teaching, the guarantee of the promised General Resurrection is to be found on this plane at the advent of the Fulfilment, when the Whole Universe, as well as everything and everybody which lives in it, reaches the goal represented by the access of Imperfection and Asymmetry to Perfection. This state of Perfection itself, from our point of view, exists in the real Present, embracing for each Individuality its whole Past and Future.

Fulfilment represents the end of General Evolution, a slow and dramatic process which entails an interminable succession of births and sufferings and deaths, through aeons of love and pain. This general evolution is directed by a law, the General Law, - some aspects of which we have already studied – intent on holding everybody in his place, this law leads the whole of the Creation towards the summit by stages which have been fixed so as to permit a common progression, despite the variations in individual rhythms.

Esoteric evolution complies with another law and follows another way, as it were, perpendicular to the first. It acts in accordance with the Law of Exception which offers the possibility of an individual and more speedy regeneration. One needs courage to embark upon this narrow and risky way where arduous efforts are necessary in order to achieve rapid results. Moreover the privilege of forcing the General Law, of following the narrow way⁵ and of benefitting from the assistance of a guide without whom the ascension would be impossible, is granted on the following and explicit condition: the student whose individual endeavours have put forth fruit must be ready to undertake the work anew in order to contribute to general evolution. This principle

⁵ Matthew, VII, 14.

has a corollary whose purpose is to ensure the continuity in esoteric work by establishing a sequence: the student cannot attain the next stage of evolution unless he has trained and put someone else in the place he has just left himself.

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The duration of the Present of living beings is individual. For the man without, this duration is of the same order as that of a respiration. In a normal and quiet state, the latter takes approximately three seconds. Positive science reaches empirically a comparable conception by introducing in psychology the notion of the mental present. By this term is understood a period of time susceptible of being contained altogether within a unity of perception of consecutive stimuli, whose average duration is estimated at approximately five to six seconds⁶.

Esoteric science, which takes less into account the fixed characteristics of a person than his possibilities of development, points out that the individual Present may be either reduced or enlarged. The respiration and normal rhythms of the man without, in a calm state, reaches in these three or four seconds the maximum limit of Present accessible to this type of man. To feel an emotion is sufficient to make the respiration of a given person take on an accelerated rhythm. Unexpected news "makes him short of breath"; finally, respiration may be considerably accelerated as a result of physical efforts. In all these cases the Present undergoes a reduction proportionate to the acceleration of rhythm. To enable one to regain one's ordinary state, both on the psychic and moral plane, the bodily rhythms, in particular respiration, must become normal again. On the other hand, anyone who could maintain his physical rhythms under exceptional circumstances in a normal state, would preserve, together with the

⁶ Vocabulary of Psychology (Vocabulaire de la psychologie) pub. in collaboration with the Association of scientific workers, by Henri Piéron, Professor at the College of France and Director of the Institute of Psychology of the University of Paris. PUP, 1951, p. 222.

integrality of his Present, a degree of calmness and detachment enabling him to reach rational decisions. It is in the extent to which such a mastery exists that the superiority of a given person is demonstrated; as the popular saying goes: in warfare he who hears the beating of his horse's hooves is victorious.

For the student who merges into circumstances, or in other words, who allows himself to be swayed by events, the Present tends to disappear, and if he then takes decisions, it is probable that he will regret them afterwards. For if, on the one hand, the fact of merging with a faster vibration of one of the lower centres entails an acceleration of respiration and, consequently, provokes a diminution of the Present, on the other hand, concentration in all its forms contribute to its enlargement. The more acute the concentration, the slower the respiration. In a state of contemplation, it even becomes imperceptible.

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The Doctrine of the Present enables us to understand better the real meaning of the image of man at a given moment of Time such as he appears to himself and to others.

A whole film is to be found behind these consecutive scenes, each representing an instant during which a differential of the Present emerges at each respiration. Within the limits assigned by birth and death, this film represents the life of each one of us — together with all the persons we have met and all the material and moral circumstances by which we have been surrounded. This is in every way comparable to what is occurring when we observe the film of a kaleidoscope through a narrow fissure, which gives the illusion of a movement in Time. The width of this fissure of observation is analogous to the differential of the Present.

The example of the kaleidoscope will enable us to define the meaning of duration of the Present. The Present can enjoy no existence and, in fact, does not last because everything which lasts lives in

Time and consequently automatically falls within the domain of the Future-Past. The expression: duration of the Present is a conventional one. It enables our reasoning faculty, for which Time exists as an absolute category, to apprehend the concept of the Present, a category which is in fact situated out of Time. We should not lose sight of this fact when we use this conventional phrase, duration of the Present.

The example of the kaleidoscope - as we said - brings out the real meaning of this conventional expression. It is quite correct to measure the individual Present by units of Time; but in this way it is not the Present itself which is measured - as it is immeasurable - but the width of the fissure through which the scenario of the kaleidoscope or the film of life is observed. Here is another example to help us to understand this mechanism which governs us.

Let us imagine a being deprived of dimensions, i.e. a living point endowed with the kind of intelligence pertaining to the first dimension. Let us admit that this being lives on a geometrical line, say a curve. For him, the whole notion of space is reduced to three representations: what is ahead (in front); what is behind and what is here. In addition he believes that the curve on which he lives is a straight line, because his mind is unable to conceive the idea of a second dimension, without which one cannot imagine a curve.

A human being, three-dimensional in space, is mono-dimensional in Time. Therefore he lives in Time on a line and perceives nothing outside this line. The whole of his conception of Time is confined - as in the foregoing example - to three representations: ahead of him: the Future, behind him, the Past; and lastly here: the Present which he conceives as being without duration.

But if, by appropriate exercises, our living point could acquire a sense of the second dimension and supposing it were out of the geometrical line on which it used to live, in the belief that nothing were to be found elsewhere, this point would then be able to observe with surprise that it has acquired the possibility of observing

not only the point — here — but simultaneously two sections of the line, the one situated ahead of it and the other behind it.

First case

Behind Here Ahead

Fig. 54

Second case

Behind Here Ahead

New point of observation

Fig. 55

The analogy drawn with the man without who lives on a line or Time is complete.

We shall recall that this line is curved in accordance with the Law of Seven. Mono-dimensional within Time, the human mind cannot see the deviation of this line in the future. The future appears to it, not as a progression following a curve, but as a line of Time, tangent to the present moment. It is one of the main causes for the mistakes man makes in predicting the Future.

Now after passing from the stage of man 4 to that of man 5, the student as he progresses towards the Way, begins to acquire the faculty of being able to perceive the second dimension of Time. As it occurred in the example of the point taken out of its line, he also is able to observe simultaneously the present moment, the Future and the Past. This means that our conception of the Future and of the Past is a relative conception, peculiar to the limited mind of the man without, and that, in reality and objectively, only the Present exists, a film which comprises for each given cycle the whole of the Future and of the Past.

We can now better understand that enigmatic and grammatically absurd sentence of Jesus: Before Abraham was, I am⁷.

⁷ John, VII, 58.

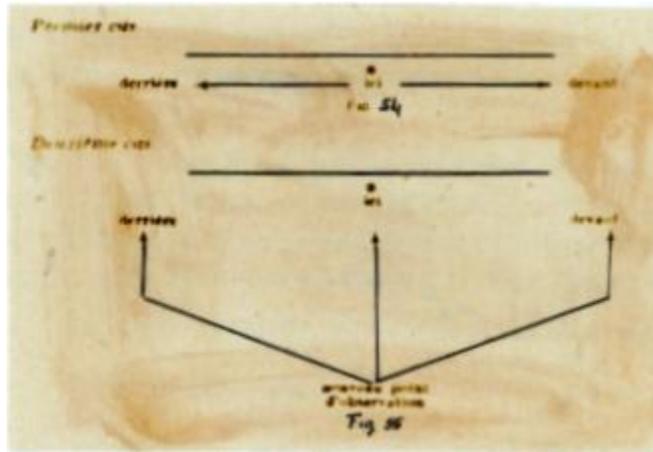
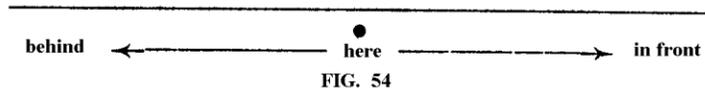


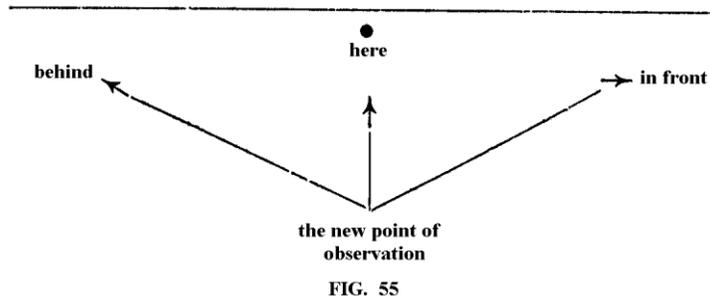
Fig. 55

The original is too blurred

First case.



Second case.



This being said, we shall realize that esoteric work on oneself has as an essential aim the enlargement of this individual fissure opening on the Present.

The uninterrupted succession of dP enables man to live on a line of Time. But the fissure proper to the man without is insufficient to make him perceive the Future and the Past altogether in a great all-embracing Present and benefit from this permanent existence. To do so, the fissure must be properly enlarged.

Perception of the I in a Present thus covering the Future and the Past is none other than the consciousness of the real I. The Present thus conceived is Life; the fissure of three seconds is the celebrated strait gate.

Jesus said: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it⁸.

This also relates to the celebrated eye of a needle⁹.

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In correlation with an examination of the elements facilitating or preventing access to the Way, it is useful to comment on the last text quoted which, in itself, completes and explains the former. It was in conversation with a young and rich man that Jesus exclaimed:

Children how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God¹⁰.

And He added:

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God¹¹.

⁸ Matthew, VII, 13-14.

⁹ Mark, X, 25; Luke, XVIII, 25.

¹⁰ Mark, X, 24-25; Luke, XVIII, 24-25.

¹¹ Matthew, XIX, 23-24; Mark, X, 25; Luke, XVIII, 25.

From this the question arises: who is rich? Esoterically speaking the rich are those who attribute a real value to their Personality and put their confidence and hope in it, no matter whether such men have great possessions or none at all.

Man must necessarily and firstly undergo an inner breakdown of his Personality before embarking on the Way, through what we call a moral bankruptcy. Then he will know the futile illusion of pride and the real value of humbleness. Rich or beggar, he will thus become poor in spirit. From now on, he will easily slip through the eye of a needle. For it is said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven¹².

¹² Matthew, V, 3.

CHAPTER XX

A system of esoteric practice has been built up to enable persons who have already acquired a certain amount of theoretical knowledge to pass on to practical work. The system is founded on the Doctrine of the Present. Exercises have been divided into three groups, in accordance with the structure of the Personality, and aim at a single general goal: acquisition of the real Present. They are of a physical and psychic order. In order that the exercises on the psychic level may be profitable, the body must be made capable of meeting the demands made on it by means of physical training. We should not forget that we live in a body and that, duly trained and disciplined, this body may turn into a marvellous instrument — in fact the only one at our disposal — to help us to reach the proposed goal. Nor should we forget that esoteric development necessitates considerable efforts very much more arduous than those to which we are accustomed in life. The body must be healthy, strong and trained to sustain efforts of this nature.

The three groups of exercises — to be practised all along the Way — have a triple objective:

- to master the body
- to control the Personality
- to establish a contact with the upper levels of Consciousness.

It will be seen that this training touches upon the three I's of man: access to the consciousness of the real I is secured by a training based on a strict discipline of the I of the body and of the I of the Personality. Such is the theory. The practical side has been elaborated from time immemorial, and includes eight groups of exercises developing by consecutive stages.

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The first group relates to outward cleanness: the body must be carefully washed everyday; special care also must be taken to

clean the navel, feet and genital organs. The head must be washed regularly. Nostrils have to be freed to allow the passage of air.

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The second group deals with inner cleanliness: a complete and regular evacuation of the digestive tube must be strictly observed. Constipation has a profoundly toxic effect upon our organism. By arresting at a certain point the digestive function - which normally develops in accordance with the Law of Seven - constipation prevents the transmutation of hydrogens and thus deprives the organism of the most precious element - for esoteric work - of solar energy. As a result, man is deprived of the possibility of rising above the lower levels of consciousness.

Both groups of exercises - although negative in value - have a great importance. By themselves they do not lead to esoteric evolution. Yet they are an indispensable condition of this evolution. Therefore, they must be carefully practised.

To keep a state of inner cleanliness is facilitated by daily physical training: walking, gymnastics, as well as by an appropriate food diet. Experience enables each one of us to adopt the regime that suits him best: for here, again, we must beware of falling into exaggeration. We know when we have found the "happy mean" by the feeling of satisfaction to which it gives rise. Whatever regime of exercise and diet we adopt, it must be healthy, strengthening and pleasant, its purpose being to enable the organism to regain its natural equilibrium which is generally upset by the artificial conditions in which we live and work. To keep our weight within normal limits also points to a correct choice in our way of life.

In monastic practice, the conditions for a poised life are determined by the Rule, which has been established for centuries and is practised under the leadership of an Ygoumenon (Superior). When esoteric work is pursued in the world, these conditions have to be studied and applied by the student himself.

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The objective of the third group of exercises consists in acquiring a correct body posture. During their performance, psychic exercises call for as perfect an equilibrium as possible of the body so that attention may be fully concentrated upon the object of the training. To do so, the best body posture, the Sage's pose as it is called in the Tradition, has to be assumed and practised until it can be maintained in a state of complete immobility, during the necessary time. It is practised, in a sitting position on a hard chair, not more than about a foot high, legs crossed, knees apart, hands flat on the knees. The position of the arms and hands may change according to the object chosen for the exercise.

The pre-condition is that head, neck and spine should be in a straight, vertical line. Shoulders must be thrown back, the head raised high. In the case of dolichocephalic people, it is important that the sinciput should be maintained in a horizontal line.

Muscles must be totally relaxed. This may be controlled by contracting them first, group by group, then by relaxing them suddenly. The waist must be pulled in and - if the foregoing indications are adhered to - the back and head will then assume a correct position in a straight line. During the exercises, we should try to avoid at all costs bending our back, for if this bad habit is indulged in, we run the risk of damaging the cerebro-spinal system. In addition, care should be taken not to let the spine be too salient. Finally, we should see that the muscles of the extremities - hands (including fingers) - and feet (together with toes) - are completely relaxed.

Eyes must remain motionless. Their position depends on the object of the given exercise. But generally speaking, we must stare straight in front of us, our eyes following a line parallel to the floor. To make sure of this, when sitting, the distance from the eyes to the floor must be measured; then we must look at the wall, four or five yards away, and fix our eyes upon the Sun, as it is designated by Tradition. It consists of a black circle, 3 cm in diameter, drawn on a piece of white cardboard. To obtain full control over our eyes

may require some time. Generally, the eye is the last organ that submits to discipline. Therefore, when familiarizing with the Sage's pose, we keep our eyes shut. Later, when we open them, some movement is allowed on condition that we do not look anywhere outside the circle of the Sun. Finally, immobility of the eyes is attained.

The foregoing is a brief description of the Sage's pose. In practice, we shall come across a host of small difficulties. We should neither worry over nor be discouraged by them. In following the given instructions, each one must seek for and find his own equilibrium. For as we said, this cannot be reached immediately. When, after repeated attempts, the correct pose is finally found and easily assumed again, the student will know it by a feeling of relaxation and repose that sleep itself cannot give.

Daily practice of the Sage' pose is a pre-condition of success for the exercises, whose objective is to control the physiological processes and to discipline our psychic life. That is why we must diligently and assiduously practise the posture and perfect it.

Tradition teaches other postures and movements: various kinds of genuflexions, prostrations, stolpostoyanie. The latter consists in standing straight up like a pole. This posture was mainly in use in the primitive Church of Egypt. Elevated places, for instance the top of a pillar were chosen for the practise of this sort of performance which called for a considerable degree of control over the body and the nerves; an even greater mastery than that evinced by the look-out man seated at the mast-head of a sailing-ship.

To put into practise the psychic method — called by Tradition the Royal Way — the Sage's pose correctly maintained is essential and sufficient for nearly all the requirements of the training; almost all the psychic, and a great part of the physical exercises can be performed when starting from this pose.

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The fourth group of exercises concerns respiration. If the organism is considered as a machine, respiration represents a sort of fly-wheel. It regulates the functioning of the body and maintains the rhythm imposed by the work of the heart. Respiration exerts a direct influence on the metabolism and contributes to the generation, by the organism, of the most refined energies, which are necessary to establish a contact with the higher centres. This influence may be considerably enhanced through the control of respiration, in particular through the practice of rhythmical respiration. This possibility arises as a function of the motions of the thoracic cage which, in addition to maintaining respiration are subject to a dual control: instinctive-automatic, and voluntary. The possibility of passing from one to another establishes a kind of bridge between the physiological and psychic functions in our organism. Though not unique, this bridge is nevertheless very important.

Although they may be highly conducive to esoteric evolution, breathing exercises have this drawback: if wrongly performed, they may produce undesirable or even dangerous consequences, for instance a pulmonary emphysema or a mal-functioning of the heart.

The first rule relating to the control of breathing is simple. It says that once filled, the lungs must hold the air in. This indication is to be found in the most ancient texts of the Orthodox Tradition. However, the time during which suspension of the respiratory rhythm should be maintained is not precisely stated. More recently, a whole set of variants relating to a practical implementation of this rule has been elaborated. But owing to the risks attaching to this sort of exercise, if done without discrimination, breathing exercises should be carried out only under the personal and permanent guidance of a master.

From the beginning of the century onwards, a great number of books of Hindu, Buddhist or other source have been published, generally with a commentary by Western authors, which deal with controlled and rhythmical breathing. Without entering into a critical analysis of the systems and indications given in these texts, we must insist on the

danger of practising breathing exercises on the basis of simple written descriptions, without the constant assistance of a competent guide.

In the monastic orthodox practice, especially in the Russian branch of the Tradition, liturgical chants, used as breathing exercises, play an important role. In certain monasteries, for instance at Laure Petchera in Kiev, these chants are sung by the full choir; at the same time, the singers must concentrate on the subject-matter of the chant. This combined exercise, physical, psychic and spiritual, employs drastic methods and yields remarkable results.

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The fifth group of exercises relates to observation. With it, we definitely enter the domain of psychism. For we approach the problem of the study of oneself in a practical way.

To observe means to ascertain the state of a thing or of a phenomenon, to establish a fact, without omitting any personal judgement.

To observe implies therefore, together with a mere ascertainment of facts, a certain awareness of oneself. Thus — and there lies its esoteric sense — observation necessitates a dual application of attention directed both at the object and at oneself. This training requires all the impartiality of which one is capable. Otherwise, it degenerates into a mere record, a unilateral action quite useless from the esoteric point of view.

Observation involves the two following groups of exercises:

- the so-called external observation, i.e. when one observes one or several external objects, including oneself, or when looking so to say "from outside";
- the so-called inner observation, when one observes one or several features, facts or phenomena of one's own inner life.

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Observation comprises all the modalities of the new attitude assumed by man who approaches esoteric work, and which derive from his permanent struggle against the encroachment of mental drowsiness. It is known that we can look without seeing; this is a characteristic of the major part of our visual impressions. But we can also look and see, in other words observe. This is a progress: for, in this way, our attention is aroused. But to observe is not enough to obtain esoteric effects, since even when we are paying heed, the object may still take such a hold on us that we may even lose consciousness of ourselves. We can reach a true state of observation, which produces esoteric effects, only when our observation is consciously directed outwards and inwards simultaneously. Observance of this general rule - dual attention - is required all along the Way up to the summit of esoteric evolution. It corresponds to the tresveni  of Tradition to which we have already alluded. It means a constant effort to watch, and to have present in one's mind the idea of the I, whilst continuing as in the past - or even better - one's outward activities. Observation is founded on, and has as starting point, the general principle taught by Jesus to His disciples: And what I say unto you I say unto all: Watch¹.

We have seen that the man without lives absent-mindedly. He lives in a dream: in night and day dreams.

We are asleep in life, and profoundly asleep. How can we in practice escape from this situation? This is difficult, and the reason is as follows: when asleep, man remembers both the experiences of his waking life and his name, which is the symbol of his Personality. This enables him when he wakes up to regain without difficulty his waking-consciousness. But to pass from the latter to a higher level of consciousness, namely that of the consciousness of the real I, he lacks the two following essential elements: experience of life, and knowledge of his name at this upper level. Man will reach the second Birth, which is the birth of his Individuality - i.e. through the indissoluble

¹ Mark, XIII, 37.

junction of his Personality, developed and new born, with his real I - only if he works unflinchingly, "gimlet-wise", by practising observation, which involves conscious efforts of presence until the attainment of a state of presence in the self. At this moment, he will receive a new name and be progressively initiated into this new, formerly undreamt of experience, to which the Revelation refers:

To him that overcometh will I give ... a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it².

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External observation may be passive. It is then concerned with objects which offer themselves to us, the external film of events, without our exerting a choice between them.

In addition to being passive, external observation may also be active. It then selects the object to which it applies. In this active form, external observation may resort to a particular method which, if regularly practised, greatly assists us in finding out what impression we produce on others. Though not a goal in itself, at least this training is valuable in that it enables us to reject most of the false ideas we entertain about ourselves. This kind of observation may also be called observation by reflection or compared to a succession of snapshots of ourselves. We get the best results when these snapshots are taken when we are engaged in conversation. A sudden effort of observation enables the speaker to feel in himself how he appears to his entourage at this given moment. A collection of such snapshots enables us to reconstitute in our mind's eye the image we project of ourselves. To get to know this image, an exercise with the help of two mirrors is also very useful. A mirror gives a picture in reverse: left becomes right and vice-versa. If we look at ourselves in two mirrors, our reflection is then restored. It generally produces an impression of unfamiliarity. The defects of

² Revelation, II, 17.

our face appear to be accentuated because our eyes can no longer make the automatic correction to which they are accustomed when our reflection is reversed.

This exercise with two mirrors enables us also to see ourselves in profile. We know very little about our profile. These new visions of ourselves bring always something new.

Orthodox practice teaches a kind of tresvenié, of external active observation, to which it has largely recourse. This is the prayer of Jesus, formulated as follows:

O Jesus-Christ, our Lord, Son of God, have pity on me, miserable sinner³. We can see in this verse a dual objective: the request for grace, and consciousness of oneself as a sinner. The two requisite elements needed in observation are thus united, provided of course that the prayer be spoken, not in a mechanical way, but through a conscious effort of presence. Bishop Theophan, in his commentaries, says that the force of this prayer does not lie in its words, which may be changed, but in the observation of our sinful state confronted with God in His state of perfection. We might add that this effort of simultaneous observation gives rise to what we called the difference of potential, generating a current of grace. Monks or laymen repeat the prayer of Jesus a great number of times, up to ten or even twenty thousand times a day.

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The second group comprises inner observation. It consists of a vast field of indispensable exercises which, together with the former group, firmly establish the student on the Path leading to the Path of Access, then to the Way.

With respect to inner observation, the same distinction is made here between passive and active exercises, as in the case of

³ Translated from Russian.

external observation.

In its passive form, inner observation is to be practised daily, preferably in the morning and, as far as possible, at the same appointed hour. After having maintained the Sage's pose long enough to feel a relaxation of the muscles and the body's pulse — normal and regular, we should observe passively everything which unfolds before our mind's eye. This exercise needs practice. At first, it may be that we see nothing, or almost nothing, but if we persevere, we little by little become aware of a whole world, full of life and rich in colour. Later on, we must concentrate on this world and try to introduce some order into it until we have mastered - or in esoteric terms - conquered it. Yet first of all it should be entirely disengaged and detached from the recesses of our waking-consciousness. This can be done by means of passive, calm and impartial observation. Above all, impartiality is required: for man is generally surprised when he discovers in himself certain emotive and instinctive impulses, certain ideas which normally - i.e. in his state of waking/sleep - seem to him to be wholly alien. The seeker will gradually learn how to explore his own moral nature. He will then become aware that usually a small part only of this content is in the foreground of his waking-consciousness, the main part being relegated somewhere to the background of his inner self. It is with stupefaction, sometimes with alarm, that he discovers the co-existence within himself - seemingly an impossibility and an absurdity - of a poet and a cynic, a hero and a coward. He also observes that he is essentially selfish and ready to justify to himself - if necessary by the most twisted means of rationalization - states of mind that he would find despicable or criminal in others.

Similar characteristics - each more distasteful than the other - are relegated to the background of our consciousness; we instinctively conceal them in its "wings" and this for two reasons: on the one hand - and this is the general case - a man forms of himself a picture which is very far from the truth and purely and

simply ignores anything in him which does not tally with this picture. But the traits of character he thus rejects do not cease to be his own. Moreover, man is afraid of discovering himself as he really is. As long as he lives in external life, there is no need for him to proceed to an introspection which would bring him face to face with his inward life. In the rare cases, where owing to fortuitous circumstances, he is momentarily confronted with himself, he usually averts his mental gaze and quickly reverts to the picture he has built up of himself. Of course, all this springs from his habit of lying to himself; but this is not surprising as the man without is born lying, lives lying and dies lying. Esoteric work alone is capable of leading man out of the wilderness — a forest full of wild animals — in which he lives. But then he ceases to be a man without.

Another important result is also achieved by the same exercise of observation: recognition of the main feature of one's Personality.

Each Personality is centered on one main feature, around which gravitate all his qualities and defects. This feature is not necessarily conspicuous; it may be insignificant, or even ridiculous. What is extraordinary is that man has difficulty in recognizing himself in his most characteristic feature. However, to recognize this feature and accept it is important. We might say, to use a metaphor that to grasp it is equivalent to grasping the end of a thread in order to unwind a reel. It is by recognizing and studying his main feature that a man will be able to determine his own type and, without any possible error, to locate the centre of gravity of his Personality in one of the eighteen sectors of the lower centres. At this point we leave theory to begin practical work, by ascertaining the functioning and regulation of the three centres. This work has to be done while on the Path of Access, as we call it.

Assiduous practice of observation — especially in the

passive form that has just been described - is an instrument of selection. Weak persons turn their back on it and give up their search for the Way in order to plunge deeper into Illusion. The strong realize what a terrible reality their moral content represents and understand - no longer philosophically, as if someone else were concerned, but in the turmoil of their soul - that the time has come to draw up their balance-sheet and to deposit it before the Judge. But this requires courage.

We have already pointed out on several occasions that the Way cannot be reached unless the seeker has accepted his moral failure and risen above it. We are now in a better position to understand the reason and meaning of this pre-condition. As soon as man starts on esoteric work, it is advisable, in his own interest, that he should draw up his moral balance-sheet: it will be easier for him to assess the various items of which it consists as he goes along, rather than to sum them up all at once. Whatever the method employed, the balance-sheet must be loyally drawn up and then deposited. For when man reaches the level of man 4 — that is at the end of the Path of Access and on the point of entering on the Way - he can no longer believe in a false picture of himself. He must become as a child, i.e. renounce lying and every kind of illusion vis-à-vis himself; and rid himself of the artificial crust that upbringing, education and experience in life have formed in him. That is why Jesus said: verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven⁴.

The exercise of inner observation is the instrument which allows the brave and persevering seeker to become a child again and to put his foot firmly on the Way of Salvation.

In its active form, inner observation corresponds to the choice of an object in our inner life to which we devote attention.

⁴ Matthew, XVIII, 3.

In its standard form, this is "self-examination", as it should be conducted.

The objective pursued here is the same as the one viewed by active external observation.

One or another of these exercises lead to concentration, whether the object be inner or outward, since the Kingdom of God is both within us and outside us (see Fig. 27).

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Therefore observation may take various forms according to object and attitude chosen. But dual attention is always compulsory.

The exercise of presence is an effort to watch; and as we have seen this represents its main aspect. Practised daily in the form of passive observation, it leads to the cognition of oneself. As presence must as far as possible become permanent — and we insist on that in view of its importance — the seeker must practise dual attention as far as he can in the course of all his occupations. He will notice that with time this effort of recollection, of presence, not only does not hamper his activities, but on the contrary helps substantially in the performance of his duties.

Two forms of presence have to be specially practised: on the one hand non-conflux and on the other hand non-considering.

We have commented on both attitudes on several occasions. It is however necessary to come back to a particular aspect of considering. Inner non-considering must be cultivated so as to become constant. Yet it should not be confused with external non-considering. Generally, the man without, especially when he merges into circumstances, is full of inner considering. In return, he lacks external considering. We must beware of that. External considering must be increased as much as possible. For external life is characterized by a certain degree of mechanization both on the psychic and physical plane. We know that we must not put our finger into the gears of a machine in operation: it

would be crushed and we would even run the risk of losing our life. The same is true of the psychic plane. We must watch in a vigilant way and, being machines, should avoid running into the psychic mechanisms by which we are surrounded.

Broadly speaking, such are the meaning and raison d'être of the exercise of observation and of the objectives which it enables us to reach. We are now able to understand why this exercise should be pursued all along the Way. First of all, it serves as a means of attaining it; it is also the means by which results acquired at each stage may be controlled.

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The sixth group of exercises concerns concentration, which is a psychic and active exercise. It consists in withdrawing our attention from everything which is not the object of moral or physical concentration.

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The seventh group deals with contemplation. If the student is able to maintain concentration upon the same object during a given time, he reaches a state of contemplation.

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The last group leads to ecstasy. Concentration followed by prolonged contemplation gives access to ecstasy, a state of Consciousness. As long as it lasts, man finds himself out of the five senses⁵.

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It is useless to practise the last three groups of exercises, beginning with concentration, until tangible results have been achieved by a prolonged practice of observation.

⁵ John, XI, 33; XIII, 21.

For the time being, we have to focus on what is accessible and indispensable to reach the level of man 4. Then at this stage only - as we have tried to show - is the Way of esoteric evolution opening before the seeker.

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We shall deal now in more detail with a few topics, and study the general diagram of the Way.

Man lives in a physical body. In it we find his Personality, a subtle organism endowed with a provisional I. Beyond this organism, the higher organs of the consciousness of the real I and of Consciousness are fully developed.

At this point we have to call the reader's attention to the necessity of a precise terminology. Origen (185-253) in his Principles warned the disciples against the intentional imprecision of certain expressions used in the texts: at times, he says, the Apostles speak of the body and mean the soul, and reciprocally. Yet the wise ones know how to make the distinction.

Now the man without gets confused as a result of the under-developed stage of his Personality. With a few exceptions, man is aware of his Personality only; in opposition to the body, his Personality appears to him as his soul. Yet as a consequence of its hostile attitude to the real I, the Personality is more closely linked with the body than with the real I. And as a consequence, the soul-Personality is perishable.

This explains the apparent contradiction according to which immortality is attributed to the soul, while at the same time we are taught that it is in danger of perishing, and that it is for us to ensure its salvation. In fact, there is only one way in which the soul-Personality can be saved, and that is through its intimate junction with the real, eternal and imperishable Soul, which makes itself manifest within man, under certain conditions, through the

intermediary of the higher centres of consciousness.

By this fusion, the soul-Personality, lacking a light of its own, will blaze with the light of the immortal Soul with which it will henceforth become one. The might of the real I will render the personal I, after its identification with it, immortal. Such is the meaning of Salvation. And such is also the sense of Creation as it has been analyzed in the preceding Chapter.

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It is only at the second Birth that a junction of the Personality with the higher emotive centre takes place and only after extensive work has been done on the Personality to perfect it.

From this, we can give the following definition of the Path of Access: the Path of Access consists in a progressive acquisition of knowledge and know-how, both enabling the student to complete the development of his Personality; in the course of the second Birth the perfected Personality is intimately united with the real I, thus giving birth to an Individuality which then enters upon the Way, properly speaking.

We see that this definition covers a portion only of the Way, - in its broad sense - namely the Path of Access. For the seeker, this portion is, however, the most important; for his warfare against Death ends at this stage with a Victory.

We can also say that this Victory consists of the absorption by the higher emotive centre of the magnetic centre, which itself absorbs the lower emotive centre, after having regulated and balanced the three centres of the Personality.

After that Victory, the ulterior part of the Way - the Way properly speaking - involves work of an utterly different kind, exempt from the influence and domination of Death, or of any of its accompanying phenomena.

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The complete Way is divided into seven sections, placed between three Thresholds. According to the Gospel it leads from Death to Life.

The Way is conceived in conformity to the Law of seven and leads through ten stages, from external life to the third Threshold - the limit of evolution for terrestrial man. Each of these stages can only be crossed by man after great efforts, focused on a creative work which has been designed in accordance with the Law of Three.

If we revert again to the terminology of the primitive Church, we see that three steps can be distinguished between the ten stages:

The Catechumen

(paths) - The one who has discerned "B" influences and has already created within himself an embryo of the magnetic centre;

The Faithfull

(Paths of Access) - The seeker who, having crossed the first Threshold, progresses towards the second Threshold;

The Christian

(the Way) - The one who, having crossed the second Threshold, evolves towards the third Threshold.

To follow the Way is the implementation of esoterism. Let us recall that this notion applies⁶ to the catechumen, the faithful and the Christian - in the sense attributed to these terms by the primitive Church - who pursue their individual evolution. Degrees are distinguished and represented by three concentric circles surrounded by an area symbolizing the wilderness or external life. This is shown in the following diagram⁷:

⁶ Cf. Ch. VT, p. 71 and Fig. 18.

⁷ The areas which have just been characterized should not be confused with the Church's hierarchy which includes – or ought to comprise - seven degrees: 1 - Apostle; 2 - Prophet; 3 – Head of Church (also called Father of Church); 4 - Bishop; 5 – Presbyter (priest); 6 - Deacon; 7 - Faithful.

Fig. 56

- 0 - the outside, the wilderness, the area where we find the man without;
- I - Exoterism, the area of the catechumen
- II - Mesoterism, the area of the faithful
- III - Esoterism, properly speaking, the area of the Christian, the inward man

In turn the last zone is divided into three concentric circles, dealing respectively with men 5, 6 and, in the middle, men 7.

The following diagram figures the whole of the Way:

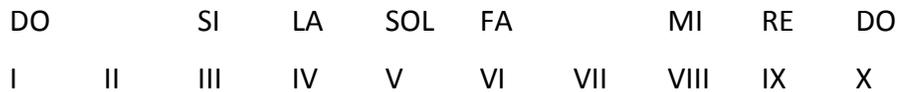


Fig. 57

In this diagram, the Way appears as a scale which goes from DO to DO and forms an octave. Intervals between DO and SI, FA and MI, as well as between DO and SI of the consecutive octave, symbolize the three Thresholds.

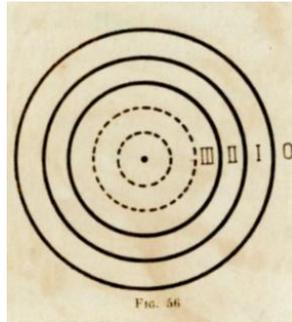
Let us now comment on the ten stages as shown in the diagram.



First stage

The space to the left of the first Threshold represents external life, characterized by the state of anarchy prevailing in the three centres of the Personality. A precise and accurate discrimination between "A" and "B" influences gives rise to an embryo of the magnetic centre. Under the latter's influence, the seeker is attracted towards the first Threshold.





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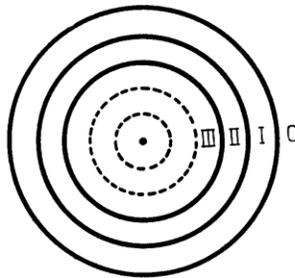


FIG. 56

- 0 — The exterior, the brush, the zone of exterior man;
- I — Exoterism, zone of the Catechumens;
- II — Mesoterism, zone of the Faithful;
- III — Esoterism properly speaking, zone of the Christians, the interior men.

Fig. 56

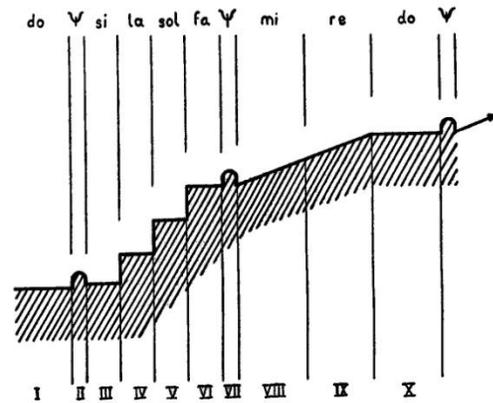
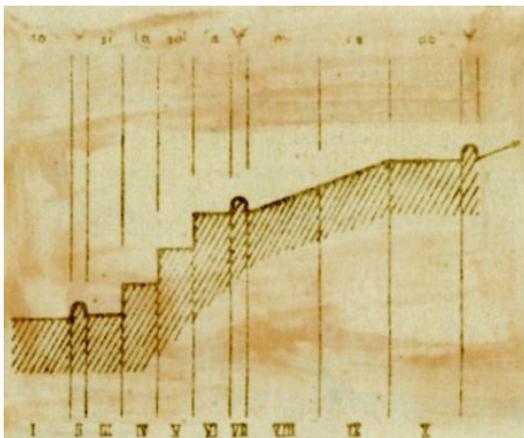


FIG. 57

The original figure is too blurred

Fig. 57

Second stage

When he has reached that point, man engages on a path. He sees "life" face to face: his own life together with its soluble and insoluble problems.

This represents his first esoteric trial. This trial involves a general re-assessment of his values, the result of which depends on the amount of objectivity and endurance displayed in so doing. In the course of this re-assessment of values, conscious efforts over ourselves must be made in order not to lie to ourselves, nor to "tack about". We must examine and analyse those around us, face facts and estimate them at their true value, without compromise or pity for ourselves or for others. Of course we must keep to ourselves the results of this re-appraisal.

This being done, we should draw conclusions. Is our interest in external life — exclusively governed by "A" factors — fading, and in what measure? Is the centre of gravity of our Personality moving towards the magnetic centre? Is this what we are really concentrating on?

It is now that we have to make our choice.

It is better to retreat before crossing the first Threshold than to want later on to go back to the area of bourgeois happiness. The Way is a one-way road. After the first Threshold, one possibility only arises: either to progress on the Way or to fail. Yet to regain our prior state is henceforth an impossibility. If the magnetic centre is pure and firm enough a man of "C" influences appears (Fig. 20). The first Threshold is crossed under his guidance.

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Third stage

The first Threshold having been crossed, a link is established in the chain of esoteric influences. The catechumen having become a faithful is saved by hope⁸.

⁸ Romans, VIII, 24.

However his content differs very little from what it was formerly. The sum of conscious efforts which he furnished enabled him to cross the Threshold, and this has represented a great step forward. But the sincere desire to quit external life - which impelled him to cross - is not in itself sufficient to free him from the "A" influences.

The one who has reached the note SI, on the other side of the Threshold, is confronted with mesoteric work. He should firmly stand on this note and face what lies before him. For no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God⁹. In the note SI, each disciple is entrusted with the task of scrutinizing carefully the film of his life in order to obtain the following twofold result:

- to establish an objective discrimination between permanent, eternal elements and temporal, karmic elements, in so far as he is capable of this at that stage of his evolution;
- with the help of this discrimination, to stimulate his own eager desire to reach and cross the second Threshold.

The force of his desire and the firmness of his decision are the only tokens of success. That is why the disciple should attach a particular importance to the work required by the note SI of the Way. This is even more important for him as the note's duration is short: it consists of a semi-tone.

Before the first Threshold man is requested to ascertain his attitude in the face of external life in general. But when he has crossed the Threshold, he must no longer take, as an objective, life with its sequence of illusions, but the film of his own life.

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Fourth, fifth and sixth stages

These correspond to three notes: LA, SOL and FA of the Way which, together with the note SI, form the Path of Access to the Way

⁹ Luke, IX, 62.

properly speaking.

This stage, including the note SI, is represented by a Stairway that man must climb (cf. Chapter XV, p. 172).

This esoteric Staircase has a peculiarity which should be borne in mind. To stand indefinitely on such or such step is an impossibility. For after a given period of time - which is largely sufficient to fulfil the task necessitated by the note concerned - the step breaks down.

In the course of his evolution in the notes LA, SOL and FA, the faithful - climbing the Stairway step by step - is entrusted with the following task:

- in the note LA - to make his Personality grow to its limit;
- in the note SOL - to develop it;
- in the note FA - to balance the three lower centres by replacing the mechanical links between them by conscious links uniting each centre with the magnetic centre, which henceforth establishes its authority over the lower centres.

And so, as he climbs the Stairway, the faithful, starting from note SI, goes through the notes LA and SOL, and reaches the note FA. In fulfilling the task which has been assigned to this particular note, he becomes man 4.

His inner core - the embryonic expression of the consciousness of his real I - will act in lieu of Ethics, which has been abolished. The radiations emanating from his real I will penetrate more and more, through the magnetic centre, the whole of the seeker's Personality.

However, we should note that man 4 remains under different aspects a man without. He is still mortal, yet ready to cross the second Threshold, beyond which starts the Way properly speaking, sheltered both from "A" influences and the Law of Accident.

Having reached this stage, the disciple becomes a man of "C" influences (Fig. 20).

We should never lose sight of the fact that everything which is done by man is imperfect. Theoretically, when the note FA is fully sounded, man 4 should already have an absolute mastery over himself, the growth and development of his Personality having reached their limits. Were this really the case, the absorption of the lower emotive centre by the magnetic centre would take place in a state of great happiness. This rarely occurs. For man, who is always and everywhere late, is generally not in time to carry out fully the task ascribed to each step of the Staircase. As the deadline assigned to the appointed work on each step is limited, man is obliged, for fear of failure, to pass on to the following step, sometimes dragging behind him a great part of his karmic burden.

This is permissible provided that an absolute purification occurs at the note FA.

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Seventh stage

Having crossed the first Threshold, the catechumen is brought face to face with "life". Having reached the second Threshold, he is confronted with himself.

In other words, he sees both the whole and every detail of his Personality. He will apprehend all the results of his Karma, including the distortions they have brought about in his being, in particular those distortions caused by hypocrisy vis-à-vis himself, and lying to himself. Those are the most difficult elements to observe and, consequently, to neutralize.

This is his second great trial.

For the first time in life, he sees himself objectively, such as he is, without make-up, without tolerance or compromise and without any possibility of evasion.

For the just man, this trial is a source of unspeakable joy, and seems to him like the first bright light of dawn.

For the unjust man — and this is the general case — the vision of himself is terrifying.

A perfect equilibrium of the Personality can be attained only when the karmic consequences have been completely neutralized; and it may be that the one who aspires to be freed, though being of good faith, cannot always appreciate the nature or the importance of these consequences. Born in sin, it may seem to him — and often, in fact, does — that some of the aspects of his Karma are human and normal.

Before the second Threshold, everything which has been learned mechanically loses its force; all buffers, every self-tranquilizing apparatus have to be broken and rejected. Debts must be paid, but in good currency.

Meanwhile, the faithful should get rid of his illusory, imaginary duties which, at times, assume a hypnotic force and to which being human, he attaches great importance.

Confrontation with oneself generally takes on a dramatic aspect as a function of the karmic burden which everybody has to bear. But this is unavoidable.

Man should then proceed to make an inventory of his entire psychic baggage, as the greater part of it had hitherto been outside his field of observation, being stored somewhere in the archives of his subconsciousness. He will be surprised to observe what the latter contains, maybe some traces of heroic actions, but also perhaps of the filthiest crimes.

If he flees from this monster, in which he should recognize himself, this will mean a fall, entailing the worst risks.

Man's attitude should be offensive. Then his Personality-monster will give way. And man will become master of himself. This is the consecration of the stage as shown in diagram 57.

This moment is of decisive importance. Henceforth, man fortified by his victory will be called upon to transfigure his

Personality and convey to it the image of radiant beauty. In the traditional language, it is said that, this is the time when the betrothed is adorned with her wedding gown.

Then Christ's Betrothed is ready to welcome her Fiancé.

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With the crossing of the second Threshold, the Personality, developed and harmonized, is born. It is the second Birth, analogous in every way to the birth of the physical body. It goes through similar stages. Doctrine has established between both processes a searching parallel enabling disciple and master to control the regularity of evolution. The Invisible Warfare, a treaty of Nicodemus the Hagiorite contains in this connexion one of the best descriptions ever given.

Having crossed the second Threshold, the Personality unites with the real I. The provisional I, not destroyed but fully developed is joined for ever with the real I: as a result man 4 becomes man 5.

This indissoluble union forms an Individuality. It is from this moment onwards that man really exists, that he is; and it is at this moment only that he feels entitled to say with certainty that he is happy to be born.

For the experience, recommenced so many times has finally succeeded.

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Three states, analogous to the three states of matter, are discernible in the human Personality.

Before the first Threshold, the I of the Personality is in a solid state. By this is meant that the "molecular" forces of attraction prevail over the centrifugal ones. Psychically, this state may be characterized by selfishness: each and everything for oneself. Man can understand nobody while in this solid state. In certain cases

where he is as hard as iron - cases which, it is true, happen rarely - man is persuaded that he is always right; he therefore attributes his failures to others or to "accidents". He is sure of himself.

However, having reached the first Threshold, the seeker is no longer in a solid state, for he no longer believes in the absolute value of the "A" influences. - He should already have felt doubts when he became aware of the existence of the "B" influences and had begun to discern them -. Now at this stage, he loses solidity and becomes malleable.

As a result of the work carried on between the first and the second Threshold, the psychic I gets more and more docile until it liquefies, at the note FA. As physical liquids are characterized by the faculty of taking the form of containers, similarly the liquid mind is capable of comprehending others like itself, by assuming their shape. Everyday language refers to this state by the expression "open mind".

After the second Threshold, man 4, having become man 5, acquires a gazeous psychic state penetrating everything and enabling him to understand every being and each and sundry.

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Eighth, ninth and tenth stages

After the second Threshold begins the Way properly speaking. It is subdivided into three parts taking place respectively at the notes MI, RE and DO.

In the note MI - the eighth stage - the inward man enters the upper zone of esoteric teaching. At this point he is under the obligation to teach others. In so doing, he acquires new faculties corresponding to the peculiarities of his Individuality. Those are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as quoted from Saint Paul¹⁰.

At this stage, man seen from the bottom is considered as a

¹⁰ I Corinthians, XIV, 1.

master; seen from the top, he becomes an assistant.

The first new basic faculty — common to all Individualities and which develops along the stages MI and RE — is an aptitude to distinguish spontaneously the true from the false.

In the Cycle of the Holy Spirit this aptitude will also belong to the new man as a distinctive mark.

At the following degree — the ninth stage — placed under the guidance of the note RE, man 5, having acquired the new faculties which correspond to his Individuality develops them to their integral expression. He thus accedes to Consciousness which makes itself manifest in him through his higher intellectual centre, via the higher emotive centre.

As a consequence he becomes man 6.

During the tenth stage — the last part of the Way — man 6 becomes man 7, this stage being characterized by a consecration of the results achieved.

It is a baptism with the Holy Spirit and with Fire¹¹. Jesus said: I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?¹²

This consecration comes as a result of a sublimation of the sexual instinct. Thus the circle comes to a close. For every living manifestation starts with a sexual act; at the end of the cycle, the activity of the sexual centre makes itself manifest anew, but on an upper level, that of the higher centres, a plane to which it belongs by nature.

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During its early stages, esoteric work assumes above all a

¹¹ Matthew, III, 11; Mark, I, 8; Luke, III, 16; Acts, I, 5; II 2-4.

¹² Luke, XII, 49. Quoted from Slavonic text. In the Hindu Tradition, the same phenomenon is described by the descent upon the Yoghi — who has reached the desired state of perfection — of dharma megha, or cloud of virtue.

negative aspect in the sense that man tries to get rid of whatever is an obstacle to his evolution. Conversely, evolution on the Way, from the second Threshold onwards — during the eighth and ninth stages — brings only enrichment and the acquisition of new qualities, derived from work carried out conjunctly with esoteric work properly speaking. These stages are not subject to the Law of Accident. But a fall is always possible.

It is only after the consecration by Fire and Spirit — which occurs at the tenth stage — that man 7, the accomplished or perfect man, according to the terminology of Saint Paul, is certain to make no more mistakes, and therefore to undergo no more falls.

He has by now gained possession of his real I, of Consciousness and of Will-power.

At this point of evolution he has reached the third Threshold. This is the end of all possible evolution for the terrestrial man, belonging to the Tritocosmos. Ulterior evolution is of course possible. He may become man 8 or 9. However the domain of the Deutercosmos begins only beyond the third Threshold.

Owing to the extreme slowness of mankind's moral evolution, men 5, 6 and 7 generally continue to work in the midst of human society.

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Weak, pitiful, but greedy and cruel, the man without always attributes to others or to circumstances the responsibility of his insuccess. Everybody and everything are at fault, with the exception of himself. In a frenzy of reproachfulness, men have even blamed Jesus of Nazareth for not having effectively saved mankind ...

We can buy food for others; prepare a meal and serve it. We can cut it up; it is even conceivable that the food be put in someone's mouth as in the case of a child or a sick person. But at this point everybody must make an individual effort to swallow the

food; nobody else can do it.

It is true that the General Law holds man in his place; if he moves, it prevents him from moving forward or from raising himself. The same law also makes him die. But man should not forget that this law has brought him into existence and enables him to live. It grants him at least thrice the necessary time to reach a complete development of his Personality and to accede again, through the second Birth, to his real I; and then, after having crossed the second Threshold to enter upon the upper part of the Way.

The Apostle Saint Paul says: when I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things¹³.

From the esoteric point of view, the man without is a child. And in most cases a wicked child. He will become adult only when he has climbed the Staircase and crossed the second Threshold. Then he will put away childish things.

Until then, the reply made by the Pythian to Socrates: know thyself remains the watchword of the student who, having crossed the first Threshold, engages on the Path of Access.

He should not forget, when entering upon it, that this is a one-way road and that he will be confronted with the alternative of either a striking success or a formidable fall.

¹³ I Corinthians, XIII, 11.

CHAPTER XXI

In the preamble to the present volume we stated that esoteric studies help us to grasp the significance of men's and human society's present evolution; and this fact also explains the growing interest shown by cultivated circles in such studies, in particular by those who are searching for explanations and remedies to the contradictions of contemporary life whose manifestations and effects are on the increase and weigh more and more heavily upon man's destiny.

A Period of transition usually gives rise to unrest and insecurity. Sunrise is always preceded by an intensification of the coolness of the night. Christ's advent similarly followed a century of civil wars which devastated the antique world.

Man today is well aware of the divergence existing between the huge progress in technique and an evident moral deficiency in mankind. Whereas on the material level, life has advanced at an accelerated pace as a function of the political, social and industrial Revolution which has taken place since 1789, on the moral plane, man has made no striking progress. He is thus under the absolute necessity of proceeding, as early as possible, to an inner revolution, to a transformation of his being in order to reinstate the equilibrium, now dangerously compromised, between the technical and moral planes.

Every thinking person today feels unhappy: for, while his power to act is weak, an accrued sensitiveness renders his desires more and more demanding and refined. So much so that man sees his aspirations wither up before they can come to fruition.

There is no reason to hope that the present situation will right itself automatically. On the contrary, the faster the progress in technique, the wider the gap between contemporary man's desires and his ability to satisfy them. This contradiction may be observed on all levels. For instance, fifteen years after the second world war, the world has not yet succeeded in disentangling itself from a situation

which is neither war nor peace; in itself alone, this fact is an eloquent demonstration of the impotence of the responsible ruling class. This applies to every sphere.

In order to restore the situation and be able to meet the requirements imposed by the march of Time, man should now discover a new source of moral energy, as he similarly discovered new sources of physical energy, through the industrial revolution; e.g. steam, electricity and the atom.

As pointed out, the solution to the problem lies in the formation of a new ruling elite, within whom moral faculties, hitherto latent, will have been developed and cultivated. These faculties, which will characterize the new man, will enable him to outrival both intellectuals and technicians, just as the latter had superseded in the Middle Ages the ecclesiastics and the knights.

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General ideas with regard to the psychic structure of the man without, his position within the Universe, and in relation to organic life upon Earth, have already been set forth. And the possibilities, under certain conditions, of a psychic and progressive development giving access to the upper planes of Consciousness have also been examined.

Knowledge, understanding and know-how, necessary to reach this objective, have been preserved throughout the centuries, in particular in oriental Orthodoxy. This triad covers the whole of the Way, the content of which has been analysed in detail. Concerning exercises, the necessary indications have been given to enable those students who wish to enrich and quicken their theoretical knowledge to start on practical work. In the course of centuries, when the flame of primitive christianity had died down, esoteric work — with a few exceptions — was carried on, as it were, by candle light, i.e. individually in the world or in monasteries. Even when several monks worked under the leadership of a master—Ygoumenon, each one

of them however had his own particular goal and went in pursuit of it alone. But the esoteric work of the monks and anchorites was in the nature of a preliminary effort, their aim being to accumulate on the astral plane the energy necessary to enable mankind to withstand the impact of the great events that would mark the future course of History.

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It is worth noticing that changes in orientation and the advent of a new era - which they implied - have constantly been marked by the active and prominent role played by women in various forms. There is plenty of evidence of this in the Gospels. It was to a woman, the Samaritan, that Jesus at Jacob's well, declared for the first time that He was the Messiah: I that speak unto thee am he¹. It was also to a woman, Mary Magdalene, that Christ appeared after His resurrection when He called her and she recognized Him².

Woman's intervention may be noticed at all critical periods of history.

It is generally agreed that the Middle Ages began during the reign of Justinian the Great. His achievements were strongly influenced by the strong Personality of his wife, the Empress Theodora. She played a role comparable to that of Aspasia at the side of Pericles. By assisting Justinian in those moments of depression - that even the strongest character experiences she enabled him to give the Christian world that extraordinary impulsion which gathered strength during the succeeding centuries. Nor should we forget the fecundating role played by the Ladies at mediaeval courts, nor the way in which the "Dames de la Pensée" were a source of inspiration for their knights.

The periods in the life of human society during which the ennobling role of woman is diminished, are marked by a triviality in morality which is manifested especially by a taste for exaggerated

¹ John, IV, 7-26.

² John, XX, 11-16.

realism. The disappearance of Courts and of the political and literary salons where, up to the XXth century, woman played such an important role, deprives international relations of a positive factor of comprehension, and disposes of the subtlety that is needed to settle political problems.

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Human relations suffer today from a veritable distortion of the prominent role that woman is called to play at man's side: instead of being the active force, an animating and fecund element - man's complement - woman is following a parallel road that bars her from exerting her creative vocation. Such a want of balance will not be allowed to continue during the Cycle of the Holy Spirit. The description of the dawning of the era of the Holy Spirit, given by the Apostle Saint Peter contains a precise indication: it is depicted as new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness³.

This text - already quoted - calls for comment from another aspect. In the Cycle of the Father, as in the Cycle of the Son, man identifying himself with the I of his under-developed Personality gets isolated from his real I and no longer lives within the Lord. In other words, he abides in the state of fall, which arose as the consequence of original sin. He mistakes Illusion for the Real. Such an identification with the I of the Personality has destroyed for thousands of years the once indissoluble unity of consciousness of polar beings - man and woman - who together formed a single Being, endowed with the unique consciousness of their real Self, a Being described in the myth of the Androgynous.

The I of the Personality, incomplete, powerless, roams about in life without faith nor true affection; it errs continuously, fails and lapses again into failure, utters lies and lives in falsehood. As a prisoner - voluntary perhaps, but still a prisoner - man

³ II Peter, III, 13.

does not do in life what he wants, but what he hates⁴ in submitting blindly to the devilish mechanism which governs his life in this triple aspect of fear, hunger and sexuality⁵. This purely illusory existence contains nothing real except a possibility for evolution which remains hidden and is the object of esoteric studies and work. With the exception of that seed, everything in external life is based on lying. Now nothing false will resist the vivifying atmosphere of the new heavens and the new earth which have been foretold for the coming era. Above all, lying - which dominates the relations between man and woman and whose less reprehensible form is Illusion - will disappear.

If the loneliness of polar beings, disunited by the fall - which arose as a direct result of their identification with the I of the Personality - is the source of the weakness of humans who have become mortal, a return to Unity should prove an inextinguishable source of new energies. Those are necessary for man; he should seek to acquire them and, with their help, try to re-establish the equilibrium in public and private life which is today dangerously compromised.

Such return to the perfect unity of polar beings cannot be carried out without effort. This road is the reward of those who have crossed or are about to cross the second Threshold of the Way. Original sin may - and should - be redeemed by the achievement of a complete and indissoluble unity of their Real I by two polar Individualities, after their second Birth. In this lies the solution to the problem of private, and at the same time, of public life. And it is the peace of the Lord⁶.

What is the real I, Soul of our soul, core of our Individuality, but a divine spark, a particle of Christ's body? It is in this

⁴ Romans, VII, 15.

⁵ Cf. Chapter VIII, p. 89-90 English text; p. 91 French text.

⁶ John, XIV, 27.

way that we should understand the meaning of the text of Saint Paul quoted in the Introduction to the present volume: neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord⁷. And he adds: for as the woman is of the man even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God⁸.

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Such is the solution to the problem raised at the beginning of this Chapter, i.e. to look for a new source of moral energy. Application of the positive method used in esoteric studies has enabled us to find it. But it can also be found out by means of the negative method dealt with in Chapter XVII, p. 211-212 (English text; p.199 French text).

As an under-developed Personality, the man without has a field of research and activity bounded by the faculties of his three lower centres.

The motory centre — which is already active in the spermatozoon — is highly developed within man. This development may be increased far more, even above the level which is considered normal. For instance, we can raise the level of instinctive life to that of waking-consciousness and, in this way, establish a control over certain physiological processes. If correctly conducted, that intervention in the domain of instinctive life may improve health and prolong life. But the effects stop at that point. A development of the possibilities of the motory centre to provides with a healthy and strong body; it does not however give rise to a new source of moral energy. Moreover, no attention is paid to a perfect development of the motory centre in our civilization. We live in a body which is imperfect, sickly and grows old, almost as soon as it has finished growing. Man makes no endeavour to combat those inconveniences by natural processes. He passively submits to them as though unavoidable.

⁷ I Corinthians, XI, 11.

⁸ Ibid. 12.

Contemporary man focuses his efforts on the development and formation of his intellectual centre. Everything is organized with a view to perfecting this centre methodically, sector by sector. Elementary teaching whose aim is to provide man with a working tool applies especially to the motory sector of the intellectual centre. Secondary schooling which tries to impart to the student the substance of a general culture lays special stress on the development of the emotive sector of the intellectual centre, whose action is then added to that of the motory sector of the same centre. The purpose of higher education is to give the student a specialized knowledge, which is acquired primarily by developing the intellectual sector of the intellectual centre. As a consequence, man becomes what we call an intellectual. Yet, the resources of the intellectual centre - which enable man to perform miracles in the field of positive science - whether pure or applied - remain within these limits. Kant and Virchow have demonstrated in their works that the field of activity open to human intellect is so to speak surrounded by an impenetrable barrier.

We shall now briefly examine the position of the emotive centre. Curiously enough, we see that in our civilization, both its growth and development are left to chance. Emotive life - deprived of a methodical education - is for man a source of unforeseeable events, rarely agreeable, even more rarely happy and whose consequences in general weigh heavily upon him. Owing to the absence of a compulsory emotive formation, as is the case in the intellectual sphere, the emotive formation of the man without, underdeveloped and neglected, undergoes the influence of the other centres: motory, intellectual, and lastly sexual. It would be no exaggeration to say that the position of the emotive centre in man's psychic life is tantamount to that of a poor relation. Yet it is only an appropriate development of that centre that will provide man with a new source from which to draw the moral energy he so badly needs.

To achieve this, mastery over the sexual centre and training the emotive centre are among the main objectives of esoteric work.

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Before going into a deeper examination of the problem of evolution and of its conditions, there is an important recommendation to which the student should adhere as from the beginning of the work up to the second Birth. It concerns one of the Golden rules of Tradition: man has to combine the work of his intellectual and emotive centres. He should proceed as follows:

If the question to be studied and solved is of an intellectual order, then after it has been elucidated by his intellectual centre, and before he reaches a conclusion or takes a definitive decision which prompts him to action, man should consult his emotive centre. Conversely, man should not act under impulses or influences emanating exclusively from his emotive centre: here again he should act only after having consulted his intellectual centre.

In general, man should develop his capacity of understanding every phenomenon and every problem of the external world, as well as of his inner world, by a simultaneous use of both emotive and intellectual centres.

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The natural growth of the Personality ceases long before it is completed. The individual limit depends on a series of factors among which may be cited: civilization, race, caste, family and social environment, lastly upbringing and instruction.

The development of the Personality beyond that limit can never occur except as a result of conscious and assiduous efforts. The only things that man brings with him at birth are predispositions, in other words, talents. With the growth of his Personality, those predispositions disclose themselves. But that is all. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure their development. For the law is formal: talents will be taken away from the one who does not develop them⁹.

In general we try to develop our talents by means of instruction. And as long as studies or research work last, the Personality continues to grow, yet often in a way which is not very

⁹ Matthew, XXV, 14-30; Mark, IV, 25; Luke, XIX, 26.

harmonious. As soon as our studies or researches come to an end, and when we begin to implement our acquired knowledge mechanically, the growth of our Personality stops.

The most important and difficult part of the Way to be crossed is the Staircase, called also the Path of Access, which leads man to the level of man 4¹⁰. Efforts made by the student to ascend it should become the main goal of his life. Esoteric work must become the axis of his existence around which will henceforth rotate the inner and external circumstances of his life.

We should not be frightened by this categorical imperative. But we have to know that trials begin at the very first step of the Staircase.

In order to cross the first Threshold man, without looking back¹¹, should successfully pass the first test: i.e. to get inflamed with an eager desire to escape from the empty life in the wilderness (what we call a "choppy sea") and to launch himself into the unknown, in search of a new meaningful and true life.

This desire for transformation - if sustained by sufficient strength and intensity - bridges the gap between the notes DO and SI, the interval which represents the first Threshold; having now arrived at the first step of the Staircase, the seeker establishes himself firmly on it.

The four notes forming the Staircase are linked between themselves by a deep interdependency, for their resonance derives its force from the initial impetus communicated by Desire. If man does not submit his whole life to this initial Desire, if his whole being is not filled with it, it is preferable for him to stop in time and not cross the Threshold. For - let us repeat it - the Way is a one-way road. We now see the full importance of the trial of Desire. According to Tradition, desire should be as strong as thirst.

¹⁰ Cf. Chapter XV, p. 178, 179, 180; chap. XX, p. 269, 270-273 fig.57 (English text; pp. 170-171 and chap. XX, p. 247-248-249 French text).

¹¹ Luke, IX, 62.

Having reached the first step, man undergoes the trial of Faith. To believe is insufficient: we must have faith. The trial consists in man's having to overcome his fear of "abandoning" himself to Faith. Jesus reassured his flock in that respect: therefore take no thought saying what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you¹².

On the Second step, the trial of Force awaits the one who has set his foot upon the Staircase. The Kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force¹³."

The third step corresponds to the trial of Discernment and ability. To grasp the meaning of that trial we should ponder over the parable of the unjust steward¹⁴, whose meaning seems difficult to grasp. It is a test. The student who succeeds in making its content tally with the phrase Ye cannot serve God and Mammon¹⁵ will be better fitted to resist that trial.

On the fourth step, we must pass the test of Love, of true, vivifying love, a devouring fire, very different from the fire that smoulders under the ashes. We have already shown what real love is when quoting the Apostle Saint Paul¹⁶. This text must be learned by heart. It is like a blazing sword, whose flames burn up every alloy,

¹² Matthew, VI, 31-34.

¹³ Matthew, XI, 12; Luke, XVI, 16. The Slavonic text is: and those who do violence to themselves take it.

¹⁴ Luke, XVI, 1-13.

¹⁵ Matthew, VI, 24; Luke XVI, 13.

¹⁶ I Corinthians, XIII, 4-8; Cf. Chapter XVII, p. 203bis, 204 (English text; pp. 193 French text).

everything that man mistakes in himself, or vis-à-vis himself, for love and which is not love at all. If we bear these words in mind, we shall be able to judge instantly every impulse coming from our hearts and to know whether or not it contains traces of true love.

This trial over, man is filled with pure Love only, which contains the elements of transfigured Desire, Faith, Force and Discernment¹⁷.

This enables us to understand why the trial on the fourth step is of a decisive nature. Until then, man may carry — and usually does — burdens of his past: lying, failures, pity for himself, inner compromises. Generally he has time and opportunities to get rid of these blemishes before entering upon the fourth step; but owing to the weight of his past, he loses time and allows at least some of these opportunities to escape. On the fourth step, a total balance-sheet should be drawn up, together with a settlement of accounts. At the second Threshold man, poor and naked, is accepted on condition however, that he be intact and pure. What is essential is that he should be filled with true Love; for everything which is false within him will be burnt by the flames of the blazing sword.

It should be noted that these trials happen at the same time and on all the steps of the Staircase. All trials are marked by Desire, but they are unevenly divided according to the particularities of the Personality of each student. An accent is placed on each step which makes the whole series chime with corresponding note: at first SI, then LA, SOL and FA.

To study more thoroughly the elements of the seeker's progression along the Staircases — which, considered from a personal aspect, constitutes the film of life — it may not be superfluous to examine again the doctrine of Karma.

¹⁷ Romans, XIII, 10.

The karmic law, derived from the principle of Equilibrium has been defined by the Apostle Saint Paul in the Tradition as follows: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap¹⁸. We should also recall the words used by Jesus to warn us in respect of Karma and to indicate the attitude which should be adopted to counterbalance this law. Agree, He says, with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge and the judge deliver thee to the officer¹⁹ and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee; thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou has paid the uttermost farthing²⁰.

In many respects, man lives on credit in external life; in addition he does violence to others. Unconsciously, he bears with him a moral burden resulting from unpaid debts and transgressions of the principle of Equilibrium. All debts should be paid in full, and all karmic consequences neutralized before reaching the second Threshold.

Karmic action occurs mechanically; in each case it tends to re-establish automatically an equilibrium broken by man's free movements. Consequently Karma operates in a compensatory way, applying, not to the whole, but to each sector of man's activities.

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When ascending the Staircase in view of reaching and crossing the second Threshold, man assumes vis-à-vis himself a new attitude: he takes his destiny in his own hands.

This task is painful and delicate. For man does not live in a vacuum, but in everyday circumstances and surrounded by neighbours. To take one's destiny in hand presupposes and necessitates that man adopts a sensible and conscious attitude excluding impulsive and simplified decisions concerning those around him.

¹⁸ Galatians, VI, 7.

¹⁹ Tormentor, in the Slavonic text.

²⁰ Matthew, V, 25-26; Luke, XII, 58-59.

Problems which confront us generally appear insoluble. Yet they must be solved. From the esoteric point of view however, a solution is positive only if every person in our entourage is given his due²¹, in accordance with the importance of his role. In this connexion, we should act in conformity with the indications given by Jesus and quoted above.

To adhere to these principles is no easy task, but it is possible, provided that man ceases from lying to himself and no longer harbours in his heart any traces of hypocrisy and cheating.

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Man's life is like a film. It is difficult of course for our Cartesian mind to admit this conception. Our three-dimensional mind is ill-adapted to ideas and facts relating to the sphere of the eternal.

But, however incomprehensible it may appear, our life is a true film conceived according to a scenario. This film turns "in permanence" and ceaselessly. So much so that at his death, man is born again and — absurd though it may seem — is born at the same place, and on the same date, as when he was first born, and to the same parents. And his film starts to turn again.

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And so each human being is born with his own personal film, representing the field of activity to which he is destined to apply his conscious attention. Although the two conceptions are often confused, a repetition of the film by no means implies a reincarnation. For reasons already exposed, the man without — who lives under the regime of Future-Past — cannot take in the whole of his film, not even the part including the immediate future. To do so, man should enlarge the fissure of his Present. Sometimes, however, when confronted with certain events, he has the impression of something

²¹ Cf. Chapter XI. p. p. 125-126 (English text; p. 124 French text).

already seen or experienced. Some persons find in this proof of so-called reincarnation. In fact, such phenomena result from an accidental and temporary influx of refined energies into the organism, which enlarge for a moment the fissure of the individual Present; salient facts of the immediate future then slip into man's waking-consciousness, thus giving rise to the impression that the past is repeating itself.

In a way, this is what happens; but this impression of something already experienced is caused only by the mechanical unfolding of the film. By reincarnation is meant a phenomenon of an utterly different kind. Whereas the theoretical film revolves entirely on the plane of possibilities, i.e. in eternity, the film of the man without falls within the plane of realizations, therefore within Time; but only to the extent strictly necessary to fulfil the purpose of the Ray of Creation. Now true reincarnation takes place entirely within Time and generally belongs to the sphere of the Real - this of course occurring within the general framework of the Manifestation. We have stressed the fact that the human Personality is not a reality in the proper sense of the word, but a possibility. It is in such a capacity that the Personality appears in the film with which it is linked; it will disappear only at the time of the second Birth. But it will then have ceased to be a Personality, for owing to its indissoluble junction with the Real I, it becomes transfigured and passes into Individuality.

As long as man lives in the wilderness, immersed in illusions and lying, satisfied with himself, his film unwinds with a rigorous automatism. And the Personality remains equal to itself. Circumstances begin to change when man crosses the first Threshold. This passage may be compared to the conception of the future Individuality. The Staircase symbolizes the period of pregnancy, and the passage of the second Threshold represents the second Birth, that of the Individuality. In the course of its ulterior development - corresponding to the notes MI and RE of the Way — the Individuality

tends more and more to integrate itself into the upper cosmos. By acquiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit which respond to its nature, the Individuality participates progressively in real, objective existence, which finally will characterize its being. This is Salvation, i.e. liberation from the grip of the film.

It is only when that point of evolution is reached that a true individual reincarnation becomes possible; it is by no means a mechanical process, but the result of a conscious action, generally in order to fulfil a mission.

One example of reincarnation is given in the Gospels. In the conversation Jesus had with Peter, James and John, whilst descending the Mount after the Transfiguration, his disciples asked Him: Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?²² And Jesus answered and said unto them: Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already and they knew him not but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist²³.

And elsewhere, speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus is categorical: And if ye will receive it this is Elias which was for to come. And also: he that hath ears to hear let him hear²⁴.

It is important indeed to understand clearly the difference between the film — the domain of possibilities — and reincarnation within Time, which belongs to the sphere of the Real. At the second Birth, i.e. when crossing the second Threshold, man escapes from the grip of his film and enters the domain of redemption. He thus gains admittance to the Sacred Brotherhood of Living Beings, called by Tradition: the great esoteric Brotherhood. The Apostle Saint Paul says: and we know that all things work together for good to them

²² Malachie, IV, 5.

²³ Matthew, XVII, 10-13; Mark, IX, 13.

²⁴ Matthew XI, 14.

that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the first-born among many brethren²⁵.

The great esoteric Brotherhood is an unshakable power; those who participate in it are no longer subject to sickness nor to sorrow, and Death loses its grip over them. For at this level, and following the example of the Lord, they also have overcome the world²⁶.

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The film, in which man is born and lives, may in principle go on turning till the end of the world, provided that man finds himself happy therein, satisfied with himself, claiming to possess every virtue and blaming others for his mistakes and misfortunes. Such an existence cannot be considered as being, properly speaking, human; we have referred to it by the term of "anthropoid". This is justified in the sense that the man without, immersed in self-sufficiency, represents the end-product of the age-old evolution of his species starting from his animal ancestors, whereas, from the point of view of esoteric evolution, he is nothing but a possibility as yet unrealized.

If the problem of esoteric evolution is envisaged from the angle of the film and the different positions that man may assume therein it is obvious that such an evolution is impossible as long as the film may be considered for all practical purposes as always turning within the same circle. The personages are those we have called anthropoid, mere puppets or, according to Jesus' word, persons who are dead but who believe themselves to be alive²⁷.

²⁵ Romans, VIII, 28-29.

²⁶ John, XVI, 33.

²⁷ Matthew, VIII, 22; Revelation, III, 1.

Esoteric evolution begins when man, by his conscious efforts, has proved himself capable of breaking the circle to transform it into an ascending spiral.

Fig. 58

The spiral curve represents an intermediary state between the position in which the human Personality finds itself in the film which turns mechanically, scarcely separated from the plane of the eternal, and the position of the Individuality, perfect, free and capable, if necessary, of reincarnating itself consciously within Time.

This state is intermediary in the sense that the film henceforth moves clearly away from the plane of the eternal, in other words the plane of possibilities. The curve of life which, for the man without, does not differ in fact from the circle, is transformed into a spiral, and no longer ends, as previously, almost at its point of departure; the gap between these two points indicates a clear cut progression within Time. The film in the shape of a spiral is the attribute of men ascending the Staircase. We have seen that a complete detachment from the film arises only when crossing the second Threshold. If man reaches this state in the course of a single life and breaks the circle the first time, he will not come back to it. Such a case occurs very seldom: it is the attribute of the just. Generally, to achieve this detachment requires several lives, in other words several revolutions of the spiral.

As a rule, each revolution takes place within Time and, consequently, may appear as a reincarnation. In fact, it is only a return to external life. This pseudo-reincarnation is neither conscious nor personal: it is the team composed of the participants in the film that comes back, although they have no recollection of their former experiences.

However a change is possible as soon as man's conscious

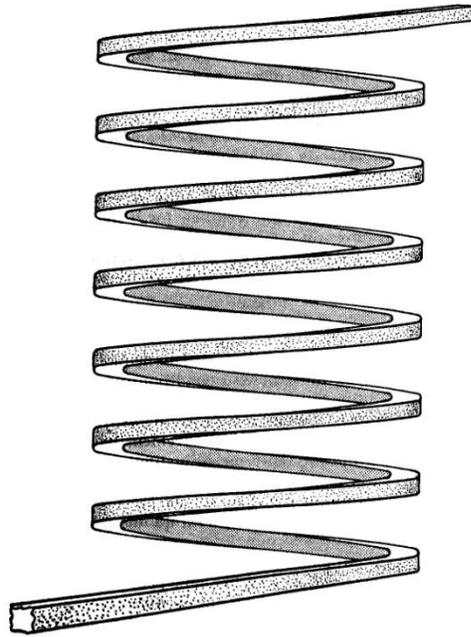


Fig. 58

The original is too blurred.

efforts tend to increase the importance of the Time factor through an enlargement of his perception of the Present.

In a film which unfolds in this way following the curves of a spiral, the subject-matter of the play changes in two ways: first of all in the course of a lifetime, i.e. during one revolution; and then from curve to curve. The composition of the team, circumstances and scenery are transformed. Two elements, however, remain permanent: first of all the general goal – which is to reach and cross the second Threshold; secondly the fulfilment of the precondition necessary to cross this Threshold, according to which all karmic burdens which have been accumulated both in present life and in the course of former curves, should be neutralized and got rid of. Every drama, says Tradition, should be played out to its denouement, before reaching the second Threshold.

This work is hard and difficult, because man is constantly making mistakes. The attentive reader has understood that to move along a spiral or to climb the Staircase is reserved to men who have already absorbed a certain amount of "B" influences, and possess a more or less developed magnetic centre. But we have to stress the fact that this state by no means rules out the possibility of error. It is true that as soon as man has set foot on the Staircase he is under observation – especially if he is sincere and works hard: he is helped by the great esoteric Brotherhood. Certain encounters, a series of favourable circumstances are the means by which this assistance is offered. This does not imply that man is dispensed from working and from making conscious efforts. Moreover, it must be said that very often the proffered help is ignored, either because man is deaf to the advice given him, or because he fails to grasp the significance of the favourable circumstances and possibilities of progression which are offered him. Still more than half belonging to the domain of Illusion, man often continues to reach impulsive decisions and turns his back on the desired objective. In most cases, while he succeeds in disengaging himself

from some situations on the level of each curve, he also introduces new complications into the film, in particular in his relationships with those around him. We should therefore understand that, as long as man has not reached and crossed the second Threshold, he has to recommence everything: he will follow again each curve in the wilderness; he will learn how to distinguish "B" influences; and will have to cross the first Threshold and climb the Stairway, step by step. It is true that no conscious effort is wasted but experience acquired along one curve appears in the consecutive curve only in the form of personal, innate aptitudes, or vague recollections concerning the personages of the team.

One of the great obstacles to evolution consists in the fact that generally man thinks of esoteric evolution only when he grows old, having already accumulated in this life a considerable amount of errors and new complications. He often brings on the scene new personages, alien to the deep inner meaning of his life or of the raison d'être of the team. Sometimes he enters into undertakings which bind him closely just when he needs all his liberty of movement to enable him to make up for the time he has lost in various undertakings or for reasons which have no connexion whatsoever with esoteric evolution.

Then, one day he becomes conscious of his situation. Woe to him, if in a panic, he tries forcibly to escape from the shackles with which he has bound himself. For instead of gaining his freedom, - a state to which he aspires - he will only fall into another even more severe and senseless state of slavery, worse than the first. Some indications concerning the attitude which should be adopted by man with regard to those around him have been set forth in Chapter XVI. Let us now try to indicate the measures which might be taken to achieve a solution.

We should know that at the end of a spiral, a comparison is made between the state of the film, such as it was conceived at man's birth, and the state in which it is at his death. A comparative

balance-sheet is drawn-up as in accounting, showing receipts and expenditure, completed by a statement of profit and loss. This balance sheet shows objectively the results of man's past life. It also furnishes basic elements for the composition of the film at the beginning of the next spiral. If in this new experiment, we could avoid the mistakes and entanglements arising out of free movements, esoteric evolution would develop along an ascending, harmonious curve. Generally, this is not the case. As we have just said, man seems to, and in fact, does grasp the idea of evolution after he has complicated the film in which he is now appearing. However, real evolution occurs only on the basis of the original film, i.e. after elimination of all the elements which have been artificially introduced into it. This is conditioned by a return to purity on the part of the centres in particular, the emotive centre, the sole depositary, at least at the beginning, of "B" influences and the seat of the magnetic centre. The heart therefore must be stainless. Otherwise it must be purified, as a pre-condition to success. The object of all the indications contained in Chapter XVII, devoted to a study of lying in all its aspects, was essentially to stress the urgent necessity of purifying the heart and re-educating the emotive centre in a positive sense.

This absolute necessity sheds a light on Jesus' sentence: except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven²⁸.

This verse mainly concerns emotive life. Yet, as from the time of the primitive Church, there was a tendency to interpret that saying of our Lord as a restriction on the development of intellectual life. This a misinterpretation. The reasoning faculty must be developed and sharpened; and the admonition to become as little children concerns the purity of the centres, and does not relate to their rudimentary state. The Apostle Saint Paul makes in this

²⁸ Matthew, XVIII, 3.

connexion a clear cut and unequivocal comment: brethren, he says, be not children in understanding²⁹; howbeit in malice be ye children but in understanding be men³⁰. In correlation with that advice, the Apostle drew his contemporaries' attention to the fact that, already at that period, man was very backward in his evolution. He says: for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of the righteousness³¹.

It is doubtful whether man has made up for his slow start since the Apostle's time. Therefore, if desirous today of obtaining tangible result from the point of view of esoteric evolution, we should lose no time in relinquishing a milk diet and run the risk of adopting that of strong meat.

That is what we are attempting to do now in presenting the Doctrine to the reader in a systematic form, instead of in parables. This corresponds to strong meat: but we still have to give in this form some indications as to the possibility of taking in esoteric work a short-cut leading quickly to the second Threshold. As already pointed out, this possibility is reserved for polar beings, for those couples to which the ancient Tradition referred in the myth of the Androgynous. We shall now examine the problem more closely, both from a theoretical and practical point of view.

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The essential facts of the film of any person's life may, on the basis of the foregoing analysis, be described as follows. The

²⁹ In the Slavonic text: in relation to intelligence.

³⁰ I Corinthians, XIV, 20.

³¹ Hebrews, V, 12-13.

person, as the hero of the romance of his (or her) life is of necessity the principal actor. But he may also enter as a secondary character into the film of persons who play in his own film an accessory role. Thus each film gets involved with other films in which we find the same set of actors but in utterly different situations. In addition, we should distinguish between two categories of players. Some really participate in the cast in which a determined role has been assigned to them, and are linked with the film in an organic way. Others only take part in the film accidentally, as a consequence of the hero's free movements. This complex situation is aggravated by the fact that, among the actors who authentically belong to the film, some play their parts badly, whilst others play roles which are not assigned to them. That is generally what happens. Let us now look more closely into this phenomenon:

The human Personality - as is known - is an organism made up of multiple particles or facets: nine hundred and eighty-seven exactly. In the ideal case, confined to polar beings alone and the only efficient one from an esoteric point of view, the 987 facets of man and woman are strictly polar: this is the case of a husband and wife predestined by their union to create a true couple. Yet the cast includes other personages who are in the film in order to play roles organically linked with that of the hero, and contribute to the dénouement of the film as a whole. They represent soul-friends, soul-brothers, soul-sisters, soul-collaborators, soul-servants, etc. The Personality of each one of them has a certain number of facets, identical with those of the hero in the case of actors of the same sex, and polar with respect to players of the opposite sex. When brothers and sisters are concerned, the number of identical or polar facets may amount to half or even more of the total. A lack of discernment, of sincerity, vis-à-vis ourselves, an innate desire to find a perfect echo to the vibrations of our Soul, and our ensuing impatience, reinforced by the General Law's action, induce us too often to contract unions which can only result in absurd situations. Instead of being on our guard against illusion, and being ready to seek for what we want,

we drift into imperfect unions which are a source of suffering for both partners and children. This kind of union also alters the meaning of the whole film and distorts the personal life of all the actors participating in the drama. Moreover, the esoteric results - anticipated at the beginning of the film - are thus seriously compromised.

Our life, as often as not, resembles a well-conceived theatrical play in which the roles have as it were been upset by someone in quest of the absurd; each one of us is, in fact, this mischievous and burlesque being.

Most of our errors - and the costliest - are committed, either on the matrimonial plane, due to considerations, or on the purely sexual plane, due to a lack of considering. Even beings of good faith are not immune from making errors. To take a brother, or a sister for a husband or wife, especially from the esoteric point of view, creates a very confused situation which gets even more complicated when children are born from such unions.

Life is then characterised by a perpetual compromise with ourselves. Such a situation inevitably has an unfavourable effect on the moral and physical health of the "accidental husband and wife", resulting in an alteration of the intellectual centre brought about by cheating and lying; heart troubles, if the emotive centre is sensitive and still aspires after truth; lastly diseases of obscure origin - including cancer - which attack the body at its weakest points. In any case, such a condition implies of necessity a permanent loss of refined energy which, in turn, provokes an accelerated decay and leads to premature death.

But, however difficult situations caused by our mistakes may be, they should not prevent the student starting on esoteric work from finding in himself the courage to face facts and to look for an appropriate solution. For if the Devil - the General Law - tries to induce us in error again in order to bar the way leading to esoteric evolution, the helpful hand of the Lord, mild and firm at the same time, is always stretched out to assist us. Yet, our too

rationalistic and realistic mind often prevents us from being aware of that helping hand.

We have already pointed to the objective nature of an equitable solution of problems arising out of a situation complicated by our mistakes: gordian knots should not be cut, but unfastened. In this way, the participants bound by the same knot will feel relieved when this situation — which can only cause suffering to all concerned — comes to an end.

If such is the case — that is to say if in fact the situation has been restored for the benefit of all concerned — the original meaning of the film and its normal development are then made clear again.

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Any set of persons in a film who are organically linked together forms a team. In the initial conception of the film, this team, by playing the parts in the participants' life-comedy, must attain the goal which has been assigned to it. This goal differs from those pursued in life under the "A" influences, the agents of the General Law, with a view to developing the Ray of Creation. In the former case the objective attributed to the team always has an esoteric meaning, for although the participating Personalities may vary greatly, they have one thing in common: a genuine desire to get rid of lying and illusions: to escape from the tyranny of the "A" influences; and to attain, in one form or another, the realm of objective existence in which man finds his real I and identifies himself with it.

We should mention here the principal law which governs the formation of such teams. On the human plane, the highest retribution goes to the person who is in command. In esoterism, on the other hand, this retribution is given to those who know best how to serve. Confusion between these two leading conceptions, i.e. between to command and to serve, assumes sometimes a dramatic aspect. It may even be observed among the disciples of Jesus. The question of knowing who,

among them, was the greatest, tormented them. This fact is mentioned more than once in the Gospel³².

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To understand better the whys and wherefores of a team and the kind of mission with which it is entrusted, we should remember the following: the spiral of the film is intermediary between an endless rotation which takes place on the plane of eternity, and the progression within Time of conscious reincarnation.

The more evolved the team, the more important the task allotted to it. History gives examples of team-work in every field: legislative, political, military and religious. Woman's role in teams is particularly striking at the crucial periods of a people's history.

We shall first consider two prominent examples of non-religious teams.

Although legend has deformed the facts of Alexander the Great's life, the available historical data nevertheless enable us to discern the significance of the mission assigned to him. His team - which for the most part his father had already assembled - was to set up a new world, the Hellenistic world, providing a huge audience destined to receive, three centuries later, the message of the Gospel and to become the cradle of Christian civilization. It is because of this essential aspect of his work that certain primitive Churches, and later the Koran itself, regarded Alexander as an Envoy and a Saint.

The story of the team led by Peter the Great is far better known. Apparently the Czar - when still very young - was well-aware of the role he was to play. Klioutchevsky, one of the best historians of the Emperor, reached a conclusion which seems absurd for a man endowed with a critical mind and scientific integrity. He says that to explain Peter's work, one had to assume that he came into the world with a pre-established plan of reform. Obviously, to enable us to

³² Matthew, XX, 20-28; XXIII, 11; Mark, IX, 34; X, 43-45; Luke, IX, 46; XXII, 24.

understand the historical importance of his reign, rational considerations, though applicable to other cases - e.g. Alexander - are not enough. According to Voltaire, Peter was the greatest legislator since Mohammed. This is however an appreciation, not an explanation. Peter wished to wipe out the results of two centuries and a half of Mongolian rule. As the promoter of the rebirth of Russia, the last survivor and heiress of the ancient Orient, the Emperor inevitably roused the whole Orient from its slumbers and paved the way for a new Renaissance. It is in this sense that his mission may be understood.

Woman's contribution to his task was considerable. He enlisted her support to bring about reforms in social life. He made her leave the Gynaecium where she spent her life, separated from masculine society. He made her take part also in his celebrated assemblies and in Court life. Catharine's role at Peter's side was primordial, as S.M. Solovieff has pointed out. His "heart-'s-friend", as the Emperor called her, was so to speak part of himself and shared in all his joys and dangers.

At the end of his relatively short life - he died at fifty-two - Peter found himself abandoned by all. This is the fate reserved for prophets and heroes. Yet his courage, vigour of mind and lucidity did not fail him; he dictated his last ukase a few hours before he died.

We find here an example of a team with a well-determined objective. We do not know of course, and shall never know, all the intimate details of the relationships between the personages participating in Peter's film. We know that they met with difficulties and experienced failures. But obstacles were a stimulus for Peter's energy. He himself, by his own unshakable faith strengthened his team's faith, and aroused the courage of the whole nation. If at the end of its existence, the team of Peter the Great allowed signs of weakness to appear, we should never forget that the world is ruled by the principle of Imperfection. Those weaknesses became manifest only when the work was completed in its broad lines.

The Bible contains a few descriptions concerning team-work, whose objective could be both profane and religious. We know very little about the elements which entered into the composition of Noah's team. In this connexion, the Scriptures merely say that the ark received a couple of every species. Data concerning Moses' team, whose work was both military and legislative, are more precise. This is even more true in the case of King David. Whereas woman seems to play a negligible part in the history of Moses, her role in the story of David is more important.

On all planes, and particularly on the religious one, an example of an incomparable greatness is given by the team of the Apostles led by our Lord Jesus-Christ. He was entrusted with the mission of causing the whole world to be born anew in the course of the Cycle of the Son, and of sowing the seed of another cycle, the last one, the era of the Holy Spirit. We know — and this was doubtless intended — that even in that team everything was not exempt from difficulties, errors or want of faith. For its members, working in the world, were also subjected to the influence of the principle of Imperfection. Jesus alone, together with His Mother, was perfect, unblemished, incapable of failure or hesitation. Though the Apostles more than once showed signs of weakness, their work was nevertheless completed and today, twenty centuries later, there is proof of it; for the word of Jesus, according to which the Good Tidings were to be preached to all Creation³³, has been fulfilled by the Apostles and has now found its accomplishment. The Gospel has in fact been disseminated all over the world. And along with it, the principles of Christian civilization have been acknowledged everywhere, even by the non-Christian part of the world. Thus was fulfilled the pre-condition allowing entrance into the last Cycle, the era of the Holy Spirit.

³³ Mark, XVI, 15.

The imperfections we can observe in team-work, as in the case of Alexander's or Peter's team and, still more, in the Apostles' team, bring comfort to us. They show that we should not be discouraged by our own weaknesses, provided that the essential be done. Failures and lapses should be analysed and serve as lessons. Then we shall assume again with courage the role entrusted to us, with this sole idea in mind: to understand our role better and carry it out - after its original meaning has been re-established - to the end.

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The film, rid of the karmic elements which have been introduced by our free movements in the course of our present life includes also a karma of former experiences. In other words, we are born with a film already loaded with the consequences stemming from prior free movements, for nothing in the Universe is lost. Karmic elements and traces left by conscious efforts come back at birth and remain in our subconsciousness in a latent state. They make themselves manifest in the form of predispositions, bents or aversions.

As already pointed out, it is only at the top of the Staircase at the note FA of the Way, that man will see in its true light and in every detail the whole content of his being. Yet, as soon as the first Threshold is crossed, esoteric work should tend to disclose the real meaning of the film. Man has to proceed to an impartial analysis of its content: the role played by each actor, and the value of that role should be scrutinized. In the course of this examination, the positive or negative character of the various roles appears more and more clearly, and after this examination, the heterogeneous ones tend to disappear from the stage. At the end of the analysis, only a few actors will remain in the film, all of them, however, organically inter-related between themselves and with the hero by means of the plot, such as it was conceived at the beginning of the experiments pursued by the real I through centuries, even thousands of years. The play should then be performed up to its final dénouement.

Man's primary task, after having crossed the first Threshold, is to protect himself from karmic influences which spring from errors made as a consequence of free movements, either during this life or during previous existences. Formerly, to facilitate that task, people went to monasteries or created hermitages, "deserts" as they were called by the orthodox Tradition. Students thus found themselves sheltered from a great number of the "A" influences; this retreat enabled them to concentrate most of their efforts on introspection. In our age, this formula is out-of-date and monasteries, as well as hermitages, are no longer, as formerly, within everybody's reach. Today we should practise esoteric work whilst remaining in the world. Moreover, the rhythm of contemporary life is different: our epoch calls for energetic and rapid measures.

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The last question to be elucidated is to know whether an abridged esoteric way exists which would enable the student to climb the Staircase — between the two Thresholds — by an accelerated process, though remaining and working in the world.

That mode of approach exists; we have more than once alluded to it: it is the work carried on by a couple. We assume that in the forthcoming era this method will be increasingly encouraged, protected and finally considered essential. In order that esoteric work be undertaken by two persons and successfully pursued, it is however absolutely necessary that both beings — man and woman — be integrally polar.

The working method which has been used in this case is the opposite to the one described above: according to it, man was to find his polar being, his legitimate wife — with whom he would eventually be united — after consecutive eliminations resulting from a long and searching analysis of his film and after experiencing new errors and failures.

In this case, man should begin by consciously seeking for his polar being. If he succeeds in finding her, they can both start

work together on the film, which by definition, is the same for them both to begin with.

Man by himself is incomplete. But where he is weak, his polar companion, is strong. Together, they form an integral being. Their union leads to a fusion of their Personalities and to a more rapid crystallization of their astral body which a common second Birth completes and unifies. This is the redemption of original sin.

The film system has been conceived in such a way that polar beings are bound to meet in life — sometimes more than once. However the heterogeneous obligations contracted during this life by each one of them — due to free movements — as well as their karmic burdens resulting from one or several experiences may divert a man or a woman from encountering the only being with whom they can form a Microcosmos.

Were there no karmic burden, everything would be perfect: two young people would meet in the most favourable family and social conditions and their union would be a true fairy tale. But reality is not like this. Obeying the principle of Imperfection and prompted by the General Law's action, both predestined beings make mistakes. Immersed in falsehood, they generally are no longer able to appreciate the gift which is offered to them, nor even to recognize their polar being.

If such is the case, a poignant question arises: are there one or several ways,- and if so what are they—of recognizing our polar being? To meet him and not recognize him or let him pass by is the worst mistake that can be made; for we then continue to live our same false life, deprived of light. Should we not sacrifice everything in favour of a union which represents our sole chance in life, that of regaining the paradise lost?

Yet we should beware of the last snare which is set for us at the very moment when an unspeakable happiness seems to smile at us. We said just now: everything should be sacrificed, but we did not say that everything should be broken.. If, after having recognized

one another, the two polar beings triumph over this last trial - often the most painful one - a new life will open before them; for henceforth they are destined to become one, both on earth and in heaven.

Let us examine anew the question of knowing how to avoid failing to recognize our real alter ego - our guarantee of happiness and salvation - once we have met him?

A number of subjective and objective clues facilitate recognition of our polar being. For polarization makes itself manifest on all planes: sexual, physical, psychic and spiritual.

Two elements should be taken into account:

The first is objective. It is a result of the principle of Imperfection, which makes itself felt, in this case as in others, as one of the great laws which condition and govern life. If it is correct to say that the predestined man and woman are absolutely polar beings, this polarity however is not simple; for on the physical, psychic and spiritual plane, both are, into a certain proportion, hermaphroditic. This proportion is both necessary and sufficient. It is necessary since it gives everyone the possibility of carrying within himself the image of his polar being. In each case this picture makes itself manifest through the organs of the opposite sex that everyone possesses in an underdeveloped state. It is, so to speak a part of the flesh and blood of one's polar being which is engrafted within oneself. This proportion is also sufficient, since it represents the strict minimum needed to safeguard total polarity. For the proportion of hermaphroditism in polar beings is rigorously equivalent.

The second element is of a subjective nature. It consists in the distortion of our Personality, as a result of the conscious or unconscious deviations it has undergone in our life - or more precisely in the course of our existence - as compared with the initial film. Those deformations either render the recognition of our polar being more difficult for us or undermine our will-power to do our utmost to be united with him.

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We shall now consider the primordial phenomenon of Creation, the polarization of the sexes, in its application to man. We know the complete diagram of a human being, which is as follows:

Fig. 59

That diagram does not show the orientation of the indivisible centres; when the orientation of the higher and sexual centres are shown, it appears as follows:

Fig. 60

The diagram of woman is naturally polar in relation to that of man. Placed side by side, they appear as follows:

Fig. 61

These diagrams, taken together represent a complete being. As such, they reflect integrally — from every aspect — the manifested Absolute in the created Universe.

We now see clearly that the real Microcosmos is constituted by an Androgynous, and not by a man or a woman alone. This being contains in itself, on an infinitesimal scale, all the elements which are found in infinitely great proportions in the Macrocosmos. It should be noted in this connexion that, according to the Bible, the creation of man in the image and after the likeness of God was achieved in the shape of an Androgynous. In fact, this indication applies to the period before Adam's fall, i.e. before the disintegration of the astral body of polar beings³⁴

Conversely, a definitive salvation within the Absolute is conditioned for man, as well as for woman, by their reintegration into a Microcosmos as it is clearly pointed out by the Apostle Saint Paul in the following text already quoted: in the Lord, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man³⁵. Separately,

³⁴ Genesis, I 27; Fall, ibid. III, 7.

³⁵ I Corinthians, XI, 11; Cf. pp. 285, 285bis English text; p. 260 French text.

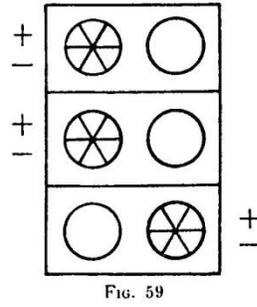
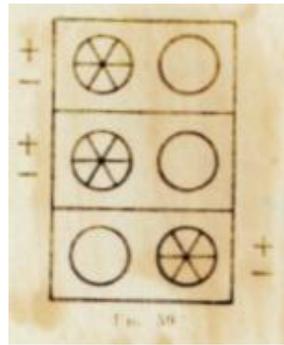


Fig. 59

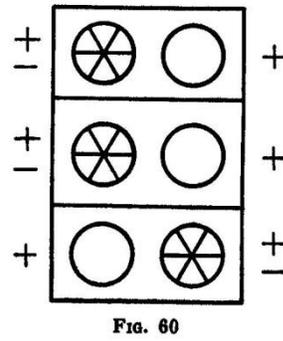
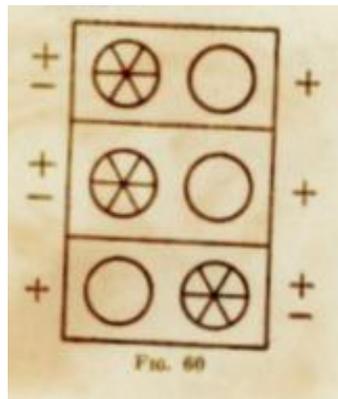


Fig. 60

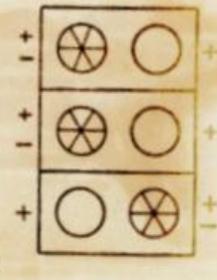
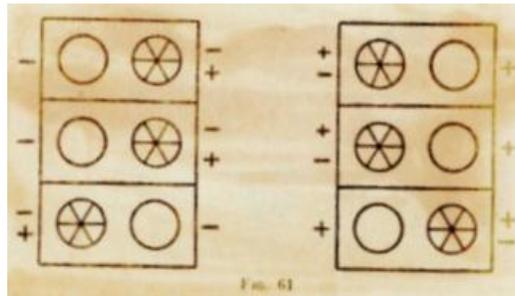


Fig. 61

Fig. 61

All 3 original figures are too blurred

man and woman — who are incomplete beings — cannot reflect God's image in its plenitude, which is all in all³⁶.

To affirm that every man, like every woman, has a polar being is an axiom. This, in fact, explains the marvellous numeric equilibrium between the sexes. Yet not all persons have a strong desire towards uniting with their polar being. Persons who are firmly "anchored" in their Personality, who are not given to reflection — and this is true of the great majority of mankind — take part with enthusiasm in a life ruled by "A" influences, and do not feel a need for that kind of union. For them, a polar being is on the same level as any other person. The Personality cannot detect anything special in it. And if, by any chance, an unfamiliar impression is experienced, when polar beings meet, this is felt rather as something abnormal and embarrassing.

Specially difficult situations arise owing to this failure of recognition. In this connexion, the case of couples, which have come together under the Law of Accident, may be mentioned. Both partners show opposed tendencies —: one of them is attracted by "A" influences, and the other is in search of the Way. At the basis of such unions is often to be found, in addition to a dual error in judgment, the influence of ancient or more recent karmic burdens. For instance, a "marriage of convenience" or a passionate attachment. The most intelligent thing to do in such a situation is for both partners to make a joint effort to resolve the situation to their mutual advantage. Particular heed should be paid to children born of such unions. For they suffer. Everything should be attempted to remedy this state of affairs. As a rule, we should not lose sight of the fact that although it is permissible for human beings to offer themselves in sacrifice, they have no right to accept it from others.

However, it may be said that an accelerated evolution of the hero of the film brings him nearer to his polar being and, at the

³⁶ I Corinthians, XV, 28.

same time, automatically excludes the Personalities who have entered the film accidentally.

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Man first begins to feel a desire, then the necessity for uniting with his polar being, as a result of the formation, and subsequent growth within himself, of the magnetic centre. This is why - as we said above - the conception of the Androgynous has for the mass of humanity a purely theoretical value only: it is just a myth. We can now understand that an eager desire for reintegration into the Microcosmos - leading directly to reintegration within the Absolute - is the fruit of a high level of moral culture. As afore-mentioned on several occasions, esoteric evolution is conditioned at the beginning by a failure, a moral collapse. Then, in order to make progress, it is necessary to ascertain one's inner content, i.e. to succeed in seeing oneself. Saint Isaac the Syrian says that the man who succeeds in seeing himself, such as he is, is better than he who succeeds in seeing angels³⁷.

What we call bankruptcy is called "death" by the Tradition. It is death in a living body. Therefore, we must die, before being resurrected. Jesus says: except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit³⁸. And He adds the following comment: he that loveth his life (the Personality) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life (always the Personality) in this world shall keep it unto life eternal³⁹.

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When progressively taking his fate in his hands, man takes upon himself the responsibility of all the partners in his film.

³⁷ Philokalia, sermons of Saint Isaac the Syrian.

³⁸ John, XII, 24; Matthew, X, 39; Mark, VIII, 35; Luke, IX, 24.

³⁹ Ibid.

As we have already said, the student's first task is to restore to his film its original meaning; then he should strive to develop it, so that the "play" be properly performed until it reaches its pre-determined end. While working on himself, the hero should try hard to create around him new circumstances, which will enable the drama to be played out to its appointed end. The student's external efforts ought to be especially directed at creating those new circumstances, but he should not try to exert a direct influence over persons. Adoption of such a policy often seems appropriate, but in most cases it is an error, for this pressure creates new karmic burdens which make things even more complicated instead of resolving the situation. We should be extremely prudent and careful. Nevertheless the new circumstances must be created in order to help those anxious to act rightly. Let us repeat that man should try to serve rather than to impose himself. In this work, patience, perseverance and faith are qualities of great practical value.

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To be able to recognize his polar being, man must concentrate, on all the planes accessible to his consciousness, all the attention of which he is capable. For, as a consequence of distortions in the film, encounters always occur in unexpected circumstances, and generally at a time and in a way unlike anything which could be imagined.

The rule prescribed is simple: to recognize his polar being, man has to know himself. The logic of this axiom is obvious: man should first know his own ego in order to recognize his alter ego.

Thus, once more we are led back to the problem of the quest for the Way.

It is true that both the I of the body and the I of the Personality aspire after another being in which they would find a perfect response. Yet it is only by his progressive identification with his real I that man attracts union with his polar being.

Man should go in search of the person, without whom he does

not truly exist, his heart full of faith, sharpening all his most refined faculties of intuitive attention, and with his sense of critical analysis developed to the utmost.

Like the troubadour of former times, man's only hope of recognizing the Lady of his Thoughts is by renewing the exploit of chivalrous love.

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The difficulty we experience in discovering our polar companion is due to the fact that we are deformed; in addition we constantly distort our film by free movements. Those are therefore the first two elements to be rectified; we must rectify our own deformation, and no longer yield to impulsive notions. That is why we should not act under the influence of one centre alone. Logically, the necessity of compensating for our deformations makes it imperative for us - whether receiving or giving out - to combine by conscious efforts the work of both our emotive and our intellectual centres when we are confronted with problems.

The complexity of a human being may be compared to an orchestra; and one's life to a symphony where each instrument, with its specific part, has its place in what is supposed to be a harmonious ensemble. When working on ourselves therefore, we should act like a conductor rehearsing a new musical piece.

The foregoing represents the preliminary work. But when polar beings meet, what are the immediately perceptible signs that would enable that human pair, still imperfect and deformed by their karmic burdens, to acquire the conviction that in all objectivity they are not mistaken?

We can attribute an objective value to a mutual recognition by taking into account the following pre-requisite criteria. From the first encounter, in the presence of the polar being, the I of the Personality and the I of the body vibrate in a way that cannot be compared with anything they might have felt previously. For the Is

are now meeting their first love which has continued throughout the centuries. Though unaware of that, polar beings know each other; this knowledge — as old as they are — makes itself manifest through the voice of their subconsciousness. And, as from their first encounter, it gives rise to an atmosphere of absolute confidence and sincerity.

This is a crucial test: polar beings do not lie to one another. They have no need to lie, for, inwardly, together they constitute a single being, from whose inner core, the real I calls to them and assents to their union. That climate of absolute and spontaneous sincerity will henceforth form the basis of their relationship. Both experience the feeling — otherwise inconceivable — of freedom within unity which puts an end to the impression of slavery and loneliness, which is our usual companion.

Vague recollections of previous experiences soon begin to come to the surface of their waking-consciousness.

The reader will now understand the full significance of the rule that forbids lying to oneself: he who lies to himself will similarly lie to his alter ego, thus bringing the miracle to an end. The marvellous aspect of the encounter will disappear behind a curtain of trivial lies, which soon turns into an insuperable barrier. Behind this barrier, relations with the polar being are undistinguishable from those that a man may establish with other women: whether wife, mistress or chance encounters. Once again the experiment has failed.

That is how and why the man without meets his polar being without recognizing her. That is also why practical work in the esoteric Way starts, and of necessity continues, with a struggle against lying to oneself. Success in this sphere is indispensable, and to attain it, no price can be too high.

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If polar beings are prepared for the truth, if their encounter makes strings that have hitherto been silent vibrate in unison, the way is then open before them both to re-create by their conscious efforts the Microcosmos long ago disrupted and destroyed. The Staircase will be climbed in a single stride and they will suddenly find themselves face to face with the second Threshold.

The catechumen crosses the first Threshold under the influence of a negative emotion: his horror of life in the wilderness and an eager desire to escape it. But when the two polar beings are confronted with the second Threshold they must be in possession, in order to cross it, of a positive watchword which they will be asked for at that moment.

The Way is then open before those who know what they want, and what they aspire to in, as well as outside, the Way — in that external life which henceforth can no longer be dissociated from esoteric work. Happy are those who can usefully contribute to it. The Gate that leads to Life will open before them, and they will read on the pediment of the wall to be crossed the following sacramental inscription:

The labourer is worthy of his hire⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Luke, X, 7.

POSTSCRIPT

From the remotest times, man has tried to resolve the problem of Absolute Knowledge. A classical initiatory formula says: try to understand that, by learning which, you shall know each and everything. Neophytes were being taught that to understand everything very little knowledge was necessary; yet to acquire that little knowledge, they would have to learn a great deal. In this connexion, the conception of Gnosis did not appear to the Ancients as implying ordinary knowledge but a vivifying Knowledge, above Reason and Faith.

Gnosis - the Gnose - was considered to be the Mysterious and hidden Wisdom, mentioned by Saint Paul. This phrase serves as an epigraph to the present work, whose purpose it is in setting forth some aspects of that wisdom to reveal the hermetic sense of its title.

The sub-title is no longer related to an abstract idea of Gnosis but to its manifestation throughout the world, particularly at the critical period which preceded and followed Christ's advent.

In the course of the Cycle of the Father, the divine Gnosis had been revealed in the form of mysteries - the Mysteries of Promise - which were implemented by the Mystery of Realization of Jesus.

With Christ's advent, the rule of silence, previously imposed upon initiated disciples, was abolished. A flux of gnostic ideas then cropped up. In several parts of the ancient world there sprang up a spontaneous growth of teachings, theories and systems founded both on the Tradition arising out of the Mystery of Promise, and on the Mystery of Jesus which seriously undermined the former initiatory order.

In the resulting conflict of ideas, two divergent streams of thought could soon be discerned, although stemming from the same basic postulate, i.e. the recognition of imperfection in the world of phenomena.

Some Gnostics tried to give an explanation of that Imperfection. In their view it resulted from a fall of light into matter, a catastrophe

which was supposed to have occurred without the intervention of the Perfect, Non-Manifested God; or else to have been due to an error, or even to a malevolent intention on the part of the Creator.

The origin of such errors is always to be found in a confusion between planes. The reasoning faculty attributes to Divinity attitudes, weaknesses and motivations of a purely human nature. We can see here, inter alia, the traces left by Hellenistic thought which tended to humanize divinities. The Gospel proclaimed by Jesus supplanted this former conception by proclaiming the possibility of the divinification of the human element in man by means of the second Birth, the Gateway to the kingdom of Heaven.

These conflicts of ideas ended in a victory for the Orthodox Church. Heretic tendencies - which had sprung up - were fought one after another and annihilated by the Apostles' work, and also by the work of the Fathers of the Oecumenical Church, who strove to make Christ's doctrine, a doctrine of Love, shine out in its eternal Truth.

Esoteric Tradition, mysterious and hidden, was thus preserved in its original purity, in particular in oriental Orthodoxy, in the form in which it had been transmitted by the Apostles and their disciples.

Geneva, November 1958 - June 1959.

END OF FIRST VOLUME

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Prepared in collaboration with Albert-Jean LUCAS, M.D.

A bibliography on the subjects dealt with in Gnosis could be considerably enlarged. The sole aim of the following list of publications is to enable any reader, who so desire, to make a more intensive study of certain topics dealt with in the present work. Such study might facilitate his understanding of the theses which have been set forth therein.

Legend: C. St. P. Pub. by the Convent of Saint Panteleimon of Mount Athos.
For titles in Russian, modern spelling has been adopted.

Note: The Bibliographical references have been reproduced in the original languages, and in accordance with the following order:

- I. BIBLE: OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS
- II. CONCORDANCES, DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPAEDIA
- III. APOCRYPHAL TEXTS
- IV. MISCELLANEOUS

CENTER FOR ESOTERIC CHRISTIAN STUDIES

It must be admitted that the Cartesian spirit which brought scholasticism to ruin, has now been superseded by the magnitude of the results achieved by positive science, which it had originally promoted. And confronted by the new world which is now being set up, it is still out-moded and condemned to immobilism. But the logic of History calls for a new spirit.

The Promoters of the Centre for Esoteric Christian Studies are convinced that pure reason, in its cold abstraction, no longer suffices today. They are persuaded that human intelligence will be able to display all its creative gifts only when warmth of heart, the leaven of true culture, has penetrated and animated human faculties in every way.

This transformation raises a host of problems behind which stands man in all his grandeur.

The world calls for the apparition of a New Man, good as well as strong, capable of freeing mankind from fear; capable of establishing a just and harmonious order upon earth and of putting the marvels of technique at the service of society.

Such is the goal, avowed or not, towards which tends the whole of mankind, without distinction of race, caste, sex or belief. It would not be foolhardy to state that this tendency is taking on a world amplitude.

Now the only known doctrine which is complete — in other words, which embraces both the spiritual and the material aspects of life — and has, from the outset claimed to have attained an oecumenical diffusion, is Christianity¹. Today this dissemination is an accomplished fact: the Gospel has been translated into approximately six hundred languages and has spread all over the five

¹ Matthew, XXIV, 14.

continents of the world.

Parallel with the progress of the Gospel, European civilization, on its own plane, assumes also an oecumenical character. Yet it is not to its European essence that it owes that expansion - in which geographical or racial elements played no role - but to the fact that, born of Christianity, it is deeply rooted in Christian culture - a fact that is often lost sight of.

We should also add that, according to old prophecies, the oecumenical diffusion of the Gospel was to be combined with essential discoveries - both in the material and spiritual domain - liable to cast light on the esoteric doctrine preached by Jesus and His Apostles.

The discovery of the celebrated Dead Sea Scrolls has already made a great sensation. Then, around 1945, near Nag Hamadi, in Upper-Egypt, were found thirteen volumes in papyrus, containing altogether some forty-nine works written in the Coptic language and, for the most part, unpublished. Among those manuscripts was found the Gospel according to Saint Thomas, which consists of a collection of about one hundred and fourteen "Logia of Jesus". According to Tradition, further and still more extraordinary discoveries may be expected.

Such are the elements, the talents, imparted to the man of the XXth century. The rest depends on his own conscious endeavours. If he buries his talents in the ground, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up². If, on the other hand, he strives to make them fructify, a new Era, full of promise, will open before mankind; it will advance under the guidance of an élite formed by new men whose apparition is greatly to be desired. It would be useless to disclose what this new Era will bring forth, for contemporary man would not believe it, any more than a man of the Middle Ages would have believed our present life.

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² II Peter, III, 10.

It is on the basis of this vision of the Present and the Future that the Centre for Esoteric Christian Studies has been set up. Its immediate objectives have been defined in its Statutes, as follows:

Article 2 - The aim of the Centre is to contribute to researches of all kinds relating to Christian esoteric Tradition; its purpose is also to associate itself with the work of bringing about a rapprochement between traditional and acquired knowledge, especially in the realm of Science and Art;

To this end, the Centre intends to give regular and temporary courses and to convene seminars with a view to studying problems relating to esoteric knowledge. In addition, it is proposed:

- 1) To create a specialized library,
- 2) To issue a Bulletin concerning the Centre's activities; to publish selected works prepared by its collaborators and students, as well as articles and notes of information in connexion with its activity;
- 3) To publish, either directly, or through the intermediary of a publisher original works in the field of esoteric knowledge or in connected spheres;
- 4) To gather documentation with the purpose of preparing a Dictionary of esoteric knowledge. This dictionary should not overlap with already existing dictionaries or encyclopaedia of the Bible. Its specialized character should facilitate esoteric research in the field of sacred texts and of the Christian, canonical and apocryphal Tradition.

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⁺ Expression used throughout to indicate the esoterically undeveloped man, in accordance with the terminology of the Gospel.

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Chapter XIX – To Be and to Appear. Confusion between these two conceptions in the man without. The principle of Imperfection as the primordial condition of Creation. The meaning of Creation is in realizing from Zero a Unit similar to the Infinite and composed of infinite units proceeding from imperfect zeros, representing the Souls after the Fall. Fulfilment. General resurrection and esoteric evolution. The doctrine of the Present. The Present is outside Time. The present of the man without. The fissure. The three dimensions of the Present.

Chapter XX – The aim of esoteric exercises is the acquisition of the real Present. Mastery over the body, the Personality and contact with the higher levels of Consciousness. Eight groups of physical and psychic exercises linked by the technique of respiration as a bridge. Passive observation. Higher group of exercises: concentration, contemplation and ecstasy. Diagram of the Way. The seven steps and the three Thresholds: crossing of the first Threshold leads from the wilderness to the Stairway, which in turn leads to the second Threshold. Having crossed the latter, the disciple enters upon the Way properly speaking, that will lead him to the third Threshold. End of the possible evolution in earthly conditions. Description of the stages of the Way.

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The plane of Eternity as the domain of the Possible. Realization within Time. The original film, as conceived in Eternity. Introduction of that film within Time. The eternal return in a so-called reincarnation, unconscious, involuntary and non-individual. Teams. Free movements of the man without obscure the original film. Karma. Conscious efforts can transform the film which moves approximately in a spiral. The so-called collective reincarnation, conscious work on the film, neutralization of Karma and return to the original film. The esoteric short-cut attained by the combined work and conscious efforts of two "polar beings" forming between themselves a Microcosmos. The primordial importance of finding and recognizing one's opposite polar being. Pre-condition: to renounce free movements. Criteria of polarity. Crossing the first Threshold calls for renunciation; to cross the second Threshold requires a positive programme.

POSTSCRIPT

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CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN ESOTERIC STUDIES.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE
préparée avec la collaboration
du
Docteur Albert-Jean LUCAS

Une bibliographie sur l'ensemble des sujets traités dans Gnôsis pourrait être considérablement étendue. Les publications mentionnées ci-après ont pour seul but de permettre au lecteur s'il le désire, d'étudier d'une manière plus approfondie divers éléments formant le contexte du présent ouvrage. Cette étude faciliterait la compréhension des thèses qui y sont exposées.

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