

Psychism: It's Dangers and Benefits

by

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This paper was classified as a Sangatheka by Murshid SAM.

The papers on this level from Hazrat Inayat Khan were withheld

from him by the Sufi Movement et. al., so he wrote his own.

“An Original Sangatheka” has been added to the title—Ed.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Psychism: Its Dangers and Benefits

I

The psychic faculty is one which man possesses in common with the animal kingdom. When we consider the processes of evolution, we find a steady stream of forces and forms moving out of the comparatively simple rocks and minerals, through the vegetable and animal worlds up to man. The Oriental philosophers who were and even today are more interested in the psychic aspect of manifestation than the physical or visual aspect, have spent some time in studying it and have given us sufficient literature on the subject to make our investigations valuable and even quite practical.

When we look at Buddhist pictures with their heavens and hells, we do not often relate them to life as we experience it. Yet from the psychic point of view it can be affirmed with a considerable degree of truth, that the three types of their hells correspond to the mineral, vegetable and animal conditions, and it can further be affirmed that man is in a hell when he is in one of those conditions.

If we should study the psychic side of pain, suffering and illness, we might be able to classify most forms of evils into three groups which correspond pretty well with those three kingdoms, and their attendant psychic forces. Naraka, the lowest hell, corresponds to the mineral world, and when man lapses back into that condition he is surely in the lowest hell. An example of this is seen in the paralyzed person who cannot move his body; he might feel great heat or great cold just as the mineral can feel great heat or great cold, but there is hardly any motor response to such stimuli. And in this respect it is well to note that most pictures of hell show it to be the place of great heat or great frigidity. And lowest of all the conditions for man is when the mind becomes paralyzed. This occurs when man falls into the abyss of Naraka, the mineral kingdom hell.

People who totally ignore all laws and principles of health, hygiene and morality, sometimes actually go downhill so rapidly that not only the body but even the mind deteriorates. Strong alcohol acts like a chemical on the vital tissues of the body and breaks down the plasmatic structure into simple mineral-like atoms and molecules. This is an extreme backward step which destroys the spiritual essence of nature (prakriti), while sex license works toward a similar end by destroying the spiritual essence in the personality (purusha) inhabiting the body. Both point the way to hell; combined they bring man back to the lowest condition, to incurable insanity.

While every conception of hell may include several divisions, generally they are regarded as grades, one higher or lower than the other. This is true whether one turns to Dante or Swedenborg or the traditions of the Hebrews or Hindus or any other religious record, and we can find grades analogous to the vegetable stage of evolution, which, while far below the human condition, still

seems very terrible when we compare it with everyday life.

When man descends to the vegetable stage either by volition or by obsession of some sort, he is in a prison. In Buddhist psychology there is a demon form called Preta, which is a vegetative type, supposed to be capable of seizing people and dragging them to hell. The hell is also called the Preta hell and if we examine closely we can see that this can be experienced even while on earth.

For instance, it is true of those who resort to narcotics. According to the traditions of the Sufis and others, God slept in the mineral kingdom, dreamed in the vegetable kingdom, awoke in the animal kingdom and realized himself in man. The opium addict has surrendered to the dream state, he lies prone on a couch, not using any faculty of locomotion nor brain-power nor will-power, and in all this he is like the plant, not like the human being. And it can be said of these persons that truly they create their own hell and when they leave the body they enter into that world of dreams and it sometimes takes them a long time to get out of it as they have no will-power.

Their breath becomes so impure, so filled with gases that decadent psychic vegetable forms feed upon their minds and subtle forces. This is true also of the condition of very malignant diseases when there is delirium. Jesus Christ, who knew the most occult laws concerning breath and consciousness, through his spiritual development was able to purify his body and the bodies of others of these forces and forms.

Sometimes heedlessness in thought, speech and action brings about a similar decadence. In tuberculosis where carbonic acid gas is not fully expelled from the body, it forms the food for plant organisms both in the physical form (as bacteria etc.) and in the psychic side, which is the preta state. Also cancerous people who have lost the chemical equilibrium in the blood-stream, have a preta-form in their body which is called cancer or carcinoma, and operations are not successful in most cases. In this instance, the physical destruction often follows an unfavorable mental or psychic condition as well as wrong diet and habits, all of which interact.

The success of x-rays in stopping the growth of cancer is really quite simple. The very high vibrations are in opposition to the physical vegetable state and would often harm plant life, but they also check the psychic growth of plants. However, it is possible to find vibrations in the universe which are not harmful to man but which will drive away the preta-growth, and while Jesus Christ manifested this from one aspect, there is no doubt that modern science will also succeed when it approaches psychism not from the standpoint of psychic research, so-called, but from the study of the great spiritual and occult metaphysics of the past.

Up to the present time, while we are in the midst of investigations, it is recognized that in some directions our knowledge is quite limited, otherwise we should be more successful in applying curatives. Men have often been able to analyze disease or insanity without being able to remedy the conditions. When the close relationship between physical, mental and psychic troubles is established, we shall be able to progress much more rapidly and this will be the dawn of a new day in science.

We have just explained a little about the types of hell corresponding to the mineral state and the vegetable state, or to the Naraka and Preta. The animal hell or rakshasic condition is not so easy to distinguish for there are many more functions belonging in common to animals and man, and not everybody seems to be aware of the pure humane and human qualities. Nor does man always recognize what may be natural in the animal as animal and may not be natural in man, considered either from the psychic side or the physical side.

The beings who occupy the animal hell are called Rakshas and Yakshas in India, and the devils and gargoyles of Europe belong to the same grade of evolution. These are not fantastic beings; they might be called the souls of animals, not the animal soul, for that is something different. By animal soul is meant the psyche of the Greeks and nephesh of the Hebrews which can also be called breath-consciousness, something necessary for this form of body and it actually forms a kind of breath-body around the physical body. This is called "Vital Body" by the Theosophists and was well known to the ancient Hindus. By "soul of the animal" we mean the true consciousness of the animal, conceived in terms of quality rather than form, which in the psychic world becomes that sort of thing. That is to say, animal can evolve directly into Rakshasa, the soul of the animal and the soul of the Rakshasa are identical, but one occupies the psychic and lower mental worlds, the other lives in the physical.

While the Buddhists recognized the Asura grade as coming between the Raksha and the human state, and accepted the ideas of higher evolution, including the pitra and deva states, the Hindus center their philosophy more around man and recognized the three qualities called Tamas, Rajas and Sattva, which qualities prevailed in most people.

Tamasic man, the lowest, is apt to be fatalistic and tends to inertia. The Rajasic man is self-willed, progressive to some extent, active and more or less democratic. The Sattvic man is altruistic and prophetic in his outlook. Besides these there is also a fourth type of man, who, while a man is not a hu-man, may be called **diabolic** and who seeks mastery over others instead of over himself.

In the consideration of psychism it is necessary to examine the subject from these four points of view, discussing it thoroughly, and examining it from a natural, moral, evolutionary and spiritual standpoint. But before doing so, it might be well to observe some of the differences of psychic faculties among the animals themselves.

The early reptiles, coming out of the water on to the warm land, had to adapt themselves to a new environment. To help them God placed in their skulls, in a most protected place, the **pineal gland**, which controlled bodily temperature and had certain other functions. This organ has been called "the third eye." The Greeks seem to have had some knowledge of it; the Cyclops was an advanced form of Yaksha. Entities of this type did not evolve on the physical plane; the huge reptiles have long disappeared on earth, apparently long before the appearance of man, but psychically their evolution did not stop. Why?

Looking at it from the standpoint of the animal, when the birds came into existence with warm

blood, with powerful eyes, with wings and feet so they could travel rapidly, they did not need any pineal gland to regulate their temperatures, they could travel back and forth to find the right climate. By this means they were able to take full advantage of magnetic currents, of which the reptile could not avail itself. Is this not a higher condition, which permits greater self-expression?

The proof is found not only in the higher mentality of the bird, in its power as in the eagle, or beauty as in the peacock, or song as in the swallow and nightingale and meadow-lark; in the process of time birds have increased and reptiles have diminished in number and in importance. Meanwhile, God, Who is all-wise, has permitted the pineal gland to remain in man, because nothing is destroyed that may someday be of value.

Man has no longer fins or tail, but he has retained this organ. The frog has digits on its toes more like man than those of the bird in some respects; also the frog, while lower in evolution than the reptile, has a voice, and the bird although lower than the beast, often has a voice sounding similar to man's. This shows that they have certain qualities which were retained in the animal kingdom, taken as a whole, which did not always appear even among the higher beasts, but were there—faculties which were inbred in man. In this respect we have to consider qualities and faculties not necessarily as higher or lower, but we should try to understand their nature.

While all qualities and all functions evolve toward the human, while whatever man has he may share with the mineral or vegetable or animal representatives, while they may appear among the lower psychical forms, narakas, pretas, rakshas, cyclops—they integrate and coalesce in man, within whom they can reach perfection.

It is only man, who comes to a full consciousness, it is only man who can fully express “I,” and it is only man who is capable of touching all planes of consciousness and realizing God while remaining man, without leaving his kingdom. And in this last respect he ranks above the jinns of the mental world and angels of the spiritual world, who occupy the higher planes of this universe. With all their faculties and powers, this treasure does not belong to them, of seeing all, knowing all and understanding all while inhabiting the gross physical vehicle.

II

Examining man bone for bone, muscle for muscle, part for part, there is very little difference in appearance between him and the animals. Even studying his behavior in groups, his social activity and his personal habits, you will find that perhaps some animals have each of these habits. The only observable difference is that in man there is a higher synthesis. Outwardly resembling the ape, he combines in his personality the psychic and mental attributes which appear severally in the bear, the lion, the rabbit, the sheep, the birds and all the lower creation.

On closer examination we can observe some differences, which evidence his higher mental

capacity, even apart from his intellectual superiority. For instance, while some animals may have a keener sense perception, as the eagle with its eyes, the deer with its nostrils, the mole with its ears, no animal seems to have all the senses combined developed to the degree we find them in man. As has been stated, man is the purified synthesis of all lower nature, and while he may not be superior in any one physical or even psychic quality, when we come to the summation of qualities and faculties, generally we can recognize man as a more advanced being.

In some of the puranic traditions and in theosophical literature there is a tradition of other racial forms, of early races or sub-races who did not dwell in a completely formed body. There is at least a germ of truth in them, that through a long period of time the human race did pass through certain phases. Many of these changes took place in the psychic world, and we of today err in assuming that human nature and human psychology has not varied through the ages.

The mistake of these traditions is that they do not accept that man from the first appeared on the earth as man, although his body has evolved from animal forms. This idea is not abnormal, taking into account the presence of “sports” or revolutionary changes in species-types. Man evolved gradually mentally and psychically, but from his first physical appearance he was man, Adam, the kingdom of man, and he will probably remain so always, apart in certain respects from all the lower creation.

These studies will be particularly concerned with the psychic aspect of things, even when we speak of the mind and the senses. Man’s sensual faculties seem to have been endowed with psychic power. All the attributes and potentialities of the lower kingdoms of nature seem to be inherent in man, and while not appearing in every individual, the root principles are there. Mystics and occultists have allays preserved the tradition of the Kingdom of Man, or Adam, in the truest sense of the latter term.

In a study of hearing and sound we have to deal with pitch, amplitude or quantity and timbre or quality. Pitch includes the range of perceptible vibrations, amplitude, the intensity of tone, the loudness or softness. Nor should we neglect the effects of the sounds themselves.

In learning about the sense of sight, we have a somewhat different approach. There have been comparatively few investigations as to the kind of vibrations ceasing sensitivity to the optic nerve. We know more about focal distances and strength of eyes, and something about color perception. This last is really a human faculty; many of the reactions of animals to color are psychic rather than physical, something psychologists have been rather slow to note. Infants also seem to appreciate the psychic aspect of color rather than its physical basis.

This is quite important. Just as all qualities appear in man, although in each one he may be inferior to certain animals, so all faculties and functions seem to appear in man, although in each one he may also be inferior to some species. Like the birds and unlike the polar bear he adapts himself to different environments. If his sight is inferior to the eagle, his other senses are more developed. Particularly is this true of taste, which with color perception, seem to have developed more in man,

and even among men it is the highest types that have the keenest ability in this respect, for they bear a close relationship to aesthetic and artistic aspirations.

It is in passing from the physical to the psychic that we reach a dilemma so far as everyday life is concerned. However, we shall present as a law the following principles which shall be upheld and explained or dissertated upon when necessary:

When psychic faculties are developed at the expense of physical or mental qualities, such is not a development but a retrogression; when psychic faculties are developed without benefit to the mind or body such is a natural but not a moral development, paralleling the increase in physical ability from athletics or gymnastics and mental development from concentration and logic.

Of course, there is also the possibility of psychic growth along with mental and spiritual development; this certainly is true in certain forms of Yoga training and elsewhere.

We may affirm that when there is any type of development, even when accompanied by no advantage to the other sides of man, where there is no retrogression, that is a gain. It is a gain when man's muscles are made stronger if the heart is not weakened thereby; it is a gain when man's eyes are improved if the heart or nerves are not harmed; it is a gain when man becomes more alert or more intellectual, when the heart is not weakened; and it is a gain even if there is psychic progress, when the heart is not weakened.

Animal psychism, which draws the vital forces to the solar plexus and lower centers, naturally makes demands upon both the heart and brain structures. Force cannot go upward and downward at the same time in the same process. No doubt many animals see and hear what man does not sense and there are also people who have natural psychic ability which is lacking in others. Sometimes this faculty is lost, but if at that period in life the energy goes to the heart or to the brain, the gain may outweigh the loss. To understand this better we shall make an investigation of the various types of psychism and how they affect the human body.

III

The first form of psychism which may appear in a person is a naive type which many children possess but which often disappears with age. This loss often accompanies the diminution of the thymus gland, the organ which nourishes them in the early part of life. Part of this loss is due to a substitution of physical and mental processes for psychic effort. Its loss cannot be called an evil because there is a gain at the same time. Generally this faculty is not regained; it is brought to the child by the soul in its involutionary journey, even from the angelic plane (Devachan or Djabrut). It may then remain dormant until the heart is awakened, sometimes rising again to activity with inner development, sometimes remaining quiescent until the personality is released from the physical

vehicle.

This type of psychism is rarely preserved until adulthood. A few, however, do retain it, and it also reappears in others who take up spiritual, mystical or occult studies. It has a deep metaphysical aspect, which is very important, for when it is active it has high usages, but on the whole it is rare.

There is another kind of psychism, more or less naive, which may be associated with the pineal gland, and which is found among the peoples having vestiges of ancient mysteries, as in Ireland, Norway, Tibet, etc. There is something about the atmosphere in such countries which arouses the finer forms of sensitivity and sensibility. Too little heed has been given to it. It has a higher and lower form, but is not lost except when intellectual development drives it away or when the eyes become accustomed to print and artificial endeavors.

This type of psychism superficially resembles animal psychism and the two are often confused. We can distinguish it from the earlier, rarer form by calling that the Sattvic (or spiritual) psychism, and this the Rajasic type for it appears among people with strong wills. This Rajasic form terminates in the Seer or Oracle, who is not so high as the Adept, but who nevertheless has a noble mission to fulfill in the world.

Oracular or Rajasic psychism is neither good nor bad. Man as man is intellectual (manasic) rather than psychic, and all psychic qualities seem to be non-human as he shares them with either the lower evolution or the higher evolution. Nevertheless it is unfair to call this or any other kind of psychic ability as non-human; one might as well call the sensual life non-human for that certainly impedes man's progress. Strictly speaking neither is good and neither is bad; it depends upon the use to which each is put and the direction the individual concerned takes in life.

Many persons deliberately seek psychic faculties; that is wrong. There is a form of Rajasic psychism which is being called Agni Yoga, because it arouses the inner fires. It is of a positive nature, and so long as it remains positive, psychism does not interfere with man's evolution, although to keep it so is very difficult. Rajasic qualities are valuable only so long as they are positive, and fire is powerful and beneficial only so long as it moves upward. With the need of adjustment to various climates and to aeroplane and submarine travel, there will be some changes in man's functions and these will largely be psychic. But even this development is not a turning backward, it is not trying to be what one is not and has not been; it comes from a natural growth.

It is always possible to slide downhill. That is why there is a water-psychism in contradistinction to Agni Yoga or fire-psychism. This latter is really identical with animal psychism. They touch the same plane and have many of the same manifestations but one is controlled by man and the other controls man. Picturing psychism by the symbol of the interlaced triangles, one may say that the white or higher psychism (which we can call Agni Yoga) is shared with the jinns or fairies and pitras, while the lower form, the negative type, belongs to rakshas, animals, asuras and lower forces generally.

Psychic faculties in animals cannot be considered as moral. The animal does not possess a full self-consciousness, and has not the same will as man has. One of its sense faculties may be overdeveloped, another can be very weak or latent, and it could have a lopsided mind unless something were interposed between its mental and physical selves. Therefore its impressions are transmitted to the mind psychically; **when the sensorium is weak, the psychic sense seems to be strong or at least active**. And when it is so required, psychic powers are most natural, and they do not interfere but rather cooperate with the orderly processes of nature.

If a question be asked, does man who is a more evolved being than the animal possess a higher degree of psychic faculty than the animal, the answer is that this is so. Not only does man possess potentially higher psychic faculties but his latent psychic power is far beyond that of anything in the lower creation. He has on the whole a much better developed sensorium (combination of all senses), an intellect which can soar out into space, and a heart within of infinite capability.

The real problem is, how can we develop any body, any function, any faculty, any latent power, without loss or harm to the other aspects of human nature. Animal psychism, or animal magnetism as it is sometimes called, referring to certain of its characteristics, presents two dangers:

- a) the actual loss of mental power bringing an insanity which is even spiritual insanity;
- b) a relative retrogression, that in developing a small amount of psychic utility, energy is consumed which would have brought greater gain if applied mentally.

Man as man, apart from his spiritual purpose, is here to develop mind. He has passed the animal state of evolution. Not that his animal nature is to be laid aside, to be wasted, to be scorned, it is not that; it is here to be used as if man were the master. Collectively man is mind; spiritual development always enhances mind, and it is generally by the gain or loss to the mind that we can measure the value of an undertaking.

Animal magnetism draws energy to the solar plexus and necessarily away from the brain. If it be asked in this relation, does not the psychism connected with the thymus gland or pineal gland also draw energy from the brain? Are not such manifestations also undesirable? In these cases sometimes the brain is not yet developed and inasmuch as the glandular system is directly connected with the blood stream, and so with the heart, these forms of psychic ability do not interfere with spiritual development unless a person deliberately or through his own weakness becomes negative, and permits curiosity, either of himself or another to control him.

Negative psychism, which has been associated with the solar plexus, also some with the adrenals (as in Voodoo practices), is more likely to draw energy away from the brain. The adrenals, although also part of the glandular structure, are more closely connected with the sympathetic nervous system, that is to say, the negative nervous system. Arousing of emotions by these methods necessarily consumes mental magnetism, which is brought downward instead of aiding man. Besides, such misapplication of vital electricity in this manner can even interfere with the normal rhythms of the body in other respects, and make of man either a non-entity or a devil.

This is a very important point, which shows that acquired psychic power is not **power** unless there is mental power and will-power accompanying it. It is a withdrawal of latent ability, like a man overdrawing an account from the bank or mortgaging his property. For the moment he seems to be wealthy but when he settles his karmic records, he will find himself very much in debt. It may throw him back in his evolution, open the way for disease and psychotic disturbances, and all in all it prevents man from realizing himself as man.

IV

The purpose of psychic energy in the universe is to materialize spirit. Even though it may have no other purpose than this, its importance can hardly be overestimated. We have to learn that life is continuous, that there is an involutionary process as well as evolutionary expansion and progress. In this involutionary movement psychic energy is needed, and while it also appears in the superior development, there it is the result of progress, not a means of access to higher conditions.

We may liken the psychic motive to water, it is a water motive, and in the Book of Genesis it is referred to as water, and also as water it is known sometimes in the Vedas. It runs downhill through the universe. The Agni-force is the reaction to its manifestation. But there is a tremendous difference:

Negative psychic force helps man to adjust himself to his environment, serving him until he has physical and mental ability. Agni psychic force is the result of man's higher efforts, not the means to his evolution, and it can help him adjust himself to higher conditions either in this world or the next.

When people speak of inner fires in the body, of Kundalini, they have some vague ideas of it, knowing it to be the opposite of animal sexualism, etc. What they do not realize is that this force does not develop of itself; man develops himself and this force is one of the results. Man's body is so constructed that the ductless glands receive their nourishment from the blood plasma. The heart is purified and this awakens power in the pineal gland and pituitary body; this is the way to many occult powers, if man only knew it.

The ego of man, or nufs, is not in all respects like the ego or nufs of the animal. Water has the tendency to weaken this nufs, and as this ego stands in the way of higher understanding and development, some have thought this a good move. But it is the movement of weakness. Man has to surrender to God and to conquer his ego, which is then transmuted, not destroyed. All its latent power is used sometime, somewhere. Nothing of value is destroyed.

A negative action or attitude of man takes place when he surrenders or submits to anything outside of himself at any time for any purpose. Surrender to higher powers or faculties, far from being an evil can enhance him and advance him; surrender to other forces or personalities is questionable if

not outright harmful. There is a form of laziness which shows no resistance, carries no force and debases the ego without destroying it. This is characteristic of many who resort to mediumship and hypnotism.

The ego in man can serve as a stop-gap, preventing him from falling backwards. The catastrophe of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Bible are symbolical representations of the retribution befalling man when he has degenerated, forgetting his humanity. God does not require every person to embark on the spiritual journey during his lifetime although all have this opportunity; His wrath is kindled upon those who journey back, who do not move forward.

What is this Divine wrath? It is not an evil punishment God has intended for man. It is the consumption of man by that very energy given him for growth and progression, unused by him when he submits to degradation. This is especially true of those who resort to negative psychism, to forces which pull downward, away from light and into shadow. The reason for Naar or hell-fire is that the unused cosmic fire has to break up the congealed icy spirit of those who have turned their backs to the light. Whether we read of a hell of fire or a hell of ice, there is a deep metaphysical reason for it. The hell of fire is for those who are stubbornly negative, who think they gain by turning backwards, while the hell of ice is to congeal the spirits who have become diabolical, who exhibit anger and temper and passion and try to consume all in their path. Thus comes to each his own compensation.

The animal differs from man, in lacking the completely individuated will (sometimes called **soul**) that the latter possesses or **is**. Therefore in all his efforts, whether instinctive or intellectual, there is a psychic element; we may say that his actions are reactions. The psychic impulse of the animal finds its completest, and often final, expression in sex activity, but even then each animal and even each plant seems to follow a quite definite rhythm. Its efforts are not self-determined, or when that is so, it is generally because it has been bred in some artificial environment, perhaps under man's care.

Animals usually have no control over these rhythms which determine instinctive acts. The desire to propagate acts as an almost blind force, spurred on by a natural magnetism. In the animal this is animal magnetism and it finds its fulfillment there; it does not have to be transmuted or sublimated, nor can it be called evil, for to the animal it is most natural.

Man, with his apparent freedom of will, may control or submit to his vital instincts at any time. Sex-passion may rise in him because of his personal condition and it is not always dependent upon any blind force of nature. This suggests a difference and in this difference one finds roads which may lead even to Heaven or hell. The same activity which impels animals to conjugate and mate, resultant not of a blind force but of a Law of Guidance, in man can be grossly employed or contrariwise can be adapted to the highest purposes. Why? Because the animal is controlled by psychic force, and man, the moment he seeks a mate without being compelled by a natural instinct, has the opportunity to control that force. If he employs this instinct or passion to arouse psychic

activity, for a psychic motive, it is sin, sin because it is unnatural, contrary to its essential purpose.

However, if it is suggested that the mating motif may be adapted to other purposes than procreation or coition, it may be said that out of the sex relationship all kinds of good may follow; there are many profitable directions in which it may turn, provided it avoids a psychic end. The reason for this becomes clearer when we see that psychic force is like a shadow standing in front of man as he passes from the light on his involutionary journey, but his shadow is behind him on the return journey.

People who have naive psychic powers have not a full shadow to their mental bodies; they are not there in complete darkness. Consequently, when they increase the light of their inner being, this psychic envelope also becomes brighter. But people who are not naively psychic, who strive to place a light in the psychic sphere, immediately throw a shadow upon their spiritual nature and this shadow obscures higher development.

This will be explained in another manner. We observe that certain persons strengthen their psychism along with spiritual development. This can be compared to a shadow which becomes clearer as a light becomes more definite or bright. In fog and dimness there is an obscured shadow, in bright light there is a clear shadow. The average person having his usual faculties but indefinite capacity, may increase his spiritual light and mental vigor and by that enhance this shadow. This is the true psychic development.

The naive psychic, without this complete shadow, is able to perceive vibrations from the heaven world (Malakut, Devachan), provided he or she has a pure heart. While this is not always the highest form of development, it can have the highest applications, and so reach the same goal toward which all humanity is tending. When this faculty dims, they are sometimes able to progress more rapidly in other directions, but they can develop very far along their own paths, without a change of condition, if rightly directed by one who understands their capabilities.

We might here present another series of principles, or if one wishes to call them such, laws:

For the sub-human species, psychic development and spiritual development can be identical.

For the naive psychic types among man, psychic faculties correspond in their field to athletics or gymnastics as means of perfecting the physical body (cp. Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga).

For other persons, concentration upon the psychic depletes the spiritual and vital forces, while higher concentrations enhance the psychic and vital forces.

It has been stated that the psychic sphere is a shadow world, and the nufs or ego has been called a shadow-thought upon the mind. Furthermore as Sufis and other esotericists teach that all evil is associated with the ego, there needs to be some explanation of the relationship between these two to avoid confusion.

The earth casts two shadows, the umbra or full shadow because of the sun, and the penumbra or part shadow, the result of the reflection of both sun and moon. According to metaphysical teachings, besides the sun in the outer world, there is the sun of intelligence in the mental world and there is also the Divine Throne, center, if it may be so called, of spiritual light. The nufs or ego is a shadow caused by the great central sun of the Universe upon man's thought of himself, producing the ego, part illusion, part reality. Were it not for this, there could be no things, as thing-ness is limited, things are not essences or principles, they come from the hard-making, contractual power of spirit.

In other words, name and form are limited to the mental, psychic and physical spheres. The root cause of ego lays between the spiritual and mental worlds, so in a certain sense it extends to the spiritual, but not in a sense that the objective mind can understand, nor in a sense that can be expressed in ordinary analytical language. Furthermore, the nufs, or **illusion-thing-in-itself** is not bad, but becomes the source of evil through assuming to be what it is not.

The psychic world is the shadow formed by the combination of this thing-ness and the light of the mental sphere, and it is more of the nature of a penumbra. Heaven and hell are the result of the direct activity of mental consciousness upon the ego, in conformance with karmic principles, purgatory is the condition when consciousness gropes in the psychic shadow-darkness.

Spiritual students on earth are not required to delve into the psychic world because their mission has taken them to a higher sphere. Unless they have been endowed with the keen sight to penetrate into that world, or through it to the mental world, they have no further need for that type of adventure. Such experience is usually completed in the pre-human evolution, either in the **asura** stage, according to Buddhistic terminology, or in the pre-earthly existence of the soul. The knowledge gained thereby, which cannot exactly be called knowledge in our terms, is transmuted into magnetism and psychic power, even sometimes into that quality we call genius.

Nevertheless, in his dream life man often touches this sphere. But there are dreams and dreams and it is not always easy to understand their nature. According to tradition, in the psychic dream of an animal nature, things take on the opposite appearance. They may appear in a more or less symbolical guise, but being further from the universal light than the mental world, not only are lights and shadows transplaced, but even thoughts appear as their opposites. In fact in many psychic experiences, whether in dream or in waking state, light appears as darkness and untruth as fact and people are easily misled.

Yet there is also a form of dream, which can be called **astral dream**, which is an inversion of the false psychic. Just as the eye, analyzed as a photographic lens, turns things upside down, but the

mind in some way reverses sight to its proper position, so this type of dream re-reverses images. Then while visions may appear in a strange or symbolic form, their connotation is correct, light meaning light and darkness signifying darkness. This is a sort of anti-purgatory, perhaps not in the sense that Dante used it, but it is opposite to the false psychic and therefore in harmony with Agni-Yoga.

In spiritual development one does not have to rely upon such dreams although it would be foolish to ignore them. They sometimes occur when the body is dense because of overeating, but the mind is clear, when it is impossible to receive impressions because of some interference. Certain types of students have them occasionally, and if a careful record of them is kept and correlated to the experiences of daily life, the established connection can serve to interpret forthcoming visions, sometimes turning them into true omens.

People who resort to alcoholic stimulants and who take dope are more likely to have the unfavorable psychic dreams, and these have been culled phantasmagoric, in contradistinction to astral. While this important distinction has been mentioned many times by James Pryse, a student of Madame Blavatsky, the terminology has not been accepted and the word “astral” has been applied to many phenomena which are not only “dis-astral” in this sense, but also in the original meaning of the word, they are opposed to the heavenly forces represented symbolically by the planets. For that reason and for other reasons, to avoid confusion, **astral** explanations and studies are not always included in spiritual instructions, as the varied usage of this term might lead many astray.

If we can maintain an impersonal attitude we shall gain thereby no matter what we are studying. While the materialistic scientist is often protected and occasionally aided by a skeptical attitude, his real genius consists in his being selfless and this also protects him against fantasy. On the other hand many metaphysical and spiritual students catch a glimpse of reality in the psychic and are not always able to understand it. Their recognition of it gives rise to a thought-form and this thought-form creates a mental impression on its own sphere, from which vantage place it can draw a concentration to the psychic and increase the human interest in that world.

As we have been trying to explain, the psychic may be regarded as a downward bridge, which once crossed, need not be used on the return journey. All animals need it, and the dream-life of the animal and the waking life of the plant (if one can properly use this term) are in that sphere. When man loses his self-control, or relapses into the Tamasic condition, he is also liable to find himself there, at least not able to control his emotional outbursts which are interwoven into his psychic nature.

A survey of the races of earth will convince us that people who practice the lower forms of psychism are not so much those of the lowest grades of cultural development, as those who have gone backward. We often find among them vestiges and relics of high tribal organization and advancement in some arts. Yet they enter into trances or drink heavy intoxicants or resort to opiates.

Races living near the animals are more prone to do this; they imitate the animal, as when they go hunting, they carry this mimicry into daily life, and noticing some resemblances between man and animal, often give strong emphasis to their animal nature. This agitates the solar plexus and adrenals and one could make some interesting investigations in this connection. But their mental light is dimmed and the more it is dimmed the greater the area of this psychic penumbra. So with all cultured man's efforts he is sometimes totally unable to "civilize" certain races.

The extreme of this low psychism is found in Voodooism, which represents the lowest degradation possible for anything called human to fall into. It increases because it is ignored, or else combated in its own sphere. To combat the false psychic, one does not employ the true psychic, one lets in a flood of spiritual light which totally dissipates the darkness.

VI

True psychic power can be developed through the personality. It may be the natural result of education, favorable environment or experience, and it is naturally increased with spiritual development. This latter may be explained: as the light is increased, the shadow seems to stand out more determinately. Behind this is a dual principle in the Universe which the Hindus call **purusha** and **prakriti**, which, while roughly corresponding to spirit and matter, more exactly mean, **the latent energy which pervades the universe**, and **the form capacity of atoms and vibrations**.

A body includes both these principles or elements and when one is spiritualized the other is purified. In meditation one develops the mind giving it power over prakrit by purifying it and restraining it with respect to purusha. The ego-shadow is inhibited so that the light of inspiration may flow through the mental channels, and control over the particular thoughts that constantly creep upon us makes it possible to attain to **Right Thinking**. Yet while these various shadows and cob-webs, as they may be called, are cleared away, we are not yet free from pure shadow.

This is because all name and form are in reality shadow, arising out of the contractive movement of spirit. From that not only are bodies and shapes produced on the physical sphere, but also forms of every type conceivable arise in the mental world. Man is higher than the animals in being endowed with individual will-power and by this power he can mold and remold the materials of both worlds. In this respect he must be classified separately. Animals, because of their very nature, accept things as they find them. When one, such as the dog, seems to worship man, it is because he recognizes that man has some divine quality in him, although he receives this impression for the most part psychically, because of man's different psychic nature.

Jesus Christ taught "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven." There is only one way to conduct this search and that is to abandon all other searches. Whenever any other thought or ideal stands in the way, the ego generates currents which prevent us from rising in consciousness above the

mental sphere. Therefore we are not able to control our destiny unless we can rise above this condition. All clouds, whether on earth or in the so-called heaven-world arise from such movements and obscure the light.

Again, as Jesus has said, no man can serve two masters; neither can he serve both God and Mammon. If man does not serve God, it is not such a great sin that he serve Mammon, provided he serve Mammon entirely, giving his whole heart and mind to a kind of material idolatry. However, this causes a confusion between prakriti and purusha in his personality because he has become negative to something in the power creation, bowing down before objects of his own making or forms derived from the mineral kingdom.

Generally this person is a Rajasic type, who seeks material comforts and it is his loss if afterwards he finds himself a pauper when he is withdrawn from the physical plane. His concentration on earth produces his later suffering although he does not hereby experience disintegration of spiritual force. Sometimes his ability to concentrate holds him in good stead; it protects him on earth to a certain extent, and probably aids in developing his intelligence. This intelligence is not lost, and with his repentance and making amends in the hereafter he can resume his journey.

How different the lot of the psychic on the downward path! Neither has he enlarged his intelligence nor enhanced the potentially spiritual powers within himself. He dreams only of the past, he seems to regard his cast-off skin like a snake or crab attached to its old covering, unmindful of its nakedness! This psychic continues naked even to the danger of the disintegration of the personality, by which the soul, so to speak, returns to God without ever having enjoyed bliss.

But apart from this he defeats the whole purpose of his life. When psychic forces are aroused in the solar plexus or in the abdominal and pelvic regions, energy is drawn from the head and heart, and when the life is pulled downward, it cannot rise. Even scientists are learning today about the interstitial glands and while they have not fully recognized their higher functions, we can see that there material energy is spiritualized; when it is not dissipated, it is sublimated and rises to the glands in the head. This completes the higher psychic evolution, not a thing in itself, but a part of general spiritual development.

At the same time we must not overlook the fact that all glands are dependent upon the nourishment they receive from the blood. The purer the heart, the more life is energized, the higher the functions and the greater the development. So whether one becomes a polished personality with the warmth of character drawn, let us say, from the pineal gland, or whether the creative faculty tends toward the artistic and beautiful, or whether intelligence utilizes thought in a practical or theoretical manner, all these powers, associated with the centers in the head, derive their sustaining life-force from the heart.

The more one looks into this subject, the more one can see that there is a purpose in all things, even a connection between things which the mind may regard as unrelated. Now nothing is prohibited by God, except that, if we follow the laws of Moses, there is a choice between the way of

life and light, and the way of darkness and death. It is this choice which is of paramount importance, the one taking man to the Promised Land of infinite possibilities, the other ending in the personality being swallowed, so to speak, by earth, as in the story of Korah, the enemy of Moses.

Korah is the prototype of the diabolic man who endeavored to increase psychic power at the expense of others. There are negative characters, people of Tamasic nature whose forces have not been aroused, who have weak wills and no definite morals who become the prey of such people. It ends in their undoing, bringing obsession or insanity. The stronger person draws the psychic power directly away from them and so devitalizes them. Just as he breathes in the air from the sphere round about him, so he pulls psychic energy by a sort of magnetic movement, away from others.

This is the path of death. Bulwer-Lytton has presented it before as in his *The Strange Story* and he has truly portrayed a tragic picture there. When such a person passes into the beyond, his blood is in a fearful poisoned condition, the connections between all bodies are broken, and he finds himself in that purgatory which being neither heaven nor hell, keeps him in an unpurified condition a long time.

Note. Shortly after the above was written, we learned about the demise of such a person, a diabolic charlatan who pretended to be a Buddhist monk. The embalmers had difficulty with his body and when a vein was pierced a fountain of black material in a watery condition arose in place of congealed blood. Blood contains the life essence; he had robbed himself of his most precious possession. The name and circumstances can be made public if further information is desired.

Long is the suffering of such a one, incapable of repentance, drawn finally into the sphere of Naraka, the lowest hell, whence he must retrace his steps through the whole evolutionary course to regain his manhood, that most precious gift of God which he has thrown away, selling his birthright for the merest mess of pottage.

VII

It may seem strange that of the various types of magnetism man possesses, all can be directly increased excepting the psychic form. There is physical magnetism which can be developed directly during his early years, and mental, moral and spiritual magnetism, all of which can grow in power through life when he follows the right path. But psychic magnetism is not increased in this way and yet it is not difficult to cause psychic demagnetization. This dilemma does not appear so strange upon closer examination.

Psychism which corresponds to the water principle moves downward, and it is also connected with the downward movement of the breath; it is the downward life-current opposed to the positive agni or Kundalini force. It is connected in a certain fashion with the exhalation while the latter is

dependent upon and associated with the indrawn breath.

Inasmuch as so much has been said against the downward psychic movement it may be questioned, what is the reason for its existence, how can a God Who is All-Wise permit the continuance of something which is so evil? And the answer is that nothing is evil of itself, that even this force has its advantages and its functions. It is only when it is misused that the trouble begins.

Just as the downward movements in the physical body have their purpose, so the downward psychical currents have their function and purpose which is very important. Elimination takes place from the physical body through certain exits, which are opposite the head in their positions.

These physical excretory movements are supported by the downward currents of the breath. In the like manner the negative psychic currents assist in removing chemical poisons and thereby purify the emotional system. Especially is this so in connection with the physical activities of the adrenal glands and supporting organs.

No one would consider it wise to feed a person through the anal opening so long as there was a mouth to use for this purpose. Food enters the mouth and passes along a certain course, and drink enters the mouth and passes along another course and when a person vomits that is a sign of disease. No doubt in animals like the camel and ruminating beasts generally there is a need for regurgitation, but man does not chew the cud and he does not therefore have to have this animal psychism for this purpose either.

The negative psychic energy, therefore, is valuable in removing poisons from the body, in assisting in all processes of elimination, and even in elimination of thought. Thus the psychic who becomes a medium does not do such thinking and thought is not always necessary. When one develops the Buddhic vehicle and so depends upon the intuitions, a current is necessary to carry these intuitions to the physical plane and this can be done along the psychic route so that the last becomes a bridge, so to speak, between the higher and lower worlds. Glance, speech and touch exude, so to speak, a force with their every activity and this is psychic force. One can also actually draw it from another by counter glance of a hypnotic variety or by certain forms of handshake and embrace, so it can be diabolic; one can also conserve it and transmute it so it can serve the spiritual forces and faculties which can be cultivated in man.

Spiritually speaking, perhaps the lowest state is reached when sexual activity is cultivated for psychical reasons rather than physical ends. This is the real curse of Onanism, which is a spiritual sin rather than a vice. Any psychical revitalization of this type or of related forms of abuse and misuse only bring temporary satisfaction and they are often followed sooner or later by deterioration on all planes and by much suffering.

From this point of view we can distinguish between the person who has either gone upon the downward path or been led astray and one who has more or less natural polygamic tendencies, who desires the company and even the embrace of persons of the opposite sex. Some people of

certain grades of evolution can be regarded as belonging to this type; sometimes it is induced because of an inequality in the number of persons of the two sexes, or because of peculiarities in the social order. While we do not always regard such a condition of affairs as moral, nevertheless it does not always impede spiritual or mental evolution. It is only when the sex embrace is used for psychic purposes that the greatest harm is done.

Thus there is a very great difference between polyandry and polygyny on one hand and the promiscuity permitted in tantric practices. Not only are there compensations in the former when we study conditions closely, but many sages and holy men have lived in countries permitting these institutions. While this is not an argument in their favor, it is wise to be cautious in criticizing them. On the other hand, promiscuity destroys psychic stability and so makes for shorter life, decrepit bodies and minds and lack of power. There is no doubt that India is suffering from this more than anything else, even with her great latent spirituality.

So when we consider all these aspects of psychism, we may see that it is quite proper, even necessary, to increase this energy to its fullest. If it be asked how it can be done, it may be accomplished in several manners. For instance, physical development of certain kinds brings with it some psychic development. This is especially true of dancers and athletes who accompany their exercises and activities with music or rhythmical movements, for rhythm is the greatest aid to psychic growth and conservation.

Mental education can build up considerably more psychic force which is often evident in the charm of personality. So by increasing the capacity of the intelligence we increase the psychic vitality. While the naive psychic may naturally possess many of the characteristics of the beings classified as jinn or genius, it is also possible for any person who rises in the scale of evolution to the degree that he possess faculties of the jinn to gain a corresponding increase in psychic power and ability so that this also will be comparable to the similar state of the denizens of the next world.

Many polished personalities, people of charm and wit, have come along this path. It is often quite natural and again it is cultivated. This is so different from the dry, sallow and lifeless character of the intellectual who has drawn all vitality into the sphere of the mind instead of leaning balanced existence. But regardless of this, practice of concentration alone, of cultivating an ideal and pursuing it, of remaining one-pointed and yet wide awake, in other words, of becoming and being intelligent, all of this greatly increases psychic power in a very fine manner with no detrimental results.

Moral power increases psychic power also. There are two or three types of this morality. The first is dependence upon one's own conscience. While the conscience of every person may differ in some respects from the conscience of every other person, yet it is true that if one follows his own inner feeling there is a gain in strength and this increases the psychic power.

There is still a greater gain when, instead of selecting and adhering always to a fixed standard, one endeavors to adjust one's life to a spiritual standard, to a code suggested by a sage or holy

personality. Then one can draw to oneself the spiritual and moral force from that one and this too builds up psychic energy. This is done to some extent in the more or less esoteric schools of Buddhism and also by the followers of other religions.

A person who is naturally good and kind, who has a sensitive heart, who is sympathetic and self-controlled, does not readily lose his energy. Besides this, silence brings power both in preventing any unnecessary loss and through meditation in restoring and increasing the latent reserve. There is an addition of cosmic energy with every reserve. There is an addition of cosmic energy with every inhalation, and this principle is involved in the Sufic practices of Khilvat and meditation.

Under either of these methods one gradually attains self-control and later may come to self-realization. When those stages are reached, one can readily protect oneself, prevent others from depriving him of life's portion and even, when he becomes wise, he learns to guard his forces as treasures. Yet this very form of conservation purifies the atmosphere around his personality and brings a sort of healing and spiritual solace to others.

It is the development of spiritual power which brings all power and magnetism and not only brings them but sustains them. This comes with the full awakening of the heart, the center of life. Then no one can take anything away and every breath in praise to God will increase this psychic vitality. This is the condition of the sage and holy men.

From this it can be seen that not only does the psychic sphere act as a bridge for the soul of man to enter into the body, in the sage psychic growth permits more of this divine life to pervade the earth plane. Thus we often see something of a child-like disposition in holy persons and in part this is the natural result of the genius qualities being permitted to flow into the physical body by this means. It is for this reason that there is a great spiritual advantage in the proper development of psychic power.

Good and evil can be found in anything in the universe and often this is because of man's own use or misuse. Bible teaches that God placed all things at man's feet. It is the knowledge of good and evil itself which prevents man from getting a full glimpse of Allah for then he is veiled under dualism and has not come into full realization. This wisdom teaching is beautifully covered in the allegory of Adam's temptation and expulsion from paradise. Certainly Adam had all psychic power, it was natural, but when he began to distinguish and especially when he began to appropriate it as a personal thing, that very act was the evil, engendering the ego and permitting every sort of suffering and danger in life.

Therefore while students on the spiritual path develop psychic power they do not deliberately strive for it. It comes naturally along with growth, along with the general evolution of the personality and the awaking of the higher self. In the Bible Christ has said: "For whosoever will save his life (psychic power) shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." That is to say, if man could come to the realization of the Christ-consciousness within himself, all psychic power and faculties would be his, whereas if he seeks these things as ends in themselves, even

the life force in him will ebb.

VIII

Besides the loss of psychic power with every breath and every activity during waking life, there are ways in which it can be increased, diminished or preserved. Generally speaking there is loss of psychic power whenever there is any concentration or attention upon it, whether this attention is given directly to the psychic or whether it affects that sphere indirectly. That is to say, in all walks of life, whenever there is mental loss, there is naturally some psychic loss, for when an object dims upon the mental plane, its shadow decreases: this means psychic diminution.

People who become mediums, whose interest is in what they call spiritualistic phenomena, suffer greater losses than they sometimes realize. Persons may be normal and good without knowing the laws of metaphysics and they do not know that concentration upon any object mentally may increase mental and psychic power while concentration upon the shadows of objects in the psychic sphere decreases that power. If an artist were always working for chiaroscuro effects, if he were always trying to paint shadows and determining the outlines of this subject-material rather than their substance, sooner or later his physical vision would be affected, he would not act as others and he could even reach a condition whereby he would recognize his own friends by their shadows or movements and no longer retain direct visualization.

And then what happens to these people? They put life into the shadows with their thoughts and as there is no real life in the shadow-world, only the reflection of life, they draw upon themselves for it, or else by their action they attract the lower elementary forces who can cover themselves with these shadows as masks. They then appear in the guise of actors, with the same sort of borrowed life as the actor has. In reality the role has no life apart from the actor, yet to the person watching the play, it is not the actor who is real, it is the dramatic character in whom he is interested. This is a form of obsession, sometimes very serious when it enters the world of phantasy. Spiritualists are prone to forget this and are caught in the by-play for which they themselves are responsible.

If the mind concentrates upon shadows instead of upon objects which have some aspect of reality, the mind can gain no positive knowledge. Instead of its sphere becoming a potential heaven, its surface becomes something like a cinema screen and its appreciation of time, space, color, quantity and quality may be dimmed. One cannot tell the size of an object by studying its one or many shadows and the knowledge gained by direct psychic envelopment is extremely limited.

When the sexual act is indulged in without concentration and mainly for the sake of pleasure there is also considerable loss. For instance, in marriage there can always be a mutual exchange, even when people are very active vitally. It is even preferable to permit birth-control where this increases devotion between husband and wife when alternatives might include extra-marital relations or perversions of any sort. However, all sex life brings the divine energy to the surface and means a

psychic loss although it may not involve any moral loss and can bring physical and moral gain. Especially is this true of bringing a child into the world when one should give more than the physical seeds, one should readily surrender both psychic and spiritual energy for that purpose.

To offset such losses, when there would be moral and physical gains, accompanied by psychic and mental loss, the mystics have discovered an important law:

Psychic loss can be interminably diminished by the maintenance of Purdah or Khilvat; psychic power can be replenished by meditation; psychic power can be increased through spiritual music.

The prevention of psychic loss is one of the subjects studied by Sufis and Vedantists and is considered very important by them. Among the Hindus it was carefully studied by the householders and some followers of Mohammed have given very strict adherence to the psychic laws laid down in the Hadith or scientific traditions. While the Buddhists practice celibacy somewhat, they spend more time in meditation and have their own methods of replenishing losses; this, of course, applies only to the spiritual schools, not to the generality.

While the study of psychic law is important it need not absorb all attention. It is only necessary to keep a few principles in mind and heart and when these are learned, especially when these are applied in the everyday life, there will be a very great gain.

Psychic power can be definitely increased by the repetition of sacred phrases and still more by chanting. These methods are used in one form or another by various mystical schools. In the Catholic Churches the mass has a value which can easily be underestimated. Some Buddhistic sects repeat sacred formulae many times; others chant whole sutras and either of these methods can be helpful. The **azan** or Islamic call to prayer, as well as the chief prayer, the Fateha, are very valuable, and the Jewish people have always ascribed the highest potency to their Shema. The ancient Zoroastrians considered every form of repetition of words important, and Mantra Yoga still has its devotees not only in India but in varied forms among the Buddhists and Sufis.

Of all methods, Sufis who have probably the most varied forms of training and who have been the most tolerant and inclusive, have found their Zikr practice the most valuable for stimulating the highest psychic training. It combines the song with repetition of a very sacred phrase. Whatever its theoretical importance the results can hardly be overestimated. If one should actually investigate the lives of the men who have performed Zikr in the various schools of Sufism, one could quickly see the enormous benefit for the young and old who sing and dance and chant together or alone. They, among all the peoples of the world, rise above the denseness of this earth, and miracles have become as commonplace among them.

Yet the greatest miracle is nothing more than this rejuvenation and transportation of psychic power. One would hardly want to call it a miracle, yet if there is anything worthy of such a name it is this. It brings immortality to earth and it would not be wrong if one said that some souls have chosen their

time of departure and carried themselves directly into Malakut (Heaven) by their own will, at a selected time and place, by this method. And just as the psychic world serves as a bridge from heaven to earth so there is sometimes another bridge which very few have walked over, from earth to heaven. This is that bridge and it is by this means that Enoch and Elijah and Kabir and a few others left this earth-plane.

A close study of psychism will reveal that its faculties and knowledge of it can be constantly increased when one is on the spiritual path, despite the possibility that little reference is made to this fact. While psychic power is no doubt the shadow of mental power, of moral power and even of spiritual power, when these are rightfully developed it is not wrong to attain to tremendous psychic ability. Considered from any other point of view, the teaching of Gautama Buddha would seem inconsistent for he taught his disciples to avoid anything of a psychic nature and yet it is also true that nowhere has this side of man reached a higher development than in the followers of this same teacher. This is because when one develops the highest faculties through inner growth, psychic expansion comes as a natural concomitant to this growth.

Naturally this approach is entirely different from that either of the followers of popular spiritualism or of the scientific investigators of the day, whatever be their reasons for the interest. The Sufi philosophers have not looked favorably on these methods because what these people call a development seems to the mystic a borrowing, and for this there will have to be a return in compensation in the future. As one cannot become wealthy by such a method, but can become wealthy by hard work, the spiritual life is regarded as vastly superior bringing with it many treasures, including these same psychic faculties and powers in their highest and grandest aspects.

The psychic world is as a treasure house wherein the spiritual and mental powers are the real treasures. A house is only a covering over the real valuables. Anyone could build a house and it would not be a treasure house unless it contained things of worth. At the same time the fact that an edifice held precious things would make it very important.

Despite the miraculous aspect of certain psychic faculties, they may really be weaknesses. A person can psychometrize a letter, but what right has one to psychometrize? Wherein has the moral right been obtained? As soon as any faculty is employed wrongly, immediately there is a loss, generally a karmic loss. Therefore the same ability which may seem a marvel can become a burden. Instead of being a blessing and a gift it makes one responsible, even inescapably responsible and instead of living a peaceful existence, the psychometric man or woman can become a thousand times more tormented than anybody else.

For psychic faculties of themselves do not increase understanding. One might see more, hear more, observe more, even know more, yet this would bring him no nearer to wisdom. Is not, then, the development of the heart's sensitivity to impression much better? Is not intuition vastly superior which raises one above the karmic sphere and thereby releases him from so much personal responsibility?

When the intuitions come to life, the mind is no longer distracted by the many thoughts or emotions or words of others that constantly reach one. The average man and woman is unable to shut out unfavorable impressions and enjoys neither rest nor peace. The spiritual student, through the practices that are taught him by his guru or sheikh knows how to protect himself against any intruding or undesirable forces and can quickly bring into play the heart vibrations and so help even those who may for the moment appear as his enemies.

Therefore clairvoyance and clairaudience as such are not particularly sought by the devotee. If they come, it is better that they come on a higher plane. The traveler on the spiritual path does not try to shut them out any more than he seeks to welcome them. When they come naturally they can be controlled and adapted to any situation in life.

In the case of the naive clairvoyant and clairaudient—who can see or hear readily because it is very natural—spiritual practices enhance these features, carrying them to the mental plane. Once centered there they can increase enormously in power, scope and practical application provided they are not used for personal gain. Insofar as any ability along these lines is moral and natural there can be no more harm than there is when the average person sees or speaks. And it is really better to learn to control any such faculties than to abort them. Whatever God has given to man is there for a purpose and it is the principal object in life to learn that purpose and to develop each faculty as a divine gift bestowed by the Grace of the Eternal.

Besides those who can see or hear with a keen sense, some spiritual students learn to function on the mental plane. Often this is due to the imagination and sometimes it comes with the inner initiations. This is quite apt to be true of artists and persons whose professions require strong concentrations; in any case it means the arousing or awakening of dormant faculties which the daily life has covered, else the so called practical education of the world has stultified.

Little children with angelic temperament sometimes preserve this ability and have a sort of spiritual clairvoyance. This is possible for everybody and it is not wrong to develop it to an unlimited extent. It has been said that psychic faculties can best be developed by paying little heed to them but rather by concentrating on mental, moral and spiritual growth. So the true spiritual forces come only at the command of one who has surrendered to God, whose ego has been effaced and who, by the removal of this deceptive lower self, becomes verily a master of the universe.

It is always to be remembered that the psychic plane is a shadow world and that the psychic forces really increase as the light of Intelligence is reflected in the personality. So the psychic shadow is to be regarded as the shadow of the mental light while the ego itself is the shadow of the spiritual light, caused not by light shining in the darkness but by light shining in the light, the different gradations of light causing a sort of illusory shadow. All real positive concentration is upon light and in the eternal progression of the soul it should always be upon greater and greater light, or as has been said, "Light and still more light."

This has been wonderfully presented in the Qur'an, in Sura XXIV, where the gracious Prophet has

explained it. He has called God the Light of the Heavens and earth. If one studies this Sura carefully and gives it proper meditation one will grow into the realization of light upon light in the heavens, referring to the spiritual and mental worlds, each having its light or lights, the stars and sun of this world being the reflections or correspondences of the higher realities.

After explaining the principles of spiritual light Mohammed, the Messenger of God, describes the condition of the infidels whom he compares to the water element. And he has well described their condition in verse 40 of this Sura XXIV, where one reads: "Or like the darkness on the deep sea when covered by billows riding upon billows, above which are clouds: darkness upon darkness. When a man reacheth forth his hand, he cannot nearly see it! He to whom God shall not give light, no light at all hath he!"

Undoubtedly this is the Islamic version of a condition to be found in the deeper hells wherein the Grace of God seems to be absent. Actually it is not absent but blind persons are unable to see. Much of the blindness of this world is not different, only what is expressed here symbolically becomes in the afterlife a reality.

By infidel is not meant unbeliever in the sense of follower of some other religions. It means rather one who has not sought God, who has followed what he has considered his own light, his own judgment—in others words his selfishness. This is the cause of all the tragedy of the world, that so many have been amused by the small loans that God has given them that they let their real treasures lay hidden. Christ also has explained this in his parable about the servants, one of whom increased his by far and another let his lay buried in the field.

This is the condition of those who think they are developing psychic faculties. All they have done is to bury their very small portion of heavenly treasures and so they are those of whom it is said: "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

X

The method by which the highest psychic power can be developed is presented by Mohammed in Sura XXIV, "Light," reference to which has already been given. In verse 35 it says: "God guideth whom He will to His Light, and God setteth forth parables to men, for God knoweth all things." That interpretation of this passage is that there is the intuitive faculty, the faculty of heart, which brings all light to men and brings all men to light and this is under the guidance of Allah. And when it is said that God speaks in parables, it means that the affairs of heart, the life of heart, the spiritual domain, cannot be understood logically. These things are either mysteries to the intellect, or else to limit their expression to words destroy their vital reality, their all inclusive signification.

The next verse of this Sura reads: "In the temples which God hath allowed to be reared, that His names may therein be remembered, do man praise Him morning and evening." This is a most

important passage. At the time when it was revealed there was only one mosque in the world. The temple to which he referred is the same as the temple to which Jesus Christ referred, that is to say, the living body. It is the body which is the temple of God and the heart which is the shrine of God, the Most High, where God's name is remembered and where man can praise Him morning and evening.

It is this passage which gives the authority for Zikr and which is the proof that the Prophet taught Zikr and Fikr and other spiritual practices of the Sufis. There is also a more interior meaning for when one is searching for God in the evening, the person has not yet found the light and the praise of God and the repetition of the Divine Name helps more than anything else in attaining this realization.

And when one has found God, one comes to the realization that the same practices are to be continued for thereby one sustains that condition and this is the best means for preserving the realization even in the midst of the daily life. Besides, one unifies all conditions of affairs and makes everything spiritual thereby and besides that it is such practices which enable one to give out spiritual life and inspirations to others and to heal and help the whole world.

This explanation is further corroborated by the next verse of the Sura which reads: "Hast thou not seen how all in the Heavens and in the Earth uttereth the praise of God?—the very birds as they spread their wings? Every creature knoweth its prayer and its praise! And God knoweth what they do." And as animals have the means of developing their own psychic power and fulfilling their obligations in life, so man has the means of stimulating much higher faculties, as much higher than the animal faculties, as he is beyond them in evolution.

The more we study this Sura, every line of which is most precious, the more we can perceive how psychic power and all power is developed, increased, magnified, evolved. We do not have to try anything ourselves; we do not, nay we should not, turn to the right or to the left. That is, we are not here to live for physical pleasure or for psychic intoxication. If that were so, if we followed such an existence we would receive the fate of those whom verse 56 of this Sura mentions: "Let not the infidels think they can weaken God on His own earth: their dwelling place shall be the Fire! And right wretched the journey."

"Why are such people called **infidels**, or **companions of the left path**? Because they do not seek God. They may say so in words, but in act and in fact they are interested in phenomena and in themselves. The philosopher, even though he be not a lover of God, even if he is not a devotee, at least seeks for order and principle in the universe; the search and not his own personality, absorbs his concentration. And in this pursuit the harm is comparatively slight; he will awaken when he finds himself facing some overpowering obstacle. That is his test and there is always hope for the progress of such persons.

We can now see why it is useless, perhaps even more useless than dangerous to study what the world calls psychic science according to the methods of the day. It is not truly a science any more

than the study of shadow forms would teach us art or science of photography or spectroscopy, let us say. Light is the subject matter for science and perhaps for all knowledge; we can also learn about heat and sound which are closely related to light, but the shadow, the phantasmagoria, the path of the echo, these have little value in our search for the understanding of the universe.

Even refutation of the psychic can become a danger. One does not destroy the shadow by emphasizing it. Shadow comes from being on the wrong side of light and silence on the matter or refusal to take cognizance of a situation is of little avail. The materialist may escape certain dilemma; if so it is because he will not progress, he will not look, he remains ignorant, he does not understand.

The seer has a very different attitude, for he both ignores and understands. The more clearly he perceives the cosmos, the better his ability to grasp all that God has created. He knows where to place value and where not to place them. So it can be maintained that he knows better than anybody else how to increase psychic power. He has learned that the spiritual science and the methods whereby this may be done can be accomplished.

At the same time there may be little taught directly on the matter in the spiritual sciences. If one were given a vast sum of money, say a million dollars and were also to receive twenty cents or a shilling, one would hardly refer to the latter amount. If he did he would be regarded as a fool; it is so very little, so unimportant in comparison with the vast wealth that he has accumulated. Even so is the psychic gift in comparison with the many blessings, the many faculties and powers, the great insight and understating that come to the yogi, to the spiritual traveler, to the muni, to the seer who has attained.

This will enable us to come to a proper evaluation of the psychic. Compared to the physical it may have a great deal to offer and the effect of the psychic world upon the physical can be very very great. The spiritual teaching on this matter is not new, it can be found in the New Testament as well as in many sacred traditions and works. It is true that poor translations or misunderstanding on the part of savants has often marred versions of sacred books studied by the laity.

Perhaps this were better so. The finest way to come to an understanding of sacred scriptures and the teaching of the Holy Ones who have appeared from time to time to guide and help humanity, is to develop the intuitive side of life and to awaken to inner understanding. Besides, may it not be a blessing that the teaching of Scriptures are not laid bare before the unworthy? With the present condition of mankind, would not many so enticed thereto not to increase devotion or understanding, but to seek to develop miraculous and strange powers; not to learn to love another more, but to be able to produce phenomena that would entice another to become one's follower, or to gain admiration from the ignorant. Verily, even in ignorance is there wisdom!

We may therefore memorize the chief principles and laws of psychism, and need not look beyond the sacred studies and the commentaries thereon for the best information. When we shall have left this world, it will not avail much to have a good knowledge of corpses. As Jesus Christ has said,

“Let the dead bury their dead;” let the sleepers and the drummers be troubled with their fancies. And let us praise God and follow His Prophets and Saints and Seers into the land of the living in the herenow as well as in the hereafter.