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Unseen Forces

CHAPTER 1

THE CREATURES OF THE ELEMENTS

Ancient philosophers populated the elements of Nature with races and species completely unknown to ordinary people. Sages of all ages affirmed that Nature works through intelligent forces, not through mechanical laws. Upon this hypothesis, the doctrine of Nature Spirits and elemental larvae was built. Paracelsus, called the Swiss Hermes, and the first great physician of modern times, offers us the most complete analysis of these strange creatures that live, move, and whose being is neither seen nor understood by mortal man. Despite seeing their works every day, we have never been taught to recognize the workers who, day and night, act through the subtlest forces of Nature.

These elemental spirits can be divided into three groups:

1. The elementals of the four elements or ethers, which are commonly called the Spirits of Nature.
2. Elementals created by man on the astral and mental planes.
3. The Dweller of the Threshold, or individual elemental.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

According to ancient doctrines, the tangible universe is composed of four principal elements. These four elements are governed by the Lords of Form, sometimes referred to as the four-headed Cherubim. These include the four-headed Cherubim stationed at the gates of the Garden of Eden; the four-headed Cherubim who, with his other brother of creation, kneels on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant; the four beasts of the Apocalypse; the four aspects of the great Assyrian sphinx; and humankind.

The Babylonian bull—all symbolize these four primordial elements. Since time immemorial, humankind has divided form into four fundamental essences. These four essences are the basis of all things knowable by the consciousness centers of the material human body. All things on a higher plane than these four essences can only be known through spiritual vision. All the countless and complex forms that appear in this world as products of the geometric emanations of the Lords of Form, or the body-building Devas, are the expression of these four L-shaped currents of life. These currents are called the rivers of life that flow from the gardens of the Lord, and their source is the great creative hierarchy known to the ancients as the Kings of Edom.

Above the cosmic root substance, physical bodies are animated by these life-giving currents of ether. Ether is that part of the body of the Universal Logos.

(or something higher that we do not know) that occupies the position of bearer or receptacle, because through it passes in four currents the power of the creative Logos. From its essences come the four creative principles that currently form the basis of the fourfold human vehicle:

1. Physical or terrestrial;
2. Ethereal or aquatic;
3. Astral the fiery one;
4. Mental or aerial.

These four vehicles, which the ancients symbolized by the arms of the cross, form the basis of the sacred doctrine of the crucifixion. As they constitute the primordial foundation of the body, they are under the control of the four qualities and building signs of the body known as the four fixed signs of the zodiac. These are the three crucifixions present in the zodiac: the cross of the four cardinal signs, the cross of the four fixed signs, and the cross of the four common signs. In turn, these represent the three principal crossroads of vital forces in the human body. The entire etheric world, with its many intersecting currents, has its seat in the solar plexus and the spleen of the human body. It is often called the fiery sea, or the basin of purification, because in the depths of its waters the soul, on its pilgrimage toward immortality, must be cleansed. These four elements are at the foundation, as is the life force behind them, of the four physical material elements: earth, fire, air, and water. The power of the invisible causal worlds works through the four material elements to manifest itself in bodies, cells, and molecular combinations.

Similar to what occurs in each kingdom of Nature where a series of life forms unfold, and which is the plane of a great natural outpouring, it is asserted that these four divisions of ether, which manifest in matter as four elements, are inhabited by groups of intelligences that operate through these elemental essences. According to the ancients, these elementals were created from a single substance: the ether or element in which they exist. They do not possess a composite body and therefore cannot attain immortality, since they have no other essence of germinal life than that of their respective elemental essence. On the other hand, as beings composed of a single substance, they are free from the destructive and disharmonious influences of opposing currents that affect composite bodies, and thus can live for hundreds—some for thousands—of years.

Classical literature contains many references to these elementals. In Pope's poem, *Rape of the Lock*, The elementals play the most important role. In the *Count of Gabal*, In the remarkable book by the Abbé de Villars, there is also a comprehensive thesis on those strange creatures of Nature; those that present varied shapes and sizes, according to their work and duties. Likewise, their bodies possess different degrees of density, depending on the element in which they operate.

Paracelsus and the Count of Gabalis divide the Nature Spirits into four classes:

1. *Gnomes*, the spirits of the earth;
2. *Undines*, the spirits of the water;
3. *Salamanders*, the spirits of fire; and
4. *Sylphs*, the spirits of the air.

THE GNOMES

Under the general heading of gnomes, we find those beings known by names such as goblins, sprites, imps, woodland sprites, dwarfs, rock men, and many other similar names. Gnomes are the densest of all Nature Spirits, and consequently, they are more subject to the laws of mortality than other spirits. They live in the element of earth and are said to work on rocks and, to some extent, on trees and flowers. Some types of gnomes dwell in old, ruined castles. This is one of the reasons why old buildings are covered with ivy and vines, for gnomes love to spread the beauties of Nature. Some gnomes reach a great size; others have the power to change their size at will. Most, however, resemble dwarfs in stature, with rather plump bodies, large heads, and waddling gaits, their garments growing as an integral part of them. According to Paracelsus, they marry and raise children, and live in a strange world that the peoples of the North call *Elfheim*. They are said to come from the earth and to be able to penetrate to its very core. They also live in caves and shape stalactites and stalagmites, while others work coral and mother-of-pearl on the seabed. These little men are often seen by children, who lose their clairvoyance around the age of seven. Sometimes they are seen in the forests storing provisions for the winter. They are very industrious little men and are in charge of shaping and forming the earth. Under the direction of the wisest gnomes, they attend to all the solids, bones, and other tissues of the human body, working on them and composing them. No broken bone could heal without the help of the gnomes.

The king of the gnomes is called *Gob*, term from which the English word derives *goblin* (Goblin). It is said that each of these elemental realms has its abode in one of the four corners of creation; and the gnomes, who work with the most crystallized of all the elements, were granted the northern corner of creation as their home. The ancients held that gnomes rule the secret treasures and hidden things of the earth, and that those who seek material treasures hidden in Nature must first win the support and assistance of the gnomes, who can at will reveal them or conceal them in such a way that they are impossible to discover. Gnomes are very avaricious, greedy, and fond of good food; on the other hand, they work incessantly, are very patient and faithful, and in our world would be called steadfast and sober. Occasionally they hold great conclaves in the heart of some shadowy forest or among the crags; and in the marvelous story of Rip Van Winkle, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, They are accurately portrayed. These industrious little beings play a very important role in the development of humankind, and they assist us in our work. They operate intuitively through the elements; and although they possess a certain intelligence, it is far inferior to our own. They are incapable of expressing themselves or manifesting themselves through any substance other than an element. The hypothetical ether that fills all solid crystallized substances as the first etheric essence is the only substance in which they can work.

Because they live in darkness and are prone to sadness, gnomes are said to produce certain effects on the human constitution, and to govern Saturnian melancholy, anguish, and discouragement.

THE UNDINES

Under the classification of undines are known nymphs, naiads, sea nymphs, sirens, harpies, daughters of the sea, and sea goddesses of the ancients. These are the elementals whose home is the element of water: the oceans, lakes, streams, and rivers of the earth. They govern the fluids or vital forces of the human body. In the same way that gnomes are represented Associated with the sign of Taurus in the zodiac, undines are represented by Scorpio, as they are connected to life and the vital forces of Nature. They are renowned for their beauty, and in their realm, beauty is apparently the fundamental principle of power. Many of their qualities are similar to those of gnomes, since they live in a world of their own. As a rule, they are considered friendly and it is believed to be fortunate to see them, and they serve humankind in the spirit of love and sincerity. Like gnomes, they have their own masters; individuals who possess an unusual degree of superiority. Their supreme ruler, *Necksa*, He is the one they obey and revere most highly. All these beings have knowledge of God, revere Him, and strive to obey Him in every way possible. The undines were given the western corner of creation, and it is said that they sometimes whisper in the west wind, which is the source of their power. They work with the creatures of the sea and are known to play an important role in the production of rain.

Medieval philosophers (especially Paracelsus) believed that storms were caused by battles fought between Natural Spirits; that the clash of their qualities produced great disturbances in the heavens, which we call tempests and cataclysms.

Undines are approximately the same size as humans and are usually symbolized as maidens dressed in sea foam, riding seahorses, or as mermaids. Composed of a more subtle essence and a finer quality of ether, undines live much longer than gnomes, but they too are subject to the laws of mortality. They are particularly interested in plants and flowers, probably because the etheric double of the plant is the same type of ether as their own. They are cheerful beings, and the quality of their emotions is more vital than astral. Because of their vital temperament, they exert considerable influence on the vital temperament of human beings.

THE SALAMANDERS

The ancients held salamanders in the highest esteem, calling them the Kings of Fire because of their fiery appearance, their immense strength and power, and the important role they play in human affairs. No spark or fire can be kindled on Earth without the aid of salamanders, for they are the spirits of fire. Those who possess the ability to study the phenomena of clairvoyance can see the great kings of the Fire twisting and turning in the flames, especially during a great conflagration. Many of the ancients believed that fire salamanders were gods, claiming that their emperors were the strings of these fire kings.

Salamanders are in charge of the emotional essences of humankind and live in the third ether, which reflects the qualities of the astral plane or world of fire. Their shape and size are highly variable, and they are sometimes seen crawling amidst fire. They were known to the ancients as great giants encased in armor of flames, which they raised using the essences of the fire element. They maintain a close connection with all sacred

organizations that use fire on the altar, and there is no doubt that they are identical to the flaming giants of Scandinavia. They particularly enjoy incense, whose smoke allows them to assume the forms of certain bodies.

Salamanders are the strongest and most dynamic of all the elementals. A great similarity exists between them and the Luciferian angels, and also with the great fire Devas of India. According to popular belief, they dwell in volcanoes and the earth's igneous strata, and from there they wield their authority. Their flaming king, *Gin*, He is a wonderful, fiery being who inspires reverent fear, and he rules his subjects with a rod of flames.

Although dangerous to human life, salamanders, when understood, are very beneficial. They are quick to act, tempestuous, and emotional, but very energetic. Some can reach an impressive size and resemble the giants of prehistoric times, while others are very small and barely perceptible to the naked eye. They are known to dwell in the south and can be felt in the warm winds of the equator. They possess a fiery temperament and influence, to some extent, all individuals endowed with this temperament. If this quality is allowed to become the controlling force of one's life, the salamanders, working through it, bestow upon all who suffer this influence a tempestuous nature, a fiery temper, and uncontrollable passions.

Due to the thinness of the element they inhabit, salamanders are very rarely seen. They live to an advanced age, and many survive for thousands of years before finally dissolving into the primordial essence from which they had differentiated.

THE SYLPHS

The inhabitants of the fourth ether (the finest and highest of all) are called sylphs, or spirits of the air. They are also known as knights of the night, wind-born, storm angels, air devas, mind-born, and by various other names. The ancients believed they dwelled in the clouds. However, further study has shown that this group of elementals (which includes fairies and all the iridescent winged beings mentioned in children's fairy tales) actually reside on mountaintops rather than in the air itself.

Sylphs live and have their being in their own ether, and, like gnomes, they multiply and live in their own world, where they build their castles of air with the subtle element that is the reflection of the mental plane. Their appearance is highly variable, because some resemble human beings but with slightly different proportions. They are known to be cheerful, eccentric, capricious, and fickle, and they wander about. They are always busy and work with the thoughts of living beings. They collaborate with the airy elements of the human body, such as the gases and ethers generated within it, while salamanders work through the blood and the fiery elements of the body. *Paralda*, Their leader, as is known, lives on the highest mountain on Earth. The sylphs exert a powerful influence on all things in which air is an important factor. The next two thousand years will be an aerial age in which the influence of the sylphs will be especially evident, and the conquest of the air has much to do with the discovery of these latent and hidden facts.

The ancients claimed that wars, plagues, fires, earthquakes, and other cataclysms were caused by vast armies of elementals marching against one another, armed to the teeth, battling within the elements of Nature. Thus, thunder and lightning were said to be caused by battles between sylphs and salamanders, while rain and storm surges were attributed to

sylphs and undines. Movements of bodies on earth, avalanches, and subterranean noises were attributed to quarrels between salamanders and gnomes. Generated by gunpowder explosions, salamanders frequent battlefields. Like great armies of fiery red beings, they also feed on human passions, becoming obsessions in the human mind and expressing themselves through the receptive ethers of the body.

The four groups—gnomes, undines, salamanders, and sylphs—are the natural inhabitants of the etheric elements. Their work is carried out through what is called the moist body of the earth and the Planetary Logoi, and they also have their corresponding poles in the human body.

In addition, there are other groups of elementals, some products of natural phenomena, and others generated by humans. Among the latter are the elementals of thought and emotion, phantoms, specters, the Threshold Dweller, and larvae. The last group (also known as etheric shells) consists of the bodies of individuals who, in the course of death, passed to the astral plane. By discarding the etheric vehicle shortly after doing so with the physical form, they leave it behind in the ether, where it slowly disintegrates. These shells underlie a large percentage of mediumistic manifestations, a fact that can only be determined by examining the medium's eyeballs. These remnants are often used by elementals and larvae as temporary vehicles of manifestation while they float in the ether in the process of disintegration. Due to the subtle structure of these etheric remnants, many years are often required for disintegration to take place. Hence, armies of etheric bodies float like splinters of wandering timbers in the sea of ethereal moisture, discarded by their original owners who long ago passed on to other planes of life.

CHAPTER 2

NATURAL PRINCIPLES

Nature Spirits are sometimes visible to the naked eye, but they can only be mastered by those who control the elements in which these entities dwell. Consequently, humankind's power over these elements grants it dominion over these realms. According to the ancients, elementals were originally under the dominion of Adamic man and are always subject to the one who owns their substance. They serve sincerely, though they do not understand or recognize the needs of the race they serve. Guided by higher hierarchies, these beings are the intelligent foundation of natural phenomena and help implant qualities and powers within plants, minerals, animals, and humans.

Many readers will reluctantly accept the reality of these entities. But since they constitute a part of the great hidden hierarchy and are the embodiment of natural principles, it is necessary that we grant them some attention and study. Under certain conditions, these elementals bind themselves to humankind and serve them faithfully and completely, as occurred in the case of Socrates' demon. Under other conditions, they were mistaken for angels, demons, and other supernatural beings. It is also believed that they exist in essence within the chemical bodies of Nature. They are the elementals not only of our Earth and the planetary chain, but also of other planets and solar systems. The fundamental constitutional difference between elementals and humankind lies in the fact that the evolutionary life of which we are a part is composed of complex organisms formed by the spirit and its chain of vehicles, while the composition of elementals is nothing more than the ether from which they are formed. Hence, the only evolution they can undergo is the evolution of their own ether, from which it is impossible for them to dissociate.

Virtually all the world's occult wisdom is based on the knowledge of the four ethers and their powers as factors in the unfolding of combinations of forms. The ethers in the bodies of minerals, plants, animals, and humans are the basis for the differentiation of these kingdoms of life. Without their vital principle (which is, in truth, the Hiram Abiff of Freemasonry), the construction of the temple of the ages could not proceed.

Among the ancient Eastern peoples, the doctrine of the four creations taught that from the body of Brahma, the concrete Deity, four sons were born, representing the visible races of the earth. From Brahma's feet was born the black man, or the physical earth, which is commonly called the footstool of God. From Brahma's chest was born the brown man, who represented ether or the ethereal emanation of Nature. From Brahma's hands (with their power of action) was born the red man, who represents the principles of movement and emotion, construction and destruction, action and reaction. From Brahma's mouth was born the white man, the Brahmin, who is the spiritual and mental man.

These four elements constitute the four emanations of the Cosmic Egg. Eastern

traditions sometimes divide the universe into five divisions, symbolized by the five fingers of a human hand. Hindus recognize a fifth division extending from the base of the nose to the crown of the head. Human evolution consists of the passage of consciousness through the four elements, so wonderfully symbolized in ancient initiations.

First Initiation. The destruction of the Matter Dragon.

This is the triumph of discrimination over the vehicles of Maya, and the liberation of Nature's chemical substances, with their corresponding law of crystallization. This also consists of overcoming the law of inertia and physically passing through a wall of stone. This battle is won by means of the sword Excalibur, which is given to the king by the hand of an undine who draws it from the waters of the vital ether.

Second Initiation. The rescue of the Pearl of Great Price from the ocean of living substances.

This Rhine gold is guarded by the angels and guardians of the body's vital forces. Under the direction of the second group of elementals (already described as water spirits) are the vital forces of Nature, which they manipulate under the direction of higher hierarchies. This second initiation is performed by burning water with the flaming sword of the four-headed Cherub, the one facing upwards in the brain. In this initiation, the candidate learns to cast away the sea of fire and receive the blessing of holy water (representing the vital forces of their own body), after which they pass beneath the sea and learn to unravel the mystery of water, which sprang from the chest of Brahma.

Third Initiation. The passage of the Flaming Ring.

In this initiation, the candidate crosses the line separating the two highest elements from the two lowest in their effort to separate the soul from the animal body. This initiation is explained in the legend of Siegfried and Brunhilde. The candidate receives the blessing of fire, incorporates the power of the salamander into their conscious vehicle, and places themselves under the direct ray of Leo, the fire king of the temple. They learn to pass through the flames and also to govern the flames of their own body. During this process, they are taught to apply the gentle heat of the alchemist, which, after passing through the spine, hatches the egg of Brahma within their own body, thus releasing the serpent from its resting position and compelling it to direct its fire upward to the Tree of Life. Under this guidance, they attain the first mystical degree. If they remain in this state, they become a mystic and a power of the flame path of the heart, and wear the purple robe of Christ.

Fourth initiation. The ascent along the path of spiritual fire.

In this trial, the candidate attains the power to consciously pass through the spiritual atmosphere and incorporates into their vehicle the active functional power of the sylphs, or spirits of the air. They achieve the power to know the atmospheric principles of Nature and also the conscious functioning of the fourth plane of Nature through the aid of the fourth elemental essence within them. In Northern myths, they ride the eight-legged horse to reach heaven; for many ages, the number eight symbolized the path of spiritual fire within humankind. In this way, they combine the four elements into the power of the mind, which can be harnessed through the fourth ether, and this is the highest form of consciousness that we currently enjoy.

All these initiations are only possible through the interpenetration of elemental essences with the human organism. During these initiations, the individual learns to master the elements and the various groups of intelligences that inhabit them. In this text, we are considering only one group of these inhabitants: the Nature Spirits.

Listing them briefly, the elements are as follows (starting with the lowest):

1. Basics, atomic ether (gnomes) highest phase is expressed in crystallization.
2. Moist ether (undines) that expresses itself as the water of life, the divine Mother Isis of all things.
3. Astral ether (salamanders) that is expressed in all movements and perceptions of the senses.
4. Mental ether (sylphs) that is expressed as the basis of mnemonic perception and reasoning intellect.

These four ethers represent the channels for the expression of the forces of the four worlds of Nature through which man evolves today. ***The ether is not itself a world, but merely a substance capable of transporting or perpetuating the product of some other sphere.*** The ancients referred to the ether as the hypothetical mirror of eternity, because it reflects the worlds of Nature in a concrete form, vitalizing and impregnating this form with the sparks of life that it contains within itself.

When the priest raises his hand in blessing, he holds two fingers raised and two lowered. The two lowered fingers represent the elements of earth and water; the two raised fingers represent the elements of fire and air; while the thumb represents Akasha, or spirit. In this way, the priest imparts the blessing of the four ethers, without which consciousness is impossible, and whose influence is the basis of growth, redemption, and regeneration.

CHAPTER 3

MENTAL AND ELEMENTAL FORMS GENERATED BY EMOTIONS

Man was granted, like his God, the gift of being a creator. The spark of life within him is capable of bestowing eternal life upon the indifferent particles that exist in nature. In other words, within man there is a touchstone that transforms into a substance similar to himself everything that comes into contact with him. Just as the universe is filled with the sparks from the wheels of God, so too are the elements of nature filled with the sparks that emanate from the wheels of life, twisting and turning within the lowest organisms of nature. Man is a god in the making; he is far closer to divinity than he believes or than he chooses to believe. The infinite desire to create beats in his blood in the same way it does in the being of the Deity; in every moment of his life he expresses the divine qualities of creation. He not only creates beings like himself and perpetuates his species through natural law, but he is also a creator on the highest planes of nature. In the same way that his physical organism reproduces beings similar to himself, other children are also born from his being.

Returning to the four creations of Brahma's body, we can now say that from the symbolic substances of Brahma's feet (material earth), Brahma's thighs (ethereal water), Brahma's chest (astral fire), and Brahma's brain (mental air), the quaternary vehicle is modeled, through which the spiritual ego can function respectively in the physical, etheric, astral, and mental worlds. Through the generative powers of the physical world, man helps to form the physical bodies of the living beings who accompany him in life. In the same way, he is able to direct the planes of substance that serve to express other waves of purely physical, evolving life. In the third world, where the red man was born of Brahma, a great stream of beings, created by himself, emanates from Brahma within man, beings very similar to the children of the physical body produced in this world. His responsibility toward these beings is as great as toward those of his own flesh and blood who grow up around him in the form of children and descendants. We cannot understand why these children are invisible to the normal eye of the physical world. The trained clairvoyant, however, is able to see them and understands that we are now populating this world with children who will grow up to be its future citizens, just as surely as we populate the astral plane with the children of our emotions—strange and fiery creatures born from our own emotional body, whose swirling apex is located in the liver. This body is the Lion of the Cherubim, and from it pours forth into the world the progeny of the emotional plane.

OUR ASTRAL CHILDREN

(The Astral World is referred to as a plane of nature)

Human passion, compassion, emotion, and desire are the qualities that align the individual's body with the corresponding body of Macrocosmic Man. God, or Brahma, has a sevenfold constitution. For each of his bodies, there is a vibratory pole or vortex in reciprocity with the human body, these poles being centers of activity that correspond to the great centers of the planes of Universal Man. By analogy, there is no doubt that the planets in our chain are the permanent seed atoms of Universal Man, and that each atom is the center of a sevenfold system of spheres or globes composed of varying degrees of density. In Universal Man, these bodies are called planes of Nature; in the lower man, these planes are called bodies. Currently, we can only perceive the waves of life that traverse the seven spheres, those that harmonize with material creation. It can be safely said, however, that in the Greater Creation, Brahma created waves of life in each of his planes (or bodies), and that the invisible elements of Nature are populated with races, orbs, chains, and so on, which pass through the sevenfold chain of manifestation, none of these creations being aware of or comprehending the existence of any of the others, or being comprehended by any other. Since this is true of Universal Man, and since the law of analogy is an infallible guide, we can safely assert that man (the lesser universe) not only carries out the work of physical creation but also gives rise to a complex series of mental and astral creations that the trained seer is able to study at first glance and whose attributes he can classify.

We now present a summary of some of its most outstanding features: Each plane of Nature corresponds to one of the vehicles of humankind. Evolution consists of successively raising the center of life consciousness from one plane to another through the gradual harmonization of consciousness with the vibratory speed of each plane.

In the Western world, the physical plane is the world of reality, since the consciousness of its inhabitants is concentrated solely on material things, leaving the centers of the senses imprisoned in the visible and physically tangible.

For us, the physical world is the only existing reality because we know the external world only through the vibratory speed of sensory perception; and our speed of sensory perception causes us to harmonize with the lowest plane—the feet of Brahma—the level of the *Sudra*, or servants.

In Nature, there is a world or plane (one of the bodies of Brahma) with which humankind harmonizes through the vibratory speed of the sutratmic emotional atom. The rotation of the atoms produces a vibrational speed, and each of these seed atoms vibrates at a different pitch. For those capable of understanding, and whose senses have achieved the necessary harmonization, these seed atoms intone a mystical song whose notes sound like the thunderous tones of a colossal organ of Nature. Never ceasing their marvelous rotational movement, they join the entirety of the celestial symphonies of the moving spheres. In a more moderate form, They intone the song emitted by the planets and in this way whisper the sacred name of the Most High, that wonderful Being that is composed of all the sparks of life that revolve in the infinite spiral of vibratory sound.

From the physical body of man extends an egg-shaped aura, with its widest part at the bottom. This aura, commonly called the astral body, is a series of swirling emanations in which the rudiments of the organs can be discerned in spirals and rotating wheels of colored light. This egg-shaped body extends thirty to thirty-five centimeters beyond the physical form and is the vehicle of conscious expression that harmonizes man, the little god, with the emotions of the Creator. Like the red planet Mars (which is its fundamental note), this body

shines with opalescent hues and colors, predominantly pink, violet, and orange. This body belongs to both the organism and the physical body, and we function within it for many years after the death of our physical form.

This astral body expresses all the feelings, emotions, desires, hatreds, fears, excesses, and active qualities of the human organism. From it perpetually spill forth into the astral plane of Nature the elementals created by humankind that inhabit that plane in the great universe.

The ancients divided the astral plane into two large regions: *Location* and *Devacham*. These words express the qualities of this world more adequately than the terms of Western languages. The translation *Location* signifies, first and foremost, the world of Compensation. It was identified with purgatory by the religious organizations of Christendom and is composed of the three grossest planes of the astral world. It is important to understand that the so-called purgatory of the ancients is many times more subtle in its atomic principles than the physical world and that it interpenetrates physical matter. Although we may not be aware of it, the eternal flames of hell are in our midst, invisible, unknown, and absolutely harmless, because we operate at a different vibrational level.

In this lower division of the astral plane are poured the elementals generated by human emotions. Our hatreds, fears, and excesses are thus stagnated in the three lower planes of the astral world. There the clairvoyant can see the fruit of human degeneration and the offspring born from the animal body of man. These creations are often strange contradictions of what a person would have others believe, for they show not what is apparent, but the secret excesses of their life. Like streams of demons and monsters, such as those that haunt the dreams of opium addicts or flash before the eyes of drunkards, we see the offspring born in the lowest place of God's fiery world. They spring from us in an unceasing and infinite stream, and nourish that seething multitude of fiery beings who destroy one another in that world of darkness. This is indeed Dante's Inferno. *Location*, In the land of sin, man must meet his creations face to face and confront the children of his vices.

Humankind has little understanding of the immortality it is capable of bestowing upon its creations. There is an apocryphal legend of Jesus that says that as a child he would mold clay doves to play with and release them into the air, giving them life so they could fly to heaven. In the same way, each of us, with the power of immortality within our soul, grants life to the substances of Nature, molding them in the expression of our temperaments and personalities, and casting them into the subtle essences of existence where they float for countless ages, each carrying the blessings or curses with which they were endowed by us.

WAYS OF THINKING

Thoughts are the geometric emanations of the mental body. They germinate and are vitalized through the union of the mental plane with the physical brain, which, like a father and mother, give birth to a child: a thought. In order to think, the entity must have within itself a center of conscious power, a subrahedral vortex with the same vibrational frequency as the mental plane. Around this center, it constructs the mental aura, which consists of an egg-shaped vehicle, sometimes with uniform points and other times with a slightly wider upper end. This ovoid, in harmony with Saturn (the one born of the mind), is a dark indigo

color, but it is traversed by mental forms of various colors and generally has a beautifully scalloped border of golden light, which sometimes turns green or orange. This body, which is the vehicle of consciousness on the mental plane, is the highest we are currently capable of constructing, since the vortices of the higher bodies are still dormant.

The Masters of Wisdom (the highest initiates of our life wave) act in these mental bodies, which some of them are able to mold into close semblance of the human form. These are the bodies from which thought forms, strange geometric emanations, and many waves and rays of various colors arise. These are also the children of man; and having created them, he bears the responsibility for their existence, since he has no power to prevent them from going about in the spirit of their creator.

We are surrounded by emanations from our own bodies, which constantly spread into the infinite reservoirs of energy, both constructive and destructive. These energy currents are the result of having vitalized our emotions and thoughts, thereby granting them the power of our immortality.

DEVACHAN

In the East, it is called *Devachan* to the home of the Devas, an important race of spiritual beings, or rather high-order astral creations that never appear on the physical plane, but who continually act in their astral bodies and occasionally in their mental bodies. Sometimes the Devas are associated with salamanders, but this is incorrect, as any scholar who carefully examines this matter will readily understand. The ancients recognized three groups of Devas:

1. The formless Devas of the highest mental planes, whose vehicles are formed from the cloudless night of the Arupa substance, abstract mental essence;
2. The incarnate Devas, who are the great beings who dwell in the Rupa, or the plane of mental forms composed of concrete thinking matter similar in texture to thought forms;
3. The Devas of fire, or the inhabitants of *Devachan*, the highest astral plane.

The Devas are part of the great group of spiritual beings who assist in carrying out the directives of the Planetary Logos. They are wondrous beings endowed with great wisdom, glory, and power, and they never appear on the physical plane. Their knowledge is seemingly limitless, and seeing one is an unforgettable experience. They form a group of instructors for humanity on the higher planes of Nature. These beings are emanations from the waves of creation and evolve as offspring cast forth from the superphysical bodies of the deities. Some are called the "sweat-born"; others, "fire-born." In many ancient doctrines, they were called "blood-born," and in others, "mind-born."

Just as these beings are the mind-born Sons of God, so too are thought-forms and astral elementals, mind-born children and fire-born children of human beings. Humankind bears responsibility for these strange creatures that float in space and battle for countless years before finally dissolving into the essences of God's body. If humanity possessed the power of immortal creation, it would populate the elements with these demons. But since it

has not yet learned to do so, therein lies its salvation.

CHAPTER 4

GHOSTS AND SPECTERS

In addition to the living inhabitants of the elements, there is a class of larvae commonly called shadows, *ghosts* the *spectra*. We will now group under the single title of ghosts both disembodied spirits and lifeless shells that float in the essences of the superphysical planes. This is incorrect, because in truth the word ghost (ghost in English) derives from the word guest, It signifies a passing shadow or the reflection cast by light in the surrounding darkness. Jehovah, the God of form, like Shiva of India (the third aspect of the Trimurti) and Osiris (the third aspect of the Egyptian Trinity), is represented as the Lord of shadows or apparitions of the underworld. In reality, all bodies are phantoms because they are specters of the real. That which is a shadow of the eternal is called a phantom or specter, and has no reality except through the reflection of life.

At night, in cemeteries, spheres of phosphorescent light and undulating phosphorescent hangings can be seen in the air; for when the human body disintegrates, it creates a luminous mist. Ancient peoples called this luminous mist a shadow, or apparition. They also said that the shadows of men walked the paths of their past, like the ghost of Hamlet's father wandering the crenellated walls of his castle.

Generally, we can divide the ghosts that transmit at night into two general classes. First, there are the disintegrating bodies of disembodied intelligences. Man does not die only once in Nature, but many times. He discards not only a physical vehicle, but also an etheric body, an astral body, and finally, a mental body. These are abandoned, the densest first, like the layers of an onion. When cast out of the spiritual monad, each of these remnants floats in its own essence of existence for a considerable time before completely disintegrating, for the subtle essences of nature preserve the bodies composed of them for countless years, just as alcohol preserves meat. The essences of Nature are composed of slowly decomposing bodies that were discarded after their experiences had incorporated them into the spiritual organisms of man.

Within these essences of Nature also dwell beings who clothe themselves in these slowly dissolving bodies, like an actor donning a costume or wearing a mask. These disguised beings are generally the elementals of the ether. The phantoms that are seen are generally ethereal bodies from which spiritual consciousness has fled, and which are sometimes dragged before the eyes of men, like the wreckage of a shipwreck floating on the sea, partly animated by the subtle substances of the ethers, or are vitalized (sometimes humanized) by an intelligence from one of these subtle planes.

People say, "The vision I saw wasn't a floating corpse; it was moving, raising its hands, looking at me." They don't understand that this mass of ethereal protoplasm that crawls and moves is floating on the surface in the middle of a sea of ether. If someone could

walk on the ocean floor and see the undulating branches of seaweed stand out vaguely in the pale green light, they would see a substance that is in itself incapable of locomotion or animation beyond the vital principle of propagation. This substance undulates and moves, twists and turns as if it were alive. Long strands of seaweed, resembling the body of a boa, undulate their sinuous branches, just as ghosts that appear at night point their fingers or fix their glassy eyes on the gazing victim. The movement doesn't originate in the thing we see moving, but is the result of the movement of external forces.

Only those who are conscious in the lower planes of the ethereal worlds can understand what it means to see those floating debris, being dragged along, always being dragged along, becoming increasingly blurred, and many years later - sometimes centuries - a strange face, so blurred that it is barely visible, signals the final disintegration of the ethereal spectrum.

The etheric plane actually belongs to the physical world. It is bound to the physical sphere insofar as it is, in reality, the mold in which its dense part was cast, just as the physical anatomy of man is actually molded in the etheric double. This etheric vehicle is purely a physical substance, much more tenuous than the solids, liquids, and gases we perceive. It is more or less bound to the physical body, sometimes disintegrating with it, but generally remains distinct from the substance of the astral world. The etheric body wanders near or over the grave where the dense body has been placed, and sometimes this leads to a condition of attachment to the earth. To prevent this possibility, ancient occultists cremated the physical body. When this is done, nothing remains to bind the intelligence higher to matter, since the body has been completely reduced to the basic inorganic substance.

The first glimpse of ethereal vision (which is nothing more than an extension of physical vision, and not clairvoyance as some imagine) leads man into a world of specters, the boundary between the physical and truly superphysical worlds.

There he sees those forms covered in floating garments made from the subtle atoms of that world, seething and twisting. Dantean forms, in endless clouds. Millions of these forms extend as far as the eye can see, floating in clusters or undulating lines in the sea of ether where they are preserved. In the endless march of time, they gradually fade away, for the atoms return to the ethereal world in the same way that physical atoms return to dust. Just as physical atoms are incorporated again into ever-changing bodies, and what constituted the body of a man may appear in the organism of a plant or an animal, the ether that had been drawn by the centers of ethereal consciousness to build a body, when dispersed by time, finally coalesces into new forms. The particles of man's etheric body are made from the disintegrating atoms of the millions of phantoms that have been floating in the ethers since eternity began. To this sea of ether he must return when his work is finished, and when the impressions that man has implanted in him, and which are necessary for the progress of his soul, have been extracted and incorporated into his higher vehicles.

Man has a body related to each of the kingdoms of Nature, which then combine into the fourfold consciousness. The entire range of his expression—as manifested through form, development, movement, and thought—is inspired by a complete organism, which in man is called a body, and in Universal Man a plane of Nature. Each of these bodies acts on its respective level. Man is born on each of these planes as the sutratmic atom descends and, by the law of attraction, polarizes a body. This body grows in a natural and progressive manner. Then, when he dies, he sheds his vehicles in the state of disembodiment, discarding each of

these bodies until only the gonadic atom remains on the Arupa plane. These discarded bodies then become the phantoms or shells of the superphysical world, just as the physical body, when the spiritual ego has disappeared, is transformed into a lifeless thing, retaining the form of a living creature, but devoid of consciousness or intelligence.

In ancient times, this process was symbolized by the Moon, which is truly a phantom, since its intelligence was reincarnated on Earth. It is a dead body, devoid of life, driven by the power of Nature's great disintegrator, the Lord of Phantasms or Specters; in other words, the Regent of the Moon.

Returning to the same topic, there is a spiritual consciousness bound to the earth that sometimes visits living beings, but in this case, it generally does so through the lower astral body. Consequently, it can never be seen unless the individual is partially asleep. People who have seen these apparitions always swear by all that they were fully awake. The consciousness is fully awake, but at that moment, it acts in the lower astral body. Hence, the physical body does not move at all during the vision. The person cannot get up and approach the apparition. They are thinking, alive, and awake, but it is always a dreamlike state in which they are partially under the sway of sleep. At that moment, the physical body is resting, and the lower physical qualities do not interfere or express themselves in any way. Then, many people become mildly clairvoyant and see ghosts and apparitions in this world. The specter usually takes the form of a grayish color, covered in dark clothing, and surrounded by a bluish-gray light. After the disembodied person has been away from the physical plane for some years, the lower part of their body becomes a tattered remnant and finally disappears, since in the higher astral plane they retain only the consciousness of their face. These specters generally appear because they are bound to the earth by strong ties, such as jealousy and the harm they caused. A great love or hate also attracts them. Thus, the miser returns to his treasure, driven by greed. These ghostly forms are what fill old castles with their presence, like the beautiful ghost of Hampton Court.

Once they are free from the pangs of their conscience or from any unfinished work, these specters disappear because consciousness fades with the astral body, and this body becomes merely a shell. Often the shell is animated by elementals that continue to frequent the places the spirit once went. A large percentage of the visions seen by mediums are merely these ethereal shells vitalized by an elemental from the astral or etheric worlds. The bonds that tie them to earth, such as petty concepts, ignorance, and Single-mindedness or similar attitudes are found in many examples. Many months after the cessation of hostilities in the last world war, soldiers from both sides who had died in the fighting rose from the battlefields and battled in the ethers, completely unaware of their death. They wounded and killed one another, cursed and uttered profanities, and lived again amidst the explosions of shells as in the past. Others wander among the forests of crosses in the cemeteries of Europe, wondering many years after their death what happened to them. The sea is populated by ghost ships whose long-dead crews continue sailing toward the port they could never reach when they lived. Aboard the ancient galleons of the etheric plane, the old Spanish buccaneer still counts his gold, bound by the ties of materiality and selfishness to the world of which he is no longer a part. The opium den is still haunted by the spirits of those who died enslaved by the curse of this vice, returning to inhale the noxious smoke and revel in their misery. Like great vampires, they seek to relive the passions of their former earthly lives by seizing the minds and souls of the living and obsessing them with their unfulfilled desires.

All these facts teach us an important lesson. The answer to the problem of those still

tied to the land presents two main rules. *an honest life* and *detachment*. Those who have fulfilled their duty in this world need not worry about returning and asking for forgiveness, nor do they have to follow in the footsteps of those they have harmed, hoping for release. Those who are unattached to worldly things will fulfill the purpose entrusted to them by their Master in other worlds. Again, if the people of this world could, in spirit and in truth, release the dead, they would not be surrounded by wailing, pleading specters, held captive by a force beyond their comprehension. When we weep for the dead, when we wish for their return to this world, we tear them from the purpose entrusted to them by their Master and surround ourselves with ghosts who will never return to life, but whom we keep here and prevent from fulfilling their duty.

Those shells that float in the ether and the lower regions of the astral plane are as incapable of helping and guiding us in the search for our salvation as a corpse is of saving us in this world. These shells are the things most often seen in visions. They are haunted by the lowest elementals and larvae of the lowest astral plane. They move tables and chairs, materialize things, and paint pictures, and man, in his folly, makes gods of beings that are not even human. Let the scholar investigate those worlds for his own pleasure; or if he is incapable of investigating them, let him learn the great truth that man should not pay homage to what he does not know. Only to his God should he pay the homage that the awakening of his consciousness indicates He deserves. Only with perfect consciousness will come perfect understanding and perfect cooperation with the workings of Nature. The ghosts of old cemeteries and the specters of dreams must return to the planes from whence they came, where they will float like debris until eternity finishes dissolving them; for the vehicles of consciousness of the spirit must be freed to learn the lessons of the new world where it dwells. There, untouched by human emotions, it will absorb the fruits of its respective bodies and with them constitute the eternal body - the temple of the soul - which is the jewel in the human crown, the great achievement of evolution.

CHAPTER 5

THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

The character and qualities that truly measure human consciousness were not present in the primordial seed of being that emerged from the Infinite, but are the fruit of experience and the maturity attained with spiritual age. The Primordial Spark—that which is neither born nor dies in every organism—knows that it cannot be saved by the bodies it has constructed through contact with the lower worlds, those we call the domains of form. The First Spark, this divine seed of the spirit, makes all growth and expression possible; but growth, in the true spiritual understanding of the word, is the result of consciousness accepting the evolving atoms of the various factors we group together under the heading of experience, without which the spirit cannot improve upon its primordial inheritance.

The world we know is the kindergarten of the spirit. Here, childlike souls are instructed in realities through unrealities. Just as cutting out figures or making paper boats is the first step in a child's education, things seemingly far removed from the truth mysteriously mold a person's character along lines of conduct that will later lead to wisdom. Very few here understand that they are being tested in this world, but this is the truth. We are obliged to grasp the spokes of the wheel of illusion until, like children in school, we outpace our class and are transferred to a higher one. Just as in school there are children who never seem to learn and remain year after year in the same grade, those who do not master the problems of life's great school must remain in the world of matter until they understand the plan and (what is far more important) until they live in accordance with the reality they have discovered.

Currently, all progress is made through the physical body. All the higher vehicles find expression through this medium and are shaped by the way they apply their respective forces in the material world. Let us list them and describe the influence they have:

The Mental Body.

In present times, this is the highest vehicle of humankind, except for a few highly advanced Adepts and Masters who consciously operate in the Buddhic body. In most people, the mental body appears as a yellow cloud surrounding the head and shoulders. The greater a person's thought power, the more organized the mental body becomes. The brain is its vehicle in matter, and the development of this superphysical body depends entirely on the exercise of thought power; it does not depend on other entities. It is the site of solving life's problems according to the faculties of reason and logic.

The Astral Body.

This body is much older than the mind and is therefore developed in a far more perfect form. It finds its expression through the fire of man's blood. The emotions, passions,

and reactions with which man excites his organism are expressions of the astral body. The heart, as the organ of influence over the destiny of consciousness, expresses the qualities of the astral body; and the mastery and direction of emotional forces are what build the astral soul in man. Emotions always tend toward extremes, and it is the balance of opposites and the mastery of extremes in this life that molds the astral body into a permanent vehicle for the expression of the spirit.

The Physical Body.

This vehicle, composed of the dense chemical form and the etheric (or vital) double, is, in principle, humanity's most ancient connection to the external universe, and currently constitutes the focal point of all other bodies. The efficiency of this body measures the expression of all the higher vehicles. It constitutes the positive link between the school of material experience and the subtle forces that humanity seeks to unveil. Through this body and its expression, all spiritual growth is currently realized. When an inventor first sketches an idea, they must adapt it to practical needs and modify it to suit the requirements of its manufacture. In the same way, the patterns of consciousness are tested in practice. Therefore, this body becomes the testing ground of life, and only those who traverse it, and upon its anvil translate their theories into practice, are truly able to know the efficacy of their ideas.

It is now necessary to consider some of the expressions by which we have learned to judge the character and lives of those with whom we come into contact. These are not gifts of the immortal spirit, but rather the harvest of life's experiences lived wisely. We know the following qualities of the soul:

Virtue.

Virtue is innocence transformed into the intelligent understanding of moral law. This achievement can only be attained through experience.

Continuity.

The ability to develop a certain line of reasoning and carry it through to successful conduct, without allowing outside interests or desires to distract the mind, is the result of many years spent mastering mental forces and developing the will to the point where it becomes the director of all emotions.

Discrimination.

This is the ability to choose, from a number of seemingly equal yet diverse possibilities, the one that best suits the organism's needs. Experience is the only thing that allows sagacity to solve the practical problems that arise.

Balance.

The power to remain unmoved by fleeting circumstances is achieved through careful analysis of life, and by understanding that the world we live in must be studied and analyzed, but never assumed to be reality. Man should never

He must renounce what he believes or what he considers reality. He must go beyond the veil before he can free himself from the illusions of this world.

Wisdom.

Understanding is the product of present experience. The philosopher, with his gray hair and stooped shoulders, has lived life to the point where he knows its paths and shortcuts and, consequently, can help others achieve a better understanding of the realities of Nature.

Only age and the power of the soul bestow the maturity that is the foundation of wisdom.

Experience bestows many other qualities, some seemingly good and others bad. Many believe that wallowing in the mire of sin is a grave error; others believe that God must have an easier and better way of instructing his children than forcing them to struggle in the darkness to save themselves. This will always be an open question that each person must resolve in their own way. Around us are thousands of beings struggling in the mud of degeneration. A large part of the world's population is morally or physically defiled. It is too late to prevent the mistakes we all make and defend, so all that remains is to help those who have fallen and lift them up so that, through suffering, they may avoid future falls. It is impossible to enact a law that makes people good, but suffering makes them prudent when they failed to heed the advice that would have prevented this situation; pain and disappointment make us reflect when we ignored good advice. In this way, humankind learns through experience. The lessons of life show that the greatest sinners became the greatest saints, not because of their mistakes, but because experience taught them to correct them. We should all thank God for granting us the capacity to suffer, for through pain, great souls are born. Adversity crushes the lazy, but galvanizes the soul for action and is an incentive for those who strive to achieve their goals. Adversity disciplines the spirit and tests resolve. When adversity is mastered, courage is born.

We should thank God that we have adversaries, because only through an enemy can one know a person's true worth. "What would I do if I found myself in certain circumstances?" is a question we should all ask ourselves. Very few know, and even fewer are capable of doing in a difficult moment, the thing they planned when they weren't under pressure. Simply place people in different situations, and only then can one judge them and know their worth in life. It's not necessary to accuse or defend them; their actions reveal the true value of their soul, and their soul shows us their place in the cosmic plan in a way that no protest or profession of faith could. Actions and attitudes toward life are the best proof; words are merely the expression of emotions that can rarely be trusted. People often argue with themselves to confirm things they know are untrue. Generally, the human animal convinces itself of the truth of a lie before it can prove it to another. In fact, it rarely proves it to anyone but itself.

THE TRAINING OF THE SOUL

Today, we use the words "soul" and "spirit" interchangeably. This is incorrect. "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18: 4) The spirit does not die.

In occult philosophy, the spirit is that essence which always exists and which constitutes the immortal part of all things created in any of the seven worlds in which the cosmic plan manifests. The spirit is indestructible, uncreated, and is the seed of divinity in all manifest creations; it is God within us, eternal permanence, the threefold spirit of being.

The soul is the garment of the spirit; the fruit or essence of all the experience gained through manifestation in the concrete worlds of mental matter, astral matter, and physical substance. In the spiritual sense, man can only be clothed by his virtues. Hence ***The attainment of the golden garment of the soul is the true reason for life.*** Accidents are worthless except for the impression they leave on the nature of the one who suffered them.

Through a hidden process, this impression is molded into the soul's body like another child in the seamless garment of the spiritual Promise. In Nature, nothing is lost, and this vehicle, created by the assimilation of experience gained over millions of years, since consciousness first differentiated, is called the soul—the shaper of destiny—the mentor to be consulted when an important decision must be made. The soul measures man's good and evil on the scales of known things. It is the basis of judgment and the inspiration behind the voice of conscience. Therefore, we ask with the prophet of old: “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”

The soul records all the different actions and reactions that constitute life. Consequently, the soul is essentially dual in nature: it records both successes and failures. The things we have done for good become our guardian angels, guiding and inspiring us to achieve new victories, while the things we have done for evil become our menacing accusers, constantly confronting us with the responsibility for our mistakes.

At the entrance to Eastern temples stand two dogs, one laughing and the other glancing askance. They represent our virtues and vices, experiences we must endure if we wish to enter the path that leads to perfection. These two qualities—the good and the bad within us—are always with us. One points to heaven, and the other always presents us with our greatest challenge. The animal remains part of our nature, and will continue to do so until we transmute the strength of the adversary into the aspiration for great victories over the lower self.

This inner adversary, this accumulation of unpaid Karma, this body of sin, this ever-present obstacle, this spirit of denial, this ever-threatening figure of evil in our nature, was called by the ancients the dweller of the threshold.

FACING THE RESIDENT

The first stage in the ancient initiation was to pass before the terrifying monster that dwells on the border between the physical and spiritual worlds. The Children of Light were told that they could never “advance into distant lands” or “earn the Master Builder’s wages” until they faced with courage and resolve the invisible demon that always dwells within them and awakened the subtle forces of which it was composed. Most people do not come to know this terrible figure until the moment of death, when the intellect acts for a brief instant on this so-called border between death and life, the place where the beast dwells. There it lies in wait—that thing built from the sins of the flesh and the crimes committed in darkness—a specter of dreadful terror, the sum total of perversion, with the added dimension of misused forces and perverted talent. Have we never stopped to think that the things we do without judgment will one day confront us as accusing judges and prevent us from reaching the light that we will one day recognize and try to serve?

In times long past, when man first sinned, this being was born, and it cried out over the blood of God's firstborn son who was killed. Hatred and fear, jealousy and greed, passions and lust, negligence and crime—all these things have nourished it until, in the present moment, man carries within himself an all-powerful being, bred and raised by the worst within him, a demon-like beast that constantly incites him to crime and perversion, that constantly tempts him, through habit, to sink into that mire of degeneration from which

he so painfully crawls out.

This is the Guardian of the Threshold. We have never seen him, yet not a day goes by that we do not battle with him, striving to free ourselves from the rings of sin that are his manifestations. Each time we master an unworthy character trait, we pass before the Dweller of the Threshold; for our sins separate us from the spirit world, and when we master our errors by acting honestly instead of giving in to our evil impulses as before, sin is no longer such a great obstacle. Finally, we become capable of facing that being one last time, and among the ethers of the upper world, we fight the dragon of karma until we vanquish it, and, bathing in its blood, we become immortal; for energy is the blood of the Dweller, and he is constituted from the energy we have lost or misused.

The Dweller differs from elementals and Nature Spirits in this respect: the latter are a separate creation, floating in space and living in the ethereal realms; the Guardian, however, is bound to humankind and never abandons them. It grows or diminishes with the sins of the individual of whom it is a part. ***The Guardian of the Threshold is truly the sin body of all beings that possess individual intelligence.*** Although man is the only intelligent being we know of, there are many others in Nature. The planet Mars is the sinful body of the Sun God and is therefore his Guardian of the Threshold, but the Deity has transmuted his power into the dynamo of the solar system.

Those who wish to serve God safely and join the immortals must first overcome their own sins. The price to be paid to enter the Temple is the conquest of our lower nature, for we cannot serve both God and Mammon simultaneously. If we try to force one part of our nature to develop spiritual powers, while with the other we serve vice and material things, we are seeking madness and death. Therefore, before embarking on the true path that the spiritual disciple must follow, one must examine oneself thoroughly and see how many elements of the lower nature still bind us to the earth. Then begins the great battle so often symbolized in the religious ceremonies of the ancients, which must result in the death of the lower nature, that of the Dweller. From the ashes of the burning conflict, the higher nature rises and unites with the spirit of light. This is the mystery of the crucifixion and the hidden meaning of the third degree of the Masonic rite. On a smaller scale, we all engage in this same battle every day, but ultimately we must face it with courage and reach a decision.

THE SINS OF THE FLESH

As long as any of the following character traits remain in a person's nature, they have no right to seek direct knowledge of spiritual matters. This does not mean they should not study these subjects, but rather that they should abstain from occult practices that could affect their superphysical nature and organism. The following vices build and strengthen the power of the Dweller:

Emotionalism, Egotism, Greed, Hatred, Excitement, Bad temper, Anger, Fear,
Dishonor, Argument, Sadness, Lust, Selfishness, Demandingness, Passion, Lies,
Attachment, Quarrel, Antipathy, Pride

All students are subject to these fallibilities. It is to be expected, and not a misfortune, to fall into these sins, because only the gods are free from all blame. Perhaps

they too make mistakes; ***But until these problems have been honestly faced and resolved, no one has the cosmic right to concern themselves with the things that lie behind the veil that separates this world from the invisible.*** It is these responsibilities that we must experience and face, and what we will be in the future depends on how we face and master them; for each of these failings renders us useless, we Great Ones who so desperately need the help of the world of men.

What kind of universe would we live in if our gods were subject to the fallibilities listed above? If our Sun were prone to fits of rage and if our Masters were driven by selfish motives, what would happen to us? If we aspire to positions of trust, we must master our passions and be patient and kind, like the gods themselves. ***No one could reach the state of master without first passing before the Guardian of their lowest nature and transmuting into creative powers the sins that grant the Dweller their power.***

THE THREE STEPS

There are three distinct steps to reach wisdom, and all progress must be made in accordance with these steps. If a person truly desires to attain the priceless gift of wisdom, they must willingly accept what the gods have decreed in this regard. The student must prepare themselves for the influence of wisdom. This must be accomplished through right thinking, right action, and a right approach to life.

Right thinking It consists of an open mind, ready to consider all things; a humble mind that accepts the crumbs from the feasts of the wise; a charitable mind that condemns no one but itself; a shrewd mind capable of seeing the good in all things and reaching the good in all things.

Right action It consists of giving the body proper care, doing appropriate exercise, and taking one's proper place in the great material battle of life. Man grows by coming into contact with all that grows. When a man is able to know all forms of life with pleasure, with consideration, with the heart of one who wants to help, and with the mind of a scholar, he progresses.

The right attitude It means that everything must be undertaken with a spirit of love, truth, and a sincere, generous desire to help make this world a better place to live. An honest way of facing life means joy, a helpful spirit, and cooperation with all who are trying to progress. It means consideration for everyone, even those who disagree with us, because it understands that we should not work for ourselves, but for God, and that each person is entitled to what is due to them.

Having prepared himself to receive wisdom by purifying the body, expanding the mind, and opening the heart, man must then apply himself to the task of digesting the knowledge he absorbs. Combining facts in a way that is practically useful in the world is no small feat. Much of what occultists teach has no value whatsoever in solving current problems. While technical knowledge is necessary for the teacher, it must nevertheless be presented in a form that makes it suitable for use; otherwise, there is no need to teach it.

The second step leads to wisdom itself, and this in turn paves the way for the third stage.

The third stage is the application of knowledge in the best and most compelling way.

This is no child's play; it requires the wisdom and understanding of the gods themselves. People treat spiritual sciences far too lightly. ***They do not understand that enlightened men are chosen from among the best on earth.*** The brightest minds, the most beautiful souls, and those who have achieved the greatest successes are chosen to serve alongside the great Spirits. Modern occultism is full of failures who have never accomplished anything for themselves or others. If these birdbrains believe for a moment that they will be elevated in a few months or years, they are sorely mistaken. ***Masters only adopt those who are deserving.*** What are we or what must we do to be worthy of requesting spiritual consideration in The service of God? What have we done to have that right? What can those we serve—our friends, the world—claim on our behalf? The following case illustrates what the Guardian of the Threshold means:

Mrs. X, an elderly lady, is such a gossip that no friend can stand her. No one dares speak in her presence. She has been married twice, but each time the marriage fell apart because of her. This woman blames others, but everyone who knows her understands that she is solely responsible. She has a miserable disposition, a sour temper, and a body poisoned by her improper diet. She spends much of her time lamenting past misfortunes, believing that everyone is against her. She refuses to acknowledge her selfishness and that she spends her time divulging what she knows about her acquaintances. She expects everyone to agree with her, and those who disagree she treats as fools. Sometimes she is full of love for those around her, and other times she hates them so much she would like to kill them. She prays and meditates every day and begs for spiritual enlightenment. She sees visions and believes the creations of her mind are real, which is entirely impossible. She is one of thousands of people who expect enlightenment as a birthright and spirituality as an inheritance. They don't understand that the Masters need people who are capable of action. This woman would be incapable of earning five dollars a week in the material world, and she is useless anywhere she goes; yet she believes she is worthy enough for God to send one of His Masters to teach her things she cannot comprehend. ***Many desire to be enlightened, but few are willing to submit their will to that of Nature and work hard enough to change their lives and achieve useful results.***

An analysis of this lady's character shows that she has the following flaws:

1. He is an incurable egoist.
2. He is pessimistic.
3. He has a violent temper, which poisons his blood.
4. He is selfish.
5. He lets his emotions get the better of him, which is a terrible waste of energy.
6. He has neglected his body. God does not frequent a temple that is not clean and free from disease.

These six flaws constitute the Dweller on the Threshold. They stand between her and all the beautiful things she longs to be. ***God will not erase his flaws, but He will grant him what he desires only when he proves his worth by mastering his nature and realizing his mistakes.*** God made a covenant with humankind. If we prepare the temple of our lives, the Father will accept to dwell within us and be the light of that temple. Let us not ask anything of God until we have done our part; let us not attempt to attain spirituality until we have built our tabernacle according to the Law given to our children when the earth was young.

THE SPHINX

Who has been able to fathom the mystery of that expressionless face gazing across the desert toward the rising sun? The being with the animal body is man's sinful body—the Threshold Guardian—and, like man's true constitution, is unknown to most. Before the candidate can progress in the spiritual work he has been commanded to perform, he must wrest the secret of sin from the silent guardian. Through concentration and consecration, he must correct and master his own vices one after another, until he can offer a spotless life in the service of the Masters. Only then will he be accepted. But in this world, few desire a spotless life. All desire power, but few can take the sword of swift detachment and plunge it into the heart of the sinister specter—their own lower nature—the Threshold Dweller.