

EXCERPTS FROM THE ARTICLE "ELEMENTALS" BY H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE Universal Æther was not, in the eyes of the ancients, simply a tenantless something, stretching throughout the expanse of heaven; it was for them a boundless ocean, peopled like our familiar earthly seas, with Gods, Planetary Spirits, monstrous and minor creatures, and having in its every molecule the germs of life from the potential up to the most developed. Like the finny tribes which swarm in our oceans and familiar bodies of water, each kind having its habitat in some spot to which it is curiously adapted, some friendly, and some inimical to man, some pleasant and some frightful to behold, some seeking the refuge of quiet nooks and land-locked harbours, and some traversing great areas of water; so the various races of the Planetary, Elemental, and other Spirits, were believed by them to inhabit the different portions of the great ethereal ocean, and to be exactly adapted to their respective conditions.

According to the ancient doctrines, every member of this varied ethereal population, from the highest "Gods" down to the soulless Elementals, was evolved by the ceaseless motion inherent in the astral light. Light is force, and the latter is produced by the will. As this will proceeds from an intelligence which cannot err, for it is absolute and immutable and has nothing of the material organs of human thought in it, being the superfine pure emanation of the ONE LIFE itself, it proceeds from the beginning of time, according to immutable laws, to evolve the elementary fabric requisite for subsequent generations of what we term human races. All of the latter, whether belonging to this planet or to some other of the myriads in space, have their earthly bodies evolved in this matrix out of the bodies of a certain class of these elemental beings--the primordial germ of Gods and men--which have passed away into the visible worlds.

No author in the world of literature ever gave a more truthful or more poetical description of these beings than Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton, the author of *Zanoni*. He makes the wise Mejnour say to Glyndon:

Man is arrogant in proportion of his ignorance... Now, in space there are millions of beings, not literally spiritual, for they have all, like the animalculæ unseen by the naked eye, certain forms of matter, though matter so delicate, air-drawn, and subtile, that it is, as it were, but a film, a gossamer, that clothes the spirit. . . . Yet, in truth, these races differ most widely . . . some of surpassing wisdom, some of horrible malignity; some hostile as fiends to men, others gentle as messengers between earth and heaven.

Such is the insufficient sketch of Elemental Beings void of Divine Spirit, given by one whom many with reason believed to know more than he was prepared to admit in the face of an incredulous public. We have underlined the few lines than which nothing can be more graphically descriptive. An Initiate, having a personal knowledge of these creatures, could do no better.

We may pass now to the "Gods," or Daimons, of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and from these to the Devas and Pitris of the still more ancient Hindû Âryans.

What the Gods and Daimonia, or Daimons, really were, we may learn from Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, and many other renowned Sages and Philosophers of pre-Christian, as well as post-Christian days. Heracleides, who adopted fully the Pythagorean and Platonic views of the human Soul, its nature and faculties, speaking of Spirits, calls them "Daimons with airy and vaporous bodies," and affirms that Souls inhabit the Milky Way before descending "into generation" or sublunary existence.

The fact is, that the word Daimon was given by the ancients, and especially by the Philosophers of the Alexandrian school, to all kinds of spirits, whether good or bad, human or otherwise, but the appellation was often synonymous with that of Gods or angels. For instance, the "Samothraces" was a designation of the Fane-gods; worshipped at Samothracia in the Mysteries. They are considered as identical with the Cabeiri, Dioscuri, and Corybantes. Their names were mystical--denoting Pluto,

Ceres or Proserpina, Bacchus, and Æsculapius or Hermes, and they were all referred to as Daimons.

If, turning from Greece and Egypt to the cradle of universal civilization, India, we interrogate the Brâhmans and their most admirable Philosophies, we find them calling their Gods and their Daimonia by such a number and variety of appellations, that the thirty-three millions of these Deities would require a whole library to contain only their names and attributes. We will choose for the present time only two names out of the Pantheon. These groups are the most important as well as the least understood by the Orientalists--their true nature having been all along wrapped in obscurity by the unwillingness of the Brâhmans to divulge their philosophical secrets. We will speak of but the Devas and the Pitris.

The former aerial beings are some of them superior, others inferior, to man. The term means literally the Shining Ones, the resplendent; and it covers spiritual beings of various degrees, including entities from previous planetary periods, who take active part in the formation of new solar systems and the training of infant humanities, as well as unprogressed Planetary Spirits, who will, at spiritualistic séances, simulate human deities and even characters on the stage of human history.

As to the Deva Yonis, they are Elementals of a lower kind in comparison with the Kosmic "Gods," and are subjected to the will of even the sorcerer. To this class belong the gnomes, sylphs, fairies, djins, etc. They are the Soul of the elements, the capricious forces in Nature, acting under one immutable Law, inherent in these Centres of Force, with undeveloped consciousness and bodies of plastic mould, which can be shaped according to the conscious or unconscious will of the human being who puts himself en rapport with them. It is by attracting some of the beings of this class that our modern spiritualistic mediums invest the fading shells of deceased human beings with a kind of individual force. These beings have never been, but will, in myriads of ages hence, be evolved into men. They belong to the three lower kingdoms, and pertain to the Mysteries on account of their dangerous nature.

The Pitris are not the ancestors of the present living men, but those of the human kind or primitive race; the spirits of human races which, on the great scale of descending evolution, preceded our races of men, and were physically, as well as spiritually, far superior to our modern pigmies. In Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra they are called the Lunar Ancestors. But, it may be asked, what then is meant by the Pitris? They are Devas, lunar and solar, closely connected with human evolution, for the Lunar Pitris are they who gave their Chhâyâs as the models of the First Race in the Fourth Round, while the Solar Pitris endowed mankind with intellect. Not only so, but these Lunar Devas passed through all the kingdoms of the terrestrial Chain in the First Round, and during the Second and Third Rounds "lead and represent the human element." . . .

Far removed from the Pitris, then, it will readily be seen are all the various feats of Indian fakirs, jugglers and others, phenomena a hundred times more various and astounding than are ever seen in civilized Europe and America. The Pitris have naught to do with such public exhibitions, nor are the "spirits of the departed" concerned in them. We have but to consult the lists of the principal Daimons or Elemental Spirits to find that their very names indicate their professions, or, to express it clearly, the tricks for which each variety is best adapted. So we have **the Mâdan, a generic name indicating wicked elemental spirits**, half brutes, half monsters, for Mâdan signifies one that looks like a cow. He is the friend of the malicious sorcerers and helps them to effect their evil purposes of revenge by striking men and cattle with sudden illness and death.

The Shudâla-Mâdan, or graveyard fiend, answers to our ghouls. He delights where crime and murder were committed, near burial-spots and places of execution. He helps the juggler in all the fire phenomena as well as Kutti Shâtan, the little juggling imps. Shudâla, they say, is a half-fire, half-water demon, for he received from Shiva permission to assume any shape he chose, to

transform one thing into another; and when he is not in fire, he is in water. It is he who blinds people "to see that which they do not see."

Shûla Mâdan is another mischievous spook. He is the furnace-demon, skilled in pottery and baking. If you keep friends with him, he will not injure you; but woe to him who incurs his wrath. Shûla likes compliments and flattery, and as he generally keeps underground it is to him that a juggler must look to help him raise a tree from a seed in a quarter of an hour and ripen its fruit.

Kumil-Mâdan, is the undine proper. He is an Elemental Spirit of the water, and his name means blowing like a bubble. He is a very merry imp, and will help a friend in anything relative to his department; he will shower rain and show the future and the present to those who will resort to hydromancy or divination by water.

Poruthû Mâdan is the "wrestling" demon; he is the strongest of all; and whenever there are feats shown in which physical force is required, such as levitations, or taming of wild animals, he will help the performer by keeping him above the soil, or will over-power a wild beast before the tamer has time to utter his incantation. So, every "physical manifestation" has its own class of Elemental Spirits to superintend it. Besides these there are in India the Pisâchas, Daimons of the races of the gnomes, the giants and the vampires; the Gandharvas, good Daimons, celestial seraphs, singers; and Asuras and Nâgas, the Titanic spirits and the dragon or serpent-headed spirits.

These must not be confused with **Elementaries, the souls and shells of departed human beings . .**

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There are many distinct classes of "Elementaries" and "Elementals." The highest of the former in intelligence and cunning are the so-called "**terrestrial spirits.**" Of these it must suffice to say, for the present, *that they are the Larvæ, or shadows of those who have lived on earth, alike of the good and of the bad. They are the lower principles of all disembodied beings, and may be divided into three general groups.* The first are they who having refused all spiritual light, have died deeply immersed in the mire of matter, and from whose sinful Souls the immortal Spirit has gradually separated itself. These are, properly, the disembodied Souls of the depraved; these Souls having at some time prior to death separated themselves from their divine Spirits, and so lost their chance of immortality. After a more or less prolonged period of time these material souls will begin to disintegrate, and finally, like a column of mist, be dissolved, atom by atom, in the surrounding elements.

These are the "shells" which remain the longest period in the Kâma Loka; all saturated with terrestrial effluvia, their Kâma Rûpa (body of desire) thick with sensuality and made impenetrable to the spiritualizing influence of their higher principles, endures longer and fades out with difficulty. We are taught that these remain for centuries sometimes, before the final disintegration into their respective elements.

After the death of the depraved and the wicked, arrives the critical moment. If during life the ultimate and desperate effort of the inner self to reunite itself with the faintly-glimmering ray of its divine monad is neglected; if this ray is allowed to be more and more shut out by the thickening crust of matter, the soul, once freed from the body, follows its earthly attractions, and is magnetically drawn into and held within the dense fogs of the material atmosphere of the Kâma Loka. Then it begins to sink lower and lower, until it finds itself, when returned to consciousness, in what the ancients termed Hades, and we--Avichî. The annihilation of such a soul is never instantaneous; it may last centuries, perhaps; for nature never proceeds by jumps and starts, and the astral soul of the personality being formed of elements, the law of evolution must bide its time. Then begins the fearful law of compensation, the Yin-youan of the Buddhist initiates.

This class of spirits are called the "terrestrial," or "earthly elementaries," in contradistinction to the other classes, as we have shown in the beginning. But there is another and still more dangerous class. In the East, they are known as the "Brothers of the Shadow," living men possessed by the earth-bound elementaries; at times--their masters, but ever in the long run falling victims to these terrible beings. In Sikkhim and Tibet they are called Dugpas (red-caps), in contradistinction to the Geluk-pas (yellow-caps), to which latter most of the adepts belong.

The second group includes all those, who, having had their common share of spirituality, have yet been more or less attached to things earthly and terrestrial life, having their aspirations and affections more centred on earth than in heaven; the stay in Kâma Loka of the reliquiæ of this class or group of men, who belonged to the average human being, is of a far shorter duration, yet long in itself and proportionate to the intensity of their desire for life.

Remains, as a third class, the disembodied souls of those whose bodies have perished by *violence*, and these are men in all save the physical body, till their life-span is complete.

Porphyry presents to us some hideous facts whose verity is substantiated in the experience of every student of magic. He writes:

The soul, having even after death a certain affection for its body, an affinity proportioned to the violence with which their union was broken, we see many spirits hovering in despair about their earthly remains; we even see them eagerly seeking the putrid remains of other bodies, but above all freshly-spilled blood, which seems to impart to them for the moment some of the faculties of life.

Among Elementaries are also reckoned by Kabalists what we have called psychic embryos, the "privation" of the form of the child that is to be. According to Aristotle's doctrine there are three principles of natural bodies: privation, matter, and form. These principles may be applied in this particular case. The "privation" of the child which is to be, we locate in the invisible mind of the Universal Soul, in which all types and forms exist from eternity... Though the privation of the unborn child's form, as well as of the future form of the unmade watch, is that which is neither substance nor extension nor quality as yet, nor any kind of existence, it is still something which is, though its outlines, in order to be, must acquire an objective form--the abstract must become concrete, in short. Thus, as soon as this privation of matter is transmitted by energy to universal Æther, it becomes a material form, however sublimated. . Forms pass; ideas that created them and the material which gave them objectiveness, remain. These models, as yet devoid of immortal spirits, are "Elementals"--better yet, psychic embryos--which, when their time arrives, die out of the invisible world, and are born into this visible one as human infants, receiving in transitu that Divine Breath called Spirit which completes the perfect man. This class cannot communicate, either subjectively or objectively, with men.

The essential difference between the body of such an embryo and an Elemental proper is that the embryo--the future man--contains in himself a portion of each of the four great kingdoms, to wit: fire, air, earth and water; while the Elemental has but a portion of one of such kingdoms. As for instance, the salamander, or the fire Elemental, which has but a portion of the primordial fire and none other. Man, being higher than they, the law of evolution finds its illustration of all four in him. It results therefore, that the Elementals of the fire are not found in water, nor those of air in the fire kingdom. And yet, inasmuch as a portion of water is found not only in man but also in other bodies, Elementals exist really in and among each other in every substance just as the spiritual world exists and is in the material. But the last are the Elementals in their most primordial and latent state.

Another class are those elemental beings which will never evolve into human beings in the present Manvantara, but occupy, as it were, a specific step of the ladder of being, and, by comparison with the others, may properly be called nature-spirits, or cosmic agents of nature, each being confined to

its own element and never transgressing the bounds of others. These are what Tertullian called the "princes of the powers of the air."

In the teachings of Eastern Kabalists, and of the Western Rosicrucians and Alchemists, they are spoken of as the creatures evolved in and from the four kingdoms of earth, air, fire and water, and are respectively called gnomes, sylphs, salamanders and undines. Forces of nature, they will either operate effects as the servile agents of general law, or may be employed, as shown above, by the disembodied spirits--whether pure or impure--and by living adepts of magic and sorcery, to produce desired phenomenal results. Such beings never become men.

These Elementals are the principal agents of disembodied but never visible "shells" taken for spirits at séances, and are, as shown above, the producers of all the phenomena except the subjective.

In the course of this article we will adopt the term "Elemental" to designate only these nature-spirits, attaching it to no other spirit or monad that has been embodied in human form. Elementals, as said already, have no form, and in trying to describe what they are, it is better to say that they are "centres of force" having instinctive desires, but no consciousness, as we understand it. Hence their acts may be good or bad indifferently.

This class is believed to possess but one of the three chief attributes of man. They have neither immortal spirits nor tangible bodies; only astral forms, which partake, to a distinguishing degree, of the element to which they belong and also of the ether. They are a combination of sublimated matter and a rudimental mind. Some remain throughout several cycles changeless, but still have no separate individuality, acting collectively, so to say. Others, of certain elements and species, change form under a fixed law which Kabalists explain. The most solid of their bodies is ordinarily just immaterial enough to escape perception by our physical eyesight, but not so unsubstantial but that they can be perfectly recognized by the inner or clairvoyant vision. They not only exist and can all live in ether, but can handle and direct it for the production of physical effects, as readily as we can compress air or water for the same purpose by pneumatic and hydraulic apparatus; in which occupation they are readily helped by the "human elementaries," or the "shells." More than this; they can so condense it as to make for themselves tangible bodies, which by their Protean powers they can cause to assume such likeness as they choose, by taking as their models the portraits they find stamped in the memory of the persons present. It is not necessary that the sitter should be thinking at the moment of the one represented. His image may have faded many years before. The mind receives indelible impression even from chance acquaintances or persons encountered but once. As a few seconds' exposure of the sensitized photograph plate is all that is requisite to preserve indefinitely the image of the sitter, so is it with the mind.

The various races of spirits are also believed to have a special sympathy with certain human temperaments, and to more readily exert power over such than others. Thus, a bilious, lymphatic, nervous, or sanguine person would be affected favourably or otherwise by conditions of the astral light, resulting from the different aspects of the planetary bodies. Having reached this general principle, after recorded observations extending over an indefinite series of years, or ages, the adept astrologer would require only to know what the planetary aspects were at a given anterior date, and to apply his knowledge of the succeeding changes in the heavenly bodies, to be able to trace, with approximate accuracy, the varying fortunes of the personage whose horoscope was required, and even to predict the future. The accuracy of the horoscope would depend, of course, no less upon the astrologer's astronomical erudition than upon his knowledge of the occult forces and races of nature. The theurgists employed chemicals and mineral substances to chase away evil spirits. Of the latter, a stone called Mnizurin was one of the most powerful agents. "When you shall see a terrestrial Daimon approaching, exclaim, and sacrifice the stone Mnizurin"--exclaims a Zoroastrian Oracle (Psel., 40).

These "Daimons" seek to introduce themselves into the bodies of the simple-minded and idiots, and remain there until dislodged therefrom by a powerful and pure will.

It is for these carnal terrestrial Larvæ, degraded human spirits, that the ancient Kabalists entertained a hope of reïncarnation. But when, or how? At a fitting moment, and if helped by a sincere desire for his amendment and repentance by some strong, sympathizing person, or the will of an adept, or even a desire emanating from the erring spirit himself, provided it is powerful enough to make him throw off the burden of sinful matter. Losing all consciousness, the once bright monad is caught once more into the vortex of our terrestrial evolution, and repasses the subordinate kingdoms, and again breathes as a living child.

To say that all "spirits" are alike, or fitted to the same atmosphere, or possessed of like powers, or governed by the same attractions--electric, magnetic, odic, astral, it matters not which--is as absurd as though one should say that all planets have the same nature, or that all animals are amphibious, or that all men can be nourished on the same food. To begin with, neither the elementals, nor the elementaries themselves, can be called "spirits" at all. It accords with reason to suppose that the grossest natures among them will sink to the lowest depths of the spiritual atmosphere--in other words, be found nearest to the earth. Inversely, the purest will be farthest away. In what, were we to coin a word, we should call the "psychomatics" of Occultism, it is as unwarrantable to assume that either of these grades of ethereal beings can occupy the place, or subsist in the conditions, of the other, as it would be in hydraulics to expect that two liquids of different densities could exchange their markings on the scale of Beaume's hydrometer.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that man, if he wins immortality, will remain for ever the septenary trinity that he is in life, and will continue so throughout all the spheres. The astral body, which in this life is covered by a gross physical envelope, becomes--when relieved of that covering by the process of corporeal death--in its turn the shell of another and more ethereal body. This begins developing from the moment of death, and becomes perfected when the astral body of the earthly form finally separates from it. This process, they say, is repeated at every new transition from sphere to sphere of life. But the immortal soul, the "silvery spark," observed by Dr. Fenwick in Margrave's brain (in Bulwer Lytton's *Strange Story*), and not found by him in the animals, never changes, but remains indestructible.

A high development of the intellectual faculties does not imply spiritual and true life. The presence in one of a highly developed human, intellectual soul (the fifth principle, or Manas), is quite compatible with the absence of Buddhi, or the spiritual soul. Unless the former evolves from and develops under the beneficent and vivifying rays of the latter, it will remain for ever but a direct progeny of the terrestrial, lower principles, sterile in spiritual perceptions; a magnificent, luxurious sepulchre, full of the dry bones of decaying matter within. Many of our greatest scientists are but animate corpses--they have no spiritual sight because their spirits have left them, or, rather, cannot reach them. So we might go through all ages, examine all occupations, weigh all human attainments, and investigate all forms of society, and we would find these spiritually dead everywhere.

For fear of being misunderstood, we would remark that while, as a rule, physical phenomena are produced by the nature-spirits, of their own motion and under the impulse of the elementaries, still genuine disembodied human spirits, may, under exceptional circumstances--such as the aspiration of a pure, loving heart, or under the influence of some intense thought or unsatisfied desire, at the moment of death--manifest their presence, either in dream, or vision, or even bring about their objective appearance--if very soon after physical death. Direct writing may be produced in the genuine handwriting of the "spirit," the medium being influenced by a process unknown as much to himself as to the modern spiritualists, we fear. But what we maintain and shall maintain to the last is, that no genuine human spirit can materialize, i.e., clothe his monad with an objective form. Even for the rest it must be a mighty attraction indeed to draw a pure, disembodied spirit from its radiant, Devachanic state--its home--into the foul atmosphere from which it escaped upon leaving its earthly body.