

The Law of the Return of Impressions

Astral Light: – (*Occult*). The invisible region that surrounds our globe, as it does every other, and corresponding as the second Principle of Kosmos (the third being Life, of which it is the vehicle) to the *Linga Sharira* or the Astral Double in man. A subtle Essence visible only to a clairvoyant eye, and the lowest but one (*viz.*, the earth), of the Seven Akâsic or Kosmic Principles. Eliphas Levi calls it the great Serpent and the Dragon from which radiates on Humanity every evil influence. This is so; but why not add that the Astral Light gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible, in which the vile emanations of the earth (moral and physical) upon which the Astral Light is fed, are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics— moral, psychic and physical. Finally, the Astral Light is the same as the *Sidereal Light* of Paracelsus and other Hermetic philosophers. “Physically, it is the ether of modern science. Metaphysically, and in its spiritual, or occult sense, ether is a great deal more than is often imagined. In occult physics, and alchemy, it is well demonstrated to enclose within its shoreless waves not only Mr. Tyndall’s ‘*promise* and potency of every quality of life’, but also the *realization* of the potency of every quality of spirit. Alchemists and Hermetists believe that their astral, or sidereal ether, besides the above properties of sulphur, and white and red magnesia, or *magnes*, is the *anima mundi*, the workshop of Nature and of all the Kosmos, spiritually, as well as physically. The ‘grand magisterium’ asserts itself in the phenomenon of mesmerism, in the ‘levitation’ of human and inert objects; and may be called the ether from its spiritual aspect. The designation *astral* is ancient, and was used by some of the Neo-Platonists, although it is claimed by some that the word was coined by the Martinists. Porphyry describes the celestial body which is always joined with the soul as ‘immortal, luminous, and star-like’. The root of this word may be found, perhaps, in the Scythic *Aist-aer*—which means star, or the Assyrian Istar, which, according to Burnouf has the same sense.” (*Isis Unveiled.*)

The Theosophical Glossary, p. 38 – H. P. Blavatsky

These exalted beings further say that all men are — as a scientific and dynamic fact — united, whether they admit it or not; and that each nation suffers, on the moral as well as the physical plane, from the faults of all other nations, and receives benefit from the others also even against its will. This is due to the existence of an imponderable, tenuous medium which interpenetrates the entire globe, and in which all the acts and thoughts of every man are felt and impressed, to be afterward reflected again. Hence, say the Adepts, the thoughts or the doctrines and beliefs

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of men are of the highest importance, because those that prevail among people of a low character are just as much and as easily reflected upon the earth as are the thoughts and beliefs of persons occupying a higher plane of culture. This is a most important tenet, if true; for, with the aid of the discoveries just now admitted by science respecting hypnotism, we are at once able to see that an enormous hypnotizing machine is about. As this tenuous medium — called by the men of the East "Akasa," and by the medieval philosophers the "Astral Light" — is entirely beyond our control, we are at the mercy of the pictures made in it and reflected upon us.

Echoes from the Orient, Chapter III, p. 11-12 — William Q. Judge

Now take another case. I have a friend who is trying to find out all about theosophy, and about a psychic nature, but I have discovered that he is not paying the slightest attention to this subject of the inevitable return upon himself of these impressions which he creates. I discovered he had periods of depression (and this will answer for everybody), when he had a despondency that he could not explain. I said to him, you have had the same despondency maybe seven weeks ago, maybe eight weeks ago, maybe five weeks ago. He examined his diary and his recollection, and he found that he had actual recurrences of despondency about the same distance apart. Well, I said, that explains to me how it is coming back. But what am I to do? Do what the old theosophists taught us; that is, we can only have these good results by producing opposite impressions to bad ones. So, take this occasion of despondency. What he should have done was, that being the return of an old impression, to have compelled himself to feel joyous, even against his will, and if he could not have done that, then to have tried to feel the joy of others. By doing that, he would have implanted in himself another impression, that is of joy, so that when this thing returned once more, instead of being of the same quality and extension, it would have been changed by the impression of joy or elation and the two things coming together would have counteracted each other, just as two billiard balls coming together tend to counteract each other's movements. This applies to every person who has the blues. . . .

I have friends and acquaintances who have these desponding spells. It is the return of old cyclic impressions, or the cyclic return of impressions. What are you to do? Some people say, I just sit down and let it go; that is to say, you sit there and create it once more. You cannot rub it out if it has been coming, but when it comes start up something else, start up cheerfulness, be good to some one, then try to relieve some other

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person who is despondent, and you will have started another impression, which will return at the same time. It does not make any difference if you wait a day or two to do this. The next day, or a few days after will do, for when the old cyclic impression returns, it will have dragged up the new one, because it is related to it by association.

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Who are we? Where are we going? Where have we come from? I told you that the old Egyptians disappeared. If you inquire into Egyptian history, the most interesting because the most obscure, you will find, as the writers say, that the civilization seems to rise to the zenith at once. We do not see when it began. The civilization was so great it must have existed an enormous length of time to get to that height, so that we cannot trace it from its beginning, and it disappears suddenly from the sky; there is nothing of it left but the enormous remains which testify to these great things, for the ancient Egyptians not only made mummies in which they displayed the art of bandaging that we cannot better, but they had put everything to such a degree of specialization that we must conclude they had many centuries of civilization. There was a specialist for one eye and a specialist for the other, a specialist for the eyebrow, and so on. In my poor and humble opinion, we are the Egyptians.

We have come back again, after our five thousand or whatever years' cycle it is, and we have dragged back with us someone called the Semitic race, with which we are connected by some old impression that we cannot get rid of, and so upon us is impinged that very Semitic image. We have drawn back with us, by the inevitable law of association in cyclic return, some race, some personages connected with us by some acts of ours in that great old civilization now disappeared, and we cannot get rid of it; we must raise them up to some other plane as we raise ourselves. . . .

So we retain in ourselves the impression of all the things that we have done and when the time comes that we have cycled back, over and over again, through the middle ages perhaps, into England, into Germany, into France, we come at last to an environment such as is provided here, just the thing physically and every other way to enable us to do well, and to enable the others who are coming after us. . . .

It [i.e. America] is the highest, although the crudest, civilization now on the earth. It is the beginning of the great civilization that is to come, when old

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Europe has been destroyed: when the civilizations of Europe are unable to do any more, then this will be the place where the new great civilization will begin to put out a hand once more to grasp that of the ancient East, who has sat there silently doing nothing all these years, holding in her ancient crypts and libraries and records the philosophy which the world wants, and it is this philosophy and this ethics that the Theosophical Society is trying to give you. It is a philosophy you can understand and practice.

Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution – W.Q.J.

Mabel Collins: But how is this astral body created?

H. P. Blavatsky: It is not created; it grows, as I told you, with the man and exists in the rudimentary condition even before the child is born.

M.C. And what about the second?

H.P.B. The second is the "Thought" body, or Dream body, rather; known among Occultists as the *Mayavi-rupa*, or "Illusion-body." During life this image is the vehicle both of thought and of the animal passions and desires, drawing at one and the same time from the lowest terrestrial *manas* (mind) and *Kama*, the element of desire. It is *dual* in its potentiality, and after death forms what is called in the East, *Bhoot*, or *Kama-rupa*, but which is better known to theosophists as the "Spook."

M.C. And the third?

H.P.B. The third is the true *Ego*, called in the East, by a name meaning "causal body" but which in the trans-Himalayan schools is always called the "Karmic body," which is the same. For *Karma* or action is the cause which produces incessant rebirths or "reincarnations." It is *not* the *Monad*, nor is it *Manas* proper; but is, in a way, indissolubly connected with, and a compound of the *Monad* and *Manas* in *Devachan*.

M.C. Then there are three doubles?

H.P.B. If you can call the Christian and other Trinities "three Gods," then there are three doubles. But in truth there is only one under three aspects or phases: the most material portion disappearing with the body; the middle one, surviving both as an independent, but temporary entity

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in the land of shadows; the third, immortal, throughout the manvantara unless Nirvana puts an end to it before.

Dialogues between The Two Editors: On Astral Bodies, or Doppelgangers – H.P.B.

Student: Is there not some connection between the Karma of man and elementals?

Sage: A very important one. The elemental world has become a strong factor in the Karma of the human race. Being unconscious, automatic, and photographic, it assumes the complexion of the human family itself. In the earlier ages, when we may postulate that man had not yet begun to make bad Karma, the elemental world was more friendly to man because it had not received unfriendly impressions. But so soon as man began to become ignorant, unfriendly to himself and the rest of creation, the elemental world began to take on exactly the same complexion and return to humanity the exact pay, so to speak, due for the actions of humanity. Or, like a donkey, which, when he is pushed against, will push against you. Or, as a human being, when anger or insult is offered, feels inclined to return the same. So the elemental world, being unconscious force, returns or reacts upon humanity exactly as humanity acted towards it, whether the actions of men were done with the knowledge of these laws or not. So in these times it has come to be that the elemental world has the complexion and action which is the exact result of all the actions and thoughts and desires of men from the earliest times. And, being unconscious and only acting according to the natural laws of its being, the elemental world is a powerful factor in the workings of Karma. And so long as mankind does not cultivate brotherly feeling and charity towards the whole of creation, just so long will the elementals be without the impulse to act for our benefit. But so soon and wherever man or men begin to cultivate brotherly feeling and love for the whole of creation, there and then the elementals begin to take on the new condition.

Elementals – Karma – W.Q.J.

Q. Is it wise to hypnotize a patient not only out of disease, but out of a habit, such as drinking or lying?

A. It is an act of charity and kindness, and this is next to wisdom. For, although the dropping of his vicious habits will add nothing to his good Karma (which it would, had his efforts to reform been personal, of his

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own free-will, and necessitating a great mental and physical struggle), still a successful "suggestion" prevents him from generating more bad Karma, and adding constantly to the previous record of his transgressions.

Hypnotism and Its Relations to other Modes of Fascination – H.P.B.

From *The Friendly Philosopher* by Robert Crosbie

As a consequence, man constantly shifts his responsibility, and acts as an irresponsible being. The whole falsity of our existence is centred there, for we are responsible for every ill that exists among us; every kind of suffering on every hand has been brought about through a false idea, and the false action which followed. What are sin, disease, sorrow and suffering but the result of our own thoughts and actions?

The Kingly Mystery – p. 221-222

We are all reaping what we have sown, individually and collectively; for we must know that we never act alone. We always act on and in connection with others, affecting them for good or evil, and we get the necessary reaction from the causes set in motion by ourselves. This presents to us the idea of absolute Justice, for under such a conception of Law each being receives exactly what he *gives*.

The Recognition of Law – p. 226

Then, everything that is done by beings affects all beings, and all that is has been caused by beings, each one affected according to their share in the cause. What the past has been, we are experiencing now—our lives now being but repetitions of lives that preceded them. What the future will be, we are making now—the lives to come depending entirely on the choice and direction of our thoughts and actions now.

A League of Humanity – p. 307

We live in a world of effects, overwhelmed mentally by them, unable to extricate ourselves from them. So what is most needed in the world is a realization of what our own real nature is. If we find what our own real nature is, then we shall know what the real nature of every other being is, whether that other being is below us in point of intelligence, or as far above us as has yet been attained by any being.

The Storehouse of Thought – p. 339

We must recognize the fact that this is a universe of law, with no chance or accident anywhere in it, and that we have arrived at our present

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position under law—the law of our own being, set in operation by ourselves; that the same law rules in every direction in space and in nature. The races of men that now exist are the result of races of men which preceded them; the planet on which we now live is the result of a planet that preceded it; the solar system of which our planet is a part is the result of a solar system that preceded it. Everything is an exact consequence of that which preceded it—*everything is a repetition of that which was*. This return of the same action or preceding impression occurs under the true aspect of memory; it is the memory of what we have been through that brings about the repetition.

Real Memory – p. 240

Law rules everywhere in nature in accord with the basis of duality. We call it the law of periodicity, but it is simply a statement of Karma, or action and reaction. What we call the laws of the elements are in reality but perceptions of the actions and reactions of various grades of intelligences. What we call our seasons, and all the cycles of time or of individuals, are covered by that law—reaction from action previously sent forth. The people who form a nation are people who were together in other times; their collective actions have brought them the same collective reactions. Every thought we have has its return of impression; every feeling we have has its return. All react upon us, coming back either impoverished or enriched. Thus, with the power to produce any kind of effect resident in us, we can understand the power of false, mistaken ideas. We can sustain these ideas interminably by the law of return of impression, and continually suffer reactions from them. The whole power of spirit used in a wrong direction, in ignorance of our own nature and the nature of beings in general, creates sorrow of every kind.

The Cause of Sorrow – p. 245-246

All are rays from and one with that Absolute Principle, which is our very Self—the Self of all creatures. What of all those beings who were the Self in process of evolution, who reached a realization of this truth ages and ages before the present civilization? What became of them? Have all their hopes and fears been lost? What is the meaning of those races, those civilizations—was it death for them when their civilization passed out as ours must, since just so surely as it had a beginning so it will have an ending? Just so surely as there are those rises and falls in civilizations, so is there a cycle of time through which the conscious man goes, and a cycle of form which the conscious man animates, uses, and leaves—to take another—from civilization to civilization.

Our God and Other Gods – p. 217-218

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We have considered that good and evil are things in themselves. They are not. There is nothing good in itself; there is nothing evil in itself. Good and evil are the effects felt by us. What is good to one may be evil to another. It depends on the recipient, on his attitude of mind. If we see that Law rules and recognize that these effects were produced by ourselves, that we receive the exact return of causes set in motion by ourselves, then we see that whatever we do or have done affects others either for good or evil, and that we must in the nature of things in time pay that debt incurred or receive back the benefit conferred. The good that comes is what we have earned through service to others. The evil that befalls us is also what we have earned, by lack of service or by injury to others—every effect is the continuation of the cause set in motion by ourselves.

The Storehouse of Thought – p. 341

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Reincarnation being the great law of life and progress, it is interwoven with that of the cycles and karma. These three work together, and in practice it is almost impossible to disentangle reincarnation from cyclic law. Individuals and nations in definite streams return in regularly recurring periods to the earth, and thus bring back to the globe the arts, the civilization, the very persons who once were on it at work. And as the units in nation and race are connected together by invisible strong threads, large bodies of such units moving slowly but surely all together reunite at different times and emerge again and again together into new race and new civilization as the cycles roll their appointed rounds. Therefore the souls who made the most ancient civilizations will come back and bring the old civilization with them in idea and essence, which being added to what others have done for the development of the human race in its character and knowledge will produce a new and higher state of civilization. This newer and better development will not be due to books, to records, to arts or mechanics, because all those are periodically destroyed so far as physical evidence goes, but the soul ever retaining in *Manas* the knowledge it once gained and always pushing to a fuller development the higher principles and powers, the essence of progress remains and will as surely come out as the sun shines. And along this road are the points when the small and large cycles of Avatars bring out for man's benefit the great characters who mould the race from time to time.

The Ocean of Theosophy, Chapter XIV, p. 119 – W.Q.J.