The Kybalion

A Study of The Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece

Hermetic Teachings on Mentalism, Vibration, and Universal Law

by Three Initiates

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The Kybalion

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Preface
Message to the Reader

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Introduction

The Kybalion makes a bold promise in its first pages: that a single master key exists, one that opens every door in the mysterious house of occult knowledge. Its authors, who sign themselves only as Three Initiates, say they are offering a short statement of seven principles that can reconcile the many teachings a seeker may have gathered, teachings that seem to contradict one another and leave beginners discouraged. The key, they say, comes from Hermes Trismegistus, the "scribe of the gods," a figure of ancient Egypt whom they call the Master of Masters.

The book is compact, with fifteen short chapters, yet the claims it makes about mind, nature, and existence are large. It says that the universe is mental, that what is above mirrors what is below, that everything vibrates, that every truth has an opposite pole, that all things rise and fall in rhythms, that nothing happens by chance, and that gender runs through every plane of existence. It then devotes a chapter to each principle and closes with a set of axioms.

That is a great deal to hand a reader, and the book does it with the confidence of a teacher who is not in a hurry to be believed.

Hermes and the Hidden Key

Few books of its size have gone on living so persistently. The Kybalion is a foundation text for a large share of modern esoteric writing, and its phrases have traveled far beyond its pages. Lines such as "As above, so below; as below, so above." and "THE ALL IS MIND; the Universe is Mental." turn up in discussions of mysticism, self-help, and the spiritual interests of the modern world. Readers who come to it from any of those directions will find familiar Hermetic sayings gathered into a compact exposition of the authors' system.

The book's appeal lies partly in its brevity. Where many occult works sprawl through hundreds of pages of symbols and lineages, this one lays out seven principles and then works through them in order. It is also an unusually direct invitation to think. The authors do not ask for belief; they say they have tried to give working principles and leave the student to apply them.

The moment of its writing matters too. The book belongs to the early twentieth century, a time of intense public curiosity about the occult, the mind, and comparative religion. Its preface speaks of students of Comparative Religions, of the many "occult" teachings on offer, and of the confusion that such abundance could cause. The authors present themselves as a calm voice among those competing claims.

The Three Initiates never give their names in these pages. Their anonymity belongs to the Hermetic custom the book describes, in which truth is reserved for those ready to hear it. They place themselves as students at the feet of Hermes, not as inventors of a new system. They say that the original maxims of the Kybalion were passed from teacher to pupil by word of mouth, and they print those maxims in their own text, followed by explanation and illustration.

Seven Principles in Plain Words

The book opens with the figure of Hermes Trismegistus, whom the authors place in the earliest days of ancient Egypt, and with the claim that all great mystical teaching ultimately flows from him. The situation is a simple one: a reader, a hidden tradition, and a bold offer to hand over its central principles. The question it raises is whether a handful of old sayings can really organize the whole of existence.

Reading it is a quiet experience. The voice is grave, courteous, and sure of itself, and it often addresses the student directly as "you." Many key terms are capitalized, such as the All, the Master Key, and the Path, which gives the prose a ceremonial air. The pace is steady. Each chapter takes one idea, states it in a

short line from the Kybalion, and then expands it with comparisons and examples drawn from nature, science, and daily life.

A first-time reader meets few characters. The book has no plot and no story to follow; it is an argument laid out in stages. The early chapters set up the history and the seven principles in outline, and the later ones take each principle in turn, so nothing gets lost if the reading is done in order. Some terms, such as plane, vibration, and transmutation, are used in the author's own sense and are explained as they go.

The tone is that of a lecture given with warmth rather than argument, and it assumes the reader is a willing listener. That is part of its charm, and part of what makes it distinctive among books of philosophy.

The Master Key and Its Claims

A few questions hover over the book from the start. If the Hermetic teaching has been guarded so closely for thousands of years, why do the authors choose to print it, and how do they square that choice with the rule that the lips of wisdom close except to understanding ears? The preface claims that the book will find those ready for it. What does it mean to be ready?

Another question concerns the key itself. The authors say one philosophy can reconcile religions that seem to contradict each other. How far can seven principles stretch before they start to feel like general statements, and how far do they sharpen into tools that the reader can actually use?

A third concerns the word "alchemy." The authors insist that the old legends of turning lead into gold were really about the mind, and about changing one mental state into another. What would it mean to treat thought as raw material that can be worked, and what does the book suggest a person might make of it?

Epigraph

"The lips of wisdom are closed, except to the ears of understanding"

Known to the Ancient Egyptians as "the Great Great" and "Master of Masters"

This Little Volume of Hermetic Teaching Is Reverently Dedicated

Preface by the Author

We take great pleasure in presenting this little work, based on the ancient Hermetic Teachings, to students and investigators of the Secret Doctrines. So little has been written on this subject, despite the countless references to the Teachings in works on occultism, that the many earnest seekers after Arcane Truths will doubtless welcome this volume.

The purpose of this work is not to set forth any particular philosophy or doctrine, but rather to give students a statement of the Truth that can reconcile the many pieces of occult knowledge they may have acquired—pieces that seem to contradict one another and often discourage and disgust beginners. Our aim is not to build a new Temple of Knowledge, but to place in the student's hands a Master Key with which to open the many inner doors in the Temple of Mystery, beyond the main portals the student has already entered.

No part of the occult teachings known to the world has been guarded as closely as the fragments of the Hermetic Teachings passed down to us over the thousands of years since the lifetime of their great founder, Hermes Trismegistus, the "scribe of the gods," who lived in ancient Egypt when the present human race was in its infancy. A contemporary of Abraham and, if the legends are true, a teacher of that venerable sage, Hermes was, and remains, the Great Central Sun of Occultism, whose rays have illuminated the countless teachings promulgated since his time. All the fundamental teachings embedded in the esoteric traditions of every race can be traced back to Hermes. Even the most ancient teachings of India undoubtedly have their roots in the original Hermetic Teachings.

Many advanced occultists traveled from the land of the Ganges to Egypt and sat at the Master's feet. From him they received the Master Key that explained and reconciled their differing views, and thus the Secret Doctrine was firmly established. Learned people also came from other lands, all

regarding Hermes as the Master of Masters. His influence was so great that, despite the many departures from the path by centuries of teachers in these different lands, a certain underlying resemblance and correspondence can still be found among the many—and often quite divergent—theories held and taught by occultists in these lands today. Students of Comparative Religions can perceive the influence of the Hermetic Teachings in every religion worthy of the name known to humanity, whether it is dead or still flourishing. Despite their contradictory features, there is always a certain correspondence, and the Hermetic Teachings act as the Great Reconciler.

Hermes's life's work seems to have been to plant the great Seed-Truth, which has grown and blossomed in so many strange forms, rather than to establish a school of philosophy that would dominate the world's thought. Nevertheless, a few people in each age have preserved his original teachings intact and pure. They have refused to take on large numbers of partially developed students and followers, instead following the Hermetic custom of reserving the truth for the few ready to understand and master it. The truth has been passed from lip to ear among the few. In every generation, in various lands around the world, a few Initiates have kept the sacred flame of the Hermetic Teachings alive. They have always been willing to use their lamps to relight the lesser lamps of the outside world when the light of truth grew dim and clouded through neglect, and when the wicks became clogged with foreign matter. There have always been a few who faithfully tended the altar of Truth, where the Perpetual Lamp of Wisdom burned. These people devoted their lives to the labor of love so well described by the poet in these lines:

"Oh, let not the flame die out! Cherished age after age in its dark cavern—in its holy temples cherished. Fed by pure ministers of love—let not the flame die out!"

These people have never sought popular approval or large numbers of followers. They are indifferent to such things because they know how few in each generation are ready for the

truth, or would recognize it if it were presented to them. They reserve the "strong meat for men," while others provide the "milk for babes." They save their pearls of wisdom for the chosen few who recognize their value and wear them in their crowns, rather than casting them before the materialistic, vulgar swine, who would trample them in the mud and mix them with their disgusting mental food. Still, these people have never forgotten or ignored Hermes's original teachings about passing the words of truth to those ready to receive them. The teaching is stated in The Kybalion as follows: "Where fall the footsteps of the Master, the ears of those ready for his Teaching open wide." And again: "When the ears of the student are ready to hear, then cometh the lips to fill them with wisdom." But their customary attitude has always been strictly in keeping with another Hermetic aphorism, also in The Kybalion: "The lips of Wisdom are closed, except to the ears of Understanding."

Some have criticized the Hermetists' attitude, claiming that their policy of seclusion and reserve showed the wrong spirit. But a glance back through history reveals the wisdom of the Masters, who understood the folly of trying to teach the world what it was neither ready nor willing to receive. The Hermetists have never sought martyrdom. Instead, they have sat silently to one side, a pitying smile on their closed lips, while the "heathen raged noisily about them," indulging in their customary amusement of torturing and killing honest but misguided enthusiasts who imagined they could force the truth on a race of barbarians. That truth could be understood only by the chosen few who had advanced along The Path.

The spirit of persecution has not yet died out in the world. Certain Hermetic Teachings, if made public, would bring down on their teachers a great outcry of scorn and abuse from the masses, who would again raise the cry, "Crucify! Crucify!"

In this little work, we have tried to give you an idea of the fundamental teachings of The Kybalion. We have sought to provide the working Principles, leaving you to apply them yourselves rather than attempting to work out the teachings in

detail. If you are a true student, you will be able to work out and apply these Principles. If not, you must develop yourself into one; otherwise, the Hermetic Teachings will be "words, words, words" to you.

The Three Initiates

Chapter 1

The Hermetic Philosophy

"The lips of wisdom are closed, except to the ears of understanding"—The Kybalion.

The fundamental esoteric and occult teachings that have so strongly influenced the philosophies of all races, nations, and peoples for several thousand years came from ancient Egypt. Egypt, home of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, was the birthplace of Hidden Wisdom and Mystic Teachings. All nations borrowed from its Secret Doctrine. India, Persia, Chaldea, Medea, China, Japan, Assyria, ancient Greece and Rome, and other ancient countries all shared in the feast of knowledge freely offered by the Hierophants and Masters of the Land of Isis to those prepared to partake of the great store of Mystic and Occult Lore gathered by the masterminds of that ancient land.

In ancient Egypt lived the great Adepts and Masters, never surpassed and seldom equaled in the centuries that have passed since the days of the Great Hermes. Egypt was home to the Great Lodge of Lodges of the Mystics. Neophytes entered her temples and later, as Hierophants, Adepts, and Masters, traveled to the four corners of the earth, carrying with them the precious knowledge they were ready, eager, and willing to pass on to those ready to receive it. All students of the Occult recognize their debt to these venerable Masters of that ancient land.

But among the great Masters of ancient Egypt once lived a man whom the Masters hailed as "The Master of Masters." This man—if indeed he was a "man"—lived in Egypt in the earliest days. He was known as Hermes Trismegistus. He was the father of Occult Wisdom, the founder of Astrology, and the discoverer of Alchemy. The details of his life have been lost to history over the passage of time, though several ancient countries disputed the honor of being his birthplace—thousands of years ago. The date of his stay in Egypt, during his last incarnation on this

planet, is not known today, but has been placed in the earliest days of Egypt's oldest dynasties—long before the time of Moses. The best authorities consider him a contemporary of Abraham, and some Jewish traditions go so far as to claim that Abraham acquired part of his mystic knowledge from Hermes himself.

As the years passed after Hermes left this plane of life (tradition says he lived three hundred years in the flesh), the Egyptians deified him and made him one of their gods, under the name Thoth. Years later, the people of Ancient Greece also made him one of their many gods, calling him "Hermes, the god of Wisdom." For many centuries—indeed, tens of centuries—the Egyptians revered his memory, calling him "the Scribe of the Gods" and giving him the distinctive ancient title "Trismegistus," meaning "the thrice-great," "the great-great," "the greatest-great," and so on. Throughout the ancient world, the name Hermes Trismegistus was revered as synonymous with the "Fount of Wisdom."

Even today, we use the word "hermetic" to mean "secret," "sealed so that nothing can escape," and so on, because the followers of Hermes always kept their teachings secret. They did not believe in "casting pearls before swine," but instead followed the teachings "milk for babes" and "meat for strong men." Both sayings are familiar to readers of the Christian scriptures, but the Egyptians had used them for centuries before the Christian era.

Careful sharing of the truth has always characterized the Hermetics, even to the present day. Hermetic teachings are found in every land and among all religions, but are never identified with any particular country or religious sect. This is because the ancient teachers warned against letting the Secret Doctrine harden into a creed. The wisdom of this caution is clear to every student of history. The ancient occultism of India and Persia declined and was largely lost because the teachers became priests and mixed theology with philosophy. As a result, the occultism of India and Persia gradually disappeared amid a mass of religious superstition, cults, creeds, and "gods." The same happened in Ancient Greece and Rome. It also happened to the

Hermetic teachings of the Gnostics and Early Christians, which were lost in Constantine's time. His iron hand smothered philosophy beneath theology, depriving the Christian Church of what was its very essence and spirit and forcing it to grope for several centuries before finding its way back to its ancient faith. To every careful twentieth-century observer, the signs showed that the Church was then struggling to return to its ancient mystical teachings.

But a few faithful people always kept the Flame alive, tending it carefully and not allowing its light to go out. Thanks to their steadfast hearts and fearless minds, the truth is still with us. But it is found to only a limited extent in books. It has been passed from Master to Student, from Initiate to Hierophant, from lip to ear. Whenever it was written down, its meaning was hidden in the language of alchemy and astrology, so that only those with the key could understand it correctly. This was necessary to avoid persecution by the theologians of the Middle Ages, who fought the Secret Doctrine with fire and sword, stake, gibbet, and cross. Even today, few reliable books on Hermetic Philosophy can be found, though countless books on various branches of Occultism refer to it. And yet Hermetic Philosophy is the only Master Key that opens every door to the Occult Teachings!

In ancient times, a collection of certain basic Hermetic doctrines was passed from teacher to student and became known as "THE KYBALION." The term's exact significance and meaning were lost for several centuries. Yet many people know this teaching, passed down from mouth to ear through the centuries. As far as we know, its precepts have never been written down or printed. It was simply a collection of maxims, axioms, and precepts that outsiders could not understand, but that students readily understood after Hermetic Initiates had explained and illustrated them for their Neophytes. These teachings formed the basic principles of "The Art of Hermetic Alchemy," which, contrary to popular belief, dealt with mastering Mental Forces rather than Material Elements:

transforming one kind of Mental Vibration into another, rather than turning one metal into another. The legends of the "Philosopher's Stone" that could turn base metal into Gold were allegories about Hermetic Philosophy, readily understood by all students of true Hermeticism.

In this little book, of which this is the First Lesson, we invite our students to examine the Hermetic teachings set out in THE KYBALION and explained by us, humble students of those teachings. Though we bear the title of Initiates, we remain students at the feet of HERMES, the Master. Here we present many of THE KYBALION's maxims, axioms, and precepts, along with explanations and illustrations that we believe will make the teachings easier for modern students to understand, especially since the original text is deliberately veiled in obscure language.

The original maxims, axioms, and precepts of THE KYBALION are printed here in italics, with proper credit given. Our own work appears in regular type in the body of the book. We hope that the many students to whom we now offer this little work will benefit from its pages as much as those who came before them, following the same Path to Mastery through the centuries since the time of HERMES TRISMEGISTUS—the Master of Masters, the Great-Great. In the words of "THE KYBALION":

> "Wherever the Master's footsteps fall, the ears of those ready to learn from him open wide."—The Kybalion.

"When the student's ears are ready to hear, then the lips come to fill them with Wisdom."—The Kybalion.

Thus, according to the teachings, when this book reaches those ready for instruction, it will attract the attention of those prepared to receive the Teaching. Likewise, when a pupil is ready to receive the truth, this little book will come to him or her. Such is the Law. The Hermetic Principle of Cause and

Effect, in its aspect as the Law of Attraction, will bring lips and ears together—pupil and book. So be it!

Chapter 2

The Seven Hermetic Principles

"There are Seven Principles of Truth; whoever understands them possesses the Magic Key that opens every Door of the Temple."—The Kybalion.

The Seven Hermetic Principles on which the entire Hermetic Philosophy is based are as follows:

1. The Principle of Mentalism. 2. The Principle of Correspondence. 3. The Principle of Vibration. 4. The Principle of Polarity. 5. The Principle of Rhythm. 6. The Principle of Cause and Effect. 7. The Principle of Gender.

We will discuss and explain these Seven Principles as we proceed through the lessons. For now, we can give a brief explanation of each.

1. The Principle of Mentalism

"THE ALL IS MIND; the Universe is Mental."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that "All is Mind." It explains that THE ALL—the Substantial Reality underlying all the outward manifestations and appearances we know as "the Material Universe," "the Phenomena of Life," "Matter," "Energy," and, in short, everything apparent to our physical senses—is SPIRIT, which is in itself UNKNOWABLE and UNDEFINABLE, but may be considered and thought of as AN UNIVERSAL, INFINITE, LIVING MIND. It also explains that the entire phenomenal world or universe is simply a Mental Creation of THE ALL, subject to the Laws of Created Things, and that the universe, as a whole and in all its parts or units, exists in the Mind of THE ALL, in which Mind we "live and move and have our being." By establishing the Mental Nature of the Universe, this Principle readily explains the varied mental and psychic phenomena that attract so much public attention and that, without such an explanation, are incomprehensible and

defy scientific study. Understanding this great Hermetic Principle of Mentalism enables individuals to grasp the laws of the Mental Universe and apply them to their well-being and advancement. The Hermetic student can intelligently apply the great Mental Laws rather than use them haphazardly. With the Master Key in hand, the student can unlock the many doors of the mental and psychic temple of knowledge and enter freely and intelligently. This Principle explains the true nature of "Energy," "Power," and "Matter," and why and how they are all subject to the mastery of Mind. Long ago, one of the old Hermetic Masters wrote: "Whoever grasps the truth of the Mental Nature of the Universe is well advanced on the Path to Mastery." These words are as true today as when they were first written. Without this Master Key, mastery is impossible, and the student knocks in vain at the many doors of the Temple.

2. The Principle of Correspondence

"As above, so below; as below, so above."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that the laws and phenomena of the various planes of Being and Life always correspond. The old Hermetic axiom put it this way: "As above, so below; as below, so above." Grasping this Principle gives us a way to solve many of Nature's dark paradoxes and hidden secrets. There are planes beyond our knowledge, but by applying the Principle of Correspondence to them, we can understand much that would otherwise remain unknowable. This Principle applies and manifests universally across the material, mental, and spiritual planes of the universe—it is a Universal Law. The ancient Hermetists considered it one of the most important mental tools for setting aside the obstacles that hid the Unknown from view. Its use even lifted the Veil of Isis enough to offer a glimpse of the goddess's face. Just as knowledge of the principles of geometry lets us measure distant suns and their movements while seated in an observatory, knowledge of the Principle of Correspondence lets us reason intelligently from the Known to the Unknown. By studying the monad, we understand the archangel.

3. The Principle of Vibration

"Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that "everything is in motion"; "everything vibrates"; "nothing is at rest"—facts endorsed by modern science, with each new discovery tending to confirm them. And yet the Masters of ancient Egypt stated this Hermetic Principle thousands of years ago. The Principle explains that the differences among manifestations of Matter, Energy, Mind, and even Spirit arise largely from different rates of vibration. From THE ALL, which is Pure Spirit, down to the grossest form of Matter, everything vibrates—the higher the vibration, the higher the position on the scale. Spirit vibrates with such infinite intensity and speed that it is practically at rest, just as a rapidly spinning wheel appears motionless. At the other end of the scale are gross forms of matter whose vibrations are so slow that they seem to be at rest. Between these poles are millions upon millions of varying degrees of vibration. From corpuscles and electrons, atoms and molecules, to worlds and universes, everything is in vibratory motion. The same is true on the planes of energy and force, which are simply different degrees of vibration; on the mental planes, whose states depend on vibrations; and even on the spiritual planes. With the appropriate formulas, understanding this Principle enables Hermetic students to control their own mental vibrations and those of others. The Masters also apply it in various ways to master natural phenomena. "Whoever understands the Principle of Vibration has grasped the scepter of power," one of the old writers says.

4. The Principle of Polarity

"Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are only half-truths; all paradoxes can be reconciled."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that "everything is dual"; "everything has two poles"; "everything has its pair of opposites"—all old Hermetic axioms. It explains the old paradoxes that have puzzled so many, stated as follows: "Thesis and antithesis are identical in nature, but different in degree"; "opposites are the same, differing only in degree"; "pairs of opposites can be reconciled"; "extremes meet"; "everything is and isn't, at the same time"; "all truths are only half-truths"; "every truth is half-false"; "there are two sides to everything," and so on. It explains that everything has two poles, or opposite aspects, and that "opposites" are really just the two extremes of the same thing, with many varying degrees between them. For example, Heat and Cold, though "opposites," are really the same thing; they differ only in degree. Look at your thermometer and see if you can discover where "heat" ends and "cold" begins! There is no such thing as "absolute heat" or "absolute cold." The terms "heat" and "cold" simply indicate varying degrees of the same thing, and that "same thing" that manifests as "heat" and "cold" is merely a form, variety, and rate of vibration. So "heat" and "cold" are simply the "two poles" of what we call "Heat," and the related phenomena are manifestations of the Principle of Polarity. The same Principle manifests in "Light and Darkness," which are the same thing, differing only in degree between the two poles of the phenomena. Where does "darkness" end, and "light" begin? What is the difference between "large and small"? Between "hard and soft"? Between "black and white"? Between "sharp and dull"? Between "noise and quiet"? Between "high and low"? Between "positive and negative"? The Principle of Polarity explains these paradoxes, and no other Principle can replace it. The same Principle operates on the Mental Plane. Let us take a striking extreme example: "Love and Hate," two mental states that seem completely different. Yet there are degrees of Hate and degrees of Love, with a midpoint where we use the terms "Like or Dislike." They shade into each other so gradually that sometimes we cannot tell whether we "like" or "dislike," or "neither." As you will see if you stop to think for a moment, all

are simply degrees of the same thing. More than this—and the Hermetists consider it more important—it is possible to change the vibrations of Hate into the vibrations of Love, in one's own mind and in the minds of others. Many of you who read these lines have personally experienced the involuntary, rapid shift from Love to Hate, and back again, in yourselves or others. So you will understand that this can be accomplished through the use of Will, by means of the Hermetic formulas. "Good and Evil" are simply the poles of the same thing, and the Hermetist understands the art of changing Evil into Good by applying the Principle of Polarity. In short, the "Art of Polarization" is a form of "Mental Alchemy," known and practiced by the ancient and modern Hermetic Masters. Understanding the Principle enables one to change one's own Polarity, as well as that of others, provided one devotes the time and study needed to master the art.

5. The Principle of Rhythm

"Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum's swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that everything displays a measured motion back and forth: a flow and inflow, a backward and forward swing, a pendulum-like movement, a tide-like ebb and flow, a high tide and a low tide between the two poles that exist according to the Principle of Polarity described a moment ago. There is always action and reaction, advance and retreat, rising and sinking. This is true of the affairs of the Universe, suns, worlds, people, animals, mind, energy, and matter. The law appears in the creation and destruction of worlds; the rise and fall of nations; the life of all things; and, finally, people's mental states. The Hermetists consider understanding the Principle most important in this last area. They have grasped this Principle, recognized its universal application, and discovered certain ways to overcome its effects on themselves by using the appropriate formulas and methods. They apply the Mental Law

of Neutralization. They cannot cancel the Principle or stop it from operating, but they have learned how to escape its effects on themselves to a certain degree, depending on their mastery of the Principle. They have learned how to USE it instead of being USED BY it. The Art of the Hermetists consists of this and similar methods. The Master of Hermetics polarizes himself at the point where he wishes to remain, then neutralizes the pendulum's rhythmic swing that would otherwise carry him to the opposite pole. All individuals who have achieved some degree of Self-Mastery do this to some extent, more or less unconsciously. But the Master does so consciously, using Will, and achieves a degree of Poise and Mental Firmness almost impossible for the masses—who swing back and forth like a pendulum—to believe. The Hermetists have studied this Principle and the Principle of Polarity closely. Their methods of counteracting, neutralizing, and USING them form an important part of Hermetic Mental Alchemy.

6. The Principle of Cause and Effect

"Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is only a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the fact that every Effect has a Cause, and every Cause produces an Effect. It explains that "everything happens according to Law"; that nothing ever "just happens"; that Chance does not exist; and that although there are various planes of Cause and Effect, with the higher planes dominating the lower, nothing ever entirely escapes the Law. To a certain degree, Hermetists understand the art and methods of rising above the ordinary plane of Cause and Effect. By rising mentally to a higher plane, they become Causers instead of Effects. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to their surroundings; to the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; to heredity; to suggestion; and to other outward causes that move them about like pawns on the Chessboard of Life. But the Masters rise to the plane above and dominate their

moods, characters, qualities, and powers, as well as their surroundings. They become Movers instead of pawns. They help PLAY THE GAME OF LIFE instead of being played and moved about by other wills and their surroundings. They USE the Principle instead of being its tools. The Masters obey the Causation of the higher planes, but help RULE on their own plane. This statement condenses a wealth of Hermetic knowledge—let whoever can, read it.

7. The Principle of Gender

"Gender is in everything; everything has masculine and feminine principles; gender manifests on every plane."—The Kybalion.

This Principle expresses the truth that gender is manifested in everything—the masculine and feminine principles are always at work. This is true not only on the physical plane, but also on the mental and spiritual planes. On the physical plane, the Principle manifests as sex; on higher planes, it takes higher forms, but the Principle itself is always the same. No physical, mental, or spiritual creation is possible without it. Understanding its laws will shed light on many subjects that have puzzled people. The Principle of Gender is always at work in generation, regeneration, and creation. Everything and everyone contains the two elements or principles of this great Principle within it. Everything masculine also has a feminine element; everything feminine also contains a masculine principle. To understand the philosophy of mental and spiritual creation, generation, and regeneration, you must study and understand this Hermetic Principle. It holds the key to many mysteries of life. We warn you that this Principle has nothing to do with the many base, pernicious, and degrading theories, teachings, and practices of lust that are promoted under fanciful titles and that corrupt the great natural Principle of Gender. Such vile revivals of ancient, infamous forms of phallic worship tend to ruin mind, body, and soul. Hermetic Philosophy has always warned against these debased teachings, which lead to lust, licentiousness, and the perversion of Nature's principles. If you seek such teachings, you

must look elsewhere—Hermeticism has nothing of that kind to offer you. To the pure, all things are pure; to the base, all things are base.

Chapter 3

Mental Transmutation

"Mind (as well as metals and elements) can be transmuted from state to state, degree to degree, condition to condition, pole to pole, and vibration to vibration. True Hermetic Transmutation is a mental art."—The Kybalion.

As we have said, the Hermetists were the original alchemists, astrologers, and psychologists, with Hermes as the founder of these schools of thought. Modern astronomy developed from astrology; modern chemistry from alchemy; and the modern academic psychology from mystic psychology. But we must not assume that the ancients were ignorant of what modern schools consider their exclusive specialty. Inscriptions on the stones of ancient Egypt conclusively show that the ancients had a full and comprehensive knowledge of astronomy. The very construction of the Pyramids shows a connection between their design and the study of astronomy. Nor were they ignorant of chemistry: fragments of ancient writings show that they knew the chemical properties of things. In fact, modern science is slowly confirming ancient theories of physics, especially those concerning the constitution of matter. Nor should we assume they were ignorant of so-called modern discoveries in psychology. On the contrary, the Egyptians were especially skilled in psychology, particularly in areas that modern schools ignore but that are now being explored under the name "psychic science"—a field that perplexes psychologists today and is making them reluctantly admit that "there may be something in it after all."

The truth is that beneath material chemistry, astronomy, and psychology (that is, psychology in its "brain-action" aspect), the ancients possessed knowledge of transcendental astronomy, called astrology; transcendental chemistry, called alchemy; and transcendental psychology, called mystic psychology. They had Inner Knowledge as well as Outer Knowledge, while modern

scientists possess only the latter. Among the many secret branches of knowledge known to the Hermetists was Mental Transmutation, the subject of this lesson.

"Transmutation" is a term usually used for the ancient art of changing metals—especially base metals into gold. The word "transmute" means "to change from one nature, form, or substance into another; to transform" (Webster). Accordingly, "Mental Transmutation" means the art of changing and transforming mental states, forms, and conditions into others. You can see, then, that Mental Transmutation is the "Art of Mental Chemistry," if you prefer that term—a form of practical mystic psychology.

But this means far more than it may seem. Transmutation, Alchemy, or Chemistry on the Mental Plane is important enough in its effects; even if the art stopped there, it would still be one of the most important fields of study known to humanity. But that is only the beginning. Let us see why!

The first of the Seven Hermetic Principles is the Principle of Mentalism, whose axiom is "THE ALL is Mind; the Universe is Mental." This means that the Underlying Reality of the Universe is Mind, and the Universe itself is Mental—that is, it "exists in the Mind of THE ALL." We will consider this Principle in later lessons, but for now let us examine its implications if we assume it to be true.

If the Universe is mental in nature, then Mental Transmutation must be the art of changing the conditions of the Universe in the realms of matter, force, and mind. So you see that Mental Transmutation is really the "Magic" that ancient writers discussed so much in their mystical works, while offering very few practical instructions. If all is Mental, then the art that enables someone to transmute mental conditions must make the Master a controller of material conditions as well as those ordinarily called "mental."

In fact, only advanced Mental Alchemists have been able to reach the degree of power needed to control the grosser physical conditions, such as the elements of Nature; the creation or

cessation of storms; and the creation or cessation of earthquakes and other great physical phenomena. But all advanced occultists in every school firmly believe that such people have existed and still exist today. The best teachers assure their students that the Masters exist and possess these powers, citing experiences that justify their belief and claims. These Masters do not publicly display their powers. Instead, they seek solitude, away from crowds, so they can better make their way along the Path of Attainment. We mention their existence here only to call your attention to the fact that their power is entirely mental and operates through higher Mental Transmutation, under the Hermetic Principle of Mentalism.

"The Universe is Mental."—The Kybalion.

But students and Hermetists below the rank of Masters—the Initiates and Teachers—can freely work on the Mental Plane through Mental Transmutation. In fact, everything we call "psychic phenomena," "mental influence," "mental science," "new-thought phenomena," and so on works along the same general lines, because only one Principle is involved, whatever name is given to the phenomena.

The student and practitioner of Mental Transmutation works on the Mental Plane, transforming mental conditions, states, and so on into others, according to formulas of varying effectiveness. The various "treatments," "affirmations," "denials," and so on used by the schools of mental science are simply formulas of the Hermetic Art, often quite imperfect and unscientific. Most modern practitioners are quite ignorant compared with the ancient masters, because they lack the fundamental knowledge on which the work is based.

Hermetic methods can change or transmute not only one's own mental states, but also the states of others. This is done constantly, usually unconsciously, but sometimes consciously by people who understand the laws and principles, when those affected have not been informed of the principles of self-protection. More than this, as many students and practitioners of modern mental science know, any material condition that

depends on the minds of other people can be changed or transmuted in accordance with the earnest desire, will, and "treatments" of the person seeking a change in life's conditions. The public is now so generally informed about these things that we do not think it necessary to discuss them at length. Our purpose here is merely to show the Hermetic Principle and Art underlying all these different forms of practice, good and evil, since the force can be used in opposite directions according to the Hermetic Principles of Polarity.

In this little book, we shall state the basic principles of mental transmutation, so that all who read may grasp the underlying principles, and thus possess the master key that will unlock the many doors of the Principle of Polarity.

We will now consider the first of the Seven Hermetic Principles—the Principle of Mentalism—which explains the truth that "THE ALL is Mind; the Universe is Mental," in the words of The Kybalion. We ask our students to give this great Principle their close attention and careful study, because it is truly the Basic Principle of all Hermetic Philosophy and of the Hermetic Art of Mental Transmutation.

Chapter 4

The All

"Beneath and behind the Universe of Time, Space, and Change, we always find the Substantial Reality—the Fundamental Truth."—The Kybalion.

"Substance" means "that which underlies all outward manifestations; the essence; the essential reality; the thing in itself," and so on. "Substantial" means "actually existing; being the essential element; being real," and so on. "Reality" means "the state of being real; true, enduring; valid; fixed; permanent; actual," and so on.

Beneath and behind all outward appearances or manifestations, there must always be a Substantial Reality. This is the Law. When a person considers the Universe, of which he is a part, he sees nothing but change in matter, forces, and mental states. He sees that nothing really IS, but that everything is BECOMING and CHANGING. Nothing stands still—everything is born, grows, and dies. The instant a thing reaches its height, it begins to decline. The law of rhythm is constantly at work. There is no reality, enduring quality, fixity, or substantiality in anything—nothing is permanent but Change. He sees all things evolving from other things and resolving into other things—constant action and reaction; inflow and outflow; building up and tearing down; creation and destruction; birth, growth, and death. Nothing endures but Change. And if he is a thinking person, he realizes that all these changing things must be only outward appearances or manifestations of some Underlying Power—some Substantial Reality.

Thinkers everywhere and throughout time have assumed that this Substantial Reality must exist. All philosophies worthy of the name have been based on this idea. People have given this Substantial Reality many names. Some have called it Deity, under many titles. Others have called it "The Infinite and Eternal

Energy"; still others have tried to call it "Matter"—but all have acknowledged its existence. This is self-evident; it needs no argument.

In these lessons, we have followed the example of some of the world's greatest thinkers, ancient and modern—the Hermetic Masters—and have called this Underlying Power, this Substantial Reality, by the Hermetic name "THE ALL." We consider this the most comprehensive of the many terms people have applied to THAT which transcends names and terms.

We accept and teach the view of the great Hermetic thinkers of all times, as well as of those illumined souls who have reached higher planes of being. Both assert that the inner nature of THE ALL is UNKNOWABLE. This must be so, because nothing but THE ALL itself can comprehend its own nature and being.

The Hermetists believe and teach that THE ALL, "in itself," is and must always be UNKNOWABLE. They regard all the theories, guesses, and speculations of theologians and metaphysicians about the inner nature of THE ALL as childish attempts by mortal minds to grasp the secret of the Infinite. Such attempts have always failed and will always fail, given the very nature of the task. Anyone who pursues such inquiries travels around and around in a maze of thought until he loses all capacity for sane reasoning, action, or conduct and becomes utterly unfit for the work of life. He is like a squirrel frantically running around and around the circular treadmill in its cage, always traveling yet never getting anywhere—still a prisoner at the end, standing just where he started.

Even more presumptuous are those who try to ascribe to THE ALL their own personality, qualities, properties, characteristics, and attributes. They assign THE ALL human emotions, feelings, and traits, down to humanity's pettiest qualities, such as jealousy, susceptibility to flattery and praise, desire for offerings and worship, and all the other survivals from the childhood of the human race. Such ideas are unworthy of grown men and women and are rapidly being discarded.

(At this point, it may be appropriate to explain that we distinguish between Religion and Theology, and between Philosophy and Metaphysics. To us, Religion means the intuitive realization that THE ALL exists and that one is related to it. Theology means people's attempts to assign it personality, qualities, and characteristics; their theories about its affairs, will, desires, plans, and designs; and their assumption of the role of "middlemen" between THE ALL and the people. To us, Philosophy means the pursuit of knowledge about things that can be known and thought about. Metaphysics means trying to carry that inquiry beyond the boundaries and into regions that cannot be known or thought about, with the same tendency as Theology. Consequently, we regard Religion and Philosophy as rooted in Reality, while Theology and Metaphysics seem like broken reeds rooted in the quicksand of ignorance, offering the mind or soul of Man nothing but the most insecure support. We do not insist that our students accept these definitions—we mention them only to show our position. In any case, you will hear very little about Theology and Metaphysics in these lessons.)

But although the essential nature of THE ALL is Unknowable, there are certain truths about its existence that the human mind finds itself compelled to accept. Examining these truths is a proper subject of inquiry, especially since they agree with the reports of the Illumined on higher planes. We now invite you to join us in this inquiry.

"THAT which is the Fundamental Truth—the Substantial Reality—is beyond true naming, but the Wise Men call it THE ALL."—The Kybalion.

"In its Essence, THE ALL is UNKNOWABLE."—The Kybalion.

"But the report of Reason must be hospitably received and treated with respect."—The Kybalion.

Human reason, whose reports we must accept as long as we think at all, tells us the following about THE ALL, without attempting to lift the veil from the Unknowable:

(1) THE ALL must be all that REALLY IS. Nothing can exist outside THE ALL, or it would not be THE ALL.

(2) THE ALL must be INFINITE, because there is nothing else that could define, confine, bound, limit, or restrict it. It must be infinite in Time, or ETERNAL: it must always have existed continuously, because nothing else could have created it, and something can never come from nothing. If it had ever "not been," even for a moment, it would not "be" now. It must continue to exist forever, because there is nothing that could destroy it, and it can never "not-be," even for a moment, because something can never become nothing. It must be infinite in Space—it must be everywhere, because there is no place outside THE ALL. It cannot be anything but continuous throughout Space, without break, cessation, separation, or interruption, because there is nothing that could break, separate, or interrupt its continuity, and nothing with which to "fill in the gaps." It must be infinite in Power, or Absolute, because there is nothing that could limit, restrict, restrain, confine, disturb, or condition it. It is subject to no other Power, because there is no other Power.

(3) THE ALL must be IMMUTABLE, or not subject to change in its real nature, because there is nothing that could act on it to change it, and nothing into which it could change or from which it could have changed. Nothing can be added to or subtracted from it; it cannot be increased or diminished, or become greater or lesser in any respect. It must always have been, and must always remain, exactly what it is now—THE ALL. There has never been, is not now, and never will be anything else into which it can change.

Since THE ALL is Infinite, Absolute, Eternal, and Unchangeable, it follows that nothing finite, changeable, fleeting, or conditioned can be THE ALL. And since, in Reality, nothing exists outside THE ALL, all such finite things must, in Reality, be nothing. Now, do not become confused or frightened—we are not trying to lead you into the Christian Science field under cover of Hermetic Philosophy. There is a

way to reconcile this apparently contradictory state of affairs. Be patient; we will get to it in time.

We see around us what is called "Matter," which forms the physical foundation of all forms. Is THE ALL merely Matter? Not at all! Matter cannot manifest Life or Mind, and since Life and Mind are manifested in the Universe, THE ALL cannot be Matter: nothing rises higher than its own source; nothing is manifested in an effect that is not in the cause; nothing evolves as a consequence that was not present in its antecedent. Moreover, Modern Science tells us that Matter does not really exist—that what we call Matter is merely "interrupted energy or force," that is, energy or force vibrating at a low rate. As one recent writer has said, "Matter has melted into Mystery." Even Material Science has abandoned the theory of Matter and now rests on the basis of "Energy."

Then is THE ALL merely Energy or Force? Not Energy or Force as materialists use those terms, because their energy and force are blind, mechanical things, devoid of Life or Mind. Life and Mind can never evolve from blind Energy or Force, for the reason given a moment ago: "Nothing can rise higher than its source—nothing is evolved unless it is involved—nothing manifests in the effect unless it is in the cause." And so THE ALL cannot be mere Energy or Force, because if it were, Life and Mind would not exist. But we know better than that, because we are alive and using Mind to consider this very question—and so are those who claim that Energy or Force is Everything.

What is there, then, higher than Matter or Energy that we know to exist in the Universe? LIFE AND MIND! Life and Mind in all their varying degrees of unfoldment! "Then," you ask, "do you mean to tell us that THE ALL is LIFE and MIND?" Yes and no, we answer. If you mean Life and Mind as we poor, petty mortals know them, we say no! THE ALL is not that! "But what kind of Life and Mind do you mean?" you ask.

The answer is "LIVING MIND," far above what mortals mean by those words, just as Life and Mind are above mechanical forces or matter—INFINITE LIVING MIND as

compared with finite "Life and Mind." We mean what illumined souls mean when they reverently say, "SPIRIT!"

"THE ALL" is Infinite Living Mind—the Illumined call it SPIRIT!

Chapter 5

The Mental Universe

"The Universe is Mental—held in the Mind of THE ALL."—The Kybalion.

THE ALL is SPIRIT! But what is Spirit? This question cannot be answered, because its definition is essentially the same as that of THE ALL, which cannot be explained or defined. Spirit is simply a name people give to their highest conception of Infinite Living Mind—it means "the Real Essence"—it means Living Mind, which is as far above Life and Mind as we know them as those are above mechanical Energy and Matter. Spirit transcends our understanding, and we use the term only so that we can think or speak of THE ALL. For the purposes of thought and understanding, we are justified in thinking of Spirit as Infinite Living Mind, while acknowledging that we cannot fully understand it. We must either do this or stop thinking about the subject altogether.

Let us now consider the nature of the Universe, both as a whole and in its parts. What is the Universe? We have seen that nothing can exist outside THE ALL. Then is the Universe THE ALL? No, it cannot be, because the Universe seems to consist of MANY, is constantly changing, and in other ways does not match the ideas about THE ALL that we must accept, as stated in our last lesson. If the Universe is not THE ALL, then it must be Nothing—at first, that seems the inevitable conclusion. But that does not answer the question, because we are aware that the Universe exists. If the Universe is neither THE ALL nor Nothing, what can it be? Let us examine the question.

If the Universe exists at all, or seems to exist, it must somehow come from THE ALL—it must be a creation of THE ALL. But since something can never come from nothing, what could THE ALL have created it from? Some philosophers have answered that THE ALL created the Universe from ITSELF—

that is, from the being and substance of THE ALL. But that will not do, because, as we have seen, THE ALL cannot be diminished or divided. And if this were so, would not every particle in the Universe know that it was THE ALL? THE ALL could not lose its self-knowledge or actually BECOME an atom, a blind force, or a lowly living thing. Some people, realizing that THE ALL truly is ALL and also recognizing that they themselves existed, have concluded that they and THE ALL were identical. They have filled the air with shouts of "I AM GOD," to the amusement of the crowd and the sorrow of sages. The claim of a corpuscle, "I am Man!" would be modest by comparison.

But what, then, is the Universe, if it is not THE ALL and was not created by THE ALL dividing itself into fragments? What else could it be—and what else could it be made of? This is the great question. Let us examine it carefully. Here the "Principle of Correspondence" (see Lesson I.) comes to our aid. The old Hermetic axiom, "As above, so below," can help us here. Let us try to glimpse what happens on higher planes by examining what happens on our own. The Principle of Correspondence must apply to this problem as it does to others.

Let us see! How does Man create on his own plane of being? First, he may create by making something from outside materials. But that will not do, because there are no materials outside THE ALL for it to use. Second, Man may procreate, or reproduce his kind, by begetting children—self-multiplication accomplished by transferring a portion of his substance to his offspring. But that will not do, because THE ALL cannot transfer or subtract a portion of itself, nor can it reproduce or multiply itself. In the first case, something would be taken away; in the second, something would be added to THE ALL. Both ideas are absurd. Is there no third way MAN creates? Yes—he CREATES MENTALLY! In doing so, he uses no outside materials and does not reproduce himself, yet his Spirit pervades the Mental Creation.

Following the Principle of Correspondence, we are justified in thinking that THE ALL creates the Universe MENTALLY, in a way similar to how Man creates Mental Images. Here, Reason's account matches the account of the Illumined exactly, as their teachings and writings show. These are the teachings of the Wise Men. This was the Teaching of Hermes.

THE ALL can create only mentally, without using material (and there is none to use) or reproducing itself (which is also impossible). Reason offers no escape from this conclusion, which, as we have said, agrees with the highest teachings of the Illumined. Just as you, student, can create a Universe of your own in your mind, so THE ALL creates Universes in its own Mind. But your Universe is the mental creation of a finite Mind, while THE ALL's is the creation of an Infinite one. They are similar in kind, but infinitely different in degree. As we proceed, we will examine the process of creation and manifestation more closely. For now, fix this point in your minds: THE UNIVERSE, AND ALL IT CONTAINS, IS A MENTAL CREATION OF THE ALL. Indeed, ALL IS MIND!

"THE ALL creates in its Infinite Mind countless Universes, which exist for aeons of Time—and yet, to THE ALL, the creation, development, decline and death of a million Universes is like the blink of an eye."—The Kybalion.

"The Infinite Mind of THE ALL is the womb of Universes."—The
Kybalion.

The Principle of Gender (see Lesson I. and other lessons to follow) is manifested on every plane of life—material, mental, and spiritual. But, as we have said before, "Gender" does not mean "Sex"; sex is merely a material manifestation of gender. "Gender" means "relating to generation or creation." Whenever anything is generated or created on any plane, the Principle of Gender must be manifested. This is true even in the creation of Universes.

Now do not jump to the conclusion that we are teaching that God or the Creator is male and female. That idea merely distorts

the ancient teachings on the subject. The true teaching is that THE ALL, in itself, is above Gender, as it is above every other Law, including the Laws of Time and Space. It is the Law from which the Laws proceed, and it is not subject to them. But when THE ALL manifests on the plane of generation or creation, it acts according to Law and Principle, because it is moving on a lower plane of Being. Consequently, it manifests the Principle of Gender, in its Masculine and Feminine aspects, on the Mental Plane, of course.

This idea may startle some of you hearing it for the first time, but you have all passively accepted it in your everyday thinking. You speak of the Fatherhood of God and the Motherhood of Nature—of God, the Divine Father, and Nature, the Universal Mother—and have thus instinctively acknowledged the Principle of Gender in the Universe. Is that not so?

But the Hermetic teaching does not imply a real duality—THE ALL is ONE—the Two Aspects are merely aspects of manifestation. The teaching is that the Masculine Principle manifested by THE ALL stands, in a way, apart from the actual mental creation of the Universe. It projects its Will toward the Feminine Principle (which may be called "Nature"), whereupon the latter begins the actual work of the Universe's evolution, from simple "centers of activity" onward to man, and then still higher, all according to well-established and firmly enforced Laws of Nature. If you prefer the old figures of thought, you may think of the Masculine Principle as GOD, the Father, and the Feminine Principle as NATURE, the Universal Mother, from whose womb all things have been born. This is more than a mere poetic figure of speech—it is an idea of the actual process by which the Universe is created. But always remember that THE ALL is One alone, and that the Universe is generated, created, and exists within its Infinite Mind.

It may help you form the right idea if you apply the Law of Correspondence to yourself and your own mind. You know that the part of You you call "I" in a sense stands apart and observes the creation of mental Images in your mind. The part of your

mind where this mental generation takes place may be called the "Me," in contrast to the "I," which stands apart and observes and examines the thoughts, ideas, and images of the "Me." Remember, "As above, so below," and phenomena on one plane may help solve the riddles of higher or lower planes.

Is it any wonder that You, the child, feel an instinctive reverence for THE ALL—a feeling we call "religion"—that respect and reverence for THE FATHER MIND? Is it any wonder that when you consider the works and wonders of Nature, you are overcome by a powerful feeling rooted deep in your innermost being? It is the MOTHER MIND you are pressing close to, like a baby at the breast.

Do not make the mistake of assuming that the little world you see around you—the Earth, a mere grain of dust in the Universe—is the Universe itself. There are millions upon millions of worlds like it, and larger ones. And millions of millions of Universes exist within the Infinite Mind of THE ALL. Even in our own little solar system, there are regions and planes of life far higher than ours, and beings compared with whom we earthbound mortals are like the slimy life-forms on the ocean floor compared with Man. There are beings with powers and attributes greater than any humans have ever imagined the gods possessing. And yet these beings were once like you, and even lower—and in time you too will be like them, and higher still, for such is the Destiny of Man, according to the Illumined.

And Death is not real, even in the Relative sense—it is only birth into a new life—and you will go on and on and on to ever higher planes of life, for ages upon ages. The Universe is your home, and you will explore its farthest reaches before the end of Time. You dwell in the Infinite Mind of THE ALL, and your possibilities and opportunities are infinite, in both time and space. And at the end of the Great Cycle of Ages, when THE ALL draws all its creations back into itself, you will go gladly, for then you will be able to know the Whole Truth of being At

One with THE ALL. Such is the report of the Illumined—those who have advanced far along The Path.

Meanwhile, rest calm and serene—you are safe and protected by the Infinite Power of the FATHER-MOTHER MIND.

> "Within the Father-Mother Mind, mortal children are at home."—The Kybalion.

> "There is no one who is Fatherless or Motherless in the Universe."—The Kybalion.

Chapter 6

The Divine Paradox

"The half-wise, recognizing the Universe's comparative unreality, imagine they can defy its Laws. They are vain, presumptuous fools, broken against the rocks and torn apart by the elements because of their folly. The truly wise, knowing the Universe's nature, use Law against laws, the higher against the lower; through the Art of Alchemy, they transform what is undesirable into what is worthy, and so triumph. Mastery does not consist in abnormal dreams, visions, fantastic imaginings, or ways of life, but in using higher forces against lower ones—escaping the pains of lower planes by vibrating on higher ones. Transmutation, not presumptuous denial, is the Master's weapon."—The Kybalion.

This is the Paradox of the Universe, arising from the Principle of Polarity, which appears when THE ALL begins to Create. Pay attention, for it shows the difference between half-wisdom and wisdom. To THE INFINITE ALL, the Universe, its Laws, its Powers, its life, and its Phenomena are like things witnessed in a state of Meditation or Dream. Yet to all that is Finite, the Universe must be treated as Real, and life, action, and thought must be based on that reality, while always understanding the Higher Truth. Each according to its own Plane and Laws. If THE ALL were to imagine that the Universe were truly Reality, then the Universe would be doomed, for there would be no escape from lower to higher, toward the divine; the Universe would become fixed, and progress would be impossible. And if Man, through half-wisdom, acts, lives, and thinks of the Universe as merely a dream (like his own finite dreams), then it does become so for him, and, like a sleepwalker, he stumbles endlessly around in a circle, making no progress, until at last he is forced to awaken by falling bruised and bleeding against the Natural Laws he ignored. Keep your mind always on

the Star, but watch your steps, lest your upward gaze make you fall into the mire. Remember the Divine Paradox: while the Universe IS NOT, still IT IS. Always remember the Two Poles of Truth, the Absolute and the Relative. Beware of Half-Truths.

What Hermetists call "the Law of Paradox" is one aspect of the Principle of Polarity. The Hermetic writings are full of references to the appearance of the Paradox in discussions of the problems of Life and Being. The Teachers constantly warn their students against the mistake of leaving out the "other side" of any question. Their warnings focus especially on the problems of the Absolute and the Relative, which perplex all students of philosophy and lead so many to think and act contrary to what is generally called "common sense." We caution all students to make sure they grasp the Divine Paradox of the Absolute and Relative, lest they become trapped in the mire of the Half-Truth. This lesson has been written with that in mind. Read it carefully!

The first thought that comes to a thinking person after realizing that the Universe is a Mental Creation of THE ALL is that the Universe and everything in it are mere illusion, unreal —a notion that our instincts resist. But this, like every other great truth, must be considered from both the Absolute and Relative points of view. From the Absolute viewpoint, of course, the Universe is like an illusion, a dream, a phantasmagoria, compared with THE ALL itself. We recognize this even in our ordinary way of thinking, for we speak of the world as "a fleeting show" that comes and goes, is born and dies. Impermanence and change, finiteness and insubstantiality must always be linked to the idea of a created Universe when it is contrasted with the idea of THE ALL, whatever we may believe about the nature of either. Philosopher, metaphysician, scientist, and theologian all agree on this idea, which appears in every kind of philosophical thought and religious belief, as well as in the theories of the various schools of metaphysics and theology.

The Hermetic Teachings, then, do not proclaim the Universe's insubstantiality any more strongly than ideas more familiar to you, though their presentation of the subject may

seem somewhat more startling. Anything that has a beginning and an end must be, in a sense, unreal and untrue; all schools of thought apply this rule to the Universe. From the Absolute point of view, nothing is Real except THE ALL, whatever terms we use when thinking or talking about the subject. Whether the Universe is made of Matter or is a Mental Creation in the Mind of THE ALL, it is insubstantial, impermanent, a thing of time, space, and change. We want you to understand this thoroughly before judging the Hermetic idea that the Universe is Mental in nature. Think about any and all the other ideas, and see whether this is not true of them.

But the Absolute point of view shows only one side of the picture—the other side is the Relative one. Absolute Truth has been defined as "Things as the mind of God knows them," while Relative Truth is "Things as the highest reason of Man understands them." So, while the Universe must be unreal and illusory to THE ALL, a mere dream or result of meditation, it is nevertheless very real to the finite minds that are part of that Universe and view it through mortal faculties, and must be treated as such. In recognizing the Absolute view, we must not make the mistake of ignoring or denying the facts and phenomena of the Universe as they appear to our mortal faculties —we are not THE ALL, remember.

To use familiar examples, we all recognize that matter "exists" to our senses—we would fare badly if we did not. And yet even our finite minds understand the scientific claim that, from a scientific point of view, there is no such thing as Matter: what we call Matter is thought to be merely a collection of atoms, which are themselves only groups of units of force, called electrons or "ions," vibrating and moving constantly in circles. We kick a stone and feel the impact—it seems real, even though we know it is only what we have just described. But remember that our foot, which feels the impact through our brain, is also Matter, made up of electrons, and so is our brain. And in any case, without our Mind, we would not know the foot or the stone at all.

Again, the ideal that an artist or sculptor is trying to reproduce in stone or on canvas seems very real to that person. So do the characters in an author's or dramatist's mind, whom they try to express so that others can recognize them. And if this is true of our finite minds, how Real must the Mental Images created in the Mind of the Infinite be? Oh, friends, to mortals this Universe of Mentality is very real indeed—it is the only one we can ever know, even as we rise from plane to plane, ever higher within it. To know it otherwise through actual experience, we would have to be THE ALL itself. It is true that the higher we rise in the scale—the closer we come to "the mind of the Father"—the more apparent the illusory nature of finite things becomes. But the vision does not actually vanish until THE ALL finally withdraws us into itself.

So we need not dwell on the question of illusion. Instead, recognizing the true nature of the Universe, let us seek to understand its mental laws and try to use them to the best effect in our upward progress through life, as we travel from plane to plane of being. The Laws of the Universe are no less "Iron Laws" because they are mental in nature. All but THE ALL are bound by them. Whatever is IN THE INFINITE MIND OF THE ALL is REAL to a degree second only to the Reality inherent in THE ALL itself.

So do not feel insecure or afraid—we are all HELD FIRMLY IN THE INFINITE MIND OF THE ALL, and there is nothing to harm us or make us afraid. No Power exists outside THE ALL that can affect us. So we can rest calm and secure. Once we attain this realization, it brings profound comfort and security. Then "calm and peaceful do we sleep, rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," resting safely on the bosom of the Ocean of Infinite Mind, which is THE ALL. In THE ALL, indeed, "we live and move and have our being."

Matter remains matter to us while we live on the material plane, even though we know it is simply an aggregate of "electrons," or particles of Force, vibrating rapidly and circling one another to form atoms. The atoms, in turn, vibrate and circle

to form molecules, which then combine into larger masses of matter. Nor does Matter become any less matter when we pursue the question further and learn from the Hermetic Teachings that the "Force" of which electrons are merely units is itself a manifestation of the Mind of THE ALL and, like everything else in the Universe, purely mental in nature. While on the material plane, we must acknowledge its phenomena. We may control Matter—as Masters of greater or lesser degree do—but only by applying higher forces. It is foolish to deny Matter's existence in its relative aspect. We may rightly deny that it rules us, but we should not try to ignore it in its relative aspect, at least as long as we live on its plane.

Nor do the Laws of Nature become any less constant or effective when we recognize that they, too, are merely mental creations. They operate fully on the various planes. We overcome lower laws only by applying higher ones. But we cannot escape Law or rise entirely above it. Only THE ALL can escape Law—and that is because THE ALL is Law itself, from which all Laws arise. The most advanced Masters may acquire powers usually attributed to human gods. And in the great hierarchy of life, countless ranks of beings have existence and power that surpass even those of the highest human Masters to a degree mortals cannot imagine. Yet even the highest Master and the highest Being must bow to Law and be as nothing in the sight of THE ALL. If even these highest Beings, whose powers exceed those that people attribute to their gods, are bound by and subject to Law, imagine the arrogance of mortal human beings of our rank and kind when they dare to call the Laws of Nature "unreal"—visionary and illusory—because they happen to understand that the Laws are mental in nature and simply Mental Creations of THE ALL. Those Laws that THE ALL intends to be governing Laws are not to be defied or argued away. As long as the Universe endures, they will endure, for the Universe exists by virtue of these Laws, which form its framework and hold it together.

The Hermetic Principle of Mentalism explains the true nature of the Universe by teaching that all is Mental, but it does not change scientific conceptions of the Universe, Life, or Evolution. In fact, science merely confirms the Hermetic Teachings. They teach only that the Universe is "Mental," while modern science has taught that it is "Material," or, more recently, that at bottom it is "Energy." The Hermetic Teachings do not dispute Herbert Spencer's basic principle, which holds that an "Infinite and Eternal Energy" exists, "from which all things proceed." In fact, the Hermetists recognize Spencer's philosophy as the most complete statement ever published outside their own teachings about how the Laws of Nature work. They believe Spencer was a reincarnation of an ancient philosopher who lived in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago and who later returned as Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher who lived around 500 B.C. They regard Spencer's statement about the "Infinite and Eternal Energy" as directly in line with Hermetic Teachings, with the addition of their own doctrine that his "Energy" is the Energy of the Mind of THE ALL. With the master key of Hermetic Philosophy, the student of Spencer will be able to unlock many doors into the great English philosopher's deeper philosophical ideas. His work shows the results of the preparation of his previous incarnations. His teachings on Evolution and Rhythm almost perfectly agree with the Hermetic Teachings on the Principle of Rhythm.

So students of Hermeticism need not abandon any of their cherished scientific views about the Universe. They need only grasp the underlying principle: "THE ALL is Mind; the Universe is Mental—held in the mind of THE ALL." They will find that the other six of the Seven Principles fit their scientific knowledge and help clarify obscure points and shed light on dark corners. This is no surprise when we recognize the influence of Hermetic thought on the early Greek philosophers, whose foundations of thought support much of modern science. The only major difference between modern science and Hermetic students is acceptance of the First Hermetic Principle,

Mentalism. As science gropes in the dark for a way out of the labyrinth it entered in its search for Reality, it is gradually moving toward the Hermetic position.

The purpose of this lesson is to impress on our students that, for all practical purposes, the Universe, its laws, and its phenomena are just as REAL to human beings as they would be under the hypotheses of Materialism or Energism. Under any hypothesis, the Universe in its outward aspect is changing, ever-flowing, and transitory—and therefore lacks substance and reality. But—and note the other side of the truth—under those same hypotheses, we must ACT AND LIVE as though fleeting things were real and substantial. There is always this difference between the various hypotheses: under the old views, Mental Power was ignored as a Natural Force; under Mentalism, it becomes the Greatest Natural Force. For those who understand the Principle, its resulting laws, and how to apply them, this one difference transforms life.

So, all students, grasp the advantage of Mentalism, and learn to know, use, and apply the laws that follow from it. But do not give in to the temptation described in The Kybalion, which overcomes the half-wise and leaves them hypnotized by the apparent unreality of things. As a result, they wander about like dreamers in a dream world, ignoring the practical work and life of human beings, until "they are broken against the rocks and torn asunder by the elements, by reason of their folly." Instead, follow the example of the wise, who, the same authority says, "use Law against Laws; the higher against the lower; and by the Art of Alchemy transmute that which is undesirable into that which is worthy, and thus triumph." Following this authority, let us avoid the half-wisdom—which is folly—that ignores the truth that "Mastery consists not in abnormal dreams, visions, and fantastic imaginings or living, but in using the higher forces against the lower—escaping the pains of the lower planes by vibrating on the higher." Always remember, student, that "Transmutation, not presumptuous denial, is the weapon of the

Master." These quotations are from The Kybalion and are worth committing to memory.

We do not live in a dream world, but in a Universe that, though relative, is real as far as our lives and actions are concerned. Our task in the Universe is not to deny its existence, but to LIVE, using the Laws to rise from lower to higher—continuing to live, doing the best we can under the circumstances each day brings, and living as fully as possible according to our greatest ideas and ideals. People on this plane do not know the true Meaning of Life—if anyone does—but the highest authorities and our own intuitions teach us that we cannot go wrong by living up to the best within us, as far as possible, and recognizing the Universal tendency in the same direction despite appearances to the contrary. We are all on the Path, and the road leads ever upward, with frequent places to rest.

Read the message of The Kybalion, and follow the example of "the wise," avoiding the mistake of "the half-wise," who perish because of their folly.

Chapter 7

"The All" in All

"While All is in THE ALL, it is equally true that THE ALL is in ALL. To him who truly understands this truth hath come great knowledge."—The Kybalion.

How often have most people heard it repeated that their Deity, called by many names, is "All in All," and how little have they suspected the inner occult truth hidden in these carelessly spoken words? This familiar expression survives from the ancient Hermetic Maxim quoted above. As The Kybalion says, "To him who truly understands this truth, hath come great knowledge." Since this is so, let us seek the truth, whose understanding means so much. This statement of truth—the Hermetic Maxim—conceals one of the greatest philosophical, scientific, and religious truths.

We have given you the Hermetic Teaching about the mental nature of the Universe—the truth that "the Universe is Mental—held in the Mind of THE ALL." As The Kybalion says in the passage quoted above, "All is in THE ALL." But note also the related statement: "It is equally true that THE ALL is in ALL." This apparently contradictory statement can be reconciled under the Law of Paradox. Moreover, it is an exact Hermetic statement of the relationship between THE ALL and its Mental Universe. We have seen how "All is in THE ALL"; now let us examine the other side of the subject.

The Hermetic Teachings hold that THE ALL is immanent in ("remaining within; inherent; abiding within") its Universe and in every part, particle, unit, or combination within the Universe. Teachers usually illustrate this statement by referring to the Principle of Correspondence. The Teacher asks the student to form a Mental Image of something—a person, an idea, anything with a mental form. The favorite example is an author or dramatist imagining characters, or a painter or sculptor

forming an image of an ideal they want to express through their art. In each case, the student will find that while the image exists and has its being solely within the student's own mind, the student—whether author, dramatist, painter, or sculptor—is also, in a sense, immanent in, remaining within, or abiding within that mental image. In other words, all the reality, life, and spirit in the mental image come from the thinker's "immanent mind." Consider this for a moment, until you grasp the idea.

To use a modern example, Othello, Iago, Hamlet, Lear, and Richard III existed only in Shakespeare's mind when he first conceived or created them. And yet Shakespeare also existed within each of these characters, giving them their vitality, spirit, and actions. Whose "spirit" do the characters we know as Micawber, Oliver Twist, and Uriah Heep possess—is it Dickens's, or does each character have a personal spirit independent of its creator? Do the Venus de' Medici, the Sistine Madonna, and the Apollo Belvedere have spirits and realities of their own, or do they represent the spiritual and mental power of their creators? The Law of Paradox explains that both propositions are true, when viewed from the proper perspectives. Micawber is Micawber, and yet he is also Dickens. And, again, while Micawber may be said to be Dickens, Dickens is not identical with Micawber. Man, like Micawber, may exclaim, "The Spirit of my Creator is inherent within me—and yet I am not He!" How different this is from the shocking half-truth so loudly proclaimed by certain half-wise people, who fill the air with their harsh cries of, "I am God!" Imagine poor Micawber, or the sly Uriah Heep, crying, "I am Dickens"; or some lowly clod in one of Shakespeare's plays eloquently announcing, "I am Shakespeare!" THE ALL is in the earthworm, and yet the earthworm is far from being THE ALL. And still the wonder remains: though the earthworm exists merely as a lowly creature, created and having its being solely within the Mind of THE ALL, yet THE ALL is immanent in the earthworm and in the particles that make it up. Can there be any greater mystery than this: "All in THE ALL; and THE ALL in All"?

The student will, of course, realize that the illustrations given above are necessarily imperfect and inadequate, for they represent the creation of mental images in finite minds, while the Universe is a creation of Infinite Mind—and the difference between the two poles separates them. And yet the difference is merely one of degree: the same Principle is at work, and the Principle of Correspondence is evident in each—"As above, so below; as below, so above."

To the degree that Man realizes the existence of the Indwelling Spirit immanent within his being, he will rise on the spiritual scale of life. This is what spiritual development means: recognizing, realizing, and expressing the Spirit within us. Try to remember this last definition of spiritual development. It contains the Truth of True Religion.

There are many planes of Being, many sub-planes of Life, and many degrees of existence in the Universe. They all depend on the advancement of beings along the scale, whose lowest point is the densest matter and whose highest point is separated from the SPIRIT of THE ALL by only the thinnest division. Everything is moving upward and onward along this Scale of Life. All are on the Path, whose end is THE ALL. All progress is a return Home. Everything moves upward and onward, despite all appearances to the contrary. Such is the message of the Illumined.

The Hermetic Teachings about the mental creation of the Universe say that, at the beginning of the Creative Cycle, THE ALL, in its aspect of Being, projects its Will toward its aspect of "Becoming," and the process of creation begins. The process is said to consist of lowering Vibration until a very low level of vibratory energy is reached, at which point the grossest possible form of Matter appears. This process is called the stage of Involution, in which THE ALL becomes "involved," or "wrapped up," in its creation. The Hermetists believe that this process corresponds to the mental process of an artist, writer, or inventor who becomes so absorbed in a mental creation that he almost forgets his own existence and, for a time, almost "lives in

his creation." Perhaps we can better convey the idea by using the word "rapt" instead of "wrapped."

This involutionary stage of Creation is sometimes called the "Outpouring" of the Divine Energy, just as the evolutionary stage is called the "Indrawing." The farthest point in the Creative process is considered the point most distant from THE ALL, while the beginning of the Evolutionary stage is seen as the start of the pendulum's return swing under the Law of Rhythm—a "coming home" idea found throughout the Hermetic Teachings.

The Teachings say that during the "Outpouring," the vibrations grow lower and lower until the impulse finally ceases and the return swing begins. But there is this difference: during the "Outpouring," the creative forces appear compactly and as a whole; yet from the beginning of the Evolutionary, or "Indrawing," stage, the Law of Individualization appears—that is, the tendency to separate into Units of Force. Thus, what left THE ALL as undifferentiated energy finally returns to its source as countless highly developed Units of Life, having risen higher and higher on the scale through Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Evolution.

The ancient Hermetists use the word "Meditation" to describe the process by which the Universe is mentally created in the Mind of THE ALL. They also often use the word "Contemplation." But the intended idea seems to be the application of Divine Attention. "Attention" comes from a Latin root meaning "to reach out; to stretch out," so the act of Attention is really a mental "reaching out," an extension of mental energy. The underlying idea is easy to grasp once we examine the real meaning of "Attention."

The Hermetic Teachings about Evolution say that THE ALL, having meditated on the beginning of Creation and thereby established the material foundations of the Universe—having thought it into existence—then gradually awakens, or rouses itself, from its Meditation. In doing so, it sets the process of Evolution in motion, successively and in order, on the

material, mental, and spiritual planes. Thus the upward movement begins, and everything begins to move Spiritward. Matter becomes less dense; Units come into being; combinations begin to form; Life appears and takes on increasingly higher forms; and Mind becomes more and more evident, as the vibrations continually rise. In short, the entire process of Evolution, in all its phases, begins and proceeds according to the established "Laws of the Indrawing" process. All this occupies aeons upon aeons of Man's time, each aeon containing countless millions of years. Yet the Illumined tell us that the entire creation of a Universe, including Involution and Evolution, is but "as the twinkle of an eye" to THE ALL. After countless cycles of aeons, THE ALL withdraws its Attention—its Contemplation and Meditation—from the Universe, for the Great Work is finished, and All is withdrawn into THE ALL, from which it emerged. But, Mystery of Mysteries, the Spirit of each soul is not annihilated; instead, it is infinitely expanded—the Created and the Creator are merged. Such is the report of the Illumined!

The illustration above of THE ALL's "meditation" and subsequent "awakening from meditation" is, of course, only an attempt by the teachers to describe an Infinite process through a finite example. And yet, "As below, so above." The difference is merely one of degree. Just as THE ALL rouses itself from meditation on the Universe, so Man, in time, ceases to manifest on the Material Plane and withdraws more and more into the Indwelling Spirit, which is indeed "The Divine Ego."

There is one more matter we wish to discuss in this lesson. It comes very close to entering the field of Metaphysical speculation, although our purpose is merely to show the futility of such speculation. We mean the question that inevitably occurs to anyone who has tried to seek the Truth: "Why does THE ALL create Universes?" The question can be asked in different ways, but that is its gist.

People have struggled to answer this question, but no answer worthy of the name has emerged. Some have imagined that THE ALL had something to gain by creating, but this is absurd:

what could THE ALL gain that it did not already possess? Others have looked to the idea that THE ALL "wanted something to love," while still others have said that it created for pleasure or amusement, because it "was lonely," or to display its power. These are all childish explanations and ideas, belonging to an immature stage of thought.

Others have tried to explain the mystery by assuming that THE ALL found itself "compelled" to create because of its own "inner nature"—its "creative instinct." This idea is more advanced than the others, but its weakness lies in the notion that anything, internal or external, could "compel" THE ALL. If its "inner nature" or "creative instinct" compelled it to do anything, then that "inner nature" or "creative instinct" would be the Absolute, rather than THE ALL, and that part of the argument would therefore fail. And yet THE ALL does create and manifest, and seems to find some kind of satisfaction in doing so. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, to some infinite degree, it must possess something corresponding to an "inner nature" or "creative instinct" in man, with a correspondingly infinite Desire and Will. It could not act unless it Willed to Act; it would not Will to Act unless it Desired to Act; and it would not Desire to Act unless it gained some Satisfaction from doing so. All of these things would belong to an "Inner Nature" and might be assumed to exist according to the Law of Correspondence. Still, we prefer to think of THE ALL as acting entirely FREE from any influence, internal as well as external. This is the problem at the root of the difficulty—and the difficulty at the root of the problem.

Strictly speaking, there can be no "Reason" for THE ALL to act, because a "reason" implies a "cause," and THE ALL is beyond Cause and Effect—except when it Wills to become a Cause, at which point the Principle is set in motion. So you see, the matter is unthinkable, just as THE ALL is unknowable. Just as we say THE ALL simply "IS," we are compelled to say, "THE ALL ACTS BECAUSE IT ACTS." Ultimately, THE ALL is all Reason in itself, all Law in itself, all Action in itself—and we can

truthfully say that THE ALL is its own Reason, its own Law, its own Act—or, further still, that THE ALL, its Reason, and its Act are Law, are one and the same, all names for the same thing. In the view of those giving you these lessons, the answer is locked within the INNER SELF of THE ALL, along with its Secret of Being. In our opinion, the Law of Correspondence reaches only that aspect of THE ALL that may be called "The Aspect of BECOMING." Behind that aspect is "The Aspect of BEING," in which all Laws are lost in LAW, all Principles merge into PRINCIPLE—and THE ALL, PRINCIPLE, and BEING are IDENTICAL, ONE AND THE SAME. Therefore, metaphysical speculation on this point is futile. We discuss the matter here only to show that we recognize the question, as well as the absurdity of the usual answers given by metaphysics and theology.

In conclusion, it may interest our students to know that although some ancient and modern Hermetic Teachers have tended to apply the Principle of Correspondence to this question, arriving at the "Inner Nature" conclusion, legend has it that HERMES the Great, when his advanced students asked him this question, answered by PRESSING HIS LIPS TIGHTLY TOGETHER and saying nothing, indicating that THERE WAS NO ANSWER. But perhaps he meant to apply the axiom of his philosophy: "The lips of Wisdom are closed, except to the ears of Understanding," believing that even his advanced students lacked the Understanding that would entitle them to the Teaching. At any rate, if Hermes possessed the Secret, he failed to share it, and as far as the world is concerned THE LIPS OF HERMES ARE CLOSED on the subject. And if the Great Hermes hesitated to speak, what mortal would dare to teach?

But remember that whatever the answer to this problem may be, if there is an answer at all, the truth remains: "While All is in THE ALL, it is equally true that THE ALL is in All." The Teaching on this point is emphatic. We may add the quotation's

concluding words: “To him who truly understands this truth, hath come great knowledge.”

Chapter 8

Planes of Correspondence

"As above, so below; as below, so above."—The Kybalion.

The great Second Hermetic Principle expresses the truth that there is harmony, agreement, and correspondence among the various planes of Manifestation, Life, and Being. This is true because everything in the Universe emanates from the same source, and the same laws, principles, and characteristics apply to every unit or combination of units of activity, as each expresses its own phenomena on its own plane.

For convenience of thought and study, Hermetic Philosophy considers the Universe divisible into three great classes of phenomena, known as the Three Great Planes:

1. The Great Physical Plane. 2. The Great Mental Plane. 3. The Great Spiritual Plane.

These divisions are more or less artificial and arbitrary, because in truth the three divisions are simply ascending degrees on the great scale of Life, from undifferentiated Matter at the lowest point to Spirit at the highest. Moreover, the different Planes shade into one another, so no firm boundary can be drawn between the higher phenomena of the Physical and the lower phenomena of the Mental, or between the higher Mental and lower Physical.

In short, the Three Great Planes can be regarded as three broad groups of degrees of Life Manifestation. Although the purpose of this little book does not allow us to discuss or explain these different planes at length, we think it best to offer a general description of them here.

To begin, let us consider a question often asked by the novice seeking to understand the word "Plane," a term used freely and explained poorly in many recent works on occultism. The question usually goes something like this: "Is a Plane a place with dimensions, or is it simply a condition or state?" We answer: "It

is not a place, nor an ordinary dimension of space; yet it is more than a state or condition. It can be considered a state or condition, but that state or condition is a degree of dimension on a scale that can be measured." Somewhat paradoxical, isn't it? But let us examine the matter. A "dimension," as you know, is "a measure in a straight line, relating to measure," and so on. The ordinary dimensions of space are length, breadth, and height, or perhaps length, breadth, height, thickness, or circumference. But occultists—and scientists as well, though the latter have not yet applied the term "dimension" to it—recognize another dimension of "created things," or "measure in a straight line." This new dimension, incidentally, is the much-discussed "Fourth Dimension," the standard used to determine degrees or "planes."

This Fourth Dimension may be called "The Dimension of Vibration." Modern science, like the Hermetists, knows well that "everything is in motion; everything vibrates; nothing is at rest"—a truth the Hermetists have embodied in their "Third Hermetic Principle." From the highest manifestation to the lowest, everything vibrates. Not only do things vibrate at different rates, but they also vibrate in different directions and in different ways. The rates of vibration make up the degrees of measurement on the Scale of Vibrations—in other words, the degrees of the Fourth Dimension. These degrees form what occultists call "Planes." The higher the rate of vibration, the higher the plane and the higher the manifestation of Life occupying it. Thus a plane is neither "a place" nor "a state or condition," yet it has qualities of both. We will say more about the scale of Vibrations in our next lessons, when we consider the Hermetic Principle of Vibration.

Remember, however, that the Three Great Planes are not actual divisions of the Universe's phenomena, but merely arbitrary terms the Hermetists use to help with the study and consideration of the various degrees and Forms of universal activity and life. The atom of matter, the unit of force, the human mind, and the being of the archangel are all degrees on a

single scale, and are fundamentally alike; their only difference is one of degree and rate of vibration. All are creations of THE ALL, and exist solely within THE ALL's Infinite Mind.

The Hermetists subdivide each of the Three Great Planes into Seven Minor Planes, and each of these in turn into seven sub-planes. All these divisions are more or less arbitrary, shade into one another, and are adopted only for convenience in scientific study and thought.

The Great Physical Plane and its Seven Minor Planes comprise that division of the Universe's phenomena which includes everything related to physics, material things, forces, and manifestations. It includes every form of what we call Matter and every form of what we call Energy or Force. But remember that Hermetic Philosophy does not recognize Matter as a thing in itself, or as having a separate existence even in THE ALL's Mind. The Teachings say that Matter is merely a form of Energy —that is, Energy vibrating at a low rate of a certain kind. Accordingly, the Hermetists classify Matter under Energy and assign it three of the Seven Minor Planes of the Great Physical Plane.

The Seven Minor Physical Planes are as follows:

1. The Plane of Matter (A) 2. The Plane of Matter (B) 3. The Plane of Matter (C) 4. The Plane of Ethereal Substance 5. The Plane of Energy (A) 6. The Plane of Energy (B) 7. The Plane of Energy (C)

The Plane of Matter (A) includes the forms of Matter known as solids, liquids, and gases, as generally recognized in physics textbooks. The Plane of Matter (B) includes certain higher, subtler forms of Matter whose existence modern science is only now recognizing; the phenomena of Radiant Matter, in forms such as radium, belong to the lower subdivision of this Minor Plane. The Plane of Matter (C) includes forms of Matter so subtle and tenuous that ordinary scientists do not suspect they exist. The Plane of Ethereal Substance includes what science calls "The Ether," a substance of extreme tenuity and elasticity that pervades all Universal Space and acts as a medium for

transmitting waves of energy, such as light, heat, and electricity. This Ethereal Substance links Matter (so-called) and Energy, and shares the nature of both. The Hermetic Teachings, however, state that this plane has seven subdivisions, as do all the Minor Planes, and that in fact there are seven ethers, not just one.

Next above the Plane of Ethereal Substance is the Plane of Energy (A), which includes the ordinary forms of energy known to science. Its seven subplanes are, respectively, heat; light; magnetism; electricity; attraction (including gravitation, cohesion, chemical affinity, etc.); and several other forms of energy suggested by scientific experiments but not yet named or classified. The Plane of Energy (B) includes seven subplanes of higher forms of energy not yet discovered by science. They have been called "Nature's Finer Forces" and are brought into operation in certain forms of mental phenomena, making those phenomena possible. The Plane of Energy (C) includes seven subplanes of energy so highly organized that it has many of the characteristics of "life," though ordinary people at their present level of development do not recognize it. It is available only to beings on the Spiritual Plane. Such energy is unthinkable to ordinary people and may be considered almost "divine power." The beings who use it are like "gods" compared even with the highest human types known to us.

The Great Mental Plane includes the forms of "living things" we know from ordinary life, as well as certain other forms known mainly to occultists. The classification of the Seven Minor Mental Planes is more or less arbitrary and satisfactory (unless accompanied by lengthy explanations beyond the purpose of this particular work), but we may as well name them. They are as follows:

1. The Plane of Mineral Mind 2. The Plane of Elemental Mind (A) 3. The Plane of Plant Mind 4. The Plane of Elemental Mind (B) 5. The Plane of Animal Mind 6. The Plane of Elemental Mind (C) 7. The Plane of Human Mind

The Plane of Mineral Mind includes the "states or conditions" of the units or entities, or groups and combinations

of them, that animate the forms we know as "minerals, chemicals, etc." These entities must not be confused with the molecules, atoms, and corpuscles themselves, which are merely their material bodies or forms, just as a person's body is only their material form, not "themselves." In one sense, these entities may be called "souls"; they are living beings at a low level of development, life, and mind—just a little above the units of "living energy" that make up the higher subdivisions of the highest Physical Plane. The average person generally does not attribute mind, soul, or life to the mineral kingdom, but all occultists recognize their existence, and modern science is rapidly moving toward the Hermetic point of view on this matter. Molecules, atoms, and corpuscles have their "loves and hates," "likes and dislikes," "attractions and repulsions," "affinities and non-affinities," and so on. Some of the more daring modern scientists have suggested that the desire and will, emotions and feelings, of atoms differ from those of human beings only in degree. We have neither the time nor the space to argue the matter here. All occultists know it to be a fact; others may consult some of the more recent scientific works for independent corroboration. This plane has the usual seven subdivisions.

The Plane of Elemental Mind (A) includes the state or condition, and degree of mental and vital development, of a class of entities unknown to the average person but recognized by occultists. They are invisible to ordinary human senses, yet they exist and play their part in the Drama of the Universe. Their intelligence falls between that of mineral and chemical entities, on one hand, and plant entities on the other. This plane also has seven subdivisions.

The Plane of Plant Mind, in its seven subdivisions, includes the states or conditions of the entities that make up the kingdoms of the Plant World. The average intelligent person understands their vital and mental phenomena fairly well, and many new and interesting scientific works on "Mind and Life in Plants" have appeared during the last decade. Plants have life, mind, and "souls," just as animals, humans, and superhumans do.

The Plane of Elemental Mind (B), in its seven subdivisions, includes the states and conditions of a higher form of "elemental," or unseen, entities. They play their part in the general work of the Universe. Their mind and life fall on the scale between the Plane of Plant Mind and the Plane of Animal Mind, and they partake of the nature of both.

The Plane of Animal Mind, in its seven subdivisions, includes the states and conditions of the entities, beings, or souls that animate the animal forms of life familiar to us all. There is no need to go into detail about this kingdom or plane of life, since the animal world is as familiar to us as our own.

The Plane of Elemental Mind (C), in its seven subdivisions, includes entities or beings, invisible like all such elemental forms, that partake to some degree, and in certain combinations, of the nature of both animal and human life. The highest forms are partly human in intelligence.

The Plane of Human Mind, in its seven subdivisions, includes the manifestations of life and mentality common to humans at their various levels, degrees, and divisions. In this connection, we want to point out that the average person today occupies only the fourth subdivision of the Plane of Human Mind, and only the most intelligent have crossed the boundaries of the Fifth Subdivision. The human race has taken millions of years to reach this stage, and it will take many more years to advance to the sixth and seventh subdivisions, and beyond. But remember, there were races before us that passed through these degrees and then moved on to higher planes. Ours is the fifth race to set foot on The Path (with stragglers from the fourth). There are also a few advanced souls of our own race who have moved ahead of the masses, reaching the sixth and seventh subdivisions, and a few who have gone still further. The person of the Sixth Subdivision will be "The Super-Man"; the person of the Seventh will be "The Over-Man."

In discussing the Seven Minor Mental Planes, we have referred to the Three Elementary Planes only in general terms. We do not want to discuss this subject in detail here, since it does

not belong to this part of the general philosophy and teachings. But we can say this much to give you a clearer idea of how these planes relate to the more familiar ones: the Elementary Planes relate to the Planes of Mineral, Plant, Animal, and Human Mentality and Life as the black keys on a piano relate to the white keys. The white keys are enough to make music, but certain scales, melodies, and harmonies require the black keys and their contribution. They are also needed as "connecting links" between the soul-conditions, entity states, and so on, of the other planes; certain forms of development take place there. This last fact gives readers who can "read between the lines" a new insight into the processes of Evolution and a new key to the secret door of the "leaps of life" from one kingdom to another. All occultists fully recognize the great kingdoms of Elementals, and esoteric writings mention them often. Readers of Bulwer's Sanoni and similar tales will recognize the entities that inhabit these planes of life.

Moving on from the Great Mental Plane to the Great Spiritual Plane, what can we say? How can we explain these higher states of Being, Life, and Mind to people who cannot yet grasp or understand the higher subdivisions of the Plane of Human Mind? The task is impossible. We can speak only in the most general terms. How can you describe light to someone born blind, sugar to someone who has never tasted anything sweet, or harmony to someone born deaf?

All we can say is that the Seven Minor Planes of the Great Spiritual Plane (each Minor Plane having seven subdivisions) include Beings whose Life, Mind, and Form are far above those of people today, just as people are above earthworms, minerals, or even certain forms of Energy or Matter. The lives of these Beings so far surpass ours that we cannot even imagine their details; their minds so far surpass ours that we scarcely seem to "think" to them, and our mental processes seem almost like material processes. The Matter composing their forms belongs to the highest Planes of Matter; indeed, some are said to be "clothed in Pure Energy." What can be said about such Beings?

On the Seven Minor Planes of the Great Spiritual Plane dwell Beings we may call Angels, Archangels, and Demi-Gods. On the lower Minor Planes dwell the great souls we call Masters and Adepts. Above them are the Great Hierarchies of the Angelic Hosts, beyond human comprehension; above those are beings who may, without irreverence, be called "The Gods," so high in the scale of Being are they, with being, intelligence, and power akin to those that human races attribute to their conceptions of Deity. These Beings are beyond even the highest flights of human imagination; "Divine" is the only word that applies to them. Many of these Beings, as well as the Angelic Host, take a deep interest in the affairs of the Universe and play an important part in them. These Unseen Divinities and Angelic Helpers exert their influence freely and powerfully in the processes of Evolution and Cosmic Progress. Their occasional intervention and assistance in human affairs have given rise to the many legends, beliefs, religions, and traditions of the human race, past and present. Again and again, they have added their knowledge and power to the world, always under the Law of THE ALL, of course.

Yet even the highest of these advanced Beings exist only as creations of, and within, the Mind of THE ALL, and are subject to the Cosmic Processes and Universal Laws. They are still mortal. We may call them "gods" if we like, but they are only the Elder Brethren of the Race—the advanced souls who have outstripped their brethren and given up the ecstasy of Absorption by THE ALL in order to help the race on its upward journey along The Path. But they belong to the Universe and are subject to its conditions; they are mortal, and their plane is below that of Absolute Spirit.

Only the most advanced Hermetists can grasp the Inner Teachings about existence and the powers manifested on the Spiritual Planes. These phenomena are so far beyond those of the Mental Planes that trying to describe them would surely lead to confusion. Only people whose minds have been carefully trained for years in Hermetic Philosophy—yes, those who brought

knowledge from previous incarnations—can understand what the Teachings about these Spiritual Planes mean. Much of this Inner Teaching is considered by the Hermetists too sacred, important, and even dangerous to share with the general public. An intelligent student may understand what we mean when we say that the Hermetic use of "Spirit" is close to "Living Power," "Animated Force," "Inner Essence," "Essence of Life," and so on. This meaning must not be confused with the usual sense of the word: "religious," "ecclesiastical," "spiritual," "ethereal," "holy," and so forth. Occultists use "Spirit" to mean "The Animating Principle," with its associations of Power, Living Energy, Mystic Force, and so on. And occultists know that what they call "Spiritual Power" can be used for evil as well as good ends (in accordance with the Principle of Polarity)—a fact recognized by most religions in their ideas of Satan, Beelzebub, the Devil, Lucifer, Fallen Angels, and so on. For this reason, knowledge of these Planes has been kept in the Holy of Holies of all Esoteric Fraternities and Occult Orders—in the Secret Chamber of the Temple. But this much can be said: those who have attained high spiritual powers and misused them face a terrible fate. The swing of the pendulum of Rhythm will inevitably carry them back to the farthest extreme of Material existence. From there they must retrace their steps Spiritward, along the weary rounds of The Path, always bearing the lingering memory of the heights from which their evil actions made them fall. The legends of the Fallen Angels are based on actual facts, as all advanced occultists know. The selfish pursuit of power on the Spiritual Planes inevitably causes the selfish soul to lose its spiritual balance and fall back as far as it had risen. Yet even such a soul is given the chance to return—and those souls make the journey back, paying the terrible price imposed by the invariable Law.

In conclusion, we would remind you again that, according to the Principle of Correspondence, which expresses the truth "As Above, so Below; as Below, so Above," all Seven Hermetic Principles operate fully on every plane, physical, mental, and spiritual. The Principle of Mental Substance, of course, applies

to every plane, because all are held in the Mind of THE ALL. The Principle of Correspondence appears on them all, since the different planes correspond, harmonize, and agree with one another. The Principle of Vibration appears on every plane; in fact, the very differences that create the "planes" arise from Vibration, as we have explained. The Principle of Polarity appears on each plane, where the extremes of the Poles seem opposite and contradictory. The Principle of Rhythm appears on each plane, as phenomena move through ebb and flow, rising and falling, coming and going. The Principle of Cause and Effect appears on each plane: every Effect has a Cause, and every Cause has its Effect. The Principle of Gender appears on each plane, where Creative Energy always manifests and operates through its Masculine and Feminine Aspects.

"As Above, so Below; as Below, so Above." This centuries-old Hermetic axiom expresses one of the great Principles of Universal Phenomena. As we consider the remaining Principles, we will see even more clearly that this great Principle of Correspondence is universal.

Chapter 9

Vibration

"Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates."—The Kybalion.

The great Third Hermetic Principle—the Principle of Vibration—expresses the truth that Motion appears throughout the Universe: nothing is at rest; everything moves, vibrates, and circles. Some early Greek philosophers recognized this Hermetic Principle and incorporated it into their systems. But for centuries, thinkers outside the Hermetic ranks lost sight of it. In the nineteenth century, physical science rediscovered the truth, and twentieth-century scientific discoveries added further proof of the correctness of this centuries-old Hermetic doctrine.

The Hermetic Teachings say that everything is in constant motion and vibration, and that the "differences" among the various manifestations of universal power are entirely due to variations in the rate and mode of vibration. They also teach that THE ALL itself vibrates constantly at such an infinite intensity and speed that it can practically be considered at rest. The teachers direct students' attention to the fact that even on the physical plane, a rapidly moving object, such as a revolving wheel, seems to be at rest. According to the Teachings, Spirit is at one end of the Pole of Vibration, and certain extremely gross forms of Matter are at the other. Between these two poles lie millions upon millions of different rates and modes of vibration.

Modern science has shown that everything we call Matter and Energy consists of "modes of vibratory motion," and some of the more advanced scientists are rapidly moving toward the occultists' position that mental phenomena, too, are modes of vibration or motion. Let us see what science has to say about vibrations in matter and energy.

First, science teaches that all matter manifests, to some degree, the vibrations caused by temperature or heat. Whether

an object is cold or hot—both are simply degrees of the same thing—it manifests certain heat vibrations and is, in that sense, in motion and vibration. Then all particles of Matter move in circles, from corpuscles to suns. Planets revolve around suns, and many of them rotate on their axes. Suns move around larger central points, which are believed to move around still larger ones, and so on, ad infinitum. The molecules that make up particular kinds of Matter are constantly vibrating and moving around and against one another. Molecules are made up of Atoms, which likewise move and vibrate constantly. Atoms are made up of Corpuscles, sometimes called "electrons," "ions," and so on, which also move rapidly, revolving around one another and displaying a very rapid rate and mode of vibration. We see, then, that all forms of Matter display Vibration, in accordance with the Hermetic Principle of Vibration.

The same is true of the various forms of Energy. Science teaches that Light, Heat, Magnetism, and Electricity are forms of vibratory motion connected in some way with the Ether and probably emanating from it. Science does not yet try to explain the nature of the phenomena known as Cohesion, the principle of Molecular Attraction; Chemical Affinity, the principle of Atomic Attraction; or Gravitation—the greatest mystery of the three—the principle of attraction that binds every particle or mass of Matter to every other particle or mass. Science does not yet understand these three forms of Energy. Still, the writers tend to think that they, too, are manifestations of some form of vibratory energy, a fact that Hermetists have taught and maintained for ages.

Hermetists hold that the Universal Ether, postulated by science without a clear understanding of its nature, is simply a higher manifestation of what is mistakenly called matter—that is, Matter vibrating at a higher rate—and they call it "The Ethereal Substance." Hermetists teach that this Ethereal Substance is extremely subtle and elastic, pervades universal space, and serves as a medium for transmitting waves of vibratory energy, such as heat, light, electricity, magnetism, and so on. The Teachings say

that The Ethereal Substance connects the forms of vibratory energy known as "Matter," on the one hand, and "Energy or Force," on the other. They also say that it manifests a rate and mode of vibration entirely its own.

Scientists have used the example of a rapidly spinning wheel, top, or cylinder to show the effects of increasing rates of vibration. Imagine a wheel, top, or revolving cylinder turning slowly—we'll call this rotating object "the object" as we continue the example. At first, it moves so slowly that we can see it, but hear no sound. Gradually, its speed increases. After a while, it moves fast enough to produce a deep growl or low note. As its speed increases, the note rises by steps through the musical scale. One after another, all the notes appear, growing higher as the motion speeds up. Eventually the object reaches the highest note the human ear can perceive. Its shrill, piercing sound dies away, and silence follows. We hear nothing from the spinning object because it is moving so fast that the human ear cannot register its vibrations. Then we begin to perceive increasing degrees of heat. After some time, the eye catches a glimpse of the object as it turns a dull, dark red. As its speed increases, the red brightens, then shifts into orange, then yellow. Green, blue, indigo, and finally violet follow in succession as the speed continues to rise. Then the violet fades, and all color disappears because the human eye cannot register it. Yet invisible rays are still emitted by the spinning object, including the rays used in photography and other subtle rays of light. Then, as the object's constitution changes, the peculiar rays known as "X rays" and others begin to appear. Electricity and magnetism are emitted once the appropriate rate of vibration is reached.

When the object reaches a certain rate of vibration, its molecules break apart and resolve into the original elements, or atoms. Then, in keeping with the Principle of Vibration, the atoms separate into the countless corpuscles of which they are composed. Finally, even the corpuscles disappear, and the object may be said to consist of The Ethereal Substance. Science does not venture to take the example further, but the Hermetists teach

that if the vibrations continued to increase, the object would rise through successive states of manifestation, in turn expressing the various mental stages, then moving toward Spirit, until at last it re-entered THE ALL, which is Absolute Spirit. The "object," however, would have ceased to be an "object" long before reaching the stage of Ethereal Substance. Otherwise, the example is correct in showing the effects of continually increasing rates and modes of vibration. Remember that when the "object" emits vibrations of light, heat, and so on, it is not actually "resolved" into those forms of energy, which are much higher on the scale. Rather, it reaches a degree of vibration at which those forms of energy are partially released from the restraining influence of its molecules, atoms, and corpuscles, as the case may be. These forms of energy, though much higher on the scale than matter, are imprisoned and confined within material combinations. Their energies act through and use material forms, but become entangled and confined in the material forms they create—a condition true, to some extent, of all creations, in which the creating force becomes involved in its creation.

But the Hermetic Teachings go much further than modern science. They teach that every manifestation of thought, emotion, reason, will, desire, or any other mental state or condition is accompanied by vibrations. Some of these vibrations are cast off and tend to affect other people's minds by "induction." This principle produces the phenomena of "telepathy," mental influence, and other forms of mind acting on and influencing mind. The general public is rapidly becoming familiar with these phenomena, thanks to the widespread circulation of occult knowledge by the various schools, cults, and teachers working in these fields today.

Every thought, emotion, or mental state has its own corresponding rate and mode of vibration. Through an effort of will, either by the person or by others, these mental states may be reproduced, just as a musical tone can be reproduced by making an instrument vibrate at a certain rate, or a color can be

reproduced in the same way. By understanding the Principle of Vibration as applied to mental phenomena, a person can polarize their mind at any desired degree and so gain complete control over their mental states, moods, and so on. In the same way, they can affect other people's minds, producing the desired mental states in them. In short, they may be able to produce on the Mental Plane what science produces on the Physical Plane: "vibrations at will." This power, of course, can be acquired only through proper instruction, exercises, practice, and so on. The science involved is Mental Transmutation, one branch of the Hermetic Art.

A little reflection on what we have said will show the student that the Principle of Vibration underlies the remarkable powers displayed by the Masters and Adepts. They seem to set aside the Laws of Nature, but in reality they simply use one law against another, one principle against others. They achieve their results by changing the vibrations of material objects or forms of energy, thereby performing what are commonly called "miracles."

As one of the old Hermetic writers truly said: "Whoever understands the Principle of Vibration has grasped the scepter of Power."

Chapter 10

Polarity

"Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled."—The Kybalion.

The great Fourth Hermetic Principle, the Principle of Polarity, expresses the truth that everything manifested has "two sides," "two aspects," "two poles," or a "pair of opposites," with many degrees between the extremes. Understanding this Principle explains the old paradoxes that have always perplexed the human mind. People have always recognized something like this Principle and tried to express it in sayings, maxims, and aphorisms such as these: "Everything is and isn't at the same time"; "all truths are but half-truths"; "every truth is half-false"; "there are two sides to everything"—"there is a reverse side to every shield," and so on.

The Hermetic Teachings hold that the difference between things that seem diametrically opposed is merely one of degree. They teach that "the pairs of opposites may be reconciled," that "thesis and antithesis are identical in nature, but different in degree," and that recognizing the Principle of Polarity brings about the "universal reconciliation of opposites." The teachers claim that examples of this Principle can be found everywhere by examining the true nature of anything. They begin by showing that Spirit and Matter are simply the two poles of the same thing, with the intermediate planes representing degrees of vibration. They show that THE ALL and The Many are the same, differing only in degree of Mental Manifestation. Thus the LAW and Laws are the two opposite poles of one thing, as are PRINCIPLE and Principles, and Infinite Mind and finite minds.

Next, turning to the Physical Plane, they illustrate the Principle by showing that Heat and Cold are identical in nature and differ only in degree. A thermometer shows many degrees of temperature: the lowest pole is called "cold," and the highest, "heat." Between these two poles are many degrees of "heat" or "cold"; either term is equally correct. The higher of two degrees is always "warmer," and the lower always "colder." There is no absolute standard; everything is a matter of degree. There is no point on the thermometer where heat ends and cold begins. It is all a matter of higher or lower vibrations. Even the terms "high" and "low," which we have to use, are opposite poles of the same thing; they are relative. The same is true of "East and West": travel around the world eastward, and you reach a point called west from where you started; return from that western point. Travel far enough North, and you will find yourself heading South, or vice versa.

Light and Darkness are poles of the same thing, with many degrees between them. The musical scale works the same way: starting with "C," you move upward until you reach another "C," and so on; the difference between the two ends of the scale is the same, with many degrees between the extremes. The color scale is likewise governed by higher and lower vibrations, the only difference between high violet and low red. Large and Small are relative, as are Noise and Quiet. Hard and Soft follow the same rule, as do Sharp and Dull. Positive and Negative are two poles of the same thing, with countless degrees between them.

Good and Bad are not absolute. Depending on how the terms are used, we call one end of the scale Good and the other Bad, or one end Good and the other Evil. A thing is "less good" than the thing higher on the scale; but that "less good" thing, in turn, is "more good" than the thing just below it. And so on: "more or less" depends on a thing's position on the scale.

The same is true on the Mental Plane. Love and hate are generally considered diametrically opposed, entirely different, and impossible to reconcile. But when we apply the Principle of

Polarity, we find there is no such thing as absolute Love or absolute Hate, distinct from one another. They are simply names for the two poles of the same thing. Starting anywhere on the scale, we find more love or less hate as we move up it, and more hate or less love as we move down, no matter how high or low our starting point. Love and Hate have degrees, with a midpoint where Like and Dislike become so faint that it is difficult to tell them apart. Courage and Fear follow the same rule. Pairs of Opposites exist everywhere. Wherever you find one thing, you find its opposite: the two poles.

This fact enables the Hermetist to transform one mental state into another through Polarization. Things belonging to different classes cannot be transformed into one another, but things in the same class can be changed—that is, their polarity can be shifted. Love never becomes East or West, or Red or Violet, but it may—and often does—turn into Hate; likewise, Hate may be transformed into Love by changing its polarity. Courage may be transformed into Fear, and vice versa. Hard things can be made Soft. Dull things can become Sharp. Hot things can become Cold. And so on: transformation always occurs between things of the same kind, at different degrees. Consider a fearful man. By raising his mental vibrations along the Fear-Courage scale, he can be filled with the highest degree of Courage and Fearlessness. Likewise, a slothful man can turn himself into an active, energetic person simply by polarizing toward the quality he wants.

A student familiar with the processes by which various schools of Mental Science and others bring about changes in the mental states of their followers may not immediately understand the principle behind many of these changes. But once the Principle of Polarity is grasped, and it becomes clear that mental changes result from a shift in polarity—a movement along the same scale—the matter is readily understood. The change is not a transformation of one thing into something entirely different. It is merely a change in degree within the same thing, a vastly important distinction. For example, drawing an analogy from

the Physical Plane, it is impossible to change Heat into Sharpness, Loudness, or Highness, but Heat can readily be transformed into Cold simply by lowering the vibrations. In the same way, Hate and Love can be transformed into each other, as can Fear and Courage. But Fear cannot be transformed into Love, nor Courage into Hate. Mental states belong to innumerable classes, each with its own opposite poles, along which transformation is possible.

The student will readily see that, in mental states as in phenomena on the Physical Plane, the two poles may be classified as Positive and Negative. Thus Love is Positive in relation to Hate, Courage to Fear, Activity to Non-Activity, and so on. It will also be clear that even those unfamiliar with the Principle of Vibration regard the Positive pole as higher in degree than the Negative, and see it readily dominate the latter. Nature tends toward the dominant activity of the Positive pole.

Besides changing the poles of one's own mental states through the art of Polarization, the many forms of Mental Influence show that this principle can also apply to one mind influencing another—a subject much written and taught about in recent years. Once we understand that Mental Induction is possible—that is, that mental states can be produced by "induction" from others—we can readily see how a particular rate of vibration, or the polarization of a particular mental state, may be communicated to another person, changing that person's polarity in that class of mental states. Many of the results of "mental treatments" are achieved through this principle. For example, someone is "blue," melancholy, and full of fear. A mental scientist uses trained will to bring his own mind to the desired vibration and achieve the desired polarization for himself. He then produces a similar mental state in the other person by induction. The result is that the vibrations rise and the person polarizes toward the Positive end of the scale instead of the Negative; Fear and other negative emotions are transformed into Courage and similar positive mental states. A little study will

show that nearly all these mental changes occur along the line of Polarization, with a change in degree rather than kind.

Knowing that this great Hermetic Principle exists will help the student better understand their own mental states and those of other people. They will see that these states are all matters of degree, and, recognizing this, will be able to raise or lower the vibration at will—to shift their mental poles and become master of their mental states instead of their servant and slave. This knowledge will also enable them to help others intelligently and use appropriate methods to change their polarity when desirable. We advise all students to familiarize themselves with the Principle of Polarity, because a correct understanding of it will shed light on many difficult subjects.

Chapter 11

Rhythm

"Everything flows out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum swings in everything; the swing to the right is matched by the swing to the left; rhythm balances." —The Kybalion

The great Fifth Hermetic Principle, the Principle of Rhythm, expresses the truth that everything displays measured motion: a movement back and forth, an outgoing and incoming flow, a forward and backward swing, a pendulum-like motion, a tide-like ebb and flow, a high tide and a low tide, between the two poles manifested on the physical, mental, or spiritual planes. The Principle of Rhythm is closely connected to the Principle of Polarity described in the previous chapter. Rhythm operates between the two poles established by the Principle of Polarity. This does not mean, however, that the pendulum of Rhythm swings all the way to the extreme poles; that rarely happens. In fact, it is difficult to establish the extreme opposites in most cases. But the swing always moves "toward" one pole and then the other.

Action and reaction, advance and retreat, rising and sinking are always present in all the forces and phenomena of the Universe. Suns, worlds, people, animals, plants, minerals, forces, energy, mind and matter, and even Spirit display this Principle. It appears in the creation and destruction of worlds; in the rise and fall of nations; in the life history of all things; and, finally, in the mental states of Man.

Beginning with the manifestations of Spirit—of THE ALL—we see an ever-present outpouring and drawing inward, the "Outbreathing and Inbreathing of Brahm," as the Brahmans put it. Universes are created, reach their lowest point of materiality, and then begin their upward swing. Suns come into being; when they reach the height of their power, decline begins, and

after eons they become dead masses of matter, awaiting another impulse to start their inner energies into activity and begin a new solar life cycle. The same is true of all worlds: they are born, grow, and die, only to be reborn. And the same is true of everything with shape and form: each swings from action to reaction, from birth to death, from activity to inactivity—and then back again. So it is with all living things: they are born, grow, and die, then are reborn. The same applies to all great movements, philosophies, creeds, fashions, governments, nations, and everything else: birth, growth, maturity, decline, death, and then rebirth. The pendulum is always swinging.

Night follows day, and day follows night. The pendulum swings from summer to winter and back again. Corpuscles, atoms, molecules, and all masses of matter move in cycles according to their nature. There is no such thing as absolute rest or an end to movement, and all movement follows a rhythm. The principle applies universally. It can be applied to any question or phenomenon on any of the many planes of life, and to every aspect of human activity. There is always a rhythmic swing from one pole to the other. The Universal Pendulum is always in motion. The Tides of Life flow in and out according to Law.

Modern science understands the Principle of Rhythm well and regards it as a universal law governing material things. But the Hermetists carry the principle much further. They know that its manifestations and influence extend to the mental activities of Man, and that it accounts for the bewildering succession of moods, feelings, and other frustrating, perplexing changes we notice in ourselves. By studying how this Principle operates, however, the Hermetists have learned to escape some of its effects through Transmutation.

The Hermetic Masters discovered long ago that although the Principle of Rhythm was invariable and always evident in mental phenomena, it manifested on two planes where mental phenomena were concerned. They found two general planes of consciousness, the Lower and the Higher. Understanding this

enabled them to rise to the higher plane and escape the swing of the Rhythmic pendulum manifested on the lower plane. In other words, the pendulum swung on the Unconscious Plane, without affecting consciousness. They called this the Law of Neutralization. It works by raising the Ego above the vibrations of the Unconscious Plane of mental activity, so that the pendulum's negative swing does not appear in consciousness and therefore does not affect the individual. It is like rising above something and letting it pass beneath you. The Hermetic Master, or advanced student, aligns himself with the desired pole and, by a process akin to "refusing" to join the backward swing —or, if you prefer, "denying" its influence over him—remains firmly in that position while allowing the mental pendulum to swing back along the unconscious plane. Everyone who has achieved some degree of self-mastery does this, more or less unknowingly. By refusing to let their moods and negative mental states affect them, they apply the Law of Neutralization. The Master, however, takes this much further. By using his Will, he achieves a degree of poise and mental firmness almost impossible for those who let the mental pendulum of moods and feelings swing them back and forth to believe.

Anyone who thinks about what creatures of moods, feelings, and emotion most people are—and how little self-mastery they show—will understand the importance of this. Stop and consider for a moment, and you will realize how greatly these swings of Rhythm have affected your life: a period of enthusiasm has invariably been followed by an opposite feeling and mood of depression. Likewise, periods of courage have been followed by equal periods of fear. So it has always been for most people: tides of feeling have risen and fallen, but they have never suspected the cause of these mental phenomena. Understanding how this Principle works gives us the key to mastering these rhythmic swings of feeling. It allows us to know ourselves better and avoid being swept away by these inflows and outflows. The Will is superior to the conscious manifestation of this Principle, although the Principle itself can never be destroyed. We may

escape its effects, but it continues to operate. The pendulum always swings, even though we may avoid being carried along with it.

There are other aspects of how this Principle of Rhythm operates that we want to discuss here. Its operation includes what is known as the Law of Compensation. One definition of the word "compensate" is "to counterbalance," which is how the Hermetists use the term. This is the Law of Compensation the Kybalion refers to when it says: "The measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates."

The Law of Compensation means that a swing in one direction determines the swing in the opposite direction, or toward the opposite pole: one balances, or counterbalances, the other. We see many examples of this Law on the Physical Plane. A clock's pendulum swings a certain distance to the right, then an equal distance to the left. The seasons balance each other in the same way. The tides follow the same Law, as do all phenomena of Rhythm. A short swing of the pendulum in one direction means a short swing in the other; a long swing to the right invariably means a long swing to the left. An object thrown upward to a certain height has an equal distance to travel on its return. The force that sends a projectile upward a mile is reproduced as it returns to earth. This Law is constant on the Physical Plane, as you will see by consulting standard authorities.

But the Hermetists take this further. They teach that a man's mental states are governed by the same Law. Someone who experiences intense joy is subject to intense suffering, while someone who feels little pain is capable of feeling little joy. A pig suffers little mentally and enjoys little—it is compensated. On the other hand, some animals experience intense pleasure, but their nervous systems and temperaments also make them suffer exquisite degrees of pain. The same is true of humans. Some temperaments allow only limited degrees of enjoyment and equally limited degrees of suffering; others allow the most intense enjoyment, but also the most intense suffering. The rule

is that each individual's capacity for pain and pleasure is balanced. The Law of Compensation is fully at work here.

But the Hermetists take this matter further still. They teach that before someone can enjoy a certain degree of pleasure, they must have swung proportionately far toward the other pole of feeling. They hold, however, that the Negative comes before the Positive in this matter. That is, experiencing a certain degree of pleasure does not mean a person will have to "pay for it" with a corresponding degree of pain. On the contrary, the pleasure is the Rhythmic swing, according to the Law of Compensation, for a degree of pain experienced earlier, either in this life or in a previous incarnation. This casts new light on the Problem of Pain.

The Hermetists regard the chain of lives as continuous and as forming part of one life of the individual. Consequently, they understand the rhythmic swing in this way; otherwise, it would make no sense unless the truth of reincarnation is accepted.

But the Hermetists claim that the Master or advanced student can, to a great extent, avoid the swing toward Pain by using the process of Neutralization described earlier. By rising to the higher plane of the Ego, they avoid much of the experience that comes to those who live on the lower plane.

The Law of Compensation plays an important part in the lives of men and women. We see that people generally "pay the price" for whatever they possess or lack. If they have one thing, they lack another—the balance is struck. No one can "keep his penny and have his bit of cake" at the same time. Everything has its pleasant and unpleasant sides. What one gains is always paid for with what one loses. The rich possess much that the poor lack, while the poor often possess things beyond the reach of the rich. A millionaire may have the desire to feast and the wealth to buy every delicacy and luxury, yet lack the appetite to enjoy them. He envies the appetite and digestion of the laborer, who lacks the millionaire's wealth and tastes, and gets more pleasure from plain food than the millionaire could—even if his appetite were not jaded and his digestion not ruined—because their

wants, habits, and inclinations differ. And so it goes throughout life. The Law of Compensation is always at work, striving to balance and counterbalance, and eventually succeeding, even if several lives are needed for the return swing of the Pendulum of Rhythm.

Chapter 12

Causation

"Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law."—The Kybalion.

The great Sixth Hermetic Principle—the Principle of Cause and Effect—embodies the truth that Law pervades the Universe; nothing happens by Chance; Chance is merely a term for a cause that exists but is not recognized or perceived; and phenomena continue without interruption or exception.

The Principle of Cause and Effect underlies all scientific thought, ancient and modern, and was stated by the Hermetic Teachers in the earliest days. Many varied disputes have since arisen among the schools of thought, but they have mainly concerned the details of how the Principle operates, and even more often the meanings of certain words. Practically all thinkers worthy of the name have accepted the underlying Principle of Cause and Effect as correct. To think otherwise would remove the phenomena of the universe from the domain of Law and Order and hand them over to the control of an imaginary something people call "Chance."

A little thought will show anyone that pure chance does not really exist. Webster defines "Chance" as follows: "A supposed agent or mode of activity other than a force, law or purpose; the operation or activity of such agent; the supposed effect of such an agent; a happening; fortuity; casualty, etc." But a little thought will show that there can be no agent called "Chance" in the sense of something outside Law—something outside Cause and Effect. How could something act in the phenomenal universe independently of its laws, order, and continuity? Such a thing would be entirely independent of the universe's orderly course and therefore superior to it. We can imagine nothing

except THE ALL as being outside the Law, and that only because THE ALL is the Law itself. There is no room in the universe for anything outside and independent of Law. If such a Something existed, it would make all Natural Laws ineffective and plunge the universe into chaos and lawlessness.

A careful examination shows that what we call "Chance" is simply a term for obscure causes: causes we cannot perceive or understand. The word Chance comes from a word meaning "to fall" (as in the fall of dice). The idea is that the fall of the dice—and many other events—is merely a "happening," unrelated to any cause. This is how the term is generally used. But when we examine the matter closely, we see that there is nothing at all random about the fall of the dice. Each time a die falls and shows a particular number, it obeys a law as infallible as the one governing the planets' revolutions around the sun. Behind the fall of the die are causes, or chains of causes, reaching farther back than the mind can follow. The die's position in the box, the amount of muscular energy used in the throw, the condition of the table, and so on—all are causes whose effects can be seen. But behind these visible causes are chains of unseen preceding causes, all of which had a bearing on the number showing uppermost on the die.

If a die is cast a great many times, the numbers shown will be about equal in frequency: there will be roughly as many ones, twos, and so on. Toss a penny in the air, and it may land either "heads" or "tails"; but toss it enough times, and the numbers of heads and tails will be roughly equal. This is the law of averages at work. But both the average and the single toss fall under the Law of Cause and Effect. If we could examine the preceding causes, it would be clear that, under the same circumstances and at the same time, it was simply impossible for the die to fall any other way. Given the same causes, the same results will follow. Every event has a "cause" and a "because." Nothing ever "happens" without a cause—or, rather, a chain of causes.

Some confusion has arisen among people considering this Principle because they have been unable to explain how one thing could cause another—that is, be the "creator" of the second thing. In fact, no "thing" ever causes or "creates" another "thing." Cause and Effect deals only with "events." An "event" is "that which comes, arrives, or happens as a result or consequence of some preceding event." No event "creates" another event; it is simply a preceding link in the great, orderly chain of events flowing from the creative energy of THE ALL. There is continuity among all events—those that precede, follow, and come afterward. A relationship exists between everything that has gone before and everything that follows. A stone is dislodged from a mountainside and crashes through the roof of a cottage in the valley below. At first, we regard this as a chance effect, but when we examine the matter, we find a great chain of causes behind it. First, there was the rain, which softened the earth supporting the stone and allowed it to fall. Behind that was the influence of the sun, other rains, and so on, which gradually broke the piece of rock away from a larger mass. Then there were the causes that led to the formation of the mountain and its upheaval by convulsions of nature, and so on without end. We might then trace the causes behind the rain, and so on. We might also consider the existence of the roof. In short, we would soon find ourselves caught up in a web of cause and effect, from which we would soon try to extricate ourselves.

Just as a man has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, and so on, until the number of ancestors reaches many millions after, say, forty generations, so it is with the number of causes behind even the most trivial event or phenomenon, such as a tiny speck of soot passing before your eye. It is not easy to trace that bit of soot back to the early period of the world's history when it formed part of a massive tree trunk, which was later turned into coal, and so on, until, as a speck of soot, it now passes before your vision on its way to other adventures. A mighty chain of events, causes, and effects brought it to its present condition, and the

latter is only one link in the chain of events that will produce other events hundreds of years from now. One event arising from that tiny bit of soot was the writing of these lines, which caused the typesetter to do certain work, and the proofreader to do the same. These lines will stir certain thoughts in your mind and in the minds of others, which in turn will affect still others, and so on, and on, and on, beyond the ability of anyone to think further—all from the passage of a tiny bit of soot. All this shows the interconnectedness and association of things, as well as the further truth that "there is no great; there is no small, in the mind that causeth all."

Stop and think for a moment. If a certain man had not met a certain woman long ago, in the dim period of the Stone Age, you, who are reading these lines now, would not be here. And if, perhaps, that same couple had failed to meet, we, who are writing these lines, would not be here. The very act of writing on our part, and of reading on yours, will affect not only our respective lives, but will also have a direct or indirect effect on many other people living now and in ages to come. Every thought we think and every act we perform has direct and indirect results that fit into the great chain of Cause and Effect.

We do not wish to consider Free Will or Determinism in this work, for various reasons. The main one among them is that neither side of the controversy is entirely right. In fact, according to the Hermetic Teachings, both sides are partly right. The Principle of Polarity shows that they are both Half-Truths, the opposing poles of Truth. The Teachings hold that a person may be both Free and yet bound by Necessity, depending on the meaning of the terms and the level of Truth from which the matter is examined. The ancient writers put it this way: "The further the creation is from the Centre, the more it is bound; the nearer the Centre it reaches, the nearer Free is it."

Most people are more or less slaves to heredity, environment, and so on, and show very little Freedom. They are swayed by the opinions, customs, and thoughts of the outside world, as well as by their emotions, feelings, moods, and so on. They show no

Mastery worth the name. They indignantly reject this claim, saying, "Why, I certainly am free to act and do as I please—I do just what I want to do." But they fail to explain where the "want to" and "as I please" come from. What makes them "want to" do one thing rather than another? What makes them "please" to do this and not that? Is there no "because" behind their "pleasing" and "wanting"? The Master can change these "pleasures" and "wants" into others at the opposite end of the mental pole. He can "will to will," rather than will because some feeling, mood, emotion, or suggestion from the environment arouses a tendency or desire within him to do so.

Most people are carried along like a falling stone, obedient to their environment, outside influences, and inner moods, desires, and so on—not to mention the desires and wills of others stronger than themselves. Heredity, environment, and suggestion carry them along without resistance or the exercise of Will. Moved like pawns on life's checkerboard, they play their parts and are set aside when the game is over. But the Masters, knowing the rules of the game, rise above the plane of material life. They put themselves in touch with the higher powers of their nature and master their own moods, characters, qualities, and polarity, as well as the environment around them. Thus they become Movers in the game rather than Pawns—Causes rather than Effects. The Masters do not escape the Causation of the higher planes, but they conform to the higher laws and thus master circumstances on the lower plane. They become a conscious part of the Law, rather than mere blind instruments. While they Serve on the Higher Planes, they Rule on the Material Plane.

But on higher and lower planes alike, the Law is always at work. There is no such thing as Chance. Reason has abolished the blind goddess. With eyes cleared by knowledge, we can now see that everything is governed by Universal Law—that the infinite number of laws are merely manifestations of the One Great Law, the LAW that is THE ALL. It is indeed true that not a sparrow falls unnoticed by the Mind of THE ALL, and that

even the hairs on our heads are numbered, as the scriptures say. There is nothing outside the Law, nothing that happens contrary to it. And yet, do not make the mistake of thinking that Man is merely a blind automaton—far from it. The Hermetic Teachings hold that Man may use Law to overcome laws, and that the higher will always prevail over the lower, until at last he reaches the stage at which he seeks refuge in the LAW itself and laughs the phenomenal laws to scorn. Can you grasp the inner meaning of this?

Chapter 13

Gender

"Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles; Gender manifests on all planes."—The Kybalion.

The great Seventh Hermetic Principle—the Principle of Gender—embodies the truth that Gender is manifested in everything: the Masculine and Feminine principles are always present and active in every phase of phenomena, on every plane of life. Here we think it important to point out that Gender in its Hermetic sense is not the same as Sex in the term's ordinary accepted use.

The word "Gender" comes from a Latin root meaning "to beget; to procreate; to generate; to create; to produce." A moment's thought will show that the word has a much broader, more general meaning than the term "Sex," which refers to the physical distinctions between male and female living things. Sex is merely a manifestation of Gender on a certain plane of the Great Physical Plane: the plane of organic life. We want to make this distinction clear because certain writers who have picked up only a little of the Hermetic Philosophy have tried to identify this Seventh Hermetic Principle with wild and fanciful—and often reprehensible—theories and teachings about Sex.

Gender's sole function is to create, produce, generate, and so on, and its manifestations are visible on every plane of phenomena. It is somewhat difficult to offer scientific proof of this, because science has not yet recognized this Principle as universally applicable. Still, some evidence is available from scientific sources. First, we find a clear manifestation of the Principle of Gender among the corpuscles, ions, or electrons that make up the basis of Matter as science now understands it. By forming certain combinations, they form the Atom, which until recently was considered final and indivisible.

The latest word from science is that the atom consists of a multitude of corpuscles, electrons, or ions—the different authorities use different names—revolving around one another and vibrating at great speed and intensity. It is also said that the atom's formation is actually due to negative corpuscles clustering around a positive one: the positive corpuscles seem to exert a certain influence on the negative ones, causing them to form particular combinations and thus "create" or "generate" an atom. This agrees with the most ancient Hermetic Teachings, which have always identified the Masculine principle of Gender with the "Positive" and the Feminine with the "Negative" Poles of Electricity (as it is called).

A word here about this identification. The public has formed a completely mistaken impression of the qualities of the so-called "Negative" pole of electrified or magnetized Matter. Science applies the terms Positive and Negative to this phenomenon very wrongly. Positive means something real and strong, in contrast to a Negative unreality or weakness. Nothing could be further from the actual facts of electrical phenomena. The so-called Negative pole of a battery is really the pole where and through which new forms and energies are generated or produced. There is nothing "negative" about it. Leading scientific authorities now use the word "Cathode" instead of "Negative." The word Cathode comes from a Greek root meaning "descent; the path of generation," and so on. Swarms of electrons or corpuscles emerge from the Cathode pole; those wonderful "rays" that have revolutionized scientific thinking over the past decade emerge from the same pole. The Cathode pole is the Mother of all the strange phenomena that have made the old textbooks useless and sent many long-accepted theories to the scrap heap of scientific speculation. The Cathode, or Negative Pole, is the Mother Principle of Electrical Phenomena and of the finest forms of matter yet known to science. So you see, we are justified in refusing to use the term "Negative" in discussing this subject and in insisting on substituting "Feminine" for the old term. The facts support us in this, even without taking the Hermetic

Teachings into account. And so, when speaking of that pole of activity, we shall use the word "Feminine" in place of "Negative."

The latest scientific teachings hold that the creative corpuscles or electrons are Feminine (science says "they are composed of negative electricity"; we say they are composed of Feminine energy). A Feminine corpuscle separates from—or rather, leaves—a Masculine corpuscle and begins a new career. It actively seeks union with a Masculine corpuscle, driven by the natural impulse to create new forms of Matter or Energy. One writer even says that "it at once seeks, of its own volition, a union," and so on. This separation and union form the basis of most activity in the chemical world. When a Feminine corpuscle unites with a Masculine corpuscle, a certain process begins. Under the influence of the Masculine energy, the Feminine particles vibrate rapidly and circle rapidly around it. The result is the birth of a new atom. This new atom is actually made up of a union of the Masculine and Feminine electrons, or corpuscles, but once united, the atom is a separate thing, with certain properties, though it no longer displays the property of free electricity. The separation of the Feminine electrons is called "ionization." These electrons, or corpuscles, are the most active workers in Nature's field. From their unions or combinations arise the varied phenomena of light, heat, electricity, magnetism, attraction, repulsion, chemical affinity and its opposite, and similar phenomena. All this results from the operation of the Principle of Gender on the plane of Energy.

The Masculine principle seems to direct a certain inherent energy toward the Feminine principle, thereby setting the creative processes in motion. But the Feminine principle is always the one doing the active creative work—and this is true on all planes. Yet neither principle can operate energetically without the other's assistance. In some forms of life, the two principles are combined in one organism. In fact, everything in the organic world manifests both genders: the Masculine is always present in the Feminine form, and the Feminine in the

Masculine form. The Hermetic Teachings have much to say about how the two principles of Gender operate in producing and manifesting various forms of energy, and so on. But we do not think it expedient to discuss them in detail here, because we cannot support them with scientific proof; science has not yet progressed that far. Still, the example we have given you of the phenomena of electrons or corpuscles shows that science is on the right track and also gives you a general idea of the underlying principles.

Some leading scientific investigators have said that something corresponding to "sex activity" can be found in the formation of crystals—another sign of the direction in which scientific opinion is moving. Each year will bring further facts confirming the correctness of the Hermetic Principle of Gender. Gender, it will be found, is constantly at work and manifesting in the realm of inorganic matter and in the realm of Energy or Force. Electricity is now generally regarded as the "Something" into which all other forms of energy seem to merge or dissolve. The "Electrical Theory of the Universe" is the latest scientific doctrine and is rapidly gaining popularity and general acceptance. It follows, then, that if we can discover in the phenomena of electricity—even at the very root and source of its manifestations—clear and unmistakable evidence of the presence and activity of Gender, we are justified in asking you to believe that science has at last offered proof of this great Hermetic Principle's existence in all universal phenomena: the Principle of Gender.

There is no need to spend your time on the well-known phenomena of the "attraction and repulsion" of atoms, chemical affinity, the "loves and hates" of atomic particles, or the attraction or cohesion between molecules of matter. These facts are too well known to need lengthy comment from us. But have you ever considered that all of them are manifestations of the Principle of Gender? Can't you see that these phenomena are "on all fours" with those of corpuscles or electrons? More than that, can't you see the reasonableness of the Hermetic Teachings,

which say that the very Law of Gravitation—that strange attraction by which all particles and bodies of matter in the universe tend toward one another—is simply another manifestation of the Principle of Gender, which operates by attracting Masculine to Feminine energies, and vice versa? We cannot offer you scientific proof of this at present. But examine the phenomena in light of the Hermetic Teachings on the subject, and see whether you do not find a better working hypothesis than any offered by physical science. Test all physical phenomena, and you will see the Principle of Gender constantly at work.

Let us now turn to the operation of the Principle on the Mental Plane. Many interesting features await examination there.

Chapter 14

Mental Gender

Students of psychology who have followed modern thinking about mental phenomena are struck by the persistence of the idea of a dual mind, which has been especially prominent over the past ten or fifteen years and has given rise to a number of plausible theories about the nature and makeup of these "two minds." In 1893, the late Thomson J. Hudson became very popular by advancing his well-known theory that every individual had "objective and subjective minds." Other writers have drawn almost as much attention with theories about the "conscious and subconscious minds," the "voluntary and involuntary minds," the "active and passive minds," and so on. The different writers' theories vary, but the underlying principle of "the duality of mind" remains.

Students of Hermetic philosophy may be tempted to smile when they read or hear about the many "new theories" concerning the duality of mind. Each school clings stubbornly to its own favorite theories, and each claims to have "discovered the truth." The student turns back the pages of occult history and, far back in the dim beginnings of occult teaching, finds references to the ancient Hermetic doctrine of the Principle of Gender on the Mental Plane—the manifestation of Mental Gender. Looking further, the student finds that ancient philosophy recognized the phenomenon of the "dual mind" and explained it through the theory of Mental Gender. This idea of Mental Gender can be explained in a few words to students familiar with the modern theories just mentioned. The Masculine Principle of Mind corresponds to the so-called Objective Mind, Conscious Mind, Voluntary Mind, Active Mind, and so on. The Feminine Principle of Mind corresponds to the so-called Subjective Mind, Subconscious Mind, Involuntary Mind, Passive Mind, and so on. Of course, the

Hermetic Teachings do not agree with the many modern theories about the nature of the two phases of mind, nor do they accept many of the facts claimed for the two respective aspects—some of those theories and claims are far-fetched and cannot withstand experimental testing and demonstration. We point out the areas of agreement only to help students connect their previously acquired knowledge with the teachings of Hermetic philosophy. Students of Hudson will notice the statement at the beginning of the second chapter of his The Law of Psychic Phenomena: "The mystic jargon of the Hermetic philosophers discloses the same general idea"—that is, the duality of mind. If Dr. Hudson had taken the time and trouble to decipher a little of "the mystic jargon of the Hermetic Philosophy," he might have gained much insight into the subject of "the dual mind"—but then, perhaps, he might not have written his most interesting work. Let us now consider the Hermetic Teachings regarding Mental Gender.

The Hermetic Teachers present their instruction on this subject by asking students to examine what their consciousness tells them about their Self. They are asked to turn their attention inward, toward the Self that dwells within each of them. Each student is led to see that consciousness first reports the existence of the Self—the report is "I Am." At first, this seems to be the final word from consciousness, but closer examination reveals that this "I Am" can be separated, or divided, into two distinct parts or aspects which, although they work in unison and conjunction, can nevertheless be distinguished in consciousness.

At first, it seems that only an "I" exists, but closer and more careful examination reveals that both an "I" and a "Me" exist. These mental twins differ in their characteristics and nature, and examining their nature and the phenomena that arise from it will shed much light on many problems of mental influence.

Let us begin by considering the Me, which students usually mistake for the I until they pursue the inquiry further into the depths of consciousness. A person thinks of the Self, in its aspect as Me, as consisting of certain feelings, tastes, likes and dislikes,

habits, peculiarities, characteristics, and so on—all of which make up the person's personality, or the "Self" known to that person and to others. The person knows that these emotions and feelings change: they arise and fade away, subject to the Principle of Rhythm and the Principle of Polarity, which carry a person from one emotional extreme to another. The person also thinks of the "Me" as certain knowledge gathered in the mind and thus forming part of the self. This is a person's "Me."

But we have gone too quickly. For many people, the "Me" consists largely of their awareness of the body and its physical appetites, and so on. Their consciousness is so bound up with their bodily nature that they practically "live there." Some people even regard their personal clothing as part of their "Me" and seem actually to consider it part of themselves. A writer once joked that "men consist of three parts—soul, body, and clothes." These "clothes-conscious" people would lose their personality if shipwrecked and stripped of their clothes by savages. But even many who are not so closely attached to the idea of personal clothing cling to the idea that their bodies are their "Me." They cannot conceive of a Self independent of the body. Their mind seems to them to be practically "something belonging to" their body—which in many cases it is, indeed.

As a person rises in the scale of consciousness, however, they can disentangle their "Me" from their idea of the body and think of the body as "belonging to" the mental part of them. Even then, though, they are very likely to identify the "Me" entirely with the mental states, feelings, and so on that they feel within them. They are very likely to regard these inner states as identical with themselves, rather than as simply "things" produced by some part of their mind and existing within them—of them and in them, but still not "themselves." They see that they can change these inner emotional states by an act of will, and can produce a feeling or state of exactly the opposite nature in the same way, while the same "Me" continues to exist. In time, then, they can set aside these various mental states, emotions, feelings, habits, qualities, characteristics, and other personal mental possessions.

They can place them in the collection of "not-me" curiosities and encumbrances, as well as valuable possessions. This takes considerable mental concentration and analytical power on the student's part. But it is possible for the advanced student, and even those less advanced can imagine how the process might be carried out.

After setting these things aside, students will find themselves consciously possessing a "Self" that can be considered in its dual aspects of "I" and "Me." The "Me" will feel like something mental in which thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings, and other mental states can be produced. It may be thought of as the "mental womb," as the ancients called it, capable of generating mental offspring. It presents itself to consciousness as a "Me" with latent powers to create and generate all kinds of mental progeny. Its creative energy feels enormous. But it still seems to be aware that it must receive some form of energy from either its companion "I" or some other "I" before it can bring its mental creations into being. This awareness brings with it a sense of enormous capacity for mental work and creative ability.

But students soon find that this is not all they discover in their inner consciousness. They find a mental Something that can will the "Me" to act along certain creative lines and can also stand aside and observe the mental creation. They are taught to call this part of themselves the "I." They can rest in its consciousness at will. There they find not an awareness of an ability to generate and actively create through the gradual process involved in mental operations, but rather a sense and awareness of an ability to project energy from the "I" to the "Me"—a process of "willing" the mental creation to begin and proceed. They also find that the "I" can stand aside and observe the operations of the "Me's" mental creation and generation. This dual aspect exists in everyone's mind. The "I" represents the Masculine Principle of Mental Gender; the "Me" represents the Feminine Principle. The "I" represents the Aspect of Being; the "Me," the Aspect of Becoming. You will notice that the Principle of Correspondence operates on this plane just as it does on the great

plane where Universes are created. The two are similar in kind, though vastly different in degree. "As above, so below; as below, so above."

These aspects of mind—the Masculine and Feminine Principles, the "I" and the "Me"—when considered alongside well-known mental and psychic phenomena, provide the master key to these dimly understood regions of mental operation and manifestation. The principle of Mental Gender reveals the truth underlying the entire field of mental influence and related phenomena.

The Feminine Principle tends to receive impressions, while the Masculine Principle tends to give out or express. The Feminine Principle has a much wider field of operation than the Masculine Principle. It carries out the work of generating new thoughts, concepts, and ideas, including the work of imagination. The Masculine Principle confines itself to the work of the "Will" in its various forms. Yet without the active aid of the Masculine Principle's Will, the Feminine Principle is likely to be content with generating mental images that result from impressions received from outside, rather than producing original mental creations.

People who can give sustained attention and thought to a subject actively use both Mental Principles: the Feminine in the work of mental generation, and the Masculine Will in stimulating and energizing the mind's creative part. Most people use the Masculine Principle very little and are content to live according to thoughts and ideas instilled into the "Me" by the "I" of other minds. But it is not our purpose to dwell on this aspect of the subject, which can be studied in any good psychology textbook, using the key we have given you concerning Mental Gender.

Students of psychic phenomena know the remarkable phenomena classified under the headings of Telepathy, Thought Transference, Mental Influence, Suggestion, Hypnotism, and so on. Many have sought explanations for these varied phenomena in the theories of the various "dual mind" teachers. To some

extent they are right, because two distinct phases of mental activity are clearly at work. But if these students consider the "dual minds" in light of the Hermetic Teachings concerning Vibrations and Mental Gender, they will see that the long-sought key is at hand.

In telepathy, we see the Vibratory Energy of the Masculine Principle projected toward the Feminine Principle of another person, which receives the seed-thought and lets it develop to maturity. Suggestion and hypnotism work the same way. The Masculine Principle of the person making the suggestions directs a stream of Vibratory Energy, or Will-Power, toward the Feminine Principle of the other person. The other person accepts it, makes it their own, and acts and thinks accordingly. An idea lodged in another person's mind grows and develops until, in time, it is regarded as that person's rightful mental offspring. In reality, it is like a cuckoo's egg placed in a sparrow's nest: it destroys the rightful offspring and makes itself at home. Normally, the Masculine and Feminine Principles in a person's mind coordinate and act harmoniously together. Unfortunately, however, the Masculine Principle in the average person is too lazy to act—the display of Will-Power is too slight—and so such people are ruled almost entirely by the minds and wills of others, whom they allow to do their thinking and willing for them. How few original thoughts or actions does the average person produce! Aren't most people mere shadows and echoes of others with stronger wills or minds? The problem is that the average person lives almost entirely in their "Me" consciousness and does not realize they have such a thing as an "I." They are polarized in the Feminine Principle of Mind, while the Masculine Principle, in which the Will resides, is left inactive and unused.

The strong men and women of the world invariably express the Masculine Principle of Will, and their strength depends substantially on this fact. Instead of living by impressions others make on their minds, they dominate their own minds through their Will, obtaining the kinds of mental images they want. They also dominate the minds of others in the same way. Look

at strong people and how they manage to implant their seed-thoughts in the minds of the masses, causing them to think in accordance with the desires and wills of these strong individuals. This is why the masses are such sheep, never originating an idea of their own or using their own powers of mental activity.

The manifestation of Mental Gender can be seen all around us in everyday life. Magnetic people are able to use the Masculine Principle to impress their ideas on others. The actor who makes people weep or cry at will is using this principle. So are successful orators, statesmen, preachers, writers, and other people in the public eye. The distinctive influence some people exert over others comes from the manifestation of Mental Gender along the Vibrational lines described above. In this principle lie the secrets of personal magnetism, personal influence, fascination, and so on, as well as the phenomena generally grouped under the name of hypnotism.

Students familiar with phenomena generally called "psychic" will have discovered the important role played in them by the force science has called "Suggestion." The term means the process or method by which an idea is transferred to, or "impressed on," another person's mind, causing that person to act accordingly. Correctly understanding Suggestion is necessary to make sense of the varied psychic phenomena it underlies. But knowledge of Vibration and Mental Gender is even more necessary for anyone studying Suggestion, because the entire principle of Suggestion depends on the principles of Mental Gender and Vibration.

Writers and teachers of Suggestion customarily explain that the "objective or voluntary" mind makes the mental impression, or suggestion, on the "subjective or involuntary" mind. But they do not describe the process or offer any analogy from nature that might make the idea easier to understand. If you consider the matter in light of the Hermetic Teachings, however, you will see that the Feminine Principle's being energized by the Masculine Principle's Vibratory Energy accords with universal laws of nature, and that the natural world offers countless

analogies to help explain it. In fact, the Hermetic Teachings show that the creation of the Universe itself follows the same law, and that this principle of Gender—the manifestation of the Masculine and Feminine Principles—is always at work in every creative manifestation on the spiritual, mental, and physical planes. "As above, so below; as below, so above." What is more, once the principle of Mental Gender is grasped and understood, the varied phenomena of psychology can be classified and studied intelligently instead of remaining largely obscure. The principle works in practice because it is based on the immutable universal laws of life.

We will not discuss or describe at length the varied phenomena of mental influence or psychic activity. Many books on the subject have been written and published in recent years, and many of them are quite good. The main facts presented in these books are correct, though the different writers have tried to explain the phenomena through their own favored theories. Students can learn about these matters and, using the theory of Mental Gender, bring order to the chaos of conflicting theories and teachings. They can also readily master the subject, if they choose. This work does not aim to give an extended account of psychic phenomena, but rather to provide students with a master key to unlock the many doors into the parts of the Temple of Knowledge they may wish to explore. We believe that in considering the teachings of The Kybalion, readers may find an explanation that clears away many perplexing difficulties—a key that unlocks many doors. What is the point of detailing all the many features of psychic phenomena and mental science, if we put in students' hands the means to learn fully about any aspect of the subject that interests them? With The Kybalion's help, one can revisit any occult library, the old Light from Egypt illuminating many dark pages and obscure subjects. That is the purpose of this book. We do not come to expound a new philosophy, but to present the outlines of a great, age-old teaching that will clarify the teachings of others and serve as a Great Reconciler of differing theories and opposing doctrines.

Chapter 15

Hermetic Axioms

"Possessing Knowledge without expressing it in Action is like hoarding precious metals—a vain and foolish thing. Knowledge, like wealth, is meant to be used. The Law of Use is universal, and anyone who violates it suffers because of their conflict with the forces of nature."—The Kybalion.

Although the Hermetic Teachings have always been kept securely locked in the minds of their fortunate possessors, for reasons we have already explained, they were never meant merely to be stored away and hidden. The Teachings emphasize the Law of Use, as you can see from the forceful statement in the quotation above from The Kybalion. Knowledge without use and expression is vain, bringing no benefit either to its possessor or to humanity. Beware of mental miserliness, and put what you have learned into action. Study the Axioms and Aphorisms, but practice them too.

> We give below some of the most important Hermetic axioms from The Kybalion, with a few comments on each. Make them your own, and practice and use them, for they are not really yours until you have used them.
>
> "To change your mood or mental state—change your vibration."—The Kybalion.

You can change your mental vibrations through an effort of Will by deliberately fixing your Attention on a more desirable state. Will directs Attention, and Attention changes Vibration. Cultivate the Art of Attention through Will, and you will have discovered the secret of mastering moods and mental states.

"To destroy an undesirable rate of mental vibration, put the principle of Polarity into operation and concentrate on the opposite pole from the one you want to suppress. Eliminate the undesirable by changing its polarity."—The Kybalion.

This is one of the most important Hermetic formulas. It is based on sound scientific principles. We have shown you that a mental state and its opposite are simply the two poles of one thing, and that Mental Transmutation can reverse their polarity. Modern psychologists know this principle and apply it to breaking undesirable habits by having their students concentrate on the opposite quality. If you are overcome by Fear, do not waste time trying to "eliminate" it. Instead, cultivate Courage, and Fear will disappear. Some writers have expressed this idea very effectively through the image of a dark room. You do not have to shovel out or sweep away the Darkness. Simply open the shutters and let in the Light, and the Darkness disappears. To eliminate a Negative quality, concentrate on the Positive Pole of that same quality. The vibrations will gradually change from Negative to Positive until you become polarized on the Positive pole rather than the Negative. The reverse is also true, as many have learned to their sorrow when they have let themselves vibrate too constantly on the Negative pole of things. By changing your polarity, you can master your moods, change your mental states, reshape your disposition, and build character. Much of the advanced Hermetists' Mental Mastery comes from applying Polarity, one of the important aspects of Mental Transmutation. Remember the Hermetic Axiom quoted earlier, which says:

"Mind (like metals and elements) can be changed from state to state, degree to degree, condition to condition, pole to pole, and vibration to vibration."—The Kybalion.

Mastering Polarization means mastering the fundamental principles of Mental Transmutation, or Mental Alchemy. Unless you learn the art of changing your own polarity, you cannot affect your environment. Understanding this principle will enable you to change your own polarity, as well as that of others,

if you devote the time, care, study, and practice needed to master the art. The principle is sound, but the results depend on the student's persistent patience and practice.

"Rhythm can be neutralized by applying the Art of Polarization."—The Kybalion.

As we have explained in earlier chapters, the Hermetists hold that the Principle of Rhythm manifests on the Mental Plane as well as on the Physical Plane. They say that the bewildering succession of moods, feelings, emotions, and other mental states results from the mental pendulum's backward and forward swing, which carries us from one emotional extreme to the other. The Hermetists also teach that the Law of Neutralization enables a person, to a great extent, to overcome Rhythm's operation in consciousness. As we have explained, there is a Higher Plane of Consciousness as well as the ordinary Lower Plane. By mentally rising to the Higher Plane, the Master causes the mental pendulum's swing to manifest on the Lower Plane. Dwelling on the Higher Plane, the Master escapes awareness of the backward swing. This is achieved by polarizing on the Higher Self and thus raising the Ego's mental vibrations above those of the ordinary plane of consciousness. It is like rising above something and letting it pass beneath you. The advanced Hermetist polarizes at the Positive Pole of his Being—the "I Am" pole, rather than the pole of personality—and, by "refusing" and "denying" Rhythm's operation, rises above its plane of consciousness. Standing firm in his Statement of Being, he lets the pendulum swing back on the Lower Plane without changing his polarity. Anyone who has achieved any degree of self-mastery does this, whether or not they understand the law. Such people simply "refuse" to let the pendulum of mood and emotion swing them back, and by steadfastly affirming their superiority, remain polarized at the Positive pole. The Master, of course, achieves a much greater degree of proficiency, because he understands the law he is overcoming with a higher law. By using his Will, he attains a degree of Poise and Mental Steadfastness almost impossible for those who let themselves be swung backward and forward by the mental pendulum of moods and feelings to believe.

Always remember, however, that you do not actually destroy the Principle of Rhythm, because it is indestructible. You simply overcome one law by counterbalancing it with another, and so maintain equilibrium. The laws of balance and counterbalance operate on the mental as well as the physical planes. Understanding these laws enables a person to seem to overthrow laws, when in fact they are merely exerting a counterbalance.

"Nothing escapes the Principle of Cause and Effect, but there are many Planes of Causation, and one can use the laws of the higher planes to overcome the laws of the lower."—The Kybalion.

By understanding how to practice Polarization, the Hermetists rise to a higher plane of Causation and thus counterbalance the laws of the lower planes of Causation. By rising above the plane of ordinary Causes, they themselves become, to some degree, Causes instead of merely being Caused. Because they can master their own moods and feelings, and neutralize Rhythm, as we have already explained, they can escape much of the operation of Cause and Effect on the ordinary plane. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to their environment; to the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; to the effects of inherited tendencies; to the suggestions of those around them; and to other external causes. These forces move them about on the chessboard of life like mere pawns. By rising above these influences, the advanced Hermetists seek a higher plane of mental action. By dominating their moods, emotions, impulses, and feelings, they create new characters, qualities, and powers for themselves, enabling them to overcome their ordinary environment and become, in effect, players rather than mere Pawns. Such people help play the game of life with understanding instead of being moved this way and that by stronger influences, powers, and wills. They use the Principle of Cause and Effect instead of being used by it. Of course, even the highest are subject to the Principle as it manifests on the higher planes, but on the lower planes of activity, they are Masters rather than Slaves. As The Kybalion says:

"The wise serve on the higher planes but rule on the lower. They obey the laws that come from above them, but on their own

plane and those below them, they rule and give orders. Yet in doing so, they form part of the Principle instead of opposing it. The wise person falls in with the Law and, by understanding its movements, operates it instead of being its blind slave. A skilled swimmer turns this way and that, going and coming as he pleases, rather than being like a log carried here and there. So the wise person is compared with the ordinary person, and yet both the swimmer and the log, the wise and the foolish, are subject to Law. Whoever understands this is well on the road to Mastery."—The Kybalion.

To conclude, let us call your attention once again to the Hermetic Axiom:

"True Hermetic Transmutation is a Mental Art."—The Kybalion.

In this axiom, the Hermetists teach that the great work of influencing one's environment is accomplished through Mental Power. Since the Universe is wholly mental, it follows that it can be ruled only by Mentality. This truth explains all the phenomena and manifestations of the various mental powers that are attracting so much attention and study in these early years of the twentieth century. Beneath and behind the teachings of the various cults and schools, the Principle of the Mental Substance of the Universe remains constant. If the Universe is mental in its essential nature, then Mental Transmutation must change the Universe's conditions and phenomena. If the Universe is Mental, then Mind must be the highest power affecting its phenomena. Once this is understood, all the so-called "miracles" and "wonder-workings" are plainly seen for what they are.

"The All is Mind; the Universe is Mental."—The Kybalion.

THE END

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