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STUDIES IN THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY

VI

THE closely related subjects of Rounds and Races, being not readily subject to statistical tabulation, are fraught with difficulty for the materialistic mind. Since details would but further confuse, only general principles are outlined. The Teachers evidently purpose to engender more of *feeling* in regard to evolutionary processes than to encourage attempts at intellectual calculation. The futility of the latter is indicated in this admonition, one among the many to be found in Theosophical writings: "the world we are in is properly considered in a metaphysical sense and not as a mere mechanism that can be explained on mechanical principles." However, underlying mathematical exactitude is indicated and enough of the mechanics shown to portray design and innate order prevailing. Metaphysical consideration could scarcely mean vagueness, nor search for the weird and strange. It would, rather, mean to see the world as a living community, whose processes express the intelligence of beings engaged in a great enterprise. It would mean, as well, to hold effort to understand the meaning and purpose of this enterprise a paramount duty. Grasp of technique might be found to increase with perception of the vital issues involved.

These abstruse subjects do but limn human history upon this earth. Therefore the much advocated method of analogy and correspondence should yield many parallels between familiar things and the progress of planetary unfoldment. In this connection, Mr. Judge's use of the word "army", in chapter three, is suggestive. All the particulars set forth regarding Rounds and Races are marked by military precision. Rank, too, has important bearing; and definite sequence holds throughout. Just as any important undertaking is launched and directed by mature and responsible persons; so the most intelligent beings from the prior evolution came first, to establish the foundations of the new world-home. These first classes represent the vanguard of the on-coming army. They laid down the cycles and traced the lines of the long seven-staged march to follow. After "a long evolution" on Globe A, the first arrivals took up their work on the next Globe. When evacuation of Globe A began, the next class started to stream into it, "coming like an army or river". Then when the vanguard advanced upon C, the second-rank regiment started its march to B, leaving Globe A to the next contingency. This same method and sequence of arrival and procedure held rigidly for all seven grades from the prior world, "the whole army proceeding with regularity round the septenary route". In the grand-total of Earth's existence, this entire major movement must be repeated *seven* times. Over three and a half circlings have already been accomplished and the whole "stream or army from the old Moon Chain" has now arrived. Like the muster-roll of any other military body, the number of evolutionary combatants is limited, although "the actual number is enormous". Also, the possible extent of this planetary campaign is restricted; for "in any particular portion of

Cosmos in which manifestation and evolution have begun there is a limit to the extent of manifestation."

Every campaign has an objective. That of Earth's host might be called the conquest of matter; for it represents the battle of spiritual power against inertia, of knowledge against ignorance. Each onward step involves struggle. First the specific Primordial Substance, the military base, must be differentiated from the One Infinite Substance; then this Mother-Substance must be energized into manifestation of the four planes, through which the sevenfold route is to be traced and its scale within scale of septenary modifications induced. Reference is made to the seven chief stages of the whole as the "seven greater states of consciousness which have been called globes". This shows the real gradation to be that of intelligence, to which matter responds. In this response the necessary vestures, or instruments for action, on each plane, are formed.

"The Round is circling of the seven centres of planetary consciousness". Each Round begins in ethereal matter and, from this, proceeds in increasingly dense substance until the most concrete possible for that cycle; thence continues its course in increasingly rarified matter, culminating in the original, tenuous substance from which it started -- on a higher level, due to the experience gained. Thus the first half of each Round is a gradual descent into materiality; the last half, re-ascent to spirituality. The first three and one-half Rounds are increasingly dense at their lowest point; the last three, increasingly etherealized. Being half through our present planetary evolution, we are now upon our upward way. Yet, constantly, it should be remembered that all this is not a *going* anywhere, but is change of consciousness, increase of knowledge. These states, while not in consubstantiality, are in coadunition; where one Globe is, there are all the rest. Each phase of these interpenetrating substances presents a field of experience; yet the very existence of such a field is the result of mind's conquest over matter. The march through the seven Globes, due to progressive change of the focus of consciousness, unerringly follows the inherent order of sequence. To this, the highest mind must bow.

Real evolution is of the Soul; yet the battlefield where it must wage its warfare for freedom is *material*. Each conditioning of substance must be fully entered into before it can be conquered and used for the Soul's purposes. Hence, many and great are the hazards of war. The weapons used by the ranks of matter are the insidious, lethal influences of its three qualities, which ever tend to ensnare intelligence and hold it in bondage. The self-conscious warrior has to contend with these invisible foes both for himself and for his lesser brothers, the lives not yet self-aware -- raw troops in training for far-future planetary campaigns. These are, of necessity, imprisoned at the stage of final condensation and precipitation. Their response to Man's stimulus, known as "natural impulse", enables them to burst their prison walls of mineral matter and gradually emerge into the vegetable and animal kingdoms; the vast gulf between the animal and the human kingdom must then be overpassed, with humanity's assistance by its own "self-induced and self-devised efforts" to attain the state of divinity. But, since "the middle of the Fourth Round" -- our present stage -- "no more Monads emerge into the human stage and will not until a new planetary mass, reincarnated from ours, is made."

The stimulating and directing of the lives in the lower kingdoms is, in part, from Man's mere presence, but principally through direct contact by incorporation in his body. The service is mutual; for the officials and soldiery could not function without uniforms. In the vast cycle from the mountain-tops of Spirit, through the dark valley of physical existence, back to the heights again, many kinds of embodiment are required, of many grades of material, from finest vesture to accoutrement of gross flesh. Each Globe contributes one primary form. Hence seven such are developed in each Round, forty-nine in the seven Rounds. But these forty-nine modifications of the race-body fall into seven main groups -- the Seven Great Races, extended developments from the Seven Races of the Moon.

Why this eternal struggle? Because, although each being is a Center of the One Life-Essence, this could never be known without self-conscious expression. Otherwise, the essential, eternal being would remain static, existing only potentially -- a Center of Power to be, to evolve, and to know, without beinghood, unfoldment, or knowledge that *It is*. Self-hood being infinite, evolution is eternal, and realization has no ultimate results. All temporary limitations are transcended, only to emerge into others. One Race produces another; one Round cycles into another; one world is succeeded by another. And all as gradually as the merging of light and darkness. There are no forced marches in nature's campaigns.

In the planetary mahabharata, the battle ebbs and flows under the law of periodicity in action and rest in ceaseless repetition until this Day shall end, when "the world disappears as a tangible thing, and so far as the human ear is concerned there is silence". Then this "Chain or mass of globes", having died, its army of lives will sometime "give birth to still another series", there to resume its warfare in the cause of truth.

This is a Holy War, wherein the gain is for both conqueror and vanquished. In it, no battle need be lost; for in every field there stand the Master-Generals, conquerors in far-former evolutions. Theosophy is their manual of war, placed in the hands of each who would fight for the upliftment of all nature.

COMPILER'S NOTE: The following is a separate item which followed the above article but was on the same page. I felt it was useful to include it here:

SELF-DEVISED EXERTIONS

A Dhyana Chohan has to become one; he cannot be born or appear suddenly on the plane of life as a full-blown angel. The Celestial Hierarchy of the present Manvantara will find itself transferred in the next cycle of life into higher, superior worlds, and will make room for a new hierarchy, composed of the elect ones of our mankind. Being is an endless cycle within the one absolute eternity, wherein move numberless inner cycles finite and conditioned. Gods, created as such, would evince no personal merit in being gods. Such a class of beings, perfect only by virtue of the special immaculate nature inherent in them, in the face of suffering and struggling humanity, and even of the lower creation, would be the symbol of

an eternal injustice quite Satanic in character, an ever present crime. It is an anomaly and an impossibility in Nature. --S.D. I, pp. 221-22.

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