

# The Doctrine of Cycles

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*Theosophical Manuals Series*

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## Contents

### Section 1

Chapter 1: [Introduction](#)

Chapter 2: [Man and Nature Allied in Cyclic Progress](#)

Chapter 3: [Progressive Rounds and Races](#)

Chapter 4: [Man's Body a Vast Sounding Board](#)

### Section 2

Chapter 5: [Cycles Imprinted on the Earth](#)

Chapter 6: [Recurring Civilizations and Archaeology](#)

Chapter 7: [Language Cycles](#)

Chapter 8: [Spiral Pathways among the Stars](#)

Chapter 9: [Conclusion](#)

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## Introduction

The doctrine of cycles is a most important, fascinating, and illuminating subject as it is presented in theosophical teachings. In studying it, we find that here is a logical and comprehensive law which not only bears an intimate relation to our daily lives,

but also has a universal range of operation. It not only concerns the details of our whole life, but it applies to everything and to every being in the universe. In short, the law of cyclic recurrences proves to be the principle or regulator for timing the events and operations of everything, visible and invisible, in mind and in matter, in time and in space. We find in it, at last, a reason why things happen when they do. The ancients well understood the vast sweep of the natural law of periodicity, and they included it in the cosmic scheme of unity when they said: "as it is above, so it is below." H. P. Blavatsky pointed out that it taught

the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe. — *The Secret Doctrine*  
1:17

Cycles are so common that we take them for granted as much as we do the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the solid earth under our feet. We cannot imagine what our world would be like without the familiar repetition of light and darkness every twenty-four hours, of the year's regular seasons — these things that keep pace with the planet's daily rotation and its yearly course around the sun. We, too, follow the same rhythmic course of action, going to sleep at night and awakening next morning for another turn of activity. Likewise, on a larger scale, we round out a lifetime. We begin with the misty dawn of infancy which, merging into childhood's awakening, expands into youth's bright morning, and so on to the noonday meridian of mature years. Next comes the turn on the arc of that one life, and we gradually

slow down, to sink to rest with the lengthening shadows of old age. But the pulsations of the spiritual self deep within us never cease, whether we are imbodied here or are freed from earth. When death releases us from the body, then a new cycle of rebirth begins in the soul's homeland.

After death, our better self awakens in higher realms of being where it is infilled with beautiful visions and blissful, refreshing rest that give strength and courage for another term of earth-life lessons. Thus we come back, again and again, with a newborn infant's fresh body and brain, ready for another round in working out our splendid destiny. Meantime, our uncounted lives are like small epicycles on the majestic arc of the solar system's lifetime. Thus, likewise, do countless universes come into being. After their vast cosmic sweep of a manifested life period reaches its apex, the movement is set toward the end of that wheeling. Finally, the imbodiment of the whole universe dissolves in the ocean of space for a cosmic rest wherein all prepare for another grander round of manifesting life. "As it is below, so it is above."

In the passing moments we see the time-atoms, so to say, the revolving units of time measure. Their rhythmic recurrences are like pulsations of time flowing steadily during the life period of a universe with all its interrelated wheels within wheels of time, space, and consciousness. The human pilgrim is a spark of the divine flame, descending through all realms of matter, to reascend through a perfected humanhood to godhood, cycling back to Divinity.

A cycle means a ring or turning. It is not a closed ring, but a continuous rounding course, expanding and advancing, so that the path of its previous round is covered with a broader sweep of progress. The form of a cycle is somewhat like a circular stairway whereon, in going up or down, we are always above or below the

level of the preceding step, or of the several steps that are covered in one round. Another form of a cycle's course is seen in the way the thread of a screw winds around and up from its small starting point. A typical example of cyclic growth is found in the expanding curves of the chambered nautilus, and even in the shape of the common snail shell. A craftsman will find suggestive lines in a spiral spring, or will see a more perfect symbol in the progressive curves of a helix spring.

However, no symbolic form can begin to picture the intricate movement and complex character of the countless wheels within wheels of time, of conditions, and of conscious unfolding life, that are always operating together. Universal motion follows a spiral course upon all planes of being, physical and superphysical. The same evolutionary pathway is continued through the material, mental, and spiritual realms. Does not the run of everyday life show the interplay of the activity of the human body, mind and spirit?

The greater cycles include numerous lesser ones of various sizes, characters, and interacting influences, as we shall see. There is nothing haphazard in all this, because everything moves with the coordinate precision of intelligent guidance. We are in a universe of natural law and order. We know that nature does not move by disorderly and causeless leaps and bounds. The child does not grow up in a day, nor does winter change to summer overnight. Each thing and each event plays its part in some greater round, by proceeding along its own course which is karmically adjusted to the whole.

The general overlapping and intermingling of cycles stands out clearly in the history of the great root-races. Here, as elsewhere, the rule holds good. The close of one great racial cycle merges into the beginning of a new racial career; and this change occurs

at the climax or greatest round of activity of a third race's period of existence. Thus, the later egos of the disappearing third root-race mingled with the few forerunners of the fifth root-race at the middle period of the fourth root-race. It is all as natural as the familiar overlapping changes and events of daily life. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow all run along in a continued story. Our own sense of our identity, at its full in the present, is also the meeting point of a receding past self, and of an oncoming future selfhood.

As the racial cycles will be discussed later, we have a more familiar example of overlapping and intermingling spheres of influence here and now. The periodic recurrence of karmic conditions from past lives explains much of the puzzling state of our world's conditions. While our modern civilization has reached a certain climax of a brilliant intellectual and materialistic evolution, the old order of things generally, in government, science, religion, business, etc., is passing away. The struggles of the outgoing cycle mingle with the birth-pangs of a new one which will open the way for a saner and better balanced progress. Those who are wise may read an open challenge in the signs of the times. There is danger in holding back and clinging to the outgrown standards of individual and collective life. Those who invoke the finer forces of their own nature will go forward, sharing in the mighty urge of the current of universal life flowing onward through everything and every creature.

In many ways, present conditions seem like repetitions of those which prevailed in the heyday of Roman power and knowledge, preceding the decline and fall of the empire. There is the same lack of that equalizing spiritual growth which is essential for the natural balance of great mental and material gains. Evidently, we have also reached the safe limits in our control of the forces of mind and matter. These forces, neutral in themselves, are potent for good or evil. Used for the benefit of humanity, they work for

the welfare of all; used selfishly, they react in disintegration and destruction. We need not repeat the mistakes of the past. The time has come for humanity to become more wholly human by bringing forth the finer and nobler qualities and powers from within its own nature.

Without question, the present time is a critical one. But if we face the responsibility of it, open-eyed and honestly, it is seen as a time of unusual opportunity. Human beings are essentially spiritual beings who *can* control the energies which their selfishness operates for their own undoing. We can transfer the same power into vitalizing a better and more timely order of world affairs. For a new cycle of inner light and peace and progress is already dawning behind the obscuring storm clouds which darken the outlook.

The Masters of wisdom foresaw the present chaotic world conditions, basing their knowledge on, and timing their work with, the law of cycles. They sent their messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, to prepare people for the inevitable confusion of a transition period. She founded the Theosophical Society through which to bring back to us the forgotten truth of our divine birthright which unites all in a universal brotherhood. In the light of mankind's common origin, mutual interests, and final destiny, it is time to leave childish things behind, and to go forward with the new cycle, working with the great scheme.

While the twentieth century has been speeding up its pace, astronomers tell us that our planetary home — the "good earth" — is also entering into a new region on its journey through space. Mother Earth is bringing us where the influence of Aquarius reigns in that twelve-spoked wheel called the zodiac. In fact, everything is moving on a conical, spiral pathway onward. That is why it is impossible for anything, however tiny or however vast

its pathway may be, to return into itself like a closed ring. Think of our moon in its monthly pathway around the earth, which, in its turn, is moving along its yearly cycle around the glorious sun whose orbit encircles a greater center of a galaxy that is wheeling its majestic way through illimitable space. Every heavenly body is following the broader sweep of some other progressing center. In this eternal motion of a divine mechanism, there are endless wheels within wheels within wheels, all moving with a universal plan of purpose. The picture is too vast for the mind to grasp it. But it is evident that at any point reached by a celestial sphere, its orbit is somewhat further along in the cosmos than it was on its preceding round. "End there is none, nor was there beginning."

It is a stimulating and liberating thought that we are all journeying through the universe in such good company, for every planet and sun and star is the body or dwelling of some bright celestial being. "A friendly universe" is no mere figure of speech, but is literal truth. The whole scheme of things is so perfect, so just, and so natural, that the only question is: How could it be otherwise?

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Man and Nature Allied in Cyclic Progress**

There is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical. — *The Secret Doctrine*  
1:640

Nature repeats herself everywhere. She follows grooves of action that have already been made; she follows the line of least resistance in all cases and everywhere. And it is upon this repetitive action of our Great Mother — universal nature — that is founded the law of cycles, which is the enacting of things that have been before, although each

such repetition, as said, is at each new manifestation on a higher plane and with a larger sweep or field of action. — *Man in Evolution*, chapter 13

Nature moves like a great wheel, ever turning round and round, so that as it goes forward in time and space, each of its spokes takes its regular turn in moving upward, forward, downward and backward. As the whole wheel of the universe rolls onward, every atom of it gains ground and experience, and also adds its impulse to the common urge forward. This evolutionary urge in mankind is naturally quickened, in greater or less degree, by mind and self-consciousness. Thus we are able to help things below us, as we in turn are helped by wiser, greater beings.

At first thought, this sweeping picture of progress may seem too vague and unfamiliar to interest or concern us, even if we could understand it. Of course, the details of our universe are beyond human comprehension. Nevertheless, the law of cycles is so evident in its universal operation that it proves the *unity of man and nature*, both evolving with a common purpose. The evidence of an ever recurring movement stands out clearly in the flow of everyday affairs. We have only to recognize the cyclic law operating before our eyes, to understand how it works likewise in vast horizons beyond our vision. Does not the periodical recurrence of night and day — a time for sleeping and waking — prove itself? This familiar example, so simple to us, involves the working of the whole earth turning once — an enormous move which is timed to the minute. It goes without saying that no one could begin to understand how that one turn of the earth affected everything upon it. Of all the lands and waters, plants, beasts, and men, nothing is *exactly* the same as it was on the previous morning. The point is, that *all moved together*, each of the countless things moving in its own cycle of experience within that one turning of the earth wheel. By analogy, we may grasp the



idea that this working of the universal rule of spiral pathways is as simple and as comprehensive as the child's A B C's and the multiplication table. The same letters learned in the primer are used by wise men to spell out the profoundest truths; while the digits we use in petty personal accounts work accurately in enormous mathematical calculations.

Today science is moving with the new cycle, in careful studies of the recurring conditions, not only in the various departments of nature forces and phenomena, but likewise in the course of human affairs. Science is becoming keenly conscious of the close relation of all its researches to everyday life and to the present and future welfare of mankind. Furthermore, there is a growing move to verify the findings of a periodicity in one field of study by comparison with the reported evidence of cycles in other lines of investigation. The deeper these researches go, the more clearly there is revealed an underlying *unity of man and nature*. For instance, those strange sunspots are being studied in relation to the weather, growth of vegetation, wars, business fluctuations, radio reception, etc., etc.

Periodicity is being observed and recorded in the occurrence of floods, droughts, famines, diseases, calamities, magnetic storms, auroras, earthquakes; also in the appearance of great men, and in eras of advances and recessions in the arts and sciences; in the rise and fall of nations and of whole civilizations; in the change of continental coastlines and mountains slowly rising or sinking; in ice ages that came and went, leaving evidence of past eras of tropical climates in high latitudes; in the seasonal habits of animals, and what not. This scientific interest is echoed by the popular press. This opens the way for more knowledge of the ancient law of cycles which is the natural key-motion everywhere.

No scientific training is needed, or even much imagination, to see that recurring changes in the earth itself are inevitably reflected upon the life of its inhabitants. This fact comes home to us as being interesting enough. And the evidence that humanity and nature are interrelated, and are evolving under the same law, is as simple as it is comprehensive. The working of the periodic law may be followed either way, from small to large issues and vice versa.

Consider the recurrent "events" of time, of matter, and of conscious life. First, take the revolving atoms making the molecules which, united in cells, form the organs making the whole human body which lasts a lifetime; at death, the atoms disperse, revolve through other forms of earth matter, and when the individual is due to begin another round of incarnation, they come together to help build his new body. Next, take the conscious life-spark — the inner self — evolving through the unfolding body of the embryo, the infant, the child, the youth, the adult, then leaving the aged body, and passing from life here to begin a cycle of existence in ethereal realms. Meantime, the passing moments have become hours, days, weeks, years, which, in turn, go on to become centuries, solar lifetimes, complete rounds of a universe, and so on.

These minute cycles of the "atoms" of time, of conscious, unfolding life, and of matter, are the working in the small of what is summed up scientifically as time-space continuum. From this unity at the summit of a universal circuit, the units begin to separate and to cycle down the progressive series of levels to the place of minutest rounds. Considered in the large or in the small, all follow the one plan of progress: matter becomes more perfect material; small time cycles become vast periods; and re embodying man brings forth more of his real, his immortal self. A living force circulating everywhere vitalizes everything into "becoming" more

of itself.

It is the one life itself which is ever coming and going in all the different forms of substances. It is destined to an endless round of creation, preservation, and destruction *of its forms*. In recognizing this fact, some deep thinkers have summed up the secrets of nature as motion. To this, theosophy adds that this universal movement is responsive to the *rhythm of a cosmic heartbeat*. Each entity's response to this vital central impulse is its own key number of pulsations. Some rate of vibration is present in all the inner and outer spheres of life above, below, around, and within us. Science defines the subtle forces of x-rays, infrared and ultraviolet light, radio waves, etc., in the special vibratory rates of each. We all know that the different vibratory rates of light waves take the form of prismatic colors, and that we hear a series of sound waves in the musical scale. Do not we ourselves have an individual rate of vibration which is variously in tune or out of tune with conditions and people around us?

There is cosmic intelligence back of a sublime purpose which keys human destiny with that of universal Mother Nature. The wise ancients understood this mystic truth, both in its simple and in its expanded meanings. They saw a universal law working in everything and in every creature. A living test of its reality was spread abroad for all who had eyes to see — as it still is. It was taught of old that, because man was an inseparable part of the universe, he was involved in, and concerned with, all natural processes. This knowledge of "things as they are" freed man from the dread of death, and from all fear of a hereafter of suffering, or of final oblivion. He had no fear of the Unknown while feeling his oneness with the sun and stars, as well as with the whole unfolding panorama of his earth home. That untroubled time was in the Golden Age when the world was young. Now it sounds like a fairy story. Well, the fairy stories and legends that our children

love are based upon realities that surrounded our racial childhood. If those ideals had never been real to us, how could we respond to them as we do at heart, and thus keep them alive from age to age in myth and legend?

A few of our most intuitive philosophers and scientists are beginning to realize that there must be a unity, even a conscious oneness, underlying all things. This recognition of natural truth was anticipated in the theosophical teachings in the nineteenth century. Then H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* repeated the forgotten story of the origin and destiny of mankind, of the planet, and of the universe. She came because the time was ripe for us to regain something of our forgotten birthright of the larger truth. In this period — our Iron Age — we have lost sight of a wonderful heritage from a far-off past. *We have become divorced from nature.* This has stunted our finer growth, and has blurred our outlook on all life. Mentally, we have withdrawn from our place as the beings who were to play the human part in this planetary drama. We seemingly stand apart from nonhuman things, regarding them as somehow alien, if not often hostile to us. Yet everything below us on the ladder of life is on its way to become human, just as we will outgrow the human stage, finally, and will reach the level of the men-gods who preceded us. All are moving together, on some round of a grand spiral pathway. All share in a common welfare, so that everything is helped by moving in unison with the whole. It is a friendly universe at heart.

It was in the primeval plan that, at first, mankind and its earth-home were cared for by divine instructors. It was a spiritual parentage starting everything aright for infant humanity. Then, when human beings became self-conscious, and had knowledge of good and evil, they were made morally responsible for the way they affected their good home. They were given charge of all,

because only in them were the fires of mind lighted, giving them insight and reason. Their bodies were made of the same stuff as that of Mother Earth which was always to feed, clothe, and shelter them. Also, the electromagnetic and other nature forces operated in them, and put them in touch on inner lines with all around him.

Nature's work was to upbuild every form of use and beauty needed to embody the invisible current of life cycling through all the kingdoms. Gradually, earth's primeval forces and materials operated to condense and bring out the ethereal model forms which were ideals provided from higher creative levels. These astral models of everything were — as they still are — links between the mental and the material planes, and caused reactions between the two realms. Thus, the material of earth was subtly affected by the potent energies of conscious human thought and will and feeling.

From the first, because of mankind's intimate relation to, and its dominion over, the subhuman kingdoms, nature, perforce, has reacted to the influence and the quality of its stewardship. Thus, its early childlike state was reflected in a happy Garden of Eden atmosphere. Later, when human beings gave rein to selfish thoughts and passions, the air around them was charged with the disordered forces of storms, disease, and enmity. The reality of this forgotten kinship between the human master and the subhuman kingdoms stands out in the history of the enormous cycles of the rounds and races on successive continents. Our recorded history also has its suitably timed examples. Was it not human unsanitary dealings with the materials embodied in them and those of their surroundings, which reacted in the mediaeval plagues? Does not the present increase of mental and nervous diseases show the typical reaction of highly-organized brain and nervous tissues to the exhausting tension of modern life? Are not

today's upheavals in world politics, etc., reflected in unusually disturbed nature forces?

Each new root-race began with a freshened earth, a favorable climate, peace among men and between them and the beasts. When a race, *en masse*, grew selfish, harsh, and warring, the climate became austere, fertile lands became deserts, and beasts turned hostile. Each root-race, in serial order descending into material life, imprinted its own quality upon the earth. The dominant quality of the first root-race was that of the Golden Age; the second that of the Silver Age; the third that of the Bronze Age; and the fourth that of the Iron Age; but each individual root-race evolved through the entire series of four periods.

Scientific students of the striking climatic and geologic changes of past eras, naturally regard them as the factors which compelled man to move with them. The larger truth, however, is that whether the change was on an upward or a downward cycle, the people affected were reaping what they had sowed in their relations with each other and with nature. The record might go back many lives. The karmic law which used natural forces of earth to start the period that was due for more or for less favorable conditions, also led men to when and where they belonged. The egos were born in fitting time and place, whether with an advancing or a retreating Ice Age, or during geologic ups and downs. We are not helpless pawns of the elements. We are relatively free to mold things after our desires of mind and heart; and, broadly speaking, we make our world what it is. Thus, our creations, in karmically reflecting our general character, give us a *key to self-knowledge* which is also the *key to nature's secrets*.

H. P. Blavatsky struck a forgotten note of unity for our discordant times when she said:

Humanity is the child of cyclic Destiny, and not one of its

Units can escape its unconscious mission, or get rid of the burden of its co-operative work with Nature. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:446

Even when this splendid truth of our human part in a cosmic unity with all other things, is beyond the grasp of the brain-mind, it is not beyond the range of the intuition. The inner self remembers all that has gone before in its other lives. It is of this store of knowledge that glimpses are caught at times by the artist and poet. These glimpses are not mere flights of fancy. Rather, they are the nature lover's recognition that, veiled in forms other than human, there vibrates a permeating quality of kinship with something muted and unnamed within *himself*.

The poet longs for words that can tell others of his oneness with a reality pervading earth, sea, and sky. But it is beyond speech. It is an inner sense of unity only to be felt by the man-child vibrating with the Mother Nature with whom he has cycled down the ages on this earth. This love of nature is rooted in the hoary past — a spiritual memory of a primeval alliance.

However, most of us are neither poets nor mystics. Logical minds want matter-of-fact evidence that cycles are operating everywhere. Well, it turns out that when we begin to look around at familiar things, they speak for themselves of recurring periodicity. Take fluid things first: the ocean tides ebb and flow with clocklike regularity all around the earth, like a great breath; the waves break on the shore at about the rate that we breathe; this rhythm is fixed beyond human power to change it. The fresh waters moistening the earth, and taken up by the transpiring plants to become cloud and rain and snow, return upon their path to help the growing things that feed and clothe and shelter us — Mother Nature caring for us always. The plant juices flow up from their busy roots, to work with sunlight in perfecting growth

and, directly or in outer rounds, find their way back to earth. The life-sap of orchard trees keeps time with the season for an annual display of new leaves and flowers and fruit; and then it flows down to rest before another period of outgo. Only a unity of purpose could regulate the harmonious flow of these steady waves and annual tides of life. The grass blade no less than the giant tree has its own rate of pulsation. These everyday mysteries are so common that we overlook the wonder of them.

Even the lowly form of life in the common caterpillar soon completes its period of crawling. Then it builds a little cocoon retreat wherein it dissolves into a mere protoplasmic jelly. Out of this shapeless mass it takes on the form of a dainty butterfly, to begin an airy life-round, sipping nectar from flowers. Its eggs are timed to repeat this cycle of changing forms. This little thing's rhythmic course is as wonderful, in its own way, as that of the trade winds and the ocean currents which steadily follow their own pathways of blow and flow.

We take it for granted that the returning seasons will reel off the earth's picture of winter's cold merging into spring's awakening of things to ripen into summer's growth, and then the harvest home for the annual circuit of experience and progress.

Meantime, the large wheel of the earth itself has rolled around its orbit, regulated so as to pass the spring equinox with its exact fifty seconds' gain in time. This tiny fraction of time is the germ, so to say, of the Platonic great year, the cycle of 25,920 of our years. The natural course of minute wheels within mighty arcs, recalls the old Hermetic saying: "nothing is great, nothing is small in the divine economy." Astronomers tell of pulsating stars that dwarf our sun in size and splendor. All the celestial bodies are timed with the cosmic clock that regulates the revolving universe.

The so-called laws of nature are the rhythmic operation of



combined wills of great celestial beings working in harmony with the divine will and its ideal purpose. We are, literally, living cells in the organism of a great being, much as we are the overlord and the law for the trillions of cells that are evolving within our body. The same pattern and purpose is working out everywhere.

This invisible but intelligent direction, operating with such regularity in nature, explains what is not accounted for by blind chance or natural selection or active chemical combinations. For example, the encyclopedia speaks of the migratory flight of birds as the mystery of mysteries. The question is: How do these little creatures know when to start, or where to go? How can they survive to find their way across great distances without chance to stop for rest? Sometimes the young broods, even on their first trip, go apart by themselves on a separate route to the distant nesting grounds. To say that these bird cycles are timed by "instinct" does not explain so purposeful a thing. These unself-conscious creatures instinctively respond to an old impulse which was strongly impressed upon the species.

The idea that the Arctic region was the original home of the bird species that breed there, has been coupled with a pre-glacial period when the far north had a springtime climate. This theory refers to those advances and recessions of the last great Ice Ages which have left their mark upon the body of the earth. The evidence of radical changes is found in the fossils of plants and animals. Of course, human life naturally flowed back and forth with the movements of desolate ice sheets. Perhaps that strange lure of the great white north, felt by some Arctic explorers, is the stirring of an ancient memory of "home" when the race was young. As migrating birds follow an old habit of nature, something of an analogy lingers deep within some of us human "birds of passage." How many of us have felt that unreasoning lure to go back to the old homestead! Mature men and women,

absorbed in handling large affairs, sometimes have a sudden urge to leave everything and revisit a lowly birth-place. They long to be where their infancy awoke in a warm home-nest, and their childhood dawned in the tender light of parental love and care. Of course, if they go back, they find everything changed — as they have changed. Their mood passes; but for the time, it made the past seem more real than the present. Somehow, they were stirred by a vagrant breeze from an early turn in their present life cycle.

Another gesture of the subhuman creatures moving with the high tides of reproductive life currents is seen in the migration of some fishes and animals. The salmon that swim thousands of miles upstream, arrive at the spawning grounds thin and exhausted. They seem impelled to move with repetitive habits impressed upon the early species. They evidently retain the impress of a former habitat so old that, meantime, the earth has changed its contours.

A similar nature-puzzle is the migration of the Northern European lemming. At irregular intervals, multitudes of these small rodents swarm down the mountains into the lowlands in a straight course, devouring all vegetation in their path. Enormous numbers swim into the sea where they perish. This strange contradiction to the natural instinct of self-preservation is accounted for by H. P. Blavatsky who says:

Coming, as they do, from all parts of Norway, the powerful instinct which survives throughout ages as an inheritance from their progenitors impels them to seek a continent, once existing but now submerged beneath the ocean, and to court a watery grave. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:782

These sporadic gestures of animal life are hints of old roads to yesterdays marked on the body of the earth. Explorations of the

ocean floors have revealed many old submerged river valleys. Our own bodies likewise carry remnants of organs now useless; but they are biological evidence of wholly different states of human embodiment in early races. Nature's records all tell the consistent story of a wonderful past that, deep within us, is linked with the present, as islands are joined to the mainland under the seas.

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## Chapter 3

### Progressive Rounds and Races

Out of the ocean of time and forth from the ocean of life, goes the manifestation of the race of men unto Life and Light. Written it was of old, in the most ancient of books. But the understanding of it is concealed from the eye and the brain. — *From the Proem to the Popol Vuh* (Ancient America)

According to the ancient teachings regarding the evolution of humanity, there are seven root-races, of which we are in the fifth. Our root-race, as such, began about 1,000,000 years ago, and we are now about midway along the course of its wheeling. Each root-race is divided into seven subraces, which, again, are divided into family races of some 30,000 years' duration.

Each race and subrace passes through its own rounds of birth, active maturity, and decline. The same periods mark the course of the civilization of each subrace, as well as the continued divisions of mankind into different nations, states, communities, and family groups. Keeping pace with these different cycles of human experience, there is an increasing number of the manifesting forms and forces in the realms of nature, as the spiritual man descends into the matter of material life on earth.

This descent is called the shadowy arc of an evolutionary cycle. At the midpoint or lowest level of this circuit, the earth matter begins to refine, and the human egos start their progressive ascent of the upward arc toward a lofty state of spirituality. This is called a planetary manvantara, which includes the entire forty-nine rounds of the seven races of that humanity, and it marks the lifetime of the earth itself. The ancient Hindus called this planetary cycle a day of Brahma, a period of manifesting life of 4,320,000,000 years. This bare outline of a recurring cosmic time period shows the same rhythmic movement in the great wheel that runs throughout the whole earth-series of "events," even down to Shakespeare's "seven ages of man." This universal law of progress, working through alternating periods of activity and rest, points out a unity of purpose in all evolution. H. P. Blavatsky says of the relation of humanity to the earth:

it is a case of descent into matter, the adjustment — in both the mystic and the physical senses — of the two, and their interblending for the great coming "struggle of life" that awaits both the *entities*. "Entity" may be thought a strange term to use in the case of a globe; but the ancient philosophers, who saw in the earth a huge "animal," were wiser in their generation than our modern geologists are in theirs; and Pliny, who called the Earth our kind nurse and mother, the only element which is not inimical to man, spoke more truly than Watts, who fancied that he saw in her the footstool of God. For Earth is only the footstool of man in his ascension to higher regions; . . . — *The Secret Doctrine* 1:154

Our earth has to live through seven rounds.

During the first three, it forms and consolidates; during the fourth it settles and hardens; during the last three it

gradually returns to its first ethereal form: it is spiritualized, so to say.

Its Humanity develops fully only in the Fourth — our present Round. Up to this fourth Life-Cycle, it is referred to as "humanity" only for lack of a more appropriate term.

Like the grub which becomes chrysalis and butterfly, Man, or rather that which becomes man, passes through all the forms and kingdoms during the first Round and through all the human shapes during the two following Rounds.

Arrived on our Earth at the commencement of the Fourth in the present series of life-cycles and races, MAN is the first form that appears thereon, being preceded only by the mineral and vegetable kingdoms — even the latter *having to develop and continue its further evolution through man.*

— Ibid., 1:159

Though the Absolute from which universes come forth must ever remain the unknown for the finite mind, yet we can know somewhat of the periodical beginnings of manifestation in the case of mankind and the earth. That, naturally, is what concerns and interests us the most. The earth, then, is the reïmbodiment of the life-atoms, the forces, and the conscious entities which animated the planetary chain of the now dead moon. The life-waves of every kind, from minerals to man, left the moon chain of globes when the time came for its long interplanetary rest in space. This planet's sleeping period was not unlike our regular nightly habit of putting out the light and retiring into restful darkness.

When the cosmic clock struck at the dawn of another period of manifestation, the atoms and forces of mind and matter and spirit of the sleeping universe, all felt the urge to come together again for a new "day" of planetary life. As always, nature and mankind

work together for the grand new cycle. Just as the earth-to-be was at first "without form and void," so the earliest forms of humans-to-be were vague and ethereal. Then, when the inner self, cycling down through ever denser grades of substance, became clothed in a physical body, it was the earth that provided its "coats of skin." These physical "coats" are what we wear today, with the invisible astral model body within, cell for cell.

The material atoms that circulate through a human body take on something of its conscious quality, which they retain as they go forth with the outgoing cell. A pure and noble life thus squares the account with nature for the stream of atoms that unite to form the body. The plan in the universal mind is to teach everything to work together. The wise who have learned this, say:

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. — *The Voice of the Silence*

In keeping with the general plan, the earth is a sevenfold entity. Therefore, with its seven different gradations of substance and of character, the visible earth has six other globes which roll with it in space. These make up what is called the "earth chain" of globes. These correspond to the different states of human consciousness which is destined to function in our evolving sevenfold nature. Only our gross body is visible to us, because we are functioning on the solid fourth globe of the earth which our body represents. The globes interpenetrating each other, being "IN CO-ADUNITION *but not* IN CONSUBSTANTIALITY WITH OUR EARTH" (*The Secret Doctrine* 1:166).

This subject is best regarded in its metaphysical and spiritual aspect, which corresponds to the inner realm of our being. Does not the invisible world of thought and feeling interpenetrate the rounds of physical life? Also, in dreamland do we not see and

think and feel and act in a realm where time and space and gravity are all keyed to astral vibrations independent of known laws of physics? Again, in deep, dreamless sleep, and in the ecstatic visions of a saintly person, it is a spiritual world that is entered. Mankind is destined, eventually, to cycle consciously through all these "globes" adapted to the different states of its own composite nature. Then, at the end of the great planetary cycle, the perfected human being's horizon will consciously include all his previous rounds of experience.

The threefold evolutionary urge which manifests in mankind as physical, mental, and spiritual unfolding, comes from that divine-spiritual monadic influence or ray which is at the heart of every thing and creature. The stream or mass of human egos evolving on our planetary chain is limited, though the actual quantity is incalculable for us. These egos came from the moon chain as a "life wave" in successive streams. The first river of "lives" began on the first globe, A, and there went through seven long rounds of evolution in bodies suited to that globe's state of matter. As this stream passed on to globe B, or the second one, another "river" of less progressed egos began their course around A. In orderly sequence, all made the circuit of globes which are usually called for convenience A B C D E F and G.

Everything fits into its own time and place and conditions in the cosmic drama which each humanity enacts in its turn. Further details are given in *The Secret Doctrine*, and other standard theosophical literature. W. Q. Judge gives a thumbnail sketch in saying:

This journey went on for four cyclings round the whole, and then the whole stream or army of Egos from the old Moon Chain had arrived, and being complete, no more entered after the middle of the Fourth Round. The same

circling process of these differently arrived classes goes on for seven complete Rounds of the whole seven planetary centers of consciousness, and when the seven are ended as much perfection as is possible in the immense period occupied will have been attained, and then this chain or mass of "globes" will die in its turn to give birth to still another series.

Each one of the globes is used by evolutionary law for the development of seven races, and of senses, faculties and powers appropriate to that state of matter: the experience of the whole seven globes being needed to make a perfect development. Hence we have the Rounds and Races. The Round is a circling of the seven centers of planetary consciousness; the Race the racial development on one of those seven. There are seven races for each globe, but the total of forty-nine races only makes up seven great races, the special septenate of races on each globe or planetary center composing in reality one race of seven constituents or special peculiarities of function and power. — *The Ocean of Theosophy*

It is useless to attempt any account of the earlier conditions of mankind and the globe. The life and the matter of that time were wholly unlike anything we know of now. H. P. Blavatsky states that only when we come to consider our human race on our present fourth globe D, in our fourth round, do the conditions become fairly comprehensible to us.

A separate continent is described as being connected with the long career of each of the great root-races. The first continent has been called the Imperishable Sacred Land. This is geographically at the north pole, and is destined to last to the end of the planetary manvantara. Of this mysterious cradle of the first



humanity, very little is said.

The name chosen for the second continent was the Hyperborean. It was "the land which stretched out its promontories southward and westward from the North Pole to receive the Second Race, and comprised the whole of what is now known as Northern Asia." The oldest Greeks spoke of the Hyperboreans dwelling somewhere far north, and visited yearly by Apollo which, astronomically, was the sun, the god of light.

Lemuria was the immense third continent which "once reigned supreme over the Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans," and was the home of the third root-race. The Lemurians were the successors or progeny of the second root-race. They were the same embodying egos who had begun to cycle down into earth-matter together. They had spent vast periods of time in arriving at the stage where their gigantic astral bodies were becoming "physicalized" in forms which were progressively to consolidate and diminish in the evolutionary course which led to the present conditions of mankind. The continents were destroyed alternately by fire and water. Lemuria's fate came through volcanic fires, from a series of subterranean convulsions and the breaking asunder of the ocean floors. For surviving remnants of Lemuria we are referred to part of California, Australia with its aborigines and primitive fauna and flora, and to some of the islands "sown hither and thither on the face of the Pacific."

Atlantis is the fourth continent, historically recorded in the ancient traditions of all peoples. Its fate is told in the Bible story of Noah and the Flood. Plato's famous island of Atlantis was but the last fragment of it to be submerged.

The Fifth Continent was America; but, as it is situated at the Antipodes, it is Europe and Asia Minor, almost coeval with it, which are generally referred to by the Indo-Aryan

Occultists as the fifth. If their teaching followed the appearance of the Continents in their geological and geographical order, then this classification would have to be altered. But as the sequence of the Continents is made to follow the order of evolution of the Races, from the first to the fifth, our Aryan Root-race, Europe must be called the fifth great Continent. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:8

The great racial cycles overlapped, so that the history of the first two really human races, that is, the last of the Lemurians and the first of the future Atlanteans, is more or less blended. The early third root-race was androgynous, and "mindless" in the sense that its consciousness was more intuitional than mental and physical. But, as the ages of development passed by, the fires of mind were lighted by manasaputras, lofty beings from higher spheres. The sexes were separated; and the bodies acquired a bony framework, the astral body becoming the inner model body — the seat of the five senses today. These evolutionary changes explain the allegory of the "mental" sleep of Adam, preceding the "separation" of the *rib bone* which became Eve.

The later Lemurians were ruled over by divine dynasties, and these lofty rulers taught them the arts and sciences, so that they "knew astronomy, architecture and mathematics to perfection."

This primeval civilization did not, as one may think, immediately follow their physiological transformation. Between the final evolution and the first city built, many hundred thousands of years had passed. Yet, we find the Lemurians in their sixth subrace building their first rock-cities out of stone and lava. One of such great cities of primitive structure was built entirely of lava, some thirty miles west from where Easter Island now stretches its narrow piece of sterile ground, and was entirely destroyed

by a series of volcanic eruptions. — *The Secret Doctrine*  
2:317

As evidence of the knowledge and skill of these gigantic builders, *The Secret Doctrine* points to the cyclopean ruins and monuments scattered around the world. These archaeological exhibits not only testify to extraordinary strength and engineering skill in their builders, but hint at more knowledge of potent, invisible forces than modern man controls as yet. The further researches of archaeology, geology, ethnology and of nature's finer forces, will unite in confirming the ancient history of the human race, which is handed down in universal traditions.

It was the "Golden Age" in those days of old, the age when the "gods walked the earth, and mixed freely with the mortals." Since then, the gods departed (*i. e.*, became invisible), and later generations ended by worshipping their kingdoms — the Elements.

.....

Thus the first Atlantean races, born on the Lemurian Continent, separated from their earliest tribes into the righteous and the unrighteous; into those who worshipped the one unseen Spirit of Nature, the ray of which man feels within himself — or the Pantheists, and those who offered fanatical worship to the Spirits of the Earth, the dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance. These were the earliest *Gibborim*, "the mighty men of renown in those days" (*Gen. vi*); who become with the Fifth Race the *Kabirim*: Kabiri with the Egyptians and the Phoenicians, Titans with the Greeks, and Rakshasas and Daityas with the Indian races.

Such was the secret and mysterious origin of all the

subsequent and modern religions. . . . — *The Secret Doctrine*, 2:273-4

Here, in a word, is the explanation of how men *brought* evil into the world. When their eyes were opened by spiritual guides, they were gifted with the light of mind which gave them a knowledge of good and evil. Even in the third root-race, a number used their free will in choosing to follow the right-hand path of light. Some of their brothers turned and followed the left-hand path of shadows. These latter consistently misused their power and knowledge, life after life. They were the Lemuro-Atlanteans who "became tall with pride." They used their control over nature forces for selfish ambition and evil ends. They became a mighty race of sorcerers, ever at war with their righteous brothers. The conflict continued, age after age, as humanity descended into denser levels of matter, up to the middle of the Atlantean cycle. By that time the root-race had developed a brilliant civilization very largely of black magicians.

In the end, after minor submersions extending for several million years, the evildoers went down with the last watery cataclysm. Meantime, their wiser brothers had separated from them, and, under spiritual guides, had migrated to distant lands that escaped the deluge. From these migrants came the beginnings of the present fifth or so-called Aryan root-race, which includes virtually all the human beings living on earth today. The germ of our present root-race dates back to the middle of the Atlantean cycle. Likewise, the germ of the subrace of the sixth root-race is even now stirring among us.

The unfortunate evil Atlantean egos were self-doomed to pass ages of repeated incarnations suffering the effects of their past evildoings. Bereft by karma of the mental and spiritual gifts they had betrayed, many of them were reduced to abject ignorance

and degradation. On every hand, the united working of karma, reincarnation, and cycles points to the original purpose of bringing everything up to a balanced state of perfection. In the lower kingdoms, under nature's direction, things run more true to type than do men as the ideal of human possibilities. As a rule, our best traits and our worst ones are inconsistent with a balanced character. However, a day of reckoning is inevitable — the sooner the better for our own progress. How often men and women of ability and worth seem held to limited and distasteful conditions of life! Presumably, they are reviewing some unbalanced account from previous lives. W. Q. Judge explains that

in one life one may be in an advanced sub-race in accordance with predominating qualities, but in that incarnation may bring up certain defects or generate certain causes requiring him to pass over next life to some other less progressed sub-race for the purpose of extirpating the defects or working off of causes.

In this way accurate adjustment, perfect development, regularity and roundness are all amply provided for. —  
*The Path 7:257*

Would not the issues of such an experience be more easily, contentedly and rapidly worked out if one knew the meaning of the laws of his own being? Suppose we were aware that something within us which does know, will rest at nothing less than perfect work?

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## **Chapter 4**

### **Man's Body a Vast Sounding Board**

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,

which is in you? — 1 Cor. 6:19

Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds. Every key contains the potentiality of good or bad, of producing harmony or disharmony. This depends on the impulse given and the combinations produced; on the force of the touch of the artist at work, a "double-faced Unity," indeed.

— H. P. Blavatsky, *Lucifer* 7:181

Verily that body, so desecrated by Materialism and man himself, is the temple of the Holy Grail, the *Adytum* of the grandest, nay, of all, the mysteries of nature in our solar universe. That body is an AEolian harp, chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut.

— Ibid.

H. P. Blavatsky further explains how the body responds to the vital touch of its indwelling creator, the dual man. His *quality* of thought and feeling sets the harp's pure silver, or its animal strings, vibrating with the operations of his better or of his lower self. The imbodyed "artist" is playing continually on one or another set of strings, thereby arousing in them a habit of responsive vibrations. The influence of his habitual trend of playing, being registered upon the instrument, naturally reverberates back upon his mind and heart. Too often our body habits get the upper hand of our will to change them for our own good. There is practical wisdom in keeping the "heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," as Solomon advised.

Fortunately, nature, who supplies the material of our earth-body, has more to do with operating it than we understand or control. Our silent partner, nature, manages our wonderful body so well that we rather take it for granted that it runs itself. It is equipped

with two nervous systems. First, there is the cerebro-spinal nervous system which functions with the brain, the senses, and the voluntary activities. Its vibrations being associated with our human nature, they are not usually as orderly as the rhythmic operations of the second or sympathetic nervous system which nature controls. However, both systems being intimately connected, they constantly react upon each other, in reflecting the conscious, the sub-, and the super-conscious life-forces.

It is nature which keeps us going, before birth and afterwards, when we are asleep or awake, conscious or unconscious, sane or insane, sick or well, vigorous or paralyzed. Nature works through the automatic nervous system to bring us back to smooth running order when we are either mentally or physically disordered. All the physiological functions are rhythmic. Their activities are timed in accord with the natural pulsation of the cosmic heartbeat.

Medical researches show that in the functions of respiration, circulation, digestion, secretion, excretion, gestation, etc., each organ has its own rate of vibratory motion, its *recurring ebb and flow of vital purpose*. Tiny ciliated cells, as in the bronchial lining, move the moisture in an outgoing current by their own rate of waving their delicate hairlets back and forth. The heart repeats its cycle of systole, diastole, and rest about four times as fast as the tide of air rises and falls in the lungs. Yet both are timed together so that the blood is received, purified, and passed on its rounds. There is a wonderful balanced relation of all the organs' pulsations to each other, and to the whole body. The coordinate system of continuous cycles within us, in its orderly precision, is regulated like a solar system. To say the least, the body is a marvelous living mechanism of interacting wheels.

Mathematics, so exact in astronomical calculations, shows that

ratios of periodicity in the solar system are repeated in our body. Our organs pulsate in multiples of the solar heartbeat. For example, the sun is the heart of the solar system. At the beginning of the eleven-year sunspot period, there is something akin to contraction, and an outpouring of the sun's life force, similar to our circulation of life-blood. The solar vital currents reach the outermost limits of its system, to return progressively for another eleven-year round.

The sun has been vitalizing our humanity during the coming and going of its past four root-races. Each root-race in its turn evolved through a regular series of four periods of differing character and duration. Our present fifth root-race repeats this typical cyclic series. Its first period lasted 1,728,000 years; its second, 1,296,000 years; its third, 864,000 years; while the fourth period, our present age, will take 432,000 years — a total of 4,320,000 years. (Cf. *Occult Glossary* by G. de Purucker, "Yugas.") This sequence of the digits 4 3 2 turns out to be a key number in certain recurring rounds, "above and below." In popular language, the precession of the equinoxes is a gain, so to say, of approximately fifty seconds on the arc of 360 degrees which the sun completes in its yearly circuit in moving around among the constellations. This yearly fraction of one-seventy-second of a degree accumulates until it totals the complete arc of 360 degrees. The sun then has arrived at the same place among the constellations in a cycle of 25,920 years — the "Platonic year."

This cycle among the celestial bodies has its miniature copy in our own bodies. That is, we breathe in and out, completing one respiration about eighteen times a minute. In twenty-four hours we breathe 25,920 times. Our little day has a respiratory round on a similar scale of the sun's precessional movement. Meantime, our heartbeat averages seventy-two times a minute; and the sun takes seventy-two years to pass one degree along its zodiacal



round. Our heartbeats in an hour total 4,320 times, repeating the digits of the ancient key number. The mathematical analogy can be carried further in showing the universality of periodicity. The significant point is the intermingling of active physical and superphysical forces. Through our sympathetic nervous system, the intelligent "laws of nature" time our organic rhythms with the superconscious heart of the universe.

The different body cells not only have their functional rhythm, but they are timed to come and go, by dividing into new cells. This simple division into new entities is now seen in lowest forms of animal and vegetable life; it repeats the way in which the ethereal, spherical first root-race reproduced itself. Our body cells are reborn, so to say, like miniature copies of the primeval method of the race. Some of our cells divide rapidly, as in young creatures; others change slowly, as in old age and in bone, but the ebb and flow is continuous. The whole body is changed in seven-year cycles; so that the man of seventy years has reembodyed, relatively speaking, ten times in one lifetime. He passes away but to return for another circuit on earth.

Life and death, then, are only the systole and diastole of the cosmic heartbeat which, for us, keeps the spiritual self coming and going, here and elsewhere. Occult physiology explains that

There is in nature a law that operates in every department whether moral or physical, and which may now be called that of undulation and then that of inhibition; while at other times it reappears as vibration, and still again as attraction and repulsion, but all these changes are only apparent because at bottom it is the same. . . . In our own blood circulation we find the blood propelled from the heart, and that nature has provided little valves which will not permit it to return to the heart by the way it came. . . .

the Occultist . . . declares that the impulse is from the heart and that that organ receives its impulse from the great astral heart of the Akasa, which has been said by all mystics to have a double motion, or alternate vibration — the systole and diastole of nature.

So in this sense the valve in the circulation represents the abyss behind us that we cannot re-pass. We are in the great general circulation, and compelled whether we like it or not, to obey its forward impulse. — W. Q. Judge, *The Path* 2:292-3

We are related consciously as well as mathematically to the sun and moon and the planets. Their orbital and interrelated positions at the time of our birth affect the trend of that incarnation. From this family of celestial bodies ebb and flow currents of the several spiritual, mental, psychic, astral, and physical life forces which circulate through us and everything else. The periodicity of the disintegrating moon has a marked dual influence which is both constructive and disorganizing. Its recurring phases are related to the periodicity of all reproductive physiology, to changes in diseases, and to growth of vegetation, etc. Its psychic and astral emanations are reflected in mental and emotional disorders. All these forces were so well understood by the ancients that they could benefit by the good and could minimize the ill effects of their influence. We human units contribute our share of the disorderly elements in the solar family. But we gain in power for good, and square our account, in proportion to our individual balance of right or wrong.

The vibrating *quality* of our conscious life is imprinted on the texture of our bodies, like mental and emotional fossils indicating their place in finer or coarser grades of earth-stuff. Even the physical contrast between a noble, clean-minded person and a

selfish, bestial type is evident. The bodies of the evil Atlanteans were coarse and sensual. The earth, too, then had reached its lowest level of materiality. From their mid-fourth round, the planetary wheel began to revolve on the upward arc and matter began to refine. In line with this is the process of radioactivity which science is studying in rocks and minerals. Some interesting examples are reported, showing a cyclic course of events running through matter as well as in mind. Moreover, in both, the cycles run concurrently, because moving with a common purpose. We read that

Thus it comes about that in the etherealizing process which our earth-globe is now undergoing, the heaviest of the chemical elements and compounds will first become radioactive, radiating their substance away with increasing speed, and will be followed by the next or less heavy and gross, the process continuing until the end of the present fourth round in particular, and with intervals of the reverse process during the downward arcs of the succeeding rounds, proceeding until the seventh round will have reached its climax or end. By that time, the globe and all on it will have returned to the highly ethereal state or condition of matter that prevailed through the first round.

— *The Esoteric Tradition*, 3rd & rev. ed., pp. 162-3

The picture of human beings evolving step by step with the matter of their bodies and in the body of the earth, shows a scientific phase of "universal brotherhood as a fact in nature." This is no mere metaphysical concept or human platitude. It is a natural fact, consistent with the essentials of science, philosophy, and ethics — the three phases of the one truth. The material of the earth's body was with us when we were cycling round the moon-chain. The lunar life-atoms reimpodified again with our humanity here, bearing the quality of our former impress, both

helpful and harmful influences. Likewise, our individual life-atoms from former incarnations come back each time, drawn to us by psychomagnetic attraction. This is nature's provision of the harvest field in which the unexpended causes of our past sowing may work out their effects. For example, the seeds of a karmic disease find a ready culture medium in one person's body conditions, while they will not grow in his neighbor's tissues because he is karmically exempt. Again, we see the musical, inventive, or other genius — or the infant prodigies — with the physical organism with which each can express the mental ability they have severally attained in previous life cycles. There is the same repetitive "coming home" of our astral model-body atoms, and of the ethereal mental and emotional substances which belong to us. The same rigid justice that rules in the universe, operates upon all planes of our being.

The chemical elements that are combined in our body organs, the musical notes that satisfy our sense of harmony, and the colors that appeal to our eyes, each have their mathematical rates of vibration. Of their progressive octaves, it is said:

To demonstrate more clearly the seven in Nature, it may be added that not only does the number seven govern the periodicity of the phenomena of life, but that it is also found dominating the series of chemical elements, and equally paramount in the world of sound and in that of colour as revealed to us by the spectroscope. This number is the factor, *sine qua non*, in the production of occult astral phenomena. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:627

Since the above was published, in 1888, marked scientific advances have shown how the different rates of vibratory forces appear as different phenomena. The popularity of the radio has made everyone wave-length conscious. *The Secret Doctrine*

anticipated outstanding scientific advances of all kinds which show the intimate relation, if not the evident unity, of matter and force. This gives a scientific basis for a unity between conscious human forces and matter, which latter now is recognized as electronic in nature. For instance, our present five senses are responsive to vibratory rates which also manifest in tangible forms of sound, color, etc.

The five senses and their several sense organs were not evolved simultaneously in humanity, but came in serial order as regards time and sequence. Briefly, then, each root-race, toward the close of its great cycle, had developed one of the seven senses in full functional activity. The first root-race evolved hearing; the second root-race added to this the sense of touch; the third added sight; the fourth, taste. Our present fifth root-race has smell with the other senses, and also the potentiality of two more that will evolve during the future sixth and seventh root-races.

That hearing was the first sense acquired, is the oldest in point of time and of experience, agrees with our ability to hear eleven octaves of sound, while our eyes see but one octave of light. It is pointed out in *The Esoteric Tradition* (pp. 162-3, 3rd & rev. ed.) that the wireless wavelengths thus far known covering some eleven or twelve octaves, manifest as sound, and correspond to our sense of hearing. Passing along the scale through octaves of shorter wave-lengths, we pass through waves producing a sense of heat, i. e., touch. Continuing through octaves of still shorter waves, we reach the range of visible radiation; here the sevenfold colors of light correspond to sight. Passing through still more rapid wave-lengths, we enter the ultraviolet range of the scale, which is related to our sense of taste. Next, come the extremely short wave-lengths of x-rays which correspond to the sense of smell.

Our latent sixth and seventh senses will evolve progressively as they are called forth by the unfolding of our higher mental and spiritual nature. Then we shall radiate the constructive and inspiring forces of mind and heart as spontaneously as we now use our other senses. At that far distant period, the body will have become formed of more refined, flexible, and enduring substance; the human being will have acquired the balance of positive and negative creative forces, as sex is but a passing phase of procreation. Sickness will be unknown, as the then enlightened humanity will have learned to work in unison with the finer forces of nature.

In such future ideal conditions on the upward arc, man will be *self-consciously* evolving through realms of being through which, as an unself-conscious god-spark, he had slowly descended into matter on the downward arc. The Kabbalistic saying that "man becomes a stone, a plant, an animal, a man, a spirit, and finally God," is true as to his *forms* of imbodiment. In the ethereal first three rounds, he passed through the filmy "presentments" of what became the stones, plants, and animals of the physical fourth round. He still uses the mineral and plant elements in his animal body. The human embryo now develops through a repetition of *forms* which hint at experience in the earlier root-races.

The diapason of type is run through in brief. . . . The potentiality of every organ useful to animal life is locked up in Man — the microcosm of the Macrocosm . . . — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:685

Because of vast ages of experience in all kinds and forms of matter, the embryonic body is evolved now in nine months. In its earliest months, its indistinct sex hints first at the a-sexual, and then at the androgynous early root-races. Another hint of the early rounds is the early development and prominent position of

the pineal gland which later is covered over by the embryonic brain. This small gland — to which physiology assigns no function — represents the once active "third eye." At present it is deeply "concealed within the hollow of the brain," where it is intimately related to all the intellectual, sensory, and psychic centers. It is pointed out that

it has once been active; for nature never creates the smallest, the most insignificant form without some definite purpose and use. It was an *active* organ, we say, at that stage of evolution when the spiritual element in man reigned supreme over the hardly nascent intellectual and psychic elements. And, as the cycle ran down toward that point when the physiological senses were developed by, and went *pari passu* with, the growth and consolidation of the physical man, the interminable and complex vicissitudes and tribulations of zoological development, that median "eye" ended by atrophying along with the early spiritual and purely psychic characteristics in man. . .

In the beginning, every class and family of living species was hermaphrodite and objectively one-eyed. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:298, 299

It is further stated that in the winding cyclic course of the great law, this "eye" will again function when we shall have reached the spiritual levels on the upward arc. Then, as perfected human beings, we leave earth-life to rest before beginning the next higher rounds of existence as young gods. There is an analogy between the human ego's whole course of planetary unfoldment and the evolutionary circuit which it travels in one incarnation. The ego begins each life as a little child, gains in experience, and in old age its outgoing pathway recrosses some of the incoming

levels. The new-born brings with it a refreshing sense of other-worldliness and is little awake here at first; gradually the child walks along into an untried world — happy, irresponsible, trusting. In the so-called second childhood, the ego's tide of vital force has turned. With the ebbing of conscious and vital currents, the aging body and brain are less awake here, are more detached, the person is forgetful but living in childlike memories, is careless, dependent. The life force ebbing here is beginning a cycle elsewhere. And the ego, now "going home," recrosses the inner levels by which it came. Senility often means an overlapping cycle of rebirth beyond the veil.

Space forbids discussion of the tuatara (*Hatteria* or *Sphenodon*), an ancient type of lizard with a third eye found in New Zealand (*Lucifer*, 1935). Also, the marsupials which dominate the fauna in Australia represent a transition stage between the monotremes or egg-layers and the placental mammals. What but the overlapping of ancient cycles accounts for these peculiar types? Evidently, they are subject to the same law of retardation which has held back the Australian aborigines, living on this relic of old Lemuria.

Modern biological researches are following the physiological changes of the cell inwardly, so to say, to the borderland of immaterial forces. Occult physiology points to the cosmic intelligence of nature as the causative agent directing the cell in bringing forth only its own kind of form and function. The invisible, re embodying life-germ of plant and animal even — ages old in its own kind of experience — is beyond the range of the microscope. Experimenters, in changing the natural order of the chromosomes or other elements of the fertilized cell, are only dealing with the natural vehicle or "body" through which intelligence is manifesting. The results, however interesting, will be disordered because artificial, and therefore will confuse, rather than reveal the question of the "issues of life" which are



sought.

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[Section 2](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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[Theosophical Society Homepage](#)

## Section 2

Chapter 5: [Cycles Imprinted on the Earth](#)

Chapter 6: [Recurring Civilizations and Archaeology](#)

Chapter 7: [Language Cycles](#)

Chapter 8: [Spiral Pathways among the Stars](#)

Chapter 9: [Conclusion](#)

## Section 1

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### Chapter 5

#### Cycles Imprinted on the Earth

There must exist geological and physical cycles as well as intellectual and spiritual; globes and planets, as well as races and nations, are born to grow, progress, decline and — die. Great nations split, scatter into small tribes, lose all remembrance of their integrity, gradually fall into their primitive state and — disappear, one after the other, from the face of the earth. So do great continents. Ceylon must have formed, once upon a time, part of the Indian continent. So, to all appearance, was Spain once joined to Africa, the narrow channel between Gibraltar and the latter continent having been once upon a time dry land. — *The Theosophist*, "A Land of Mystery"

Geologists are well on their way towards finding additional and convincing evidence that this "good earth" of ours has preserved records of colossal events in her wonderful career as a man-bearing planet. In fact, our earthly home has been the shifting stage upon which the moving drama of humanity's life has regularly come and gone, over and over again, for millions of years. This planetary stage-setting has been shifted to and fro, back and forth, up and down, but always in keeping with the

human plot of the unfolding racial drama for which it was the background. It was an unusually responsive background, too, because the earth being an entity itself — a magnet, scientists say — there was a constant electromagnetic play of currents between its electronic matter and the busy creatures who swarmed over its surface. Their bodies were made of its same stuff; and they affected the earth with what they thought, felt, and did. In return it affected them, so that they moved on together, progressing through every kind of small, intermediate, and great cycle.

The earth tells its story — not in the language of any one time or people, but in the universal mother-tongue of nature. Hence, he who understands his own composite nature may see how the career of mankind and of the globe have been keyed to the same great purpose throughout all the changes of earth-life. Racial and planetary cycles have imprinted upon the earth geological hallmarks of their common evolutionary periods of change and growth. Therefore, the geologist who interprets his fund of scientific data in the light of the planetary history as given in *The Secret Doctrine* will find evidences of cyclic periods of Mother Earth's growth as plainly recorded as the annual rings in cross-sections of gigantic trees. The detailed record has been kept from age to age by the White Brotherhood, and sacredly guarded in teachings of the Mystery schools. Enough is now given out to answer the moot questions of racial and planetary evolution.

Agassiz said that "The crust of our earth is a great cemetery where the rocks are the tombstones on which the buried dead have written their own epitaphs." This quaintly somber reading of the geological data of humanity's earlier rounds of experience is enlivened by the theosophical story of humankind's reïmbodiments. For the same deathless egos who began their many earth-lives in the "garden of Eden" period have never ceased to be. Even now some of them may be incarnated among

the geologists who are studying the imprinted records which Mother Nature kept of their planetary childhood and youth.

There is an interesting analogy between the way the earth cycled through its early embodiment and our own physical beginning of each fresh incarnation. In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, the Master K. H. writes:

As you may infer by analogy every globe before it reaches its adult period, has to pass through a formation period — also septenary. Law in Nature is uniform and the conception, formation, birth, progress and development of the child differs from those of the globe only in magnitude. The globe has two periods of teething and of capillature — its first rocks which it also sheds to make room for new — and its ferns and mosses before it gets forest. As the atoms in the body change [every] seven years, so does the globe renew its strata every seven cycles. . . . The correspondence between a mother globe and her child-man may be thus worked out. Both have their seven principles. — pp. 93-4

It is stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, 2:140, that the period of mineral and vegetable development was not less than 300,000,000 years before mankind, then present in its astral forms, acquired "coats of skin." At the time that the astral body became physicalized, the separation of the sexes occurred — some 18,000,000 years ago. Also, the latent fires of the human mind were lighted, and we began to revolve in experience as self-conscious human beings.

The most active cycle of development of the mineral and vegetable kingdoms occurred during the earth's earlier rounds before mankind's astral imbodiment became "physicalized." At present the combination of human mental and material nature is the dominant activity on the globe, while the lower kingdoms are in a cycle of relative quiescence. The present convulsions of

nature, which to us are so disturbing, like earthquakes, volcanoes, etc., are mild compared with the periods of intense activity of the rocky earth in the globe's earlier stages. The theosophical teaching is that while the bodies of the late third root-race were physicalized enough to have left some fossilized remnants, yet the violent volcanic, seismic, and cataclysmic events that have occurred periodically since that time doubtless have ground any such records to pieces.

Moreover, continents have disappeared beneath the oceans, and new lands have arisen from beneath the waves in many parts of the globe since its matter solidified from its primeval state. The earth rounded out one of its continental birthdays, so to say, in the same time period of each one of the great root-races. The globe itself has evolved through its successive cycles corresponding to the rounding out of several root-races, of which we are in the fifth.

Of course, neither the root-races nor the continents which they specially inhabited were always sharply defined, any more than our birthdays mark sudden and complete changes in our body or in our character. There was the same intermingling and overlapping of human and continental cycles that is taking place today, although finally great cataclysms changed the surface of the globe. These convulsions wiped out the degenerate portion of a root-race. Meanwhile the worthy survivors had found refuge on lands which had been rising from the ocean as slowly as other parts of their former habitats had been sinking for ages.

A haunting memory of these momentous events in racial history is the basis of similar traditions among all peoples. H. P. Blavatsky points out:

That worlds (also Races) are periodically destroyed by fire (volcanoes and earthquakes) and water, in turn and

renewed, is a doctrine as old as man. Manu, Hermes, the Chaldees, all antiquity believed in this. Twice already has the face of the globe been changed by fire, and twice by water, since man appeared on it. As land needs rest and renovation, new forces, and a change for its soil, so does water. Thence arises a periodical redistribution of land and water, change of climate, etc., all brought on by geological revolution, and ending in a final change in the axis. . . . there is a secular change in the inclination of the earth's axis, and its appointed time is recorded in one of the great Secret Cycles. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:725-6

Naturally, the intimate relation between human nature and Mother Nature would make so important an event as the beginning and ending of great human cycles coincident with planetary changes. Always and everywhere there is the combined action of the laws of karma (cause and effect), reïmbodiment, and cycles. These laws rule not only in human life, but in the life-course of every atom of matter, as well. Thus it is that the whole mass of matter constantly changes at the same time and exhibits alterations analogous to changes through which man the thinker is passing.

These concurrent evolutionary changes of mind and matter are consistent with the fact that all matter is alive and, in some degree, is conscious, though mankind only is self-conscious. Matter is somehow intangibly affected by its association with conditions of human life. For tangible evidence of human influence upon earth material, contrast the complicated equipment of twentieth century American life with the native Indian's simple demand upon nature's supplies in his day.

These two peoples, with similar bodies to feed, clothe, shelter, and transport, are ages apart in their viewpoints, both of which have

been reflected upon the same country. Compare the light impress which the Indian made upon the earth he occupied, with the same area as it appears today. Now the landscape has been tunneled through, bridged over, deforested here and reclaimed there, soil and even weather modified, oceans joined by an artificial canal, electric and water power harnessed, highways and skyways charted — the whole nature picture changed to match a different cycle of human thought and feeling.

An interesting hint of the relation of man to nature is given in *Isis Unveiled* 1:395 where, in discussing human magnetic emanations, it is said:

Magnetic currents develop themselves into electricity upon their exit from the body.

In view of this interplay of forces, it is easily seen how a continued and unbalanced flow of certain magnetic human emanations would periodically reach a point of tension with a violent reaction upon the globe itself. The physical effects would result through electrical and other fluids acting with the gases on the solids of the globe. The exploding point, so to say, would coincide with the change of a great cycle, producing violent convulsions in the forms of earthquakes, floods, fire, and ice. William Q. Judge goes into this at some length in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, pp. 169-70, where he says:

At the intersection of the great cycles dynamic effects follow and alter the surface of the planet by reason of the shifting of the poles of the globe or other convulsions. This is not a theory generally acceptable, but we hold it to be true. Man is a great dynamo, making, storing and throwing out energy, and when masses of men composing a race thus make and distribute energy, there is a resulting dynamic effect on the material of the globe which will be

powerful enough to be distinct and cataclysmic. That there have been vast and awful disturbances in the strata of the world is admitted on every hand and now needs no proof; these have been due to earthquakes and ice formation so far as concerns geology; but in respect to animal forms the cyclic law is that certain animal forms now extinct and also certain human ones not known but sometimes suspected will return again in their own cycle; . . .

Since Judge wrote this in 1893, evidence of ancient areas formerly covered with ice have been found in tropical sections of Africa and elsewhere, showing that these were once polar regions. The theory of the shifting of the poles is now commonly accepted by scientists. The ancient teaching is that, in addition to alternations of the warm ocean currents and the hot magnetic currents of the earth, cataclysmic effects include alterations of the poles which have been inverted several times. Each time there was a complete change of the earth's surface, alternately affected by fire and water, upon which event is based the Biblical story of the Noachian flood. Noah and all living things in the ark stand for the surviving men and things of the doomed fourth root-race, which were the beginnings of the succeeding root-race. This story of *our* Deluge, recorded from the remotest antiquity, is a universal tradition. It is found in beliefs of so varied nations as the Peruvians, Aztecs, Chaldaens, Chinese, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Hindus etc., as well as among primitive peoples.

Geology proves that the polar regions were once warm and flourishing countries; and theosophy tells us that mankind was even then present and embodied. Both Arctic and Antarctic explorers have found fossils of subtropical plants in very high latitudes, coral that flourished on the shores of Greenland, etc. There are many geological footprints of the migrations of the great ice sheets which, as one scientist graphically states, marked



"a sliding scale of climatic values on the changing cycles of time."

Modern geology has a fairy-tale fascination for a student of theosophy because, far from dealing with a dry-as-dust subject, one is studying a planetary entity which has kept a graphic sketch of vast cycles in our wonderful past. The evolutionary plan running through those periods of experience is prophetic of greater unfoldment in the future. Intuitive researchers will find that the phenomena of earth and of nature forces are the natural language which matter speaks in its own behalf, in the universal drama of unfolding, imbodyed, cyclic life.

H. P. Blavatsky's knowledge of cycles enabled her to predict discoveries in the twentieth century that would prove many of the ancient teachings. Her explanations of the rounds and races and the continents they inhabited did not fit in with the current theories and, in her day, they were then thought to be wholly lacking in tangible proof. Nonetheless, anthropologists are slowly pushing back the dates for prehistoric humanity, while a few scientists are examining the idea of Atlantis seriously. Moreover, observations such as submarine explorations reveal many changes in the elevation of the water line, which seems to be part of the universal ebb and flow of things. Of course, it is well known that changes in elevation are going on now in many parts of the earth. Some of the American coasts are slowly rising, while others are going down; the Himalayas and the California mountains are steadily rising, etc., all of which is in keeping with the overlapping and intermingling of great and small cycles, both in the history of root-races and of continents. Even today, an overlapping geological cycle dating back to the third root-race includes parts of California, Ceylon, and Australia.

These geologic evidences of conditions which we and Mother Earth have passed through together have something more than a

scientific meaning. Looking backward, they give us a mountain-peak perspective of the soul's continued journey. The background of spiritual purpose of the whole picture dignifies and ennobles the pathway of our everyday life. The past, present, and future are the eternal Now for the inner self who cycles beyond the limits of time into limitless Eternity. Each person is told in *The Voice of the Silence*, page 31:

Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life; it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

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## Chapter 6

### Recurring Civilizations and Archaeology

The revolution of the physical world, according to the ancient doctrine, is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect — the spiritual evolution of the world proceeding in cycles, like the physical one.

Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended. — *Isis Unveiled* 1:34

But these cycles — wheels within wheels, . . . — *do not affect all mankind at one and the same time* — as explained

in the *Racial division of Cycles*. Hence, as we see, the difficulty of comprehending and discriminating between them, with regard to their physical and spiritual effects, without having thoroughly mastered their relations with, and action upon the respective positions of nations and races, in their destiny and evolution. This system cannot be comprehended if the spiritual action of these periods — *pre-ordained*, so to say by Karmic law — is separated from their physical course. -- *The Secret Doctrine* 1:641-2

A volume might be written about the facts given in the above quotation. Indeed, many volumes would not suffice for the vitally interesting subject. The teachings in *The Secret Doctrine* are not theories or hypothetical half-truths. They are a matter of actual records which have been kept all down the ages by the most highly evolved and noble representatives of the human race. These records are safe in the secret annals of the great White Lodge of Masters who sent H. P. Blavatsky forth as the messenger to their fellow-men.

In these ancient records, the prehistoric part dwarfs all that is known historically about the life story of mankind and the globe. In the vast perspective of the whole, all the confusing data of evolution, archaeology, geology, etc., fit into consistent times and places in the picture. A significant example in the picture is the fact that in the working out of human progress, the whole mass of mankind does not reach the same level of attainment at the same time. This accounts for the confusing archaeological finds of high and low grade civilizations in the same geological strata. The ancient record also explains the finding of superimposed cities, where the lower levels show that a higher degree of culture preceded later levels of more primitive conditions.

In different parts of the globe, at the same time, there have been

cave-dwellers, lake-dwellers, tribes of wandering hunters, pastoral peoples, and flourishing civilizations, all rounding out their separate careers.

It is perfectly natural that certain larger or smaller numbers of the human race should be karmically grouped together according to their general status of evolution. Moreover, contemporary grouping of different grades is the general rule of life. For example, in educating a single generation, are not the students graded from the alphabet level on up to the university degrees? The analogy holds good with members of the whole human family who are revolving in different orbits of racial childhood, youth, maturity, and old age, all at the same time. In fact, mankind has here and now, as always, its different age groups of evolutionary growth. Each group is rounding out its own rightful "place in the sun" of mental and spiritual illumination. It is all as natural as that the day should be dawning at one place, while the sun is at full meridian at another point, is setting at the third, and only faintly reflected by the midnight moon at the fourth quarter of this one world.

Evolution is but another word for cyclic law. The race does not move *en masse* in an end-on evolution. That fact is evident in watching the same tide of human development which is both ebbing and flowing at different places of the modern world. The contrasting levels would speak for themselves to an observer, now that aviation and radio are bringing the ends of the earth together. Imagine the aviator filming a bird's-eye view of the human conditions which he flew over as he circled round and round Mother Earth. He would find, between the most contrasted types, living pictures of all the mental, moral, and material strata from savagery to civilization. In fact, if this modern world were suddenly overwhelmed by a cataclysm and preserved *in statu quo*, like Pompeii, the far distant archaeologist would find a

buried past as paradoxical as the present excavators do, in looking backward.

Just as our rotating earth swings us around from one morning to the next, when we carry on further our yesterday's affairs, so the rounds of whole civilizations come and go, flourish and fade away, again and again. Each reincarnating ego is attracted back to earth karmically at the time, to the place, and in the conditions where it can take the next step on its journey of becoming humanly perfect. How rapidly and how far each one will go in one lifetime depends upon himself. Conditions which are stumbling blocks to a weak character may be used as stepping stones by another of strong will and courage. Each person is reborn with the character which he has made for himself, and each life holds opportunities for bringing out more of his own inner power and knowledge. The karmic law makes no mistakes in grouping individuals together in any stage of any kind of a culture. The greatest and the least of them, as well as the general average of individuals, are more or less closely linked by their personal, national, and racial karma.

The recent unexpected findings in various places of a series of superimposed cities of different grades of culture are evidences of the living ebb and flow of human affairs in one or another country. The puzzling situation points to the naturally cyclic course of our evolution. These finds are the common homesites of people of different degrees of development, and they were separated, layer from layer, by the dust of ages. The question is not only, Who were these forgotten peoples, but Why were they all drawn to the same place to settle? It may be that it was a favorable site for the general interests of a community. Possibly, numbers of them reincarnated in several strata of the series. Most likely, each level was a lesser round in some larger cycle of a purpose working in the whole series. In that case, the first city

would leave behind it something of its influence which, unconsciously, attracted after-coming men, collectively, to settle there. Thinking man leaves his impression on something more than the material earth. The vital impress of his own inner life of thought and feeling is reflected in the surrounding astral light which retains all these pictures. Thus, besides, the tangible relics which mark the levels of recurring habitations, the inhabitants must have impressed the locality with a certain psychomagnetic quality which had an intangible attraction for other minds and hearts.

Much has been done in discovering these old sites since H. P. Blavatsky wrote of them in 1888:

Tradition asserts, and archaeology accepts the truth of the legend that there is more than one city now flourishing in India, which is built on several other cities, making thus a subterranean city of six or seven stories high. Delhi is one of them; Allahabad another — examples of this being found even in Europe; e. g., in Florence, which is built on several defunct Etruscan and other cities. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2: 220-1

Some of these buried cities are helping us to realize that much which has stood for traditional events and mythical figures was founded on actual history of an unrecorded past. For instance, it is reported that the oft-quoted Hill of Hissarlik where Troy stood is now revealing the site of the Homeric city, "the seventh from the bottom of a stack of nine cities that comprise the hill."

The same author adds that there are ancient cities in the western world of the Americas which have not even a legendary history. She points out that

There, all along the coast of Peru, all over the Isthmus and

North America, in the canyons of the Cordilleras, in the impassable gorges of the Andes, and, especially, beyond the valley of Mexico, lie, ruined and desolate, hundreds of once mighty cities, lost to the memory of men, and having themselves lost even a name. . . . As regards prehistoric buildings, both Peru and Mexico are rivals of Egypt. Equaling the latter in the immensity of her cyclopean structures, Peru surpasses her in their number; . . . Works of public utility, such as walls, fortifications, terraces, water-courses, aqueducts, bridges, temples, burial-grounds, whole cities and exquisitely paved roads, hundreds of miles in length, stretch in an unbroken line, almost covering the land as with a net. . . . Of the long generations of peoples who built them, history knows nothing, and even tradition is silent. . . . Whole forests have grown out of the cities' broken hearts, and, with a few exceptions, everything is in ruin. But one may judge of what once was by that which yet remains. — *The Theosophist*, "A Land of Mystery"

There is a pathos in that thought of the cities' broken hearts, where once upon a time the vital currents of human life pulsated to and fro, moving with the ebb and flow of hopes and fears, aspirations and desires, joys and sorrows, even like our own. Archaeology is no dry-as-dust study when we begin to read the continued story of human earth-life. These excavated homes and temples and battlefields — if we but knew it — are scattered chapters of the history of the past — of our own past.

Human nature ever plays the same dual role in the drama of a god living in an animal body. The usual archaeological "finds" of both altars and weapons everywhere are symbols of the same contrasting impulses that move us today in our forms of worship and of conflict. Sometimes, merely the fragments of prehistoric

pottery excavated from old kitchen middens give us glimpses of an artistic side to an unknown people's life. Thus art and archaeology are allied in passing on some evidence of our heritage of that strain of creative beauty which runs in the veins of the human family. How could many of us who are untaught in the arts so often thrill with the harmony expressed in color, or line, or sound, if we had not known and felt the like before? Why should our busy lives ever seem to be, at times, a mere round of drab and aimless days, if our inner self had never revolved in some past period of a broader and brighter existence? Our innate ideals are often the spiritual aroma of rounds of experience which the real self remembers. The new brain that is born with each recurring incarnation, cannot remember all the details of its own life-term. But the enduring soul harvests and stores all that is best in every round. There is both truth and poetry in Emerson's words:

What is excellent,  
As God lives is permanent;  
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;  
Heart's love will meet thee again.

A subject of perennial interest is the location of the cradleland of mankind. Of course, the continents of the first four root-races were gone, and new lands were ready when the time was ripe for the present fifth root-race of evolving egos to begin its wheeling. The scientific idea that civilization originated where now stretch the great plateaus of Central Asia, and the theological tradition of the Garden of Eden, both point to the cradleland of our fifth root-race. The ancient records tell of a vast Central Asian homeland, with two widely separated epochs of racial history. The fifth root-race, in germ, dates far back to some egos then among Atlantean tribes. This early stock left the continent of the powerful sorcerers and migrated in serial surges, under spiritual guidance, to the



then rising lands of Central Asia, now the region of the Gobi desert. Then, this vast continental tract was an aggregate of beautiful, fertile lands, with a mild and equable climate, and with outlying islands and countries in the surrounding seas. HPB speaks of an inland sea, consecrated and called "the Abyss of Learning" (*The Secret Doctrine* 2:502). The sacred records tell of the wonderful civilizations there which sprang up and flourished for ages.

Then, in the revolving cycles of time, the land rose, the seas receded, the fertile land turned barren, and the climate became severe. The people migrated, in turn, to newly risen lands, and spread out to the west, the east, and the south. This diffusion of the old culture into new lands went on for thousands upon thousands of years. In time, knowledge of those early Asian civilizations receded into a far-off past, until even their history became legendary. The migrants were the people who far later became the Chinese, the Tartars, the Hindus, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persian, the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, and the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes.

The present archaeological urge to search these dim corridors of the past is timed with the new cycle of spiritual awakening, and of recovery of sacred knowledge of the sublime purpose that runs through unnumbered incarnations. Dr. de Purucker, in an interesting article from which the above data are culled, says:

Some day I believe that our archaeologists and other scientists, delving in the wind-swept deserts, sandy, arid plains of Turkestan, Persia, Baluchistan, will uncover remains showing that there there was at least a civilization the equal of anything we have today. . . .

There was a civilization, some few thousand years before the earliest history that we know about Greece and Crete

and Asia Minor, in what is now the arid lands of Persia, that would have put to shame anything that ancient Greece or Rome or Egypt or Babylon could show — a civilization gentler, greater even than ours. That was the mother-land of the Greek and Roman and Italian peoples. . . .

Central Asia is not only the cradle of civilization of our Fifth Root-Race, but our motherland. To it, in the earliest beginnings when the Fifth Root-Race began to be itself as a stock separate from Atlantis, to it the earliest Fifth Race colonists went and settled there. It was then a land rising above the waters and from its lofty plains and plateaux — through age after age, as age succeeded age — the germinal new races tried to work off the deviltry of their own Atlantean forefathers now rushing to their doom. Protected of karma, protected by the Lodge, the early Fifth lived there. Sub-race succeeded sub-race, as they slowly climbed from innocence to knowledge and from knowledge to a modicum of wisdom — and its abuses, until now we have reached our kali-yuga and are beginning to pay. When will men learn that the only road to happiness and peace, to prosperity and increase in possessions, both spiritual and material, is obedience to the spiritual and moral law, and service. . . . Selfishness defeats its own ends. -- *The Theosophical Forum*, June, 1937

These glancing headlights on a wonderful past in Central Asia appeal to our intuition as events belonging to our individual history. The average you and I have been egos in this human life-wave from the beginning. Looking back, one's mental horizon expands with thought of the endless revolving of wheels within wheels of our past lives. The many incarnations have been mere epicycles along the great spiral of this fifth root-race which is still in its prime. Our imagination pictures this Asian focus of

civilizations broadcasting its human life and light by way of those migrant groups whose cultures evolved into the characteristic types of different nations. In time, there must have been — must still be — recurring points of contact between the egos who there took separating paths for one or many lives.

Consistent with the karmic repetition of old contacts would be the historical welter of converging influences during the decline of the Roman Empire. At that period, the fixed forms of belief and custom became fluidic and unsettled. The strange mixture of thought and character was, in its origin, Indian, Druidic, Germanic, Syrian, Persian, and from other strains, all typical expressions of some national trend of the human mind and emotions. Today, America is another melting-pot of nationalities. Are not the age-old contacts being renewed again — this time with peculiar responsibility to profit by past mistakes, and to build more wisely for the common good? Especially in the New World, life in the precocious generations is fluidic, restless, dynamic, seeking — sensitive to impulses that go far, right or wrong.

Because present world conditions were foreseen, provision was made for spreading abroad such a light of liberating truth that, in the signs of the times, we may read of the real issues being worked out. The great White Lodge which sent guides to lead our young race from doomed Atlantis to the Asian homelands, sent H. P. Blavatsky with the ancient knowledge by which we must find our way out of our selfish mistakes. Our humanity has outgrown its irresponsible infancy, and it must round this turn of the cycle with self-conscious will and the right motives.

It was part of the great plan for universal brotherhood that the fresh land of the New World was to be the birthplace of the Theosophical Society. It was not chance that, a century earlier, the

obverse side of the United States seal was subscribed: "*Annuit coeptis. Novus ordo seclorum.*" Then it was that a New Order of Ages was started on its grand round upon the upward arc. It was part of the end-of-the-century work for humanity that is brought out from behind the scenes. Timely efforts were also being made in Europe to warn those in power of impending disaster. The messengers tried to awaken the many who pursued secret methods of gaining wealth and power and long life, that the real "philosopher's stone" was the faculty within our own spiritual nature. But the warnings, and the noble and extraordinary work of Cagliostro, Mesmer, and Saint-Germain were understood only by the few.

It is most significant that the *outer work* of the Great Lodge for the end of the Nineteenth century has been carried over in the Theosophical Movement into the twentieth century. It is the first time since the fourteenth century that "light from the East" has grown brighter and stronger in the West. It is being recognized by ever larger numbers of those who are willing to go forward. We find hints of the larger issues running deep in the changing current of affairs. For instance:

. . . Occult philosophy teaches that even now, under our very eyes, the new Race and Races are preparing to be formed, and that it is in America that the transformation will take place, and has already silently commenced.

Pure Anglo-Saxons hardly three hundred years ago, the Americans of the United States have already become a nation apart, and, owing to a strong admixture of various nationalities and inter-marriage, almost a race *sui generis*, not only mentally, but also physically. . . .

Thus the Americans have become in only three centuries, a "primary race," *pro tem.*, before becoming a race apart, and

strongly separated from all other now existing races. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:444

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## Chapter 7

### Language Cycles

As languages have their cyclic evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, *fall into matter*, admixture with other languages, maturity, decay and finally death, so the primitive speech of the most civilized Atlantean races — that language, which is referred to as "Rakshasi Bhasa," in old Sanskrit works — decayed and almost died out. While the "cream" of the Fourth Race gravitated more and more toward the apex of physical and intellectual evolution, thus leaving as an heirloom to the nascent Fifth (the Aryan) Race the inflectional highly developed languages, the agglutinative decayed and remained as a fragmentary fossil idiom, scattered now, and nearly limited to the aboriginal tribes of America. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:199

But language, proceeding in cycles, is not always adequate to express *spiritual thoughts*.— Ibid., footnote.

Hearing was the first of humanity's five senses to be developed, and language was destined to play its important part in the recurring events of unfolding life on earth. As language is coeval with reason, the vocal sounds made by the earlier root-races, before solar deities had lighted their fires of mind, were more copies of nature sounds than articulate speech. However, the last subraces of the third root-race, under their divine instructors did build cities and begin civilizations while they were still limited to monosyllabic speech.

Naturally, the vocal medium of expressing human thought and

feeling evolved *pari passu* with the cyclic expansion of consciousness. Thus, as human beings gradually rounded out more and more of their human nature, little by little, they gained the means of finding a wider range of vocal expression. By the time of the late fourth root-race, there had been developed the first languages of inflectional speech. These languages, adopted by the overlapping early fifth root-race, became the root of the Sanskrit. The Devanagari script was invented by the Kabiri (see *The Secret Doctrine* 2:364.)

H. P. Blavatsky says of her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, that, in writing it,

The attempt to render in a European tongue the grand panorama of the ever periodically recurring Law — impressed upon the plastic minds of the first races endowed with Consciousness by those who reflected the same from the Universal Mind — is daring, for no human language, save the Sanskrit — which is that *of the Gods* — can do so with any degree of adequacy. — *The Secret Doctrine* 1:269

The ancient origin of Sanskrit is given in an article entitled "Was Writing Known Before Panini?" and is found in *Five Years of Theosophy* (pp. 419-20). This article, written by "A Chela," explains that classical Sanskrit was only restored, if somewhat perfected, by the celebrated grammarian Panini, who did not create it. It had existed throughout cycles and would pass through others still. The author continues:

Every one sees — cannot fail to see and to know — that for a language so old and so perfect as the Sanskrit to have survived alone, among all languages, it must have had its cycles of perfection and its cycles of degeneration. And, if one had any intuition, he might have seen that what they

call a "dead language" being an anomaly, a useless thing in Nature, it would not have survived, even as a "dead" tongue, had it not its special purpose in the reign of immutable cyclic laws; and that Sanskrit, which came to be nearly lost to the world, is now slowly spreading in Europe, and will one day have the extension it had thousands upon thousands of years back — that of a *universal language*. The same as to the Greek and the Latin: there will be a time when the Greek of Aeschylus (and more perfect still in its future form) will be spoken by all in Southern Europe, while Sanskrit will be resting in its periodical *pralaya*; and the Attic will be followed later by the Latin of Virgil.

It is in keeping with the above data that the sacred language should have been preserved, and should have begun to reappear with the ancient wisdom which was brought from the introspective and philosophical Orient. When the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, the teachings were so new to the matter-of-fact West that often no suitable English words could express them. It came about, in explaining finer shades of meaning or more universal concepts, that Sanskrit terms crept into the literature and lectures. For instance, the term *karma*, meaning "action," "consequences," or "cause and effect," soon became common, especially as applying to human life. This one word covered the meaning of the Bible phrase that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Moreover, the logical process of such harvesting was explained by the periodical series of reincarnations — though the teaching of cycles was less emphasized then than it is now when it is being recognized both in science and philosophy. At first, however, the strange words were sometimes objected to by critics like the reporter to whom W. Q. Judge replied prophetically that

the Sanscrit language will one day be again the language

used by man upon this earth, first in science and metaphysics, and later on in common life. Even in the lifetime of the *Sun's* witty writer, he will see the terms now preserved in that noblest of languages creeping into the literature and the press of the day, cropping up in reviews, appearing in various books and treatises. . . . So this new language . . . will be one which is scientific in all that makes a language, and has been enriched by ages of study of metaphysics and the true science. — *The Path* 1:58

Judge's confidence in the adoption of Sanskrit terms by the West is already justified. Not only do they appear in the press and current literature, but university courses in Sanskrit find increasing enrollments. This is significant of something more than getting mere literary "light from the East." It shows a growing need of terms for voicing larger ideals and deeper feelings of men and women who are heart-hungry for truth and light. These seekers are such as will form the nucleus of a subrace of the new cycle with its undercurrent of natural mysticism awakening their own muted sense of an inner reality.

The revivifying of this ancient tongue makes for a better understanding between the thinking world of the mystical, introspective East and that of the practical, intellectual West. The two have much of value to share with each other and reap mutual benefit thereby. It was H. P. Blavatsky's understanding of the inner treasures of truth possessed by India's learned pundits, which gave her and her work the support of some of their best native scholars and cultured citizens. She early helped to found schools for the Indian boys and, later, for the girls, in which Sanskrit was taught — an innovation at the time. This work, recorded in early numbers of her *Theosophist*, is significant of her methods in founding a nucleus for a universal brotherhood. Instead of bringing a new religion or an alien philosophy to



different peoples, her appeal to each was to awaken them to the hidden, liberating truths in their own teachings. The vibrations of her keynote of international understanding have been kept alive by her students ever since. This keynote rings stronger and clearer than ever today — a saving minority of harmonious vibrations in a chaotic world.

Words are living things. A language reflects the quality of the time, of the events, and of the character of the people, when and where it circulates as the medium of mental and emotional exchange. An everyday instance is noted in the way the restless, vivid, intensive strain in modern life is finding typical expression in newly-coined words and catch phrases. Travelers from abroad note the quick coinage of so-called Americanisms which keep pace with new elements entering into the flowing current of daily life in the western republic. Some of the hybrid terms are so apt as to find a place, finally, in standard dictionaries.

Language is one of the valued keys of the ethnologists. What puzzles some of them who hold to an end-on evolution for mankind, is to find many barbarous and savage peoples who speak, even imperfectly, languages which are elaborate in both vocabulary and syntax. If these people were nearer a supposed ape-ancestry than Europeans, their language should be correspondingly crude and simple. However, this apparent contradiction proves to be a paradox which is explained by the law of cycles. These cases are good evidence of the spiral evolutionary course pursued through great rounds and races. These peoples are moving on the last turn of a wheel of untold antiquity.

It is noted that the Australian natives, for example, "use a complicated grammar with three genders." Presumably, these egos now incarnating in a disappearing race are finishing the

final curves of a downward cycle dating back to old Lemuria of which Australia is a remnant. These echoes of former greatness point to the long ages which these egos have spent in fulfilling the law of sowing and reaping. For us, too, they are words of warning. They are tragic evidence of the essential nature of ethics in the fabric of the universe. Right and wrong are not human inventions, but are part of the universal law of balance and harmony. The law of retardation slows the wheel of our progress when we break the moral law of our own being. Likewise, nature, on her part, calls a halt by means of sickness — or even death — when we persistently break her laws of health. When she halts us with sickness where we are on the wrong course, the pain and limitation are her stop signals, lest a worse thing befall us.

The cultural echoes in the life of these peoples hark back to their past experience both in cycles of growth in true wisdom and in periods given over to evil magic. In some degree, do we not all vaguely feel, at times, a sense of having attained to better and to worse things than belong to this life? Emerson points out in his essay on *History* that

Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history.

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## Chapter 8

### Spiral Pathways among the Stars

*"The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-center of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein. . . . The planets are its limbs and pulses. . . ."*

. . . there is a regular circulation of the vital fluid throughout our system, of which the Sun is the heart — the

same as the circulation of the blood in the human body — during the manvantaric solar period, or life; the Sun contracting as rhythmically at every return of it, as the human heart does. — *The Secret Doctrine* 1:541

The italicized part of the above quotation is from the archaic records, here interpreted by commentaries "compiled by generations of adepts." As *The Secret Doctrine* is based upon these records, the striking analogy between the solar and the human heart is presented therein as a logical part of the one universal evolution. When the book was published some seven years before the discovery of x-rays, H. P. Blavatsky predicted that if the living and throbbing heart could be made luminous and visible, one would see the sunspot phenomenon repeated every second. Today, the growing interest in, and the deep study of sunspots and of the electromagnetic and other influences of the celestial spheres, open the way for still other of the ancient teachings which relate man to universal nature.

Our solar system is a big cosmic family with its sun and moon, and the older and younger planets, comets, nebulae, etc., visible and invisible. Each shining orb embodies an intelligent being, a deity of some grade, rounding out its own cycle of suitable experience and growth. Our earth also embodies a planetary entity. Mankind, too, has its rightful place in the solar family, for

the "Serpents of Wisdom" have preserved their records well, and the history of the human evolution is traced in heaven as it is traced on underground walls. Humanity and the *stars* are bound together indissolubly, because of the *intelligences* that rule the latter. — *The Secret Doctrine* 2:352

These "Serpents of Wisdom" are the few most highly evolved spiritual and intellectual individuals of each succeeding round

and race. Through initiation in the Mystery-schools, they learned to verify the inner teachings about man and the universe. The divine instructors of early humanity had directed men's minds to the invention of all the arts and sciences through which the creative impulse again comes forth and operates in recurring civilizations. These teachings included laws and legislation, architecture, metallurgy, agriculture, the medical use of plants, various modes of magic, astronomy, etc. Echoes of all these things have remained in the earth's inner atmosphere and are the source of the "innate ideas" that haunt our minds. Each ego must round this part of the cycle of constructive knowledge by becoming aware of it within himself. We are reminded that

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. — *Eccles. 1:9*

Every human being has a background of infinity and a limitless future. To have reached the human stage means that we were all in that majestic procession which started with our earth's life cycle. Then it was that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Among those rejoicing at the birth of this infant humanity were our spiritual ancestors who had perfected their human cycle long, long ages before. They are aware of a karmic relation to us which calls for their help in following them on the destined way.

The unity of man and nature is given voice in "Locksley Hall" where Tennyson says:

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of  
the suns.

In keeping with the earth's cycling onward, astronomers' advance

in knowledge and technique has enabled them to reach out into new regions of space. They are finding many extra-galactic systems all evidently revolving and evolving on their own pathways as we are on ours. This is added evidence of intelligent direction and common purpose everywhere. The very thought of it broadens the mind that can see here the working of universal law. Moreover, the harmonious and orderly interrelations of the countless orbs point to the essential nature of cooperation and ethics in the universe itself.

The paths of the celestial bodies are spiral curves of the utmost complexity. Moreover, as our sun moves around its orbit, it brings its whole family of revolving globes into new regions of space where they have never been before. Nor will they be there again. New conditions of mind and of matter, and of their influences, are met and intermingle with those of the receding past.

There is the cycle of 25,920 years during which the solar family travels around the zodiac of which each sign has a different influence upon the earth and upon us. Speaking of this in 1887, H. P. Blavatsky said that when, in a few years, we entered the sign of Aquarius, "psychologists will have some extra work to do, and the psychic idiosyncrasies of humanity will enter on a great change" (*Lucifer* 1:174). Her words are being fulfilled in the increase of mental and nervous diseases, the craze for psychism, the numbers of "sensitives" and mediumistic types, phenomenal occurrences, etc. These conditions were far more rare fifty years ago.

When the twentieth century opened, the thought world was dominated by the opposing forces of a scientific materialism and those of an illogical theology. Neither was prepared to meet the problems of the unfolding nature of composite man who is

essentially linked with all the universe. Nor did both together make provision to meet the psychological phase of evolving humanity which is manifesting in the disorders now confronting physicians, statesmen, publicists, and, indeed, individuals and nations generally. In short, the selfish, egocentric view of men and nations today is logically and morally on a par with the mediaeval belief in a flat earth as the center of attendant globes. The modern world sadly needs the practical help of the mysticism of the ancients. Our statesmen might change the course of history by understanding the deeper causes of recurring events. Such knowledge is as scientific as the foretelling of a coming comet or a star. For instance, looking back to the signs of the times in 1888, we read:

It is simply knowledge and mathematically correct computations which enable the Wise Men of the East to foretell, for instance, that England is on the eve of such or another catastrophe; France, nearing such a point of her cycle, and Europe in general threatened with, or rather, on the eve of, a cataclysm, which her own cycle of racial *Karma has led her to.* — *The Secret Doctrine* 1:646

The Masters of wisdom do not meddle with politics. Their warning meant what is so slowly dawning on the disordered world. Its rapid progress having interwoven and intermingled its every material and mental interest, it can go no farther save with brotherly regard for humanity's common welfare. The Masters, vitally alive to world conditions and to sidereal influences, know the zodiacal periods calling for help.

This linking of the sidereal cycles with mankind was, with the ancients, the esoteric or sacred part of astronomy. With them, astrology was a science as infallible as astronomy, and still is for its interpreters *who are equally infallible.* The secret records go

back to those of the great Atlantean astronomer, Asuramaya. It is said that the Atlantean records cannot err, as they were compiled under the guidance of early mankind's divine instructors in astronomy. However, what has survived to our time, and is even publicly known, is but a fragment of the vast and noble science of ancient astrology. The ancients considered the position and influence of all the heavenly orbs as the bodies of intelligent entities. This knowledge, manifestly, is beyond the attainment even of the many intelligent men and women who feel the appeal of the starry spaces and are looking there for more light on life here.

The modern horoscope, even if correct in some things, may be more of a detriment than a help. The person who depends upon its decrees as inevitable, is less inclined to use his spiritual will to meet and work through his difficulties impersonally. To regard unfavorable issues merely by their conflict with our personal desires and plans is to lose the benefit of the karmic experience as a means of gaining more self-knowledge and strength of character. We cannot change our past sowing of unhappy causes; but how we face and deal with the harvest of effects *is* in our power. "The stars impel but do not compel."

The ancients knew how to regulate human life by the reckonings of the cosmic clock of nature which is infallible.

That clock is the heavenly vault; and the sun, the moon, the seven planets (as the ancients reckoned them), and the stars, are the "hands" marking time cycles. —

*Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, p. 206

All the esoteric anniversaries, like the four sacred seasons — the winter and summer solstices, and the spring and autumn equinoxes — were based upon the science of relating the destiny of mankind to the timing of the celestial orbs. Man is a son of the

spiritual sun, and his body and all his life on earth are sustained by solar vitality. Man is an embryo divinity, even as the divinities were once men in their aeonic evolutionary cycle of "self-becoming." The quickening spirit ensouls alike every manifesting form of matter from the least to the greatest on the one grand round.

From center to circumference, from the imperceptible vesicle to the uttermost conceivable bounds of the Kosmos, those glorious thinkers, the Occultists, trace cycle merging into cycle, containing and contained in an endless series. The embryo evolving in its pre-natal sphere, the individual in his family, the family in the state, the state in mankind, the Earth in our system, that system in its central universe, the universe in the Kosmos, and the Kosmos in the ONE CAUSE . . . thus runs *their* philosophy of evolution, . . . —  
*The Secret Doctrine* 2:189

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## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the doctrine of cycles, as presented in this manual for inquirers, is by no means completed. Further theosophical study based upon the different aspects of the subject in the several chapters, will repay specialists in scientific and in other lines of research. For this doctrine imbodies a scientific, philosophic, and religious basis for a comprehensive philosophy of life itself. And the deeper one goes in any and in all lines, the more evident becomes the mystic and vital unity between man and great nature. Thus, in the periodic recurrence of human imbodiments, with such harvesting of its past conditions as may free the personal field for wiser sowing, the human soul evolves its innate powers, with the natural purpose of becoming more



than merely human. All the currents of life — cosmic and terrestrial — are flowing towards realms of greater light and greater perfection of forms, of more intelligent ideas and of more spiritual ideals.

Each person as a self-conscious unit is in his own place in the general stream of the human race which is moving on at an average speed to fulfill its planetary career during the seven ages of the earth's life. However, each one is free to train himself to run ahead of the mean average pace. The results of such self-directed efforts appear among us, in different degrees, as superior individuals, geniuses, masters, and saviors. Somewhere, in our future, we shall reach the racial "moment of choice," the outcome of which will decide whether each will go on and complete the great planetary round on the ascending arc. Those who are unprepared to keep up with any grade of the trained climbers, will fall behind, stranded on some sandbank of time. There they must await another manvantara to continue their evolution with the slow unfolding of a new race. The point is, that the divine impetus manifesting throughout the cosmos is keyed to progress; each individual, being an integral part of the universe, must go with it, however much he delays and thereby wrongs himself. The cycle of necessity is inevitable. Thus, the origin of ethics is not a man-made ruling, but it is a reality woven into the very fabric of the universe.

In the justice of the natural law the final "moment of choice" is but the summing up and balancing of the daily choice of right and wrong through many lives of using free will as a self-conscious being. At present, we each are the human battlefield of our own dual mind which is fighting for selfish, personal ambitions and desires on the one hand, and for spiritual thought and impersonal feeling on the other. We all have our pet weaknesses which are so unworthy of our best traits. The general trend of our dual

thoughts and impulses seems to play upon our minds and feelings automatically, because each one is a cyclic repetition of its own kind. They are the elements of our self-made character. Each one of them is vitalized with our own life force, and it gains strength each time it returns and is given play. If our thoughts and feelings are petty and selfish, their quality of jealousy, envy, anger, hatred, suspicion, deceit, etc., colors our reaction to both new and old associations and conditions. We instinctively express our character.

If we have vitalized the opposite traits of generosity, kindness, sympathy, love, trust, aspiration, sincerity, and the like, these also return to us on their ennobling rounds. Our dual impulses both use the brain-mind to make out a case for right and wrong in the inner struggles between conscience and desire. When we decide aright, our lower nature loses the strength that is gained by our better side. In recognizing this power of creating a noble character, step by step, we find opportunities of winning point by point in meeting the routine affairs of daily life. These seemingly small victories unite their force and make us equal to the larger issues which try our souls severely. Even the failure to win at times may count as success, for the person who keeps on trying builds up his moral strength, and diffuses something helpful into the very air around him.

Every day is a new beginning for all, no matter what the past has been. To unfold, to advance, to "become" is the natural and vital impulse of everything and every being. The most dreary and difficult life outwardly, may be a cycle of opportunity for the inner self to show its heroic courage and impersonal power.

The Soul knows only the Soul; the web of events is the flowing robe in which she is clothed. — *Emerson*

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