

Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality

by Annie Besant

Published in 1911 and 1914

Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai [Madras] India
The Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras. India

[Page 1] THERE is so much confusion of thought with regard to the meaning of the three stages of consciousness which I have described under the names Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality, that I think we shall not waste our hour this evening if we devote it to the consideration of these stages of consciousness, trying to define them accurately and to understand exactly what is meant by the name which is given to each. And it is not only that by this study we shall, perhaps, somewhat clarify our ideas, but also we shall find that answers present themselves to certain rather curious problems that appear in human life from time to time, problems that are puzzling in their nature and that give rise to a good deal of bewildered questioning. We find people, for instance, asking why it is that we sometimes see an apparently fundamental change take place in a person within the limits of a single incarnation, and why someone who looks by no means hopeful during the earlier stages of his life should [Page 2] perhaps evolve very rapidly during the last half of his incarnation. Then, again, another question that sometimes arises is: Why is it that people who in many ways do not seem to be qualified, show none the less certain signs of spiritual growth? What is there in their nature which enables them to acquire certain spiritual faculties, when, looking at them from the purely external standpoint, they would not seem to be sufficiently evolved to show forth these qualities? Why is it, as I have often heard people say, that you can sometimes obtain better and wiser advice from a person in whom the higher intellect is not largely developed, but who shows very strongly the qualities of compassion, benevolence and sympathy, than from an intellect far more highly trained, than from a well-developed mind?

Now if these stages of consciousness are not understood, we are apt to answer such questions in a very mistaken fashion; and in a fashion, moreover, that is not only mistaken in itself, but is also likely to give rise to certain serious mistakes in conduct, certain grave blunders in our attempts to forward our own evolution. Thus we find people sometimes mistaking abounding emotion for spirituality, sometimes confusing the mere surging up of feeling with the strong potencies that come down from the spiritual world; and it is partly in order that we may avoid those [Page 3] blunders, that I am going to ask you to follow me this evening in a somewhat careful analysis of these stages of consciousness, bringing them under the light of that Theosophical teaching which has illuminated for many of us so many problems in the past, and which illuminates so many new problems now.

If we look at the question from the ordinary standpoint of western psychology we find in our text-books the very familiar division of the mind into emotion, intellect and will. When we come to look a little more closely into this classification, we find that under the heading emotion sub-classes are made: first, *sensations*, simple, primitive in their character, lying at the root of all further manifestation of consciousness, sensations which are the response of the organism to stimuli, to something that touches it from without. Then we have *feelings*, which are said to arise from the grouping and co-ordination of these primitive sensations, complex in their nature — sometimes exceedingly complex — but none the less traced down to these simple sensations, which, grouped together according to their nature, gradually produce that which is recognized as feeling; so that under this heading emotion we have the two sub-classes of sensations and feelings.

Now if we consider for a moment the five planes of the universe on which, according to [Page 4] the Theosophical teachings, our human evolution is proceeding at the present time — the physical, the astral, the mental or mānasic, the buddhic and the nirvānic — if we consider for a moment those five planes, we shall see that they seem to arrange themselves in a very definite order. With regard to the nirvānic plane we need say practically nothing tonight, for although that be the higher region of the spiritual universe it can scarcely come into our consideration at the present stage of evolution. The nirvānic and the buddhic planes together we class under the heading spiritual. All their forces would be spiritual forces, all consciousness working in them would be a consciousness spiritual in its nature, spiritual Beings would have there their habitat. If, then, omitting also for the moment the mental region, we look at the two lower planes — the astral and the physical — we find that these may be classed together as phenomenal. In these phenomenal worlds evolution takes place with regard to the astral body, the etheric double and the dense physical. These three bodies belong, of course, to the astral and the physical planes, which are capable of being classed together as phenomenal, just as the two higher planes are classed together as spiritual. They are essentially the worlds of phenomena, the worlds of concrete objects, the worlds in which [Page 5] forms are found with all their limitations; whereas the two higher are worlds which to the lower scrutiny are formless, in which the life is continually manifesting itself and moulding the subtle matter of those planes into immediate expression of itself. So that the great characteristic of the two higher regions is the manifestation of life, the great characteristic of the two lower the manifestation of form. Thus we may classify them in these pairs as phenomenal and spiritual.

When we come to deal with the mental world, the mānasic, we find that it partakes of the characteristics of those regions above and of those below, or, if we prefer to say so, of the inner and the outer. The lower half of the mental plane shows the distinct mark of the phenomenal worlds, the rūpa levels or the levels of form. And we notice that its phase of consciousness is that of the intellect, whose ideas are drawn from the phenomenal world and which takes sensations and feelings from that world below it, co-ordinates them, groups them together, draws its own conclusions from them, the whole of that work going on on the lower mental plane, that which we speak of as the levels of form or rūpa. Those levels, then, are distinctly related to the two lower worlds. But when we pass on to the higher, the upper half of the mental, we find that the intellect takes [Page 6] on the characteristics which belong to the higher regions or spiritual world. It is abstract, not concrete, in its character ; it deals with ideas which from the standpoint of the concrete intellect are formless, those ideas that have the peculiar characteristic of existing in their own world as things perfectly intelligible, perfectly distinct, perfectly clear as seen by the intuition of manas, but that none the less, the moment they pass on to the lower level of the mental plane, are found not to be one but many in every case—one abstract idea belonging to the formless world giving birth perhaps to hundreds of concrete ideas, each one distinct with its own characteristic form. So that, looked at in this way, we see that the mental plane seems to divide itself into this dual relationship to the worlds above it and the worlds below. Consciousness working thereon shows out these two great characteristics — the concrete dealing with the phenomenal, and the abstract reaching upwards toward the spiritual. This plane is essentially the human plane, it is the great battleground of humanity; none of the combats that take place on the physical or the astral planes are to be compared in their intensity, in their importance, in their subtlety, with the combats that are waged on the mental plane. It is the plane of balance, the plane having two below [Page 7] it and two above it, the central plane for humanity, and in that sense the most important and the most characteristic in human evolution. It is there that the " I " develops, the root and the center of individuality; hence it is that on this plane all the most terrible combats are waged. It is the place where success or failure comes to humanity in the course of our world-evolution.

Now looking at the whole question in that rather wide way, trying to take, as it were, a bird's-eye view of these planes on which human evolution is proceeding, we shall find, I think, that the question of

consciousness will become very much easier to grasp. If we would understand the consciousness which is working on these planes, we must note the characteristics of each plane, and these will in turn be characteristics of the consciousness in its activity on any given plane; and the more we are able to recognize each of these planes as separate from the others, as having its own place in evolution, the more shall we be able to understand the workings of consciousness on each, the attributes which it will necessarily develop, the characteristics which it will inevitably show. And if we can work these out fairly, clearly and definitely, we shall not run into the danger of confusion into which I notice so many of our students do run, sometimes thinking that the emotional [Page 8] is the spiritual, and utterly misunderstanding the place of the mental in the total evolution of man.

There is one thing that we shall have to consider when we are dealing with consciousness, which does not at once come out clearly and plainly in this broad view that I have been taking. There is a kind of borderland between the astral and the mental planes; not a borderland in the sense of anything that intervenes between the two, but a region which is in a very real sense common to both; a region in which the higher matter of the astral plane and the lower matter of the mental plane work together in a peculiar and co-ordinated fashion, so that you cannot entirely separate them in their working, so that characteristics of both planes are there found to be united. And the product of activity, when the two kinds of matter from the higher astral and the lower mental are brought together and meet to work together, the product of that coalition has partly the intellectual stamp, partly the stamp which belongs to it as coming to it from the astral plane — the stamp of *kāma*; so that we get a form of consciousness which we are obliged to distinguish by the term drawn from both, *kāma-mānasic*. And some of you, I dare say, in your studies, especially in reading the writings of [Page 9] H. P. Blavatsky, have sometimes been a little confused by this division which is brought in by her. So much does she bring it in, in fact, that she even occasionally speaks of the *kāma-mānasic* plane as a region where both *kāma* and *manas* are working together, where one cannot speak of it as wholly *kāmic* or as wholly *mānasic*, where the two so interpenetrate each other that they may be separated from the pure workings of *manas* on the one hand and of *kāma* on the other, but where we get the characteristics of both. This region is therefore conveniently called by the names of both, *kāma-mānasic*. The recognition of that will help us considerably in clearing up some of the difficulties that are left by the ordinary western division, between emotions, taken as divided into sensations and feelings, and the differences that arise between the different classes of feelings, which you will find in a moment that I shall prefer to separate off definitely as emotional.

One other point has to be considered before I take up these things separately, and it is this: that consciousness is one, and that however different the manifestations may be, the life within them is the same. There is but one life working in us, the life of *ātmā*. It is that which, pouring forth from the *nirvānic* plane, presents itself as *buddhi* on the *buddhic* plane, [Page 10] as *manas* on the *manasic* plane, as *kāma* on the *astral*, as *prāna*, through the *etheric* and the *dense body*, on the *physical*. There is but one life, no matter how different may be its manifestations; it is the essential consciousness, and that unit is the root of our being. Everything that is in us comes forth from that; and we should think of it as a great stream of outpouring energy, which changes its appearance and its color as it clothes itself in the matter of one plane after another, the color being lent it by the plane — the coloring matter, we might almost call it. While the essential life remains the same, remember always that that essential life draws into itself the coloring characteristic of any plane; so that when the evolution through all the planes is completed, the *ātmā* has taken up the coloring of every plane, and is therefore very different at the conclusion of the human evolution from the *ātmā* at the beginning of that evolution — a point which we are very often apt to lose sight of, and so to get a sort of despairing idea and to say of the whole evolution: " If it be *ātmā* at

the beginning and âtmâ at the ending, what has been done through all this pilgrimage ?" While âtmâ may shake off all the matter of the planes, the coloring obtained through that matter is not lost. [Page 11]

Realizing this one outpouring energy, let us remember that in the course of evolution we have the mounting upwards, as the Monad climbs from the mineral to the vegetable, from the vegetable to the animal, from the animal to the animal! man; that we have the downpouring stream, âtmâ-buddhi-manas, working downwards towards the mñasic plane, while âtmâ-buddhi from below, as the Monad, is working upwards towards the mñasic plane. Hence that same central plane is the meeting-place of the two streams - another thing that shows us its enormous importance and the central position which I gave to it in the five as a whole. It is the meeting-ground of the two great waves of evolution, the one going Upwards, from the second Logos, the other coming downwards from the first: they meet on the mental plane and there carry on what we call the joint evolution.

Let us see, then, how emotion is to be distinguished, how it arises and how it manifests itself. We may here utilize quite rightly and quite fully the western psychology in the analysis that it gives of sensations and feelings. They belong to that upward-climbing Monad that we know as the wave from the second Logos having the organizing characteristic of âtmâ-buddhi climbing upwards in evolution. That climbing of the mineral to the vegetable begins, as we [Page 12] know, by the vivifying of astral matter, the Monad drawing it round itself for the purpose of expressing the capacity of what we call sensation. As it passes onwards from the vegetable to the animal, this astral matter is drawn very much more under the control of the Monad and is roughly shaped round it in the astral body of the animal, at which stage the characteristic of sensation becomes very marked.

Now what is sensation ? It is the power to respond to a stimulus from without, the response of the organism to something that touches it, the answer which it sends out to that touch, the sensibility to contact. We have learnt that this power of response resides in the astral matter, not in the physical, that the power of sensation is not a power which is located in the physical body, but that all that the physical body does is to provide certain organs whereby stimuli may be sent in from the physical world and conducted to the true centers of sensation in the astral body. If anything interfere with the link between the astral and the physical, sensation stops; dislocate the astral from the physical, and there is no sensation in the physical. As we know in the use of various drugs, when that dislocation is brought about we lose all power of sensation, of response to any stimulus that may touch us from without. [Page 13] The power of sensation is in the astral matter, and as that is aggregated together into a primitive kind of astral body centers of sensation are gradually built up, and the animal feels, responds to stimuli, and has what we call primary sensations. As this astral body becomes better organized, these simple sensations aggregate themselves together into feelings, very much after the fashion that western psychology describes, and we have then more complicated movements in the astral body made up of a number of primary sensations, the astral body adding to the mere response to the external stimulus its own power which has been evolved by way of those repeated responses. So that it gradually acquires, as it were, a kind of ready-made apparatus; an apparatus composed of a number of vibrations which are always ready to come into action as a group, and these aggregated vibrations we may at this stage call *feelings*. They belong to the astral body, and they come as a great gush in answer to a stimulus, the impulse being in its nature the kind of sensation which gave rise within the astral body — by many repetitions and many workings of the astral body upon the sensation — to this feeling, which is then established as what we may call a group of vibrations; not the simple vibration of the answer that we call [Page 14] sensation, but the grouped, co-ordinated and modified vibrations which work together as a feeling.

Then comes the still further change which occurs when, from the mental plane, action takes place on the part of the awakened manas after the third life-wave has come down, and manas is brought into activity; that is, mānasic matter is being brought together by that downward wave and the inchoate mental body is formed. We then find that this mental matter begins to vibrate when the astral matter is set vibrating very vehemently, and that when these complicated groups of vibrations are active in the astral body, an answering vibration is set up in the growing mental body. That vibration lends to the feeling something of the mental character. Then memory comes in, and a little inclination to reason and to judgment, and so on; a certain intellectual quality is thus imparted to the feeling, which enriches and deepens it and tends to make it more permanent, giving it a more defined character of its own. This separates it off still more distinctly from other groups of feelings, or vibrations that are called feelings, in their turn; and this mental quality, which is due to the mental region inter-working with the astral, gives us what I will define as emotion. So that we have now three classes instead of [Page 15] the two of western psychology which takes emotion as the whole. I am taking sensation, feeling and emotion as a triad, as three classes which can be distinguished the one from the other; the first two, the sensations and the feelings, being really kāmīc or astral, the third, emotion, being kāma-mānasic — the manas and the kāma both entering into it and producing this kāma-mānasic vibration. This, in order to use an ordinary English word, we will speak of as *emotion*, remembering that its distinguishing mark is this mental, this intellectual touch added to that of kāma.

It will probably make these theoretical distinctions, as we may perhaps call them, a little clearer if I take two illustrations. One, which you would generally characterize — (when you bring morality into the question) — as good, and the other which you would characterize — (regarded from the moral standpoint) — as bad. Certain sensations in primitive man, as in the animal, are pleasurable, others painful. Take the group of pleasurable sensations which arise either in the animal or in the animal-man in contact with another animal or animal-man of the opposite sex — I am using the word man, of course, in the double sense. Where there is sex difference, the coming into touch with each other gives rise, at the earliest possible stage, to a [Page 16] certain feeling of mutual attraction, a feeling which will be called pleasurable in its nature and which attracts the two together. It is nothing more than a response of the nature of sensation on the part of each to the stimulus afforded by the other; but the two opposites which find one of their expressions in sex — (those two opposites that run all through the universe and that express themselves as sex on the physical plane) — when they come towards each other embodied in two forms separated for the time, attract each other. Each acts as a stimulus to the other and there is the stimulus giving rise to a sensation; but it is a complete inter-action, each acting as a stimulus to the opposite, each feeling the sensation in reply to that stimulus. There is there nothing but the simple sensation in the most primitive form. After a time, however, the activity of the astral body, the grouping together of many such sensations and the placing them, as it were, in connection with beings that have the characteristics of the opposite sex, give rise to a feeling which we may then characterize as something more than a mere sexual sensation. We might call it passion still animal whether in the brute or in the animal-man, but distinguishable from mere sensation, less primitive in its character, with a great deal more astral force and life coming [Page 17] into it. So that the consciousness — (which, remember, is a unit) — responding by this far more highly organized astral grouping, will have far more complicated vibrations; and these we may speak of as sexual passion. Then comes the time when the intelligence begins to work in connection with this passion, when the intelligence begins to bring in its finer and keener vibrations and we have the emotion of love, kāma-mānasic in its character. Later there will be a recognition of many other elements that should enter into that passion to purify and to refine it, and all sorts of other ideas will come into connection with it — the ideas of sacrifice and self-surrender and helpfulness and desire to make happy — and then the whole feeling is enriched and purified and elevated by this influx of the intelligence working in the mental body. In this survey we get the three

stages: The sensation, which is the mere response to the stimulus from the opposite sex; the passion, which is the more complicated feeling and into which very many more vibrations in the astral bodies enter; and the emotion, love, of a far higher character and containing far loftier possibilities. These, speaking generally, would be on the side that we should call good.

Then, if we study the question on the side that we regard as evil, we may take a similar [Page 18] set of three stages in connection with pain. Pain is caused by two antagonists meeting each other, when their meeting gives rise, say by a blow inflicted by one on the other, to a sensation of pain — a response from the astral body, unpleasant, inharmonious, troublesome in its character. That, as a simple sensation, would be nothing more than pain. But gradually that passes, being connected with the one who inflicted the pain, into what we may call the passion of resentment, and the astral body feels an impulse to return the pain it has received; and this passion of resentment, looked at from the standpoint merely of the pairs of opposites, is the corresponding correlative of the passion of attraction on the other side. Then, passing on to the time when the intelligence begins to touch this feeling, or passion, of resentment, we have hatred evolved, just the opposite of love, the repulsion as against attraction, that also belonging to the kâma-mānasic region. Hatred is an emotion, not simply a feeling, having this intellectual quality which has deepened and enriched it and made it keener and more subtle in its nature, capable of giving rise to other vibrations exceedingly destructive in their character, just as those given rise to by the vibrations of the emotion of love are constructive in their character. For here we have indeed one of [Page 19] those great pairs of opposites which are working throughout the whole of the universe.

These two illustrations will probably enable you to bear in mind, in a somewhat concrete fashion, what I mean (whether I am defining them rightly is a matter for debate) by these three classes of sensations, passions and emotions, or sensations, feelings — if you like to use that word instead of passions — and emotions. Now coming from that to an analysis of the action of consciousness on the intellectual, the mental plane, we shall find that its working takes on an entirely different character, that there are certain broad lines of division which separate off its experiences as mānasic from its experiences as kâmic.

First of all, if you look at the kâmic experiences broadly, you will find that they are all of the nature of rushing outwards, that they all are pouring themselves out to seek, that they are never satisfied by an expression which is contained within the consciousness — which is a feeling — but that the consciousness is always trying to reach outwards to something which it looks at as external to itself. That is a broad characteristic of the whole of those — whether you take sensation, or passion, or emotion, it does not matter — they are all marked by this common peculiarity, that they are all part of [Page 20] the outward-rushing energy of ātmā; they rush outwards to seek expression and satisfaction in the phenomenal world, they cannot be satisfied alone. In fact, if we think for a moment, we cannot imagine any of these things as existing alone; if we could think of a person as perfectly isolated in the universe, this outward-rushing energy would be stopped; it could not express itself except in connection with another. That is the great mark of action on the kâmic plane, and it is a mark of enormous importance if you want to understand some of the problems I alluded to at the beginning.

But now, when we come to deal with the mental plane, we are at once struck with this immense difference — that it is self-contained. When the consciousness begins to work in its intellectual aspect, and to work with pure mānasic matter undisturbed by these astral vibrations — leaving out the kâma-mānasic entirely — it draws itself in, it concentrates itself, it endeavors to shut out the external world, and looks on everything that comes from outside as a disturbing influence which prevents it from

concentrating itself and from exercising its faculties in the natural way. So that the very first thing that the consciousness will do when it begins to work on the mental plane will be to draw itself inwards, carrying with it that with which it has come into [Page 21] contact on the astral plane. It cannot get ideas until it draws in from the astral body a large number of those emotions, which grow out of the feelings and sensations on the astral plane, and which have been worked up in the astral body and have been handed on by it, for the next activity, to the mental plane. All the great ideas with which that consciousness is going to work will be drawn from the sensations which have been obtained by the astral body coming into contact with the outer universe. There, again, western psychology is right; it is continually right in its earlier analysis, while it breaks down when it comes to deal with the deeper phases of consciousness. It is quite true that when dealing with the awakening mentality in man everything is found to depend upon what is supplied to it from outside: it cannot start itself, it must answer; and the earlier vibrations of the mānasic consciousness can only be awakened by receiving vibrations from outside which shall stir it into activity. It will then send out a little answer, and as it sends it out it will draw back again, drawing with it the experiences it has obtained; but it cannot make any use of those experiences outside its own limits, it can do nothing with them as mental food, until it draws them within the circle of the mind and begins then to work upon them in its own sphere. [Page 22] And in order to do that successfully, having drawn itself in, it must shut out the external world and must not permit all these surging vibrations to come in and confuse its attention, for its attention has to be directed to that which it has drawn into itself if it is to make any use of those experiences and so develop germinal intellectual faculties. Bear in mind, then, that fundamental difference of intellectual working. True, it must gather from outside, the astral body must hand on; but the condition of success for the intellectual working is that it shall concentrate itself on that which is obtained from the lower vehicle. Drawing in these results, these threads, it sets to work upon them, and all its characteristic workings are these internal vibrations which deal with the fruits of the experience gathered from outside. It puts side by side number of these things which we call at this stage *perceptions*, and these perceptions or percepts are ranged side by side, and the mind contemplates them and begins to develop what we call the power of comparison. Looking at them all, it sees their likenesses and their differences and compares one with another. Having thus considered and compared them, it begins to draw out their likenesses and puts those likenesses together, and out of them forms an idea of a rather more elaborate character: it [Page 23] then takes all the differences and makes those into dividing marks. We find now an immense amount of what we call analysis — that is, the breaking up of these things by the comparison which recognizes identities and differences; and by fixing the attention on differences the process of analysis goes on.

Thus the mind, in its lower stages, by taking all these concrete ideas which it evolves from all that it has obtained from the outer world, by putting them together and classifying them, by building up more complicated ideas out of them, develops, by means of this concrete activity, all the powers that we recognize as the intellectual powers — judgment, reasoning, comparison, memory, then the drawing of conclusions, the deductive and inductive faculties, the logical faculties — all these things are gradually evolved. But if we consider them, we shall see that their evolution must depend on the power of the mind to isolate itself, so that it shall not be confused by inrushes from the outer world. It wants to be alone, it wants to be quiet, it wants to shut the doors of the senses, and within its own self-contained realm to apply itself to those results which it has obtained from the lower vehicles in which the consciousness has been functioning. It is only as this has gone on to a very great extent, as the phenomenal world has been used [Page 24] for the shaping of all these concrete ideas and the working upon them and the reasoning upon them, it is only then that the higher faculties of the intelligence will begin to evolve on the formless plane, and abstract thought — the drawing out of the common element in these various separated concrete ideas — will begin. Slowly and gradually that lower activity will make active the higher manas; on its own plane it will enter on its own especial work of abstract thinking, and the highest intellectual

faculties will then be gradually developed. These higher faculties are classified as synthetical rather than as analytical: they are no longer engaged in breaking up into their component parts the ideas on which the mental activity has been working, but are re-combining them and by synthesis are creating new ideas — ideas which are the images of realities in the Universal Mind. This is the quality in man which makes it possible that he in turn shall become universal, which evolves within the limits of the causal body that third aspect of the life of the first LOGOS, that quality of the Universal Mind which is to be the essence of individuality when the limits of the individual have fallen away.

Looking at that, then, as a rough definition of mental working, we come back again to the idea which is so important for our understanding [Page 25] of its place in evolution, that the mind is the self-contained part of the consciousness, and that the self-containing is necessary for its perfect evolution. The mental plane is, as we have seen, the balance, the center of the whole evolution. The plane above and the plane below have a certain definite relation the one to the other, and this relation lies in the common characteristic that in both of them is the consciousness pouring itself out. On the buddhic plane the consciousness is pouring itself outwards; on the kāmīc plane the consciousness is pouring itself out. In both cases it is seeking expression by unifying. On the kāmīc plane it does this on a very much lower level by gaining possession of an object and bringing it into itself, by taking possession of it as *mine*, by holding it and assimilating it; whereas on the higher plane, the buddhic, it pours itself forth to include, and not feeling the sense of difference of the "I" and of the "mine", it is conscious of a unity which sees all that it touches as part of itself and includes all within itself. Thus the outpouring differs in this subtle way from the outpouring on the kāmīc plane, that the one is pouring out to the external, while the other, if I may use the phrase, is pouring internally. The consciousness on the higher plane recognizes everything as part of its own life and its own [Page 26] nature; it does not need to go forth in order to find, finding all as within itself, yet still having that expansive character which is continually including, never excluding, which does not know limitations, which does not recognize boundaries. Hence it has sometimes been said that the kāmīc plane is the reflection of the buddhic on a lower level; it shows, as it were, in an image down below a kind of reflection of the qualities which are found above. Just as may be seen in the water the reflection of a mountain which is by the side of a lake, so in kāmā there is a kind of reflection of certain buddhic qualities. And thinking, as we are taught to think, of the whole of these creative activities as pairs continually reflected, we find these pairs existing on the nirvānic and the physical planes, on the buddhic and the kāmīc, and once more the intellectual region as the point of balance for the whole.

Now this, if carefully worked out in our thought, will throw considerable light upon those curious problems that I spoke of with regard to the wonderful and unexpected change that sometimes takes place in the life of an individual, with regard also to that problem as to why we find a touch of deeper insight in some who — especially in old age after a life of unselfishness and of compassion — are able to give us counsel [Page 27] and advice marked by that deeper insight which we are accustomed to connect with the idea of spiritual activity. Let us think of the change itself. We find, perhaps, a person in whom the rush of the emotional nature is tremendously strong; he is marked by great enthusiasm, by a headlong quality, by lack of balance, by lack of consideration, by a tendency to rush with enormous energy into some undertaking which attracts the feelings and the emotions. Perhaps it is some scheme of benevolence which may be exceedingly ill-considered, which may have in it innumerable flaws and blunders, all of which will work mischief as that scheme of benevolence is put into activity. But the strong emotional nature has no time to think of that; the tremendous surge of emotion carries it right away and it only sees that the scheme promises to do good, promises to end misery, to sweep away poverty, to change the face of the world. It cannot stop for all the cold consideration as to whether means are adapted to ends, and all the rest; it must go out in a tremendous rush, and out it goes. It does a considerable amount of

good, and also a very large amount of evil; it breaks down a great many things that might have helped, it gives life to a great many things that are bitter exceedingly; and the whole thing is a great wave — with all the force of a wave [Page 28] certainly — but also with, destructive power which ill-regulated force must always present. It destroys, truly, but yet has within it that great constructive force of the universe, the emotion of love, the desire to help. In that outrush, therefore, it is also constructing, and having in it that quality of love, it brings about a certain answering vibration on the buddhic plane. By the self-surrender that will continually go with that great outrush of emotion and enthusiasm, by the willingness of the person who feels it to throw his own life away if only he may serve the larger life that he sees suffering around him, by the great impulse of self-sacrifice that does not count the cost but is willing to give itself completely — health and life and everything else — if only the suffering may be relieved, is added to the kāmīc passion and emotion a touch from the buddhic plane, some recognition of the unity which makes it seem well that the separated life should give itself for the life of the whole. Thus is set stirring within the evolving life, the evolving Self, a little vibration on the buddhic plane which will throw down on to the kāmīc a slight ray of light, giving to it its own beauty and attractive power and working, in him who feels it, however ill-considered his action, however foolish that which he does, for the evolution of the [Page 29] spiritual nature and thus enabling a step forward to be made in that incarnation. The light from the buddhic plane, thrown upon the intelligence, brings it also into greater activity, enables it to see an idea of which, intellectually recognized, the intellect takes hold. The intellect seizes this great force which was started in the kāmīc nature, changes its direction, while leaving it as a force, and utilizes that tremendous energy, directing it to a wiser end, and by a wiser method, so that the whole nature evolves forwards and upwards and a great change is seen even within the limits of one life.

For it must be remembered that for progress force is absolutely necessary and that force is continually being evolved by way of the emotions. Granted that in the earlier stages of that emotional rush it may be a force which is working very foolishly, none the less is it a force; whereas if there is no force there is not the motive-power which will get the creature on. He lacks the steam, and however perfect the machine, it will not go if there is no steam in it. We may have a piece of magnificent machinery which, if we could set it going, might do wonders; but if we cannot get any steam into the boiler, or if the boiler is too small to give sufficient energy for the moving of the machine, it will remain there without motion for want of that very energy [Page 30] that should come from its boiler. Now the kāmīc nature is the boiler of the evolving Self, and no machinery that it can make anywhere, however admirable it may be and whatever its possibilities in the future, can work in any given incarnation if that force is lacking which will move it. But given the force, we can turn it to any end that is recognized as good; and when the gleam of buddhic light flows down, upon the intelligence, that illuminated intelligence will recognize a great ideal and will begin to utilize the force and turn it in a better direction. A change in the object is all that is needed in these cases. Turn the same force towards a higher object and the aim will be achieved. The great force in the kāmīc nature that was being used for the sake of the personal self, when turned to the service of the common Self of man will make the hero, the pioneer and the saint. It is a change in the direction of the force caused by the change of the object which is recognized as desirable: make that change— and it is sometimes done by a flash of illumination — and then the whole of that energy will be turned towards the achieving of the higher end.

Suppose, however, that there is a great development of the pure intellect only, while this emotional side of the nature has been dwarfed [Page 31] and stunted in any given incarnation; or suppose that in the course of evolution the tendency has been especially towards the intellectual, while the emotional nature life after life has been little developed — which is quite possible, because our development is often exceedingly lop-sided — there will then be building on the mental plane a piece of magnificent machinery

that in a future incarnation will be of priceless value. Do not imagine for one moment that its building is to be deprecated; do not imagine that it is to be considered undesirable; it is necessary for the full and perfect evolution, it has to be made at some time or another, it has gradually to be achieved in one incarnation or another, but I am simply considering one incarnation for the sake of clearing the mind. Imagine, then, that the whole of it has been devoted to the intellectual building — towards analysis, towards synthesis, towards working out ideas on the mental plane — what is the end of that working ? Isolation. We build round us a wall to keep the outer impacts away, trying to be calm and still and untouched by anything from outside, in order that the mental energy, balanced naturally, may do its work. There we have the building up of the great mānasic possibilities; but such a nature may find in any one incarnation insuperable difficulties in the way of achieving the spiritual [Page 32] life. The isolation is that which makes the very expansion which is a necessity of the spiritual life impossible for the time and the whole conditions of the working are those which are least favorable to the expansive and inclusive qualities. And although such a life would have a most useful and necessary place in the total evolution — as bringing the intellect into magnificent working order and ensuring a splendid and rapid evolution in a future birth, yet, for the time being, spiritual aid would be practically thrown away upon it, because the whole force of the evolution would be turned towards the concentrated, isolated growth, and not towards the pouring forth of life.

Now in looking at the whole of our nature in this way, we shall see how necessary the evolution of each of the planes is for the perfect growth, the perfect expression of the Self. We shall see how, instead of putting the one against the other — the intellectual man decrying the emotional, and the emotional man saying hard things about the intellectual, the one scornfully saying that it is only cold intellect, and the other saying, with equal scorn, that it is only ill-regulated emotion — the balanced and thoughtful person would see in each a necessary stage of evolution and, if he had reached the point where able to give help to each, [Page 33] would consider only the nature of the aid that he should give, in order to help forward a man to the best possible advantage in the activities to which the Self in him was chiefly turning its attention. For we continually fail to recognize that it is the Self in each of us that should be the guiding force in our evolution; that it is not for one to say how the Self in another shall evolve, what activities he shall develop in one incarnation, what line he shall follow in any particular birth. The Self itself chooses the pathway along which it will go, and it is for that inner Self to decide for its vehicles which of them it will develop, along which path lies for it the line of least resistance in any given birth. And anyone who, having evolved to a higher life is able to help those who have not reached so far, will not consider which qualities to him may be most attractive, which path to him may seem most intrinsically desirable; he will rather consider what the Self is working out in that individual and how he can bring energy to bear to assist the Self in its work in that incarnation which it has in hand. So that in all the dealings of the great Masters with evolving humanity, this question of means and methods, of times and seasons, exercises determining force on the nature of the help. They give; and many people would sometimes [Page 34] feel less discouraged, would, in their judgment of the great work which goes on around them, be better balanced and would be seeing things more clearly, if they recognized that the Master gives help in the way that it is most needed by the individual, and does not think for one moment whether in giving that help its nature may be misconstrued, or whether He may be thought to be more or less generous in His contact with any particular soul. He gives what he knows to be the best; He does not give what might bring Him the greatest outrush of gratitude from the limited consciousness with which He is dealing. It often happens, therefore, that in dealing with a man of keen intellect, of great mental power, the Master gives help which is never appreciated by that man during the whole of his incarnation. He helps him onwards in his intellectual growth, helps him to strengthen and to build more perfectly his intellectual apparatus, not minding at all, in His perfect selflessness, in His perfect compassion, whether that man, if he knows of the Master's existence, may think himself neglected, unhelped, or left on one side; but

giving, as all Those do give Who stand on those heights of selflessness, the exact aid which is wanted by the evolving Self to quicken its evolution, the exact kind of succor which makes the [Page 35] final achievement easier than it would otherwise be.

I cannot but think that if, as students, we were sometimes to look at the matter in this broader way, dealing with it in the light of Theosophical knowledge, we should become more compassionate, more tolerant, more charitable to the infinite diversity of evolution that we see around us on every side; more able to help our brothers, more grateful for the help that we ourselves receive.