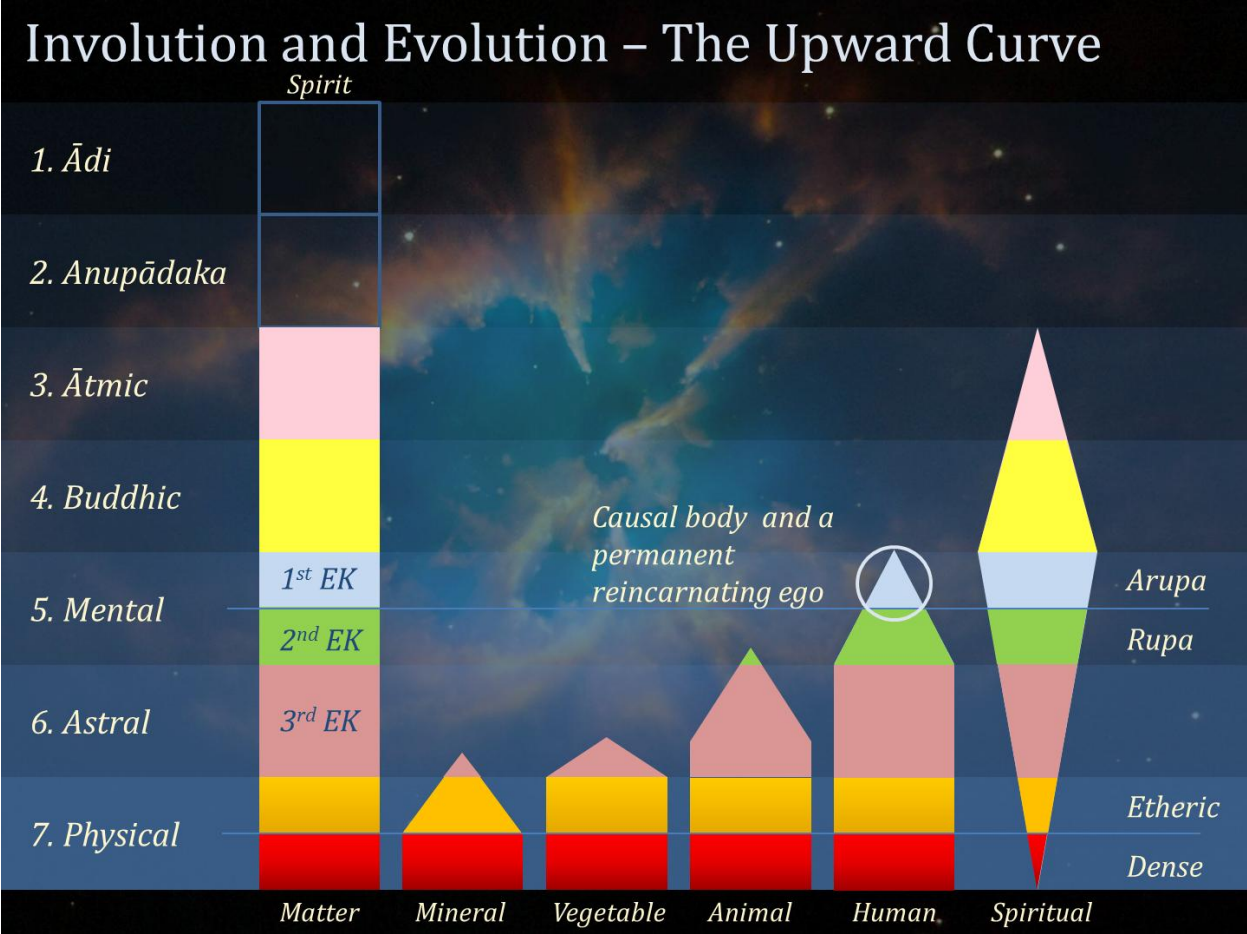


Chapter 3 – The Life Waves

Part 4 – Involution and Evolution



The Upward Curve

The variously colored bands which occupy the principal part of this diagram are intended to signify various stages in the upward progress of the monadic essence.

Involution - then the Upward Sweep

In its downward course, which is indicated by the column to the left of the diagram, it simply aggregates round itself the different kinds of matter on the various planes, evolving that matter by accustoming and adapting it to convey vibrations and impressions, and at the same time acquiring for itself the power to receive and respond readily to these impressions at their respective levels. But when it has reached the lowest point of its immersion in matter, and turns to begin the grand upward sweep of evolution towards divinity, its work then is somewhat different. Its object then is to develop its consciousness fully at these various levels, learning to control the bodies which it constructs from them, and to use them definitely as vehicles, so that they shall not only serve as

bridges to carry impressions from without to the soul, but shall also enable that soul to express itself on their several planes through their instrumentality.

In this effort it naturally begins with the lowest matter, since its vibrations, though they are the largest and coarsest, are also the least powerful or penetrating, and therefore the easiest to control. Thus it happens that man, although possessing in a more or less latent condition so many higher principles, is yet at first for a long time fully conscious only in his physical body, and afterwards very gradually develops the consciousness in his astral vehicle, while in his mental body it comes at a still later stage.

Description of the Ribbons representing the Kingdoms

Turning to [the slide], we see that we have a separate band or ribbon to represent each of the kingdoms.

The Mineral Kingdom

It will be noticed that in the band corresponding to the mineral kingdom we have the full width developed only in the denser part of the physical plane, and that in the part of the band which corresponds to etheric physical matter the band grows steadily narrower as we approach the higher planes. This of course indicates that in the mineral kingdom the control of the soul over the higher part of the etheric matter is not yet perfectly developed. It will be noticed also that there is a small point of [pink], showing that a certain amount of consciousness is already working through astral matter - that is to say, that a certain amount of desire is already manifesting itself.

Desire in the Mineral Kingdom

It may seem strange to many people to speak of desire in connection with the mineral kingdom; but every chemist knows that in chemical affinity we have already a very distinct manifestation of preference on the part of various elements; and what is that but a commencement of desire? One element has so strong a desire for the company of another that it will instantly forsake, in order to join it, any other substance with which it may happen to be in association. Indeed, it is by means of our knowledge of these likes and dislikes of the various elements that we obtain various gases when we want them. For example, oxygen and hydrogen are combined in water, but if we throw sodium into the water we find that oxygen likes sodium better than hydrogen, and promptly deserts the latter to combine with the former; so we have a compound called sodium hydroxide instead of water, and the released hydrogen escapes. Or if we put zinc filings into diluted hydrochloric acid (which is hydrogen combined with chlorine) we find that the chlorine proceeds to abandon the hydrogen in order to join the zinc, so that zinc chloride remains, while hydrogen is given off and may be collected. So it will be seen that we are justified in speaking of the action of desire in the mineral kingdom.

Desire in the Vegetable Kingdom

If we now look at the band which symbolizes the vegetable kingdom we shall see that it is of full width not only in the dense physical, but also in the etheric part. We shall see also that the point typifying desire is more fully developed, betokening a far greater capacity of utilizing the lower astral matter. Those who have studied botany will be aware that likes and dislikes (that is to say, forms of desire) are very much more prominent in the vegetable world than in the mineral, and that many plants exhibit a great deal of ingenuity and sagacity in attaining their ends, limited though these ends may be from our point of view.

Desire in the Animal Kingdom

When we turn to the band representing the animal kingdom we find that consciousness has advanced very much further. It will be noticed that the band is of full width not only through the whole of the physical plane, but in the lowest sub-plane of the astral as well, showing that the animal is capable to the fullest possible extent of experiencing the lower desires, although the rapid narrowing of the band as we reach the higher sub-planes proclaims that his capacity for the higher desires is much more limited. Still it does exist; and so it happens that in exceptional cases he may manifest an exceedingly high quality of affection or devotion.

Intelligence beyond Instinct in Animals

It will be observed also that the band representing the animal kingdom ends in a point of green, signifying that at this stage there is already a development of intelligence, employing mental matter for its manifestation. It used at one time to be supposed that reason was the quality which distinguished man from the animals - that he possessed this faculty, while they had only instinct. As regards the higher domestic animals, however, that is certainly a mistake; anyone who has kept a dog or a cat, and made a friend of him will surely have observed that such creatures undoubtedly do exercise the power of reason from cause to effect, although naturally the lines along which their reason can work are few and limited, and the faculty itself is far less powerful than ours.

In the case of the average animal the point is quite correctly shown as embracing only the lowest variety of reason, acting in the matter of the lowest subdivision of the mental plane; but with the highly developed domestic animal the point might readily extend even to the highest of the four lower levels, though, of course, it would remain only a point, and by no means the full width of the band.

Human Consciousness

Man Possesses a Causal Body and a Permanent Reincarnating Ego

When we turn to the consideration of the band of color which represents humanity, we at once note several quite new features. In this case the band retains its full width not only through the whole of the physical plane, but also through the whole of the astral, showing that man is capable of all varieties of desire to the fullest possible extent, the highest as well as the lowest. It also exhibits the full width in the lowest level of the mental plane, indicating that, as far as that level is concerned, man's reasoning faculty is fully developed. Higher than that, however, the development is not yet full; but an entirely new factor is introduced in the dark blue triangle on the higher mental plane, betokening the possession by the man of a causal body and a permanent reincarnating ego. This blue triangle corresponds to the other triangle in the circle which is seen in *[the slide depicting the three great outpourings]*.

In the great majority of mankind the point which denotes consciousness of any sort upon the higher mental levels does not rise beyond the third or lowest of them. It is only very gradually, as his development progresses, that the ego is able to raise his consciousness to the second or the first of these sub-planes.

Desire in Man

It is not, of course, implied that the man can function consciously at these heights as yet. In the most primitive types, desire is still emphatically the most prominent feature, though the mental development has also proceeded to some extent. Such a man during life has a dim consciousness in his astral body while asleep, and after death he is very fully conscious and active on the lower astral sub planes. In fact, that lower astral life usually forms nearly the whole of the interval between his incarnations, for as yet he has practically nothing of the life of the heaven-world. The consciousness of the man at this level is undoubtedly centered in quite the lower part of the astral body, and his life is principally governed by sensations connected with the physical plane.

As Man Evolves he Governs Desire with Reason

The ordinary man of our own civilization is still living almost entirely in his sensations, although the higher astral is coming into play; but still for him the prominent question which guides his conduct is not in the least what is right or reasonable to do, but simply what he himself desires to do. The more cultured and developed begin to govern desire by reason - that is to say, the center of consciousness is gradually transferring itself from the higher astral to the lower mental. Slowly as man progresses, it moves up further still, and he begins to be dominated by principle rather than by interest and desire.

Man in a Shell

To be able to use these different bodies as definite vehicles in which the soul can consciously function is another and still greater development. Any fairly advanced and cultured man has consciousness fully developed in the astral body, and is perfectly capable of employing it as a vehicle if he were only in the habit of doing so. But to do this a definite effort would be necessary.

The enormous majority of men know nothing at all about the astral body or its uses, and so naturally make no effort of any kind. They have behind them the tradition of the immemorial custom of a long series of lives in which the astral faculties have not been used, for these faculties have been gradually and slowly growing inside a shell, somewhat as a chicken grows inside the egg.

Man Is In Enclosed In a Shell of Self Centered Thought

The shell is composed of the great mass of self-centered thought in which the ordinary man is so hopelessly entombed. Whatever may have been the thoughts chiefly engaging his mind during the day, he usually continues them when falling asleep, and is thus surrounded by so dense a wall of his own making that he practically knows nothing of what is going on outside.

Occasionally, but very rarely, some violent impact from without, or some strong desire of his own from within, may tear aside this curtain of mist for the moment and permit him to receive some definite impression; but even then the fog closes in again almost immediately, and he dreams on unobservantly as before. It is obvious that this shell may be broken in various ways.

Man Breaks Through the Shell (or Mist) in Different Ways

By Evolution

First - In the far-distant future the slow but sure evolution of the man will undoubtedly gradually dissipate the curtain of mist, so that he will become conscious by degrees of the mighty world of intensely active life which surrounds him.

By Effort Hastening the Natural Process

Second - The man himself, having learnt the facts of the case, may by steady and persistent effort from within clear away the mist, and gradually overcome the inertia resulting from ages of inactivity. This is, of course, merely the hastening of the natural process, and will be in no way harmful if the man's development is proceeding with equal rapidity along other lines. But if he should gain this awakening without having attained at the same time the strength, knowledge, and moral development which would naturally have preceded it, he would be liable to the double danger of misusing such powers as he might acquire, and of being overwhelmed by fear in the presence of forces which he could neither understand nor control.

By Accident

Third - It may happen that some accident, or some unlawful use of magical ceremonies, may so rend the veil that it may never be wholly closed; and then the man is left in the terrible condition so well described by Madame Blavatsky in her story of "A Bewitched Life", or by Bulwer Lytton in his powerful novel *Zanoni*.

By Assistance of a Friend Who Knows the Man

Fourth - Some friend who knows the man thoroughly, and believes him capable of facing the dangers of the astral plane and doing good unselfish work there, may act upon this cloud-shell from without and rouse the man to definite action. Naturally the man who does this undertakes a very serious responsibility toward the man whom he thus arouses. The elder worker assumes this responsibility only when by long and intimate acquaintance he has become reasonably certain that the younger possesses in some measure all the qualifications mentioned in Chapter XIX of *Invisible Helpers*; but the need of helpers is so great that every aspirant may be absolutely certain that there will not be a day's delay in arousing him as soon as he is seen to be ready.

Meantime any who feel themselves overlooked have always the resource of adopting the second method to which I referred above; but before doing so they would be well advised to assure themselves absolutely and beyond any possibility of doubt that they possess the requisite development along other lines, as otherwise their fall will be speedy and certain.

Man Can Work on the Astral Plane at Night

But a great deal of work may be done, and constantly is done, short of this full awakening. A man who falls asleep each night with the definite intention in his mind of doing a certain piece of work, will assuredly go and attempt to carry out his intention as soon as he is freed from his physical body; but having done his best in connection with that particular case, he is almost certain to let the fog close round him once more, simply because he has for ages been unaccustomed to initiate a fresh line of action when functioning apart from the physical brain.

Many make a practice of thus ensuring that they may perform at least one helpful action each night; and of course in many cases the action is such as to occupy the whole of the time spent in sleep, so that they are practically exerting themselves to the fullest extent possible for them. We should also remember that it is by no means only during sleep that we can give effective help; the strong living thought can be sent out at any moment, and can never fail in producing its effect. But the difference between the one who has been definitely awakened and the one who has not, is that in the case of the former the curtain of mist has been for ever dissipated, while in the latter it merely opens for the time and then shuts down as impenetrably as before.

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(MVI)

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