

# Seeming “Discrepancies”

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To the Editor of *The Theosophist*.

I have lately been engaged in devoting a few evenings' study to your admirable article, "Fragments of Occult Truth," which deserves far more attention than a mere casual reading. It is therein stated that the translated *Ego cannot* span the abyss separating its state from ours, or that it cannot descend into our atmosphere and reach us; that it attracts but cannot be attracted, or, in short, that no departed SPIRIT can visit us.

In Vol. I, page 67, of *Isis*, I find it said that many of the *spirits*, subjectively controlling mediums, are human disembodied spirits, that their being benevolent or wicked in quality largely depends upon the medium's private morality, that they cannot materialize, but only "project their aetherial reflection on the atmospheric waves."

On page 69: "Not every one can attract *human* spirits, who likes. One of the most powerful attractions of our departed ones is their strong affection for those whom they have left on earth. It draws them irresistibly, by degrees, into the current of the Astral Light vibrating between the person sympathetic to them and the Universal Soul."

On page 325: "Sometimes, but rarely, the planetary spirits . . . produce them [subjective manifestations]; sometimes the spirits of our translated and beloved friends, etc."

From the foregoing it would appear as if both teachings were not uniform, but it may be that *souls*, instead of *spirits*, are implied, or that I have misunderstood the meaning. Such difficult subjects are rather puzzling to Western students, especially to one who, like myself, is a mere tyro,<sup>1</sup> though always grateful to receive knowledge from those who are in a position to impart such.

Yours, etc.,

9th January, 1882.

CALEDONIAN THEOSOPHIST.

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<sup>1</sup> **Tyro** - A beginner in learning something.

*Editor's Note.*—It is to be feared that our valued Brother has both misunderstood our meaning in *Isis* and that of the “Fragments of Occult Truth.” Read in their correct sense, the statements in the latter do not offer the slightest discrepancy with the passages quoted from *Isis* but both teachings are uniform.

Our “Caledonian” Brother believes that, because it is stated in *Isis*,<sup>2</sup> that “many . . . among those who control the medium *subjectively* . . . are *human, disembodied spirits*,” and in the “Fragments,” in the words of our critic, that “the Ego cannot span the abyss separating its state from ours . . . cannot descend into our atmosphere, . . . or, in short, that no departed SPIRIT can visit us”—there is a contradiction between the two teachings.

We answer—“None at all.” We reiterate both statements, and will defend the proposition. Throughout *Isis*—although an attempt was made in the *Introductory Chapter* to show the great difference that exists between the terms “soul” and “spirit”—one the *reliquiae*<sup>3</sup> of the *personal* EGO, the other the pure essence of the spiritual INDIVIDUALITY—the term “spirit” had to be often used in the sense given to it by the Spiritualists, as well as other similar conventional terms, as, otherwise, a still greater confusion would have been caused. Therefore, the meaning of the three sentences, cited by our friend, should be thus understood:

On page sixty-seven wherein it is stated that many of the *spirits*, *subjectively controlling* mediums, are “human disembodied spirits,” etc., the word “controlling” must not be understood in the sense of a “spirit” possessing himself of the organism of a medium; nor that, in each case, it is a “spirit”; for often it is but a *shell* in its preliminary stage of dissolution, when most of the physical intelligence and faculties are yet fresh and have not begun to disintegrate, or *fade out*. A “spirit,” or the spiritual Ego, cannot *descend* to the medium, but it can *attract* the spirit of the latter to itself, and it can do this only during the two intervals—before and after its “gestation period.”

Interval the first is that period between the physical death and the merging of the spiritual Ego into that state which is known in the Arhat esoteric doctrine as “Bar-do.” We have translated this as the “gestation” period, and it lasts from a few days to several years, according to the evidence of the adepts.

Interval the second lasts so long as the merits of the old *Ego* entitle the being to reap the fruit of its reward in its new regenerated Egoship. It occurs after the gestation period is over, and the new spiritual Ego is reborn—like the fabled Phoenix from its ashes—from the old one. The locality, which the former inhabits, is called by the northern Buddhist Occultists “Deva-chan,” the word answering, perhaps, to Paradise or the Kingdom of Heaven of the Christian elect.

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<sup>2</sup> HPB: [Vol. I, p. 67.]

<sup>3</sup> **Reliquiae** - remains, as those of fossil organisms.

Having enjoyed a time of bliss, proportionate to his deserts, the new *personal* Ego gets reincarnated into a *personality* when the remembrance of his previous Egoship, of course, fades out, and he can “communicate” no longer with his fellowmen on the planet he has left forever, as the individual he was there known to be.

After numberless reincarnations, and on numerous planets and in various spheres, a time will come, at the end of the Maha-Yug or great cycle, when each individuality will have become so spiritualized that, before its final absorption into the *One All*, its series of past *personal* existences will marshal themselves before him in a retrospective order like the many days of some period of a man’s existence.

The words—“their being benevolent or wicked in quality largely depends upon the medium’s private morality”—which conclude the first quoted sentence mean simply this: a pure medium’s *Ego* can be drawn to and made, for an instant, to unite in a magnetic (?) relation with a real disembodied spirit, whereas the soul of an *impure* medium can only confabulate with the *astral* soul, or “shell,” of the deceased.

The former possibility explains those extremely rare cases of direct writing in recognized autographs, and of messages from the higher class of disembodied intelligences. We should say then that the personal morality of the medium would be a fair test of the genuineness of the manifestation. As quoted by our friend, “affection to those whom they have left on earth” is “one of the most powerful attractions” between two loving spirits—the embodied and the disembodied one.

Whence the idea, then, that the two teachings are “not uniform”? We may well be taxed with too loose and careless a mode of expression, with a misuse of the foreign language in which we write, with leaving too much unsaid and depending unwarrantably upon the imperfectly developed intuition of the reader. But there never was, nor can there be, any radical discrepancy between the teachings in Isis and those of the later period, as both proceed from one and the same source—the ADEPT BROTHERS.