

THE DUAL NATURE OF MAN

The dual nature of man in all its ramifications is a large subject, and to understand it is of the first importance. Through understanding the human organization in the esoteric sense, keys are afforded for the comprehension of after-death states and processes; for the technique of reincarnation, and of how man may become immortal. The present discussion covers a phase of the subject that falls largely within the range of common experience, and is of the greatest practical importance in helping the student to gain an understanding of himself and his associates.

In the highest metaphysical sense, there is but One Reality, yet on the plane of relative knowledge, which is the plane of our common human experience and action, we must reckon with the problems of our complex nature. It is a serious mistake to confuse metaphysical reality with the processes of valuation and differentiation which are inescapable on the plane of relative consciousness. Hence, to refuse to face the problems of man's relative nature on the ground that he really is a unit, a One, is simply to sidestep responsibility and fail to realize the significance of metaphysical Oneness.

Occultism teaches that man is subject to a triune evolution, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes. But with the exception of a few individuals the highest or monadic evolution is not an attained experience. Knowledge of this highest evolu-

tion is of theoretical importance, since with it the realization may be attained. Further, a truer perspective concerning the lower evolution is then realized. For the majority the phases of development that are of vital importance are the lower two, the physical and manasic.* The conflict between these two natures is a sufficiently common experience and it is not difficult to attain a practical understanding of them.

In Robert Louis Stevenson's story "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," it is not indicated how far he was conscious of the occult significance of what he wrote, but, conscious or unconscious, he portrayed very effectively the great drama of the Human Soul. Man has an earthly or sensible* nature which continually clashes with his higher or intelligent nature. This latter is not his spiritual nature since that is the Monad, but frequently it is called the spiritual man. This intelligent nature is not the Higher Self but the Higher or Reincarnating Ego which corresponds to the Higher Manas. The sensible nature is the outer sensuous man, or, the personal nature. Since man, as well as other creatures, is compounded out of living substance, which means substance possessing the principle of spontaneity, it follows that his lower as well as his higher nature have the power of self-assertiveness. His personality is not an automaton, and does not respond initially to the direction of the Higher or Inner Man with the same completeness that an automobile responds to the control of the driver. It is more like a horse with a rider, and in most cases a poorly broken horse; for in some instances it acts like a wild bucking bronco. We have learned that the horse has a will of its own which differs in important respects from the will of its rider. The control of the rider is that of

an intelligent creature not unlike that of an engineer directing a mechanism. Sometimes almost perfect harmony is attained between rider and steed, and when this is the case we have a wonderful combination, and co-operation between the two.

A Master is one who has completely mastered his steed or personality so that there is but One Will where formerly there had been two. Mastery results from training of the steed rather than breaking it, for this would have a spirit-destroying effect analogous to the effect on a horse that has been treated so severely that it becomes hopeless and spiritless. But when the steed or the personal nature has come to recognise the complete ascendancy of the Inner Man, the Rider, it no longer sets its will in opposition. It is by no means easy to gain this control, so it behooves us to be patient with our friends when we observe their steeds behaving fractiously; at the same time never allowing our own control to become slack. If we can master our steeds then we have effective instruments of action through which the purposes of the Inner Man may be achieved on this plane. If we fail to attain this mastery, this Inner Man remains largely helpless and ineffective.

The method of floating through life, if persisted in, leads to failure through ineffectiveness, and there will be no inner content in such a life for the incarnation is practically wasted.

If, on the other hand, the issue is accepted and the student resolves to become lord in his realm, then he will have to face the opposition of the fractious steed of his personal nature. And the more resolved he is the stronger will be the fight. But if he refuses to accept defeat he will find that somewhere in

the depths of his being he has the necessary strength to command ultimate mastery. The important point is that he refuse to be content with any compromise. Probably there are none who do not recognize the fact that one part of the nature tends in a direction contrary to another. Hence, if a course of life is followed which accords with one aspect, the other is defeated in its purposes. This inner conflict is strong save in two types, the very low and the very high. In the first case we have a purely animal man, such as the primitive types of men and degenerates. For such individuals life is simple since they follow without inner resistance the urgings of the animal nature. The second instance is that of the regenerate or spiritually victorious men, as the Masters. With them the animal nature has been completely subdued and there is but One Will. Between these two poles lies the mass of humanity, torn between the two opposed tendencies of their nature. This is the stage of crucifixion from which follows resurrection if the spiritual nature triumphs, but spiritual death in case the animal side becomes supreme.

Mankind cannot linger indefinitely in the field of conflict. There is a cycle, which we might call one of grace, during which man may vacillate between his higher and lower nature, but inevitably a time comes when he must either win to spiritual purity or he will gravitate to the highroad of destruction. The necessity for attaining spiritual purity in ones being, if immortality is to be realized, may be illustrated from chemistry. All compound substances are to a greater or less degree unstable. They do not have anything like the duration of elements. A substance like common table salt may last for a considerable time in nature pro-

vided it is not submitted to the action of strong acids or alkalis; if it is, the sodium and chlorine of which it is composed go their separate ways. Let salt symbolize man with his dual nature and let the chlorine, since it is a gas, stand for his spiritual aspect, sodium for the animal, then we can see the significance of the acid test. If an Ego ~~has gravitated~~ has gravitated strongly toward sodium then, when the separation comes, consciousness of self-identity goes toward the lower pole of darkness or unconsciousness. On the other hand, if the Ego is identified predominantly with chlorine, or Spirit, then following the acid test, self-identity or the "I-AMness" rises in freedom.

There is no path to immortality or mastery save through conquering the lower nature. Now the lower nature can never be mastered simply by indulging it. On the contrary it gains strength. It is the spiritual nature that must be cultivated and given full freedom. Occasionally a student may say, "I do not want self-denial or self-sacrifice. That is the negative path and I want the more positive path of doing as I please." This is a foolish statement and shows lack of understanding, since whatever course an individual chooses one or the other aspect of his nature is denied and sacrificed. Which shall it be, the animal in man, or the spiritual being which he also is? The wise student will say: "I will not sacrifice my spiritual being for that is the Real Man. I will to be positive and assert my freedom. If anything in my lower nature stands in its way then it must go for it is essentially negative." I choose the Path of Realization, of Transcendence, and of Freedom." Thus every student should decide which he most desires and then proceed courageously to transform everything in his nature which stands opposed.

It is in the practical working out of the problem formed by the conflict of the dual nature that we find the value of discipline. To be effective this discipline must be cheerfully accepted by the individual concerned whether he imposes it himself or asks someone else to help establish it for him. If he regards the discipline as something externally imposed upon him and resents it in his heart, it will do him no good. If someone who has accepted the responsibilities of an elder brother or teacher sets the course of training, the student should treat it as something which he himself truly desires and wills. It is not important that the student should always understand the rationale of the specific steps in the discipline. In fact, if he always understood it would mean that he was fully abreast of the consciousness of the teacher and the latter would no longer need to discipline him. But a teacher who is really able to help the student on to higher levels may seem at times arbitrary or incomprehensible. If the training is really effective it may seem unjust from the level of the consciousness of the one being trained. This must necessarily be so for the student is still in the midst of the struggle with his lower nature, and that which is good from the standpoint of the higher nature will often seem strange, or severe, or even unjust from the viewpoint of the former. It should be remembered that so long as an individual feels that any injustices or wrong can possibly be done to him he has not mastered his lower nature. The Spiritual Man is a King who cannot possibly be injured, for he is superior to that which is not spiritual, and the lesser cannot harm the higher. Also, since Spirit is one, it cannot be unjust to itself. The lower nature often requires rough treatment to be dislodged from a false position.

In the spiritual sense no student is ever right in criticizing his teacher. This has nothing to do with the question as to whether the teacher is always wise in the relative sense. It is simply a matter of the attitude the student must take if the teacher is to have spiritual value for him. In this domain there is no constraint which requires a student to accept anyone as a teacher or to continue as a pupil. But if he is to receive any real benefit he must really be a pupil, otherwise not even the wisest of men could instruct him. On the other hand, if a student is really great as a pupil (a rare phenomenon) then he can force wisdom out of the mouth of an ordinary teacher. This is an occult law, sometimes stated in the form: "The Chela makes the Guru." There is a story told of a Chela who by his art as a pupil once redeemed a black adept. Students should remember that the possibilities of greatness as pupils are as large as the opportunities for greatness as teachers. There is a law which restrains the teacher, for he only may do or say whatever his pupils make possible. In the spiritual Chela-Guru relationship there are no limits. The Guru becomes the expression of the Master to the Chela who is on that Line of Life.

The reason underlying this is: the teacher symbolizes Spirit or the Higher Self of the pupil. As the pupil relates himself to his teacher so also he brings about in himself the ascendancy of his own spiritual nature. When the work that a given teacher can do is finished, the student will be graduated.