

None sees the slow and upward sweep
By which the soul from life-depths deep
Ascends, —unless, mayhap, when free,
With each new death we backward see
The long perspective of our race
Our multitudinous past lives trace.

—WILLIAM SHARP.

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CYCLES.

AMONG problems which have vexed the human mind, none have caused more perplexity than that of cycles or the periodical recurrence of events.

The ancients endeavored to know the law of cycles in order to conform their lives to it. In our times men seek to discover cyclic law that they may conduct their business profitably. In all times men have tried to discover the law of cycles because with such knowledge they could follow their agricultural pursuits with certainty, ward off epidemics, pestilences, and provide against famine; foretell wars, storms, seismic disturbances, and guard against affections of the mind; know the cause of birth, life, death, and the after state; and profiting by the experiences of the past, they could outline future events with accuracy.

The word cycle is derived from the Greek “kuklos,” which means a ring, wheel, or circle. In a wider sense a cycle is the action and the reaction of motions from a center, the nature and duration of the cycle being measured by the direction and impulse of the motions as they go from and return to their source. The end of one cycle or circle is the beginning of another, so that the motion is spiral, as in the winding of a string or the unfolding of the petals of a rose.

Cycles can be divided into two broad classes: those which are known and those which are subjects of speculation. Among those with which we are most familiar is the cycle of a day, when the earth has made one complete revolution around its axis in twenty-four hours; the cycle of a lunar month, when the moon has made one revolution around the earth in 28 days; the cycle of a year, when the earth has completed one revolution around the sun and the sun has made one revolution through the signs of

the zodiac, a period of about 365 days; and the sidereal year or cycle of the precession of the equinoxes when the pole of the equator has once revolved around the pole of the ecliptic in 25,868 years.

It is a matter of common knowledge that from the apparent journey of the sun through the constellations of the zodiac, we get our four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter, each extending over a period of three months, and that each of these months is divided into four quarters and a fraction, each quarter of the month being a phase of the moon as first quarter, full moon, last quarter, and new moon. The zodiac is the great sidereal clock, the sun and moon its hands which mark off periods of time. After the zodiac we have devised a chronometer which has twelve signs; these mark the light and dark periods in one day of twice twelve hours.

A subject of interest to the statistician and historian is the cyclical appearance of fevers, plagues, famines, and wars; the cyclical appearance and disappearance of races, and the periodically recurring rise and fall of civilizations.

Among the individual cycles there is the cycle of the life current which passes from the aura around the body into the air-chambers of the lungs, where using the blood as its vehicle it flows by the pulmonary veins to the left auricle, then to the left ventricle, thence passing out through the aorta is distributed to all parts of the body as arterial blood. The life current with the life cells returns through the capillaries to the veins, thence through the venae cavae to the right auricle, thence to the right ventricle, and from there through the pulmonary artery to the lungs, where, having been purified, it again becomes the carrier of life to the body, the complete cycle occupying about thirty seconds.

The most important of all cycles to us is that cycle in which is included the pre-natal state, birth, life in this world, death, and the after-death state. From a revelation of this cycle a knowledge of all other cycles will follow. We believe that in the pre-natal development of man the entire history of our planet is epitomized.

The human body is keyed up to run for a certain period, the cycle of its life. In this period, past ages in the life of humanity are lived over again by the individual. Then the wheel of life turns into the cycle of death.

It is with the cycles of birth and life and death that the ancient philosophers were concerned, because by knowledge of them they might pass into and out of that bourne from which, it is said, no traveller returns. The purpose of pre-natal development is to draw the universal elements into one body, mould them into the human form, which offers the greatest opportunity for experience to the intelligent principle, the mind, which is to inhabit the human body. For the mind the purpose of life is to acquire a knowledge of its relation to the universe, through and while in the body, to perform the duties which follow that knowledge, and to build in the future by the experiences of the past.

Death is the closing, reviewing and balancing of life's work, and a means of return to the world of the thoughts which belong to this world. It is the gateway through which the soul returns to its own sphere.

The after-death state is the period of the rest and gestation of the life's work before the beginning of another life.

Birth and death are the morning and evening of the soul. Life is the period for work, and after death comes rest, recuperation, and assimilation. As the necessary duties of the morning are performed after the night's rest, then the work of the day, the duties of the evening, and return to rest, so the soul puts on its appropriate vestures and they pass through the period of childhood, engage in the real day's work of life, and are laid aside in the evening of old age, when the soul passes into that rest which will prepare it for a new journey.

All the phenomena of nature tell the story of the soul through its cycles, incarnations and reincarnations in life. How shall we regulate these cycles, how accelerate, decrease or change their motions? When the way is really seen, each one finds it in his power to do it. The way is through thought. Through thought in the mind the soul came into the world, through thought the soul became bound to the world, through thought the soul becomes freed.

The nature and direction of ones thought determines his birth, character and destiny. The brain is the workshop of the body, the thoughts which are fashioned from this workshop pass into space to return after a longer or shorter while to their creator. As the thoughts created affect the minds of men of a nature like unto the thought, so they return to their creator to react on him as they had acted on others. Thoughts of hatred, selfishness and the like, compel their creator to go through like experiences and bind him to the world.

Thoughts of unselfishness, compassion, and aspiration, act on the minds of others and, returning to their creator, free him from the bonds of recurring births.

It is these thoughts which man continually projects that meet him after death. He must dwell with these thoughts, digest and assimilate them, each in its own class, and after that has been done, he must return to this world, the school and the educator of the soul. If attention is paid to the fact, it will be found that there are periods in one's life where certain moods recur. Periods of despondency, gloom, despair; periods of joyous exuberance and happiness; periods of ambition or aspiration. Let these periods be noted, combat the evil tendencies, and take advantage of favorable opportunities.

This knowledge can only come to the man who becomes as "wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove."



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P. O. Box 17510 • Rochester, NY 14617 • USA

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