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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

The Christian says that Man has a Body, Soul and Spirit. The Theosophist says that Man has Seven Principles. In a few words what are these Seven Principles?

The theosophist views man from two standpoints. From one he is mortal, from the other he is immortal. The mortal part of man is made up of four distinct principles. First, the physical body, which is built up from solids, liquids, air and fire, which are altogether the material of the physical body. Second, the *linga sharira*, which is the form, or design body of the physical. This form body is of ether, a less changeable matter than the constantly changing physical. The design or form body is the principle which moulds the unformed foods of solids, liquids, gases and light taken into the body, and which preserves its form throughout life. Third, is *prana*, or the principle of life. This principle of life causes the form body to expand and grow, otherwise the form would always remain the same. By the principle of life the foods of the physical body are kept in constant circulation. The principle of life tears down and sluffs off the old and replaces it in the form with the new matter. Thus the old physical is carried away and replaced with new physical matter, and the life matter is built into a physical body, and that physical body is given shape and held together by the design or form body. Fourth, is *kama*, the principle of desire. Desire is the turbulent craving animal in man. It is the inherent instincts and animal tendencies in man, and it uses and gives direction to the life and form of the physical body. These four principles constitute that part of man which dies, is separated, disintegrated and returns to the elements from which it is drawn.

The immortal part of man is threefold: First, *manas*, the mind. The mind is the distinctive principle which makes man a human being. The mind is the reasoning principle in man, that which analyzes, separates, compares, which identifies itself and considers itself separate from others. It unites with desire and during physical life it conceives desire to be of itself. Mind reasons, but desire wants; the instincts crave, as opposed to what reason dictates. From the contact of mind with desire come all our experiences in life. Owing to

the contact of mind and desire we have the duality of man. On the one hand, a craving, furious, rampant brute; on the other, a reasonable, peace loving being whose origin is divine. The mind is the principle by which the face of nature is changed; mountains are levelled, canals built, sky-towering structures raised and the forces of nature harnessed and driven to build up civilizations. The sixth, buddhi, is the divine soul, the principle which knows and feels itself to be in others and others in itself. It is the principle of true brotherhood. It sacrifices itself that all nature might be raised to a higher degree. It is the vehicle through which the pure spirit acts. Seventh, atma, is the spirit itself, pure and undefiled. All things unite in it, and it is the one pervading principle through within and about all things. Mind, soul and spirit, are the immortal principles, whereas the physical, the form, life and desire are mortal.

The christian division of man into body, soul and spirit is not at all clear. If by body is meant the physical form, then how account for the separate life, the permanent form and the animal in man? If by soul is meant the thing that may be lost or may be saved, this requires an explanation different from the christian. The christian uses soul and spirit and synonymously and he seems to be neither able to define soul and spirit nor to be able to show the difference between each. The theosophist by his sevenfold classification gives of man an explanation of man, which at least is reasonable.

In a few words can you tell me what takes place at death?

Death means the separating of the physical body from its design, or form body. As death approaches the form body of ether withdraws itself from the feet upwards. Then the mind or ego leaves the body through and with the breath. The breath in departing stops life, leaves the form body, and the form body ascends from the chest and usually rolls out of the physical from the mouth. The cord which had connected the physical with its form body is snapped, and death has taken place. It is then impossible to revive the physical body. The desire principle may hold the sensual mind in bondage for a time, if that mind during life has thought of its desires as itself, in which case it remains with the animal desires until such time as it can distinguish between itself and them, then it passes into the ideal state of rest or activity which conforms to its highest thoughts, entertained by it while living in the physical body. There it remains until its period of rest is at an end, then it returns to earth life to continue its work from the point where it was left off.

Most spiritualists claim that at their seances the souls of the departed appear and converse with friends. Theosophists say that this is not the case; that what is seen is not the soul but the shell, spook or desire body which the soul has discarded. Who is correct?

We consider the statement of the theosophist to be the more correct, because the entity with which one may converse at a seance is only an echo of what was by the entity thought during life and such conversation applies to material things, whereas the divine part of man would speak of things spiritual.

If the soul of man may be held a prisoner after death by its desire body, why may not this soul appear at seances and why is it wrong to say that it does not appear and converse with the sitters?

It is not impossible for the human soul to appear at seances and converse with friends, but it is highly improbable that it does, because the "sitters" do not know how to evoke the temporary prisoner and because such appearance would either have to be summoned by one who knows how, or else by the intense desire of one who is living as well as of the discarnated human soul. It is wrong to say that the appearances are the souls of the departed because the human soul who cannot distinguish between itself and its desires usually goes through a metamorphosis similar to that of a butterfly in order that it may realize its condition. While in this condition it is inactive as is the cocoon. That human soul who is able of its own volition to distinguish itself from the animal would refuse to have more to do with that animal which causes it such torment.

The reason for such an unusual occurrence as the appearances of a discarnated human soul at a seance would be to communicate with some one present on certain topics, such, for instance, as information of spiritual importance or a philosophical value to the one most concerned. The communications of the entities who do masquerade under the title of some departed person, chatter and prattle about unimportant things with an occasional speculation on some matter suggested by one of the sitters. If our departed friends had been guilty of such driveling conversation while with us during their earth life, we would, as friends, have grieved for them, but nevertheless we should have been compelled to have had them placed in an insane asylum, because it would have been apparent at once that they had lost their minds. This is just what has occurred to the beings who appear at seances. They have actually lost their minds. But the desire which we speak of remains, and it is the

desire with only a bare reflection of the mind which it had been connected with that appears at the seance. These appearances jump from one topic to another with no showing of reason nor any apparent lucidity of thought or expression. Like the insane, they appear to be suddenly interested in a subject, but they as suddenly lose the subject, or their connection with it, and jump to another. When one visits an insane asylum he will meet with some exceptional cases. A few will converse with apparent ease on many topics of interest, but when certain matters are introduced the lunatic becomes violent. If the conversation is continued long enough the point at which they ceased to be human will be discovered. It is just so with the spooks or desire forms who appear at seances. They echo the old instincts and longings of and for earth life and express themselves according to those longings, but they invariably fall into nonsensical chattering when other matters are introduced that are not suited to their particular desire. They have the cunning of the animal and, like the animal, will play about the field and cross and recross their tracks to elude the one who pursues them with consecutive questions. If the hunt is carried on, the departed either bids farewell to the questioner because his "time is up and he must go" or else he will say that he does not know how to reply to what he is asked. If a discarnated human soul should appear he would be direct and lucid in his statements and what he said would be of value to the person addressed. The nature of his communication would be of moral, ethical, or spiritual worth, it would not be of commonplace matters, as is almost always the case at seances.

If the appearances at seances are only the shells, spooks or desire bodies, which have been discarnated by the human souls after death, why is it that they are able to communicate with the sitters on a subject known only to the person concerned, and why is it that the same subject will be brought up over and over again?

If the spooks or desire forms were connected during earth life with the names with which they claim to be, they are aware of certain topics, as in the case of a madman, but they are only automatons, they repeat over and over again the loose thoughts and desires of life. Like a phonograph they speak out what was spoken into them, but unlike the phonograph they have the desires of the animal. As their desires were connected with the earth, so they are now, but without the restraint due to the presence of the mind. Their answers are

suggested and oftentimes indicated by the questions put to them, and which are by them seen in the questioner's mind even though he may not be aware of it. As for instance, one may see a light reflected on the wearer's hat or other object of which he may not be aware. When the questioner is informed of something of which he has not before known, he considers it wonderful and of course thinks that it could only have been known by himself and his informant, whereas it is only the reflection seen in the mind of the questioner or else it is the impression of an occurrence caused by the desire-form and given expression whenever the occasion allowed it.

The fact cannot be denied that spirits do sometimes tell the truth and also give advice which if followed will result to the benefit of all concerned. How can the theosophist, or any other opposed to spiritualism, deny or explain away these facts?

No theosophist or other person respecting the truth ever tries to deny facts, nor to dodge the truth, nor would he attempt to hide the facts, or to explain them away. The endeavor of any truth loving person is to get at the facts, not to hide them; but his love for facts does not require that he should accept as true the claims of an unreasoning person, or those of a spook, or shell, or elemental, masquerading at a seance as a dear departed friend. He listens to the claims made, then proves the claims to be true or false by the evidence advanced. The facts always prove themselves. Out of their mouths, saints prove themselves to be saints, philosophers to be philosophers; the talk of unreasoning people proves them to be unreasoning and spooks prove themselves to be spooks. We do not believe that theosophists are opposed to the facts of Spiritualism, though they deny the claims of most spiritualists.

The first part of the question is: do "spirits" sometimes tell the truth. They do—sometimes; but so does the most hardened criminal for the matter of that. Inasmuch as no particular instance of the truth stated by a "spirit" has been given, we will venture to say that the truth or truths stated by what some people will insist on calling "spirits" is of a commonplace nature. Such, for instance, as a statement that within a week you will receive a letter from Mary, or John, or that Maria will fall sick, or get well, or that some good fortune will befall, or that a friend will die, or that an accident will occur. Should any of these things be true it would only go to show that an entity—whether of a high or low character—is capable of a finer sensuous perception than the same being, if incarnated. This is

so because each body perceives on that plane on which it is functioning. While living in a physical body, one perceives material things through the physical senses; and events are perceived only at the time of their occurrence, such as getting a cold, or falling, or receiving a letter, or meeting with an accident. But if one is not limited to the physical body and still has the senses, these senses act on the plane next the physical, which is the astral. One who functions on the astral plane can perceive events occurring there; the viewpoint in the astral plane is from a higher ground than the physical. Thus, for instance, the thought or positive intention of one to write a letter could be seen by one capable of seeing such intention or thought, or a cold could be predicted with certainty by seeing the condition of the astral body of the one who would have it. Some accidents may also be predicted when the causes of them have been set in motion. These causes are invariably in the thoughts or the actions of people, and when a cause is given the result follows. To illustrate: if a stone is thrown in the air one may predict its fall long before it touches the ground. According to the force with which it was thrown and the arc of its ascent, the curve of its descent and the distance it will fall may accurately be predicted.

Entities who function on the astral plane may thus see the causes after they are generated and may predict an event with accuracy because they can see in the astral that which will occur in the physical. But a murderer can see the ascent of a stone and predict its descent quite as truly as a saint or a philosopher. These are of material things. The advice given as to how to avoid an accident does not prove that it is given by an immortal soul. A villain might advise one of an impending accident as accurately as a sage. Either might advise one standing in the way of a descending stone and prevent his injury. So might a lunatic. It might be asked how such advice could be given by a spook, if a spook is devoid of mind. We would say that a spook is devoid of mind in the same sense that a hopelessly insane man is devoid of mind. Even though he lose a knowledge of his identity, there is a slight reflection that is implanted on the desire, and it remains with the desire. It is this reflection that gives the semblance of mind in certain cases, but it must be remembered that although the shell has lost the mind that the animal remains. The animal has not lost its cunning and the cunning of the animal with the impression left by the mind enables it to follow, under certain cases, such as those already instanced, the events transpiring in the realm where it functions. The facts are then

reflected on itself as a picture may be reflected by a mirror. When an event is reflected on the desire body and this picture is connected with or related to one of the sitters at the seance, the spook or shell responds to the thought picture reflected on it and attempts to voice forth the thought or impression as a piano would voice forth or respond to the person who operated its keys. When a sitter at a seance has lost or mislaid something, this loss remains as a picture in his mind and this picture is stored as an old memory. The picture is often perceived or reflected by the desire body or spook. It then responds to the picture by telling the sitter that at such a time was lost such an article of value, or that this article may be found by him, in the place where he had put it, or where it had been lost. These are instances where the facts are stated and advice given, which proves to be correct. On the other hand, where one fact is given, a hundred falsehoods are said, and where advice is once correct, it is a thousand times misleading or harmful. We therefore say that it is a waste of time and detrimental to ask and follow the advice of the departed. It is a well known fact that all people who prey on the weaknesses of others, engaged in betting, or gambling, or speculations on the market, allow their intended victims to win small sums of money, or they will flatter the victim on his shrewdness in speculation. This is done to encourage the victim to continue his risk, but eventually this results in his utter failure and ruin. Similar is the case with mediums and spook chasers and phenomena hunters. The little facts which they find true entice them to continue their practices until, like the speculator, they are in too deep to get out. The spooks assume control and may finally obsess the victim entirely and then follows failure and ruin. The statistics of mediumship and of phenomena chasers will prove these statements true. And the one who champions the "spirits" can neither "deny nor explain away these facts."

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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