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CONSCIOUSNESS.

CONSCIOUSNESS is the subject of all subjects which is to be studied, and which it is necessary to become acquainted with, if man is to make real progress. Therefore consciousness is now the subject of our consideration.

Consciousness is the origin, the aim, and the end of every great system of philosophy, science, or religion. All things have their being in consciousness, and the end of all beings is consciousness.

The question of consciousness will always be the despair of the materialist. Some have tried to dispose of the subject by saying that consciousness is the result of the action of force and matter. Others have held that consciousness transcends both force and matter, and further claim that although it is necessary to both, yet it is quite independent of either. Others have said it was not a subject about which one could speculate with any degree of profit.

Of all subjects, consciousness is the most sublime and important. Its study yields the most practical results. Through it our highest ideals are attained. By virtue of it all things are possible. On consciousness alone depends the very existence of our life and being. Without it we would not know anything of the world in which we live nor would it be possible to know who and what we are.

What we have to concern ourselves with at present is not the word consciousness itself, but with that for which the word consciousness stands. Consciousness is not the thing which is conscious. That which is conscious is only so by virtue of consciousness, of which it is an expression.

Consciousness is the one reality on which all things depend, but we too often attach less importance to it than to some glittering bauble or passing event. Perhaps it is because of its being so constantly with us that we slight it and treat it as secondary or dependent. Instead of offering the respect, the reverence, the worship due to It, and It alone; we ignorantly sacrifice to our ever changing gods.

The mystery of mysteries, the Great Unknown, is symbolized to us by the inexpressible which we attempt to express by the word consciousness. Though some meaning of this word may be apprehended by the simplest mind yet, there has lived no one however great who has solved the final mystery of consciousness. On the contrary, as the mind continues to search, the subject becomes broader, deeper, more comprehensive and infinite, until the searcher, transcending his bodies, stands in rapt attention: for a brief moment, beyond the domain of time, on the threshold of the Unknown, in reverence and silence, he who seemed finite worships infinite consciousness. Transfixed in the indivisible, immeasurable, indescribable, he stands within yet outside the boundaries of time, until a feeling of awe, a desire to know, to comprehend, to put into thoughts that which is beyond the range of thought, to put into words that which cannot be spoken, causes the mind to waver and the vision to fail. Returning to the state where perception is bounded by limitations, he finds himself again in the present, remembering the past and anticipating the future. But he cannot again be entirely ignorant: he worships consciousness as expressed through an infinite number of forms and states.

Consciousness is at once the most evident, the most simple, the greatest and the most mysterious truth. The universe is embodied consciousness. Consciousness is neither matter, space, nor substance; but consciousness is throughout substance, is in every point of space, and is within and around every atom of matter. Consciousness never changes. It always remains the same. Consciousness is the same in a translucent crystal, a creeping vine, a huge animal, a noble man, or a god. It is matter that is continually changing in its qualities, attributes, and degrees of development. Consciousness reflected and expressed through matter appears in each form to be different, whereas the difference exists only in the quality of matter, not in consciousness.

Through all states and conditions of matter, consciousness is always one. It never changes in any manner, nor under any circumstance is it anything else than consciousness. All matter, however, is conscious and is graded in seven states or degrees which are usually called states of consciousness, but which in reality are states of matter, and not of consciousness.

From the lowest to the highest state, the purpose of the formation and transformations of matter is to build up forms and bodies and improve them as vehicles for the expression of consciousness. The states of matter are distinct classes or degrees of the development of matter. These states make up the entire universe, from the most simple elementary matter to that refined sublimated matter of which the highest god is formed.

The purpose of evolution is the transformation of matter until it finally becomes consciousness. From its primary unformed state, matter proceeds in its development towards consciousness, through form, growth, instinct, knowledge, unselfishness, divinity.

The first state of matter is the elementary or atomic. In this state matter is without form and is conscious in the simplest degree only.

The second state of matter is mineral or molecular. In the first state the atom whirls, and by virtue of previous development, draws other less

developed atoms about it. With these it combines, condenses, crystallizes, into the concrete solid form of the mineral, and so becomes conscious of a state different from the atomic. As an atom it was conscious of its own state only, which afforded no opportunity for the expression of consciousness except in its unrelated state. As soon as the atom combines with other atoms, it increases in its development toward consciousness, guides the atoms of which it is the center, and passes from the formless atomic state of force into the molecular state of the mineral, where it develops through form. The mineral or molecular state of matter has a strong affinity for elementary matter and shows a powerful influence over all elementary forces. This power is exhibited in the magnet.

The third state of matter is vegetable or cellular. The atom which guided other atoms and became the molecule, attracts less developed molecules and guides them from the molecular state of matter, which forms the mineral kingdom, into the conscious cellular state of matter, distinguished as the vegetable kingdom, and becomes a cell. Cell matter is conscious in a different degree than molecular matter. Whereas the function of the molecule was static form, the function of the cell is growth in a body. Here matter is developed through life.

The fourth state of matter is animal or organic. The atom which guided other atoms into the molecular state, and thence into the cellular state throughout the entire vegetable kingdom, passes as a cell into the body of the animal, and being there influenced by consciousness as expressed through the animal, functions in an organ in the animal, then controls the organ and eventually develops to the conscious organic animal state of matter, which is desire. It then takes charge of and progresses, from a simple animal organism to the most complex and highly developed animal.

The fifth state of matter is the human mind or I-am-I. In the course of innumerable ages, the indestructible atom which guided other atoms into the mineral, through the vegetable, and up to the animal, at last attains the high state of matter in which is reflected the one consciousness. Being an individual entity and having the reflection of consciousness within, it thinks and speaks of itself as I, because I is the symbol of the One. The human entity has under its guidance an organized animal body. The animal entity impels each of its organs to perform a particular function. The entity of each organ directs each of its cells to do a certain work. The life of each cell guides each of its molecules to growth. The design of each molecule confines each of its atoms into an orderly form, and consciousness impresses each atom with the purpose of becoming self-conscious. Atoms, molecules, cells, organs, and animal, are all under the direction of mind the self-conscious state of matter the function of which is thought. But the mind does not attain self-consciousness, which is its complete development, until it has subdued and controlled all desires and impressions received through the senses, and centered all thought on consciousness as reflected in itself. Then only is it fully conscious of itself; and to its own question: who am I? It can with knowledge, answer: I am I. This is conscious immortality.

The sixth state of matter is the humanity soul or I-am-Thou-and-Thou-art-I. The mind having overcome all impurity in its own matter and attained self-knowledge, it may remain immortal in this state; but if it seeks to become consciousness it will become conscious of consciousness as reflected in all the individual minds of humanity. It enters the state of being in the minds of all humanity.

In this state the I-am-Thou-and-Thou-art-I pervades all human beings and feels itself to be humanity.

The seventh state of matter is divinity or divine. The humanity soul or I-am-Thou-and-Thou-art-I, giving up itself for the good of all, it becomes the divine. The divine unites into one, god-like humanity, men, animals, plants, minerals, and elements.

We are self-conscious human beings in the sense that the one consciousness is reflected in our minds. But our minds also reflect different states of matter which manifest as innumerable emotions, impulses, and desires. Mistaking the impermanent, evanescent, for changeless eternal consciousness, each identifies himself with the body instead of with consciousness. This is the cause of all our sorrow and misery. Through consciousness within the mind knows of the eternal and longs to unite with it, but the mind cannot as yet discriminate between the true and the false, and in its efforts to thus discriminate it suffers. Through continued effort each of us will at last reach the golgotha of suffering and be crucified between the matter of the turbulent underworld and the glories of the over-world. From this crucifixion he will arise a new being, resurrected in consciousness from the individual self-conscious mind, to the I-am-Thou-and-Thou-art-I soul of collective humanity. Thus resurrected he is the inspirer to renewed effort to help others, and the guide in all human beings who put their faith in the One Consciousness.



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