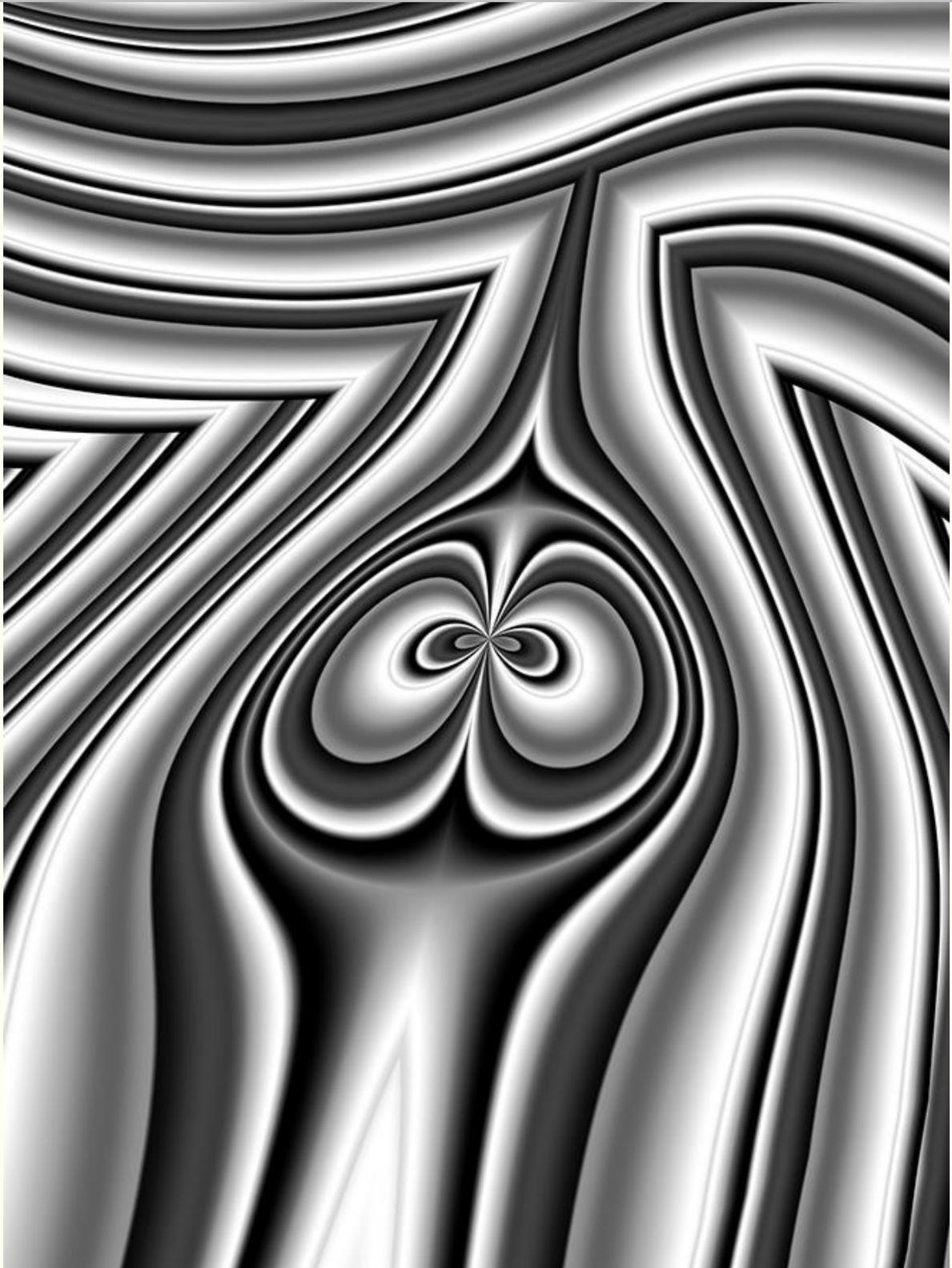


*When inner and outer
man are off-kilter*



How degrading magnetism can cause obsession.¹

First published in *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1889 through April 1895, Questions 2 through 345, in Numbers 1 to 70 (First Series). Republished in: Dara Eklund (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2nd ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. II, 2009; QUESTION 107, pp. 286-88.²

What is the Theosophical view of “Obsession?” Are the New Testament accounts of “casting out devils” to be regarded as literally true? If so, is it a retribution coming under the law of Karma, as with persons under seven years of age? There are cases where the so-called obsessing power seems so far superior in force of will as to be wholly irresistible by the victim: where is the remedy?

The T.S.³ has no “view” about obsession. All on such subjects must be the expression of individual opinion. The Editor appears to intimate that there are really no cases of obsession, and if that is the intention of the answer, it must result from the fact that he has never met a case. It is true that as superstition abates instances of obsession do also, but that does not prove the phenomena to be the product wholly of belief in their possibility. Nor do the writings of men like Lecky⁴ prove much to my mind on these topics, since he thinks from a standpoint entirely at variance with mine. Since I have, in common with many other members of the Society, known of clear cases of obsession, no amount of argument by one who had never encountered such would be of any avail; and it is quite likely that those who do not believe in the possibility of these abnormal occurrences will never meet one, because the mind is not directed in that direction. There are obsessions, then, as we think from observation, but the classes of obsession given in the first answer, two in number only, are not adequate. We have to include in obsession that most mysterious thing — insanity. Physicians do not understand this affliction. They cannot explain how a man suddenly loses his identity and becomes a raving maniac. Or in milder cases, where a man periodically becomes for months at a time some other person with no memory of the former state, and so relapses from one to the other. I know of such a case in which a boy first showed this form of insanity, and has gone on for years with the alternation of personality until now he is of age. His trouble would long ago have brought him to the insane asylum if it were not that he was born in a rich and fortu-

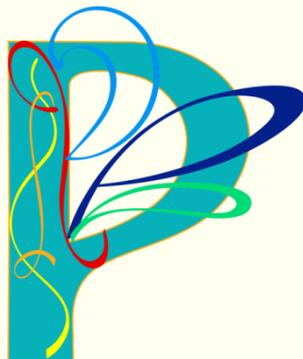
¹ [Parallel Reading: “Blavatsky on a Case of Obsession,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [This magazine was distributed free of charge to members-at-large of the Theosophical Society in America, who were invited to “send questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes upon Theosophical subjects.” Usually they were handled by the editor, Alexander Fullerton, with the assistance of Mr. Judge. Though some of the editor’s answers (signed Ans.) may have been by Judge, we include only those contributed under his own name, initials, or pen-names. — DARA EKLUND, Compiler.]

³ [Theosophical Society]

⁴ [William Edward Hartpole Lecky, 1838–1903, Irish historian and political theorist.]

nate family. What is to be said of such cases? Are they voluntary or not? They do not come under either of the heads in the answer by the Editor. As they are wholly involuntary, is free-will invaded or justice dethroned? I think not. Karma rules in this as in all else, and it is only when one limits his view of karma to this one life that he can be confused. Acts in a former life set up such tendencies in the ocean of life that when the Ego came back again it was sure to one day become insane, which only means that a disarrangement of astral and physical forces was brought about resulting in a total inability to correlate the soul and body, and this is called insanity. It was free will that laid down the causes, and free will has no power to alter the effects. But, as in the case I cited, there may be ameliorations brought about by karma in the same way. For in that one we see — as is often not the case with others — that the poor insane person is protected by reason of the effect of another kind of karma, and is in this long insane or obsessed life cared for and made as happy as is possible. Remember, the mind of each is connected with the body in a certain definite manner and not merely in an imaginary way. This definite method is by certain channels and filaments or nerves; among the most difficult to explain are the magnetic and electric ties for the mind. Now our hold upon the body we have been born into may be so weak that we are not able to keep possession of these channels, and stronger forces may even unconsciously go in where we have tried to stay. This is not caprice any more than it is caprice that water will leak from a tank if there be any cracks. So there may come a time that the building called the body, which we hoped to occupy for a long time, becomes so imperfect that our mental tenancy is no longer possible and we drift off altogether, leaving it to the use of other forces or intelligences good or bad; or, as is often the case, we are now driven out for a time and then again get complete possession for a short term, until in that process the cords of magnetism and the electric channels are clogged up or destroyed so far as we are concerned, when we leave altogether. All this of course may happen by what is called the man's own will or act, as where one suffers from paresis brought about by gross dissipation, but all the cases are not of this kind, nor are they all due to spiritualistic *séances*. As to remedies, those suggested by the Editor are good, but there are others possible by the use of strong magnetism used by one who knows all these laws in every detail and can intelligently apply the remedy.



Suggested reading for students.



On the soul of the spiritual man lit by its own light.

Insights to our divine ancestry and human nature may be gleaned from the following titles in the same series:

- A CONGENITAL PREPONDERANCE OF FIRE ELEMENTALS
- ANCIENT BELIEFS IN THE IMMORTALITY OF SOUL
- ANCIENT OPINIONS UPON PSYCHIC BODIES
- APOLLONIUS COMFORTS A BEREAVED FATHER
- ASTRAL BODIES OR DOPPELGÄNGERS
- ATMAN IS A RAY FROM A SPARK OF UNCREATED RAY
- BLAVATSKY ON AETHROBACY AND FAKIRS
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT DEVELOPMENT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM
- BLAVATSKY ON THREE ESSAYS BY É. LÉVI
- BLOOD IS THE FIRST INCARNATION OF UNIVERSAL FLUID
- CHINESE BELIEFS ABOUT THE HUMAN SOUL
- CICERO'S DREAM OF SCIPIO AND MACROBIUS' COMMENT
- CLASSIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES IN MAN
- COMMON-MISCONCEPTIONS-OF-THEOSOPHICAL-DOCTRINES
- CONCERNING THE DOCTRINES OF THE THEOSOPHISTS
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - DRAWING
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - ESOTERIC
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - OVERVIEW
- COSMOS AND DEITY IN MAN - DRAWING
- DAS' SCIENCE OF THE EMOTIONS (1908)
- DEATH AND IMMORTALITY
- DEATH AND POST-MORTEM STATES
- DEATH HAS NO TERRORS

CONSTITUTION OF MAN SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- DEVACHAN, DREAM REALM WHERE PURE SOULS ARE REWARDED
- DREAMLESS SLEEP
- ELIPHAS LEVI ON DEATH AND SATAN
- EMOTIONS' TRIUNE NATURE
- EVOLUTIONARY TRANSMIGRATION OF MATERIAL PARTICLES IN NATURE
- FACING SEVEN VIRGINS IN THE HALL OF JUDGMENT
- FROM THE STRONGHOLD OF YOUR SOUL, CHASE ALL YOUR FOES AWAY
- HAIR IS THE RETAINER OF PRANA
- IN DEEP SLEEP WE DREAM NO MORE AND CONFABULATE WITH THE STARS
- IS SUICIDE A CRIME
- JUDGE ON THE INNER CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- JUDGE ON THE OCCULT NATURE OF MAN
- LÉVI ON DEATH BEING THE BIRTH-PANG OF LIFE
- LIFE IS AN INDESTRUCTIBLE UNIVERSAL FORCE
- LOW BUFFOONERY AND MOCKING LAUGHS
- LYMPH IS A MASQUE FOR NYMPH
- NEED OF A SPIRITUAL VOCABULARY
- NO NEED FOR EXPENSIVE FUNERALS
- NOUS AUGOEIDES OF THE NEOPLATONISTS
- NOUS MOVES MAN
- OEDIPUS AND SPHINX UNRIDDED
- OSIRIS AND TYPHON, HIGHER TRIAD AND LOWER TETRAD
- PLATO ON THE APPLE OF THE EYE
- PLATO'S TWO HORSES
- PLUTARCH COMFORTS APOLLONIUS
- PLUTARCH COMPARING PASSIONS AND DISEASES – TR. WHITE
- PLUTARCH ON BOASTED WISDOM, FORTITUDE, MAGNANIMITY, AND TEMPERANCE
- PLUTARCH ON EXERCISES PROPER FOR A SCHOLAR
- PLUTARCH ON PLATO'S PROCREATION OF THE SOUL
- POST-MORTEM WANDERINGS OF THE WICKED SOUL
- PREMATURE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTHS
- PSYCHOLOGY LACKS ENTIRELY KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL
- PSYCHOMETRY IS THE NATURAL BUT LATENT FACULTY IN US

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- REAL DREAMS ARE ACTIONS OF THE TRUE SELF
- RELEASING THE ASTRAL SOUL FROM ONE'S ASHES
- SEPTENARY IS THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- SIXTH SENSE IS REASON OVER INSTINCT
- SPECULATIONS ABOUT REINCARNATION AND MATERIALIZED SPIRITS
- SPIRIT AND PERISPIRIT
- SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS ARE OBJECTIVE COPIES FROM SUBJECTIVE IMAGES
- SUBBA ROW ON KAMA-LOKA
- SUBBA ROW ON THE SEVENFOLD PRINCIPLE IN MAN
- SUBBA ROW ON THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE
- SYNESIUS CONCERNING DREAMS
- THE AQUILINE NOSE IS ROYAL AND NOBLE
- THE DEVOTIONAL LOVE AND NOBLE ASPIRATIONS OF LOWER MANAS
- THE ESOTERIC PHYSIOLOGY OF MAN
- THE HEART IS THE ORGAN OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS
- THE IMAGE-MAKING POWER
- THE KARMIC EFFECTS OF INVASION, CIVILIZATION, AND VULGAR SPECULATION
- THE LIFE PRINCIPLE
- THE MOON REGULATES THE PRANA OF NATURE AND MAN
- THE OCCULT INFLUENCE OF MAN'S ACTIVE WILL
- THE PERISPIRIT OF ALLAN KARDEC
- THE PROPHECY OF GENERAL YERMOLOV
- THE SUTRATMAN OF THE UPANISHADS
- THE TWO VOICES OF LORD TENNYSON
- THE VOICE OF THE WILL IS THE ATOMIC POINT
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - MAN, THE JEWEL OF THE UNIVERSE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - SEPTENARY ANTHROPOS
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE CYCLE OF LIFE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF ACTION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE SUTRATMAN OF THE UPANISHADS
- THREE CUBITS OF THE EAR, FOUR OF THE STALK
- TIBETAN TEACHINGS ON AFTER-DEATH STATES

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- TROUBLES FROM UNDISSOLVED EX-DOUBLES
- TWO SPIRITS UNITED IN THE ELYSIAN FIELDS
- WHEN THE GREEN IS OVERCOME WITH AZURE
- WHEN THE SERPENT SLOUGHS OFF HIS SKIN
- WHY SECLUDING WOMEN DURING THEIR MENSTRUAL PERIOD
- WOE FOR THE LIVING DEAD

