

*Dazzled glimpses
into the Astral Light*



The bright spot of light

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To the Editor of "The Theosophist"

Madame,

In the last issue of your valuable Journal, a member of the New York Theosophical Society seeks to be enlightened as to the cause of a bright spot of light which he has often seen. I am also equally curious to have an explanation. I attribute it to the highest *concentration* of the soul. As soon as I place myself in *that* prescribed attitude, suddenly a bright spot appears before me which fills my heart with delight — indeed, that being regarded as a special sign by the Indian devotee that he is in the right path, leading to ultimate success in the Yoga practice — that he is blessed by the special grace of the Almighty.

One evening, sitting on the ground cross-legged, in that state of innate concentration when the soul soars into the high regions, I was blessed with a shower of flowers — a most brilliant sight, and which I long to see again. I moved to catch at flowers so rare, but they eluded my grasp and suddenly disappeared, leaving me much disappointed. Finally two flowers fell on me, one touching my head and the other my right shoulder, but this time also the attempt to seize them was unsuccessful.

What can it be, if not a response that God has been pleased with his worshipper, meditation being, I believe, the unique way of spiritual worship.

P.

September 18th, 1881

Editorial response by H.P. Blavatsky

It depends. Those of our orthodox native contributors, who worship some particular God — or, if they so prefer, the one ISVARA, under some particular name — are too apt to attribute every psychological effect brought on by mental concentration during the hours of religious meditation to their special deity, whereas, in 99 cases out of 100, such effects are due simply to purely *psycho-physiological* effects. We know a number of mystically-inclined people who see such "lights," and that as soon as they concentrate their thoughts.

- Spiritualists attribute them to the agency of their departed friends;
- Buddhists — who have no personal God — to a *pre-nirvānic* state;
- Pantheists and Vedāntins to *Maya* — illusion of senses; and
- Christians — to a foresight of the glories of Paradise.

The modern Occultists say that, when not directly due to cerebral action whose normal functions are certainly impeded by such an artificial mode of deep concentration — these lights are glimpses of the Astral Light, or, to use a more *scientific* expression — of the “Universal Ether” firmly believed in by more than one man of science, as proved by Mr. Balfour Stewart’s *Unseen Universe*.¹ Like the pure blue sky closely shrouded by thick vapours on a misty day — is the Astral Light concealed from our physical senses, during the hours of our normal, daily life. But when concentrating all our spiritual faculties, we succeed, for the time being, to paralyse their enemy — the physical senses, and the inner man becomes, so to say, distinct from the man of matter, then, the action of the ever-living spirit, like a breeze that clears the sky from its obstructing clouds — sweeps away the mist which lies between our normal vision and the Astral Light, and we obtain glimpses into, and of, that light.

The days of “smoking furnaces” and “burning lamps” which form part of the Biblical visions are well gone by and — to return no more. But, whosoever, refusing natural explanations, prefers *supernatural* ones, is, of course, at liberty to imagine that an “Almighty God” amuses us with visions of flowers, and sends burning lights before making “covenants” with his worshippers.



Akasha and Astral Light compared and contrasted (Table).

There now follows a table from our Confusing Words Series. Full text under the title “Astral Light is a term very little understood.” — ED. PHIL.

¹ Balfour Stewart (1828–1887) and P.G. Tait, *The Unseen Universe: or, Physical Speculations on a Future State*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1875. 3rd ed., 211pp

Akasha and Astral Light compared and contrasted.

| Akasha (Alaya) | Astral Light |
|--|--|
| Undifferentiated, Abstract Space, (noumenal) about to be occupied by Primordial Consciousness. | |
| Field 1 — Latent Consciousness (1 st and 2 nd Logos) | |
| Field 2 — Differentiated Consciousness (3 rd Logos, Mahat) ¹ | |
| Dhyani-Chohans, collectively, | or Humanity at large. |
| Plato's The Good (To Αγαθόν) The Good cannot measure anything. | Man is the measure of all things. |
| Represented by the Manasaputras, subjectively, | and by Fohat, objectively. |
| Eternal Unconsciousness i.e., Perfect, Divine Consciousness, | periodically displaying aspects of Itself. to the perception of self-conscious minds. |
| Ideal Divine Mind | reflected and reversed in human thoughts and aspirations. |
| Germ within Acorn | Acorn |
| "So himself was indeed | (his own) son." |
| Soul of the World, of Thought and Compassion. | Body of the World, of Perception and Action. |
| Primordial Cosmic Substance. | Aggregate of all possible perceptions (mat- ter). |
| Vehicle of Divine Thought. | Storehouse of human (psychic) iniquities. |
| Not Thought-Substance but recorder of every thought and deed of the spiritual man, | and of the animal man. |
| Spiritual plane | Psychic plane |
| Reality | Illusion |

¹ The noetic word of Mahat consists of four elements, To Agathon, Nous, Psychē, and Hylē. This quaternary, also known as the Pythagorean Tetractys, is reflected in the sensible world of Matter. The elements or *rhizomata* of the lower Tetractys are Fire, Air, Water, and Earth. Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 599

Seeing a bright light with closed eyes.

Damodar K. Mavalankar, "Seeing Bright Light with Closed Eyes." First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV (12), Supplement to September 1883, p. 11. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; p. 319.

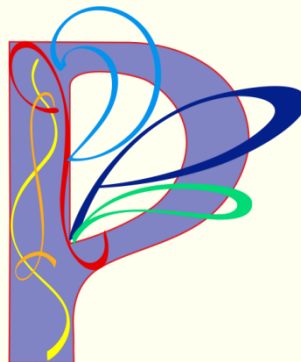
Our Brother P.T. Srinivasaingar of Negapatam, writes to ask:

Can you please explain the following phenomenon?

If a man closes his eyes, lets two fingers pass over them, presses the lower eyelids tightly with these fingers (meanwhile the eyes being closed) and tries to see, then before 2' [seconds] are over, a bright light begins to develop itself before his [mind's?] eye.

Our Brother Mr. Srinivasaingar does not seem to have read any works on Mesmerism. If he had, and if, moreover, he had witnessed personally Col. Olcott benumbing the limbs of his patients and incapacitating them, by his will-power, from opening their eyes, once that he had passed his hand over them, our Negapatam friend would have seen the *rationale* of the phenomenon he describes. The effect, he witnesses, is due to Auto-Magnetisation, pure and simple. Once that the eyes are closed and the mind, drawn away from all external objects of sense, is concentrated, what may appropriately be called the sixth sense, or "Siva's eye" — clairvoyant sight — is opened and the Astral Light, one of the correlations of *Akasha*, becomes perceptible. Those who are mediumistic can achieve this quicker than others and in some instances, on certain occasions, without any effort. But these effects will not be under the control of these peculiarly constituted people who become but passive agents of the elementals and the elementaries. He who desires to develop his psychological capacities has to practise self-Magnetisation and, becoming an active operator, has to subject the nature-forces to his WILL. It was with that view that the ancient *Aryans* enjoined the performance of the *Sandhya* Ceremony¹ now so much neglected and misunderstood!

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR



¹ [Religious ceremonies performed in India at sunrise, noon, and sunset.]

Suggested reading for students.



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