

THE WORD.

VOL. 5

JULY, 1907.

NO. 4

Copyright, 1907, by H. W. PERCIVAL.

I IN THE SENSES.

WE SMELL AND TASTE and hear and see and feel; we live in the senses, act with the senses, think through the senses and often identify ourselves with the senses, but seldom or never do we question the origin of our senses, nor how the occupant inhabits them. We suffer and enjoy, strive and slave to feed and gratify the senses; we think and plan and work for the attainment of our ambitions without realizing that these ambitions are all connected with the senses and that we are their servants. We create ideals which are based on sensuous perceptions. The ideals become idols and we idolators. Our religion is a religion of the senses, the senses our gods. We create or select our deity according to the dictates of our senses. We endow it with the attributes of sense, and worship devoutly through the avenues of our senses. We are educated and cultured according to our capacity and to the enlightenment of the age we live in; but our culture and education is for the purpose of paying tribute and homage to our senses in an artistic and aesthetic manner, and according to scientific methods. Our science is a science of the senses. We try to show that ideas are only sensuous forms and that numbers are figures invented for the convenience of counting and to be used for obtaining the comforts and enjoyments of the senses in the age in which we live.

Left to the senses we should be circumscribed and shut in by the world of our senses; we should feed, act, live and die like animals in the world of our senses. But there is the "I" who is the dweller in the senses on whom the senses depend for their keenness of sensation and though the senses are his present masters, there will be a day when the "I" will awake from his stupor and will arise and throw off the chains of the senses. He will end his term of slavery and claim his divine rights. By the

light which he radiates he will dispel the powers of darkness and dissipate the glamour of the senses which had blinded and lulled him into forgetfulness of his divine origin. He will quiet, subdue, discipline, and develop the senses into superior faculties and they will become his willing servants. Then the "I" will as the divine king reign with justice, love and wisdom over the universe of the senses.

The "I" will then know of the realm within and beyond the senses, which is the divine source of all things, and will be partaker of the ineffable presence that is the One Reality in all things but which we, while blinded by our senses, are unable to perceive.

In the beginnings of the universe the one homogeneous substance differentiates, and through its one attribute, duality, manifests as spirit-matter. From and as spirit-matter are produced all forces. Thus comes into existence a universe without form. In the course of involution the forces produce the elements as their vehicles. Each force has its corresponding vehicle. This vehicle or element is the grosser expression of the force. It is the reverse side of its force, just as spirit-matter and matter-spirit are the opposite poles of that which was substance. All forces and elements are not manifesting at once in the beginning, but manifest only as and in the degree in which they produce the conditions for manifestation. There are seven forces, with their corresponding vehicles, seven elements. These constitute a universe in its involution and its evolution. The zodiac shows this involution and evolution by its seven signs from cancer (♋) by way of libra (♎) to capricorn (♏). In the beginning of the first period (round) of manifestation, but one force expresses itself and through its particular element. This element later serves as a means for the expression of the second force also with its second element. In each period (round) an additional force and element manifest. Our present universe has passed through three such great periods and is now in its fourth. Our bodies are the result of the involution of the forces and their elements which are manifested and are becoming manifest. In the fourth period is the turning point from involution into evolution.

By the involution of the elements, bodies are produced which contact the elements and through which the elements operate. The elements are involuted into bodies and become the senses of the organized body. Our senses are the drawing together and blending of the elements into one body. Each sense is connected with its particular part of the body which part is its organ and the particular center through which the sense acts on its corresponding element and through which the element reacts on the sense. Thus have been involved the elements of fire, air, water and earth; and the fifth is now being evolved as ether. The sixth and seventh senses are now being, and still are to be evolved through their corresponding organs and centers in the body. The forces operating through the elements of fire, air, water, earth and ether are light, electricity, the water-force which has as yet no scientific name, magnetism, and sound. The corresponding senses are: sight (fire), hearing (air), tasting (water), smelling (earth), and touch or feeling (ether). The organs of these elements in the head are the eye, ear, tongue, nose and skin or lips.

These elements with their forces are entities, they are not chaotic nothings. They are brought together and unite to produce the body of man with its senses.

Nearly every animal form is endowed with five senses, but none in the same degree as man. The senses in the animal are governed and controlled by their corresponding elements, but in man the "I" offers resistance to the entire control by the elements. The senses in the animal appear to be keener than those of man. This is because the elements meet no opposition when acting on the animal, and therefore the animal is guided more truly by the elements. The senses of the animal are simply conscious of their respective elements, but the "I" in man questions the action of his senses as he attempts to relate them to himself, and so apparent confusion ensues. The less resistance the "I" offers to the senses in which it finds itself the more truly will the elements guide the senses, but if the elements guide the man entirely through his senses he is less intelligent and less responsible. The closer to nature man lives the more readily will he respond to and be guided by nature through his senses. Although primitive man can see and hear farther and his smell and taste is keener along natural lines, yet he cannot distinguish between colors and shades of color, which the artist sees and appreciates at a glance, nor can he distinguish the difference in tones and harmonies which the musician knows, nor has he the keenness of taste which the epicure has cultivated or the expert tester of teas developed, nor is he able to detect the difference and quantities of odor which one can who has disciplined his sense of smell.

Man is developing a sixth sense which the animals have not. This is the personality or moral sense. The moral sense begins to awaken in primitive man and becomes a more dominant factor as man improves in breeding and education. The element corresponding to this sense cannot be perceived by man though it is present, but the force which he uses through the sense of personality and morality is thought, and it is through thought that there awakens within the senses of man his real "I" which is the seventh sense, the sense of individuality, of understanding and of knowledge.

The past history of our universe, of the involution of the elements of nature and of all animal life, is re-enacted in the formation of a human body. The involution of the elements ends at birth and the evolution of the senses begins. The gradual development of the senses in the past races can be best studied by careful observation of the human being, from birth to the complete unfoldment as man. But a still better and surer method of learning how the senses are developed is to revert to the time of our own infancy and watch the gradual evolution of our senses and the manner in which we made use of them.

A baby is a wonderful object; of all living creatures it is the most helpless. All the powers of the earth are summoned to assist in the fabrication of the little body; it is verily a "Noah's Ark" in which is contained the pairs of all forms of life and of every thing. The beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, and the seeds of all life are held in that wee universe. But unlike the other animal creation, a baby needs constant care and protection for

many years, as it cannot provide for nor help itself. The little creature is born into the world without the use of its senses; but with the faculty of making itself heard on arrival and demanding attention.

At birth the infant is not in possession of any of its senses. It can neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell, nor feel. It has to learn the use of each of these senses, and does it gradually. All infants do not learn the use of their senses in the same order. With some hearing comes first; with others, seeing first. Generally, however, the infant is only conscious as in an indistinct dream. Each of its senses is opened as by a shock, produced by the seeing or hearing for the first time, which is brought about by its mother or some one present. Objects are blurred to the infant eye, and it can in no manner see anything distinctly. The voice of its mother is only heard as a buzzing or other noise which excites its organ of hearing. It is unable to distinguish odors and cannot taste. Nourishment taken is from the prompting of the cells of the body, which are simply mouths and stomachs, and it cannot feel with any exactness nor locate any part of its body. At first it cannot close its hands on any object, and attempts to feed itself with its fists. That it cannot see will be observed by its inability to focus its eyes on any given object. The mother has to teach it to see and hear, as she teaches it to take nourishment. By repeated words and gestures she attempts to attract its attention. With patience the mother looks into its wobbling eyes for a glance of recognition, and weeks or months pass before her heart is gladdened by an intelligent smile. When it is first able to detect sound it moves its little limbs rapidly, but is unable to locate the sound. Usually with the location of the sound comes the sense of sight when some bright object is moved before its eyes or its attention is attracted to some object. The careful observer who has followed the development of any infant cannot fail to perceive by its actions when either of these senses is used properly. If the tone used in speaking to it is mild and pleasant it will smile, if harsh and angry it will scream with fear. The time when it first sees an object may be recognized by the corresponding look of recognition which the object excites. At this time the eyes will be seen to focus properly; at other times than when it sees the eyes are out of focus. We can test the child as to whether it sees and hears with one of the favorite toys, a rattle. If we shake the rattle and the child hears it but does not see, it will stretch out its hands in any direction and kick violently, which may or may not be in the direction of the rattle. This depends on its ability to locate the sound. If it sees the rattle it will at once focus its eyes on the rattle and reach for it. That it does or does not see is proved by moving the rattle gradually to the eyes and withdrawing it again. If it does not see, the eyes will present a blank stare. But if it does see they will change in their focus according to the nearness or distance to the rattle.

Taste is the next sense developed. At first the infant is unable to show its preference for water or milk or sugar or other food that does not actually irritate or blister the cells of the body. It will take all food alike, but in time it shows preference for one over the others by crying for it when the particular food is suddenly withdrawn. Thus, for instance, if a piece of candy is placed in its mouth it will cry if the candy is removed and will not be consoled by either nipple or milk. But its attention may be removed

from its sense of taste by shaking a rattle or dancing some bright object before its eyes. The sense of smell is detected by the observer by presenting certain odors, the preference for which will be shown by a smile, a frown, or the baby coo.

Feeling is developed gradually and in proportion to the other senses. But the child has not yet learned the value of distances. It will reach for the moon or a swaying bough of a tree with as much confidence as it will reach for its mother's nose, or its father's beard. Oftentimes it will cry because it cannot grasp the moon or some distant object; but gradually it learns the value of distances. It does not, however, so readily learn the use of its organs, for it will try to feed itself with its feet or rattle or any toy. Not until many years have passed will it cease to try to put everything within reach into its mouth.

The senses are in early life controlled by the elements as are the animals. But in this early youth the senses are not actually developed; for, though there are prodigies which are exceptions to the ordinary rule, the senses do not really begin to be used with intelligence until the age of puberty; then begins the real use of the senses. It is then that the moral sense, the sense of personality begins, and all the senses take on a different meaning at this stage in their development.

As there are forces which operate through their vehicles, the elements, so also are there principles which are connected with and act through the senses and their organs. In the beginning the first element was fire, the first force manifesting was light which operated through its vehicle and element, fire. In the beginnings of man the light as a fire in the universe is mind, which, though in its beginning is in the most primitive form, contains in itself the germs of all things which are to be developed and also sets the limit to its development. Its sense is sight and its organ is the eye, which is also its symbol.

Then comes the operation of the force, electricity, through its element the air. In man the corresponding principle is life (prana), with its corresponding sense of hearing, and the ear as its organ. The force of "water" acts through its element water, and has as its correspondence the principle of form (astral body or *linga sharira*), with its sense, that of taste, and its organ the tongue.

The force of magnetism operates through the element earth, and has its corresponding principle and sense in man, sex (physical body, *sthula sharira*) and smelling, with the nose as its organ.

The force of sound acts through its vehicle ether. In man the corresponding principle is desire (*kama*) and its sense feeling, with the skin and lips as its organs. These five senses are common to animal and man alike, but in varying degree.

The sixth sense is the sense which differentiates the animal from the human. The sense begins, whether in child or man, with the sense of I-am-ness. In the child it is shown when the child becomes what is called "self-conscious." The natural child, like the natural animal or natural man, is quite unreserved in its manners, and unafraid and confident in its behavior. As soon as it becomes aware of itself, however, it loses that natural response of the senses to their outer elements, and feels restrained by its feeling of I.

In looking back over the past the adult does not remember the many pangs and jars which the presence of I has caused to his sensations. The more aware the I is of itself, the more pain it will cause to the sensitive organization. This is particularly expressed by the boy or girl just reaching their adolescence. Then the sixth sense, the moral or sense of personality, is evinced because the I is then more positively connected with the body than it had been before. It is at this point that the principle of thought acts through its sense, the moral sense or personality. In this sense the personality is merely the reflection of the I, the mask of the I, the false ego. The I is the individuality or the perfected principle of mind, corresponding to the initial effort of mind to express itself through its first sense, that of sight, with the corresponding force of light and its element fire.

The senses are represented in the zodiac. If a diameter be drawn from the signs cancer (♋) to capricorn (♑), the eyes in the head are on the horizontal line in the zodiac which divide the sphere into an upper and lower portion. The upper part of the zodiac or head is the unmanifested, while the lower half of the zodiac or head is the manifested and manifesting half. In this lower manifesting half there are seven openings, indicating seven centers, but through which at present only five senses operate.

The principles enumerated by Mme. Blavatsky in theosophical teachings are, the physical body (sthula sharira), the astral body (linga sharira), the life principle (prana), the principle of desire (kama), the mind (manas). The principle of mind (manas) is by Mme. Blavatsky said to be the individualizing principle, which is the only one of those mentioned by her which is eternal, and the only undying principle which manifests itself in man. The higher principles are not yet manifest, and therefore are represented in the upper half of the zodiac; but inasmuch as the principle of mind is that which is manifest in the universe and man, the signs of the zodiac show the manner in which this principle is developed through contact with the lower transitory principles, in the natural order from involution to evolution. Thus, for instance, the first breath of mind, cancer (♋), fructifies the germ of life, leo (♌), which gradually develops into form, virgo (♍), and which form is determined by its sex and birth, libra (♎). Its sex is expressed with the development of the principle of desire, scorpio (♏). Here ends the solely animal physical man. But there are the inner senses, such as clairvoyance and clairaudience, which correspond to seeing and hearing. These, with the faculties of the mind, have their organs and centers of action in the upper half of the head. The mind and its faculties must be disciplined and developed before the higher principles (atma and buddhi) can become active.

The human begins the sixth sense of personality and morality which either guides or is guided by the thought, sagittary (♐). As the thought becomes strictly moral, and the senses are used in their proper functions and put to right uses, the thought as personality and a reflection of the I comes in line with its real I, the individuality or mind, which is the completing of the senses by calling into action the higher power of the mind. The organ through which the personality is reflected and on which the moral sense dawns is in this classification represented by the pituitary body. The organ representing individuality, capricorn (♑) is the pineal

gland. As an organ the pituitary body is placed behind and midway between the eyes. The pineal gland is slightly behind and above them. The eyes symbolize these two organs which lie behind them.

These senses of ours while acting through the centers or organs in the head are not mere accidents, or chance evolution by environment. They are both the receiving and the operating stations from which the thinker, man, may receive instruction, and control or direct the forces and elements of nature. Neither is it to be supposed that the signs of the zodiac are the arbitrary naming of certain constellations in the heavens. The constellations in the heavens are symbols as are our own planets. The signs of the zodiac represent so many great classes or orders. At the head of each class or order is an intelligence too sacred to make more than mention of to us. From each such great intelligence there gradually proceed in orderly procession all the forces and elements which make up man's body, and each such has its correspondence in the body of man as stated.

The senses are distinct from the real I and cannot be identified with it. As the I comes into contact with the body, the senses delude it, they intoxicate it, they bewitch it and throw a glamour of enchantment around it which it is not well able to overcome. The I is not to be perceived by the senses; it is intangible and impalpable. As it comes into the world and is associated with the senses it identifies itself with some or all of the senses, because it is in the physical world of forms in which there is nothing to remind it of itself, and it is not until after long suffering and many journeys that it begins to identify itself as distinct from the senses. But in its very effort to distinguish itself it at first becomes even more enamored and deluded.

In the child state or of primitive man it had the natural use of its senses, but with such it could not discern itself. Through cultivation and education the senses were brought to a higher degree of development. This is represented by the various branches of art. As, for instance, the sculptor more clearly conceives form and proportion and moulds the plastic clay or carves the solid marble into forms approximating the beauty which his mind conceives. The artist with the color sense trains his eye to see and his thinking principle to conceive of beauty not only in form but in color. He detects differences in shades and tones of color which the ordinary man does not even conceive, and the primitive man or child sees only as a splash of color contrasting with another splash. Even the man of ordinary education in looking at a face sees only the contour, and gets the general impression of the color and features. From closer inspection he sees what he cannot name as any particular shade of color; but the artist not only at once gets a general impression of the color, but he can on inspection detect many shades of color on the skin which are not even suspected to be present by the ordinary man. The beauties of a landscape or figure executed by a great artist are unappreciated by the ordinary man, and only seen as daubs by the primitive man or child. An animal has either no regard for color, or else is only excited by it. The child or primitive man has to be trained carefully to grasp the idea of shades of color and the perspective in a painting. At first a painting appears to be only a flat

surface which is light or dark in certain parts, but gradually the mind appreciates the foreground and the background with the objects and atmosphere intervening, and as it learns to appreciate color the world appears different to it. The child or primitive man only recognizes a sound through the feeling or emotion which it produces. Then it distinguishes between a discordant noise and a simple melody. Later it may be trained to appreciate more complex sounds, but only the real musician is able to distinguish and appreciate discord from harmony in a great symphony.

But the glamour which results from the cultivation of the senses binds him even more closely to the senses, and make him more their slave than heretofore. From their obedient servant in ignorance, he becomes their loyal slave with culture, though by education and culture he approaches the time of awakening.

Each of the five senses is either high or low according to the use which is made of it by the personality. Civilization and education tend to bind the I to the senses as long as the I and the reasoning faculties shall be applied to material ends and the I is attached to the world and to what it erroneously conceives to be its possessions. Losses, poverty, pain, sickness, sorrow, trouble of all kinds, throw the I back on itself and away from their opposites which attract and delude the I. When the I is strong enough it begins to argue with itself about itself. Then it is possible for it to learn the meaning and the real use of the senses. It then learns that it is not of this world, that it is a messenger with a mission in this world. That before it can give its message and perform its mission it must become acquainted with the senses as they really are, and use them as they should be used instead of being deluded and controlled by them.

The I learns that the senses are really the interpreters of the universe to it, the I, and as such should be given audience, but that the I must learn their language of interpretation, and use them as such. Instead of being beguiled by their influence, the I learns that only by the control of the senses is it able to interpret the universe through them, and that by their control, it, the I, is performing a duty by giving form to the unformed and helping on matter in its involutory and evolutionary processes. The I then still further learns that behind and above the elements to which he speaks through his senses there are intelligences and presences with which he may communicate through new and unused faculties which come into existence and are acquired by the proper use and control of his physical senses. As the higher faculties (such as perception and discrimination) are developed they take the place of the physical senses.

But how is the I to become conscious of I and acquainted with itself? The process by which this may be done is simply stated, though for many it may be difficult of accomplishment. The process is a mental process and is the process of elimination. It may not be done at once, though it is quite possible if the efforts are continued.

Let the one who would succeed in the elimination of the senses be seated quietly and close his eyes. Immediately there will rush into his mind the thoughts of all manner of things relative to the senses. Let him simply begin the elimination of one of the senses, say that of smell. Then let him cut off the sense of taste, so that he is not conscious of anything

that he can either smell or taste. Let him continue by eliminating the sense of sight, that is to say that he will not be conscious in thought by any means of any thing in form or color. Let him further eliminate the sense of hearing, so that he shall be conscious of no noise or sound, not even the buzzing in the ear, or the circulation of the blood through his body. Let him then further proceed by eliminating all sense of feeling so that he is not conscious of his body. It will be conceived now that there is no light or color and that nothing in the universe can be seen, that the sense of taste is lost, the sense of smell is lost, that nothing in the universe can be heard, and that there is no sense of feeling whatever.

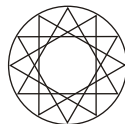
It will be said that one from whom the senses of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling are cut off has no existence, that he is dead. This is true. In that moment he is dead, and he does not exist, but in place of *ex-istence* he has *Being*, and instead of having sensuous life, he IS.

That which remains conscious after the senses have been eliminated is I. In that brief moment of time man is illuminated in Consciousness. He has knowledge of the I as I, distinct from the senses. This will not last long. He will again become conscious of the senses, in the senses, through the senses, but he will know them for what they are, and he will carry the memory of his real being with him. He may then work on with and through the senses towards the time when he will no longer be their slave, but will be himself always himself, will always be I in the proper relation to the senses.

One who is afraid of death and the process of dying should not engage in this practice. He should learn somewhat the nature of death and of his mental processes before thus going in search of I.

This is one of a number of editorials that first appeared in Harold W. Percival's monthly magazine, The Word, between 1904 and 1917. By the time his books were published - between 1946 and 1952 - he had developed a new terminology that would enable him to better convey the results of his thinking. This largely explains any differences between these earlier writings and Percival's later works.

Mr. Percival dictated most of the editorials that appeared in The Word. Occasional typos were not uncommon and likely due to tight monthly deadlines and the necessity of typesetting each letter by hand. In the interest of preserving the authenticity of these documents, we have reproduced them here in their original format, including typographical errors and the punctuation usage and style of a different era. As much as possible, we have also retained the typestyle and layout of the pages as they appeared in the early years of the twentieth century. More of the Percival editorials are available at www.TandD.org.



THE WORD FOUNDATION, INC.

A NON - PROFIT ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED IN 1950
P.O. BOX 17510 • ROCHESTER, NY • 14617 • USA

www.word-foundation.org

 [email article](#)