

# Elementaries

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I perceive that of late the ostracized subject of the Kabalistic "Elementaries" is beginning to appear in the orthodox spiritualistic papers pretty often. No wonder; Spiritualism and its Philosophy are progressing, and they will progress despite the opposition of some very learned ignoramuses, who imagine the Cosmos rotates within the academic brain. But if a new term is once admitted for discussion, the least we can do is to first clearly ascertain what that term means. We students of the Oriental Philosophy count it a clear gain that spiritualistic journals on both sides of the Atlantic are beginning to discuss the subject of sub-human and earth-bound beings, even though they ridicule the idea. But do those who ridicule know what they are talking about, having never studied the Kabalistic writers? It is evident to me that they are confounding the "Elementaries" – disembodied, vicious, and earth-bound, yet human Spirits – with the "Elementals," or Nature Spirits.

With your permission, then, I will answer an article by Dr. Woldrich which appeared in your *Journal* of the 27th inst., and to which the author gives the title of "Elementaries." I freely admit that, owing to my imperfect knowledge of English at the time I first wrote upon the Elementaries, I may have myself contributed to the present confusion, and thus brought upon my doomed head the wrath of Spiritualists, mediums, and their "guides" into the bargain. But now I will attempt to make my meaning clear. Éliphas Lévi applies the term "Elementary" equally to earth-bound human Spirits and to the creatures of the elements. This carelessness on his part is due to the fact that as the human Elementaries are considered by the Kabalists as having irretrievably lost every chance of immortality, they therefore, after a certain period of time, become no better than the "Elementals," who never had any souls at all. To disentangle the subject, I have, in my *Isis Unveiled*, shown that the former should, alone, be called "Elementaries" and the latter "Elementals" (vol. i. p. xxx. "Before the Veil").

Dr. Woldrich, in imitation of Herbert Spencer, attempts to explain the existence of a popular belief in Nature Spirits, demons and mythological deities, as the effect of an imagination untutored by Science, and wrought upon by misunderstood natural phenomena. He attributes the legendary Sylphs, Undines, Salamanders and Gnomes – four great families, which include numberless subdivisions – to mere fancy; going however to the extreme of affirming that by long practice one can acquire

That power which disembodied spirits have of materializing apparitions by the will.

Granted that "disembodied Spirits" have sometimes that power; but if disembodied why not embodied Spirits also, *i.e.*, a yet living person who has become an Adept in Occultism through study? According to Dr. Woldrich's

theory, an embodied Spirit or Magician can create only subjectively, or to quote his words:

He is in the habit of summoning, that is, bringing up to his imagination, his familiar spirits, which, having responded to his will, he considers as real existences.

I will not stop to enquire for the proofs of this assertion, for it would only lead to an endless discussion. If many thousands of Spiritualists in Europe and America have seen materialized objective forms which assure them they were the Spirits of once living persons, millions of Eastern people throughout the past ages have seen the Hierophants of the Temples, and even now see them in India, without being in the least mediums, also evoking objective and tangible forms, which display no pretensions to being the souls of disembodied men. But I will only remark that, though subjective and invisible to others, as Dr. Woldrich tells us, these forms are palpable, hence objective to the clairvoyant; no scientist has yet mastered the mysteries of even the physical sciences sufficiently to enable him to contradict, with anything like plausible or incontrovertible proofs, the assumption that because the clairvoyant sees a form remaining subjective to others, this form is nevertheless neither a "hallucination" nor a fiction of the imagination. Were the persons present endowed with the same clairvoyant faculty, they would every one of them see this creature of "hallucination" as well; hence there would be sufficient proof that it had an objective existence. And this is how the experiments are conducted in certain psychological training schools, as I call such establishments in the East. One clairvoyant is never trusted. The person may be honest, truthful, and have the greatest desire to learn only that which is real, and yet mix the truth unconsciously and accept an Elemental for a disembodied Spirit, and *vice versa*. For instance, what guarantee can Dr. Woldrich give us that "Hoki" and "Thalla," the guides of Miss May Shaw, were not simply creatures produced by the power of the imagination? This gentleman may have the word of his clairvoyant for this; he may implicitly and very deservedly trust her honesty when in her normal state; but the fact alone that a medium is a passive and docile instrument in the hands of some invisible and mysterious powers, ought to make her irresponsible in the eyes of every serious investigator. It is the Spirit, or these invisible powers, he has to test, not the clairvoyant; and what proof has he of their trustworthiness that he should think himself warranted in coming out as the opponent of a Philosophy based on thousands of years of practical experience, the iconoclast of experiments performed by whole generations of learned Egyptians, Hierophants, Gurus, Brâhmans, Adepts of the Sanctuaries, and a whole host of more or less learned Kabalists, who were all trained Seers? Such an accusation, moreover, is dangerous ground for the Spiritualists themselves. Admit once that a Magician creates his forms only in fancy, and as a result of hallucination, and what becomes of all the guides, spirit friends and the *tutti quanti* from the sweet "Summer Land," crowding around the trance mediums and Seers? Why these would-be disembodied entities are to be considered more identified with humanity than the Elementals, or as Dr. Woldrich terms them, "Elementaries," of the Magician, is something which would scarcely bear investigation.

From the standpoint of certain Buddhist Schools, your correspondent may be right. Their Philosophy teaches that even our visible Universe assumed an objective form as a result of the fancy followed by the volition or the will of the

Unknown and Supreme Adept, differing, however, from Christian theology, inasmuch as they teach that instead of calling out our Universe from nothingness, He had to exercise His will upon preëxisting Matter, eternal and indestructible as to invisible Substance, though temporary and ever-changing as to forms. Some higher and still more subtle metaphysical Schools of Nepal even go so far as to affirm – on very reasonable grounds, too – that this preëxisting and self-existent Substance or Matter (Svabhâvat) is itself without any other creator or ruler; when in the state of activity it is Pravritti, a universal creating principle; when latent and passive they call this force Nirvritti. As for something eternal and infinite, for that which had neither beginning nor end there can be neither past nor future, but everything that was and will be, IS; therefore there never was an action or even thought, however simple, that is not impressed in imperishable records on this Substance, called by the Buddhists Svabhâvat, by the Kabalists Astral Light. As in a faithful mirror, this Light reflects every image, and no human imagination could see anything outside that which exists impressed somewhere on the eternal Substance. To imagine that a human brain can conceive of anything that was never conceived of before by the "universal brain," is a fallacy and a conceited presumption. At best, the former can catch now and then stray glimpses of the "Eternal Thought" after this has assumed some objective form, either in the world of the invisible, or visible, Universe. Hence the unanimous testimony of trained Seers goes to prove that there are such creatures as the Elementals; and that though the Elementaries have been at some time human Spirits, they, having lost every connection with the purer immortal world, must be recognized by some special term which would draw a distinct line of demarcation between them and the true and genuine disembodied souls, which have henceforth to remain immortal. To the Kabalists and the Adepts, especially in India, the difference between the two is all-important, and their tutored minds will never allow them to mistake the one for the other; to the untutored medium they are all one.

Spiritualists have never accepted the suggestion and sound advice of certain of their seers and mediums. They have regarded Dr. Peebles' "Gadarenes" with indifference; they have shrugged their shoulders at the "Rosicrucian" fantasies of P. B. Randolph, and his *Ravalette* has made none of them the wiser; they have frowned and grumbled at A. Jackson Davis' "Diakka"; and finally, lifting high the banner, have declared a murderous war of extermination against the Theosophists and Kabalists. What are now the results?

A series of exposures of fraudulent mediums that have brought mortification to their endorsers and dishonour upon the cause; identification by genuine seers and mediums of pretended Spirit-forms that were afterwards found to be mere personations by lying cheats, go to prove that in such instances at least, outside of clear cases of confederacy, the identifications were due to illusion on the part of the said seers; spirit-babes discovered to be battered masks and bundles of rags; obsessed mediums driven by their guides to drunkenness and immortality of conduct; the practices of free-love endorsed and even prompted by alleged immortal Spirits; sensitive believers forced to the commission of murder, suicide, forgery, embezzlement and other crimes; the over-credulous led to waste their substance in foolish investments and the search after hidden treasures; mediums fostering ruinous speculations in stocks; free-loveites parted from their wives in search of other female affinities; two continents flooded with the vilest slanders, spoken and sometimes printed by mediums against other mediums;

*incubi* and *succubi* entertained as returning angel-husbands or wives; mountebanks and jugglers protected by scientists and the clergy, and gathering large audiences to witness imitations of the phenomena of cabinets, the reality of which genuine mediums themselves and Spirits are powerless to vindicate by giving the necessary test conditions; *séances* still held in Stygian darkness, where even genuine phenomena can readily be mistaken for the false, and false for the real; mediums left helpless by their angel guides, tried, convicted, and sent to prison, and no attempt made to save them from their fate by those who, if they are Spirits having the power of controlling mortal affairs, ought to have enlisted the sympathy of the heavenly hosts on behalf of their mediums in the face of such crying injustice; other faithful spiritualistic lecturers and mediums broken down in health and left unsupported by those calling themselves their patrons and protectors – such are some of the features of the present situation; the black spots of what ought to become the grandest and noblest of all religious Philosophies freely thrown by the unbelievers and Materialists into the teeth of every Spiritualist. No intelligent person of the latter class need go outside of his own personal experience to find examples like the above. Spiritualism has not progressed and is not progressing and will not progress, until its facts are viewed in the light of the Oriental Philosophy.

Thus, Mr. Editor, your esteemed correspondent, Dr. Woldrich, may be found guilty of an erroneous proposition. In the concluding sentence of his article he says:

I know not whether I have succeeded in proving the Elementary a myth, but at least I hope that I have thrown some more light upon the subject to some of the readers of the journal.

To this I would answer: (1) He has not proved at all the "Elementary a myth," since the Elementaries are, with a few exceptions, the earth-bound guides and Spirits in which he believes, together with every other Spiritualist. (2) Instead of throwing light upon the subject, the Doctor has but darkened it the more. (3) Such explanations and careless exposures do the greatest harm to the future of Spiritualism, and greatly serve to retard its progress by teaching its adherents that they have nothing more to learn.

Sincerely hoping that I have not trespassed too much on the columns of your esteemed journal, allow me to sign myself, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

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