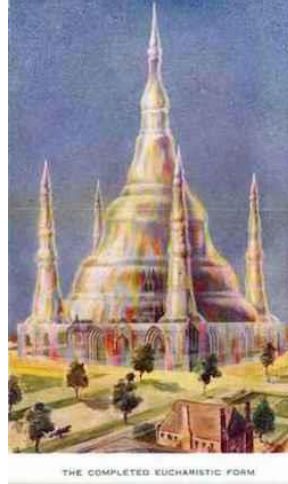


## The Mass

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(Originally published in *The Hidden Side of Things*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1913.

My attention was first called to this by watching the effect produced by the celebration of the Mass in a Roman Catholic Church in a little village in Sicily. Those who know that most beautiful of islands will understand that one does not meet with the Roman Catholic Church there in its most intellectual form, and neither the priest nor the people could be described as especially highly developed; yet the quite ordinary celebration of the Mass was a magnificent display of the application of occult force.

At the moment of consecration the Host glowed with the most dazzling brightness; it became in fact a veritable sun to the eye of the clairvoyant, and as the priest lifted it above the heads of the people I noticed that two distinct varieties of spiritual force poured forth from it, which might perhaps be taken as roughly corresponding to the light of the sun and the streamers of his corona. The first rayed out impartially in all directions upon all the people in the church; indeed, it penetrated the walls of the church as though they were not there, and influenced a considerable section of the surrounding country.

This force was of the nature of a strong stimulus and, its action was strongest of all in the intuitional world, though it was also exceedingly powerful in the three higher subdivisions of the mental world. Its activity was marked in the first, second and third subdivisions of the astral also, but this was a reflection of the mental, or perhaps an effect produced by sympathetic vibration. Its effect upon the people who came within the range of its influence was proportionate to their development. In a very few cases (where there was some slight intuitional development) it acted as a powerful stimulant, doubling or trebling for a time the amount of activity in those intuitional bodies and the radiance which they were capable of emitting. But forasmuch as in most people the intuitional matter was as yet almost entirely dormant, its chief effect was produced upon the causal bodies of the inhabitants.

Most of them, again, were awake and partially responsive only as far as the matter of the third subdivision of the mental world was concerned, and therefore they missed much of the advantage that they might have gained if the higher parts of their causal bodies had been in full activity. But at any rate every ego within reach, without exception, received a distinct impetus and a distinct benefit from that act of consecration, little though he knew or recked of what was being done.

The astral vibrations also, though much fainter, produced a far-reaching effect, for at least the astral bodies, of the Sicilians are usually thoroughly well-developed so that it is not difficult to stir their emotions. Many people far away from the church, walking along the village street or pursuing their various avocations upon the lonely hill-sides, felt for a moment a thrill of affection or devotion, as this great wave of spiritual peace and strength passed over the country-side, though assuredly they never dreamt of connecting it with the Mass which was being celebrated in their little cathedral.

It at once becomes evident that we are here in the presence of a grand and far-reaching scheme. Clearly one of the great objects, perhaps the principal object, of the daily celebration of the Mass is that every one within reach of it shall receive at least once each day one of these electric shocks which are so well calculated to promote any growth of which he is capable. Such an outpouring of force brings to each person whatever he has made himself capable of receiving; but even the quite undeveloped and ignorant cannot but be somewhat the better for the passing touch of a noble emotion, while for the few more advanced it means a spiritual uplifting the value of which it would be difficult to exaggerate.

I said that there was a second effect, which I compared to the streamers of the sun's corona. The light which I have just described poured forth impartially upon all, the just and the unjust, the believers and the scoffers. But this second force was called into activity only in response to a strong feeling of devotion on the part of an individual. At the elevation of the Host all members of the congregation duly prostrated themselves-- some apparently as a mere matter of habit, but some also with a strong upwelling of deep devotional feeling.

The effect as seen by clairvoyant sight was most striking and profoundly impressive, for to each of these latter there darted from the uplifted Host a ray of fire, which set the higher part of the astral body of the recipient glowing with the most intense ecstasy. Through the astral body, by reason of its close relation with it, the intuitional vehicle was also strongly affected; and although in none of these peasants could it be said to be in any way awakened, its growth within its shell was unquestionably distinctly stimulated, and its capability of instinctively influencing the astral was enhanced. For while the awakened intuition can consciously mould and direct the astral, there is a great storehouse of force in even the most undeveloped intuitional vehicle, and this shines out upon and through the astral body, even though it be unconsciously and automatically.

I was naturally intensely interested in this phenomenon, and I made a point of attending various functions at different churches in order to learn whether what I had seen on this occasion was invariable, or, if it varied, when and under what conditions. I found that at every celebration the same results were produced, and the two forces which I have tried to describe were always in evidence-- the first apparently without any appreciable variation, but

the display of the second depending upon the number of really devotional people who formed part of the congregation.

The elevation of the Host immediately after its consecration was not the only occasion upon which this display of force took place. When the benediction was given with the Blessed Sacrament exactly the same thing happened. On several occasions I followed the procession of the Host through the streets, and every time that a halt was made at some half-ruined church and the benediction was given from its steps, precisely the same double phenomenon was produced. I observed that the reserved Host upon the altar of the church was all day long steadily pouring forth the former of the two influences, though not so strongly as at the moment of elevation or benediction. One might say that the light glowed upon the altar without ceasing, but shone forth as a sun at those moments of special effort. The action of the second forces, the second ray of light, could also be evoked from the reserved Sacrament upon the altar, apparently at any time, though it seemed to me somewhat less vivid than the outpouring immediately after the consecration.

Everything connected with the Host-- the tabernacle, the monstrance, the altar itself, the priest's vestments, the insulating humeral veil, the chalice and paten-- all were strongly charged with this tremendous magnetism, and all were radiating it forth, each in its degree.

A third effect is that which is produced upon the communicant. He who receives into his body a part of that dazzling centre, from which flow the light and the fire, becomes himself for the time a similar centre, and radiates power in his turn. The tremendous waves of force which he has thus drawn into the closest possible association with himself cannot but seriously influence his higher bodies. For the time these waves raise his vibrations into harmony with themselves, thus producing a feeling of intense exaltation. This, however, is a considerable strain upon his various vehicles, which naturally tend gradually to fall back again to their normal rates. For a long time the indescribably vivid higher influence struggles against this tendency to slow down, but the dead weight of the comparatively enormous mass of the man's own ordinary undulations acts as a drag upon even its tremendous energy, and gradually brings it and themselves down to the common level. But undoubtedly every such experience draws the man just an infinitesimal fraction higher than he was before. He has been for a few moments or even for a few hours in direct contact with the forces of a world far higher than any that he himself can otherwise touch.

Naturally, having watched all this, I then proceeded to make further investigations as to how far this outflowing of force was affected by the character, the knowledge or the intention of the priest. I may sum up briefly the results of the examination of a large number of cases in the form of two or three axioms, which will no doubt at first sight seem surprising to many of my readers.