

Elementals and Elemental Essence

C. W. Leadbeater and Bertram Keightley

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QUESTION 344.

In the Astral Plane much mention is made of “elemental essence” from which the thought builds “elementals,” and on p.15 it is said that on looking at a stone there can be seen its astral counterpart, the flue flowing through it, its aura and its appropriate elemental essence. In what way is the last distinguished from the rest? Is it astral or other matter? (1896.)

B. K.— “Elemental essence” is the name applied to the monadic essence, *i.e.*, Âtma-Buddhi, which is descending through the matter of the manasic and astral planes into the mineral kingdom. Âtma-Buddhi clothes itself primarily in the atomic condition of each of these planes of matter in turn, but is of course distinguishable by the trained clairvoyant vision from the matter in which it thus vehicles itself, though without such a vehicle formed of the matter of the plane in question it could not manifest upon that plane at all. It thus constitutes the informing or ensouling life and sentiency of every form which can be built of the matter belonging to that plane. By this I mean the life and sentiency properly belonging to that form as such, whether or not that form is used as a vehicle by some conscious entity from the same or any higher plane. To take an instance. Suppose my thought builds a form out of the matter of the lowest astral sub-plane. In building it, my thought encloses in the shape made of this order of matter a portion of the “elemental essence” of the astral plane, *i.e.*, of that Âtma-Buddhi which has clothed itself in atomic astral matter. This elemental essence then becomes the life and sentiency of the form my thought has built, receiving from my thought its direction, character, and separate existence. When the form breaks up, the elemental essence returns to the particular class of essence from which it was drawn. For although the astral elemental essence is *primarily* Âtma-Buddhi vehicled in atomic astral matter, yet as time proceeds it further differentiates itself, clothing itself in other orders of astral matter besides the atomic, and thus gives rise to the very numerous classes of astral elemental essence.

Speaking generally, there are three great realms of “elemental essence” which in earlier theosophic writing have been spoken of as the three “elemental kingdoms” which precede the mineral kingdom in order of evolution. These belong respectively to the arûpa levels of the manasic plane, to the rûpa levels thereof; and to the astral plane; each again being subdivided into many kinds, classes, and orders.

From the foregoing the answers to the questions put will be clear. The elemental essence informing a stone is distinguishable from the astral counterpart of the stone and from the Jîva flowing through it, by its own peculiar characteristics, which are just as plainly visible to the trained clairvoyant sight as the peculiarities of the stone itself. The nature of the elemental essence has been explained above as far as can be done in words. But this explanation must

necessarily be very imperfect, and will probably convey but little to the reader; just as a written description of the flavour of a strawberry would give but little idea of what that fruit really tastes like.

C. W. L.—The elemental essence is very readily distinguishable from the rest by those who are able to see it, but it is not so easy to make the distinction clear in a verbal description on the physical plane. First, let it be understood that elemental essence is merely a name applied during certain stages of its evolution to monadic essence, which in its turn may be defined as the outpouring of Âtmâ-Buddhi into matter. We are all familiar with the idea that before this outpouring arrives at the stage of individualisation at which it ensouls man, it has passed through and ensouled in turn six lower phases of evolution—the animal, vegetable, mineral, and three elemental kingdoms. When energising through those respective stages, it has sometimes been called the animal, vegetable or mineral monad—though this term is distinctly misleading, since long before it arrives at any of these kingdoms it has become not *one* but *many* monads. The name was, however, adopted to convey the idea that, though differentiation in the monadic essence had already long ago set in, it had not yet been carried to the extent of individualisation.

Now when this monadic essence is energising through the three great elemental kingdoms which precede the mineral, it is called by the name of “elemental essence.” Before, however, its nature and the manner in which it manifests can be understood, the method in which Âtmâ enfolds itself in its descent into matter must be realised. Be it remembered, then, that when Âtmâ, resting on any plane (it matters not which—let us call it plane No. 1) wills to descend to the plane next below (let us call that plane No. 2), it must enfold itself in the matter of that plane—that is to say, it must draw round itself a veil of the matter of plane No. 2. Similarly when it continues its descent to plane No. 3 it must draw round itself the matter of that plane, and we shall then have, say, an atom whose body or outer covering consists of the matter of plane No. 3. The force energising in it—its soul, so to speak—will, however, not be Âtmâ in the condition in which it was on plane No. 1, but will be that Âtmâ *plus* the veil of the matter of plane No. 2. When a still further descent is made to plane No. 4, the atom becomes still more complex, for it will then have a body of No. 4 matter, ensouled by Âtmâ already twice veiled—in the matter of planes 2 and 3. It will be seen that, since this process repeats itself for every sub-plane of each plane of the solar system, by the time the original force reaches our physical level, it is so thoroughly veiled that it is small wonder men often fail to recognise Âtmâ at all.

Now suppose that the monadic essence has carried on this process of veiling itself down to the atomic level of the devachanic plane, and that, instead of descending through the various subdivisions of that plane, it plunges down directly into the astral plane, ensouling or aggregating round it a body of atomic astral matter; such a combination would be the elemental essence of the astral plane, belonging to the third of the great elemental kingdoms—the one immediately preceding the mineral. In the course of its two thousand four hundred differentiations on the astral plane it draws to itself many and various combinations of the matter of its several sub-divisions; but these are only temporary, and it still remains essentially one kingdom, whose characteristic is monadic essence involved down to the atomic level of the devachanic plane only, but manifesting through the atomic matter of the astral plane.

The two higher elemental kingdoms exist and function respectively upon the rûpa and the arûpa levels of the devachanic plane, but the question probably does not refer to

them. It should, however, be remembered that in speaking of this phase of evolution, the word “higher” means, not, as usual, more advanced, but *less* advanced, since here we are dealing with the monadic essence on the downward sweep of its arc, and progress for the elemental essence therefore means descent into matter instead of ascent towards higher planes. Unless the student bears this fact constantly and clearly in mind, he will again and again find himself beset by perplexing anomalies.

QUESTION 345.

On page 18 of Manual VI. [The Devachanic Plane by C. W. Leadbeater], Mr. Leadbeater mentions elemental essence as something “quite distinct” from the “mere matter of the plane.” Monadic essence he does not speak of. I had thought elemental essence was the matter of the plane, and monadic essence the informing principle as it were—that the latter clothed itself in the former, and bore the same relation to it as the individuality does to the personality; that the elemental essence was the result of the first outpouring of the Logos, and the monadic essence that of the second. Is not this correct? (1899.)

B. K.—The term “monadic essence” has been already defined in the *Vahan*, but it may be well to repeat the explanation in other words, and try to make clear the distinction between the two terms, “monadic essence” and “elemental essence.”

First, then, the “monadic essence” of any plane is the second outpouring or second Life Wave (*i.e.*, the outpoured Life of the Second Logos) *clothed in the atomic matter of the plane in question*. To elaborate: (*a*) the second Life Wave denotes the whole outpouring of life from the Second Logos irrespective of the kind or kinds of matter in which it may be clothed; (*b*) when this second Life Wave is clothed in the atomic matter of any plane and not in any of the other (molecular) conditions of the matter of that plane, it is called the monadic essence *of that plane*. It should further be remembered that, in its descent from the Logos, the second Life Wave clothes itself only in the atomic matter of the planes above that on which we may be tracing its further differentiation. Thus, to take the monadic essence of the physical plane as an example, this physical plane monadic essence will have as its outermost garment the atomic matter only of the physical plane; within that its next sheath will be the atomic matter of the astral plane, but it will not have in its sheathing any of the various molecular combinations of the astral atoms which constitute the various sub-planes of the astral. Further, the next inner sheath of the monadic essence will be composed of the highest order of matter belonging to the uppermost of the four lower subdivisions of the manasic plane (since this manasic plane embraces two distinct evolutionary kingdoms). Then as its next sheath it will have atoms of the highest of the three arûpa manasic levels, then atoms of the buddhic plane, and so on.

So far, then, for the meaning and use of the term “monadic essence”; now let us take up the other term, *viz.*, “elemental essence.” Its use and meaning are simple. When a portion of the monadic essence of any plane clothes itself in the molecular matter of that plane, in addition to its permanent sheath of the atomic matter, it is then called “elemental essence” of such and such a kind. Thus, to put this in the form of a definition: “elemental essence” is “monadic essence” sheathed in a further outer coating of molecular matter.

To deal now specifically with some of the subsidiary points mentioned in the question, on the basis of the above definitions and explanations:

1. “Elemental essence” is thus not the matter of the plane, but involves another and higher life, viz., the life of the Second Logos poured forth as the second Life Wave, since it consists of monadic essence sheathed in the molecular matter of the plane, and we thus have—Elemental essence = monadic essence + sheathing of molecular matter of the plane = second Life Wave + atomic matter of plane in question and all planes above it + molecular sheathing.

2. Both monadic essence and elemental essence belong to the second Life Wave poured forth by the Second Logos, *not* to the first Life Wave which proceeds from the Third Logos.

C. W. L.—The questioner should study his Manuals more carefully. If he will read again pp. 74-79 of *Manual VI.*, and p. 56 of *Manual V.* [*The Astral Plane by C. W. Leadbeater*], he will find a statement of the subject which, if he had understood it, would have rendered his query unnecessary. Elemental essence *is* monadic essence at a certain Stage of its descent into matter. Just as the name “mineral monad” or “mineral essence” is applied to that part of the monadic outpouring from the Second Logos which happens to be manifesting through the mineral kingdom, so is the name “elemental essence” applied to that part of the same outpouring which is as yet at an earlier stage of evolution and is manifesting through the elemental kingdoms on the astral or mental planes. The distinction between the essence and the matter of a plane is drawn in *Manual V.*, pp. 14, 15.

QUESTION 346.

When elemental essence is moulded into a thought-form, it takes to itself a colour corresponding to the nature of the thought or feeling; does it carry with it any part of this colouring when it sinks back into the general mass of essence, when the thought-form disintegrates? (1902.)

C. W. L.—It is undoubtedly true that the essence when moulded by thought adopts a certain colour—a colour which is expressive of the nature of the thought or feeling. But we must remember that a colour is, after all, nothing but a certain rate of vibration, so that all that we mean when we say that a thought-form is of a certain colour is that the essence composing it is for the time compelled to vibrate at a certain definite rate by the thought which is ensouling it.

Now the evolution of the elemental essence is to learn to respond to all possible rates of vibration; when, therefore, a thought holds it for a time vibrating at a certain rate, it is helped to this extent, that it has now become habituated to that particular rate of vibration, so that next time it comes within reach of a similar vibration it will respond to it very much more readily than before. Then presently those atoms of essence, having passed back again into the general mass of the elemental essence, will be caught up again by some other thought and will then have to vibrate at some totally different rate, and so will evolve a little further by acquiring the capacity to respond very readily to the second type of vibration. So by very slow degrees the thoughts not only of man but of nature spirits and devas, and even of animals so far as they do think, are slowly evolving the elemental essence which surrounds them—slowly teaching, as it were, here a few atoms and there a few atoms to respond to this or that different rate of vibration, until at last a stage will be reached when

all the particles of the essence shall be ready to answer at any moment to any possible rate of vibration, and that will be the completion of their evolution.

So that perhaps it would be more correct for us to say that what the essence carries with it back into the mass is not so much the colour itself as the power to assume that colour at any moment when required.

QUESTION 347.

Is it possible to kill or to destroy elementals of an evil character so that they can do no further harm to ourselves or others? (1896.)

C. W. L.—Undoubtedly it is possible to dissipate an artificial elemental by an exertion of will-power, if that is what is meant by the questioner. It is also possible on the physical plane to kill a poisonous snake in order that it may do no further harm; but neither course of action would commend itself to an occultist except under very unusual circumstances. It is perfectly justifiable for a man to defend himself or others from either the snake on the physical plane or the evil elemental on the astral: but in nearly all cases this can be done without employing any of the forces of destruction. In the case of the elemental the simple expedient of forming a shell round oneself or round anyone whom one is engaged in protecting will at once prevent the possibility of any unpleasant consequences.

In dealing with a matter such as this there are two points which must never be forgotten—first, that the elemental essence evolves through its connection with thought, and that unless circumstances absolutely compel us to do so, we shall do wrong to interfere with that evolution. Whether the thought ensouling it is evil or good makes no difference to the essence; all that is required for its development is to be used by thought of some kind. The difference between the good and the evil would be shown by the quality of essence which it affected, the evil thought or desire needing for its appropriate expression the coarser and denser matter, while the higher thought would require correspondingly finer and more rapidly vibrating matter for its covering. There are plenty of undeveloped people always thinking the coarser, lower thoughts, and their very ignorance and crassness are made use of by the great law as evolutionary forces to help on a certain stage of the work that has to be done. It is for us, who have learnt a little more than they, to strive ever to think the high and holy thoughts, which cause the evolution of a finer kind of elemental matter, and so to work in a field where at present the labourers are all too few.

Secondly, we must remember that an astramental image of an evil character can never affect anyone unless they have in themselves something corresponding to it upon which it can fasten. Upon the aura of a pure and noble-hearted person these evil influences make absolutely no impression; they are unable to find any entrance there, and they simply rebound from it like a missile from a dead wall. Most of all is this the case with a man who is full of loving thought, for he is ever pouring out from himself a constant stream of good wishes and benevolent feelings—a stream so strong that nothing evil can withstand it, but is swept far away before its outward rush. Thus it is plain that everyone may defend himself (and others) from evil by a method better far than any in which the idea of destruction has place.