



***PRENTICE  
MULFORD***

***THOUGHTS  
ARE THINGS***

**Prentice Mulford**

# **Thoughts are Things**

EAN 8596547002093

DigiCat, 2022

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## **Chapter 1**

### **THE MATERIAL MIND vs THE SPIRITUAL MIND**

THERE belongs to every human being a higher self and a lower self--a self or mind of the spirit which has been growing for ages, and a self of the body, which is but a thing of yesterday. The higher self is full of prompting idea, suggestion and aspiration. This it receives of the Supreme Power. All this the lower or animal self regards as wild and visionary. The higher self argues possibilities and power for us greater than men and women now possess and enjoy. The lower self says we can only live and exist as men and women have lived and existed before us. The higher self craves freedom from the cumbrousness, the limitations, the pains and disabilities of the body. The lower self says that we are born to them, born to ill, born to suffer, and must suffer as have so many before us. The higher self wants a standard for right and wrong of its own. The lower self says we must accept a standard made for us by others--by general and long-held opinion, belief and prejudice.

“To thine own self be true” is an oft-uttered adage. But to which self? The higher or lower?

You have in a sense two minds--the mind of the body and the mind of the spirit. Spirit is a force and a mystery. All we know or may ever know of it is that it exists, and is ever working and producing all results in physical things seen of physical sense and many more not so seen.

What is seen, of any object, a tree, an animal, a stone, a man is only a part of that tree, animal, stone, or man. There is a force which for a time binds such objects together in the form you see them. That force is always acting on them to

greater or lesser degree. It builds up the flower to its fullest maturity. Its cessation to act on the flower or tree causes what we call decay. It is constantly changing the shape of all forms of what are called organized matter. An animal, a plant, a human being are not in physical shape this month or this year what they will be next month or next year.

This ever-acting, ever-varying force, which lies behind and, in a sense, creates all forms of matter we call Spirit.

To see, reason and judge of life and things in the knowledge of this force makes what is termed the "Spiritual Mind."

We have through knowledge the wonderful power of using or directing this force, when we recognize it, and know that it exists so as to bring us health, happiness and eternal peace of mind. Composed as we are of this force, we are ever attracting more of it to us and making it a part of our being.

With more of this force must come more and more knowledge. At first in our physical existences we allow it to work blindly. Then we are in the ignorance of that condition known as the material mind. But as mind through its growth or increase of this power becomes more and more awakened, it asks: "Why comes so much of pain, grief and disappointment in the physical life?" "Why do we seem born to suffer and decay?"

That question is the first awakening cry of the spiritual mind, and an earnest question or demand for knowledge must in time be answered.

The material mind is a part of yourself, which has been appropriated by the body and educated by the body. It is as if you taught a child that the wheels of a steamboat made the boat move, and said nothing of the steam, which gives the real power. Bred in such ignorance, the child, should the wheels stop moving, would look no farther for the cause of their stoppage than to try to find where to repair them, very much as now so many depend entirely on repair of the

physical body to ensure its healthy, vigorous movement, never dreaming that the imperfection lies in the real motive power--the mind. The mind of the body or material mind sees, thinks and judges entirely from the material or physical standpoint. It sees in your own body all there is of you. The spiritual mind sees the body as an instrument for the mind or real self to use in dealing with material things. The material mind sees in the death of the body an end of all there is of you. The spiritual mind sees in the death of the body only the falling off from the spirit of a worn-out instrument. It knows that you exist as before only invisible to the physical eye. The material mind sees your physical strength as coming entirely from your muscles and sinews, and not from source without your body.

It sees in such persuasive power, as you may have with tongue or pen, the only force you possess for dealing with people to accomplish results. The spiritual mind will know in time that your thought influences people for or against your interests, though their bodies are thousands of miles distant. The material mind does not regard its thought as an actual element as real as air or water. The spiritual mind knows that every one of its thousand daily secret thoughts are real things acting on the minds of the persons they are sent to. The spiritual mind knows that matter or the material is only an expression of spirit or force; that such matter is ever changing in accordance with the spirit that makes or externalizes itself in the form we call matter, and therefore, if the thought of health, strength and recuperation is constantly held to in the mind, such thought of health, strength and rejuvenation will express itself in the body, making maturity never ceasing, vigor never ending, and the keenness of every physical sense ever increasing. The material mind thinks matter, or that which is known by our physical senses, to be the largest part of what exists. The spiritual mind regards matter as the coarser or cruder expression of spirit and the smallest part of what really

exists. The material mind is made sad at the contemplation of decay. The spiritual mind attaches little importance to decay, knowing in such decay that spirit or the moving force in all things is simply taking the dead body or the rotten tree to pieces, and that it will build them up again as before temporarily into some other new physical form of life and beauty. The mind of the body thinks that its physical senses of seeing, hearing and feeling constitute all the senses you possess. The higher mind or mind of the spirit knows that it possesses other senses akin to those of physical sight and hearing, but more powerful and far reaching. The mind of the body has been variously termed "the material mind," the "mortal mind " and the "carnal mind." All these refer to the same mind, or, in other words to that part of your real self which has been educated in error by the body.

If you had been born and bred entirely among people who believed that the earth was a flat surface and did not revolve around the sun, you would in the earlier years of your physical growth believe as they did. Exactly in such fashion do you in your earlier years absorb the thought and belief of those nearest you, who think that the body is all there is of them, and judge of everything by its physical interpretation to them. This makes your material mind.

The material mind seeing, what seems to it, depth, dissolution and decay in all human organization, and ignorant of the fact that the real self or intelligence has in such seeming death only cast off a worn-out envelope, thinks that decay and death is the ultimate of all humanity. For such reason it cannot avoid a gloom or sadness coming of such error, which now pervades so much of human life at present. One result or reaction from such gloom born of hopelessness is a reckless spirit for getting every possible gratification and pleasure, regardless of right and justice so long as the present body lasts. This is a great mistake. All pleasure so gained cannot be lasting. It brings besides a hundredfold more misery and disappointment.

The spiritual mind teaches that pleasure is the great aim of existence. But it points out ways and means for gaining lasting happiness other than those coming of the teaching of the material mind. The spiritual mind, or mind opened to higher and newer forces of life, teaches that there is a law regulating the exercise of every physical sense. When we learn and follow this law, our gratifications and possessions do not prove sources of greater pain than happiness, as they do to so many.

By the spiritual mind is meant a clearer mental sight of things and forces existing both in us and the Universe, and of which the race for the most part has been in total ignorance. We have now but a glimpse of these forces, those of some being relatively a little clearer than those of others. But enough has been shown to convince a few that the real and existing causes for humanity's sickness, sorrow and disappointment have not in the past been seen at all. In other words, the race has been as children, fancying that the miller inside was turning the arms of the windmill, because some person had so told them. So taught they would remain in total ignorance that the wind was the motive power. This illustration is not at all an overdrawn picture of the existing ignorance which rejects the idea that thought is an element all about us as plentiful as air, and that as blindly directed by individuals and masses of individuals in the domain of material mind or ignorance, it is turning the windmill's arms, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another; sometimes with good and sometimes with evil results.

A suit of clothes is not the body that wears such suit. Yet the material mind reasons very much in this way. It knows of no such thing as clothing for the spirit, for it does not know that body and spirit are two distinct things. It reasons that the suit of clothing (the body) is all there is of the man or woman. When that man or woman tumbles to pieces through weakness, it sees only the suit of clothes so going

to pieces, and all its efforts to make that man or woman stronger are put on the suit instead of making effort to reinforce the power within which has made the suit.

There are probably no two individuals precisely alike as regards the relative condition or action on them of their material and spiritual minds. With some the spiritual seems not at all awakened. With others it has begun to stretch and rub its eyes as a person does on physical awakening, when everything still appears vague and indistinct. Others are more fully awakened. They feel to greater or lesser extent that there are forces belonging to them before unthought of. It is with such that the struggle for mastery between the material and spiritual mind is likely to be most severe, and such struggle for a time is likely to be accompanied by physical disturbance, pain or lack of ease.

The material mind is, until won over and convinced of the truths, constantly received by the spiritual mind at war and in opposition to it. The ignorant part of yourself dislikes very much to give up its long accustomed habits of thinking. Its costs a struggle in any case at first to own that we have been mistaken and give up views long held to. The material mind dislikes change more and more as the crust of the old thought held from year to year grows more thickly over it. It wants to live on and on in the house it has inhabited for years; dress in the fashion of the past; go to business and return year in and year out at precisely the same hour. It rejects and despises after a certain age the idea of learning any new accomplishments, such as painting or music, whose greatest use is to divert the mind, rest it, and enable you to live in other departments of being, all this being apart from the pleasure also given you as the mind or spirit teaches the body more and more skill and expertness in the art you pursue.

The material mind sees as the principal use of any art only a means to bring money, and not in such art a means for giving variety to life, dispelling weariness, resting that

portion of the mind devoted to other business, improving health and increasing vigour of mind and body. It holds to the idea of being “too old to learn.”

This is the condition of so many persons who have arrived at or are past “middle age.”

They want to “settle down.” They accept as inevitable the idea of “growing old.” Their material mind tells them that their bodies must gradually weaken, shrink from the fullness and proportion of youth, decay and finally die.

Material minds say this always has been, and therefore always must be. They accept the idea wholly. They say quite unconsciously, “It must be.”

To say a thing must be, is the very power that makes it. The material mind then sees the body ever as gradually decaying, even though it dislikes the picture, and puts it out of sight as much as possible. But the idea will recur from time to time as suggested by the death of their contemporaries, and as it does they think “must,” and that state of mind indicated by the word “must” will inevitably bring material results in decay. The spiritual or more enlightened mind says: “If you would help to drive away sickness, turn your thought as much as you can on health, strength and vigour, and on strong, healthy, vigorous material things, such as moving clouds, fresh breezes, the cascade, the ocean surge; on woodland scenes and growing healthy trees; on birds full of life and motion; for in so doing you turn on yourself a real current or this healthy life-giving thought, which is suggested and brought you by the thought of such vigorous, strong material objects.

And above all, try to rely and trust that Supreme Power which formed all these things and far more and which is the endless and inexhaustible part of your higher self or spiritual mind, and as your faith increases in this Power, so will your own power ever increase. Nonsense! “ says the ultra material mind. “ If my body is sick, I must have something done to cure that body with things I can see and

feel, and that is the only thing to be done. As for thinking, it makes no difference what I think, sick or well.”

At present in such a case a mind whose sense of these truths new to it, has just commenced to be awakened, will, in many cases, allow itself to be for a time overpowered and ridiculed out of such an idea by its own material mind or uneducated part of itself; and in this it is very likely to be assisted by other material minds, who have not woken up at all to these truths, and who are temporarily all the stronger through the positiveness of ignorance. These are as people who cannot see as far ahead as one may with a telescope, and who may be perfectly honest in their disbelief regarding what the person with the telescope does see. Though such people do not speak a word or argue against the belief of the partly awakened mind, still their thought acts on such a mind as a bar or blind to these glimpses of the truth.

But when the spiritual mind has once commenced to awaken, nothing can stop its further waking, though the material may for a time retard it.

“Your real self may not at times be where your body is” says the spiritual mind. It is where your mind is--in the store, the office, the workshop, or with some person to whom you are strongly attached, and all of these may be in towns or cities far from the one your body resides in. Your real self moves with inconceivable rapidity as your thought moves.

“Nonsense” says your material mind; “I myself am wherever my body is, and nowhere else”

Many a thought or idea that you reject as visionary, or as a whim or fancy, comes of the prompting of your spiritual mind. It is your material mind that rejects it. No such idea comes but that there is a truth in it. But that truth we may not be able to carry out to a relative perfection immediately. Two hundred years ago some mind may have seen the use of steam as a motive power. But that motive power could not then have been carried out as it is today. A certain previous growth was necessary--a growth and improvement

in the manufacture of iron, in the construction of roads, and in the needs of the people.

But the idea was a truth. Held to by various minds, it has brought steam as a motive power to its present relative perfection. It has struggled against and overcome every argument and obstacle placed in its way by dull, material, plodding minds. When you entertain any idea and say to yourself in substance: "Well, such a thing may be, though I cannot now see it" you remove a great barrier to the carrying out and realization by yourself of the new and strange possibilities in store for you.

The spiritual mind today sees belonging to itself a power for accomplishing any and all results in the physical world, greater than the masses dream of. It sees that as regards life's possibilities we are still in dense ignorance. It sees however, a few things--namely, perfect health, freedom from decay, weakness and death of the body, power of transit, travel and observation independent of the body, and methods for obtaining all needful and desirable material things through the action and working of silent mind or thought, either singly or in co-operation with others.

The condition of mind to be desired is the entire dominancy of the spiritual mind. But this does not imply dominancy or control in any sense of tyrannical mastership of the material mind by the spiritual mind. It does imply that the material mind will be swept away so far as its stubborn resistance and opposition to the promptings of the spiritual are concerned. It implies that the body will become the willing servant, or rather assistant of the spirit. It implies that the material mind will not endeavour to act itself up as the superior when it is only the inferior. It implies that state when the body will gladly lend its co-operation to all the desires of the spiritual mind.

Then all power can be given your spirit. Then no force need be expended in resisting the hostility of the material mind. Then all such force will be used to further our

undertakings, to bring us material goods, to raise us higher and higher into realms of power, peace and happiness, to accomplish what now would be called miracles.

Neither the material mind nor the material body is to be won over and merged into the spiritual by any course of severe self censure or self denial, nor self punishment in expiation for sins committed, nor asceticism. That will only make you the more harsh, severe, bigoted and merciless, both to yourself and others. It is out of this perversion of the truth that have arisen such terms as “ crucifying the body” and “ subjugating the lower or animal mind.” It is from this perversion that have come orders and associations of men and women who, going to another extreme, seek holiness in self denial and penance.

“Holiness” implies wholeness, or whole action of the spirit on the body, or perfect control by your spirit over a body, through knowledge and faith in our capacity to draw ever more and more from the Supreme Power.

When you get out of patience with yourself, through the aggressiveness of the material mind, through your frequent slips and falls into your besetting sins through periods of petulance or ill temper, or excess in any direction, you do no good, and only ill in calling or thinking for yourself hard names. You should not call yourself “a vile sinner” anymore than you would call any other person a “vile sinner,” If you do, you put out in thought the “vile sinner” and make it temporarily a reality. If in your mental vision you teach yourself that you are “utterly depraved” and a “vile sinner,” you are unconsciously making that your ideal, and you will unconsciously grow up to it until the pain and evil coming of such unhealthy growth either makes you turn back or destroys your body, For out of this state of mind, which in the past has been much inculcated, comes harshness, bigotry, lack of charity for others, hard, stern and gloomy and unhealthy views of life, and these mental conditions will surely bring physical disease.

When the material mind is put away, or, in other words, then we become convinced of the existence of these spiritual forces, both in ourselves, and outside of ourselves, and when we learn to use them rightly (for we are now and always have been using them in some way), then to use the words of Paul: “ Faith is swallowed up in victory,” and the sting and fear of death is removed. Life becomes then one glorious advance forward from the pleasure of today to the greater pleasure of tomorrow, and the phrase “to live” means only to enjoy.

## **Chapter 2**

### **WHO ARE OUR RELATIONS?**

THE man or woman who is most like you in tastes, motives, and habits of thought, and to whom you feel most attracted, may not be brother, sister, cousin, or any physical relative at all. But such person is to you a very near relation.

Your brothers or sisters may not be like you at all in mind, taste, and inclination. You may associate with them because they are members of the family, but were you not to know them as brothers, sisters, or other relatives, or were you to see elsewhere their exact counterparts in character, you might not like such counterparts at all. Physical or “ blood relationship” has very little bearing on the real or mental relationship. It is possible for a brother or sister, a father or mother to be very closely allied to you in thought and sympathy. Again, it is possible for a father or mother, brother or sister, to be very remote from you in thought and sympathy, and to live in a realm or atmosphere of thought very unlike yours.

You can live neither healthfully nor comfortably, unless with those whose thought-atmosphere (a literal emanation from them) is similar to your own. Physical relationship may or may not furnish such an atmosphere. Compel a labouring man whose thought goes little beyond his eating, drinking and daily round of work, to live exclusively with a company of artists and philosophers, seeing none of his own kind and order of thought, and that man’s spirits would in time be depressed, and his health would suffer. The same law works when the superior mind is compelled to constant association