

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

---

---

Vol. 67, No. 6

April 1997

---

---

### THOUGHTS ON H.P.B.

BEFORE our next issue is out, White Lotus Day will have been celebrated. Everywhere in the world, students of Theosophy gather together on this anniversary day, not merely to honour the memory of their Teacher H.P.B., but also to seek their own mind-purification and heart-upliftment. It is an occult truth that by constantly dwelling on the words of the Sages, by devotedly thinking of Their ever-living presence, we ourselves touch Their world.

What order of being was H.P.B.? Who was this Russian noblewoman who was called the Sphinx of the 19th century? Even today, more than a century after her death, she continues to be the paradox *par excellence* for students and inquirers alike. From numerous viewpoints this "Pyramidal-Sphinx" can be described. One thing is certain: for us who revere her as guide and guru, she becomes greater and grander as we know more of the philosophy she taught, as we delve deeper into the methods she emphasized to teach and to serve. For the ordinary, casual observer, she ever remains a riddle, unsolved, unsolvable; and we shall not be wrong in surmising that for all who try to understand her nature without the aid of her teachings, a mystery she will remain, a mystery she *must* remain.

Let us then try to get at a picture of this great personage by the help of the teachings to which her very soul and spirit were transmitted. Hers was a Promethean personality: it was titanic in its struggles against the weaknesses and follies of the era to which she

belonged; but it was also full of that fire of inspiration which created the good and which guided all. She not only showed how the ways of the 19th century were misguided; she also revealed the hidden Path to the World of Light and to the Beings of Light. She was Spiritual Will incarnate; she had Knowledge and Wisdom extraordinary; she had a perception of the unity of all human beings, which made her practise compassion and sacrifice for all. We must try to see H.P.B. in this triple role: (1) the Soul of Will, (2) the Heart of Knowledge, (3) the Mind that ever planned and ever executed untold Sacrifices.

(1) To begin with, H.P.B. was born with a Will both controlled and creative. Spiritual Will is a rare attainment. Even ordinary strong will is very different from obstinacy; an obstinate person is *not* wilful. But one who possesses ordinary will uses it for multifarious ends; *e.g.*, a businessman uses his will to make money, or to gain power, or for other purposes. But when that ordinary will undergoes spiritual training and culture, it acquires not only a concentration in method, but also purity in motive and purpose. H.P.B. had that Spiritual Will; not only was it under her complete control, but it was directed to a single goal; and it never wavered from its purpose. She used that Will to develop supernormal powers, to obtain supernormal knowledge, to help her pupils and the world at large in a supernormal manner; and she consecrated that Will to the service of those whom she called "Masters" and whom she followed with rare fidelity. She had powers and faculties that will be the heritage of future races only. To the world to which she came, she was like the first sweet shower of blessed rain for which the summer fields are athirst. The learned men of science did not know what she knew, nor did they care to understand her faculties and powers, and so they looked askance at her, derided her, and rejected her. But scientists of today are beginning to teach what their own predecessors rejected, and so is "wisdom justified of her children"! We say—if you want to fathom the greatness of H.P.B., study the nature and function of human will which, rising superior to obstinacy, becomes not only concentrated, but also consecrated to a noble and spiritual purpose. Her clairvoyance, her clairaudience,

all her wonderful faculties and virtues, were the fair fruits of the training and discipline of her Spiritual Will.

(2) Turning to her Knowledge: Let people look at her writings, even if they have no inclination to study them. The Knowledge the writings convey is not of an ordinary nature. Not only does she show great *Viveka*-discrimination in analysing vast stores of Knowledge of science, philosophy and religion, but she demonstrates calm *Vairagya*-dispassion in evaluating all Knowledge. Her books show the spiritual nature of her Knowledge, and, what is more, its vast scope is simply amazing. Not a branch of science, not a school of philosophy, ancient or modern, not a religion or theology with which she was not familiar. If her Will gave her extraordinary power and rare faculties, the Knowledge she gained under the Blessed Gurus made her a Sage. There are *yogis* who possess both purity and powers, but that alone does not make them wise Sages. H.P.B. was a rare *Yogi* who had her psychic faculties under full control, and in addition she had Knowledge and was able to give a rational explanation of the processes of Nature, without which the spiritual life is full of dangers and pitfalls.

(3) But she was something more than a pure *Yogi* of superhuman faculties, or a *Jnani* who had Wisdom. She was also the embodiment of Compassion and Sacrifice. Her love was for *all*—not for her countrymen only or for Theosophists only. Her likes and loves of a personal nature were never allowed to interfere with her profound compassion for Orphan Humanity. In serving others, she sacrificed her all. She served the high and the low, the Westerner and the Easterner, and made no distinction between them. She sacrificed the peace and bliss of the well-earned rest of the spiritually illuminated, and became a bridge in this ocean of *samsara*, over which men and women may pass on to the Occult World of Peace and Light and Supreme Knowledge. Scores of stories can be narrated of how she sacrificed here, gave love there, poured out compassion in another place. She taught by precept and ever set an example of charity, tolerance, forbearance and fortitude.

What is the key that really will unlock the mystery of this Prometheus who brought the Fire of Theosophy, *Brahma-Vidya*, to

the world of the 19th-20th century? The key is enshrined in the word—Chelaship. Confusion and misunderstanding about Chelaship exist because the truth of the nature and function of real Gurus is forgotten. Chelaship nowadays implies slavery to some person who has successfully harnessed human credulity. Perhaps the most important purpose of H.P.B.'s mission was the restoration of the lost ideal of Chelaship and of Spiritual Gurus. Her writings and her example teach the true function of a disciple, the real path of Chelaship, and the nature of the genuine Gurus. In her own person she showed what Chelaship meant. She was the Mediator between the world of Immortal Adepts and that of mortal men.

Who is a Mediator and what is Mediatorship? It can be compared to the human principle of *Antahkarana*—that Internal Organ which acts as a link or a bridge between our own incarnated, mortal, personal self and our divine and purified *Augoeides*. Passing over the bridge of *Antahkarana*, the mortal becomes one with the Divinity within, thereby becoming immortal. All true chelas are like *Antahkarana*, a bridge between the sense-world and the Occult World. The Chela bears the Light of Knowledge to those who are groping for it in the darkness of *samsara*—not merely theoretical knowledge, but that practical knowledge which brings to men and women a new vision of the universe, a new attitude to life. A Chela's attitude to the whole of Nature is one of profound responsibility, and it is rooted in his knowledge of the Laws of Nature and his reverence for all beings in Nature.

H.P.B. gave that teaching and set that example. Loyalty and fidelity born of that knowledge of the Laws of Nature begets devotion, and therefore H.P.B. was a great devotee, not a mushy, sentimental devotee, but a real *bhakta* who carried within her heart the fire of Buddhi, of pure and compassionate Wisdom. Having Light and Love, Wisdom and Compassion, imparting Knowledge to all and sacrificing for all, she lived and laboured, and some few in the world saw who she was, and whom she represented. Such few recognized that she was a Chela and that she represented the Real Gurus, Blessed Lords of Shadowless Light. To her we pay homage, for through her suffering and sacrifice we have come to

know the existence of the Path to the Masters, and if we try to spread the Knowledge she gave, it is because we look upon it as the sure and safe guide in our world of craft, cunning and credulity. May her Light continue to guide us! May we remain faithful, till the very end, to the Path she showed and to the Masters who are behind!

---

THERE are several ways of acquiring knowledge: (a) by accepting blindly the dicta of the church or modern science; (b) by rejecting both and starting to find the truth for oneself. The first method is easy and leads to social respectability and the praise of men; the other is difficult and requires more than ordinary devotion to truth, a disregard for direct personal benefits and an unwavering perseverance. Thus it was in the days of old and so it is now, except perhaps, that such devotion to truth has been more rare in our own day than it was of yore. Indeed, the modern Eastern student's unwillingness to think for himself is now as great as Western exactions and criticism of other people's thoughts....

The real "Path" to esoteric knowledge is very different. Its entrance is overgrown with the brambles of neglect, the travesties of truth during long ages block the way, and it is obscured by the proud contempt of self-sufficiency and with every verity distorted out of all focus. To push over the threshold alone, demands an incessant, often unrequited labour of years, and once on the other side of the entrance, the weary pilgrim has to toil up on foot, for the narrow way leads to forbidding mountain heights, unmeasured and unknown, save to those who have reached the cloud-capped summit before. Thus must he mount, step by step, having to conquer every inch of ground before him by his own exertions; moving onward, guided by strange landmarks the nature of which he can ascertain only by deciphering the weather-beaten, half-defaced inscriptions as he treads along, for woe to him, if, instead of studying them, he sits by coolly pronouncing them "indecipherable." The "Doctrine of the Eye" is *maya*; that of the "Heart" alone can make of him an elect.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

WHERE have I come from? Where am I going to? What will be my condition after death? What is the origin of this Earth? These are some of the questions that arise in our minds. The theories put forward by science and religion by way of explanation depend upon their respective concepts of the nature of man. The scientific theory of evolution, as put forward by Darwin and others, speaks of an ancestor common to man and ape, on the basis of mere anatomical resemblances found between the two. Their theory is thus restricted to the physical body or form of man. If we turn to religion, it posits that, as far as the human form is concerned, humanity has sprung from a single pair of Adam and Eve. But, unlike science, religion admits the existence of an immortal soul, and at the same time puts forward the absurd theory that for every baby born a special soul is created.

Today, some leading scientists admit that there is intelligence, design or law behind everything, from the smallest bacteria to the vast Universe. But this was not the general scientific position in the past. Mr. Judge wrote in his article, "Which is Vague, Theosophy or Science?":

The well-known Haeckel in his *Pedigree of Man* says, in speaking of Darwin's teachings and lauding them: "Darwin puts in the place of a conscious creative force, building and arranging the organic bodies of animals and plants on a designed plan, a *series of natural forces working blindly*, or we say, *without aim, without design*. In place of an arbitrary act we have a necessary law of evolution....A *mechanical origin of the earliest living form* was held as the necessary sequence of Darwin's teaching."

As Mr. Judge comments, it is absurd to say that "blind, undesignated forces," working haphazardly, could finally produce forms with design. In our observation of Nature, we see only harmonious design in all forms.

Theosophy does not keep changing its stand as science does, and has always spoken of a plan, a design or law behind evolution. Of

the Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine, the first relates to God, the second to Law, and the third to Being or Evolution. According to Theosophy, God is not a Being but is an immutable, omnipresent, omniscient Principle. At the time of manifestation, there arises within this Universal Principle a point of energy, which after a series of transformations differentiates into Spirit and Matter. These are the two poles of the One Reality and they are linked through an intelligent medium called *Fohat*. The plan or the blueprint of the Universe is there in the Divine Mind even before the Universe comes into existence. *Fohat*—the universal propelling Vital Force of all manifestation—impresses the ideas in the Divine Mind on to Cosmic Matter as the Laws of Nature. As a result we find that this is a Universe of Law, and every single atom is governed by this Law. In fact, the whole Universe comes into existence in accordance with the Law of Cycles, or of Periodicity, which is the supreme Law governing evolution.

In Theosophy we are given the details of evolution pertaining only to the Earth Chain of globes, which is the reincarnation of a former chain of globes, once active—the Moon Chain. When the latter had completed its life cycle, it "died," and the evolving Egos or Monads began their migration to the Earth Chain in seven streams or waves. *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 174) divides the Monadic Host into three great classes:

1. The most developed Monads (the Lunar Gods or "Spirits," called, in India, the Pitris), whose function it is to pass in the first Round through the whole triple cycle of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms....They are those who first reach the human form (if there can be any form in the realm of the almost subjective) on Globe A in the first Round...

2. Those Monads that are the first to reach the human stage during the three and a half Rounds, and to become men.

3. The laggards; the Monads which are retarded, and which will not reach, by reason of Karmic impediments, the human stage at all during this cycle or Round....

Now what is a Monad? The One Spirit is universal and omnipresent, and its divine spark, *Atma*, is present in every being. Its

vehicle is *Buddhi*. This *Atma-Buddhi* unit is called Monad. It is the spirit or soul in everything, whether it be an atom, a stone, a plant, an animal, or a man. Every Monad is a self-moving unit and centre of force, and from it comes the impulse for evolution. Yet, it is itself changeless. *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 174-75 fn.) tells us:

Metaphysically speaking, it is of course an absurdity to talk of the "development" of a Monad, or to say that *it* becomes "Man." ...It stands to reason that a MONAD cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. *It is not of this world or plane*, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality. Left to itself the Monad will cling to no one; but, like the "plank," be drifted away to another incarnation by the unresting current of evolution.

The Monad passes through various kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, animal and human. The experiences gained in these kingdoms are stored in *Buddhi*. As we go from one kingdom to a higher one, not only is there evolution of form—the forms become more and more complex—but also a greater degree of consciousness or intelligence is exhibited. Even in the minerals there is a degree of consciousness, though almost in latency. In the vegetable or plant, there is a somewhat higher degree of consciousness or intelligence—*e.g.*, the sunflower responds to the movement of the sun and turns in its direction. In the animal, there is a still better specialized mode of intelligence, like the struggle to get food and the desire to protect the young.

Experiments have shown a kind of free will even in the simplest protoplasmic units. In her article "Kosmic Mind," H.P.B. writes about the behaviour of a unicellular amoeba, observed under the microscope. The amoeba was seen to hunt only for the aquatic plant *Spirogyra* as its food, rejecting every other food placed in its path. The experimenter observes that the way of acting of these animalculae in their search for food "is so amazing that one is almost

inclined to see in them *consciously acting beings*." So also the epithelium cells, covering the wall of the intestine, selectively suck out drops of fat from the food particles. Yet, animals do not have self-consciousness or the power to think and choose that human beings possess. In the lower kingdoms, there is natural impulse to rise to higher forms. But, having reached the animal kingdom, the Monad can rise to higher forms only in that kingdom, as the "door" to the human kingdom closed in the middle of the Fourth Round and no more Monads can enter there.

When the Monads were ready to enter the human kingdom, a perfect human form was developed by natural processes, but it was yet ethereal. It had a brain of superior capacity than that of the animals, because it is this brain that would be used as an instrument by the mind at the proper time. At this early stage, however, man was man only in form. The mind, though latent, had still to be "lit up."

Even as far as physical man is concerned, he did not spring from a pair of Adam and Eve, nor has he descended from the anthropoid apes. It was a class of progenitors or ancestors of man called the Lunar Pitris who projected their shadows which developed into the human form. As for the resemblance between man and the anthropoids, Theosophy says that the latter, instead of being our ancestors, are the *product* of man's bestiality. In the far past, mindless "men" united with the females of huge animals, producing man-like monsters. This sin was repeated by the thinking men of the Atlantean Race, and their progeny are the anthropoids.

The *Manas* in man was still lying dormant like an unlit candle, so that the Monad had no link with the vehicle. The *Manasaputras* or Sons of Wisdom lighted up the *Manas*, endowing man with the power to think and choose as also with the reflective consciousness. This happened some 18,000,000 years ago.

It is at this point that the Monad became individualized. The lighting up of *Manas*, we are told, was done according to the readiness of the forms. In some forms which were ready, the higher beings incarnated fully. Forms which were only half ready received only a spark and they constitute the average humanity. While those

forms which were not at all ready, as these were the Monads which had just entered the human kingdom, remained "narrow brained." These constitute the savage tribes, such as those of Africa and Australia, whose reasoning power is very low. This explains the varying degrees of intellectuality found among various races of men.

Who were these beings who gave man the light of *Manas*? In *The Secret Doctrine* it is said that the whole Kosmos is guided, controlled and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient beings who are agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws. It was self-conscious beings of immense Wisdom, called *Manasaputras* or *Agnishwatta Pitris*, who gave man the light of *Manas*. So man's mind is not a product of physiological growth, but has a divine source.

In *The Eternal Verities*, the analogy of the tree and the book is given to show that the *form* does not produce the mind. Just as it would be foolish to think that the tree becomes the ideas in the book, so also it would be a folly to say that the animal becomes man. The tree is turned into pulp and goes through many other processes before the paper is manufactured and is ready for printing. At every stage human intelligence is involved. But can we say that those who manufactured the paper or those who did the printing were the real producers of the book? What constitutes the book? It is not the paper nor the printed letters. It is the ideas, or what is "incarnated" or embodied in the book, that is of value. So the book is produced by the mind that first saw the need for it and provided the ideas for it. So also man is not the form but the mind. Just as the mind that produced the book holds many more ideas which are not in the book, so also each of us on the outside is like a "book," but each Ego has many other perfections and ideas which as yet it does not show forth. The progress of the individual depends upon how much of that which is potential in him he is able to bring into actual operation. The aim of evolution is to reach the nature, stature and dignity of self-conscious godhood while in the body, not only for one's own benefit, but also to raise the entire mass of manifested matter to that high estate.

Infant humanity was not left to itself to exercise its newly acquired power of thinking, but was guided by spiritual instructors who burnt into the imperishable centre of man's consciousness spiritual wisdom as also the first notions of arts and sciences.

Why do we not possess this knowledge today? It is because when *Manas* has to function through the body, it forgets its divine origin. On incarnation, *Manas* becomes dual. When it entangles itself in passions and desires it is called *Kama-Manas* or lower *Manas*, and when it has united with *Buddhi* it is called *Buddhi-Manas*. But it is for the lower mind to turn for help and guidance to the higher. So the higher *Manas*, though all-knowing, is helpless on our plane, because the incarnated mind refuses to take help—just as a person who has sprained his ankle will not be able to walk even though he has the knowledge of walking.

It is this *Manas* united with *Buddhi* which is the "eternal pilgrim" or the "reincarnating ego" who goes from one life to another, and like a bee gathering honey from flower to flower, it gathers from every personality noble and undying qualities like unselfishness, sympathy, love in the abstract, etc. These are taken by the ego to *Devachan* where it assimilates these noble ideas, and then comes back enriched in the next incarnation. Thus evolution proceeds in accordance with the law of cycles.

The Third Fundamental states that after the Monad has reached the human stage, further evolution is by self-induced and self-devised ways and means, checked by its Karma. According to the law of Karma, all that we are today is the result of our former actions, and we are building our future through our present actions. Our future depends not only upon our actions now, but also upon how we react to the Karmic consequences of our past actions. Do we accept them constructively, seeing that there is something in them for us to learn, or do we rebel and say, "What have I done to deserve this?"

People try to accumulate merit, but as we are told in the *Gita*, once the stock of merit is exhausted we are born again on earth. To get release from the chain of birth and death, we have to become Karmaless. How? Even the Great Ones are under the sway of

Karma; for every action of theirs, there will be a reaction; but the *law of retribution* does not apply to them—*i.e.*, a sage will not perform an evil action, but even the good is done so impersonally and selflessly that he does not offer an individual focus where the effects can come back. He is like a writer who has made a deal that all the money that comes to him as royalty would be distributed as charity.

So also all our actions must be as an offering to the Krishna within. It has been found that in times of crisis, human beings tend to forget their personal interests and are able to act selflessly. A great being knows that every moment of human life is a moment of crisis, because at every moment we are called upon to make an all-important decision—to choose the way that would take us either a step higher or a step lower; to choose between the transitory or the eternal, between the personal will to prevail or the Divine Will. These choices that we make from moment to moment are not unimportant, as there will come a time in human evolution when mind will be fully developed and the entire humanity will be compelled to make a conscious choice between the right-hand path leading to conscious and complete union with the higher nature or the left-hand path leading to annihilation. This is termed the *moment of choice*.

We generally grumble that this is *Kali Yuga*, the Iron Age, and that we can do little against it. We also complain about our past Karma and how it is weighing us down. But Theosophy says that man is never completely conditioned by his surroundings, inner or outer. In H.P.B.'s article "Psychic and Noetic Action" we are told:

This "Mind" is *manas*, or rather its lower reflection, which whenever it disconnects itself, for the time being, with *kama*, becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties, and is the organ of free will in physical man.

We have the examples of Confucius and Plato (who are called Fifth Rounders), and of Buddha and Shankara (who are termed Sixth Rounders), because they were much ahead of their times; *i.e.*, mentally, psychically and spiritually they belonged to a higher

plane of evolution which average humanity will reach much later. So an individual can take his evolution in his own hands and even in a downward cycle he can be the "redeemer of the race."

We cannot progress in isolation. We help or retard the progress of the whole creation. We are continually sending out good or bad impressions to the matter around us. If we send out brutal impressions, then the atoms emanating from us are absorbed by the ferocious beasts instead of being refined and kept on the human plane. This is misinterpreted to mean that man can be born in the future as an animal. Theosophy says, *once a man, always a man*. Our thoughts and feelings affect not only other men but also the lower kingdoms. The beings below us look up to us for their progress. Mr. Judge points out that man is responsible for ferocious animals like tigers, lions, serpents, etc.

A cell in the body is an entity, but at the same time it is part of the "unit" that is the body. So also man is an entity belonging to the "unit" that is the whole Universe. As *Light on the Path* says, "Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame." We have created the total situation. A son may walk out of the house of a father who earns money by unfair means, but he must not forget that it is not so simple to sever himself from his family, as he has contributed in making the family what it is. So also we cannot condemn a person for his sin, because he and we are all part of the same human family. It is said that before one can attain to Buddhahood, one has to face, not only all the latent evil propensities of his nature, but also the maleficent power accumulated by the community and the nation to which one belongs.

Aid comes to us, not from outside but from within. Mr. Judge states in *An Epitome of Theosophy* that, however personal and interior the process of spiritual development may be, it "is not unaided." In the process of evolution, nothing is added from the outside, but there is unfoldment or realization from within. It is like we hear in the stories sometimes, where a poor little boy in the end turns out to be a prince. Each one of us is potentially a prince. So Arjuna is told by Krishna, "Thou art born with the divine destiny."

---

## THE FRUITS OF STUDY

NEWCOMERS to Theosophy, when they find stress being laid in the U.L.T. on the study of the Philosophy, often ask: "What is the good of all this study? What after all does it matter whether God is personal or impersonal, whether there are seven rounds and seven globes or not, whether there are seven races and this is the fifth or not, whether there are seven human principles or more? Why not just tell people to be good, to be kind and charitable, to live as friends and brothers?"

To all those who raise such questions let us ask a counter-question: "Why are *you* not good and kind and charitable and brotherly? What prevents you from living the truth as you say you see it?" Is there anyone who doubts the wisdom of these words of the Buddha: "Hatred ceaseth not by hatred but by love"? Or of this injunction of Jesus: "Love thy neighbour as thyself"? Then why is it that people do not live up to what they theoretically recognize to be true? Is there anyone who does not accept that it is our duty to be good, to live noble and virtuous lives of altruism and service? Everyone knows it; everyone talks about it; every preacher in every church, every priest in every temple of every creed, speaks of it. Then why is it that people are not able to live good, holy and happy lives? They want to, but they cannot, because they have not the capacity and the strength to live such lives. Just as a child is not able to lift up a heavy weight because its muscular system is not fully developed, so also the minds and hearts of men and women have not grown and developed to lift up the burdens of the world, by becoming and being good.

Study of Theosophy not only brings us conviction that the Living Ideas of Divine Instructors are true, but it also gives us a new energy for living the good life, the higher life. The true science of ethics is unknown to most men and women in the modern world; devotion is not recognized as a matter of practice, strenuous and sustained, but is regarded merely as a matter of feeling. Study of Theosophy is like the exercise of the muscles; a new kind of power or force flows into us and arouses in us true devotion, without which

the noble or virtuous life, the life of true service and altruism, is not possible.

U.L.T. insists upon study not merely for the sake of getting information. It is not mere information that enables one to become better, though the information does something. Just as a pupil at school in learning any subject not only gathers information but also develops the power to learn more, to observe, to reason and to judge, so does the Theosophical student. His individual study at home and the corporate efforts at Lodge meetings enable him not only to gather data and information but also to unfold the latent power of intuitive discernment. We acquire more knowledge and develop the power to know more at one and the same time.

It needs to be realized, however, that familiarity with the verbal forms in which the Theosophical teaching is expressed, and *knowledge* of the philosophy are entirely different things. Such realization is the beginning of wisdom. Unless the knowledge that is acquired from books or from group study is pondered over and assimilated, it is forgotten. It may last a few weeks or months or years; but when the brain goes, it goes too; nothing of it remains unless it is built into the very fabric of our nature. People go through the round of births and deaths and pass through the same experiences again and again without developing the resourcefulness to deal with those experiences and the ability to correct themselves when they go wrong. Why? Because assimilation has not taken place.

A sure proof that the ideas and thoughts have been assimilated by us and not merely the words memorized lies in asking ourselves: "Can I make clear that which I profess to know, to others who have not understood?" If we cannot make clear the Three Fundamental Propositions, or Reincarnation and Karma, or anything else that we have read of in books or heard of in lectures or at the study classes, to those with whom we come in contact and who have never before read or heard of these subjects, then we have not understood them.

There is another way of finding out whether what is studied has been assimilated. The *Gita* says that there is no purifier to be compared to spiritual knowledge, and the purity of life that ensues

on the acquirement of knowledge is the final test. Has our knowledge purified our inner senses so that we see, hear, sense more clearly today than we could yesterday? Are our feelings and emotions becoming more pure, more noble and compassionate than they were yesterday? Are our minds purified so that we are able to think straighter than we did yesterday? If our answers to these questions are in the affirmative, it is an indication that wisdom which is happiness has become part and parcel of ourselves.

One of the characteristics of men and women belonging to our modern civilization is that they do not see clearly. Something comes in the way. That something is impurity—impurity that is mental, impurity that is emotional, impurity of the senses and of the body. Study lets loose an energy that energizes our mind, our emotions, our brain, our senses, and eliminates and purifies. Right kind of study is at once twofold in purpose: it eliminates the dross from our nature and is therefore destructive; it builds up and is therefore constructive. The taking in of food on the physical plane is analogous to the taking in of knowledge. Certain foodstuffs build up the body; others are eliminators of poisons; and unless both the processes take place simultaneously we are bound to have a clogged-up bodily system. Similarly, without proper study our sense nature, our emotional nature and our mind nature get clogged up, impurities accumulate and our vision gets dwarfed.

True knowledge comes slowly and is not easily acquired. The acquisition of it depends not only upon present effort but also upon past Karma. The co-operation of the Inner Manasic Ego is necessary. We shall lose some of our impatience with our slowness in increasing our knowledge if we clearly recognize that the Ego within is hampered by the weaknesses of our personality; once the latter is cleansed, what we read and reflect upon is understood and assimilated.

But we want quick results—"I have read today so many pages from *The Ocean of Theosophy* or *The Key to Theosophy* or *The Secret Doctrine*; what have I gained from this study? How have I purified myself?" The mastering of any science or philosophy or art requires several years of constant and consistent study. We are like

little children who are fond of being considered grown up and who continually watch whether they are growing up or not, and get disappointed because they do not perceive the change. And yet every moment the change is taking place, more molecules are coming in, and the growth manifests itself in a certain restlessness of the body of the child. Similarly, in many of us, the growth that is taking place imperceptibly produces at first an emotional or mental restlessness; and, if we go on in spite of it and keep on studying, we shall presently come across, as by a flash of lightning, something that is steadfast and stable in our consciousness. The vision may come and go away, perhaps for months and years, but that does not matter. In the passage of time, spontaneously from within ourselves wisdom will spring forth, all doubts will be resolved and inner peace will result.

There are two modes of study, individual and in the company of co-students, both of which are necessary. The importance of joint study is often not perceived. It is an illusion that we can study any subject by ourselves alone. The very fact that we use books implies that we are taking the aid of those we acknowledge to be superior to ourselves, or we would not be studying their books. All of us are limited in our own way. Each one of us has certain impurities in his or her lower nature. These get transformed as we study together and observe what has been achieved by others and the transformation that has taken place in them. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity is our first object; the coming together of fellow students for the purposes of study makes us realize the power of brotherhood, and such realization in turn brings to birth altruism and service in an ever-expanding measure.

Real study, by the power to eliminate and to purify, brings the clear vision whereby we become embodiments of the wisdom, and as that process goes on we are able to help others, and in proportion ourselves, because we and our fellows are one. Student-servers of Theosophy are labouring so that the doctrines they cherish "may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century." It is not possible to change the Buddhi-Manas of the race in one sweep, but each of us can change his own mentality by the power or energy that study

brings. We thus begin to acquire a new attitude towards life. From the kingdom of the dead we begin to emerge into the kingdom of the living; instead of being blind, we begin to see; instead of being led by others, we begin to stand up on our own feet and help others to do likewise.

Further, study does two things. First, it kills out in us all sense of egotism, pride and self-importance. It also kills out that other form of egotism, mock-modesty, which makes us say, "I am a nobody." Study makes us see ourselves for what we are; it brings us the vision of the deeper Self which is divine and of the superficial self which is always changing.

Breadth of vision and liberality of view, accompanied by right discrimination and resourcefulness, are the fruits that study of Theosophy brings. Such study ought not to be a matter of convenience but an uttermost necessity. Unless we feel that study is as necessary to our constitution as physical food is to the body, we shall not go at it with enthusiasm, zeal and persistence. "To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle."

W. Q. Judge has this wise admonition to offer us:

What is the plain duty of every Theosophist? To read and understand, so as to be able to explain theosophical doctrines. The society has never suffered from outsiders so much as it has from its unintelligent representation by members. The world is full of minds who wish to know, and Theosophists should form clear conceptions of what they think they believe, in order to meet objections, dispel doubts and carry conviction. Such is our duty.

---

THE Yogi, whose intellect is perfect, contemplates all things as abiding in himself, and thus, by the eye of Knowledge (*Jnana-chakshus*), he perceives that everything is *Atma*.

—SRI SANKARACHARYA

## SPIRITUAL LIGHT

THE *Voice of the Silence* gives us this advice:

Seek for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

Earlier, we are told of two more "Halls." The first is the Hall of "terrestrial consciousness," and the second that of astral consciousness—"the psychic world of supersensuous perceptions and of deceptive sights." The first is also called the "Hall of Ignorance," and the second the "Hall of Probationary Learning." Both are minefields where the aspirant is easily deceived if he does not fix his consciousness upon the Divine Self. Similar advice is given in every Scripture of any note the world over. He who is "to give thee birth" does not just refer to a personal Guru, but to the real "Guru" who is our Higher Self. This is the real Teacher we can rely on for true guidance.

The *sloka* also tells us that this "Hall" is a realm "wherein all shadows are unknown." In a later footnote, H.P.B. writes: "'Personalities' or physical bodies called 'shadows' are evanescent." So we have to attain a state of consciousness in which the personality is "deliberately forgotten." It is only when we begin to focus our consciousness on this higher plane that we can actually be said to be "born." At least this is our *second* birth. It is also our real birth. To be born in a physical form does not necessarily make us human. It is the awakening of the Divinity in us that transforms us into truly human beings. We begin to realize what we actually *are*, and then the masks begin to fall away and we are brought "face to face" with our true Self. It is a great relief to begin to discern Spiritual Light in the darkness of our lives, but it also brings added responsibility and many dangers. But, if we dwell on these dangers and are able to see only the dark side, we shall never be free from the clutches of *Maya*. We need to be aware of them, but we should always dwell on the Light that floods our mind and soul when they are touched by the Divine. We become what we think on, and if we

can keep our mind upon the higher part of our nature, then in time the mists will clear and we will begin to discern the Truth. The Light is always present, but we must not confuse it with any physical light or even mental light, for this can be a barrier to understanding what the true Light is.

Spiritual Teachers will tell us that the word "Light" is used because it is the only word that even begins to convey the idea, but it falls far short of the actual reality, which can only be experienced in the heart of the aspirant. Words eventually become obstacles on the path and will act like the ball and chains that were attached to the legs of prisoners in the olden days. They will prevent us from moving on. At certain stages they are necessary, but there are times when they cease to be important and we need to read our hearts to know the cycles of learning. Everyone is different and we have to know ourselves as individuals as also become aware of ourselves as part of the Whole. As *The Voice of the Silence* puts it: "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims."

It is dangerous for anyone to set up hard and fast rules to reach the goal. Certain individuals have found that certain practices have helped them on the way, so they have tried to inflict these on others. The motive may be good, but one man's meat is another man's poison, and what is beneficial for one may not be so for another. That is the magic of Theosophical Teaching. It gives general rules that each can apply to his or her own life, and its exponents do not (or should not!) try to dogmatize. What brings light to one can but mean darkness to someone else. Our vision of Light varies. In spiritual teaching, we call the unknown "darkness." This is not because it is dark in the traditional sense of the word, but because it is beyond our comprehension and so appears to be dark. In the same way, we all have our varying views as to what is light and what is dark. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is said, concerning the self-governed Sage: "What is night to those who are unenlightened is as day to his gaze; what seems as day is known to him as night, the night of ignorance." So on different levels of advancement we have our differing perceptions. True Spiritual Illumination is beyond the

opposites of light and shadow.

We need also to look at the dictionary definition of the word "light": "That by which objects are rendered visible...illumination of mind...knowledge...spiritual illumination." So it is obvious that it is a mistake to have too materialistic a view of the word "Light." The "light of truth" mentioned in the quotation from *The Voice of the Silence* at the head of this article, refers to that illumination of mind that renders many hitherto hidden facts visible. Spiritual progress consists in removing the veils that prevent us from seeing clearly. These veils are formed by the mind, which is both our saviour and our tempter. *The Key to Theosophy* says that "the future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas gravitates more downward to Kama rupa, the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to *Buddhi*, the Spiritual *Ego*" (p. 90). If it gravitates upwards, it becomes illumined by the Light of the Higher Self, and the mists begin to clear. The Higher Self is described in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 173) as "the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God *above*, more than within, us. Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his *inner Ego* with it!"

This then is the "light of truth" that "shines with unfading glory," and all else is *Maya* (illusion). We should take this to heart and work towards the time when all sense of separateness will fall away and we shall become merged in the ALL. Then we should be able to act spontaneously and unselfishly for the good of all sentient beings.

---

Is it to be wondered that so few reach the goal, that so many are called, but so few are chosen? Is not the reason for this explained in three lines of *The Voice of the Silence*? These say that while "The first repeat in pride, 'Behold, *I know*,' the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, 'Thus have I heard' "; and hence, become the only "chosen."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## FEELING JOYOUS

W. Q. JUDGE, in his article "Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution," speaks of a friend who had periods of depression and despondency, and he shows the way to get over such moods:

Take this occasion of despondency. What he should have done was, that being the return of an old impression, to have compelled himself to feel joyous, even against his will, and if he could not have done that, then to have tried to feel the joy of others.

The mystery of the "overwhelming, unquenchable gladness" for everything that happened, is happening, or is going to happen, needs to be understood, for there are in the world most lovable and enthusiastic people who, in the words of the poet William Morris, "seem glad even to draw their breath."

In his *Dictionary of Word Origins*, J. T. Shipley states that the word "glad" is derived from the Latin "*glaber*," meaning "smooth."

The cognate Old High German *glat*, smooth, came into Old English as *glad*. As things smooth are shiny, the sense shining developed; this gradually took the place of the other. Then, applied figuratively, it meant persons of a shining disposition; hence the present application.

Such a disposition is of the nature of what Carlyle calls "blessedness": "There is in man a higher than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness." Another author, Young, also makes a similar distinction when warning us to "beware what earth calls happiness; beware all joys but joys that never can expire."

What, then, is happiness? Shipley points out that this word is rooted in the Anglo-Saxon "*hap*," meaning chance or luck. So, "happy first meant lucky, and if you were lucky you'd be happy too."

The *Bhagavad-Gita* states that doubt is the dispeller of happiness (IV, 40). Pleasure is of three kinds, *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, and its long-term result is either pain or contentment,

depending on its quality. The forsaking of desires results in contentment and happiness (II, 55); their subjugation leads to peace of mind and freedom from sin (VI, 27). The wise, imbued with spiritual knowledge, discourse continually on the Supreme and thereby obtain enjoyment and satisfaction (X, 9). Devotion to the Supreme (VI, 28) and the recognition of the Divine Presence in everything (IX, 22) will produce the highest bliss, *Ananda*. The harmony that results is called *Satchitananda*, which is explained by Mr. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 99) thus:

<p><i>Sat</i>, or Being;  <i>Chit</i>, or Consciousness, Mind;  <i>Ananda</i>, or Bliss</p>	}	<p>These together are  called <i>Satchitananda</i>.</p>
---	---	---

But *Sat*—or Being—the first of the three, is itself both *Chit* and *Ananda*. The appearing together in full harmony of Being and Consciousness is Bliss or *Ananda*. Hence that harmony is called *Satchitananda*.

This is the "supreme happiness" which is the "eternal place."  
(*Gita*, XVIII, 62)

This state of *Ananda* can be attained by following the prescription of Gautama, the Enlightened One, who teaches in Chapter XV of the *Dhammapada* the cultivation of freedom from attachment to hate, longing, anxiety and possessions. The company of the wise and the noble is also conducive to happiness. In the words of the Blessed One:

Happy is the solitude of him who is full of joy, who has learned the Truth, who sees the Truth. Happy is freedom from malice in this world, self-restraint towards all beings that have life. Happy is freedom from lust in this world, getting beyond all desires; the putting away of that pride which comes from the thought "I am!" This truly is the highest happiness!

The Old Testament extols this Wisdom, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness" (*Proverbs*, III, 17), for "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." (III, 13)

H.P.B. says in one of her articles: "Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and

make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact." And, again: "Life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity." Yet, as stated by Robert Crosbie, "true happiness for all can be obtained only when each human being uses all his powers for the good of others."

Hence, instead of railing "against other folks, because other folks have what some folks would be glad of" (Henry Fielding in *Joseph Andrews*), let us, like the shepherd in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, "owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness," but be "glad of other men's good," and thus reach the "Heavens of Gladness" (*Light of Asia*, Book VIII), the "eternal place." (*Gita*, XVIII, 62)

---

ESOTERIC philosophy teaches that everything lives and is conscious, but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings. Life we look upon as "the one form of existence," manifesting in what is called matter; or, as in man, what, incorrectly separating them, we name Spirit, Soul and Matter. Matter is the vehicle for the manifestation of soul on this plane of existence, and soul is the vehicle on a higher plane for the manifestation of spirit, and these three are a trinity synthesized by Life, which pervades them all. The idea of universal life is one of those ancient conceptions which are returning to the human mind in this century, as a consequence of its liberation from anthropomorphic theology....It hardly seems possible that science can disguise from itself much longer, by the mere use of terms such as "force" and "energy," the fact that things that have life are living things, whether they be atoms or planets.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 49

## THE BASIC QUESTIONS

SOMETIMES people keep on revolving in their minds a problem that appears to them so baffling that they cannot proceed smoothly with further study and understanding. When one comes to such a point, it may help to devote a little time to considering what we already do know or can at present know about the problem, and thus we can help ourselves to surmount such mental barriers.

Take anything, any problem, and ask the following five questions: *What* is this? *How* did it come to be? *When* did it come to be? *Where* did it come to be and what is its place in the scheme of things? *Why* does it exist? The first question deals with the intrinsic nature or essence of the thing or problem; the second, third and fourth questions with its process of becoming and its place in time and space; the fifth question with its cause or purpose and its utility.

This mental exercise requires the harmonious use of reason, logic and imagination, among other qualities. If it is sincerely undertaken, it very soon reveals to us how little we really do know, how little is known or explained in any of our modern systems, whether scientific, psychological, philosophical or religious, and how ridiculous it is for us to attach undue importance to any one proposition which puzzles us. Let us rather put it aside for the time being and take it up later when we have a better basis of knowledge. Those who are beginners in Theosophy should particularly note this, and, instead of wasting their time and energy over what they find too abstruse, should try to grasp the simpler teachings first.

Older students, who have studied Theosophy more deeply, assert that it alone of all the systems of thought known to us can point to the answers to these five questions and lead us to solve our own problems. These questions probe the beginning, the middle and the end of all existing things.

Anyone who seeks in earnest to understand any aspect of life soon finds that Life itself is the great Mystery and that it is One. Science, religion, psychology and philosophy only recognize and try to deal with some of the minor, particular problems of life, each in its own way and in its own field. But Life, being One, requires

a synthetic, unified system to direct the mind toward the solving of its problems. Metaphysics, psychology and physics, like spirit, mind and matter, cannot be separated; they are inseparable, interdependent, involved in one process, having one source and one goal.

Theosophy is simple. There are only three fundamental propositions to be grasped; it explains one consistent process of evolution—from within, without; there are only five basic questions that the human mind can ask at present. If students would study and work on these fundamental ideas, scores of lesser difficulties would vanish from their minds and, what is more important, from their hearts. It is the heart that must find a way out of the snares of delusion. It is the heart that must unite the vision of the mind with the work of the hands, and thus create unity. *This is life.*

It is truly said that without vision the people perish; but let us not forget that without love there will be no vision worthy of the name, no questions worth asking or finding answers to. Let us consider the problems raised by the fifth question, "Why?", without forgetting that our hearts as well as our heads must be satisfied with the answer. This was the test that the Buddha asked his *Bhikkhus* to apply in evaluating all the teachings that he gave them; and this is as important for us moderns as it was 2,500 years ago.

---

It needs but a little to overthrow and destroy everything—just a slight aberration from reason. For the helmsman to wreck his vessel, he does not need the same resources, as he needs to save it; if he turn it but a little too far to the wind, he is lost; yes, and if he do it not deliberately but from mere want of attention, he is lost all the same....Keep awake then and watch your impressions; it is no trifle you have in keeping.

—EPICTETUS

## THE CORNER STONE

[Reprinted from *The Path*, October 1886.]

TRADITION relates that in the building of King Solomon's temple there was a stone of such peculiar shape that the workmen could find no place for it, though it was regularly cut and with great care, and contained the *sign* of the Master. When the temple was near completion, a place was found for the stone which the builders had through ignorance rejected. It was the *Keystone* of the *Royal Arch*.

Those who have opened the halls of learning to this generation have given a foundation stone, and repeatedly declared that no other foundation can endure, that the floods of time and the storms of passion will surely sweep with the besom of destruction every superstructure not founded on this rock. And yet there are those who wear the garb of fellow-crafts, and claim the wages of workmen, who not only reject this stone but ridicule it, and laugh it to scorn. The result is manifest in the confusion of the workmen, and it will presently become manifest that those who thus reject the corner stone of Theosophy are brothers of the shadow literally, rather than Sons of Light; they will find no designs on the tracing-board, and they will be accused of murdering the "widow's son."

The time for wages will surely come, and even they who have come in at the ninth hour and laboured faithfully in the vineyard will receive due wages.

The corner stone of Theosophy is distinctly stated to be *Universal Brotherhood*. A firm belief in this principle is required of every candidate for membership in the Theosophical Society. This is the sole requirement for affiliation, it is made plain, and no one can plead ignorance of this one requirement. To claim fellowship in the Society, and ignore or repudiate its cardinal doctrine, is not only the most pronounced hypocrisy, but works in every way to the injury of the individual and the Society. Those therefore who are not ashamed to repudiate this cardinal principle ought in all fairness to retire from the Society, and direct their energies into more congenial channels.

But aside from explicit repudiation of this principle of Brother-

hood there is too often a tacit disregard of its requirements. It has been charged against the Society, that in the enunciation of this simple doctrine they have announced nothing new; and it may at once be answered that it is not claimed as a novelty, but an *actuality*. And yet it is too often the case that the application of this principle of universal brotherhood reaches no further than to the admission to membership in the T.S. of persons of either sex, and of every creed, colour, and nationality, while in the relations of members and the necessary work of the Society, the principle of brotherhood is too often practically ignored. It may therefore be profitable to inquire into the reasons assigned by the Masters for giving out to the world at this time their priceless treasures, and the purpose for which the Theosophical Society was instituted, though these purposes have been time and again stated, in plain English, and are printed in the rules and by-laws of the Society as well as in every application for membership. The misinterpretation of these plain declarations leads to constant disappointment, and hinders the legitimate work of the Society.

We have been repeatedly told that the Masters are no respecters of persons. They have on every occasion persistently and consistently refused to teach occultism to individuals. They have stated over and over again the terms on which anyone can gain their notice, or hope to advance in spiritual knowledge or power, *viz.*, by working unselfishly and unceasingly for the advancement of the Brotherhood of man. This is the plan on which the Masters work. Whatsoever they have given out has been designed for the elevation and well-being of the *whole human race*.

They have chosen such agents or assistants as were available for the promulgation of their doctrines, and they have distinctly stated that not for this generation alone, but more especially for the coming Yuga, do they labour, like wise husbandmen sowing now the seed for future harvests.

The meaning of Universal Brotherhood and the mission of the Theosophical Society become thus perfectly plain, and we can misinterpret only at our peril. The Masters have said, work with us, and become a part of us and sharers with us.

Creeds and sects are innately selfish, dividing mankind into selfish circles of conceited and selfish men. Creeds are crumbling; replace them with universal benevolence, toleration, charity, justice—in one word, BROTHERHOOD. He, therefore, who repudiates brotherhood, denies all. He who forgets charity, kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, has no right to call himself a Theosophist. We should have charity for everything but for uncharitableness. Let those who will, in the face of all this, strive for occult power. Let them, in spite of constant warning, force themselves, if they can, into the astral plane, to be driven back in everlasting terror by the "Demon of the Threshold," or end their days in an Asylum for the insane, but let them look for no assistance or protection from the Masters.

Pure and undefiled Theosophy leads man only to higher planes of thought and life. It puts him in possession of the true philosopher's stone, by enabling him to convert the energies of life into higher uses, for the welfare and elevation of his race. It teaches him neglect of no common duty or obligation, and it nowhere holds out the inducement that a Mahatma can be evolved by some secret hocus-pocus out of a mountebank. The mountebanks will presently denounce Mahatmas and repudiate Theosophy, but they will prove as powerless to stay the tide of truth as to achieve Mahatmahood. They may deceive the foolish and unwary, and console themselves with the company of Coulomb, Hodgson & Co., but those who have accepted in deed and in truth the simple doctrine of universal brotherhood *with all that it implies*, will possess their souls in patience and perfect trust, for they have heard the music of BATH-KOL.

—J. D. BUCK

---

IF you cleave the heart of one drop of water there will issue from it a hundred oceans.

—SHABISTARI

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The human body originates, like other animal bodies, in a cell and develops "through stages undistinguishable from those of fish, reptile, and mammal until the cell attains the highly specialized development of the quadrumanous and *at last the human type*." This, says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 258), "is an Occult axiom thousands of years old." The Kabalistic axiom, "A stone becomes a plant; a plant a beast; a beast a man; a man a God," holds good throughout the ages, as far as physical evolution is concerned.

*Life* magazine (November 1996) publishes scientific photographer Lennart Nilsson's pictures of the prenatal transformations of a varied group of vertebrates—pigs, monkeys, chimps, chickens and humans. The pictures show the striking similarities in their early embryonic development. Nearly halfway to birth, the foetuses of different vertebrate species are easy to tell apart, yet they continue to undergo similar internal changes, say the experts in comparative embryology. The sequence of prenatal metamorphoses common to all vertebrates, biologists reason, "points to a shared ancestry."

Man is more than his body, and even in embryonic development his kinship with other vertebrates goes "thus far and no further." *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 219) speaks of "the spiritual potency in the physical cell that guides the development of the embryo." It is the inner soul of the physical cell that is "the key that must open one day the gates of the *terra incognita* of the Biologist, now called the dark mystery of Embryology."

"The embryo of man has no more of the ape in it than of any other mammal, but *contains in itself the totality of the kingdoms of nature*" (*S.D.*, II, 259). One of the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine, one which stands in direct antagonism to modern science, is that "man, in this Round, preceded every mammalian—the anthropoids included—in the animal kingdom." (*S.D.*, II, 1)

The writer is certain to meet what will be termed insuperable objections....The line of embryology, the gradual development of every individual life, and the progress of what is known

to take place in the order of progressive stages of specialization...is perfectly scientific, and we have nothing against *that*; for all this relates to the *shell* of man—his body, which in its growth is subject, of course, like every other (once called) morphological unit, to such metamorphoses. It is not those who teach the transformation of the mineral atom through crystallization—which is the same function, and bears the same relation to its *inorganic* (so-called) *upadhi* (or basis) as the formation of *cells* to their organic *nuclei*, through plant, insect and animal into man—it is not they who will reject this theory, as it will finally lead to the recognition of a Universal Deity in nature, ever-present and as ever invisible, and unknowable, and of *intra-Cosmic* gods, who all were men....

But we would ask, what does science and its exact and now axiomatic discoveries prove against *our* Occult theory? Those who believe in the law of Evolution and gradual progressive development from a cell (which from a *vital* has become a morphological cell, until it awoke as protoplasm pure and simple) —these can surely never limit their belief to one line of evolution....Nor do we find that which ought to be found, if the now orthodox theory of Evolution were *quite* correct, namely, a constant, ever-flowing progress in every species of being. Instead of that, what does one see? While the intermediate groups of animal being all tend toward a higher type, and while specializations, now of one type and now of another, develop through the geological ages, change forms, assume new shapes, appear and disappear with a kaleidoscopic rapidity in the description of palaeontologists from one period to another, the two solitary exceptions to the general rule are those at the two opposite poles of life and type, namely—*MAN and the lower genera of being!* (*S.D.*, II, 255-56)

---

Researchers have long suspected that apes may have with humans a trait fundamental to our species—self-awareness, the quality of mind that recognizes its own existence. In humans, self-awareness is coupled with an awareness of the mental lives of others, giving rise to abstract notions such as compassion, altruism,

pride, embarrassment, guilt, envy, etc.

At the New Iberia Research Centre in Louisiana, U.S.A., experiments were carried out to explore the "mental lives" of apes—how they think about themselves and other beings (*Discover*, November 1996). Researchers, headed by Daniel Povinelli, director of the centre's laboratory of comparative behavioural biology, put various species of animals in front of a mirror. The apes alone showed self-exploratory behaviour. They were, for instance, curious about parts of their body they could not ordinarily see. This shows that the ape recognizes itself in the mirror, and for an animal to recognize itself, the researchers reason, it must have a sense of self—some form, however rudimentary, of self-awareness. Other tests by psychologist Gordon Gallup of the State University of New York at Albany also go to show that among all the animals only the great apes—chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas—display self-recognition. The researchers admit, however, that while the apes have a sense of "self," only humans can conceive of both "self" and "other"—*i.e.*, the recognition that other people, too, experience desires, intentions and beliefs just as we do.

The theory about a common ancestor of humans, chimps, orangutans and gorillas still persists in scientific circles, and Povinelli believes that the apes "may be recapitulating the evolutionary drama that produced self-awareness in some ape-human ancestor." Others, such as ethologist Frans de Waal, disagree, and say, "We hardly know what self-awareness is, let alone how it came about." The debate continues.

Self-awareness in apes, though in rudimentary form, is hardly surprising considering that "they have a spark of the purely human essence in them; man, on the other hand, has not one drop of pithecoïd blood in his veins" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 193). The egos imprisoned in ape form are known in Theosophy as the Delayed Race, compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms. How long will it be before science considers the Theosophical teaching that

the pithecoïds, the orang-outang, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee *can*, and, as Occult Sciences teach, *do*, descend from the ani-

malized Fourth human Root-Race, being the product of man and an extinct species of mammal—whose *remote* ancestors were themselves the product of Lemurian bestiality—which lived in the Miocene age. The ancestry of this semi-human monster is explained in the Stanzas as originating in the sin of the "Mindless" races of the middle Third Race period. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 683)

---

Parents generally stress the mastering of traditional intellectual skills as the key to a child's success. But helping the child master his emotional world is even more vital to achievement in all walks of adult life than is IQ, says University of Washington psychologist John Gottman. He calls the child with a healthy emotional life "emotionally intelligent."

Gottman's research is supported by the National Institutes of Mental Health, U.S.A. His team studied 119 children in two 10-year studies. Those who thrived had parents who understood their own emotions and could transmit this knowledge to their children. His programme for helping parents become "emotion coaches" is explained in his book *The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*.

In the course of an interview with him reported in *USA Today*, he explained what "emotional intelligence" is and in what ways it can benefit children:

The concept involves four things. First, you must know your own emotions and how to manage them. That includes the ability to control impulses, delay gratification, cope with life's ups and downs. Second, you must be able to recognize emotions in others, respond empathetically to them, read their social cues. Third, you must be able to handle relationships with others well. And last, you must be able to motivate yourself in an optimistic fashion and be confident of your feelings, your accomplishments, your abilities, as you go through the world.

Emotional intelligence is a better predictor of how children will do in life than anything else. Emotionally intelligent children can soothe and calm themselves better than those

whose parents dismissed their emotions as unimportant. Their academic achievement levels are higher—math and reading scores are higher, even when you control for standard IQ scores. Their relationships with people are more meaningful. They have fewer behaviour problems and better physical health. Emotional intelligence appears to be a buffer against stress, so they do better if there is marital conflict or divorce.

---

There seems to be no agreement among psychologists in their debate over the meaning and value of self-esteem. It is generally taken to mean feeling good about oneself. But it has its dark side. A new study reports that young gang members tend to have inordinately high opinions of themselves—so much so that they feel entitled to steal from and beat up others. (*Utne Reader*, November-December 1996)

Psychologist Martin E. P. Seligman, in his book *The Optimistic Child* (1996) credits philosopher William James with defining the concept over a century ago as awareness that our successes equal or exceed our pretensions. In other words, self-esteem is feeling good about what we do—not feeling good in spite of what we do, or even if we do nothing at all. That is mere egotism or narcissism. Critics argue that this is exactly what the self-esteem movement has fostered. By getting the relationship between behaviour and feelings backwards, it has engendered positive feelings that have no basis in reality.

Self-deluding self-esteem can also get in the way of learning, argues Charles J. Sykes. Another critic, University of Michigan psychology professor Joseph Adelson, claims that the connection between self-esteem and learning may be more complicated than Sykes implies, and that as a general rule children are not as vulnerable as they are taken to be.

Self-esteem, the studies say, is a complex issue and is affected by class, race, sex, etc. Sometimes hopelessness is mistaken for self-esteem. Matthew Ramadan, a consultant to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, says, "I agree that people are out there

with the attitude that I can do anything I want because the world owes me something. But that's not high self-esteem, that's lack of self-esteem."

There can be no real self-esteem without self-discipline, and self-discipline is based on self-knowledge. The whole issue seems to centre round what we mean by "self"—the false ego (the terrestrial personality) or that spark in us which is but the reflection of the "One Universal Ego." Self-esteem has little meaning or value without respect for other "selves"—all a part of the One Self.

---

Do places carry a curse? *India Today* (February 28) carries the story of a cluster of deserted villages near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, haunted by a 170-year-old legend of a curse. The Paliwal Brahmins who once lived there were a prosperous community, reputed to have great wealth. Unable to bear the atrocities of Saalim Singh Mehta, then prime minister of the princely state of Jaisalmer, who was jealous of their wealth, they fled from their homes one night, leaving behind all they owned. The legend goes that while leaving they invoked a curse on all future inhabitants of the villages. Those who have challenged the curse and have moved there, say locals, have only invited on themselves death or other mishaps. No one dares live in these villages any more, and apart from foreign tourists who go there by busloads out of curiosity, the place is deserted. Rumours of wealth hidden amidst the decay still continue.

A wilful curse, spoken with the deliberate intention of harming others, involves the direction of the great power of sound to maleficent ends, as well as of words as vehicles of thought, will and feeling. Esoterically, thought—depending on the intensity with which it is directed—is far more potential in creating evil results than a deed. H.P.B. mentions that a thought once generated and sent out has become independent of the brain and mind which gave it birth, and will live upon its own energy. We read in "A Master's Letter" (*U.L.T. pamphlet No. 29*):

Every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself,

coalescing we might term it, with an elemental—that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon.

Apart from this, as Mr. Judge states in one of his "Conversations on Occultism," elementals have guard over hidden treasure, having "many and curious modes of causing further concealment." And some elementals are described as beings "of horrible malignity." But no harm can come to anyone—whether by a curse or by elemental beings—which is not his due under Karma.

---

Fragile and flaking, 2,000-year-old birch bark scrolls at the British Library are among the earliest Buddhist manuscripts known. Acquired in 1994 with the help of an anonymous benefactor, the 13 scrolls were written in Gandhari, a now dead language. Some are said to record philosophical treatises; others hold moral guides and poems explaining Buddhism. By comparing them with later manuscripts, scholars are hoping to learn how the religion spread from India to China along the Silk Road after Buddha's death in the fifth century B.C.

"The worn-out texts were so sacred that they weren't discarded but were buried in clay pots," says Richard Salomon of the University of Washington, who is deciphering the scrolls. "They won't revolutionize our understanding of Buddhism, but they will clarify the origins and development of traditions and texts," he explains. (*National Geographic*, March 1997)

---