

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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THE TEACHER OF ETHICS

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Try to realize that progress is made step by step, and each step gained by *heroic* effort. Withdrawal means despair or timidity....Conquered passions, like slain tigers, can no longer turn and rend you. Be hopeful then, not despairing. With *each* morning's awakening try to live through the day in harmony with the Higher Self. "Try" is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil. Naught else is *expected* of you. *One who does his best does all that can be asked.* There is a moment when even a Buddha ceases to be a sinning mortal and takes his first step towards Buddhahood.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

H.P.B. gives us in the above what we may well take as our motto for the coming days when students of her Philosophy will be preparing themselves inwardly for White Lotus Day—"Try." Our best is all that is expected of us, but what *is* our best? None can determine it until he has *tried*. Whatever the stage we are at, for each the taking of the step nearest to him is what matters most. We are like people at the foot of a hill; if we think we can make a leap to the summit, overlooking the steps immediately in front of us, we are soon bound to feel overwhelmed by the task we have undertaken and to pronounce it impossible of attainment for us; or, if we are expecting someone to carry us up one level and believe

that we can climb on from there, we are waiting in vain. The starting point is where we are.

A stage comes in the life of each when it is easier to see one's own weaknesses and limitations rather than one's powers and faculties. To dwell on the former is to hinder our efforts to do our best, not only in the performance of those duties that are obligatory, but also in the doing of special works, such as deeds of *Yajna*-sacrifice, *Dana*-charity and *Tapas*-mortification, which, the *Gita* says, "are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise." None can do his best in Masters' Work unless he performs *all* his tasks the best he can, no matter how insignificant they may seem.

The words of the Master reassure us: "He who does what he can and all that he can, and all that he knows how to do, does enough for us." "This task," Mr. Judge explains in *Letters That Have Helped Me*,

includes that of divesting yourself of all personality through interior effort, because that work, if done in the right spirit, is even more important to the race than any outward work we can do. Living as you now are, on the outward plane chiefly, your work is due there and is to be done there until your growth shall fit you to pass away from it altogether.

"No man," wrote H.P.B., "is required to carry a burden heavier than he can bear; nor do more than it is possible for him to do." Desertion of one duty in order to fulfil another, howsoever much greater, is quite unjustifiable and will never result in spiritual progress. Again in the words of H.P.B.: "He who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another. No real, genuine *Master* will accept a chela who sacrifices anyone except himself to go to that Master." This sacrifice of oneself to go to the Master may take a whole life; but we can get our "mental luggage" ready for the next.

The preparation involves the doing of every duty, however trivial, as a sacramental act. Every moment offers fresh opportunities to apply Theosophical verities in the performance of works. Persistent efforts at application build in time, by the energy of thought,

spiritual stamina. Just as an army with guns cannot fight if it has no bullets, so students cannot make much headway with mere book study, without the spiritual stamina flowing from application.

The student has a chance to contact H.P.B.'s mind and heart and to drink at the fountainhead of her inspiration in a different way than through study. Of all the aspects of her marvellous message, the one which deals with the ethics of Theosophy is the most important because the effects produced by it are more lasting—almost permanent. The metaphysics of Theosophy reveal to the student universal principles, the laws of nature, the world process called evolution and his own place in the scheme of things. All these have to be applied to himself by himself. The value of study is great, but knowledge acquired by the brain, unless assimilated through practice and application by the Ego, parts company with the man on the threshold of *Devachan*. Without study, however, practice is not possible, for study yields the material to be applied.

H.P.B. herself greatly emphasized the importance of Theosophical ethics, as, for instance, in her *Five Messages* to the American Theosophists. She not only taught but also exemplified their power in her own life. If she had a mind which the Master K.H. described as one of nature's most complicated machines, if her psychic and psychological powers were rare indeed, as the same authority indicated, her ethical heart also was supreme in making Sacrifices, in radiating Compassion, in offering Devotion. She was a Channel through which poured that Light which dispels not only the darkness of ignorance but also the clouds of selfishness, pride and other hardnesses.

The ferment of her teachings is working in the world. The ideas she set in motion act as magnets and those whose minds and hearts are ready to receive them are drawn to them like bits of metal. The inquirer in time becomes a student and the student grows into a devotee. But her message has not yet penetrated a sufficient number of men and women; and that is why those who have the welfare of their brothers at heart, those who believe that the new world will not be soundly established until Theosophical ideas are accepted by a large majority, are exerting themselves to spread that message

and those ideas. The Theosophical Movement that H.P.B. launched is ahead of the times. People express surprise that it has not made more of a success; the wonder is that it has succeeded as far as it has in the present state of men's minds and hearts. It is not surprising that there have been the failures that the history of the Theosophical Movement records. There have been successes too which history does not always record.

H.P.B.'s work was twofold. One aspect of it was diffused and expansive—her work for humanity as a whole. But there was also her work with individual souls, her appeal to individual minds and hearts. Her appeal to the mind is: Free your mind by study, by calm examination of the principles of life and conduct. Her appeal to the heart is: Develop the spirit of love and charity, not for your next of kin only, not for your own community and country only, but for all that is true and good and beautiful anywhere and everywhere. Her appeal to the individual is: Look within yourself; you are not a Hindu, you are Brahma; you are not a Muslim, you carry within you the Light, the *Noor* of Allah; you are not a Parsi, you are the son of Ahura Mazda; you are not a Christian or a Jew, you are the Son, one with your Father in Heaven.

The Mission of H.P.B. is the Mission of Theosophy—to energize men and women to fight the Holy War against their own senses and passions; to inspire students to become victorious disciples. To obtain knowledge is to set the mind free; to practise Theosophy is to set the heart free. And it is the free mind and the free heart that can fully serve orphan humanity. That is the Mission and the Message of H.P.B.

THE good is one thing, the pleasant another; these two, having different objects, chain a man. It is well with him who clings to the good: he who chooses the pleasant, misses his end.

—*Katha Upanishad*

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD—FICTION OR FACT?

THE world is sick of war and desires peace, yet wars and preparations for war continue. People wish to banish enmity and to usher in an era of friendship, yet rivalry and hatred perpetuate hard feelings which separate man from man. Many believe in and talk about Brotherhood, but we see everywhere the failure of unity and harmony.

In the modern world, nationalistic forces have overpowered internationalism, and Universal Brotherhood is looked upon as Utopian—fanciful talk of impractical idealists. Partial brotherhoods have so usurped the place of Universal Brotherhood that the very concept of cosmopolitan internationalism, of humanity as a unit, one grand family, seems fanciful.

Theosophy not only says that Universal Brotherhood is a fact in Nature, but goes further and shows how it can be brought about by each one practising it in his own life. The first and most important of the Three Objects of the Theosophical Movement is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. What are the obstacles we have to overcome, what the pitfalls we have to avoid, if we desire to be brotherly to others, if we wish our community and our nation to live in unity and harmony with other people and other countries?

First, there is the concept of race. On every continent, in one form or another, this problem exists. It is caused by the spirit of arrogance. White people arrogantly believe themselves to be superior to the coloured people. There is no justification for this whatsoever. Next, there is the bar erected by the concept of creed and religion. Religions divide man from man as perhaps nothing else does. Thirdly, there is the obstacle to Brotherhood caused by the existence of castes and classes. Indians suffer from it most atrociously. In the West, this obstacle to Universal Brotherhood takes other forms. Finally, there is the obstacle that sex raises. The

feminist movement is now a world movement. The struggle of women against the oppression and tyranny of male dominance, while justifiable, has raised new problems for the entire social order which need to be sorted out.

These four—race, creed, caste and sex—offer grave obstacles to the emergence of a World-State, to the building of an International Order, to the practice of Universal Brotherhood. Shall we then give up all hopes of realizing Universal Brotherhood? By no means. The principle to understand is that of unity in diversity. Diversity is not inimical to Brotherhood; our human understanding, or rather misunderstanding, of what brotherhood, harmony and unity mean, is at fault.

Let us see this same truth in another and more practical way. Each one of us is desirous of practising brotherhood, of becoming friendly with the world at large. What then is the difficulty? The difficulty is twofold: one inheres in us, the second inheres in others. Take the first: We want to be friendly with others, but on our own terms and conditions. We want to get and to give as *we* determine, without recognizing the right of others to determine for themselves. This is the difficulty inhering within us. The second difficulty is that we do not desire to be friendly and brotherly with some, not because we have some weakness, but because those others have blemishes and vices. We do not want to hob-nob with thieves and robbers, we do not want to break bread with drunkards and drug-addicts, or to keep company of liars and vagabonds. But we should not shrink from them or hate them. We may feel sorry for them, but while they are in that condition it is most difficult to befriend them. First, we do not actually know how to handle thieves and drunkards and vagabonds; and secondly, we ourselves are not pure enough, strong enough, wise enough, to risk contamination. Evil company corrupts the good; it may very likely bring about our moral fall. Unless evildoers resolve to give up their vice, and begin to practise purity and brotherhood, we can do little for them directly. But we can ever and always work indirectly to free them from their wickedness.

The same problem arises in another shape. We understand that

we cannot directly and actively befriend the wicked evildoers; but what about the ordinary men and women? There are other people in the world besides evildoers—religious people, social people, political people—how can we help them? What is to be our attitude to them? How to be brotherly to those who are sectarian or bigoted in one sphere or another and who do not see their way to practise *Universal* Brotherhood? There are very many people in the world who are social snobs, or consider their race and religion superior to all other races and religions, or are full of self-righteousness and take a superior attitude. Such people very often demand from us co-operation without giving us co-operation. They would have nothing to do with us if we steadily show our interest in *Universal* Brotherhood. It is not that we do not want them, it is that they do not want us, unless we become sectarians like them.

Are not such narrow-minded people very similar to those whose weaknesses and vices are visible and patent? The weakness of the bigoted is a moral and mental fault. Because fanaticism passes for faith, dogmatism for conviction, sectarianism for piety, and nationalism for patriotism, people do not distinguish truth from falsehood. Very large numbers of people are sectarians—politicians are sectarians; so-called religious people are sectarians; and there are others. Sectarianism is so widespread that most people do not even recognize that it is a great evil.

And so the practical question confronts us: How shall we begin to live the life of Brotherhood? Are there fundamental principles that Theosophy offers for our guidance and use? If one is prepared and determined to practise Universal Brotherhood, how should he start? Granting one is determined to give co-operation to others and not only demand it from others, how should he commence?

Theosophy says to the individual—begin with yourself. As a starting point, recognize that both those classes of people, the evildoer and the sectarian, are your brothers, though their ways are not your ways, their attitude not your attitude. Each one of us has his own moral weaknesses, his own mental deficiencies. As we purify ourselves, we make the work of the wicked and the vicious more difficult for them. Similarly, as we ourselves remove

all species of sectarianism from our constitution, as we ourselves practise brotherhood by rising above the limitations of creed and religion, caste and race, we help the sectarian and the fanatic to overcome his defects, to change his attitude. This principle has been enunciated by every great philosopher and reformer. Confucius has said: "Robbers disappear from a kingdom where the king is honest." This sounds so strange, so impractical, that people listen, shrug their shoulders and pass on. But the metaphysical basis of the doctrine should be understood.

Take the human body. Is there a single particle of matter that we can call exclusively our own? The very matter that composes my body now was in the body of some other human being sometime ago. When a body dies and the particles separate, they go to build other forms of life. Matter being indestructible and forms of matter ever changing and rebuilding themselves, the body of each of us is affected by the body of all others. An ill body increases the mass of human illness. Modern science recognizes this in the case of contagious diseases, but Theosophy goes much further and says that all health and ill-health is contagious. Physical contact and physical proximity bring about *direct* interchange, but as we are all using the same matter, as we all live and breathe and have our being on the same earth, there is among all of us *indirect* interchange which takes place in spite of distance and time. Science recognizes direct exchange. Theosophy adds the principle of indirect exchange. This might be called the manifestation of brotherhood in Matter. It is both direct and indirect.

Turn to the Mind. Our thoughts and ideas, our attitudes and opinions, are most powerful agents for spreading virtue or vice. This is partly recognized. A great writer's thoughts affect human nature. Everyone admits that; but all do not see the very law which operates. Let us ask a simple question to ourselves: In what way, by what method, do the ideas of a book we are reading touch us, affect us? A noble book ennobles its reader; a worthless book degrades its reader. But how? What is it that happens? If we did not know Chinese and took up a Chinese book, and our eyes looked at the pages, we would not be affected. Only when with our mind

we understand a book—*i.e.*, the thoughts of its author—do its contents directly affect us. This is the law of attraction through consubstantiality. Similarly, the teachings of Theosophy that are being repeated through the written or spoken word, touch and impress our mind. There is a more intimate connection between all students of Theosophy than they generally recognize. They are united by something that affects and touches them directly and that something does not touch and does not affect except indirectly all others. This might be called the manifestation of brotherhood in mind. By matter and by mind the whole of humanity is closely united. In other ways also all members of the human kingdom are bound together, for weal or for woe, in good ways as in bad ways.

The whole of nature is of one substance. In the human kingdom we are not only of the same substance in body but also of the same essence in soul. Our bodies are different, though of the same substance; so also our souls are different though of the same essence. Substance and essence, or matter and spirit, which go to form man are the same for all, though in the process of evolution bodies and souls fashioned out of that substance or matter, and essence or spirit, are different.

Let us get this idea clearly and most difficulties will disappear. The health or ill-health of our body affects the general health of humanity. Our virtues and our vices likewise affect the sum-total of human morality. Our ignorance or enlightenment affects the entire mind of the race. Therefore it is necessary that we remove from within ourselves the two great enemies to Universal Brotherhood—vice and sectarianism.

When an individual undertakes this task, he finds that ranged against him are these two enemies who are organized and united among themselves. Thieves and robbers unite to plunder; the immoral congregate at the same place: the drunkards at a toddy shop, the gamblers at the gambling den. Similarly, the speculators are in the share market, politicians at their party's meets, Christians in their churches and Jews in their synagogues. Both the vicious and the sectarian have come together and like "birds of a feather flock together." Therefore he who desires to give up his vice, to

overcome his weakness, to free himself from sectarianism, must seek the company of those who, like himself, are aspiring and endeavouring to practise Universal Brotherhood.

Because there were sufficient men and women actuated by the desire for an unsectarian life, the Theosophical Movement was inaugurated by Madame Blavatsky. Its primary object was to gather together in a single association men and women the world over who desired to *practise* Brotherhood. The Theosophical Society was never meant for those who only *believed* in Universal Brotherhood, but was established especially for those who earnestly desired to *practise* Brotherhood without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste, colour or condition.

The principal task of the United Lodge of Theosophists is to give knowledge of that Philosophy which helps people to purify themselves, to grow in virtue, to break the fetters of sectarianism, to unfold the spirit of enlightenment which makes the whole world kin. No one can rise without knowledge and without aspiration. And to knowledge and aspiration must be added the strength that comes from companionship. The task of attaining true knowledge and practising Universal Brotherhood is so lofty, so absorbing, that there is neither time nor inclination for the Lodge as an Association to take part in any political or social work. The few who are volunteers in the army of Universal Brotherhood fully recognize that they too have their own weaknesses, their own limitations; but supporting each other, standing hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder, they derive support and joy from their colleagues and co-students, all of whom are ensouled by the same Immemorial Philosophy. They know that within themselves is that spirit of Truth and Compassion which will enable them to help the helpless, to befriend the friendless. They recognize the truth of the ancient teaching of the *Gita* (VI, 31-32): "He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee."

They also derive inspiration from the blessings of another kind

of spiritual companionship. If mind attracts and affects mind, surely soul attracts and affects soul. Studying and practising the Philosophy of Universal Brotherhood, they feel and they embody more and more the influence of those who are the Elder Brothers in the human family. These Great Souls are not religious priests or sectarian patriarchs. They are Lovers of Men, Compassionators of Orphan Humanity, Instructors of the aspirants to Wisdom, Servants of Great Mother Nature—above race and religion, above caste and creed. Their Religion, their Philosophy, their Science, is founded on the principle of Universal Brotherhood.

IN history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is right in saying "spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception," and that it is to be attained by means of devotion. Ignorant men who had no access to books have by their inward sense perceived the real truth of things, not only those round about them, but relating to the larger concerns of nature. Jacob Boehme was wholly unlettered, but he knew the truth. His writings show an acquaintance, not to be then gained from books, with the true doctrines found in the Hindu scriptures and secret books. In Germany today are men known to me, who, more unlearned yet than Jacob Boehme was, know many things still mysteries for our learned theosophists who can boast of college education. The reason is that these men have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth. I do not decry or despise learning; it is a great possession; but if the learned man were also a devoted one in the sense of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

OUR age is essentially an age of transition where all things are changing, and changing so rapidly that many feel somewhat lost. There is much of bewilderment, a feeling of insecurity, and a sense of fear and anxiety, and these make for restlessness. This need not be so if we understand what it is all about, and if we retain a true sense of direction. Old forms must die to make room for better ones. Progress means change and we all need greater flexibility of mind and preparedness to face all changes, while retaining our faith in that which changes not. Adaptability is essential to meet the challenge of our era, the era of science and technology, with both wisdom and courage.

There is so much of confusion as to the role of science itself, and we hear contrary views. Some say: "Science will save us from superstition and fraud." Others declare: "Science is the greatest menace yet invented by man. It will destroy the human race." Some blame all the evils of gross and brutal materialism on science. Science is responsible, they claim, for the threat of total war, for the contamination of our planet by artificial increase of radiation, for the squandering of our earth's resources, for the destruction of wild life, etc. Others worship at the shrine of science, and firmly believe science will free us from all evils and usher in an age of social justice, democracy and well-being for all.

Both these extreme views, however, are erroneous. Science has given us vast knowledge, and this knowledge has brought us immense power. But it is man who uses that knowledge and man who wields that power. Science is neither good nor evil *per se*. But man is a moral being, and on his choice depends the course of science and the future destiny of humanity. The crisis we face is a moral one, for it is the outcome of the conflict within man himself. Bertrand Russell has rightly said:

We are in the middle of a race between human skills as to means and human folly as to ends....Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will

be increase of sorrow.

True moral values, which alone can survive the outward changes brought about by the impact of science, the explosion of scientific knowledge, belong to wisdom. The need of the hour is for men of wisdom. Mere knowledge without wisdom to guide us in the utilization of that knowledge will make for greater sorrow.

We have grasped the mystery of the atom [General Omar Bradley once said] and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, and power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living.

The real danger then is that of knowledge without wisdom and power without conscience. We need that moral perception which will enable us to resist the temptation to misuse power.

The spectacular advance of scientific knowledge has shaken, nay, swept away, beliefs and dogmas rooted in ignorance, and with these have gone surface moral values with no permanent basis. Revealing the errors and false dogmas of narrow theologies, it has left many with no religion at all. But if the false values have gone, the true moral values remain. If man wishes to do so, he can purge himself of egotism; he can turn from a life of self to a life of service. The things that obstruct man's true progress are of his own making: his greed, his ambition, his selfishness. These are his enemies which he must fight and conquer. Gandhiji tells us:

All selfish desires are immoral, while the desire to improve ourselves for the sake of doing good to others is truly moral. The highest moral law is that we should unremittingly work for the good of mankind.

True moral values thus spring from the vision of the oneness of humanity. We need to abandon moral values based on the false parallel between nations and individuals and follow instead those eternal values based on the recognition that all men are brothers. Such values have nothing to fear from science. If the religion we

follow is that of Brotherhood, science will give us the means of applying our moral principles more effectively in the service of our fellow beings.

No, we need not fear science! We need fear only our own folly and stupidity, our greed and selfishness. The power which science has put into our hands can be used beneficently and constructively if we become wise and unselfish. Let our moral values be those eternal values which transcend all sects and creeds and belong to the realm of the spirit. Anchored firmly in the One Spirit, we can meet all challenges with confidence and with courage. True morality lies in the awareness of the Spiritual Reality and calls for a disciplined life, a clean and useful life dedicated to disinterested service.

Such a life is not opposed to science. In fact we should all cultivate a truly scientific attitude, which makes for tolerance and, breaking artificial barriers, enables us to eradicate sectarianism, provincialism, isolationism. The scientific temper blends modesty and humility with self-reliance and initiative.

Science has dominated the Western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony. In India, in many obvious ways we have a greater distance to travel. And yet there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not its later manifestation, fits in with the scientific temper and approach, as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.

ALL men are responsible for one another.

—*Talmud*

PATANJALI'S PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEM

MEDITATION is being spoken of much more widely today than in the past. Granted it is necessary, how is it to be practised?

In the West, and for Western people attracted to the East, it would seem that the cart is being put before the horse. And how can the cart go straight if the propelling power cannot see ahead? In the present unsettled state of the youth of the world, anything that frees the consciousness from the mundane world where *control* is the essence of happiness will make a strong appeal, but the vital question will remain—What is life for? And the corollary—Who or what is man?

The system of Yoga expounded by Patanjali in the sixth or seventh century B.C. is there for all to try and follow, but it is difficult, for it demands attention to every aspect of life.

He begins with the student as he is, just as Krishna began with Arjuna where he was—a prey to misconceptions and therefore not knowing what were the right actions to be performed. That is where we too have to start—with what we know of ourselves, with our mind and ideas as they are. It is not meditation that we need first. Even the Buddha put meditation as the last step on his Noble Eightfold Path. What is first needed is the power to concentrate. But what *is* concentration? Concentration has to do with the mind we know and use, the mind that flits from object to object, pleasant or unpleasant, and the control of which is indeed difficult, as the *Gita* points out. Patanjali gives us a good expression by which we can understand this flitting; he calls it the “modification of the thinking principle.” The mind becomes, as it were, modified or transformed into the subject or object that engages its attention. By reason of this tendency to diffuseness, it is not able to keep to one object or idea.

The mind is, therefore, full of objects, desires and ideas—all of which are forms—which we think about or which flit into our sphere of awareness and out again. The difference between this state of diffuseness and that of concentration is this: When we are

fully concentrated the soul is in a state of being wholly devoid of taint of, or impression by, any object or subject, and is therefore aware or wakeful even when there is nothing to be aware of. When, on the other hand, we are not concentrated, the soul is, as it were, altered into the form of the object or subject that comes before the mind.

We should note that the mind Patanjali is here referring to is the mind as we know it and work with in ordinary life; and soul is not Atma or Spirit, but that aspect of the higher Manas which is active in Buddhi. It is impossible to follow this system of Yoga unless we start from the known, and all we *know* is the mind we use. We *learn* of the higher mind or soul, but faith in it grows within us as we progress and make the necessary effort.

The idea Patanjali gives us, that “at the time of concentration the soul abides in the state of a spectator without a spectacle,” is very important because it points to a state of awareness and not of blankness. The difference between these conditions is like that between a man asleep in a dark room and one awake in a dark room. In both cases there are no objects that can be seen, but in the one case there is no sense of alertness, while in the other case the mind is in a state of conscious awareness, activity, receptivity.

It is not enough, therefore, just to sit for meditation—with or without a seed idea. The first stage is to find out just what it is that modifies the mind and prevents concentration. Peculiar as it may seem, the mind flits not only to that which is pleasant, but also to that which is unpleasant. It is not enough to blot out the unpleasant and be “modified” by the pleasant; we must remain “unmodified” by both.

Patanjali tells us that there are five different kinds of modifications of the mind. These have to do with our life as we know it. They are: Correct Cognition, Misconception, Fancy, Sleep and Memory. The last one is perhaps the hardest to “hinder,” yet without this “hindering” concentration is not possible.

There are three ways by which we can learn to cognize correctly—by direct perception, using our senses and sense-organs; by reasoning and inference; and by learning from what others have

observed or reasoned out. Without the use of these three we are apt to misconceive everything and be led astray.

Fancy is an idea based on no real foundation and on the literal interpretation of words. This is a common state of man today. Opinions are based on hearsay, on newspaper reports, etc.; political, social and medical assertions are accepted freely without study or reflection. Just as, not “Behold, I know,” but “Thus have I heard” should be our attitude, so in ordinary life we should not imitate or accept others' opinions blindly, but should say, “So-and-so states this or that.” Only when we know a thing by personal and vigorous study of it are our opinions of any value to us, or to others.

Sleep we can understand, but we are sometimes “asleep” even when awake, that is, when we are passive, when we note nothing, desire or feel nothing, think nothing.

Memory, as said, is our worst enemy. Once something is imprinted on the mind, it is difficult to efface it. Sometimes the subject or object imprinted is so alive that it keeps impinging upon our waking awareness any and every time the mind is not otherwise engaged. Even when apparently forgotten, it can be recalled. Yet this modification of the mind must be “hindered” if success in meditation is to be achieved. As *The Voice of the Silence* says:

Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within. Thus purified, the shrine must of all action, sound, or earthly light be void; e'en as the butterfly, o'ertaken by the frost, falls lifeless at the threshold—so must all earthly thoughts fall dead before the fane.

Yet we have to cultivate one kind of memory, for if we forget SELF, the Soul will “lose o'er its trembling mind control, and forfeit thus the due fruition of its conquests.”

Some systems of yoga start with this idea and concentrate on the SELF, but Theosophy teaches that no rung in the ladder of control can be missed. What is apparently conquered in one life may yet spring up in times of crisis and destroy our concentration. Therefore Patanjali says that concentration must be learnt by repeated or

uninterrupted effort, with a firm position assumed with regard to the end in view. We must never give up. What will make us never give up? Nothing but the absence of desire. Desire often implies tension, struggle to obtain, while the real condition to be attained is dispassion, indifference to all else but Soul.

These are easy words, but what is the Soul? Let us remember that it stands for that which has nothing to do with the life of the senses and desires, the ordinary life that most of us lead. Soul is different from everything we know. Hence our difficulty. We have to begin to learn what Soul is by finding out what it is not.

Once again Patanjali makes us start from what we have some glimmering of in our mind, however faint it be. After describing different types of meditation, he says that “the state of abstract meditation may be attained by profound devotedness toward the Supreme Spirit considered in its comprehensible manifestation as *Ishwara*.” And he goes on to tell us who, or what, *Ishwara* is. The *Gita* also gives a wonderful description of the Supreme Spirit (Chapter XIII). In the same chapter, Krishna, speaking of “true wisdom of a spiritual kind,” lists the virtuous qualities, which include a meditation upon things we know, such as birth, death, decay, sickness and error, and ends with the statement that “it is a never-ceasing love for me alone...a resolute continuance in the study of *Adhyatma*, the Superior Spirit, and a meditation upon the end of the acquirement of a knowledge of truth...”

These words were spoken after Arjuna had the spiritual vision vouchsafed to him. Before that, he had been told to fix his meditation upon the Higher Self. It is with such meditation, which gives us an idea of something beyond what we now know, that begins the path of progress toward a full realization of *Ishwara* as the Higher Self. As it is the Higher Self of us all, the idea of separateness that we have must be dispelled. Once we have studied all we can about *Ishwara* and gained some knowledge of what Spirit is, the obstacles in the way of concentration fade away of themselves.

But these obstacles have to be recognized before they can be destroyed. They concern the body—sickness, languor, laziness;

the emotions—doubt, carelessness, addiction to objects of sense; and the mind—erroneous perception, inability to reach the abstract, and weakness of will which renders us incapable of holding on to any state even when we have reached it. These difficulties or obstacles bring grief, distress, trembling and sighing. Reversing the process, when we suffer from these states we should search for their causes.

As for conquering them, that should not be too difficult if we concentrate on what we already *know* for ourselves to be true, and increase our faith in it. Any accepted truth which we approve should be dwelt upon. Knowledge of things not known today will come naturally to us as we increase our concentration on what we do know, with faith and without doubt or distress.

We can overcome all obstacles by our attitude to life. As *The Voice of the Silence* says, “To live to benefit mankind is the first step.” We must practise benevolence, tenderness and complacency, and remain unruffled by opposites like happiness and misery. To develop the mental attitude of higher indifference is to purify the mind.

We have to learn to steady the mind, hinder its modifications, and pay attention, conscious attention, only to those things we desire to know. To help us to see what happens when we do not do this, Patanjali reminds us that the mind becomes that on which it dwells. Hence we should dwell on what we desire, exercising control.

When the mind changes into the likeness of that which it ponders upon, it reaches what is called the “argumentative condition.” In this condition, the mind is intent upon an object selected for meditation, whether gross or subtle, the significance of that object, its application, and the abstract knowledge of the qualities and elements of the thing itself. When the designation of the object and its meaning have disappeared from the mind, and the abstract thing itself is meditated upon, that is the “non-argumentative condition.” The word “argumentative” is interesting. The dictionary says that it means “controversial,” which implies that we have different opinions on a subject. Only when we get to the essence

can these controversial aspects disappear. As *The Voice of the Silence* says: "...thou hast to feel thyself ALL-THOUGHT, and yet exile all thoughts from out thy Soul."

When we have learnt to reach the "non-deliberative" mental state, we attain that spiritual clearness in which knowledge which is completely free from error becomes ours. This knowledge has nothing to do with the knowledge gained by inference or from anyone's testimony, for the latter has to do with particulars and not with the field of knowledge itself. The train of self-reproductive thought stops all other trains of thought.

Beyond this kind of meditation, called "meditation with its seed"—for there is a definite object selected for the mind to dwell upon—there is a higher stage where no thought-seed is present. The mind-soul passes beyond the need for an object or a seed, and the abstract state is reached. The recognition of the object or subject ceases and the mind grasps the essence.

After all this, which is the foundation of meditation, and has therefore to be kept in mind throughout, Patanjali passes to the practical means of concentration. In Book III he deals directly with the stages of meditation. Each Book describes in greater detail what has been sketched in Book I. Our first step is that daily concentration which is outlined in Book I. But let us examine our motive for such study.

In the individual, man is conscious of the vast superiority of Nature; but when once he becomes conscious that he is part of an indivisible and indestructible whole, he knows also that the whole of which he is part stands above nature....Let him once touch on the power which comes from knowing himself as part of the human spirit, and nothing can crush him by its greatness.

—*Lucifer*, February 1888

A RARE VIRTUE

TRUE gratitude is a rare virtue in our civilization when constant demands are made for one or another type of rights and privileges, without any consideration as to how much we owe others and what our responsibility towards them is. It is a reverential feeling of the human heart which should flow out spontaneously in every direction, to the visible and the invisible worlds and to great Mother Nature for all the bountiful gifts that she bestows freely. Usually, people are grateful for some help or kind treatment received from others, or for mercy shown towards them in their hour of stress and difficulty. It would be ungracious not to feel so, but it is not enough. True gratitude has no boundary; it expands more and more as we come to recognize the Law of Interdependence to an ever greater extent. Not only are human beings dependent on one another; all beings, high or low, great or small, to get along in this evolutionary march have to aid and be aided by others.

This universe is alive and vibrant with different powers and forces. It is guided by divine intelligences and is not a mechanical and fortuitous concurrence of atoms. Therefore, first and foremost, our whole-hearted gratitude should go out to the One Divine Principle of Life, which is also the One Law. It is the source and origin of everything, from the starry firmament above to the dust below our feet. Each human being as a Divine Ray has emanated from the Eternal Source, is one with it and with all other emanations from the same Source, the Divine Principle. It is universal in scope, and, being the Law itself, is impersonal. It is omnipotent—all powerful; omnipresent—all-pervasive; omniscient—all-knowing. Usually, petitions are made to a Personal God for some kind of favours and boons, and, when these are not responded to, people get disappointed and annoyed, not understanding the Law of Karma, just and immutable. All the great Teachers have taught time and again that one should meditate and reflect on that Source, the Self of all creatures, and work in harmony with it so as to reach the nature, stature and dignity of conscious godhood, the goal of every

human being. When man considers himself to be a miserable sinner, or believes that he has descended from the apes, how can he put forth effort to rise to the Divine origin, above all limitations, and how can true gratitude overflow the heart? It is the recognition of unity with the One and with all that enables man to express his heartfelt gratitude.

A ray of Divine Life and Light is the Eternal Pilgrim, going the rounds of his pilgrimage on earth, gaining wisdom, experience and power. It always needs a bodily vehicle to work through, to contact the objective world and objective things, to adjust the Karmic balance and to step onward and forward on the great journey. That vehicle is provided by one's parents in terms of past affinities, and they guard and protect one through the years of childhood and beyond. We can only realize the deep debt of gratitude we owe them as we reflect upon and try to understand the words of Lord Buddha:

Difficult it is to obtain birth as a human being. Difficult it is to live the life of a man. Difficult it is to get to hear the True Law. Difficult it is to attain to Enlightenment. (*The Dhammapada*, Verse 182)

These days, are there many who realize this truth and pay their respectful homage to their parents? Everything is taken for granted and life has become such a mechanical process that children forget their responsibilities to them!

The body provided by the parents is not a solid mass of matter but is made up of different kinds of lives, constantly coming in and going out, human, animal, vegetable, mineral, fiery, watery, airy, earthy. To keep them all working harmoniously is the duty of the Inner Ruler. They belong to different Hierarchies, each working according to the law of its own being. The body is considered as something to enjoy life with, and is not generally looked upon with reverence. It is pampered by most people, tortured by a few, and is no longer the appropriate instrument it ought to be. Through self-control and self-discipline it can become a living temple for a living god.

The Inner Ruler has under its command 33 crores of Devas, it is said. It is a vast kingdom, vast as a universe in miniature, which has to be ruled efficiently. In reference to this, there is an instructive story: Once upon a time the great God Shiva-Mahadeva had to perform a sacrifice at which he wanted all the 33 crores of gods to be present. So he made his son Kartikeya go round and invite all of them. Kartikeya's vehicle was a peacock, on which he set out to do his errand. The day was approaching and he had been able to do very little; so he wanted his work to be entrusted to a wiser god, and Ganesha, God of Wisdom, was selected. Ganesha had a reputation for performing the maximum work with the minimum of labour. His vehicle was only a mouse and he had very little time to do the work. He reflected upon the task ahead, went round his father, Shiva, three times, and prostrated himself before him. He thus invoked all the 33 crores of gods and gave them the invitation, and all of them came on the appointed day. People are generally in the habit of looking outside when every power and force is within them. Beings of various degrees do so much for us and it is the duty of each one to give them the right impress through deliberate choice, so that they may not be degraded but through gentle help may be ever uplifted.

The connecting link between man's body formed of different lives and the Divine Ray, the Eternal Pilgrim, is Manas, the thinker endowed with self-consciousness, the great prerogative of mankind. At a certain stage in our pilgrimage the divine intelligences actually incarnated on earth to light up the mind of man, turning consciousness into self-consciousness. Theosophically, they are known as the Solar *Pitris*, the mind-born sons of Brahma, a hierarchy by itself. This is how the three lines of evolution have converged together and brought a human being on the scene so that through self-choice and self-determination he may reach the destined goal of human perfection. The mind is the instrument of the self-conscious thinker, who, like the body, has to be nourished well and kept clear of all dross. The human mind has to be raised to the plane of divinity, and that task is to be done reverentially and gratefully, day after day, till man the thinker attains conscious

union with his divine parent, Atma-Buddhi.

What about gratitude to our fellow pilgrims, who consciously or unconsciously do so much for us unasked—the millions of workers in the fields, the factories and the mines; the big bosses and the petty peons, all those who serve us along different lines? Only through our loving thoughts and feelings can we show our gratitude to them. Were it not for these unknown millions, how would we get the wherewithals of life?

Are we not indebted to great Mother Nature at every step and at every turn? Her beauties and utilities are too many to be mentioned! She is ever ready to serve us. Are we as ready to help her with right knowledge and right love? The majestic mountains, the flowing rivers, the green fields and multicoloured flowers, the vast oceans, the deep forests, the sun, the moon, the stars, all provide us with necessities, never for a moment considering their benefit or reward. Hidden in the bosom of Mother Nature are deep secrets to be unveiled, but she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit. Therefore, it is only when through self-purification the Spiritual Vision, the Divine Eye, is opened that she becomes the friend and ally of man, grateful for having an opportunity to help and serve.

What homage shall we pay, out of the heart's gratitude, to the Elder Brothers, the great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, the Custodians of the sacred lore, who out of their compassion sacrificed the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* to help suffering humanity? It is only through the study of their philosophy and service of their humanity that we may express, in however small and insignificant a measure, our gratitude.

To unite one's soul to the Universal Soul requires but a perfectly pure mind. Through self-contemplation, perfect chastity, and purity of body, we may approach nearer to It, and receive, in that state, true knowledge and wonderful insight.

—PORPHYRY

THE POWER OF FAITH

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

—St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews

Faith is the pressure of the Spirit on humanity, the force that urges humanity towards what is better, not only in the order of knowledge but in the whole order of spiritual life. Faith, as the inward sense of truth, points to the object over which fuller light is shed later.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Faith can only grow from within, it cannot be acquired vicariously. Nothing great in this world was ever accomplished without a living faith.

—GANDHIJI

Imagination is a potent help in every event of our lives. Imagination acts on Faith, and both are the draughtsmen who prepare the sketches for Will to engrave. This is all the secret.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

EVEN today when the intellectual temper of the intelligentsia is too often that of materialistic scepticism, we come across remarkable incidents which modern science cannot account for. The unbelievers scoff and ridicule or try to explain it all by using big technical terms which fail to explain and only explain away. The credulous in awe whisper, "a miracle!" and yet feel somewhat ashamed and sometimes rather fearful.

The fact is that our modern knowledge, while it may tell us about the external side of nature and the outward man, is still ignorant of the inner forces which exist in both. "Spiritual and divine powers lie dormant in every human being," says H.P. Blavatsky, "and the wider the sweep of his spiritual vision the mightier will be the God within."

Most people today deny the very existence of the Inner God and are thereby blinded to its manifestations. Face to face with expressions of the Divine, they prefer to deny or ignore. The many "providential" escapes; the varied strange and remarkable

“interventions”; the so-called coincidences—all can be traced to their real source, the Spirit in Man.

Many of these unexplained occurrences are made possible through the power of faith. But what is faith? What does the modern man know of faith and its workings? What are the ingredients of faith? What did the ancients mean when they affirmed that “with faith all things are possible”? The educated intellectual is likely to laugh and say it is all ignorant superstition: how can faith cause anything to happen? And yet that same man will accept the fact that if you give a pellet of bread to a patient suffering from constipation and he *believes* you have given him a laxative, the effect on his body will be that of a laxative! “Oh, yes, but that is easy to explain,” says the sceptic. “That is a clear case of auto-suggestion and demonstrates the action of the mind upon the body.” Very well. But was not that action of the mind the result of the belief held by the patient? Or—to change the illustration—when a man is incapable of walking, though there is no actual physiological incapacity, because he thinks he has suffered an injury to his legs, what paralyses his legs? Is it not his belief (or faith) that he has received an injury that incapacitates him for walking? Such examples could be multiplied. And the same principle explains the common experience that we do better when we have faith in our own skill or knowledge, that self-confidence brings success and lack of it failure. The question really is: Can anything be done without a measure of faith? Could we live at all without faith? Rightly did the Initiate Paul write to the Corinthians: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

And did not his Master, Jesus, extol the power of faith above all others when he said to his disciples:

For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, “Remove hence to yonder place,” and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. (*Matthew*, xvii, 20)

The occasion on which Jesus is reported to have thus spoken is significant and deserves to be recalled. His disciples had failed to

cure a youth suffering from epilepsy, and his father went to Jesus and complained. Jesus exclaimed: “What an unbelieving and perverse generation!” and asked that the boy be brought to him. And forthwith he cured him. Later his disciples asked their Master privately: “Why could *we* not cast it (the evil spirit) out?” And Jesus answered: “Your faith is too weak.” And then he uttered the promise quoted above.

In this instance the cure was the result of Jesus’ own spiritual faith, which made his command an act of will, and he is indeed said to have spoken sternly to the boy. Such healing is possible through an effort of the healer’s will which enables him to transmit a positive life-current to the patient and thereby restore his health.

There are other possibilities. Take the case of the woman who touched Jesus’ garment. The cure in that instance was the result of the woman’s own faith. The incident is revealing. It is narrated in the *Gospel of St. Luke*, Chapter viii. Jesus was on his way to the house of a man whose little daughter was dying. The father had begged him to save his child and Jesus had consented. Crowds surrounded him on all sides, when a woman came from behind and touched his cloak. Jesus felt the touch but had not seen the woman, did not even know who had touched him, and yet the woman was cured. For twelve years she had suffered from haemorrhages and, certain that Jesus could cure her, she had followed him and touched his cloak. And lo! at once the flow of blood had stopped. And to her Jesus said: “My daughter, your faith has cured you! Go in peace!”

What is this invisible, intangible imponderable that can achieve such startling results and produce what the ignorant call “miracles”? “Faith,” says H. P. Blavatsky, “is a quality *endowed with a most potent creative power*.” This inner quality is in all of us, however dormant, and can act even unconsciously to the believer, and independently of the merit or otherwise of the object to which it is directed. How much greater its power when it is consciously exercised by one who *knows* and therefore understands fully its *modus operandi*!

That power, then, lies “inside human credulity” and explains the rationale of many things otherwise unexplainable. For the aspirant the cultivation of true faith is a necessary part of his spiritual discipline. In fact, without it no spiritual discipline can begin. He must recognize the Divine Presence in his own heart and have unshakable faith that he can seek and receive Its guidance. This is true prayer and acts as a veritable invocation which brings down into the personal consciousness a divine afflatus. Says Paracelsus:

The human spirit is so great a thing that no man can express it; as God Himself is eternal and unchangeable, so also is the spirit of man. If we rightly understand its powers, nothing would be impossible to us on earth. The imagination is strengthened and developed through *faith in our will*. Faith must confirm the imagination, for faith establishes the will.

The purely worldly intellect in which scepticism is entrenched finds it difficult indeed to awaken the spiritual will. And so the acquiring of faith is the first step in the spiritual life. In Buddhist philosophy faith is called the “seed” without which no spiritual effort can begin. This faith includes not only conviction, but also imagination or the image-making faculty and the volitional aspect, the will to achieve.

In Sanskrit, the word for faith is *shraddha*, akin to *cor*, “the heart,” in Latin. Indeed, that inner faith is more a quality of the heart than of the mind. It is in truth the perception of the heart and transcends that of the intellect. At first only an intuitional feeling, it grows into intuition itself and flowers into self-realization. This faith or *shraddha* is described by Dr. Radhakrishnan thus: “...it is not acceptance of a belief. It is striving after self-realization by concentrating the powers of the mind on a given ideal.”

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna deals with the subject of faith in great detail. In the Seventeenth Discourse he tells Arjuna that the faith of every man is in accordance with his *svabhava*, his own nature or character, his own temperament and disposition. “Man is of the nature of his faith: what his faith is, that, verily is he” (xvii, 3). He then goes on to explain the faith of mortals on the basis of

the three *gunas* or qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*: truth, desire and inertia.

The ramifications of the principle that each one is of the nature of his faith are wide and most significant. How necessary it is to make our faith *sattvic*! This can be achieved only if we know our true Self, if we sense the presence of God within our own hearts. To think of ourselves as mere bodies will cause us to lead superficial and sensuous lives and will shut us out altogether from the finer things of life. To believe we are nothing but the personality or mask we wear in our present life will make us selfish and enhance our sense of separateness. Only when we know the Real in us do we touch the deeper levels of our consciousness.

Let us follow the wise injunction of W. Q. Judge, who tells us: “...formulate to yourself certain things as true that you feel to be true, and then increase your faith in them.”

May we endeavour to cultivate an ardent and unshakable faith in the reality of the Divine Spirit and feel ourselves its channels! This will enable the God within to manifest in us, and make us transmitters of its blessings for the benefit of our fellow men.

BUT that Infinite we would enter is living. It is the ultimate being of us. Meditation is a fiery brooding on that majestic Self. We imagine ourselves into Its vastness. We conceive ourselves as mirroring Its infinitudes, as moving in all things, as living in all beings, in earth, water, air, fire, aether. We try to know as It knows, to live as It lives, to be compassionate as It is compassionate....As our aspiration, so is our inspiration. We imagine It as Love and what a love enfolds us. We conceive of it as Might and we take power from that Majesty.

—AE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

How old are civilized human societies? Dates are constantly being revised by newer archaeological findings. Four years ago, the discovery of the Harappan site of Dholavira in Gujarat pushed back the dates by a few thousand years; and now has come the dramatic finding of a submerged site in the Gulf of Cambay, off the coast of Gujarat. Archaeologists date it back to 7500 B.C., and proclaim it as the earliest known urban settlement in India—and maybe the world—“changing the starting point from where the history of our civilization is tracked.” (*India Today*, February 11)

After spending weeks dredging the site and picking up over 2000 artefacts, the team of oceanographers from the National Institute of Ocean Technology in Chennai made some astonishing revelations. It found that the ruins under the sea showed signs of what was once a masonry dam, also a large granarylike structure, and another construction with sunken steps that looked like the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro. Also discernible were outlines of a drainage system, mud roads, and foundations of crumbled homesteads. The artefacts recovered included polished stone tools, ornaments, figurines, broken pottery, semiprecious stones, ivory, and fossilized remains of human bones.

The findings have triggered much interest and controversy among leading historians, archaeologists and others throughout the world. Many are of the view that the discovery is important enough to launch an international collaborative study. Dilip Chakrabarti, an expert on ancient Indian archaeology, goes so far as to say, “If the dates are true it would be revolutionary in terms of understanding the growth of villages and cities in the world.... It could completely alter all our notions of history.”

There are many questions that still remain unanswered: Where, for instance, did the people of Cambay come from? Were they natives or did they come by sea from West Asia? When and how did they become agriculturists and go on to build a mature urban settlement? The notion still persists that early humans were hunters

and later became farmers, and archaeologists are hoping that the sunken city of Cambay which was once part of a predominantly agricultural society will reveal the “missing links” connecting the two.

There is general agreement that those who preceded the Vedic Aryans in India, like the people of the Indus Valley, belonged to a highly civilized race.

It is yet far from being proved who were the original and primitive masters of India. That this period is now beyond the reach of documentary history, does not preclude the probability of our theory that it was a mighty race of builders, whether we call them Eastern Ethiopians, or dark-skinned Aryans (the word meaning simply “noble warrior,” a “brave”). They ruled supreme at one time over the whole of ancient India. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 435)

Kenneth L. Woodward’s comparative study of the Bible and the Qur’an (*Newsweek*, February 11) attempts to establish that the two have a “real kinship.” Each book says much more than what a literal reading can possibly capture; each claims to be “divine revelation”; each insists that God is one. As the Prophet himself insisted, “God reveals himself through signs whose meanings need to be deciphered.” “Here, it would seem,” says Woodward, “lie the promising seeds of religious reconciliation.” There is more misunderstanding than points of disagreement between the two.

Like the Bible, the Qur’an is a book of divine revelation [writes Woodward]. Between them, these two books define the will of God for more than half the world’s population. Over centuries, the Bible fashioned the Hebrew tribes into a nation: Israel. But in just a hundred years, the Qur’an created an entire civilization that at its height stretched from northern Africa and southern Europe in the West to the borders of modern India and China in the East....

But since the events of September 11, the Qur’an and the religion it inspired have been on trial. Is Islam an inherently

intolerant faith?.... What seeds of reconciliation lie within the Qur'an and the Bible and the traditions that they represent? Does the battle of the books, which has endured for centuries between Muslims and believers in the West, ensure a perpetual clash of civilizations?...

Compared with the few and much quoted verses that call for jihad against the infidels, the Qur'an places far more emphasis on acts of justice, mercy and compassion.

Indeed, the Qur'an is better appreciated as comprehensive guide for those who would know and do the will of God. Like the Bible, the Qur'an defines rules for prayer and religious rituals. It establishes norms governing marriage and divorce, relations between men and women and the way to raise righteous children. More important, both books trace a common lineage back to Abraham, who was neither Jew nor Christian, and beyond that to Adam himself. Theologically, both books profess faith in a single God (Allah means "The God") who creates and sustains the world. Both call humankind to repentance, obedience and purity of life. Both warn of God's punishment and final judgment of the world. Both imagine a hell and a paradise in the hereafter....

In Islam's current political conflicts with the West, the major problem is not the Muslims' sacred book but how it is interpreted. Muslims everywhere are plagued by a crippling crisis of authority. Like freewheeling fundamentalists of every religious stripe, any Muslim with an agenda now feels free to cite the Qur'an in his support.

Much of the misunderstanding of the Qur'an's message stems from the word "jihad," a word often misinterpreted by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Jihad means, literally, "effort." "Often it describes the personal struggle merely to be a better, more pious Muslim," writes Christopher Dickey in the same issue of *Newsweek*. Muslims often justify "defensive holy war" against "infidels"; but is it mere physical warfare that the Qur'an refers to? There are dead-letter interpretations of the *Gita*, too, and the war of Kurukshetra is often not understood as a symbolic representation of the war within, between the higher and the lower self in each

one of us. The "holy war" is an inner war; the "infidel" is an inner foe; the goal is an inner goal. Is this not a more meaningful interpretation of jihad than a literal rendering?

The sense of smell is perhaps the most mysterious and least appreciated of all the senses. Researchers are now discovering that smell plays an important role in memory and mood.

The correlation and interchangeability of the senses has long been known, and now the theory is being advanced that smell can arouse powerful emotions. *Health and Nutrition* (November 2001) reports:

It's easy to see how a keen sense of smell can enhance life's pleasures. Could the reverse also be true? Could depression and other mood disorders—in older people and smokers, for instance—be linked to an impaired sense of smell? Researchers are only beginning to address those questions, but they've already found a fairly significant relationship between smell and mood. People who completely lose their sense of smell, for example, often become anxious and depressed. Psychologists at Brown University have found that odour can even reinforce the negative feelings associated with failure....

The link between smell and mood is actually at the heart of aromatherapy....Even more intriguing is the possibility that the gradual decline of the ability to smell can contribute to memory problems. No one knows for sure, but it seems clear that difficulties with the sense of smell are associated with memory loss. Last year, researchers at Columbia University found that a subtle decrease in the olfactory sense may precede the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

The effect of colour and music on emotional and even physical health is well known. Colour, music, scent, all have their vibrations which produce direct effects on our psychological nature; the elemental lives also are affected by these means. It is for each one to observe his own nature and thus learn how sense impressions

affect his emotions and his health.

There are thought-provoking hints in Theosophical literature about scent, its rationale, its significance and its correspondences, and the interchangeability of the senses. Attention may be invited, for example, to the statement in *Transactions* (p. 94): “An orthodox Occultist goes so far as to say that the smell of a flower emanates from it ‘consciously’—absurd as it may seem to the profane.” Also to John Worrell Keely’s discussion of the non-physical character of the “substance” of odour, and its extreme tenuity (*S.D.*, I, 565). Mr. Judge’s *Echoes from the Orient* implies that odours can be impressed upon the astral light and that they can be carried thousands of miles through it (p. 53). Experiments have proved that scent affects even the growth of plants.

Though it is a well-recognized fact that all beings, including men, animals and plants, have a specific odour, *how* it is produced is a question not easily answerable by science. Scent is correlated with sound and colour and all are in terms of vibration as far as their immediate cause is concerned. A note in *The Theosophist* for July 1883 suggested that the odoriferous element inherent in the protoplasm or vital substance is “one of the links which connects the life principle with the physical body.” That seems to be borne out by the resistance of distinctive bodily odour to the most scrupulous physical cleanliness; for scent is an expression from within without, which it is not easy to alter.

While “globalization” is much talked about today, it is mainly applied to the process of bringing goods and services, products, markets and national economies under the umbrella of large corporations, thus shrinking the world.

Is our world really a family? An unsigned article in *Purity* (February 2002) touches on the practical implications and responsibilities of the concept of the global family:

It means that the context of faith, nationality and culture is unity, oneness....

The key to reawaken the understanding of the holistic and united nature of the human family is to begin from within, to understand the self first. First and foremost, *I am a soul* and that *I play the part* of being a Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, a Buddhist, an atheist or, that I belong in India, in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, in Korea, in USA, etc. The field of action is not the identity. The cultural norm is not the personality. In fact, like any drama, the actors are wonderfully attired and expressed in a range of characters, with certain inflections of personality and humour to match those actors.

This is what it means to be a family—to enjoy and laugh at the differences—to accept individual and separate identity whilst being a part of the colourful whole.

Let us play together a singular symphony of love and happiness as one world family. This is one magnificent composition created by the same Composer, the One Supreme.

According to a WHO study, increasing air pollution in India is responsible for the premature deaths of about 750,000 people annually. The report also says that premature deaths and illness caused by environmental factors account for one-fifth of all diseases in South Asia—more than the toll taken by any other preventable factor.

Atmospheric pollution is caused by human activities, propelled by greed. There is a price to be paid for every act of indiscretion, but we are slow in learning the lesson.

Instances of animals caring for the young of other species are “baffling,” yet not uncommon. In a recent instance reported by Earth Environment Service, a full-grown lioness in Kenya’s Samburu Game Reserve took over an oryx calf separated from its mother at birth. The lioness became inseparable from the young oryx, which normally would have been prey for big cats. The pair

ranged side by side, with the lioness fiercely protecting the frail calf, chasing off leopards and cheetahs. Park workers reported seeing the lioness lay down to nap with the frail oryx curled up next to her. Exhausted from a vigilant two-week watch over her unlikely ward, the lioness slept as a male lion pounced on the oryx and dragged it away. The grief-stricken lioness howled “in pain” upon awakening and circled the area before departing.

Could not humans learn a thing or two from such instances?

IF we continue to speak of other animals as less mysterious than ourselves, if we speak of the forests as insentient systems, and of rivers and winds as basically passive elements, then we deny our direct, visceral experience of those forces. And so we close down our senses and come to live more and more in our heads. We seal our intelligence in on itself and begin to look out at the world only as spectators—never as participants.

If, on the other hand, we wish to recall what it is like to feel fully a part of this wild earth, then we shall have to start speaking somewhat differently. It will be a difficult change, but it will also be curiously simple, and strangely familiar, something our children can help us remember. If we really wish to awaken our senses, and so to renew the solidarity between ourselves and the rest of the earth, then we must acknowledge that the myriad things around us have their own active influence upon our lives and our thoughts (and also, of course, upon one another). We must begin to speak of our sensuous surroundings in the way that our breathing bodies really experience them—as active, as animate, as alive.

—DAVID ABRAM