

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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DISCIPLESHIP

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Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing
Vina;

Mankind, unto its sounding board;

The hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the Great
World-Soul.

The string that fails to answer 'neath the Master's touch in
dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks—and is cast away. So
the collective minds of Lanoo-Shravakas. They have to be
attuned to the Upadhyaya's mind—one with the Over-Soul—or,
break away.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

AMONG the Blessed Works of H.P.B., unique importance attaches
to the proclamation she made in the first sentence of the first
volume of her first book, and the achievement which enabled her
to give to the world *The Voice of the Silence*, "Dedicated to the
new."

The old, forgotten Path in the jungle of this civilization was
cleared by her, so that the aspirant might walk it. But that aspirant
has to unfold true Devotion to Wisdom, to the Sages who are its
custodians, and to all who are its students and pupils and whom he
must recognize as his companions.

The above quotation from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*

enshrines a vital instruction for all would-be Chelas. Those who have attained the sweet fruits of Discipleship have done so by the actual practice of the truth contained in these lines.

The Path to which H.P.B. pointed can be trodden by the would-be disciples of this cycle. The inspiration of the Esoteric Philosophy she taught culminates in the learner's heart as a concentrated aspiration to walk that Way. The strength and loyalty with which a learner adheres to his resolve express his inner faith and vision. The depth of that faith and the purity of that vision are tested by the Power of Time; in the life of the devotee that Power flows, testing and trying, and it does not belong to the past, the present or the future, but to the Eternal Now. Chelaship is a continuous development toward Immortality and may be called an Immortal Process.

It is taught that Chelaship begins with the inner attitude of mind; what one thinks and feels is of greater importance than outer action, though outer behaviour has to conform to the inner perceptions; and the first task of the aspiring devotee is to cultivate his perception through the study of right knowledge and the practice of right discipline.

In the measure in which he overcomes the five hindrances—(1) lust, (2) ill-will, (3) torpor and languor, (4) restlessness and mental worry, and (5) doubt—does he achieve the success to which the first statement of the above quotation points. A would-be Chela is not but a string, capable of echoing (there is an important idea in the word "echoing") the Soul. In this world of personalities and persons, the aspirant-devotee has to become the echo of his own Soul, of the Divine Singer within himself.

To become such an echo is not a negative but a positive process. How to achieve the wonderful position of the true echo of the Soul Singer in this noisy, bragging, boastful, angry and greedy civilization of the dark cycle and the iron age? In one place the Mahatma K. has said these words which are exactly applicable to the stage of Discipleship of which we are speaking:

No men living are freer than we when we have once passed out of the stage of pupilage. Docile and obedient but never slaves during that time we must be; otherwise, and if we passed our

time in arguing, we never would learn anything at all.

Next, our echoed song is for mankind. Once again in the measure of our assimilation of the Divine Song of the Higher Manas can we enable the voice of our personal self to influence mankind. The service of humanity is therefore an early *sine qua non* in the devotee's daily life.

It is a condition of Chelaship that each aspirant learn to be devoted to the interests and welfare of co-aspirants, co-students and co-servers. It is the *collective* minds of the learners which have to be attuned to the Master's mind. All the strings of the soul-echoing Vina must be tightened to produce the song for the service of mankind.

All tests and trials of the would-be Chela are directly related to his inner attitude, that reflects itself in his outer behaviour. The neophyte's first privilege is to be tried in the searching fire made up of his lower non-spiritual attributes. He is tested on the psychological side of his nature—especially by "Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation—especially the latter," said the Master K.H. The agents employed in this testing are "the jealous Lhamayin in endless space."

These trials and tests have the effect of bringing out the evils of the lower man, which coalesce to fight the effort of the would-be Chela to oust them. They make a deadly hard weapon of iron smelted by the Lhamayin, who wield it against the erect integrity of the Neophyte. Asks the Master—"Why is it that doubts and foul suspicions seem to beset every aspirant for chelaship?" The answers to this question are numerous, but of fundamental importance is this one: In the strife between the Living and the Dead, on the Battlefield of Dharma, the neophyte must see, face, fight and conquer the conglomerate evil. This produces a two-sided experience: As water develops the heat of caustic lime, so the honest and sustained endeavour of the neophyte brings into fierce action every unsuspected potentiality latent in him; but at the same time his vivid and vital, moral and intellectual forces are set free for his constructive use. Every test passed, every trial faced, is a step forward on the Path in the direction of the Master, which, one of

Them says, "forces us to take one towards him."

This battle of the living portion of the personal man against his dead aspects with their nefarious, deadening effects produces despondency and despair, and Arjuna-like the neophyte wants to withdraw, does not desire to fight out the field. It is very necessary to remember that the first chapter of the *Gita* which deals with this first real experience in Chela-life is designated as a type of Yoga—*Vishad-Yoga*. Does it not imply "making union with despondency"? And what does it mean? Does it mean that we should hug despair to our bosom and bolt from the field of battle, refuse to engage in the greatest of all wars? Or, Arjuna-like, should the neophyte make union with despondency with the purpose of taking a good look at that fear-causing demon, of understanding its demoniac nature, of seeking the explanation about it from the Teachings and the Teachers? Real union with despondency implies mastering and using the demoniac in the service of the Divine.

Which virtue will enable the neophyte to continue to live his life aright? *Vishad*, despondency, brings one to *Vairagya*, detachment—detachment from the self of matter, from the pairs of opposites. Illusion has to be conquered if Truth is to be perceived. Indifference to pleasure and to pain implies freedom from "thirst for perceptible and scriptural enjoyments," says Patanjali.

Vairagya, indifference, desirelessness, detachment, is the very first *Paramita* which the aspiring and devoted neophyte should unfold. It involves a mental abnegation, to begin with, and this is not agreeable to our modern mind; but it must be acquired if discipleship is to be successful. This *Paramita* leads to the flowering of the Higher Resignation which has dauntless energy-*prana* as its heart and patience sweet that nought can ruffle as its head.

There are two suggestive sayings by two Zen teachers:

Gettan used to say: "There are three kinds of disciples: those who impart Zen to others, those who maintain the temples and shrines, and then there are the rice bags and the clothes-hangers."

Gasán, the victorious disciple of Tekisui, remained when weaker fellows ran away. Gasán remembered:

"A poor disciple utilizes a teacher's influence.

"A fair disciple admires a teacher's kindness.

"A good disciple grows strong under a teacher's discipline."

To aid the earnest student to mould his mind in the new style of thinking and to acquire the right attitude, we draw attention to a collection of reprints in our Volume X, pp. 137-143, under the caption "Masters and Their Companions." Also below we reprint three extracts; the first two are from H.P.B.'s pen; the third, from Mr. Judge's:

I.—THE VICTORIOUS DISCIPLES

"Love one another," said Jesus to those who studied the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

"Profess altruism, preserve the union, accord, and harmony of your groups, all you who place yourselves in the ranks of neophytes and seekers of the *one Truth*," say other Masters to us. "Without union and intellectual and psychic sympathy you will attain nothing. He who sows discord reaps the whirlwind."

Learned Kabalists are not wanting among us in Europe and America. What good does that do us, and what have they done for the society? Instead of getting together to help each other, they look at each other askance, ready to criticize.

Those who wish to succeed in Theosophy, abstract or practical, should remember that want of union is the first condition of failure. But let ten determined theosophists unite themselves; let them work together, each according to his own way, in one or another branch of universal science, but let each one be in sympathy with his brother; let this be done, and we can answer for it that each member would make greater progress in the sacred science in one year than could be made in ten years by himself. In Theosophy what is needed is emulation and not rivalry.

In real Theosophy it is always the least who becomes the greatest.

However, the Society has more victorious disciples than is commonly supposed. But these stand aside and work instead of declaiming. Such are our most zealous as well as our most devoted disciples. When they write they hide their names; when they read

garbled translations of sacred ancient books, they see the real meaning under the veil of obscurity that western philologists have thrown upon them, for they know the mystery language. These few men and women are the pillars of our temple. They alone paralyze the incessant work of our theosophic moles.

II.—WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

Chelaship has nothing *whatever* to do with means of subsistence or anything of the kind, for a man can isolate his mind entirely from his body and its surroundings. Chelaship is a *state of mind*, rather than a life according to hard and fast rules on the physical plane. This applies especially to the earlier, probationary period, while the rules given in *Lucifer* for April last pertain properly to a later stage, that of actual occult training and the development of occult powers and insight. These rules indicate, however, the mode of life which ought to be followed by all aspirants *so far as practicable*, since it is the most helpful to them in their aspirations.

It should never be forgotten that Occultism is concerned with the *inner man* who must be strengthened and freed from the dominion of the physical body and its surroundings, which must become his servants. Hence the *first* and chief necessity of Chelaship is a spirit of absolute unselfishness and devotion to Truth; then follow self-knowledge and self-mastery. These are all-important; while outward observance of fixed rules of life is a matter of secondary moment.

III.—THE WISH TO SAVE OTHERS

If we look over the work of the Society, we find wherever the members boldly avow their belief and are not afraid to speak of this high ideal, the interest in Theosophy is awake, the work goes on, the people are benefited. To the contrary, where there are constant doubt, ceaseless asking for material proof, incessant fear of what the world or science or friends will think, there the work is dead, the field is not cultivated, and the town or city receives no benefit from the efforts of those who while formally in a universal brotherhood are not living out the great ideal.

Very wisely and as an occultist, Jesus said his followers must give up all and follow him. We must give up the desire to save ourselves and acquire the opposite one—the wish to save others. Let us remember the story in ancient writ of Yudhishtira, who, entering heaven and finding that his dog was not admitted and some of his friends in hell, refused to remain and said that while one creature was out of heaven he would not enter it. This is true devotion, and this joined to an intelligent declaration of belief in the great initiation of the human race will lead to results of magnitude, will call out the forces that are behind, will prevail against hell itself and all the minions of hell now striving to retard the progress of the human soul.

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BROTHERHOOD—THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF LIFE

BECAUSE Deity is reflected in Man, therefore all men are brothers—this is the primal concept of the ancient Wisdom-Religion. The immanence of God implies the solidarity of men. If Deity is omnipresent, then It is present in the human constitution. Its omniscience endows each human mind-soul with the possibility of omniscience; and, because all men are potentially omniscient, therefore they are spiritually identical in nature and are brothers. This concept may be illustrated by the following quotations from the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them. Understand that all things are in me even as the mighty air which passes everywhere is in space. (IX, 4-6)

Here in my body now behold...the whole universe animate and inanimate gathered here in one. (XI, 7)

That man and God are identical in their innermost nature is the central truth of the great Upanishads; and how man can realize for himself that truth of truths is the subject of their inquiry and exposition.

As from a blazing fire a thousand sparks of the same nature fly forth, so do creatures manifold come forth from THAT, and thither do they return. (*Mundakopanishad*, II, i, 1)

Smaller than the small, greater than the great, in the heart of each living being, reposes THAT. One free from desire, with his mind and the senses composed, sees the glory of THAT and becomes absolved from all grief. (*Kathopanishad*, I, ii, 20)

Let us proceed to apply these fundamental ideas to the everyday affairs of life.

This world of ours is at strife. The struggle for existence may well be described as the real and most prolific parent of most of our

woes and sorrows and of all crime. Individuals and nations, tribes and races, fight to live and survive. Their philosophy of life, which is the outcome of their beliefs, is at variance with the tenets of the Spiritual Instructors. "Give," cried Christ; "Grab," exclaim his so-called followers today. "Resist not evil," quietly declared the Reformer; "Fight everyone else but your own inherent evil, and fight because that evil lives," is the unspoken rule of life of the modern man. "The greatest among you is he that serveth," Jesus preached. "How can we make others serve?" is the question that makes millions resort daily to a hundred ways and means, to a thousand devices and subterfuges.

The whole world is badly in need of a new law of society—the Law of Brotherhood. Not only brotherhood in speech or brotherhood in action, for the one may give birth to the sense of superiority and manifest as patronage from the "high and mighty" to the lowly born, and the other may beget charity from the rich to the poor, and thus both tend to perpetuate differences. What is wanted is Brotherhood in life.

This can only be realized on a spiritual basis. Democracy is bound to fail when it endeavours to establish itself on the principle of human equality. The manifested universe is founded on the Law of Differentiation. If we try to create a stable society on a contrary law we are working against Nature and failure is bound to result. Human beings can never be equal—economically or intellectually or morally. Therefore we should try to rear the coming civilization on a plan which does not go counter to Nature and her fixed laws. Brotherhood can be, nay, must be realized because Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. Has it occurred to us that Nature is all the time endeavouring to manifest Brotherhood and that we are not aiding her in that supreme effort?

Nature is working to establish Brotherhood, not because of us but in spite of us. Some of us desire earnestly to see the principle of Brotherhood realized in individual and national life. Our difficulty, it would seem, is that we have not understood the laws which make Brotherhood the great fact in Nature and the final goal of evolution. Some of the "leaders" of the day remind us of those of whom the

Kathopanishad speaks: "Living in ignorance but regarding themselves as wise, they go round and round, in many crooked ways, blind leading the blind."

In the ancient days this was recognized. Reformers in every walk of life, understanding the central truth of the Law of Brotherhood, applied it. They worked with Nature, in terms of her laws, and success attended their efforts. When they forgot to apply these laws, their societies and civilizations decayed and perished. This can be seen in the rise and fall of civilizations in China, Egypt, Persia, Arabia and time after time in India.

What are the central principles underlying the Law of Brotherhood?

First, that all men are brothers because of their spiritual nature. A ray of divinity is present in all human beings.

Second, that in the manifested universe the Law of Differentiation works; therefore is the human kingdom divided into male and female; black, yellow, brown and white; rulers and ruled; wise and ignorant; rich and poor; employers and employed; saints and criminals.

Third, that out of these two laws of spiritual identity and outer differentiation arises the third, the Law of Evolution or Progress of the Spiritual Man through the instrumentality and by the help of the many material forms created by the Law of Differentiation.

Fourth, that Brotherhood exists in the spiritual world and that the ultimate goal of natural evolution is to establish the Kingdom of Brotherhood in this material universe of differentiation.

Fifth, that pain and sorrow are the outcome of obstructing the continuous efforts of Nature to proceed to its goal.

Sixth, that to try to establish Brotherhood in the material universe is to energize the forces of differentiation and is therefore the way of pain and death; and that the true path is to establish the Kingdom of the Self, Atman, *i.e.*, to realize the unity of life which manifests, sustains and renovates the myriad forms of matter.

Seventh, that the twin doctrines of Duty and Sacrifice (*Dharma* and *Yagna*) are the pillars which support and uphold the Temple of Brotherhood belonging to the Kingdom of God.

Eighth, that this Kingdom is not to be entered by us in some far-away Heaven, in some far-off future, but has to be realized on earth and now, and the Temple of Brotherhood has to be raised by us here, by the fulfilment of duty as against the claiming of rights, by the sacrifice of the great, the rich, and the powerful, through their love for the small, the poor and the weak. Just as the Great Ones sacrifice Their freedom by incarnating in bodies of matter, just as They fulfil Themselves in this material universe in many ways by the performance of Their Duty (*Gita*, III, 22-24), so must we who are emanations of that Divine Principle, copying the Great Example, work according to the Laws of Duty and Sacrifice and build a Democracy in which everyone is a King.

If, therefore, we try to establish Brotherhood in the Kingdom of matter—body and mind, wealth and trade—we are bound to fail; but if we endeavour to precipitate, in this manifested material universe, the Spiritual Brotherhood which exists, we will succeed.

This implies that we should think of man as a spiritual entity, unfolding his divine powers which are latent so that they may become patent. We are in the habit of thinking of man as a material entity, living and dying, learning and experiencing through thought and feeling and labour; by the strength of his body, the power of his emotions, the capacity of his mind, the vision of his moral nature, the perception of his reason. All these separately or collectively are taken by us to be the man. Therefore body fights against body, mind against mind, body against mind and mind against body; capacity fights against efficiency and reason against feeling; and so *ad infinitum*. "Who shall survive in the Great Struggle?" everyone asks, and each answers: "I." What is true of individuals is, alas, too true of groups of individuals, including nations.

Very different was the conception of the ancient world and the Wise Ones hold to it and work by it even today. They conceive Man as a spiritual entity, a spark of Divine Fire, a portion of God-Consciousness.

In him are embodied spiritual and divine powers. These are latent and evolution means the unfolding of these sleeping faculties. The one great central power that is unfolding in man is that of

mastery over matter. We see differentiation because different beings are unfolding different capacities, different aspects of the one power—the power of mastering matter. To human beings, contact with matter means pain; identification with matter brings corruption, disease, decay, death. It is so because Natural Law is misunderstood and misapplied. But the long course of evolution is unfolding in man the power to gain mastery over matter and thus pass from the region of mortality to that of immortality, to become one with Divinity.

A rich man is learning, through the disillusionment that wealth brings, the glory of poverty; the pauper is acquiring through the majesty of suffering the gift of sacrifice; woman is gaining the strength of love through the trials of motherhood; man is developing the grace of gentleness through enduring the rough and tumble of life; ugliness of body leads us to look for the beauty of soul; adversity enriches life; poverty supports the bond of brotherliness—Divinity is everywhere fulfilling Itself through man. "The intelligent man knowing the formless Atman firmly established in perishable bodies does not grieve," says the *Kathopanishad*. "Of those things which deceive I am the dice, and splendour itself among splendid things," says Krishna in the *Gita*, adding, "My divine manifestations...are without end...."

It is this concept, that mortal men are growing into immortality with the help of their environment, in and through their environment, that is very necessary today. We are what we are because through what we are and through that alone the establishment of the Kingdom of Brotherhood is possible, nay, certain.

The demand of men, therefore, should not be for rights to be claimed and obtained, but for duties to be performed. The fulfilment of *Dharma* or duty implies the understanding of our brothers and neighbours. At present our complaint is that we are not understood—the employer complains that he is misunderstood; the employee says he is misjudged; the politician, the preacher, the reformer, the *bourgeois*, the aristocrat, the anarchist, the black man, the brown, the yellow and the white man—everyone cries and cries incessantly: "Don't misunderstand me." That is so because all of us want

something from others, from without.

Let us affirm that we are what we are so that through our environment we may know ourselves to be divine, and then by the performance of our own duty, never forgetting that "it is better to do one's own duty...the duty of another is full of danger" (*Gita*, III, 35), we should do away with the terrors of the struggle for existence. But let us not forget that duty to others implies the knowing and understanding of those others. But we cannot know another, we cannot understand him, unless we love him; therefore the teaching: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." This implies our making ourselves one with our neighbour—with his joys and sorrows, his pains and sufferings. We are eager to make ourselves one with his joys and riches, but not with his suffering and poverty. We claim kinship with the saints, but are not eager to identify ourselves with the sinners. That is where the Law of Sacrifice has to be practised. (*Cf. Bhagavad-Gita*, III, 10-13)

Our motto should be: "Those who have, must give." Then only those who have not will not try to grab. Giving, not only what we have but what we are, is the expression of spiritual brotherhood. Therefore we must work for the reign of that socialism which gives and does not take. The Law of Sacrifice means that he who possesses gives to him who needs.

Brotherhood, therefore, is not to be established but has to be realized. We have not to create it, for it already exists; we have only to rediscover it. Its essence is within us; it is useless to look for it outside of us. Therefore we must seek and find the Laws of the Kingdom of God which are within us and apply them to the Kingdom of men in this world of empires and commonwealths and republics.

Man must take a new view of himself, and then he will be able to make a new world around him. He looks upon himself as a weakling, a mortal whom disease injures, decay attacks and death engulfs. The reality of Brotherhood does not touch him and therefore cannot inspire him to establish the Kingdom of Brotherhood. Let us teach him that he is an immortal whom fire cannot burn and water cannot drown, who is slowly but surely

evolving into the stature of perfection. "As oil in seeds, as butter in cream, as water in springs, as fire in fire-sticks, so is that SELF [God] within the Self [Man]. Man will find God if he seeks for Him with Truth and Meditation." (*Shvetashvataropanishad*, I, 15)

Next, we must teach him to recognize himself as belonging to the human family, whose members are immortal and evolving; towards whom he has duties and who have duties towards him. As a citizen of the State, he must be inspired to work for the improvement of the State; for this he must be made to realize that not only does he belong to the State but also the State belongs to him. If mortal citizens are masters of the State, they will impart to it their own mortality. Their immortality will enable them to create an immortal State. Towards that end let us endeavour to improve the State of today; which means that we should try to obtain conditions which help the soul more than the body; that we should remove causes which produce mind-disease, which in turn begets diseases of the senses and sense-organs, nerves and limbs; that we should establish an educational system that enlightens the individual as a whole and not only his brain and body; that we should enable the State to afford equality of opportunity to all, so that each one is able to express his own innate nature and is not forced to eke out his livelihood, somehow, somewhere.

But all this implies enlightened rulers and administrators. It may rightly be said of our present-day "leaders": "They rule others; themselves they cannot rule." Rulers of the new era must be in a position to rule because they rule themselves in the first instance. This can only be achieved when the individuality controls and guides the personality, when the soul shines through the body, when the body is not a prison-house of the soul but the Temple of a Living God, when the mind is not a slave of the senses or the master of the soul, but when man is the actor using mind and brain, senses and sense-organs. "Know the Self as the lord of the chariot; the body is the chariot; Pure Reason [Buddhi] is the driver and the mind is his rein; the senses are the horses; the objects which they perceive are the roads" (*Kathopanishad*, I, iii, 3-4). Then only will man cease to act as the protector of his own mortal self and worldly

belongings, as a fighter facing the struggle for existence; and will act as an immortal whom nothing can destroy, and as a brother to all.

For the successful discharge of obligations and duties, the supreme lesson of right activity must be imparted. To work as immortals we must work incessantly, skilfully, joyously, without attachment, regardless of the fruits of action. "Skill in action" is a different thing in the world today; in olden times it meant the recognition of the dignity of labour, the joy of execution, the beauty of expression, the consecration of work at the altar of human service, without expectation of any benefit to oneself. Such dispassionate workers alone can establish the true Brotherhood of Humanity.

Individuals make society. Society produces the State. Brothers can make Brotherhood; without the former we cannot build the latter. Where are the Brothers, those who will toil to save men's minds and bodies because they have saved their own souls? Brothers who will build the Society of Brotherhood and create the State where the Law of Brotherhood functions? Where are they? Let us ourselves resolve to be such Brothers.

IF the action of one reacts on the lives of all, and this is the true scientific idea, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practising in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real human solidarity, which lies at the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained. It is this action and interaction, this true brotherhood and sisterhood, in which each shall live for all and all for each, which is one of the fundamental Theosophical principles that every Theosophist should be bound, not only to teach, but to carry out in his or her individual life.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

WHAT IS THE ATOM?

IN *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 268) it is said that "each atom...*may reach through individual merits and efforts* that plane where it re-becomes the one unconditioned ALL." The question might arise: "How can an atom which is not individually self-conscious make efforts and earn merit?"

We learn that all life is conscious. What does this imply? What does being "conscious" mean? In "Psychic and Noetic Action" (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*) we read:

Occultism regards every atom as an "independent entity" and every cell as a "conscious unit." It explains that no sooner do such atoms group to form cells, than the latter become endowed with consciousness, each of its own kind, and with *free will to act within* the limits of law.

And in "Kosmic Mind" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 20*) H.P.B. states:

Occultism tells us that every atom...is a little universe in itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers.

It can be understood somewhat that a "cell" has such functions or powers, but what of the "atom"?

Every cell must of necessity have...a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own *psychic* and *noetic* action....The molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its "principles," the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell's activity and behaviour are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly, by the noetic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the *physical* cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms—being psychospiritual, *not physical units*—*act under laws of their own*....It is the higher mind alone which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells. ("Psychic and Noetic Action")

Turn to *The Secret Doctrine*. Atoms are called: "material molecules" and are informed "by their apperceptive monads."

Atoms fill the immensity of Space, and by their continuous vibration *are* that MOTION which keeps the wheels of Life perpetually going. It is that inner work that produces the natural phenomena called the correlation of Forces. Only, at the origin of every such "force," there stands the *conscious* guiding noumenon thereof—Angel or God, Spirit or Demon—ruling powers, yet the same. (*S.D.*, I, 633)

So, we have to see the atom—of whatever kind—as merely the "body" of some kind of intelligence. And intelligence, of whatever type and with whatever powers, has a kind of inherent choice of action, the limits of which are determined by the capacity of the form and the experience gained by the awakened or still sleeping consciousness within that form. How else can we understand the *living* Universe and the stages of progression of the awakening awareness? Without the possibility of diversity in action by the smallest units of life there would be stagnation, and never would the condition of self-conscious choice be possible anywhere in the Universe. What is memory? Through repeated experiences consciousness learns certain things; instinct becomes intelligence. Through repeated experiences intelligence becomes capable of being used by the higher Mind. And so on and on towards perfection.

But this is difficult to understand unless we look for the "soul" of each tiny speck and atom in space, each having its distinct mission throughout the life-cycle, and each in harmony with its fellow atoms and with the whole.

Reflection along this line brings us nearer to the conception of Universal Brotherhood, embracing *all* Nature. It makes us look differently on everything, from the smallest infusoria to the highest Dhyān Chohan; and we see more clearly that the countless lives that are the outbreathings of the One Life will one day become men like ourselves.

THE TWO PATHS

THE image of the Path, the Way, or Tao, is used in almost all religious and mystic traditions. Just as one reaches one's physical destination by taking steps on the path, so also spiritual progress is through a series of steps or stages. The *Gita* mentions three paths—the Path of Knowledge, of Action, and of Devotion. *Light on the Path* points out:

Seek out the way....Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. (pp. 4-5)

The Voice of the Silence speaks of two Paths:

The PATH is one, Disciple, yet in the end, two-fold....At one end—bliss immediate, and at the other—bliss deferred. Both are of merit the reward: the choice is thine....

The first Path is LIBERATION. But Path the second is —RENUNCIATION, and therefore called the "Path of Woe."
(pp. 44, 45)

This refers to a stage where the person walking the Spiritual Path reaches *Nirvana* and faces the choice of taking the Path of Liberation or the Path of Renunciation. One who chooses the Path of Liberation has been called *Pratyeka-Buddha*, a Bodhisattva who cares not for the suffering of humanity but only for his own bliss. *Pratyeka* means, literally, "each," or "one who works for himself"; *i.e.*, he becomes a Buddha for his own benefit. He as it were bows to himself. He enters *Nirvana* and "disappears from the sight and hearts of men." This has been called a kind of spiritual selfishness. One who chooses the Path of Liberation continues to enjoy peace and bliss till the end of that *Manvantara* or period of manifestation. Then at the beginning of a new *Manvantara*, he begins at a relatively lower point. One choosing the Path of Liberation has missed the point—the bliss is not quite as eternal as he thinks, and

compared to a renouncer, he is lacking in compassion.

Most religions talk only about *moksha* (liberation). The *Gita* too hints at it: "...and having attained to my state they are not born again even at the new evolution, nor are they disturbed at the time of general destruction," thus implying that in the case of the renouncer there is a continuity of consciousness. Theosophy speaks of the Path of Renunciation as the superior Path. This teaching is based on the testimony of a long line of Sages and Seers. There are Mahatmas so high that their existence is known only to those who are one step below them in the hierarchy.

The "mutable" must be sacrificed to the "permanent," says *The Voice of the Silence*. Scientists too recognize that, inspite of varying phenomena, nature's laws are permanent. There is one side of us which cares for the world, and the other side which cares for our own self. We must try to realize that the side that cares for the world and its suffering is the "permanent" side. There are things that change only over a long period of time, and so they *appear* permanent. This is relative permanence. That which is changeable in us has its own value; body and its health, for instance, need to be attended to; but when we crave for good food, good appearance, and pay undue attention to the body, then somewhere our value judgment has gone wrong. We have begun to consider the body as all-important. Sacrificing the mutable to the permanent implies giving up all those things which give rise to the separative tendency.

On the other hand taking the Path of Renunciation has been referred to as the Bodhisattva ideal. A Bodhisattva is, in hierarchy, less than a "perfect Buddha." But the Bodhisattva stops short of becoming a Buddha and liberating himself from the world, as his urge to help his suffering fellowmen is greater than the urge for his own bliss. He has been referred to as a *Nirmanakya*, one who remains in the earth's atmosphere so that he can be in contact with humanity. A *Nirmanakaya* suffers in the sense that he has helplessly to watch the people suffer. As he is the embodiment of the Law, and as humanity's suffering comes under the Law of Karma, there are limits to his help.

The Path of Renunciation has been described as the "Secret

Path" which "leads the Arhan to mental woe unspeakable; woe for the living Dead." Sometimes a particular way of life looks seemingly depressing, but it is not truly so. Mr. Judge points out in *Letters That Have Helped Me*:

You must always remember, when reading such things, that terms must be used which the reader will understand. Hence, speaking thus, it must be said that there are such cycles of woe—from our standpoint—just as the fact that I have no amusements, and nothing but work in the T.S., seems a great penance to those who like their pleasures. I, on the contrary, take pleasure and peace in the "self-denial," as they call it. Therefore, it must follow that he who enters the secret Path finds his peace and pleasure in endless work for ages for Humanity. But, of course, with his added sight and knowledge, he must always be seeing the self-inflicted miseries of men. (p. 116)

The Voice of the Silence speaks of "woe for the living dead" that the Arhat feels. A footnote points out that this refers to men ignorant of Esoteric truths and Wisdom. Life is worthwhile if we keep before us the ideal of spiritual truths. Jesus tells his disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (*Matthew*, V, 13). When we put the right amount of salt in a dish, it brings out the taste of the different ingredients. So a disciple has to perform his spiritual functions and influence others around him. But if disciples themselves forget the truths, then there is no hope for others. Spiritual life is not negation; we have to go on with our daily activities, but they must be guided by spiritual verities. When mundane activities are carried out in the light of Theosophy, there will not be a clash between one's duties and theosophical work. Spiritual life brings about integrity.

The "woe" that the renouncer feels is due to the fact that he cannot act against Karma and make people do the right things or walk the spiritual path. To care and yet not interfere, takes enormous patience. He helplessly watches humanity suffer. He is under the commandment, "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as

the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." One has to bear the consequences of one's actions. The *Nirmanakayas* can help humanity by showing how to meet the effects and bear the consequences of one's actions with a calm mind.

The Voice of the Silence also points out:

The "Secret Way" leads also to Paranirvanic bliss—but at the close of Kalpas without number; Nirvanas gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals.

"Kalpas without number" implies an extremely long period. Humanly speaking, choosing the Path of Renunciation is like losing *Nirvana* for ever. A renouncer's task is done when all people will have reached perfection. At the beginning of every *Manvantara*, the renouncer once again has the choice to enter *Nirvana* or to renounce its peace and bliss. On every such occasion he chooses to remain behind and help humanity. What about his own progress? The consciousness of these beings is very different. As described in *The Voice of the Silence*, "His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand."

One who remains in the invisible atmosphere of the earth, clothes himself in the *Nirmanakaya* body. It is an exceptionally purified kind of ethereal body. It is the permanent astral, a coherent body. One of the signs of spiritual development is that one is able to disentangle the astral body from the physical, at will.

Losing *Nirvana* implies losing its peace and bliss. We cannot imagine the bliss at that stage. For a child, being with its mother or getting an ice cream may mean bliss. For a renouncer, bliss means being able to remain in a state of meditation, rather than being subject to the tumult of the chaotic world. For him, to remain in contact with the world is like being a great musician who finds himself in the company of people who produce discordant notes.

Paranirvana represents the state where the renouncer has no contact or connection with anything and is merged in the one whole—a drop within the ocean and the ocean in the drop. A *Nirmanakaya* is in the *Paranirvanic* state only during *Pralaya*,

when he merges completely in the One Reality, as at that point there is no humanity with its suffering. But this is not annihilation. The individuality exists, but on our plane we cannot understand the nature of this individuality. One individual is different from the others in weight, height, colour, etc. But at that level, the individual exists in an unconditioned state.

"Returning *Nirvanees*" are the beings who come back with knowledge of the previous *Manvantara*. In *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 471) H.P.B. speaks of Avalokiteshwara, who is the first to appear at the beginning of a cycle and the last to withdraw. When a being comes first, he has the grasp of the whole archetypal plan. Archetypal ideas are the images on the higher levels of consciousness, which then get reflected on the lower plane. Just like when school is about to begin, teachers and principal come first to get things ready, and then at the time of closing they are the last to go, and they prepare an outline or seed plan for the school when it reopens.

Those who renounce become part of the "Guardian Wall" which protects humanity "from further and far greater misery and sorrow." They teach humanity how to meet the consequences of its actions. Collective Karma is like a big fund; people contribute to it and take from it. The presence of the *Nirmanakayas* in the invisible atmosphere of the earth keeps away the bad influences, and as they act impersonally, the effect of their good acts works for the benefit of all humanity.

"A SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD is he," says *The Voice of the Silence*. It is very rare to find the word "saviour" in Theosophical literature. This term is seldom used, so as not to give the misleading idea that we can sit tight and someone else can save us. "Saving" here does not mean saving from misery, but saving from compulsory involvement in the round of birth and death, *i.e.*, saving from being subject to our Karma and that of others. One is saved from being involved in this complicated chain of cause and effect. This is not running away, but learning to take shelter in that consciousness which is extricated from the ups and downs of life. When we face some calamity, we tend to identify ourselves with it. The fact is that when we are subject to ups and downs, only a fraction of our total

capacity comes into the picture; a larger part of ourselves is not involved.

The Fragment of "The Two Paths" in *The Voice of the Silence* ends with the words "OM VAJRAPANI HUM." Vajrapani is a Bodhisattva in Buddhist tradition, and the name means "one who holds the sceptre." According to Hindu mythology, the *vajra* or sceptre was used by Indra to overcome the demons of darkness. *Vajra* is also referred to as *Dorje*, and in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 59 fn.) we are told that it is "a weapon or instrument in the hands of some gods, and is regarded as having the same occult power of repelling evil influences by purifying the air as Ozone in chemistry." It is also a *Mudra*, a system of occult signs made with the fingers, which indicates that with a gesture of the hand the yogi has complete command over all lower influences.

When one begins to walk the spiritual path, the motive is to be free of suffering. As *Light on the Path* suggests, the soul first realizes the world to be like a cage, a hospital, a prison, all false and fleeting. The treading of the path begins with dissatisfaction with the world, but it need not end with walking away from it. In the end, upon reaching *Nirvana*, there is a grand and final choice—of taking the Path of Liberation, which is described as an "exalted and glorious selfishness," or choosing the Path of Renunciation. The disciple is asked to be of clean heart before he starts the journey. When we try to live the spiritual life, the desire for the fruits of action must be abandoned. We need to attempt this right at the beginning of the journey, for as we advance, we will possess more powers and then it will be more difficult to give up attachment to the fruits of our actions. To wait till some later day is like saying that I will first be a millionaire and then give up wealth.

THE created world is but a parenthesis in eternity.

—SIR THOMAS BROWNE

ELIMINATING MENTAL AFFLICTIONS

IN Book II of the *Yoga Aphorisms*, entitled "Means of Concentration," Patanjali introduces "the afflictions which arise in the disciple." No doubt they affect also ordinary men in varying degrees, but Patanjali is dealing with them here as they affect the disciple, *i.e.*, one who has seriously set himself to overcoming his lower nature and making it fit to express the powers of the higher, under the guidance of a qualified spiritual teacher. The culture of concentration forms an important part of that effort and Patanjali, with the high sense of responsibility of the true spiritual teacher, is offering help to true aspirants in achieving it. He is not interested in helping worldly-minded and unscrupulous persons to increase their power to prey upon their fellows; hence this specifying reference, so similar to the opening verse of *Light on the Path*: "These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them."

The "five afflictions" are: "Ignorance, Egoism, Desire, Aversion, and a tenacious wish for existence upon the earth." Ignorance is called the "field of origin" of the others, it being "the notion that the non-eternal, the impure, the evil and that which is not soul are, severally, eternal, pure, good and soul."

Egoism is "the identifying of the power that sees with the power of seeing." The soul being the Perceiver, "vision itself, pure and simple," "unmodified," and looking directly on ideas, egoism is the confounding of the soul, the real knower and experiencer, with its instruments of body or mind.

The naming of Egoism so early among the afflictions of the would be Yogi points to the importance of motive in seeking to develop latent powers. For the dangers of the "lower *Iddhi*" or *Siddhis*, referred to in the first verse of *The Voice of the Silence*, are very real. The path that leads to the development of abnormal powers brings one very early to a parting of the ways. H.P.B. has warned in her article, "Practical Occultism," that

it is the motive, *and the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest

tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it.

Shall the warning frighten us out of the idea of ever acquiring concentration and the potentially beneficent powers to which it leads? No; if our conscience is clear and we are sure of the purity and altruism of our motive, now and as we proceed, we can with confidence apply Patanjali's rules if we have properly grasped them. Mr. Judge has written:

...no earnest one who feels himself absolutely called to work persistently to the highest planes of development for the good of humanity, and not for his own, need fear aught that heaven or hell holds.

Desire, the dwelling upon pleasure, and Aversion, the dwelling upon pain, are the next two afflictions. "Addiction to objects of sense" gets strengthened by desire and aversion, but they have a wider field of action. The universe, Krishna declares, "is surrounded by this passion...the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased." He calls upon Arjuna to restrain his senses at the very outset and to "conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment."

The complete overcoming of desire and aversion is implicit in the "Resignation to the Supreme Soul," which, in the first verse in Book II, Patanjali includes in "the practical part of Concentration." Mr. Judge defines this resignation, in his note on that verse, as "consigning to the Divine, or the Supreme Soul, all one's works, without interest in their results." This, surely, is none other than the implication of Krishna's repeated emphasis in the *Bhagavad-Gita* on freedom from attachment to the fruits of action, as one quotation out of many on the subject will show. Krishna says:

Those who have spiritual discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire....He abandoneth the desire to see a reward for his actions, is free, contented, and upon

nothing dependeth.he is not solicitous of results...(IV, 19-21)

In other words, as Mr. Judge writes in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (pp. 45-6):

...once resign and all is possible....We must cultivate complete resignation to the Law, the expression and operation of which is seen in the circumstances of life and the ebb and flow of our inner being.

The only way to learn from the passing shows of life, Mr. Judge tells us, is "through the heart's resignation; for, when we become in heart completely poor, we at once are the treasurers and disbursers of enormous riches."

The last of the five afflictions, "a tenacious wish for existence upon the earth," a specialized expression of *Kama* or desire, is explained by Patanjali as inherent in all sentient beings and reproducing itself through all incarnations. This powerful tendency, Mr. Judge explains, helps to cause incarnations, and reproduces itself in each, acting through the physical basis common to all sentient beings. For, he says, it is only through manifesting on the material plane that the spiritual monads can attain their development. Elsewhere he writes, "Complete knowledge must be attained in the triune man: body, soul, and spirit."

All these afflictions are to be evaded, when subtle, by producing "an antagonistic mental state," *e.g.*, seeking knowledge to overcome ignorance, cultivating altruistic thoughts to starve out the overweening sense of personality, and resignation to overcome aversion and desire, while trying to act for and as the Self of all creatures to weaken the crude wish to live. When the "afflictions" become too persistent, Patanjali's prescription for getting rid of them is meditation.

WHAT are obstacles to the lower creatures are opportunities to the higher life of man.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

PITFALLS ON THE WAY

"THOU art the Way and the Wayfarer!" "Thou must become the Path!" These are the injunctions given to the traveller on the Path of Self-realization. Students of Theosophy especially would do well to remember them because they have to be wary of the pitfalls on the way—the inner way. These come in many forms and many ways. The lower nature is insidious and subtle in its expression, and can assume many forms. When the traveller becomes completely enmeshed in the net of illusions and has felt for a while the sensation of pleasure, he suddenly experiences a fall, and the fall is all the more hurtful because he cannot see the reason for it; and he is, therefore, confused and shattered. He usually blames a neighbour or a friend or an associate for his downfall. It is at this time that self-examination becomes necessary. Sincere self-examination reveals that none is to be blamed except one's own personality.

The most common obstacle that the student of Theosophy encounters is self-importance, the feeling of "Behold, I know!" He has mastered the tenets of Theosophy. He has come to know intellectually the esoteric truths. He has knowledge of the right and the wrong of actions. He has striven to live the life, to the best of his ability, and knows that he has traversed some distance. It is now that the danger arises. He pauses for a while on the difficult path and looks around. He sees co-travellers struggling. The pathways are many and he is tempted to look over the fence and view the terrain of his neighbour. What he sees shocks him: ill-kept gardens, wrong ways of work, stupidity, lethargy and other shortcomings that are accepted as a part of human nature. Revolt grips him and he hastens to condemn and to attempt to correct the failings of other men. He finds fault with them and feels that, as he knows the Truth, he has a right to be their guardian. He strives to correct other men, not with the compassionate understanding that comes only with the full realization of the heart doctrine, but with the rod of a policeman who keeps guard. He hastens to sit in judgment over others and thinks he can reform them in the light of the knowledge he has acquired and by virtue of the distance he has traversed on the path,

paying scant attention to the Theosophical injunction and advice: "Judge not, speak little, love much, and work."

He judges his neighbours, and speech becomes necessary for the incessant pointing out of other people's faults, in an effort to reform them; love diminishes at the magnitude of their vices that go unbridled; and work becomes that of condemning and correcting others and trying to do their duties better than they, in order to show them the right path. And in all this, the student loses sight of his own goal and his own path; his progress is retarded, and he gets enmeshed in his own feelings of wrath and anger.

It is important for us, therefore, to understand that we have no right to look over other people's fences and do other people's duties while we have our own path to travel and our own duties to perform. If we fix our eyes upon our own next step and tread the way without looking around, we may travel in peace and comfort. Everyone struggling to go forward has a way of his own, and it is not right for a fellow traveller to try to weed out another's garden *unless he is called upon to do so*.

Compassionate understanding comes when one has looked into the hearts of men wisely and fully. Until then no one has a right to reform other men, because such reform will not bear fruit unless accompanied by the tolerance and love that spring from self-knowledge.

A THOUGHT of hatred does more harm than a blow, for a bruise is swiftly healed, but the power of thought is terrible, and working as it does in finer matter has more powerful results. We swim in a sea of thought, and every thought is purifying or making fouler still that sea.

—CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A spate of observations made by molecular biologists now sequencing DNA as part of the human genome project, suggest that there is a lot more to heredity than DNA. The hitherto accepted theory that everything comes from our genes, and genes come from our parents, is now being questioned. There are tantalizing hints that we inherit something else as well, says Gail Vines in *New Scientist*:

Just as cells inherit genes, they also inherit a set of instructions that tell the genes when to become active, in which tissue and to what extent. This much is uncontroversial. Without this "epigenetic" instruction manual, multicellular organisms would be impossible. Every cell, whether it's a liver cell or a skin cell, inherits exactly the same set of genes, and it is the manual, which has different instructions for different cell types, that allows the cell to develop its distinctive identity.

Established theory has it that the instruction manual is wiped clean during the formation of sperm and egg cells, ensuring that all genes are equally available, until the embryo starts to develop specific tissues. But outlandish evidence now suggests that changes in the epigenetic instruction manual can sometimes be passed from parent to offspring....

Molecular biologists have created the misleading impression that genes alone run the show. The constant emphasis on the power of genes, says Wolf Reik [a molecular biologist], has created "a 20th-century form of fatalistic predestination," in which people believe they are the product of their genes, nothing more, nothing less. Even geneticists, he says, have lost sight of the huge range of environmental factors that can change a gene's activity, ranging from an adult's diet to certain high-tech fertility treatments. For those reasons, some geneticists are calling for a new definition of the gene, based on not only its DNA sequence, but also its epigenetic instruction manual—the degree of methylation, for example....

Marcus Pembrey...speculates that the inheritance of epigenetic factors which control a few select genes may have enabled human populations to regulate the growth of individuals

according to food availability. Food shortage could generate physiological responses in adults, say, a change in hormone levels, that influence the activity of key growth genes. This could then be passed on to their offspring by varying the genes' methylation....

"What we can see now is the tip of the iceberg," says Marilyn Monk, a molecular embryologist and geneticist....As the human genome project rushes to completion, the really interesting insights are going to come not from the sequences...but "from working out how genes are controlled."

There is more to heredity than its physical mechanism. It is, however, significant that scientists are coming round to the view that environmental factors and diet can alter a gene's activity. Theosophy agrees that food is an important vehicle or basis of heredity. The very process of reincarnation by which the Ego passes from the disembodied to the embodied state is connected with food. Mr. Judge mentioned that the germs of human reproduction must come from food taken by the parents. And millennia ago the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, tracing the soul's return in symbolic language, pointed to the same truth:

Having become mist, he becomes a cloud, having become a cloud, he rains down. Then he is born as rice and corn, herbs and trees, sesamum and beans. From thence the escape is beset with most difficulties. For whoever the persons may be that eat the food, and beget offspring, he henceforth becomes like unto them. (V, 10, 6)

People often talk about "fear of the unknown" during times of transition and turmoil. Rapid changes create great uncertainties about the future. When people face life's uncertainties, their fear inhibits them from personal development and growth.

Though we cannot change the future or even know in advance what it holds in store, yet we can change our own attitude towards it and thus help ourselves, writes Wallace Wilkins in *The Futurist*:

By altering how you think about your uncertainties, you can

free yourself from many inhibitions and limitations....

Actually, there cannot be a fear of the unknown, because the unknown is devoid of information. The unknown is neither positive nor negative. It is neither frightening nor elating....The unknown is like a blank screen at a movie theater. A blank screen contains no information. There is nothing positive or negative, frightening or exhilarating about a blank screen....

Screens do not create emotional experiences at theaters, but images projected onto the screen do elicit emotions. If a horror movie is projected onto a screen, you will be frightened. If tragic scenes are shown, you will be saddened. If comical scenes are displayed on the screen, you will laugh with delight. The power to create emotions is not in the screen, but in the projections onto the screen.

Devoid of information, the unknown has no more power to create your emotions and behaviours than a blank movie screen. Then what causes people to fear when they face the unknown?

Here's how it works: We create our own fears by projecting our own frightful images, anticipations, beliefs, and thoughts onto the blank screen of the unknown. Every time you project a threatening or catastrophic image onto the unknown, you will be frightened....Like a blank screen, the unknown gives you great freedom. It permits you to fill it with whatever is useful to you. Instead of projecting frightful, inhibiting scenes onto the unknown, you can project upbeat, "can-do" scenes.

This is scenario planning on a personal level. Each individual has the power to replace fear with confidence and optimism. With practice, your positive projections can engage and inspire you each time you encounter another unknown....Fill this unknown with only positive anticipations.

Our new thinking habit will bring substantial benefits to us.

Who were the original Americans? The old theory is that they were East Asians of Mongoloid stock who trekked across the Bering Strait. But new finds, say the archaeologists, are rewriting American prehistory. Some recently found skeletons bear no

resemblance either to today's Native Americans or to the Asians who were believed to be their ancestors and thus, supposedly, the original Americans. The picture that emerges is that early America was a mosaic of cultures and peoples who came both by land and by sea from several regions of Asia and even from Europe. *Newsweek* (June 7) features the raging debate as to who got there first:

The emerging answer suggests that they were not Asians of Mongoloid stock who crossed a land bridge into Alaska 11,500 years ago, as the textbooks say, but different ethnic groups, from places very different from what scientists thought even a few years ago. What's more, stone tools, hearths and remains of dwellings unearthed from Peru to South Carolina suggest that Stone Age America was a pretty crowded place for a land that was supposed to be empty until those Asians followed herds of big game from Siberia into Alaska. A far different chronicle of the First Americans is therefore emerging from the clash of theories and discoveries that one anthropologist calls "skull wars." According to the evidence of stones and bones, long before Ellis Island opened its doors America was a veritable Rainbow Coalition of ethnic types, peopled by southern Asians, East Asians—and even, perhaps, Ice Age Europeans.... "It's very clear to me," says anthropologist Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian Institution, "that we are looking at multiple migrations through a very long time period—migrations of many different peoples of many different ethnic origins."...

The possibility that today's Native Americans are not the descendants of the original Americans is not going down easily.... "We are rewriting the textbooks on the First Americans," says Stanford. The new edition will show that "the peopling of America was never as simple as simple-minded paradigms said." ...It is thousands of years older than we thought—home to settlers so diverse that it was, even millenniums ago, the world's melting pot.

What is missed out by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and others engaged in the study of ancient lands and peoples is the fact that the geography of our globe was then very different from

what it is now. As stated by H.P.B. in "Notes on 'A Land of Mystery'" (*The Theosophist*, August 1880):

We never pretended to suggest new theories for the formation of oceans. The latter may have been where they now are since the time of their first appearance, and yet whole continents been broken into fragments partially engulfed, and left innumerable islands, as seems the case with the submerged Atlantis. What we meant was that, at some pre-historic time and long after the globe teemed with civilized nations, Asia, America and perhaps Europe were parts of one vast continental formation, whether united by such narrow strips of land as evidently once existed where now is Behring Strait (which connects the North Pacific and Arctic Oceans and has a depth of hardly more than twenty to twenty-five fathoms), or by larger stretches of land....

We have as evidence the most ancient traditions of various and widely-separated peoples—legends in India, in ancient Greece, Madagascar, Sumatra, Java, and all the principal isles of Polynesia, as well as those of both Americas. Among savages, as in the traditions of the richest literature in the world—the Sanskrit literature of India—there is an agreement in saying that, ages ago, there existed in the Pacific Ocean a large continent which, by a geological upheaval, was engulfed by the sea. And it is our firm belief—held, of course, subject to correction—that most, if not all of the islands from the Malayan Archipelago to Polynesia, are fragments of that once immense submerged continent. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, August 1943)

Far from being the "New World" as commonly believed, America is older than Europe (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 407 fn.). It was peopled during the palmy days of Atlantis, the traditions of whose high civilization the American settlers would most naturally have brought with them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the surviving antiquities of the American continents far surpass in grandeur and in extent the early European records that have come down to us.

The new *Sanctuary Asia* is an updated and attractive natural

history and wildlife magazine committed to promoting environment awareness and education in a world increasingly becoming conscious and ashamed of the deteriorating environment of Mother Earth. In the June issue, Bittu Sahgal writes editorially on "The Nature of the Beast":

There is something quite remarkable about the manner in which the most powerful humans view nature. Perhaps threatened by its supposed immutability, they seem driven with the idea of altering, rearranging, and boxing it to fit their own vision of life and development. In the end, nature does what nature does best...it subdues the disobedient. But not, lamentably, before it takes a very vicious toll of millions who played no hand at all in transgressing its limits.

True, we have the power to block the flow of the mighty Narmada. We also have the means to turn millions of years of evolution into plywood tea boxes. And we can indeed invoke the miracles of science to purify infinitesimal quantities of Tungabhadra river water after poisoning it with organochlorines. What is more, we can now stock "frozen zoos" full of the genetic raw materials from which tigers, elephants, monkeys, rhinos and even human beings could materialize on some distant day.

It is in the nature of the beast to dream. But, with every passing day, the signals being sent to us by nature are getting less and less tolerant. Ironically, that we persistently choose to ignore such signals is as good a sign of our trust in nature as it is of our disrespect for it....

A minority that demonstrates a somewhat more healthy respect for nature has been trying, often with surprising success, to cajole, oppose and coerce the system to protect the ecological foundation of millions....But this, in the ultimate analysis, is a social problem. Time will prove that our ecological crisis requires social solutions born of a multitude of voices communicating power, will and wisdom.

For now, however, as a chronicler of our times, I must reluctantly report that our environmental voices are too few, and even among these...most are trapped in the silken web of

unsustainable lifestyles...which themselves are the root of most environmental destruction. We are, in other words, the problem we wish to solve.

A study presented at the conference of the British Psychological Society reveals that chimpanzees share key psychological traits with humans. This will give added weight to the growing international movement demanding "human rights" for the great apes.

The Sunday Times (London) reports on recent findings. Dr. Lindsay Murray of University College, Chester, spent 1,000 hours studying 59 chimpanzees at several zoos. Using interviews with keepers and drawing on her own observations, she found that the chimps could be graded on personality factors, including their openness to experience, conscientiousness, degree of extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism—the same categories used by psychologists to define human personality. Analysis of the results provided quantifiable proof that each chimp has its own personality and a unique combination of defining traits. "This is another weapon in the battle to give them better conditions and rights," says Murray.

Niall Ormerod who has been in charge of the chimps at Chester zoo for 25 years says: "Other animals may have a certain temperament, but chimps definitely have personalities and moods like children." A two-year-old chimp, it has been observed, is much more intelligent than a child at the same age.

Dr. Jim Anderson, senior lecturer in psychology at Stirling University and a leading expert on primate behaviour, has carried out extensive research on chimpanzees' powers of self-recognition. Unlike almost all other animals, if presented with a mirror, a chimp will use it to examine itself, looking at its teeth, for example. This has been taken as important evidence of the kind of self-awareness previously thought unique to man.

"It has been shown that chimpanzees have complicated emotional lives and can suffer extreme depression if they are

bereaved," Anderson said. "There seems to be a great deal of similarity between humans and chimps. The closer to us they are seen to be genetically, biologically and psychologically, must help the case that they need better rights."

New Zealand's parliament is debating a bill that would give chimps the equivalent of basic human rights. If passed, the bill would give the great apes, which includes chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans, the fundamental right to life and the right not to suffer cruel or degrading treatment. The law would allow individuals to use the courts to protect apes they believe are being mistreated. Campaigners for the Great Ape Project, a pressure group behind rights for the apes, hope the New Zealand bill will set a precedent which other countries will follow.

The voices raised against experiments on animals in research laboratories are bearing fruit and alternatives are being sought. Ivar Giaever, a Nobel Prizewinning biophysicist, and Charlie Kees at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, have developed the Electric Cell-Substrate Impedance Sensing (ECIS) machine, which uses electricity to study complex cell behaviour. The new electric biosensor yields detailed results and an unprecedented level of sensitivity. Data readings can be taken as often as every quarter second to follow a cell's behaviour movements. The implication of this discovery is that it offers a noninvasive technique for testing animal cells allowing researchers to examine and measure the activity of live cells over time, while eliminating the need to carry out tests on live animals. (*Sanctuary Asia*, June 1999)
