

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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"THOU ART THAT"

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H.P.B. tells us in *The Key to Theosophy*: "Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his *inner Ego* with...Atma, the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF...the God *above*, more than within, us." (p. 173)

What is the inner or higher "Ego"? Is it not Manas, the Fifth Principle, the permanent Individuality or the reincarnating Ego? It is this Manas that has to saturate itself with the Higher Self, the ray of the One Self reflected in us. But Manas *per se* cannot do so except through the instrumentality of the lower, personal ego, or lower Manas combined with Kama and operating through the physical body and its phantom or "double."

To try to understand this, we need to remember that there is a relationship between the imperishable Manas and its vehicles, and between Manas and Buddhi, the vehicle of Atma or Spirit. Manas is the conscious aspect of Atma-Buddhi and the aim of evolution is to make Manas fully conscious of Atma through the vehicle of Buddhi. The words from the *Key* quoted above refer to the same point: the inner Ego (Manas) has to be saturated with Atma, the Higher Self, the inseparable ray of the Universal and One Self. And this has to be done during life, with the aid of the personal Ego.

How can we, while functioning as personalities, achieve this high goal? What makes it possible for us to achieve it is the fact that

in Manas, Buddhi lies latent. And Buddhi can be activated through the power of the Will, the force of Spirit in action.

Manas is, therefore, our starting point and we need to distinguish between it and the vehicle through which it works, through which it "sees" and acts. Then follows the second stage, which is to control the vehicles so that they become the instruments of our thought, will and action, instead of being the rulers of the Manas.

We must learn, therefore, what our vehicles are: Buddhi is the vehicle of Atma or Spirit. Manas becomes the vehicle of Atma-Buddhi as it allows the latter to shine through itself. The lower Manas can be said to be the vehicle of the higher Manas; and between the two Manases there is the bridge called *Antahkarana*. Kama is the vehicle of lower Manas. Prana or Life-Energy is the vehicle of Kama. The astral body is the vehicle of Prana. The physical body is the vehicle of the astral body.

Each of these vehicles has its usefulness. They are to be trained and purified so that each becomes not only a fit vehicle of the principle immediately above, but of the spiritual essence itself.

So what are we? We often say that "I am the Ego," implying that it controls the other constituents of our make-up, but we do not reflect sufficiently on the relationship of the Ego to the Higher Self. It might help us, therefore, to note the line of descent from the One, the Atman, to man, looking at man as the representative of that One on the material planes; for the highest looks through the eyes of the lowest, we are told.

Let us then define our terms first: The Higher Self is the Master within, "the equivalent of Avalokitesvara [the onlooking Lord], and the same as Adi-Buddha...Christos of the ancient Gnostics." He is the Father in Heaven; the Supreme Divine Spirit which overshadows man; the crown of the upper spiritual Triad in man, the Atman.

Students of Theosophy often speak of Higher Manas as if they knew what it is, but how many know what its real nature and powers are? By study and contemplation, and above all by application, *i.e.*, by correct observance of the rules of Theosophic discipline, we have to assimilate the Higher Ego or Manas. It is through the lower

manasic ego, purified of earthly dross and extricated from Kama, that we begin to know ourselves as the Higher Manasic Ego. Having known ourselves as God incarnate, we are in a position to know our Avalokitesvara, our Father in Heaven. We have to assimilate the divine Individuality while in this animal shell.

Let us now try to see the descent from the highest to the lowest. Says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 572):

The divine, purely Adi-Buddhic *monad* manifests as the universal Buddhi (the *Mahabuddhi* or Mahat in Hindu philosophies), the spiritual, omniscient and omnipotent root of divine intelligence, the highest *anima mundi* or the Logos. *This descends*"like a flame spreading from the eternal Fire, immovable, without increase or decrease, ever the same to the end" of the cycle of existence, and becomes universal life on the Mundane Plane. From this Plane of *conscious* Life shoot out, like seven fiery tongues, the Sons of Light, (the *Logoi* of Life); then the Dhyani-Buddhas of contemplation, the concrete forms of their formless Fathers—the Seven Sons of Light, *still themselves*, to whom may be applied the Brahmanical mystic phrase: "Thou art 'THAT'—*Brahm.*" It is from these Dhyani-Buddhas that emanate their *chhayas* (Shadows), the Bodhisattvas of the celestial realms, the prototypes of the *super-terrestrial* Bodhisattvas, and of the terrestrial Buddhas, and finally of men.

What does "Thou art THAT" mean? It means that "we," from whatever angle of vision we approach ourselves, came in a direct line from one of the Dhyani-Buddhas of Contemplation, one of the Seven Sons of Light. Each of us is, in fact, a Buddha; what we are aiming at is *conscious awareness* of this fact.

The "Seven Sons of Light" or Dhyani-Buddhas are also called "Stars." We are told that the Star under which a human Entity is born will remain its Star throughout the whole cycle of its incarnations in one Manvantara. We learn also that "the 'triads' born under the same Parent-planet, or rather the *radiations* of one and the same Planetary Spirit (Dhyani Buddha) are, in all their after-lives and rebirths, sister, or 'twin-souls,' on this Earth." (*S.D.*, I, 574)

Meditation along these lines will bring closer the day when we

shall have an intuitional perception that we are "the vehicle of the manifested Avalokitesvara or Divine Atman (Spirit)." Looking at the line of descent from the highest to the man-stage, brings a calm for the ruffled spirit, but there is another requisite: absence of desire—absence of desire for lower things; absence of desire for progress. We need to be "happy and content in the Self through the Self." The Self works through us; we have to help It to so work.

We need to see the inwardness of such statements as: "I and my Father are one"; or, "As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body." In the Catechism, the Master is made to ask the pupil:

"Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?"

"I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it."

"Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?"

"It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, 'Thy Soul and My Soul.'"

The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyan Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptation of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science. (*S.D.*, I, 120)

THE very first step is to rise from considering the mere outside delusive environment, knowing it to be the result of past lives, the fruition of Karma done, and say with Uddalaka in speaking to his son:

"All this Universe has the Deity for its life. That Deity is the Truth. He is the Universal Soul. He Thou art, O Svetaketu!"

—W. Q. JUDGE

SELF-PREPARATION

MEN and women in the majority are at present familiar with two planes of being. The boor and the savage are intensely active on the plane of material existence. Their untrained minds are practically dormant. The animal in them is active, but that animal has not yet got the malevolence and rancour which the power of the captive mind alone can provide. The sophisticated and the learned live their lives on the plane of desires, of likes and dislikes, of affinities and antipathies. But, for the most part, they turn these desires towards the earthly for their gratification and outlet. It thus happens that the mind allies itself with the human animal and lends to it its powers of imagination, fascination and fantasy.

To the boor, ethics are meaningless. They hold no message for him. To one lost to cravings, they are irksome impositions enforced by an effete society. To the worldly pious, they have a value. They hug ethics to themselves, ostensibly display them before others, and on the strength of that possession lay claim to be the chosen few of God. They parade their piety and virtue, and take care to see that others do not forget their eminence. Virtue in them is but the negation of the grosser forms of vice. They have no eyes to see that their very claim to exclusiveness is of the nature of vice which being the more subtle is for that reason the more dangerous.

So goes the world, swaying between tears and laughter—a prey to all things that go to form the attachments and revulsions of men and women. There are only the very few who can see the perils of goodness, love and harmlessness in their unimpeded motion when they place the person in his true setting of a universal brotherhood that excludes no unit of consciousness. The power of an unchained virtue would be insignificant if it did not enable him to encounter without attachment or revulsion all men, places and events—foul and clean alike.

True religion is the science of the laws that govern the vaster life. It is the art that makes one live, not as an individual unit fighting for its survival, but as one in a vast and numberless throng that has a date with destiny. For, our destiny is not a life or even lives. It is the

achieving of a consciousness which is immeasurably higher than the consciousness of the good man when compared to that of the savage or of one steeped in evil. Many there have been who have conceived that this destiny is for the individual as a unit and that once he has attained it, he pulls himself out of the herd and leaves it to work out its own salvation. Such thinking but leaves a human gloss on destiny and drags it down from its sublime elevation. If the individual achieves his goal, he but shifts his duty of achieving his own destiny to the larger one of helping others to achieve theirs. He dare not isolate himself in a capsule, however lasting, and separate the drop from the ocean. The nature of an ubiquitous divinity forbids it.

If the aspirant is to use the physical, the intellectual and the psychic only as instruments for service and not of pleasure, how does he set about the task? Life itself should be able to provide an answer. It should be evident to the perceptive that the lure of the physical loses its hold as soon as the unassuaged thirst of desire predominates. Kings have been known to barter away their kingdoms for the attainment of some one dominant emotion. Desire in its turn will be found to fail of attraction the moment it is brought under the cold analytical scrutiny of the intellect. But it is not the coldness of intellect that holds the golden key. For, mere intellect is yet another instrument which serves but a limited purpose. Life demonstrates to us that the coldness of intellect leads the person to a crass selfishness which seeks to gain its own ends and conceives of a world that turns round himself. The results of scientific research of this as of the preceding century show how scant have been the efforts of men and women to learn to elevate the moral tone of the race. The discoveries on which modern science preens itself tend towards a satisfying of one's lower urges and thus lead to a somnolence of the soul. The dangers of humanity slipping back into the abyss of depravity are indeed great today.

Without the aid of intellect and intelligent behaviour, human passions have the tendency to run riot. So, too, with the intellect. Unless it is harnessed and led by the diviner part of man, it tends to live only amid the perishable and evanescent aspects of nature.

Intellect has to rise to its sublimation in holiness, has to seek its efflorescence in the adoration of that which it by itself will never evaluate to the full unless it loses its identity in a conjunction and close union with the highest. Aspiration and devotion soar far above the tardy processes of intellectual reasoning. The self-sacrificing love that finds its own felicity in the torture it embraces in order that the loved one is protected, laughs at reason and rejects its whisperings of caution and danger. The martyr mounts the faggot because he reverences the ideal to such an extent that even death by slow torture cannot force him to debase it.

In all ages, men and women have intuitionally recognized the presence of the Divine and have built systems round its shadow. Prayer—that opiate of the Soul—postulates an outside agency which has to be petitioned and which is supposed to dispense boons and relieve pain. Except for the very few, the common throng has believed this agency to be an extraneous potency that dominates men, the elements and all nature, and dispenses glory or gloom according to its likes. Thus we have warring religions, each claiming the same divine origin. We also have the singular phenomenon of Christian nations at war, each calling upon the same god to exterminate the other. Cold reason must sooner or later erase from the mind the possibility of there being such an extraneous god. But this refuting of a wrong theory will not by itself lead to a true concept of Deity. An infinite Deity that resides in each atom is a logical necessity. Can man soar beyond reason and sense It in its manifold divine ways?

Mystics have gone on record that the divine light exists and shines in all things, although in all it does not shine forth equally. We have glimpses of it when we see that by it "the slayer's knife did stab himself; the unjust judge hath lost his own defender; the false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief and spoiler rob, to render." We see it in its intricate workings in the annals of the nations; the lives of the martyrs as of the renegades; the history of bigotry on the one hand and of enlightenment on the other. What hinders? The darkness hinders—the refusal to turn the face towards the light as it shines and glitters in all beings and all things. We of the age of a

science steeped in materiality can still experiment with life so that we may sense its quintessence and in the success of our research find that which in the ultimate must ever remain incommunicable save to those who rise to that high plane where communication becomes possible.

Observing life from this side of intellect, we find several clues emerging from existence as we know it. The perpetual whirl within the atom; the geometric formation of atom groups within the elements; the incredibly beautiful growth from embryo to maturity that all composite life portrays; the silent, unseen movement that in men, nations and civilizations weaves from within the subject the fabric of moral retribution—all these demonstrate to us that within the smallest of the small as within the mighty and the grandiose there exists an indestructible, intelligent and designing force that can weigh feathers and that works with equal felicity in the mollusc and in man, in the star-dust and in the ocean bed, in the tortuous recesses of man's degenerate brain as in the golden casket of him who is high in holiness. It is this vision that has to be made a backdrop to all human effort and has to be consciously preserved through good and evil circumstances.

If by constant practice the aspirant is able to switch himself from the plane of terrestrial attractions to that of noble desires, and from thence to that of the higher intellect, he can with assiduity of devotion rise from the plane of intellect to that of intuition. However, he has to understand that the old norms can no longer apply. He has to venture into a new stratum of existence where neither the instruments nor the rules of the lower planes can have any application. It is as though he is preparing to set out across uncharted seas to unfamiliar bourns hinted at in myth and song, allegorized and poetized, yet never particularized save in the veiled language that the Wise Ones use. To prepare himself for the pilgrimage, the devotee will have to assemble his luggage. He will no doubt discover that in his journey through life he has acquired, sometimes by heredity, oftentimes by choice, things that he has prized and hugged to himself—valued baubles that he has watched over and painstakingly preserved, but that he must leave behind as

burdensome and of no value if he is to proceed on his journey. It sometimes happens that attachment to these non-valuable possessions (goods, relations, friends) proves too strong for him and the journey is abandoned no sooner it is begun. In some cases, the journey is undertaken in all solemnity and then suddenly the old attachment exerts its pull in midstream. If the moral stamina has not been built up, the pilgrim retraces his steps and seeks to rehabilitate himself in his own sight by shouting that there is no distant bourn but a vast and mocking sea.

Can the aspirant face his desires unflinchingly and, analysing their hold on himself, break away from them completely? Strange as it may seem, the glamour of attachment is so great that he may not list the most insidiously tenuous of his attachments as one worthy of a penetrating analysis. In his blindness, he may even list it as indispensable to his pilgrimage. Religious fanatics, self-styled crusaders and murderers who created the Inquisition are but a few typical examples of men who have smeared the pages of history. Ambition, the love of comfort, the acquiring or retaining of position, rank and reputation, are as destructive of soul-effort as are the grosser appetites of men. To take these up for scrutiny as they appear in daily living, to admit to oneself that these have found a lodgement in one's make-up, to recognize their presence and to administer the antidote, is a long and arduous process. This is so because the atoms or lives that go to form one's physical, astral, psychic and manasic sheaths bear deep the stamp and impress of these qualities. These lives have to be purged and others brought in which are congenial to the new purpose. New magnetic affinities have to be created, and this can only be done by the arousal of a WILL that is indomitable and that gives strength to the aspirant to refuse to touch anything that is antagonistic to the determined purpose. This first step is negative, yet is important, because it clears the place for the erection of the temple. However, being negative, by itself it is powerless to build. And yet, how difficult is that step!

As the work of removing the debris goes on apace, the builder has to be active to search for his building materials and bring them to the construction site. Some of the materials can be obtained only

by Herculean efforts during which life itself may seem to hang in the balance. No effort can be by-passed, lest the building be left unfinished and the temple become a mausoleum in which lie buried the lop-sided efforts of the frustrated soul. This search for materials from secret and far distant places is symbolized by the aspirant's voluntary exile from his usual haunts. He may remain where he has always been, his home, occupation and surroundings may be the same, and yet he is far away on other planes and different atmospheres, seeking for materials and tools not obtainable in the uncongenial terrestrial atmosphere. When his efforts have progressed to some extent, he gets confirmed in his faith. He now seeks more and more to withdraw himself in adoration of a flame which he does not see. In his moments of adoration, he gains strength, guidance and certitude of knowledge. He gets it because it is his inheritance which is released to him as soon as he lays claim to his ancient lineage. Before the high altar of his inner being, he is safe. But if he has reaped his peace in the strength of his great effort, he is called upon to sow also. When he acts on the terrestrial plane, it becomes his duty to pass on his strength and peace to those who struggle in profound gloom. He has to enter the plane of matter to transmit his gospel and at the same time to keep away the forces of darkness that seek to drag him from his high estate. His own salvation and the salvation of those around him lies in his seeking refuge at all available times in that grotto where the flame burns with steady light. He has so to saturate himself in that Light that earthly darkness does not have the power to surround and lay siege to it.

This adoration of the Inner God has to be absolute. It cannot be shared even with gods and exalted beings. It is profoundly true that the finite can have no relation with the infinite and yet human consciousness can reach out to that which is beyond time and circumstance, and, grafting itself on the tree of life eternal, see itself not as a number distinct and isolated from other numbers but as the veritable origin and source of these.

ASCETICISM—FALSE AND TRUE

"LIGHT and darkness are the world's eternal ways," says the *Gita*. In the sphere of knowledge, the true and the false move side by side, like the living body and its shadow. In every faith there are "false pietists of bewildered soul" who pursue rituals and practices that are the very opposite of the true practices of soul-life. Among the Hindus, there are misguided yogis; among the Muslims, there are bewildered sufis and dervishes, as among the Christians there are ignorant monks and nuns. Why is this? First, it is indicative of human zest, human zeal, human devotion and aspiration, to leave behind "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and to endeavour to approach the spiritual realm of Nirvana, to gain salvation or *Mukti*, to reach "Heaven." This grand and noble feeling of "devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow" gets distorted, giving rise to misunderstanding and mischief.

How shall we differentiate between the true and the false? By a simple process, once the latter is understood. Nature's rules and laws are simple, once their meaning and working are grasped. In the matter of false and true knowledge, the test lies in the simple fact that truth always agrees with truth; therefore the rules of the life of the soul have a universal basis. That which is Universal Knowledge, taught by *all* great Soul-Teachers, is true; that knowledge which differentiates and says, "Only Christians can be saved"; or, "Only Jews are the chosen of God"; or, "Muhammed is the only Prophet and Muslims alone are the faithful," is false knowledge.

So also in the matter of asceticism or austerity, Krishna and Buddha and all the other true Teachers give the same instruction. The Esoteric Science, *Gupta Vidya*, looks upon soul-life and soul-practices as a discipline. All life in the human kingdom is a test; human souls are continually tested by the impersonal Law of Karma. But all do not know that life is probationary. Their ignorance, however, makes no difference to the Law. If one eats poisoned food, albeit in ignorance, one must suffer the consequences. It is better to know, even though the process involves suffering, and so in the process of evolution man comes to recognize that each

human soul is evolving through experiences of pleasure and pain. This recognition brings to him the idea of discipline, *i.e.*, a desire to know the laws under which and by which the soul grows; what the soul should undertake and what it should avoid becomes the subject of study and investigation. This study brings the knowledge of what Divine Discipline is. It is called "Divine Discipline" because it is in conformity with the laws of Nature, and therefore takes the soul to divinity. In the mystic and occult side of *every* religion, the roots of this Divine Discipline are to be found. Because serious and thoughtful study is not undertaken, the teachings of the Great Gurus, Seers and Sages are misunderstood and, what is worse, misapplied and misrepresented.

So rules of true Asceticism make up the Divine Discipline of Life—the discipline of the soul which enables it to realize the life of Bliss-*Ananda*, the life of freedom from passion-*Kama*, the life full of Faith-*Iman* or *Shraddha*. Therefore the first question always to keep before us is: Does this practice or exercise I am about to undertake bring me the Light, the Power and the Peace of Divinity?

Two basic principles emerge, as taught by all seers and sages from the days of the Vedas to those of H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. The first is: Moderation—avoidance of extremes. Eating too little, cutting down on sleep, is not the path to divinity. The Golden Mean, the Middle Path of the Buddha, is the true way. The second principle is: All exercises must proceed from within without. Bodily exercises without desire-restraint and mind-control are of no avail. Physiological practices without mental purification do not take us to the world of the Spirit. These two principles emerge very clearly in the Sixth Discourse of the *Gita*:

This divine discipline, Arjuna, is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching. The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking. When the man, so living, centres his heart in the true Self and is exempt from attachment to all desires, he is said to

have attained to Yoga. Of the sage of self-centred heart, at rest and free from attachment to desires, the simile is recorded, "as a lamp which is sheltered from the wind flickereth not." When regulated by the practice of Yoga and at rest, seeing the self by the self, he is contented; when he becometh acquainted with that boundless bliss which is not connected with objects of the senses, and being where he is not moved from the reality; having gained which he considereth no other superior to it, and in which, being fixed, he is not moved even by the greatest grief; know that this disconnection from union with pain is distinguished as yoga, spiritual union or devotion, which is to be striven after by a man with faith and steadfastly.

In these verses we get the whole philosophy of Asceticism.

On the practical side, what shall we do—we who live in the world, who have to earn our livelihood, who are householders with obligations? The central idea is: Do not bother overmuch about your environment and circumstances; bring about a change within, and the without will take care of itself. Do not trifle with the body when the desires and the thoughts are not attended to. The *Gita* talks of "false pietists of bewildered soul." Those who think that beauty of surroundings will bring them beauty of soul, are as bewildered as those who think that if they are surrounded by books they will grow wise. Let us begin with the soul—not with our wandering mind and our wild passions, but with the soul. This is *Raja Yoga*—the Royal Science, the Divine Discipline. So let us first note well that the soul in us is a fact, that the soul exists. If we overlook this and follow practices which do not take the soul into consideration, we shall take the way of *Hatha-Yoga*, the torturous way. Next, let us learn about the nature, constitution and powers of the soul; get the knowledge that the soul is the real man, and is the master and controller of the wandering mind, the raging emotions, the troubled senses, the moods of brain and body. Let us dwell on the nature of the soul—that is real meditation, that is the only true prayer. Let us study and we shall find out that the soul in us is divine and possesses the power to adjust the mind, to give battle to the passions, to light up the temple of the body.

"From within, without" being the rule, the very first requirement is knowledge about the soul and its powers. Next, there is the mind. The main point to note about the mind is that it has the tendency to be attracted by the desires, ultimately leading to its enslavement by those desires. Therefore the Divine Discipline advocates the withdrawal of the mind from worldly occupations, at least once a day, when the soul impresses on the mind the great fact that it need not be affected by desires and passions. The mind needs to be engaged with or impressed by the soul's desire. The soul desires to illuminate the mind, and it cannot succeed because the mind is attracted by the lower desires and the passions. Study of holy books, of the universal laws of nature, helps the mind to part company with desires and to seek the good company—*Sat-sang*—of the soul.

Next, the lower desires must be eliminated, transformed. There are two classes of desires—lower and higher; the lower desires arise from the senses; the higher, from the mind seeking the company of the soul. The safest and easiest way to avoid the lower desires is to evoke the higher desires, three in number: (1) desire for the higher life, or soul-life; (2) desire for soul-knowledge; (3) desire for the company of the Holy Ones. These three must be cultivated. The culture of the higher desires is what Theosophy advocates.

Soul-attention leads to mind-discipline, and these two lead to feeling-control. It is constructive, not destructive, work. Finally, as the last step, arise bodily exercises. When higher desires are born, when the mind moves in the direction of the soul, the appetites of the body, the tendencies of the bodily senses, undergo a natural change. No amount of breathing exercises, no amount of fasting, no amount of strange foods, no amount of physical practices, will purify or bring illumination if one is not purifying one's inner nature. Once the within is properly attended to, all else falls into place. But there is constructive work to be done with our body as well—the need to keep it healthy and clean we all know about; but making it observe rules of habit which are methodical and regular is equally important. They are part of the Divine Discipline of life. We overcome Karma and change our environment that way.

There exist the true Ascetics, the perfected Chelas of Shiva, the Guru of Gurus, the archetypal Ascetic. Their bodies are like temples, and light and power stream forth from these living temples of the true Ascetics. The one desire of the real Ascetic is compassion for all, for the whole of humanity. His one thought is Wisdom with which to change the mind of the race. The soul who is the true Ascetic lives, and lives on in uttermost renunciation for the good of all. Our days are dark with privation and with sorrow, as our nights are spent in silence and in non-knowledge. Let us turn within, and begin the journey at the end of which will come the Power, the Peace, the Light of the great Ascetics, the Masters, the Mahatmas, who, one and all, are true Yogis and Sufis.

THE soul, considered as spirit and not animal soul, is pure, of the essence of God and desirous of immortality through a person; the person may fail and not be united to the soul; another and another person is selected; each one, if a failure in respect to union with the Self, passes into the sum of experience; but finally a personal birth is found wherein all former experiences are united and union gained. From thenceforward there is no more falling back, for immortality through a person has been attained. Prior to this great event the soul existed, and hence the doctrine of pre-existence. For all of the personal births the soul was the God, the Higher Self of each, the luminous one, the Augoeides; existing thus from all time, it might be the cause of rebirths but not itself be reincarnated, as it merely overshadowed each birth without being wholly in the flesh. Such a doctrine, extremely mystical, and providing for each a personal God with a great possibility held out through reunion, could well be called by Origen "a different theory" from metempsychosis and "of more elevated character."

—W. Q. JUDGE

LETTERS TO A STUDENT

III

[Reprinted from *The Pacific Theosophist*, August 1893.]

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:

Since my return I find not only your letter, but also the sad word that our sister has passed from our sight, though still visible to the heart of love. Such beautiful natures as that of Mrs. B. come to us in their sweet and uncomplaining faith as revelations of heights we may reach and, reaching them, couple such love with knowledge and power. This she will doubtless do when she returns; such achievement is not for one life, but is reached through many lives. It almost seems as if she bore her karma for our teaching. I cannot think her afar, but seem to see her pass with some bright meteor down the sky, going from the invisible to the invisible, and caught by us on her bright track for a moment, with hearts that remember and hope.

It seems sad to lose them thus. Yet it is at the behest of nature. How far sadder to lose them otherwise, as we have lost....But that was at the behest of nature, too. We can only view all alike with calm, garnering lessons and experience from all.

How vain it is to reach "higher in effort than in hope!" And we do not—we cannot.

He who thinks so knows not himself. What prompts or sustains "effort" if not the hidden hope! The soul force is not reached by the mind. We do not cognize the *concealed* will; only when it becomes self-conscious can we know it, and then the man at first thinks it is something beside himself—some mysterious regent or governor entering and ruling him—just as clairvoyants have mistaken their own auric body for an angel. In the last *Path* I have given some hints which may help you to see that, unknown to you, the inner self is guiding—and perhaps, too, thwarting your plans for its wise purposes.

It is not *money* the T.S. needs. If that were all! Don't you see that what we need is *devotion*, true and earnest devotion, union, har-

mony, a sense of absolute identity with all and with the Cause? If we had this, money would sufficiently come—as it comes in other, poor societies more devoted than ours because they have a *form* to cling to, and the average man still needs the prop of form and creed. He does not really, but thinks he does, and makes it so. If we had ten millions tomorrow we could not do more than increase our propaganda and sow the *intellectual* seed. That never reaches the heart, nor changes the life. What we need is to show an example of Brotherhood and union, of a calm, strong, kindly spirit, untouched by any personal wrong, oblivious of personal fault, reckoning not with man, but with the latent Divinity in man which makes every Adept salute each man as "*Aum*"!

So I regret to see you still holding on to this idea that money is greatly needed and bearing disappointment because of it. You thus engender energies which are contrary to your growth. They stunt and warp the soul-body. Understand me—I do not say money would not help; I say it is not our chief need. Our chief need is individual example and brotherhood. I say nothing can advance us so long as we maintain our present attitude of separation.

My brother, I know that sadness well. I myself am always tasting its bitterness anew, and I believe many others are. When we offer all, it seems hard not to be accepted, or to be put under service. Well, *we are*. The first service is patience and faith; the next, to *sense our orders*. We are always getting them in daily indications, inside and outside, in a way to test and develop intuition; but, absorbed in our daily plan, we do not always see them. On rising, I make no plan; but as I wake I say: "What is today's work?" Every circumstance then presents itself. If not, I know I am to study and to grow—perhaps to rest, though this is rare.

Fraternally yours,

JASPER NIEMAND, F.T.S.

EXPERIENCE is not what happens to you. It is what you do with what happens to you.

—ALDOUS HUXLEY

A PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION

IF the word "sacrament" be taken in the Christian theological sense—shorn of its implication of a specific rite—namely, as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," may not any action that is performed with the right motive and attitude and with due attention be a sacramental action?

By "grace" in this context no student of Theosophy would understand, as the theologian might, the "undeserved mercy of God." Nor will it connote to him such other dictionary meanings as merely "a courteous or gracious demeanour" or "beauty or harmony of form or attitude" or "ease and elegance of speech." These are good and any or all of them may characterize an action that is prompted by the the Real Man within. Skill in action is Yoga, but very great skill of a sort may be displayed by the devisers of weapons of destruction and a gracious manner does not always bespeak a gracious mood.

Those actions which are in the true sense touched with "grace" are those expressing a spiritual prompting from within or those in which participates the incarnating Ego, godlike in its essential nature, a spark from the one Divine Fire. We are told in *The Key to Theosophy* that every noble thought, idea and aspiration of the personality, proceeding from and fed by this invisible root above, must become permanent. Thus "pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity."

"Spiritual and divine powers," we are told, "lie dormant in every human being." How can we bring them into operation through the personality? By an attitude of true devotion, a dedicated life of service.

"That is all very well," it may be said, "for those whose Karma places them in a position where they can render full-time service to the Cause which they recognize to be mankind's best hope. But what of the rest of us who have to earn our livelihood at humdrum, sometimes uncongenial tasks, though all our wish is to be free for Theosophical service?" This is a good intention to hold quietly in the mind and heart without being attached to it. So when, under

Karma, the opportunity for full-time service of the Cause is opened to one, one will embrace it joyfully and not temporize and make excuses, like the would-be followers of Jesus who wanted to do this and that before they joined him. He is reported to have told one such: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (*Luke, IX, 62*)

Desires, whether good or bad, bring corresponding opportunities in their own good time. When things ought to be different with us, they will be different, but meanwhile are we doing all we can to cause the wheel "already set in motion to continue revolving"? Who is there that has *no* time, money or work to offer to the Theosophical Cause for which he professes enthusiasm? Of what use would a pittance be? Of more than can be reckoned, if giving it entails a sacrifice, like the poor widow's two mites which were declared of greater worth than all that the rich had given.

Even if an earnest student really finds himself so circumscribed by unpropitious Karma from the past that he can give no active outer service or financial help to Theosophy, he can yet make a valuable contribution to the Cause. He can speak, when opportunity offers, the timely word that may start another on a constructive line of thought. He can correct others' misconceptions of Theosophy when these are voiced in conversation. And by the power of our thinking we could, although confined in prison, still render service to the Cause.

...if unselfishly and earnestly we think *Theosophy*, and desire that others should, like us, be benefited by it, then to the minds we meet in stray moments of the day and in many hours of the night we cry "Theosophy," and "Help and hope for thee." The result must be an awakening of interest upon the slightest provocative occasion. (*The Heart Doctrine*, pp. 57-58)

It may indeed be that stray moments for such thinking in the course of a busy day are few, but would not honest self-examination reveal a host of quite inconsequential thoughts we had found time during such a day to entertain? Be that as it may, the very attitude with which we perform the humblest duty may invest it with "an inward and spiritual grace." Krishna says:

Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 27)

This obviously rules out actions performed with a wrong motive or against our conscience. But dare we commit unto Krishna, seated in the heart of each of us, tardiness, dilatoriness or slovenly workmanship—anything short of our best? Fortunately, our best is all that is expected of us. None of us is perfect yet in character; few, if any, can be perfect even in performance, but Mr. Judge has written:

It is not *what* is done, but the spirit in which the least thing is done that is counted. Hear the word of the Master. "He who does the best he knows how and that he can do, does enough for us." (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 10)

If we put our whole heart into every duty we may have to perform, first turning silently and earnestly to the Warrior within who is ourself and our king, standing aside and letting him who is incapable of defeat battle for us, a spiritual influence will naturally go with whatever action we perform. Even the simple signing of a letter will then become a sacramental action and with even an ordinary friendly or business letter there will go a spiritual influence.

MEN'S natures are alike; it is their habits that carry them far apart.

Study the past, if you would divine the future.

Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous.

—CONFUCIUS

MAYA—OVERCOMING THE GREAT ILLUSION

IN *The Theosophical Glossary*, H.P.B. gives us the following definition of Maya:

Illusion: the cosmic power which renders phenomenal existence and the perceptions thereof possible. In Hindu philosophy that alone which is changeless and eternal is called *reality*; all that which is subject to change through decay and differentiation and which has therefore a beginning and an end is regarded as *maya*—illusion.

This is the view most of us have as regards *Maya*. All the great Eastern religious and philosophical systems of thought (*e.g.*, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism) emphasize this teaching of *Maya* and, far more importantly, suggest ways to overcome the Great Illusion. It is because we try to find the permanent in the impermanent that we suffer so much. We need to discover the changeless dimension to our Being that will eventually make us immortal. More advice on how we can achieve this is given in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 39-40):

Maya or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition. To the untrained eye of the savage, a painting is at first an unmeaning confusion of streaks and daubs of colour, while an educated eye sees instantly a face or a landscape. Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence which contains itself in the noumena of all realities. The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyān-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself. Whatever reality things possess must be looked for in them before or after they have passed like a flash through the material world; but we cannot cognize any such existence directly, so long as we have sense-instruments which bring only material existence into the field of our consciousness. Whatever plane our con-

consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

Spiritual progress is an altering of the way we see the world. Veils are lifted to reveal more of the world in which we "live, and move, and have our being." We are in fact returning to what we really are, free from all the conditioning that society forces upon us. We have mistaken views as to our own nature and that of our brothers and sisters. In reality there is no life and death for the true Self; it is neither born or dies. We can begin to see that even the teachings of Reincarnation and Karma are ultimately illusory as far as the undying Real Self is concerned. This fits in with H.P.B.'s comments regarding the upward progress of the Ego through "a series of progressive awakenings."

We view the world from our own particular level, and what is reality to one person may be illusion to another. So, as H.P.B. points out, a savage may fail to discern the beauty of a painting by Michelangelo that is self-evident to a cultured person. In the same way, our understanding of Spiritual Truths also alters as our consciousness undergoes a transformation and new horizons present themselves to our mental vision. People believe that it is impossible to conceptualize the Truth, as it is forever changing and growing. This is just another *Maya*, as in reality Truth is always the same; it is just our perception of it that alters. As stated by a Master of Wisdom:

The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of Illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*. The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*.

This seemingly simple statement is "mind-boggling" when meditated upon. It does not say that *some* of the esoteric teachings are incommunicable, but that most, *if not all*, are. Where does that leave us as regards the teachings in *The Secret Doctrine*? What do we have presented to us in that book if the teachings cannot be communicated? The key sentence in the above quotation is: "The illumination *must come from within*." Unless we have developed a certain degree of intuition, we will only be reading empty words. However, it is true to say that the teachings in *The Secret Doctrine* are satisfying even intellectually, and make more sense than the theories put forward by materialistic scientists and by dogmatic religious leaders. So, although the deeper teachings are inaccessible to intellectual reasoning, certainly those facts presented to us in genuine Theosophical works are signposts without which we would be hopelessly lost in the labyrinth of personal ideas and opinions that are constantly forced upon us by the media and the education system.

So what is the best way to attune ourselves to the Divinity within us and to live the life requisite for true spiritual progress? In her article "Occultism versus the Occult Arts," H.P.B. mentions different kinds of Esoteric Knowledge:

There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the exoteric Puranas. There is (1) *Yajna-Vidya*, knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Mahavidya*, the "great knowledge," the magic of the Kabalists and of the *Tantrika* worship, often Sorcery of the worst description. (3) *Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers of incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words, a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) *ATMA-VIDYA*, a term which is translated simply "Knowledge of the Soul," *true Wisdom*, by the Orientalists, but which means far more.

This last is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires "Light on the Path," and who would be wise and

unselfish, ought to strive after.

All other kinds of knowledge exist in the realm of *Maya* and, if we are to overcome the Great Illusion, we must set little store on them and use them only, as H.P.B. says, when purified of their dross and for beneficent purposes. What we need to do is to try to clear away the debris resulting from centuries of negative conditioning, and once again become aware of our place in the Universal Scheme. Our inner nature is always peaceful, blissful and harmonious, but we constantly erect mental barriers that prevent us from becoming aware of our True Self. We tell ourselves that the Path is too difficult, that we are not ready to tread it, thereby making it even more difficult. The obstacles we encounter are self-created. Robert Crosbie stated over and over again that most of our problems come from a misunderstanding of our true nature, and we should heed him and the countless others who have said the same. We may complain about our environment, but the Spiritual Path is an inner Path and it does not matter what kind of external surroundings we have, as we can always extricate ourselves from involvement in the illusions that we have created individually and collectively in the world around us.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is teeming with advice on how to live the life. One example is: "To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out he should subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit." This one verse from Chapter VI gives the key to living spiritually. We achieve tranquillity by focusing our attention on the Divine and always returning to it when we stray; in this way we do not get caught up in the affairs of the world, though we still live in it and carry on with our normal activities. This is what H.P.B. says on the subject in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 280):

The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through "the still small voice" of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the

Universal Spirit, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.

It is only when we refuse to be swayed by illusion that we can begin to communicate with each other on a deeper level and therefore begin to be aware of the true dignity of human nature. When the veils begin to lift, we will at last know what true Love is beyond sensuality and sentimentality.

One of the greatest illusions that we have to overcome is that of time. *The Secret Doctrine* has much to say on this subject and what it says is illuminating. Vol. I, page 37, tells us:

Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but "lies asleep." The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past. Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change—or the same—for the billionth part of a second; and the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of "time" known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories which we name the past.

The past is just a series of images and the future our mind-created expectancies. To really overcome the illusion of the senses we need to live in the present moment. In the East, the senses are known as the "six thieves." This is because besides sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, the lower mind is also added to the senses. This is made clearer in *The Voice of the Silence* where it is written:

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.

Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.

When we at last realize that the battleground is indeed within the mind, we are well on our way to overcoming the Great Illusion and rediscovering our True Nature. Let us then try to live by the Light within, which is the Light of Intuition and which is our true Guide if cultivated properly by Theosophical study, meditation and altruistic practice.

THE universe never stops or slows down. Action, perpetual action, is the principle that guides its workings, whether at the macrocosmic level of the planets that move smoothly in their orbits, or at the microcosmic level of the body's organs, each performing its ordained function.

It is this natural reality which is clothed in philosophical form by the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the gospel of action in human affairs expounded by Sri Krishna at the beginning of the Mahabharata war. Krishna warns his vacillating disciple, the warrior-prince Arjuna, against the foolishness of humans who would take credit for their own actions, when they are in fact caused by the varying degrees to which the *gunas*—the pre-existing human tendencies towards serene goodness, restless energy and dull inertia—inform the individual personality.

Lest this doctrine lull humans into the passive acceptance of the given situation, however, Krishna also admonishes Arjuna in the following words (Chapter 3, shloka 8): "Action is greater than inaction; perform therefore your task in life. Even the life of the body could not be if there were no action."

Krishna goes on to nuance his insistence on ceaseless action: it is neither mindless activity nor work directed towards a narrow gratification that he has in mind. In Chapter 18, shloka 9, he provides his definition of work performed as sacred trust, work that is rendered in the spirit of an offering to eternity: "He who does work because it ought to be done, and surrenders all selfishness and thought of reward, his work is pure and is peace."

—P. D. SHASTRI

THE TURNING POINT

Those three—(a) Perfectibility of Humanity, (b) Cause of Sublime Perfection, (c) Masters are living facts, and not cold abstractions—should be well spread abroad. They pulverize the awful wrong of inherent sin, they raise a hope in every man above a sot, they illuminate the sky of the future. We work for the future—oh, the glorious future!

—W. Q. JUDGE

What of the present that is passing with us, through us and all around us? Mr. Judge observes:

The race is, as a whole, in a transition state, and many of its units are kept back by the condition of the whole. We find the path difficult, because, being of the race, the general race tendencies very strongly affect us. This we cannot do away with in a moment. It is useless to groan over it; it is also selfish, since we in the distant past had a hand in making it what it now is. The only way we can alter it is by such action now as makes of each one a centre for good, a force that makes "for righteousness," and that is guided by wisdom. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 76)

Consideration of the far-reaching implications of these simple words shows us a certain path of action.

If certain beings, the Masters and their Chelas, are able to see that the race is in a "transition state," then that also means that They are able to stand aside from it. Only that which is permanent and stable can see the passing events. A profound knowledge of time and of the great law of causation shows when certain cycles are to come. The general law of the interrelationship of all beings, called "Brotherhood," holds them back or advances them in their totality. No unit is able at any time to go very far beyond the mass of units. But all individual efforts either advance or retard those immediately around, and eventually the whole. We are charged, therefore, with the responsibility of living and working for the "glorious future." But, this we cannot do well unless we act and feel and, above all, think correctly *now*.

What then shall we do? Let us consider some further statements

made by Mr. Judge and H. P. Blavatsky. In concluding his *Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge states: "...the Lodge [of Masters] hopes by the time the next tide begins to rise that the West will have gained some right knowledge of the true philosophy of Man and Nature, and be then ready to bear the lifting of the veil a little more." This of course has reference to all of us and not only to the West.

Madame Blavatsky, in her closing section in *The Key to Theosophy*, refers even more emphatically to the duty of all students of Theosophy in the following words:

If the present attempt...succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the XXth century. The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings, and, as I have said, their prejudices and dogmatic illusions will have been, to some extent at least, removed. Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the next torchbearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path. Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish.

We are now, H.P.B. says in *The Secret Doctrine*, at the turning point of the Fifth Race, in the Fourth Round, and on the Fourth Globe of this Earth Chain. If we recall that the universe, as well as our race and ourselves, is sevenfold, we shall see the significance of the passing of the midway point of the period. We are now in that period which will culminate in the climacteric cycle of the Manvantara. The cycle which began in 1897-98—when the first 5,000 years of *Kali Yuga* were concluded—will end in 1997-98. It is over 5,000 years since Krishna taught the teachings embodied in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and 2,500 years since the preaching of the Good Law by Gautama, the Buddha. Approximately 1,200 years have elapsed

since the end of the era of the Neo-Platonic Movement. This is our period in terms of past historical cycles and times, and to some this may appear significant.

If we are now to try to fit ourselves to act and serve as the great Dhyan Chohans served at the midway point of evolution, "when all matter and all types were in a transition and fluid state" (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 77), and if, as we are further told by Mr. Judge, "in the mental development we are now at the same point and what we now do in faith and hope for others and for ourselves will result similarly on the plane to which it is all directed," we cannot forgo the opportunity to heed and study that work which will result in this advancement and harmonizing with the whole.

If we look around us today, we shall see that there are signs here and there that the work of the Theosophical Movement since 1875 has not been in vain. We are apt sometimes to take too short-term a view of things. Men's minds cannot be changed overnight; it takes time. For instance, terms such as "reincarnation" and "brotherhood," to name only two, are being used today by men and women who a few decades ago would never have thought of them. So there are signs both good and bad in the world today.

But we, as students of the great, immemorial philosophy of Theosophy, must not relax our efforts. The "moment of choice" has been spoken of in our Philosophy, and it is indicated that it is made up of small choices. If constant decisions to harmonize with Nature and her laws have been made, we shall have built into our natures the right kind of responses, shall have so inclined and trained the molecules and cells making up our physical body and our inner finer constituents that each of us shall have made of himself a focus through which impersonal forces of good alone can act. We *are* working for the great change in the Manas and Buddhi of the Race that is going on in many directions. For us there must be no laziness, no *laissez-faire* and pandering to the prejudices and customs of the world, but a just appraising and a correct employment of these, so that we can in truth fulfil our *own* duty on our return back to our "sacred seat," the Higher Self within.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Do present generations have a responsibility to protect the rights of those who will come after them? "After us, let's avoid the flood." This is the idea behind a proposal for a declaration on the safeguarding of future generations, that UNESCO has presented to its Member States. (*Unesco Sources*, September 1996)

"The chances our children and grandchildren have of living in an ecologically balanced world are eroding daily. As well, serious questions are arising on violence and terrorism and the lack of freedom and democracy," stressed Hector Gross-Espiell, Uruguay's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and former President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, who presided over a meeting of international jurists to prepare a draft of the declaration.

For the main part, the preliminary draft's 13 articles deal with the environment and human rights. Each generation, it states, has the right to inherit an Earth that is undamaged and uncontaminated by human activity. Care must also be taken "to ensure that future generations are not exposed to waste-products or pollution that put their health or even their lives at risk, and to preserve the genetic heritage of humanity as well as biodiversity." The preliminary draft also calls for the defence of cultural diversity and a commitment not to take any measure that could provoke discrimination of any sort, as people everywhere and of all generations have the right to live together, peacefully and with respect paid to their human rights.

"Up until now, there has been no future-oriented human rights text," said Gross-Espiell. "This is the first time that a text of international law will have been specifically devoted to them." Science and technology are capable of producing major upheavals. More than ever, the future appears as a *terra incognita*. Even more reason to advance towards it with caution.

The gift of speech and the use of language make humans unique among all species. Researchers interested in language evolution have generally been linguists and anthropologists and have focused

on questions such as when language evolved or what its early phases might have been like. But *how* did it originate? Scientists are still searching for an answer.

Anthropologist and science writer Jo Ann C. Gutin's article, "A Brain That Talks" (*Discover*, June 1996), focuses on the work of Marty Serno at the University of California at San Diego. Serno believes that there is a link between brain evolution and language evolution:

Serno's idea is this: language ability arose in the human brain not through the development of a new, uniquely human language organ, as most accounts have it, but by "a relatively minor rewiring" of a neural system that was already there. And that neural wiring belonged largely to the visual system, a part of the brain that recent research—including Serno's own—has shown to be almost unimaginably complex.

Language is the physical or sense form of ideas; ideas are the metaphysical or ideal form of intelligence, or knowledge—in other words, of mind. *The Secret Doctrine* traces the origin of language back to the late Third or Lemurian Root-Race, when man became a thinking being:

Language is certainly coeval with reason, and could never have been developed before men became one with the informing principles in them—those who fructified and awoke to life the manasic element dormant in primitive man. For, as Professor Max Muller tells us in his *Science of Language* (1874, p. 383), "Thought and language are identical." (*S.D.*, II, 199 fn.)

One of the Masters wrote that "long ages of silence were required for the evolution and mutual comprehension of speech... up to the first monosyllable uttering man." H.P.B. defines monosyllabic speech as "that of the first approximately fully developed human beings at the close of the Third Root-race, 'the golden-coloured,' yellow-complexioned men, after their separation into sexes, and the full awakening of their minds" (*S.D.*, II, 198-99). The whole human race was at that time "of one language and of one lip." The subsequent evolution of language in the Fourth and Fifth Races

is also explained in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 198-201)

What scientists are discovering today is that phenomena, though seemingly widely different in nature, follow similar rules. A group of scientists have found bizarre similarities between the way the values of currencies fluctuate and the behaviour of swirling liquid or air. Shoaleh Ghashghaie, a statistician, and Wolfgang Breyman, a physicist at the University of Basel, came across some new figures on the patterns of minute-by-minute and day-by-day changes in the values of the Deutschmark against the U.S. dollar. They showed the figures to colleagues who study "turbulence"—the whirls and patterns that appear in rivers and winds. The researchers immediately saw a striking resemblance between the currency statistics and the patterns in turbulent flows. They publish their conclusions in the British journal *Nature* (Vol. 381, p. 767, June 1996)

"Given that these two systems are very different, their behaviour is astonishingly similar," says Breyman. He is convinced that "it is more than mere coincidence," and that there is an underlying parallel between turbulent motions and the way financial markets evolve. Although it may never be possible to precisely predict weather or the stock market, one can foresee the *patterns* of their behaviour, say the researchers.

There is today an increasing acceptance of hidden order in everything, a pattern in apparently random phenomena, a law governing seemingly chaotic happenings. Now a growing band of scientists are pursuing their quest for these laws, uncovering previously unimagined aspects of nature.

Archaeologists and art experts around the world were stunned last year when French cave researcher Jean-Marie Chauvet unveiled a remarkable collection of prehistoric rock art, which scientific tests showed to be over 30,000 years old. The animal paintings and engravings were remarkable as much for the exquisite quality

of the artwork as for their antiquity. (See "In the Light of Theosophy," August 1995.)

Now comes another "striking" discovery of early art, this time in northern Australia. Archaeologists searching for prehistoric tools discovered thousands of precise, coin-size circular impressions covering the great orange boulders strewn across the region. *Newsweek* (October 7) reports:

What is astounding is the age of this "wallpaper," as one archaeologist described it. According to the latest dating methods, the impressions were left 75,000 years ago, making them more than twice as old as the French cave paintings that had previously stood as the oldest examples of human art. While excavating the sediment, researchers also found ochre, possibly used as a paint, that they dated as 116,000 years old. A hand tool they unearthed could be 176,000 years old—discoveries that if verified would force scholars to rewrite the story of human development.

Above all, the Australian finds could reopen the question of how and when people developed creative powers. Until now, the theory held that art began with modern man, *Homo sapiens*, who began to migrate from Africa 100,000 years ago. But people from Africa are thought to have arrived in Australia only 60,000 years ago—long after the craftsmen who worked so meticulously on the northern boulders. The new discoveries suggest that some form of creative human species lived in Australia long before the arrival of modern man.

Archaeologists, who are working in close co-operation with Aboriginal groups, are mystified as to what these marks represent. Those who made them took great pains in carving out the circles dextrously to virtually the same depth and the same 1.2-inch diameter, suggesting that they held them in great importance. On one boulder alone there are some 3,500 of these mysterious impressions. Paul Tacon, head of the Australian Museum's Anthropology Department, compared the findings to Britain's Stonehenge, the mystery of which scientists have still to solve. "Here we have something comparable in that a cultural group sculpted large monoliths across an equally large area," he said. According

to Peter Tozer of the Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation, "Aboriginal people have the sense that they have been here forever"—at any rate far longer than generally believed.

Sometimes native belief is sounder than "expert" opinion. Australia is often looked upon as a new continent, most inappropriately. As a matter of fact, it is "one of the oldest lands now above the waters" (*S.D.*, II, 197). *The Secret Doctrine* explains that Australia once formed part of the enormous continent of Lemuria, the home of the first physical human stock, the Third-Race humanity, to whom the "Gods," as Incarnated Egos, gave the light of mind. Lemuria itself ended its career as an active field of experience for progressing humanity, some 700,000 years before the early Eocene Age. "The survivors of those later Lemurians, who escaped the destruction of their fellows when the main continent was submerged, became the ancestors of a portion of the present native tribes." (*S.D.*, II, 197)

The controversy over IQ (intelligence quotient) tests continues. In Britain, members of the "Campaign for Real Intelligence" argue that IQ is only one element of mental ability, and should not be taken as the sole measure of a person's intelligence. The campaigners object to research on the links between genes and IQ—that is, to the theory that intelligence is largely determined by heredity. In a letter to Britain's medical Research Council, they warn that the discovery of any genes connected with IQ could divide society by marginalizing people who lack the "IQ genes." If an individual's genes determine his IQ, and if IQ then determines his chances of success in life, it is a short step to the conclusion that there is nothing he can do to improve his prospects.

"IQ doesn't tell you anything about other aspects [of ability], like being good at sport or music, or how good a person you are, or how responsible you are as a citizen," says Gail Chester, one of the group's founder members.

IQ scores at best measure the kind of intelligence needed to do school work. But evidence suggests that these scores have little to

do with a person's later life and accomplishments. Thus, the tests may result in the greatest injustice and harm. Human intelligence and behaviour cannot be reduced to mathematical quotients, and it is good that this is being recognized.

Modern-day sleep researchers are beginning to realize that a lot more goes on during sleep than the body, including the brain, getting a good rest. American and Israeli researchers have found that sleep plays a role in imprinting recently learned material into the memory. (*The Sunday Review*, October 20)

During sleep, we go through different levels of consciousness—from light slumber to deep, dreamless sleep. It also includes, say the sleep specialists, periods of rapid eye movement (REM), which is when we dream. They believe that during REM sleep, the brain actually replays visual memories recorded during the day, which helps sort them out and file them away in the memory. To check this out, Israeli researchers taught the same task to two groups of people. That night, one group was deprived of REM sleep. The other was allowed to pass into deep sleep before being woken up. The next day, it was found that those who got their full quota of dream sleep showed overnight improvement in performing the task, while those deprived of it showed no improvement at all.

Other studies also showed that there is a link between dream sleep and memory. Researchers say that the brain produces extra amounts of a certain memory-related substance during the REM phase of sleep. If a person misses that state, he misses the boost to the memory.

Many people, scientists included, believe that the loss of one sense strengthens the others. Researchers of Fukui Medical School in Japan and their colleagues at the National Institutes of Health in the U.S.A. have now come forward with real evidence for that general belief. Their studies show that in blind people, the visual cortex—a part of the brain that normally processes visual informa-

tion—is instead given over to touch. (*Discover*, July 1996)

Norihiro Sadato and his colleagues used positron emission tomography, or PET, to monitor the brain activity of blind people as their fingertips were engaged in two tasks: reading braille, and scanning English letters and other shapes made by grooves etched in paper. Their blood flow increased significantly—in the visual cortex rather than the sensory-motor one. The researchers also monitored sighted people (wearing eye patches) as they performed the second task. In contrast to the blind, they actually showed a decrease in visual cortical activity while trying to recognize the letters and shapes. In the blind, apparently, neurons normally reserved for vision were adjusting to handle information from their fingertips. Sadato believes that extensive tactile learning, such as training in braille, may rewire the brain in deeper ways than anyone had realized.

Theosophy says that all senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness. The senses are to a certain extent interchangeable; every sense pervades every other. Thus the sense of seeing can be interchanged with the sense of touch, without involving anything further than the exercise of senses on the physical plane.

THE gods of our time, mechanization and organization, have brought life and death. They have wired up the whole world, established contact throughout, created everywhere the possibility of co-operation, concentration of strength and mutual understanding. At the same time they have trapped the spirit, fettered it, stifled it. They have led man from individualism to collectivism. But with his unguided insight man has so far succeeded only in realizing the evil that is in every collectivism, the negation of the deepest personal values, the slavery of the spirit. Will the future be one of ever greater mechanization of society governed by the demands of utility and power?

—JOHAN HUIZINGA